



Tour Information



Walking in Bulgaria





Travel

Passports

You may need to renew your British Passport if you are travelling to an EU country. Please ensure your passport is less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left on it) and has at least 6 months validity remaining from the date of travel. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Swiss valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel.

For more information, please visit: [passport checker](#)

Visas

As a tourist visiting from the UK, you do not need a visa for short trips to most EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. You'll be able to stay for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

For further information, please check here: [travel to the EU](#)

Different rules apply to Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania. If you visit these countries, visits to other EU countries do not count towards the 90-day total.

Bulgarian embassy: 186-188 Queen's Gate, London SW7 5HL.

Tel: (0)20 7581 3144.

<http://bulgarianembassy-london.org>

For visa information: email

consular@bulgarianembassy.org.uk

Open Mon-Fri 0930-1330.



Tickets

Included with your detailed itinerary is an e-ticket, which shows your flight reference number. You will need to quote/show this reference number at the check-in desk and you will be issued with your boarding pass. **Online check-in is not available for this booking.**

Your Group Scheduled or Club Class ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage allowance

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

With British Airways your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45x 25cm including handles, pockets and wheels, and a personal bag (handbag or computer case) no bigger than 45 x 36 x 20cm including handles, pockets and wheels.

For more information please visit

www.britishairways.com

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Border Control

At border control, you may need to:

- show a return or onward ticket.
- show you have enough money for your stay.
- use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queueing.

Taking food into EU countries

Please note, you are not able to take meat, milk or any products containing them into EU countries.

Transfers

On arrival in Sofia, transfer to Koprivshitsa and the Hotel Panorama (approx. 2 hours).

Special Requests

If you haven't already done so, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



Accommodation

Accommodation throughout will be at small family run 3-star hotels on dinner, bed and breakfast basis. All hotels have a restaurant, lounge, comfortable bedrooms with private facilities and, most importantly, a very warm welcome. In rural areas, expect cosy and comfortable rather than sleek and stylish!

Panorama Hotel Koprivshtitsa (2 nights)

The family run Panorama Hotel is built in a traditional style with wood and stone and sloping roofs. All rooms have balconies, TV, and ensuite bathrooms with showers. Some rooms have views towards the old town of Koprivshtitsa. The hotel has its own small taverna.

For more information, please visit:

http://panoramata.com/hotel_en.htm

Hotel Dafi, Plovdiv (1 night)

Hotel Dafi is a modern style hotel well-located in a quiet neighbourhood in central Plovdiv, making it easy to wander out in the evening. The comfortable and colourful rooms include TV, minibar, air-conditioning, wi-fi and private bathroom with shower and hairdryer.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.hoteldafi.com/en/>

Hotel Chichin, Bansko (2 nights)

Well-located close to the centre of Bankso, this simple hotel offers comfortable accommodation with all rooms including balcony, TV and private bathroom with shower. Hotel facilities include a bar, tennis court and a sauna (free of charge).

For more information, please visit:

<https://hotelchichin.com-bulgaria.com/en/>

Hotel Emaly, Separeva Banya (1 night)

Small traditional-style hotel surrounded by nature and situated at the foot of the Rila Mountains in a region known for its warm thermal waters. The comfortable bedrooms include TV, private shower room and Wi-Fi. Hotel facilities include a hot tub, sauna, steam room and small indoor pool, which is fed by the warm mineral waters. The hotel also has

a summer garden and restaurant that serves traditional Bulgarian cuisine.

For more information, please visit:

http://sapareva-banya.hotelemaly.com/index_en.php

Family hotel Zdravets, Sofia (1 night)

Small, family-run hotel situated in the Simeonovo district of Sofia. Well-located for a sight-seeing tour of Sofia and transfer to Sofia Airport.

This hotel does not have a website.

Practical Information

We recommend you bring the following items:

- 1 light waterproof jacket
- 1 good size day sack
- 1 pair of light trousers (for prickly undergrowth)
- 1 water bottle (although you can buy water cheaply locally)
- Personal first aid kit
- Sun hat
- Sun cream
- Insect repellent
- 1 fleece or warm layer for cold in altitude or chilly evenings
- T-shirts/layers so you can adjust to changing early/late season weather conditions
- A walking stick or ski sticks can be very useful for uneven terrain

As some of the walks will encounter uneven and sometimes rocky terrain, it is essential to have comfortable, well-fitting and protective footwear. It is advisable that boots are ankle high to provide good ankle support. Vibram soles tend to have better grip. It is always advisable to break in your boots before your holiday. Try two pairs of socks, one thin pair close to the skin, and a thicker outer sock.

Bring a foot care kit, especially useful is moleskin and second skin, compeed is also very good for blisters.



Food

Bulgarian cuisine (Bulgarian: българска кухня, translit. bălgarska kuhnja) is a representative of the cuisine of Eastern Europe. It shares characteristics with other Balkans cuisines. Bulgarian cooking traditions are diverse because of geographical factors such as climatic conditions suitable for a variety of vegetables, herbs and fruit. Aside from the vast variety of local Bulgarian dishes, Bulgarian cuisine shares several dishes with Persian, Turkish, and Greek cuisine.

Bulgarian food often incorporates salads as appetizers and is also noted for the prominence of dairy products, wines and other alcoholic drinks such as rakia. The cuisine also features a variety of soups, such as the cold soup tarator, and pastries, such as the filo dough based banitsa, pita and the various types of börek.

Main courses are very typically water-based stews, either vegetarian or with lamb, goat meat, veal, chicken or pork. Deep-frying is not common, but grilling - especially different kinds of sausages - is very prominent. Pork is common, often mixed with veal or lamb, although fish and chicken are also widely used. While most cattle are bred for milk production rather than meat, veal is popular for grilling meats appetizers (meze) and in some main courses. As a substantial exporter of lamb, Bulgaria's own consumption is notable, especially in the spring.



Drink

Bulgaria has more than six hundred mineral water springs around the country, so the quality of Bulgarian traditional drinks is considered to be very high. A yogurt called "ayrian" and millet ale called "boza" are two traditional non-alcoholic beverages in the Balkans.

A strong (40% vol) and clear grape brandy, called rakia (Ракия), is the Bulgarian national drink and is served neat, usually at the beginning of a meal with salads. In some smaller towns, some families still distil their homemade rakia and it is then usually much stronger, starting at 50% vol. Another popular drink is Mastika (Мастика) (47% vol). It is similar to Greek Ouzo and Turkish Raki.

Bulgaria has several well-known local wine varieties. These include Melnik, Mavrud, Pamid, Gamza (Гъмза) (red dry), Kadarka (red sweet) and Keratsuda (white dry). Local lagers like Zagorka, Kamenitza and Shumensko are among the best when it comes to inexpensive and widely available drinks.

Meals included in the holiday are:

Breakfast and dinner daily and lunch on day 6.



Destination

Not many countries in the world have a longer or more varied history than Bulgaria. There are seven historical cultural strata in Bulgaria: of an unknown civilization from the fifth millennium BC, the Thracian civilization, Ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Bulgarians, and the Ottoman Empire. Modern Bulgaria was born in 1878, when five centuries of foreign rule were brought to an end by a war between czarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire. After the dramatic twentieth century, which included 45 years of communist rule (1944-1989) Bulgaria opened a new page in its history with its accession to the European Union on 1 January 2007.

Aside from the country's fascinating history it also has a spectacular nature with impressive landscapes, that include stunning mountain scenery, impressive glacial lakes, and wonderful golden beaches.

Walking in Bulgaria centres around two mountain ranges - the mighty Rila and the equally dramatic Pirin range that stretches all the way to Greece.

During the tour you will of course encounter spectacular mountain scenery, but also the country's unique culture and architecture, its delicious food and interesting customs, and its very friendly local people.

For more information visit:

<https://bulgariatravel.org/en/>

The Sredna Gora

Sredna Gora, which means *The Middle Mountain*, is the second longest mountain range in Bulgaria, and is famous for its historical sights, hunting areas and wines.

Koprivshitsa

Koprivshitsa was one of the main centres of the heroic April 1876 uprising against Ottoman rule. It is also known for its authentic Bulgarian National Revival architecture of the 18th and 19th centuries and for its folklore festivals, which have made it a very popular tourist destination. Collections of ethnographical treasures, old weapons, National Revival works of art, household weaves and embroidery, national costumes and typical Bulgarian jewellery are displayed in several impressive house-museums. Walking along the cobbled stone streets and soaking up the authentic 19th century

atmosphere one can feel the spirit of the heroic past of this remarkable town.

Starosel

The area is known as the "Valley of the Thracian kings" due to the many relics of this unique ancient civilization that have been found here.

The Thracian Temple Complex is situated just 4km from the village of Starosel sitting on a lush green hill overlooking the countryside with views for miles. This is the oldest ever found royal Thracian complex with a mausoleum dating back to the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 4th century BC. The complex includes six under-hill temples, four of which are unique, as well as royal burial sites. The large temple, Chetinyova Mogila, and the Horizon temple are open for visitors.

The entire hill is surrounded by a wall made of processed granite blocks with a length of 241 meters and a height of 3.5 meters. The wall is called krepis and outlines a circle which according to the Thracian religious beliefs symbolizes the sun. The entrance of the temple has a parade staircase and two pedestals, on which statues of lions were sitting.

For more information visit:

<http://www.panacomp.net/starosel-thracian-tomb/>

Plovdiv

Plovdiv is Bulgaria's second largest city founded 8000 years ago. It is one of the oldest cities in Europe alongside Troy and Mycenae and is older than Rome, Athens and Constantinople. The city is situated at the crossroads of the West and the East, in the Thracian valley where history and modernity go hand in hand, an area with a rich, diverse culture that has been thriving since ancient times. Plovdiv was the capital of Ancient Thrace and a major trading centre in the Middle Ages. The city's charming historic quarter boasts beautifully decorated period houses and magnificent churches and has been proclaimed an architectural open-air museum.

For more information visit:

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/bulgaria/plovdiv-and-rodopi-mountains/plovdiv>

<http://www.bulgariatravel.org/en/Article/Details/306/Plovdiv%20City>

The Rhodope Mountains

The Rhodope mountains are famed as the birthplace of Orpheus, legendary Thracian musician and singer, but they are also home to some of the oldest and loveliest coniferous forests in Bulgaria. These mountains are very much alive, hosting many small villages and hamlets where the local people have preserved a traditional lifestyle. The landscape is soft and rolling with high ridges and deep gorges alternating with valleys. As many as 10 percent of the world's minerals and as well as 600 caves can be found here.

For more information visit:

<https://rewildingeurope.com/areas/rhodope-mountains/>

Bansko

Bansko is a well-known historic town with an imposing church, a charming old quarter with many houses from the Bulgarian Revival period, narrow cobbled streets, and several museums. In the winter Bansko is hugely popular as a ski resort and, in the summer, it is a popular place for visitors because of the charming sites offered by the town but also because of its closeness to nature and several idyllic walking trails. The town enjoys a scenic location at the foot of the magnificent Pirin Mountains, part of the Pirin National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Another feature of Bansko are the numerous (over 120) traditional Bulgarian restaurants, called 'mehana'. These traditionally decorated restaurants serve typical Bulgarian dishes. Sometimes dinner is accompanied by traditional music and dance as well. Food at 'mehanas' tends to come in huge portions and always served alongside fantastic house wine.

For more information visit:

<https://www.itsalltriptome.com/top-things-to-do-in-bansko/>

<https://visit-bansko.bg/en/what-to-see/the-old-city>

Pirin National Park

Located in south-west Bulgaria and covering a territory of around 40,000 hectares, Pirin is one of three national parks in Bulgaria. It overlaps with two EU Natura 2000 sites and is one of two Bulgarian sites on UNESCO's World Heritage list.

The dominant part of the park is made up of diverse limestone mountains 2,000 metres above sea level. The territory includes over 70 glacial lakes and a broad range of glacial landforms including many waterfalls and caves. Pirin was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983.

The Pirin Mountains are believed to be birthplace of Spartacus - heroic Thracian fighter for freedom. The mountains are named after Perun, the supreme god of the Slavs.

For more information visit:

<https://luckybansko.com/visitor-center-of-pirin-national-park-p153101/>

Wine Tasting

Vine growing, and wine making have been part of Bulgarian culture since ancient times. Archaeological evidence shows that wine grapes have been thriving here since 4000 BC. This makes Bulgaria one of the oldest wine producing areas in the world. Some of these older varieties still exist today – Mavrud, Dimyat, Pamid, Melnik, Gamza.

Popovo Lake

Popovo Lake is the largest of the eleven Popovi Lakes. The lake and the surrounding area is one of the most popular places for hiking in the Pirin park. The Lake is an hour and a half walk from Bezbog hut. From the northeastern end of Popovo Lake its waters flow to the six Ribni Popovi lakes (Fish lakes).

For more information visit:

<https://luckybansko.com/popovo-lake-in-the-pirin-mountains-p96801/>

Rila Monastery

The Monastery of Saint Ivan of Rila, better known as the Rila Monastery is the largest and most famous Eastern Orthodox monastery in Bulgaria. It is situated in the southwestern Rila Mountains, in the deep valley of the Rilska River. The monastery is named after its founder, the hermit Ivan of Rila (876 - 946 AD), and today houses around 60 monks. The monastery is depicted on the reverse of the 1-lev banknote, issued in 1999.

This colourful monastery is magnificently decorated with around 1200 wall and ceiling paintings. The monastery housed cells for up to 500 monks and 1000 bedrooms for pilgrims.

For more information visit:

<https://rilskimanastir.org/bg/about/>

Rila Mountains

With their highest peak Musala reaching a height of 2925 m., the Rila Mountains are the highest mountains in Bulgaria and the sixth highest in Europe after the Caucasus, the Alps, Sierra Nevada, the

Pyrenees and Mount Etna. These mountains are like a rough sea of ridges, peaks, deep gorges and 189 crystal-clear lakes often described as “The Blue Eyes of Rila”. Their name is of Thracian origin and means “plenty of water”.

The Seven Rila Lakes found amidst these mountains all have individual names, Dolnoto (the lower lake), Ribnoto (the fish lake), Trilistnika (the Trefoil), Bliznaka (the twin), Babreka (the kidney), Okoto (the eye) and Salzata (the tear). When you see the lakes, you should recognise them by their names, for example Okoto (The eye) is the deepest one, Babreka (The Kidney) has the shape of a kidney The Trefoil and Twin are alike in their shapes, and the Lower Lake is the lowest lake. The seven lakes flow one into each other and create the Djerman river. They are one of the most remarkable natural sites in the Balkan Peninsula.

For more information visit:

<https://luckybansko.com/seven-rila-lakes-a-piece-of-paradise-in-rila-mountain/>

Sofia

The city is located at a strategic crossroads. The route from Western Europe to Istanbul passes through Sofia via Beograd and Skopje, then through Plovdiv to Turkey. Sofia also connects The Near East and The Middle East, lying between the banks of The Danube and the shores of The White Sea on the one hand, and between The Black Sea and The Adriatic on the other. Sofia preserves many valuable monuments to its long and storied past. During the sightseeing tour visit to the Roman Serdika Fortifications (Sofia oldest preserved building) and the 4-the century AD St. George’s Rotunda, famous for its original structure and unique frescoes, Alexander Nevski Cathedral, Ivan Vazov National Theatre, The National Assembly, The Church of St. Sophia. Sofia is a also full of delightful surprises offering a thriving and diverse street life, including open-air cafés and busy markets as well as many lovely parks and gardens to relax in.

For more information about Sofia, visit:

<http://bulgariatravel.org/en/object/234/sofia>.

Reading Suggestions

Cambridge Concise Histories: A Concise History of Bulgaria

This book offers a comprehensive thousand-year history of the land, people, society, culture and economy of Hungary, from its nebulous origins in the Ural Mountains to the elections of 1988. It tells above all the thrilling story of a people which became a great power in the region and then fought against - and was invaded by - Ottomans, Germans and Soviets.

DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: Bulgaria

The ideal travel companion, full of insider advice on what to see and do, plus detailed itineraries and comprehensive maps for exploring this captivating country.

Mountain Guide/Tour Manager

Your Mountain guide/tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour, from start to finish, to ensure that everything operates according to plan. If you have any problems or questions, please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.



The Basics

Climate – The weather in Bulgaria at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.

Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – Bulgarian.

Religion – Bulgarian Orthodox.

National holidays – New Year's day (01 Jan); National Day (03 Mar); Labour day (01 May); St Georges Day (16 May); St Cyril and Methodius Day (24 May); Unification Day (06 Sep); Independence day (22 Sep); Day of the Bulgarian Revival Leaders (01 Nov); Christmas Eve (24 Dec); Christmas day (25 Dec); Boxing day (26 Dec); New Years Eve (31 Dec).

Currency – Lev. Лв1 = 100 stotinki. Notes are in denominations of Лв 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1, Coins are in denominations of Лв 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 stotinki. The exchange rate is tied to the Euro at a fixed rate 1 Euro = Лв1.955.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 230 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is generally safe to drink. Although, we would probably recommend buying bottled water to be on the safe side. This is readily available and cheap.

Shops and museums – Shops are open Mon-Sat 1000-2000. Department stores often remain open longer, up to 2200 on Sunday. Supermarkets are open all day, every day. Outside main areas, some shops may close at lunchtime.

Please note that some museums may be closed on Mondays.

Clothes & shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – The guarantee of free mobile phone roaming throughout the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway has ended. Check with your phone operator to find out about any roaming charges that might be applied after 1st January 2021. A new law means that you are protected from getting mobile data charges above £45 without you knowing. Once you reach £45, you need to opt in to spend more so that you can continue using the internet while you are abroad. Your phone operator will tell how you can do this.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport should it be required.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

Before you travel, make sure you have got a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or travel insurance with health cover.

You may not have access to free emergency medical treatment and could be charged for your healthcare if you do not have an EHIC or GHIC when visiting an EU country, or travel insurance with full healthcare cover when visiting Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. If you have an EHIC it will still be valid while it remains in date. Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) will be valid if you are travelling to an EU country.

For further information about the GHIC please visit: <https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045 (Mon-Fri 0900-1700),

Outside the above office hours please telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7841 023807

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you need consular assistance during your holiday:

British Embassy, Sofia, Bulgaria

9 Moskovska Street

Sofia 1000

Bulgaria

Tel: +(2) 933 9222

britembinf@mail.orbitel.bg

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