

Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque (Bosnian: Gazi Husrev-begova džamija / Serbo-Croatian Cyrillic: Гази Хусрев-бегова џамија, Turkish: Gazi Hüsrev bey camii) is a mosque in the city of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Built in the 16th century, it is the largest historical mosque in Bosnia and Herzegovina and one of the most representative Ottoman structures in the Balkans. Being the central Sarajevo's mosque since the days of its construction, today it also serves as the main congregational mosque of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is located in the Baščaršija neighborhood in the Stari Grad municipality and, being one of the main architectural monuments in the town, is regularly visited by tourists.

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History[edit]

The Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque was built in 1531 as the central object of the Beg's endowment, which also included a maktab and a madrasa (Islamic primary and secondary schools), a bezistan (vaulted marketplace), a hammam (public bathplace) etc. The foundation of this waqf by the contemporary Ottoman governor of Bosnia had a crucial point in the development of the town. The architect's name is unknown, but after some speculations, which even included famous Mimar Sinan as an option, most scholars agreed that Acem Esir Ali "Alaüddin", Ottoman mimar of Persian ancestry, is the most probable builder. It is still possible that Sinan himself did inspect the work on the spot, since he was in the region at the time.[1] Historical documents testify that Ragusan masons, requested from their government by Gazi Husrev-beg, participated in the building process.

Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque was the first mosque in the world to receive electricity and electric illumination in 1898 during the period of Austro-Hungarian Empire.[2]

Architecture[edit]

The mosque belongs to the type of complex-spaced, multi-domed mosques and it is a represent of the Early Period of Classical Ottoman Architecture (sometimes referred to as Early Istanbul Style). The central rectangular space, framed by high walls and covered with a dome resting on pendentives, represents the spine of the structure, while lower extensions lean to it and expand the volume of the interior space. The qibla side of the mosque is extended with a rectangular space which is covered by a semi-dome resting on two highly developed muqarnas structures. They stand in function of pendentives, reducing the rectangular outline of the ground level to the near semi-circle shape in level of the semi-dome. This area houses central architectural elements with religious purposes: mihrab, minbar and kursi and, being open to the central space with a huge arch, represents the focal point of the mosque. Two smaller spaces, called tetime[check spelling] (sg. tetima) are located on the left and right sides of the central space, placed furthest from the qibla side. They are covered by two lower domes resting on pendentives.

The exterior is dominated by the main dome, topped out only by a simple, yet monumental minaret. The entry side is marked with a portico resting on four wide columns and covered with little domes, only the central one, above the portal, being a bit greater than others, and resting on muqarnas-adorned pendentives, in contrast to others which are laid on simple, plain-surfaced pendentives. The monumental portal is richly decorated with muqarnas, as well as columns' capitels.

In his legacy, he stated: "Good deeds drive away evil, and one of the most worthy of good deeds is the act of charity, and the most worthy act of charity is one which lasts forever. Of all charitable deeds, the most beautiful is one that continually renews itself." [3]

[Destruction and reconstruction](#)[\[edit\]](#)

During the Siege of Sarajevo, Serbian forces purposely targeted many centers of the city's culture, such as museums, libraries, and mosques, and fired on them generally. As the largest and best known, the Beg's mosque was an obvious target.

Having suffered a significant amount of destruction, the reconstruction of the Mosque started with foreign help in 1996, right after the war. The old and faded layer of Austro-Hungarian decoration was removed and, since remains of older, historical layers of decorative painting weren't found, a completely new interior was designed and applied by Bosnian calligrapher Hazim Numanagić in 2001-2002. Austro-Hungarian decoration, performed mostly in pseudo-Moorish style, remains only on the portal of the Mosque today.

[Gallery](#)[\[edit\]](#)

Mosque in 1900

The entrance

East side of the mosque

View from the market

The fountain in the courtyard of the mosque

Gazi Husrev-beg mosque

Call to prayer (close up Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque)

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