Balkan: a powder keg
Geography
Ancient History

- Human occupation: at least -1.4 million years,
- Greek culture: 9\textsuperscript{th} century BC, trading with natives (7\textsuperscript{th} – 3\textsuperscript{rd} c. BC),
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Middle Ages

- (Relatively) small states:
  - Principality Carantania (664 – (745) - 828),
  - Serbian states (9th c. - 1540),
  - Croatian kingdom (925 – (1102) - 1527),
  - Albanian kingdom (1272 – 1368),
  - Bosnian kingdom (1377 - 1463),
- Outer aggressors:
  - Byzantine empire (330 – 1453),
  - Bulgarian empire (681 – 1018, 1185 – 1396),
  - Hungarians,
  - Franks,
  - Vlachs,
  - Ottomans,
  - Venice republic, ...
Middle Ages

Milestones:

• Christianization
  – Irish missionaries invited by Salzburg bishops,
  – Byzantine missionaries (st. Cyril and Methodius),
  – Conversion of state rulers, e.g., Bulgarian king,
  – State christianization, e.g., Serbs were baptized by Byzantine empire,

• Schism (1054),

• Battle at Kosovo polje (1389),

• Fall of Constantinople (1453).
15th – 19th century

• Spread of Habsburg monarchy and Ottoman empire,
• Constant attacks by Ottoman empire + establishment of military frontier (1553 - 1881),
• Illyrian Provinces (1809 – 1816),
• Spring of nations (1848),
• Creation of Austria-Hungary (1867),
• Serbian revolution (1804 – 1815 -> de facto independence in 1868),
• Greek independence war (1821 – 1832),
• Congress of Berlin (1878),
20th century
Towards War

- Coup in Serbia and assassination of the King Alexander and Queen Draga (1903)
  - House of Karađorđević takes over
  - Serbia turns away from Austria-Hungary towards Russia,
- Young Turk revolution (July 1908)
  - Bulgarian declaration of independence on 5th October 1908
  - Austro-Hungarian de-jure annexation of Bosnia on 6th
  - Serbian mobilization on 7th, but no war,
  - Ottoman embargo on Austria-Hungary until 26th February 1909
  - huge commercial losses of Austria-Hungary.
First Balkan War

- Formation of Balkan League (Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro) against Ottoman empire (early 1912)
  - Montenegro declares war on Ottoman empire in September 1912
  - Other 3 countries join the war in October and overrun Turks
  - Turkish counter offensive fails
  - Treaty of London (30th May 1913) ends the war

= Balkan League annexes almost all European territories of Ottoman empire + Albania gains independence.
Second Balkan War

• Unresolved disputes about territories (mostly about Macedonia) within Balkan League remain
  -> Serbia and Greece enter alliance against Bulgaria (1st May 1913)
  -> Bulgaria redeployes troops to the west and launches a surprise attack against Serbia and Greece (16th June)
  -> Serbs stop Bulgarians and Greeks advance
  -> Romania declares war on Bulgaria (10th July) and occupies its northern part
  -> Ottoman empire enters Bulgaria and starts retaking territories lost in the First Balkan War (12th July)
  -> Negotiations start and armistice comes into effect on 31st July
  -> Treaty of Bucharest (10th August)
  = Macedonia is partitioned between Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria + Serbia becomes the most powerful state in the region.
Border Changes
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Balkans after First Balkan War, 1912
Border Changes

Balkans after the Second Balkan War, 1913
Assassination of Franz Ferdinand

- Ethnic unrests in Austria-Hungary (1914),
- Emperor Franz Joseph is 84 years old and his nephew Franz Ferdinand is the heir to the throne,
- Franz Ferdinand went to Sarajevo to watch military maneuvers and decided to drive through the town on 28th June – the anniversary of the battle of Kosovo
  - seven assassins are waiting and first assassin throws a hand grenade, but fails to kill him
  - Franz Ferdinand is driven to the mayor’s house and assassins start going home
  - when Franz Ferdinand is driven home, the driver takes a wrong turn and when he wants to go backwards Gavrilo Princip comes face to face with Franz Ferdinand
  - Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie are shot and they die on the way to hospital
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July Crisis

- Pro-austrian local population starts pogroms against Serbs and Austria-Hungary decides to teach Serbs a lesson
  - Germany grants a support to Austria-Hungary (6\textsuperscript{th} July)
  - Austria-Hungary sends an ultimatum to Serbia with impossible demands (23\textsuperscript{rd} July)
  - Serbs ask Russians for help (24\textsuperscript{th} July)
  - Russians start mobilizing reserves (26\textsuperscript{th} July)
  - Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia (28\textsuperscript{th} July)
  - Austrian artillery is shooting on Belgrade and German and Russian emperor are exchanging telegrams (29\textsuperscript{th} July)
  - Germany declares war on Russia (1\textsuperscript{st} August) and France (3\textsuperscript{rd} August) + Britain declares war on Germany (4\textsuperscript{th} August).
WWI

• Austro-Hungarian troops cross the border at river Drina (12\textsuperscript{th} August),
• Serbia wins the battle of Cer (15\textsuperscript{th} – 24\textsuperscript{th} Aug.),
• Stalemate in the battle of Drina leads to trench warfare,
• Austrians launch a massive attack (5\textsuperscript{th} November) and conquer Belgrade (2\textsuperscript{nd} December),
• Serbs receive ammunition and in a counter-attack (3\textsuperscript{rd} December) push Austro-Hungarians out of the country.
Important events in the surroundings:

- Ottoman empire joins Central powers (31\textsuperscript{st} October 1914),
- Italy joins Allies (23\textsuperscript{rd} May 1915),
- Bulgaria joins Central powers (12\textsuperscript{th} Oct. 1915).
WWI

• When Bulgaria entered the war, stalemate for Serbs turned into a certain defeat
  -> Serbs retreat across Albania
  -> Austria-Hungary conquers also Montenegro
  -> Serbia is shared between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria

• Slovenes, Croats, and Bosnians in Austro-Hungarian army keep fighting on Soča front.
Kingdom Yugoslavia

- State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs + Serbia + Montenegro + satellites = Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1\textsuperscript{st} December 1918)
- Treaty of Rapallo (12\textsuperscript{th} November 1920),
- Carinthian plebiscite (10\textsuperscript{th} October 1920),
- Vidovdan constitution (28\textsuperscript{th} June 1921),
- Alexander abolishes the constitution and renames the kingdom into Kingdom of Yugoslavia (6\textsuperscript{th} Jan. 1929),
- Alexander is assassinated in France (9\textsuperscript{th} October 1934),
- Croats gain autonomy (24\textsuperscript{th} August 1939).
• Yugoslavia signs a pact with Germany (25th March 1941)
  -> Huge protests in Belgrade
  -> Military coup d'état (27th March)
  -> Germany attacks (6th April)
  -> Unconditional surrender (17th April)
WWII

• Occupation, collaboration, and civil war:
  – Foreign forces: Germans, Italians, Hungarians, and Bulgarians
  – Domestic forces: Chetnics (royalists), Liberation front (partisans), Ustashe (Croatian nationalists), and Home-guard.
Tito’s era

- “Elections” (11th November 1945) + deposition of King Peter II,
- Declaration of FPRY (29th November 1945),
- Breakup with Stalin (1948),
- Creation of Non-Aligned Movement, i.e., third world (1961),
- FPRY -> SFRY + Tito is declared “president for life” (7th April 1963),
- Tito dies (4th May 1980).
80s

- Olympic games in Sarajevo (1984),
- Economic collapse,
- Political crisis and start of ethnic tensions,
- “Rallies of Truth”, i.e. “Yogurt revolution” (1988).
Breakup

• Congress of the League of Communists (January 1990)
  -> The party falls apart on the national level
  -> Multi-party elections in all the republics
  = Separatists win in 4 (out of 6!) republics
• Independence referendum in Slovenia (23rd December 1990),
• Yugoslavian army starts taking actions (March 1991),
• Independence referendum in Croatia (2nd May 1991).
War in Slovenia

- Start of the armaments (October 1990),
- Declaration of independence (25\textsuperscript{th} June 1991),
- Yugoslavian army attacks (26\textsuperscript{th} June),
- Brioni Agreement (7\textsuperscript{th} July),
- The last YNA soldier leaves Slovenia (25\textsuperscript{th} October).
War in Croatia

- By the end of September 1991 Serbs controlled 1/3 of Croatia,
- Destruction of Vukovar (August - November 1991),
- Siege of Dubrovnik (October - December 1991),
- Ceasefire (January 1992),
- Continuation of fighting (January 1993),
- Operations Flash (May 1995) and Storm (August 1995)
  -> Exodus of Serbs from Knin
  -> The end of war.
War in Bosnia

- Bosnia declares independence (1\textsuperscript{st} March 1992),
- Siege of Sarajevo (5\textsuperscript{th} April 1992 – 29\textsuperscript{th} February 1996),
- Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina are accepted in UN (22\textsuperscript{nd} May 1992),
- UN troops arrive to Bosnia and the war breaks out (June 1992),
- Genocide in Srebrenica (July 1995),
- NATO air strikes (30\textsuperscript{th} August – 20\textsuperscript{th} Sept. 1995),
- Dayton agreement (14\textsuperscript{th} December 1995).
War in Serbia

- Creation of Kosovo Liberation Army (1991),
- KLA starts attacking (first) authorities and (later) civil population (1995),
- Serbian retributions and start of war (28th February 1998)
- NATO bombardment of Serbia (March – June 1999),
- Serbs retreat from Kosovo and international units arrive (June 1999).
The end of Yugoslavia

- Macedonia also declared independence (25th September 1991),
- Overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic (5th Oct. 2000),
- State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (2003 – 2006),
- Montenegro declares independence (3rd June 2006),
- Kosovo declares independence (17th February 2008).
Next Chapter

• All west Balkan countries are democratic by constitution, but they are almost “failed states”,
• Slovenia and Croatia are members of EU and NATO,
• Macedonia is blocked on all levels by Greece and has big problems with Albanian minority,
• International units remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo to preserve fragile peace,
• There are still unresolved border issues and there are still tensions between countries.
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