

BEAUTIFUL BULGARIA

SATURDAY JULY 1st – SATURDAY JULY 8th



Join us for an unforgettable adventure through Bulgaria and experience the scenery, culture, and beauty of a fascinating part of Europe

HIGHLIGHTS

A hiking, cultural, sightseeing and culinary adventure

Visit the mesmerising Rila Monastery & Lakes

Walk around the enchanting cities of Sofia Bansko & Plovdiv

Hike the pristine Pirin Mountains

Taste home made Bulgarian foods, visit local markets & sample its wines

DAY 1 JULY 1st SOFIA AIRPORT – PLOVDIV (150 KM Drive)

Arrival in Sofia, transfer to Plovdiv (90 mins). Overnight in Plovdiv.

Easy Jet Flight EZY6537 from London Gatwick 13.00 to Sofia 18.05

DAY 2 JULY 2nd – PLOVDIV



WALKING TOUR

Morning: Walking tour of Plovdiv (Bulgaria's second largest city and one of the oldest in Europe founded 8000 year ago, on a par with Troy and Mycenae). The city's historic quarter boasts beautifully decorated period houses, ancient fortress walls, a Roman forum and stadium, magnificent churches. We'll visit the Roman theatre, the Ethnographic Museum and the Church of SS Constantine and Helena.



MONASTERY

Afternoon: Visit Bachkovo Monastery. It's the second largest in Bulgaria (Founded in 1083) and one of the most important monuments of Christian architecture in the country. The cathedral church of the Virgin Mary (finished in 1604) is the place where the miraculous icon of Virgin Mary, dated from 1310 is kept (brought from Georgia beginning of 14th century).

WINE TASTING



Transfer to the nearby village of Brestovitsa which has been named the "Wine capital of Bulgaria". Wine tasting in one of the wine cellars and drive back to Plovdiv. Overnight stay in Plovdiv

DAY 3 JULY 3rd PLOVDIV – BANSKO (200 KM Drive)

LOCAL MARKETS & PANORAMIC VIEWS

Drive towards Velingrad, stopping at a small open air market. Transfer to Avramovo and take a narrow gauge to Belitsa. During the trip we'll enjoy the beautiful panorama of the Rila and Rhodope mountains.

HOME VISIT & LOCAL FOOD



Visit the village of Gorno Draglishte, Bulgarian house and taste home made food & speak to the local family about Bulgarian folklore & dances

ST TEODAR'S CHURCH & THE ROCKET



Walk up to the village of Dobarsko, visit the church of St Teodor Triton and Teodor Stratilat built in 1614. The church is famous for its unique image of Jesus arriving on earth on something that resembles a rocket. The painting is still a mystery for scientists and experts.

BANSKO SCENERY

Drive to Bansko. Recently the town developed as the largest ski resort in Bulgaria. It enjoys a scenic location at the foot of the magnificent Pirin Mountains and the **UNESCO** World Heritage Pirin National Park. A scenic walk around the area. Overnight stay in Bansko.

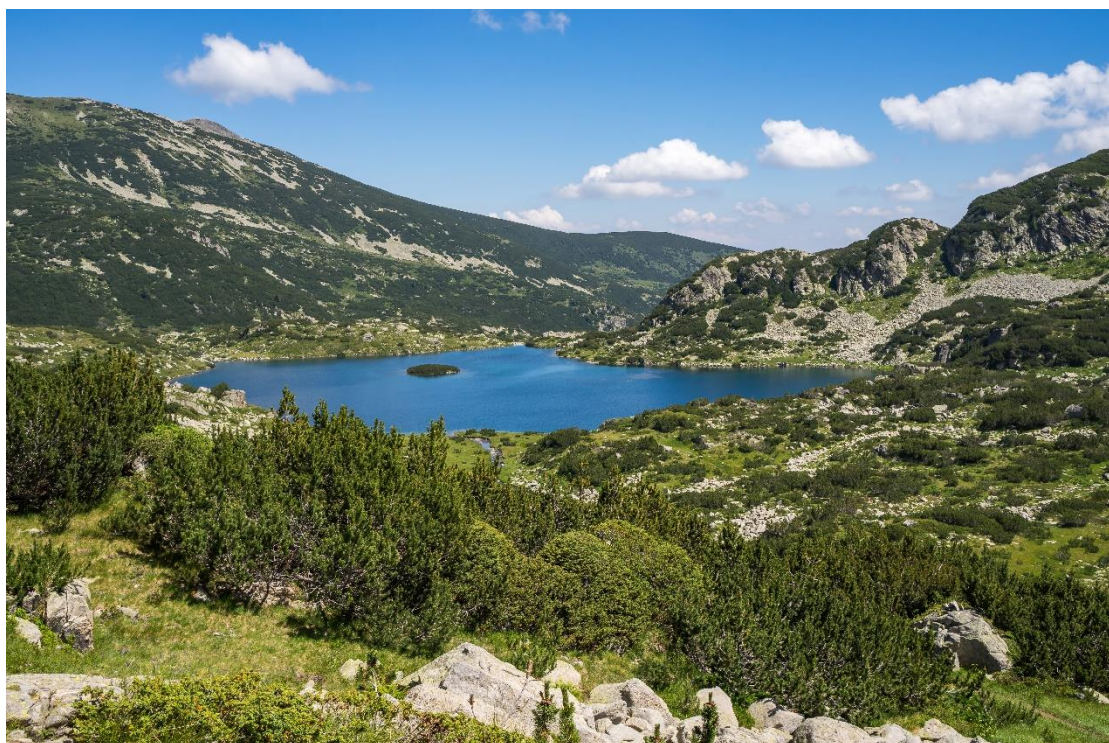
Ascent 280 m / descent 280 m Walking distance: 4 km

DAY 4 JULY 4th BANSKO - GOTSE DELCHEV - BEZBOG- POPOVO LAKE - GOTSE DELCHEV - BANSKO - PLOVDIV (40 KM Drive)

PIRIN MOUNTAINS

Transfer to Gotse Delchev hut (1412m). Get on the chair lift to Bezbog hut (2236m) located along the beautiful Lake Bezbog within the UNESCO World Heritage Site - Pirin National Park.

LAKE POPOVA & HIKING (3 ½ hours)



Walk to the largest and deepest lake in Pirin Mountains – Lake Popovo (2310 m) which would take about 3 ½ hrs. The trail weaves mostly up and down, very often amid some mountain pine shrubs.

One of the trademarks of Lake Popovo is a small island in the middle of the lake named Kilimavkata. According to legend a local priest drew himself after his beautiful daughter Kalina was kidnapped by a Turkish lord. As the priest's body disappeared beneath the water his kamelaukion (kilimavka) rose up in the surface forming the island. Since then the lake has been known as “Priest's Lake” or Popovo Lake.



We then head to the 3 Lakes Samodivski (sheltered in a small cirque among high rocks) with a small stream curving between them forming a tiny waterfall. Walk back to Bezbog hut and take the lift again to Gotse Delchev hut. Minibus transfer to hotel in Bansko. Overnight stay in Bansko.

Ascent 650 m Descent 650 m

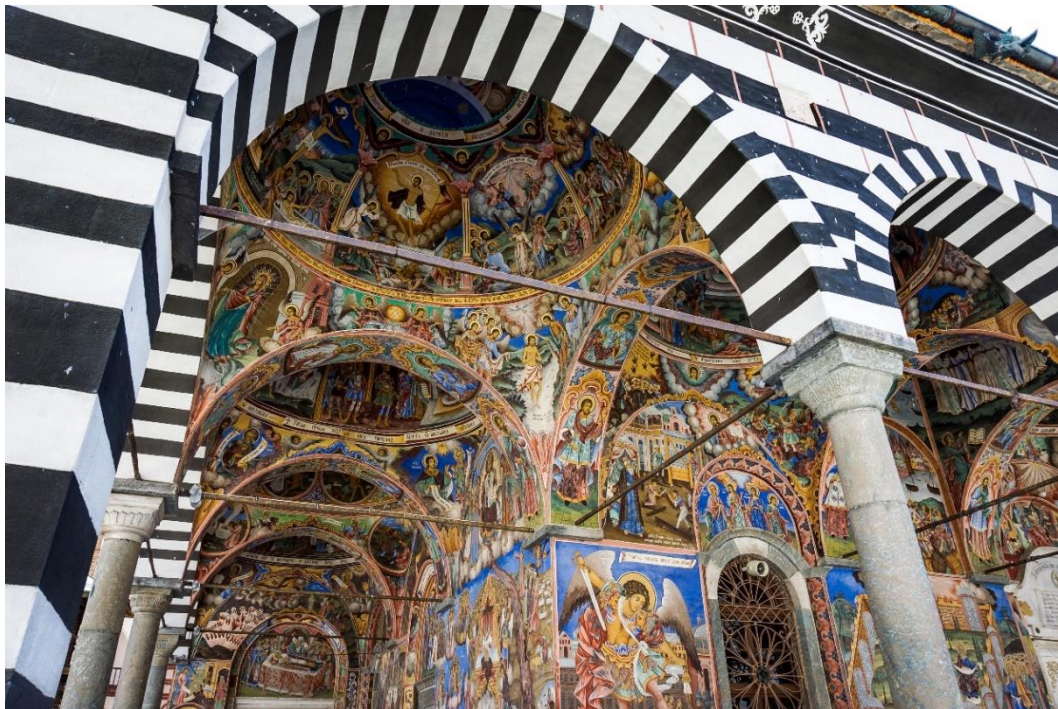
Walking distance: 9 km (Bezbog hut – Popovo lake – Bezbog hut)

DAY 5 JULY 5th – BANSKO – RILA MONASTERY – SEPREVA BANYA (180 KM Drive)

RILA MONASTERY & COUNTRYSIDE WALK



Transfer to Rila Monastery - Bulgaria's largest & most beautiful Monastery. Set amongst picturesque Rila mountains, the cloister is a spectacular **UNESCO** World Heritage with impressive monastic buildings, a church & chapel. The frescoes painted on the walls are breath taking & the decoration of the exterior ceilings incredibly well preserved.



STOB PYRAMIDS



Walk to the Stob Pyramids (45 mins one way). A beautiful place with great scenery which changes with the seasons we'll also visit the St Ivan Rilski grave. Drive to Separeva Banya. Stay in Separeva Banya / Panichishte.

First walk Ascent 130m /descent 130m
Walking distance: 3km.

Second walk: Ascent: 150 m / descent 150m
Walking distance: 1.5km

BULGARIA

Despite its relatively small size which occupies only 2% of Europe, Bulgaria's biodiversity is among the richest in the continent. It is conserved within 3 national parks, 11 nature parks, 16 biosphere reserves and 1364 protected areas. The impressive range of flora and fauna is set among an equally impressive range of landscapes, including wild mountains, sandy beaches and verdant valleys decorated with many lakes and rivers.

**DAY 6 JULY 6th SEPAREVA BANYA RILA LAKES – SOFIA
(120 KM)**

THE SEVEN RILA LAKES & HIKING



Transfer to Pionerska, chair lift to Rila Lakes hut (1520). Hike around The Seven Rila Lakes in the Rila National Park. 1st lake: The Kidney followed by The Eye (the deepest circus lake in Bulgaria (38m) and then the highest The Tear (2535m) where we'll enjoy an incredible panoramic view of the lakes, the Vitosha Mountains and the Balkan Range in the background.



We continue exploring the rest of these mountain pearls. The next one is the largest The Twins, followed by The Trefoil, The Fish Lake and The Lower Lake which is the lowest and collects the waters from the other six lakes. The trek ends at the Rila Lakes hut again. Back on the chair lift to Pionerska hut, followed by a transfer to Sofia. Overnight stay in Sofia.

Ascent 500 / descent 500 m Walking distance: 10 km

DAY 7 JULY 7th – SOFIA

WALKING / SIGHTSEEING TOUR



We'll visit the Roman Serdika Fortifications (Sofia's oldest preserved building) and the 4th 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 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.



Optional visit the Museum of History and Boyana church UNESCO list and Museum of History. Overnight stay in Sofia.

DAY 8 JULY 8th SIGHTSEEING & TRANSFER TO AIRPORT

These additional sights can be visited during Day 7 & Day 8: Vitosha Mountain, Museum of History, Boyana Church

Transfer to Sofia airport for departure flight.

Easyjet Flight EZY 6538 18.50 Sofia – London Gatwick 20.10

BULGARIA

Bulgaria is a Balkan country situated in the Southeast of Europe between Romania, Serbia, Northern Macedonia, Greece and Turkey. Not many countries in the world have a longer or more varied history than Bulgaria. There are seven historical cultural strata on Bulgarian territory: 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. All of them have contributed to the country's rich cultural heritage, leaving behind their stories and form of architecture

COST:

£795 (For payment before Jan 31st) Early Bird rate

£895 (For payment before Feb 28th)

£995 (For payment after Feb 28th)

PRICE INCLUDES:

- Hotel accommodation throughout trip
- Breakfast on all days
- Wine tasting
- Visit & lunch at a Bulgarian house tasting home made food
- English speaking guide throughout
- All sightseeing as per itinerary
- All transfers and transportation throughout

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Airfare to/from Bulgaria;
- Visa fees if any
- Entrance fees to the sites and museums approx. Euro 40-50;
- Lifts to Bezbog hut and 7 Rila lakes - Euro 30.- per person
- Personal insurance;
- Supplement for a hotel in the city center is euro 10 per person per day payable to organisers
- Customary tips to guides and crew;
- Items of personal nature, drinks, mini bar, telephone calls etc.

NB.

-
- It is possible that there might be changes in the program depending on weather conditions
- Every guest takes part in the guided hikes, activities and attractions at their own risk. The walking times does not include stops for pictures, picnics, breaks etc. It is based on an average hiker's speed and varies a lot depending on the terrain, the group size and hiking experience / fitness levels of each guest.