

# The Painted Mosque and Arabati Baba Tekke in Tetovo

We weren't entirely [impressed with Tetovo](#) during our short visit, finding it too noisy, crowded and hectic. But the city does have a couple things to recommend it. The Šarena Džamija, more commonly known as the Painted Mosque, and the Arabati Baba Tekke are two historic sites worth seeking out.



Tea gardens and cafes line the banks of the Pena River, which flows through the center of Tetovo. At the foot of an ancient stone bridge spanning the river, is the mosque of Šarena Džamija. Built in 1438 and reconstructed in 1833, the mosque is famous for its vibrant color scheme, with an exterior covered in rectangular designs that resemble playing cards.

We arrived just as an older gentleman wearing a white skullcap was opening the doors, and he ushered us inside, speaking German. It turned out that he had spent a decade working in Jürgen's home town of Darmstadt. While the two of them reminisced about life in Hessen, I admired the mosque. The interior was as richly colored as the outside, decorated with floral motifs and cityscapes from around the Muslim world.

From here, it was about a ten minute walk to the Arabati Baba Tekke, on the southern edge of Tetovo. As we approached, I thought this *tekke*, or dervish