

Bulgaria – Highlights of Bulgaria

Tour Code BG

Bulgaria represents a fascinating destination that offers a perfect combination of history, architecture and tradition. Homeland of Orpheus and, in the 4th-3rd centuries BC, of the horsemen of Thrace, whose rich tombs still survive, and mountains where medieval Christians built remote monasteries with stunning frescoes. An impressive six UNESCO sites, beautiful scenery, and with a rich folk tradition which still survives in many areas, plus with a direct flight with British Airways of only three hours, Bulgaria is very much open to visitors

Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Sofia
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Day 1 Fly to Sofia. Old City walking tour

We fly from London Heathrow to Sofia direct with British Airways. Lunchtime arrival and transfer to the centrally located Crystal Palace hotel. We have an introductory walking tour to the capital this afternoon, one of the most ancient cities in Europe founded 7 000 years ago. We include some of the historical and cultural landmarks of the city; the Roman Serdica Fortifications (Sofia's oldest preserved building) and 4th century AD St. George's Rotunda, famous for its original structure and unique frescoes.. Welcome dinner at the hotel (D).

Day 2 In Sofia. Drive to Veliko Tarnovo

We spend the morning in Sofia, its main attractions include the Alexander Nevski Memorial Cathedral with the Crypt housing a unique collection of icons, Parliament Square, the National Theatre and the Church of St Sophia. Afternoon scenic drive to Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria's mediaeval capital. Two nights at the hotel Yantra with dinner (B,D)

Day 3 In Veliko Tarnovo

Sightseeing tour of Bulgaria's medieval capital, picturesquely located on four hills above the Yantra River. We include the Museum of the National Revival, where the First Bulgarian Constitution was adopted in 1879, and the medieval fortress on Tsarevets Hill. In the afternoon, we drive to the nearby museum village of Arbanassi for a visit to the unique 16th century Church of the Nativity and the Konstantsaliev House, the oldest house in the village and famous for its traditional architecture (B,D)

Day 4 Visit Kazanlak. Drive to Plovdiv

Drive to Etara, an open-air ethnographic complex showing the everyday life of local people centuries ago. We continue south through the spectacular Shipka Pass. We visit Shipka church and one of the recently excavated Thracian tombs named "Goliama Kosmatka", that dates from the 5th century BC. Arrive in the town of Kazanlak and visit to the Museum of History, and the famous 4th-century BC Thracian tomb which is included in UNESCO'S World Heritage List. Dinner and two night stay in Plovdiv at the hotel Trimontium (B,D)

Day 5 In Plovdiv

Founded about 8 000 years ago, Plovdiv was the capital of Ancient Thrace and a big trade centre in the Middle Ages. The city's historic quarter boasts beautifully decorated period houses, ancient fortress walls, a Roman forum and stadium, magnificent churches. We visit the Roman theatre, the Ethnographic Museum, and the Church of SS Constantine and Helena. In the afternoon, we drive to

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Bachkovo Monastery, one of the oldest monasteries in Bulgaria scenically located on the banks of the Asenitsa River. The monastery is known for its unique architecture and amazing wall paintings and icons (B,D)

Day 6 Drive to Bansko

We head south today pausing at Velingrad, famous for its mineral springs. We take a narrow gauge train to Avramovo enjoying the scenery of the Rhodope mountains. At Dobarsko we see the delightful small church of St Teodor Triton, noted for its abundance of original frescoes and icons, some of which are interpreted as portraying Jesus in a rocket! Our day ends at a Bulgarian house to taste some traditional home made cooking. Dinner and overnight stay in Bansko at the Sveti Ivan Rilski hotel (B,D)

Day 7 Visit Bansko and Pirin Mountain traditional villages

We start the day with a walk through the cobbled streets of Bansko and visit to Holy Trinity Church; the largest and most interesting in the Pirin area. Driving south we arrive at Kovatchevitsa; perfectly located and one of Bulgaria's prettiest villages. We also visit Delchevo, another traditional village set in the idyllic Pirin Mountain National Park. Two nights at the Interhotel Sandanski with dinner (B,D)

Day 8 Visit Sandanski, Melnik and Rojen Monastery

Sandanski is a spa town with lot of mineral springs in the area and believed to be the birth place of Spartacus. We drive to the 12th century built Rojen Monastery, restored after a fire in the 17th century, and well preserved since that time. We also visit the pretty and traditional village of Melnik, together with the neighbouring Rojen monastery a declared cultural and historic reserve (B,D)

Day 9 Visit Rila Monastery. Drive to Sofia

Drive to Rila Monastery, the biggest and most important symbol of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Founded in the 10th century and rebuilt in the 13th and 14th centuries, this monastery is one of the oldest in Europe. It was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1983. Behind its 20-metre-high walls lie impressive monastic buildings, a church and a chapel with remarkable wall paintings. Two nights at the Crystal Palace hotel with dinner (B,D)

Day 10 In Sofia. Visit National Museum and Boyana Church

This morning we visit the National Museum of History, where the magnificent Thracian treasures of ancient gold are on display. We'll also visit the Boyana church, world-famous for its wall paintings, which date back to 1259. The most remarkable achievement of Bulgarian mediaeval painting, they are also a precious contribution to European art. The Boyana Church is also one of the best preserved and interesting buildings from mediaeval times in Bulgaria. It is included in UNESCO's World Heritage List. A farewell dinner in a typical Bulgaria restaurant with folk show has been arranged this evening (B,D)

Day 11 In Sofia. Fly London

A leisurely morning to enjoy some last minute shopping perhaps or visit to one of the many cultural museums in the city. Lunchtime transfer to the airport for our BA flight return to London Heathrow (B)

Cost £1195.00 per person in twin room (excl. international flight) Single supplement £200.00



Fresco of Christ, Rila Monastery

Price includes –

- ▶ Tour accompanied from London by *Patrick Syder FRGS*
- ▶ Specialist Bulgarian guide for our daily excursions
- ▶ All transportation - private a/c coach
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Comfortable 4 star hotels with private en-suite facilities
- ▶ All breakfast and hotel restaurant dinners daily
- ▶ All airport transfers
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities

Not included – travel insurance, drinks, some meals, guide and driver gratuities, and international flight (from £200.00 with British Airways)

(for current price check Opodo →)

