



Rediscover the
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Tour Notes

Essence of Bulgaria

Tour Duration – 12 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●○ | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●●○ | Wildlife ●●●○○

Tour Pace

Busy

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Wander the fascinating capital of Sofia
- ✓ Enjoy the stunning frescoes and courtyards of the imposing Rila and Rozhen monasteries
- ✓ Get a sense of the rich cultural heritage left by former civilisations - the Thracians, the Ottomans, Turks and the Romans - over the decades
- ✓ Explore the ancient wine-producing village of Melnik, surrounded by strange sandstone pyramids
- ✓ Admire the quaint villages of the Rhodopes region
- ✓ Revel in Plovdiv, home to a host of Roman, Ottoman and 19th – century Bulgarian architectural marvels
- ✓ Experience the whole process of the rose distillery process while being in the Rose Valley
- ✓ Savour the fresh air of the Pirin Mountains
- ✓ Get adventurous in Trigrad soaking up the breathtaking views from the gorge and caves
- ✓ Spend a morning hiking in the refreshing Balkan Mountains



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Tour Map - Bulgaria - Essence of Bulgaria



Tour Essentials

Accommodation: Mixture of comfortable tourist class hotels and family-run guest houses, all en-suite

Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary.

Group Size: Maximum of 12 travellers

Start Point: Sofia

End Point: Sofia or, for tour extension to Romania possibility to transfer overland by car, via Ruse (contact us for details)

Transport: Sedan car (for a maximum 3 travellers) or Minivan/bus (depending on group size)

Country Visited: Bulgaria



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Essence of Bulgaria

As we know it today, Bulgaria is an urbanized, skilled society, where modernity coexists with much that is traditional. Heritage plays a highly visible role in the society, with medieval churches, monasteries and numerous folk festivals being held in rural places. Nevertheless, such traditions provide a contrast with contemporary Bulgaria's rapid transformation into a modern European society. Embark with us on an itinerary which has been designed to take in as many of Bulgaria's highlights as possible, while keeping cross-country travel as manageable as possible. Our journey starts with a tour of the vibrant capital Sofia before leaving for Southern Bulgaria, with its rich cultural heritage and dramatic Pirin mountain scenery. We continue to the central region along the Rhodopes mountains, via picturesque villages and narrow gorges to Trigrad where unspoilt nature dominates. Finally, we spend time in the wonderful city of Plovdiv and continue to the North in the shadow of the Balkan Mountains with its fascinating mix of historical old towns and archaeological treasures, from the ancient Thracian Tomb in Kazanlak, via the world-famous rose valley and back to the capital. Within Bulgaria's beguiling blend of nature and history, unforgettable adventures are guaranteed.

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour. On our Bulgaria tours, we have a combined driver/guide for groups of three or less.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Sofia

Arrive in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, and transfer to the city centre. The rest of the day is at leisure, with no guided activities. If you wish to arrange extra sightseeing or excursions please get in touch prior to your departure. Overnight L'Opera Guest House or similar. No meals included today.

Sofia

Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria since 1879, rich with over 2,000 years of history, used to be an old Roman, Byzantine, Medieval Bulgarian and well-known Ottoman city. A royal palace, parliament house and various government ministries were built in the eastern part of the centre, providing Sofia with a quarter of fine buildings which still exist to this day. The Roman, medieval and Ottoman-era buildings that also dot Sofia give some idea of the city's ancient origins, Monumental public buildings from the Communist period add a melancholy grandeur to downtown squares and intersections.

Day 2: Sofia

After breakfast take a walking city tour through the fascinating historical city of the capital. Starting with the golden-domed Aleksander Nevski Cathedral and Sveta Sofia, one of the capital's oldest churches which gave the city its name. Walk by the fountain-splashed City Garden overlooked by the Neo-Classical National Theatre and continue to the vibrantly decorated Russian Church. Walking through the red-brick Market Hall, we arrive face to face with the third world's largest Art-Nouveau Synagogue. After a traditional style lunch,





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continue to explore the capital at your own leisure. The evening is yours to discover the mouth-watering local culinary scene - your tour guide will provide you with recommendations. Overnight L'Opera Guest House or similar. (BL)

Day 3: Sofia – Rila Monastery – Melnik (Approx. driving time today: 3.5 hours – 4 hours)

Leaving Sofia behind, head to the majestic Rila Mountains. Visit Rila Monastery, the country's most famous cultural heritage and also one of the most picturesque orthodox structures. Experience the tranquillity of the site and admire the magnificent church of Rozhdestvo Bogorodichno with its apocalyptic frescoes. Glance at the immense Monastery's kitchen with its surprisingly gigantic cauldrons before taking an easy walk (flat terrain – distance: 3.5km) to the cave of St. John the Hermit of Rila. Lunch will be taken by the picturesque Rilska River before continuing our journey south. Notice the change in vegetation, shifting from pine forest to endless sunflower fields and a nice Mediterranean climate. Travelling through rolling landscapes, stop at lush Kresna gorge and soon thereafter emerge into the heart of the wine region, ending in Bulgaria's smallest town - Melnik for our overnight stay. Overnight Rechen Rai Hotel or similar. (BL)

Note: *For those who do not wish to do the walk, it is possible to be transferred by car to the cave. Tonight, your hotel is located walking distance from the main street, however you may wish to bring a headtorch/flashlight with you to guide you on the way back.*

Rila Monastery (UNESCO World Heritage Site)

Rila Monastery was founded in the 10th century by St. John of Rila, a hermit canonized by the Orthodox Church. Its ascetic dwelling and tomb made him a sort of medieval superstar admired by the local people, the Bulgarian tsar Peter and even the royals in neighbouring Constantinople. Some one thousand years later, this monastic complex is arguably Bulgaria's most iconic building and was enlisted to UNESCO World Heritage status in 1983.

Day 4: Melnik – Excursion to Rozhen Monastery (Approx. driving time today: 30 minutes)

This morning take a picturesque trail (gentle uphill on a marked path – maximum 2 hour walk), twisting through an acacia forest up to the highest part of intriguing natural rock formations known as the "sand pyramids". Visit the 13th century Rozhen Monastery, located on a tranquil plateau with dramatic views over the region's sandstone cliffs. Admire the ancient frescoes in the company of one of the monks before indulging in local cuisine at *mehana* (tavern) nearby in the village of Rohzen. Later in the afternoon, visit the home of one of the area's wealthiest wine merchants, beautifully restored to its 19th century appearance. Here enjoy wine tasting in the natural cellars lying right beneath the building. Return to the hotel and any remaining time this afternoon is at leisure to stroll in the peaceful surroundings. Overnight Rechen Rai Hotel or similar. (BL)

Note: *For those who do not wish to do the walk this morning, it is possible to be transferred by car from Melnik to the Rohzen Monastery and from there take a very short walk to the best viewing point (gentle walk uphill – 30 minutes in both directions).*

Melnik

The enchanting small town of Melnik is tucked away in a valley formed by rocky, arid hills crowned with pyramidal sandstone formations and a canyon of beautifully eroded rocks. Once a thriving centre of winemaking and the capital of a principality, Melnik is now a quiet town with less than 400 inhabitants living all-year round.

Day 5: Melnik – Kovachevitsa – Trigrad (Approx. driving time today: 3.5 hours)

Heading east from Melnik across the southern spur of the Pirin Mountains, access the foothills of the Rhodopes, a region studded with quaint traditional villages. Take a detour from the main road to the stone-built highland settlement of Kavachevitsa, gaining an insight into the everyday lives of the Rhodopi inhabitants



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– a mixture between Bulgarian Christians, Bulgarian-speaking Muslims - Pomaks and Turks who have co-existed peacefully for centuries. The village itself is an enchanting and peaceful architectural reserve, many artists from the capital retreat here during the weekend holidays. Explore the alpine style village with its stone tile roofs and small galleries, before continuing our journey to the pine-covered central Rhodopes, stopping en-route for lunch. Travelling through diverse landscapes of mountains, forests, rivers, lakes and valleys, arrive in the isolated picturesque village of Trigrad. Overnight Arkan Han Hotel or similar. (BL)

Day 6: Trigrad Gorge – Yagodina – Eagle’s Eye viewpoint - Trigrad (Approx. driving time today: 1.5 hours and optional: 40 minutes Jeep transfer on track)

Wake up to the sounds of nature, and after breakfast depart following the Trigradska River via the astounding 7-kilometer-long Trigrad Gorge, a nature reserve with numerous caves. Ascend through the Devil’s Throat boarded by its steep and dramatically narrow marble cliffs, and finally emerging at the pretty village of Yagodina. From here, take a walk down the spectacular stalagmite-filled Yagodina Cave. Stretching for about 10 km over five levels, we walk about 45 minutes through stunning galleries with interesting curtain-like rock formations comprising evidence of prehistoric occupation. Return to Yagodina and embark on a 4WD Jeep for a 30-minute drive (one way) of steep ascent to the sightseeing Eagle’s Eye platform built at 1,563m above the sea level, next to the St Ilija peak. The walkable platform reveals a 680m shear drop looking down dramatically on Buynovsko Gorge. A breathtaking 360-degree panorama is revealed over the mountains in the distance. Look out for Golden Eagles which can sometimes be seen soaring on the thermals. We drive back to Yagodina for lunch and afterwards, return to Trigrad, where a short cooking class (optional) can be arranged to learn how to make *Banitsa*, one of the most traditional and delicious Balkan specialties. Overnight Arkan Han Hotel or similar. (BL)

Notes: *Be aware that the access to the Eagle Eye viewpoint requires a drive off-road on a steep and bumpy mountainous track. The local drivers are experienced and there are no particular risks involved. Nevertheless, we advise to keep your belongings stored in a bag during the drives. Although we really believe the experience is worth the rough journey to the top, if you suffer from vertigo or feel uncomfortable taking part, you may wish to remain in Yagodina and take an easy walk through the nearby pine forest and vast meadows.*

Day 7: Trigrad – Gela - Shiroka Luka – Bachkovo Monastery – Asen’s Fortress - Plovdiv (Approx. driving time today: 3 hours)

Today we head north, to the architectural reserve of Shiroka Luka, nation-wide renowned for its folklore music academy and, in particular for its bagpipe tradition. Take a walk (easy walk on marked trail, soft ground – about 1h30 in total) through nice pastoral landscapes up to the small village of Gela, where lunch will be taken overlooking the valley.

Descending to the delightful village of Shiroka Luka, we get the chance to meet Kalin, a bagpipe master, who will explain how to make the unique and traditional *Kaba Gajda* (literally “rude bagpipe”), and of course play a few tunes. Continuing via the famous Pamporovo ski resort, stop for a visit at the country’s second largest monastery, the Bachkovo Monastery, renowned for its fine architecture, sumptuous iconostasis and dramatic frescoes in the Church of Sveti Nikola. Finally, enter the Thracian Plain, stopping for a short visit to the medieval Asen’s fortress with its tiny church perched on high atop a steep rock. Later this afternoon, arrive in the beautiful city of Plovdiv, home to a host of Roman, Ottoman and 19th century Bulgarian architectural marvels. Overnight Evmolpia Boutique Hotel or similar. (BL)

Note: *For those who do not wish to do the walk, it is possible to be transferred by car directly to the village of Gela, or to take a shorter walk of about 45 minutes in duration.*

Shiroka Luka

This quaint and atmospheric village was originally founded in the late 14th century by villagers fleeing forced Islamization and hiding in this hard-to-reach mountain region. Shiroka Luka characterizes a rebirth of



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Bulgarian identity in religion, traditions, art and architecture and above all, is particularly associated with folk culture as the village is also the home of the National School of Folklore Arts.

Bachkovo Monastery

Situated at the foot of the forested slopes of the Rhodope Mountains, the Bachkovo Monastery lies with its serene courtyards filled with flowerbeds, exotic trees and drinking fountains. The monastery was founded in 1083 by Grigori and Abbasi Bakouriani, Georgian brothers who were commanders in the Byzantine army. In the 13th century, the monastery was sponsored by Tsar Ivan Assen II and his successor Ivan Aleksander. Destroyed by the Ottomans in the 16th century, it was restored by the 17th century.

Day 8: Plovdiv

Revel today in the streets of Plovdiv, starting this morning with a guided city tour within its romantic old town packed with colourful and creaky 19th century mansions. Visit the exquisite merchant house of Stepan Hindlian, built in 1835 and kept as original, walk by the impressive marble Roman amphitheatre, and enter the Cuma Cammi Mosque, dated from 1364. This afternoon is at your own leisure to explore the countless galleries, artisan's workshops, and cafes hidden in the meandering cobblestone streets. Stunning views over Plovdiv at sunset are not to be missed from the vantage point of Nebet Tepe. This evening, meet up with your guide again for a memorable dinner in a 19th century Dervish monastery now operating as a restaurant right in the heart of old Plovdiv. Overnight Evmolpia Boutique Hotel or similar. (BD)

Plovdiv (European Capital of Culture 2019)

Plovdiv (*a.k.a.* Philippopolis) was founded by Philipp the Great, father of Alexander, known under the same title. Plovdiv's geographic position made it a glorious centre of trade in between Europe and the far/middle East over the centuries. Plovdiv old wealthy merchant's homes were crafted by the most skilled artisans of the time and present probably the finest display of 18th and 19th century architecture in the Balkans. In addition, one of the world's best-preserved ancient theatres is located in the city centre, and was constructed during the reign of the Roman Emperor Trajan (98-117 AD). Like Rome, Plovdiv straddles seven hills but as Europe's oldest continuously inhabited city, it is far more ancient.

Day 9: Plovdiv – Kazanlak (Rose Valley) – Kalofer (Approx. driving time today: 1.5 hours)

Leaving Plovdiv and the Rhodopes Mountains behind, we depart to the city of Kazanlak, famous for being the epicentre of the worldwide renowned Bulgarian rose oil production.

Here we walk through the city Rose Park (Rosarium) and enter the recently opened Rose museum which gives excellent facts about the rose production. We have our lunch by the Koprinka dam and later on, visit the superb Thracian tomb of Kazanlak, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. This royal tomb reveals great examples of Early Hellenic mural depictions. Following the stairs outside of the tomb, visit the Ethnographic museum for rose liquor and rose jam degustation in a peaceful atmosphere. Continue to Kalofer for the night. Overnight Chardaka Hotel or similar. (BL)

The Valley of Roses

Framed by the lofty Balkan Mountains to the north and the dense forested Sredna Gora Hills to the south, the Valley of Roses is a predilected area of production of rose Damascena and Alba varieties. The valley is named after the rose plantations which for centuries have supplied Bulgaria's rose-oil industry. Today, 85% of the world's rose oil production originates from here and the Valley of Roses is a popular destination, especially during the harvest season in late May – mid June.

Day 10: Kalofer Eco-trek walk - Shipka – Kalofer (Approx. driving time today: 1.5 hours)

After an early breakfast, start our morning at the heart of the Balkan Mountains with a scenic 1.5 hours walk (round-trip on marked path with a few stairs and moderate uphill – comfortable walking shoes with good grip recommended) above the White River crossing numerous wooden bridges. The views are spectacular and keep a close out for local flora and fauna. After a picnic lunch by the river, we go for a visit to Enjo Bonchev





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rose distillery and take a look at the superb Golden Church of Shipka. If you wish, there is the possibility to visit the Tomb of Seuthes III (optional), and we may stop at a small ostrich ranch where you can buy locally made products. Return to Kalofer and the rest of the day is at leisure. Overnight Chardaka Hotel or similar. (BL)

Note: For those who do not wish to do the whole round-trip walk, it is possible to shorten the distance.

Day 11: Kalofer – Karlovo – Sofia (Approx. driving time today: 2.5 hours)

We start our day visiting a micro-farm where we observe the farmer producing white traditional cheese. We continue our way to the town of Karlovo, following the footprints of the 19th century revolutionary Vasil Levski. On arrival, take a walk in the old part of the city, protected as an architectural reserve and visit two of the most remarkable houses in the town. In Pateva House, enjoy for the first time the magic of locally produced roses and herbs, while in Buhalov Khan House we learn about the traditional art crafts and drink a Turkish coffee prepared on sand. Continue to the 15th century old Kurshum Mosque (literally meaning the “Bullet” mosque), named after its leaden roof and later and continue back to Sofia. This evening enjoy a farewell dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight L’Opera Guest House or similar. (BLD)

Note: For those wishing to continue their tour to Romania, note that there is the option today to leave the group and transfer by car to Ruse, a privileged village located north from Kalofer. Please contact us for details.

Day 12: Departure from Sofia

The final day is at leisure until your transfer to the airport and you onward flight. If time allows you may wish to spend some more time wandering in the streets and observing the monuments of the capital. (B)

Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions

Arrival and departure airport transfers
All accommodation as per the itinerary or similar
Land transportation
Services of an English-speaking guide/tour leader - we have a combined driver/guide for groups of three or less.
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
Entrance fees for sites as listed as part of the itinerary
Walking poles
Water reservoir in the vehicle and reusable flask for the time of the tour

Excluded

International flights
Travel Insurance
Items of a personal nature
Activities mentioned as optional in the itinerary
Visa if applicable
Drinks
Tips (discretionary)



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Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At the time of writing there are no travel warnings in place for areas that we visit in Bulgaria. It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore, please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

Accommodation Rating

On this tour you can expect to stay in comfortable tourist class hotels and family-run guest houses. You can expect rooms to be en-suite, with private bathroom. In general you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash. Tap water is generally safe and drinkable, but may have an odd taste.

To limit unnecessary plastic waste, we would appreciate if you could bring your own water bottle or flask that you can refill with drinkable water for the whole length of stay, or alternatively, a bottle will be lent to you on arrival for the duration of your tour.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.



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Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

Bulgarian food is similar in many ways to that found in Greece and Turkey: filo pastries; tomato, cucumber and white cheese; moussaka and stuffed vine leaves are among the shared dishes. The use of sunflower instead of olive oil for cooking and flavouring is the main difference. A salad or a selection of meze often start a meal, both traditionally accompanied by a glass of *rakiya*, the local brandy. The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide for a meal including a few mezes, a main dish and a dessert. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of the major cities such as Sofia and Plovdiv may charge more.

Lunch/Dinner: (BGN) 20 lv. – 30 lv. (£8 - £13)

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer: 2lv – 4lv (£1 - £2)

Mineral Water – 500ml: 1 lv. (£0.50)

Ayran (Sour yoghurt): 1.50 lv. (£0.70)

Soft Drink – 250ml: 2lv - 3lv (£1 - £1.50)

Tipping

If you are satisfied with the services you receive from your local guide and driver, then you may consider leaving a tip. This amount is obviously left at your discretion although, for our group tour, a reasonable amount to tip the driver would be around EUR20-30 per person and for your tour guide EUR25-40 per person, depending on the group size. Expectation of a tip for hotel staff is rare, however in restaurant, bills rarely include service and it is customary to leave a tip of about 10%.

Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: ATM machines are common and can be found in all sizeable towns and cities but not in the villages

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are commonly accepted in hotels, restaurants and shops in the big cities and towns but acceptance is less widespread in more rural areas. You cannot rely on using a credit card exclusively while in Bulgaria.

Local Currency: Bulgarian Lev (BGN –always abbreviated to lv.)

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Euros, US Dollar or Pound Sterling

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you on arrival

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.



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Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities.

Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

Many nationalities including British, US, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and EU passport holders do not require a visa to visit Bulgaria for stays of less than 90 days.

Regulations do frequently change though, so we advise that you check the current requirements with your nearest embassy.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Vaccinations & Protection

For visits to Bulgaria, there are no compulsory vaccinations. However, we strongly recommend that you contact your Doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the recommended vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A and B, Polio and Typhoid.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.



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Preparing for your tour

Climate

Bulgaria has four distinct seasons, with a warm spring, a long hot summer, a mild autumn and a cold winter, with significant snowfall in the mountain areas. In the South and Eastern parts, temperatures are usually mild and representative of a Mediterranean climate. Spring presents Bulgaria at its most beautiful, with both open countryside and city parks bright with lush green grass and flowers in full bloom.

Autumn is also generally a very pleasant season to visit as the weather usually remains reasonably mild well into November, with little rainfall. Consequently, we advise that the best time to visit the country is from April to October.

Access to the Internet

Access to the Internet via Wi-Fi should be available in every location on your tour. Wi-Fi is usually available in the rooms, however at some occasions, will be only available at the restaurant or main lobby of the accommodation. Nevertheless, we can never guarantee that Wi-Fi connection will be working when you stay at the properties.

Driving times

The driving times stated in the itinerary are given in the best of faith. Driving times may on occasion be longer due to unforeseen circumstances such as poor weather, road construction activity, mechanical problems etc.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet although this will be rare in summer. For the mountainous areas, it is advisable to bring warmer clothes especially for night time and early mornings and even during the day it can be cold. When visiting a church, a monastery or a mosque, you should be appropriately dressed, covering your shoulders and wearing pants or shorts which should be at the knee or below. When visiting a mosque, you will be asked to remove your shoes and women should cover their head, arms and legs.

Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared and to be adequately immunized. Suncream/sunblock is a must – please ensure you bring enough as it may not be available locally. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. It is highly recommended to also bring a torch or flashlight, especially for the nights in Trigrad and Melnik to assist with walking around hotel/lodges at night. For walks, telescopic poles will be available for you to use in the vehicle – please advise before the departure if you need.

Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots with closed toes and ankle support are recommended for the walks, as well as a pair of sandals for general travelling.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.



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Electric Supply & Plugs

Electricity in Bulgaria is 220V, with a frequency of 50Hz or 230V, with a frequency of 50hz. Plugs have two round pins like most European countries and correspond to plug types C and F.

Recommended literature before to travel

We advise a short selection of contents which you can find interesting to see and read to get a better understanding of some of the places you will visit during the tour.

- Movie: *The World is Big and Salvation around the corner*, 2008. – The movie it set in Karlovo
- Poems from Hristo Botev, the revolutionary poet from Kalofer
- Book: *Bay Ganyio* by Aleko Konstantinov – Typical satire about how the Balkan people used to be in the 19th- 20th centuries
- Modern literature: *Natural novel and Physics of Sorrow* by Georgi Gospodinov

Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated on 27th December 2019.

