

BULGARIA

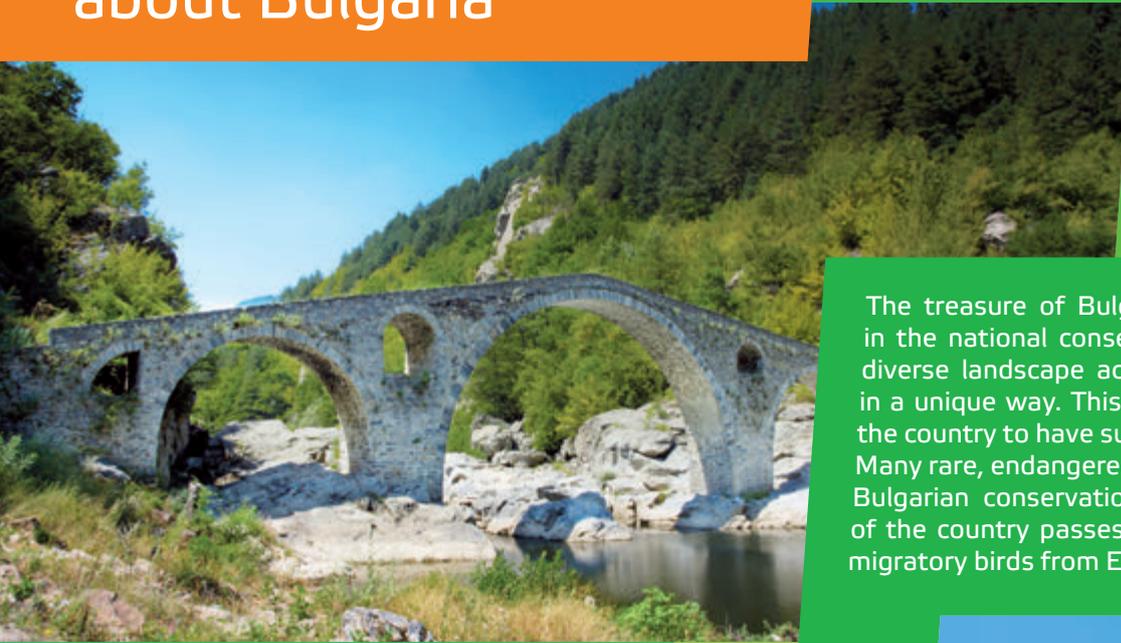
ECO TOURS AND
VILLAGE LIFE



BULGARIA

www.bulgariatravel.org

Unique facts about Bulgaria



The treasure of Bulgarian nature is well preserved in the national conservation parks. The climate and diverse landscape across the country are combined in a unique way. This is one of the many reasons for the country to have such an animal and plant diversity. Many rare, endangered and endemic species live in the Bulgarian conservation parks. Through the territory of the country passes Via Pontica – the route of the migratory birds from Europe to Africa.

For those who love nature, Bulgaria is the place to be. You can appreciate the full experience of hiking the numerous eco trails, where one can see the most beautiful places and unique landscapes in Bulgaria. The different length and level of difficulty of the eco trails will satisfy every taste.



The Bulgarians are kind and hospitable people. This traditional hospitality can be best sensed in the village regions. Here you can feel the warm welcome, taste the authentic cuisine prepared by traditional chefs and stay in a vintage Bulgarian village house. You may attend a folk festival, go hiking in the wild or just relax in the unforgettable atmosphere of the Bulgarian countryside.

INTRODUCTION



To get to know Bulgaria, one has to dive into its authenticity, to taste the product of its nature, to backpack across the country and to gather bouquets of memories and impressions. The variety of Bulgarian nature offers abundant opportunities for engaging outdoor activities – one can hike around the many eco trails in the National Parks and preservation areas, observe rare animal and bird species or visit caves and landmarks.

Bulgaria has a dense net of eco trails. There are new routes constantly marked across the mountains, which makes many places of interest and landmarks more accessible.

The eco-friendly outdoor activities are easily combined with the opportunity to enjoy rural and alternative tours. One can get acquainted with the authentic Bulgarian folklore and can stay in a traditional vintage village house in the regions of Rila, Pirin, The Rodopi Mountains, Strandzha, Stara Planina (the Balkan Range), the Upper Thracian valley, the Danube and the Black Sea Coast regions. Many villages offer organised events such as horse riding, crafts, hiking to a nearby landmarks, folklore nights and various outdoor activities.



BIO VARIETY

Bulgaria is amongst the highest ranking European countries when it comes to bio variety. The diverse natural resources guarantee the existence of a vast variety of animal species, some of which are only found in Bulgaria, and some are facing extinction. Bulgaria has over 29,000 animal species. The country has a

treasury of endemic plants – from 3700 in total, 170 are announced to be endemic for the country, and around 200 for the Balkan Peninsula.

NATIONAL PARKS

Rila National Park

The Rila National Park is the largest park in Bulgaria. It is situated 100 km south of Sofia and includes the central part of Rila Mountain. There are 4 conservation areas within the range of the park. Most of the woods in Rila are centuries old and consist of spruce, scotch pine and white fir. The number of endemic species at the territory of the park is 57. There are over 3,000 animal species occupying the park and the bird species are 99.

The park is one of the favourite places of nature lovers and hikers. Most tourist routes and trails are marked with winter and summer markings. A vast net of trails runs across the park and the levels of routes vary in difficulty.



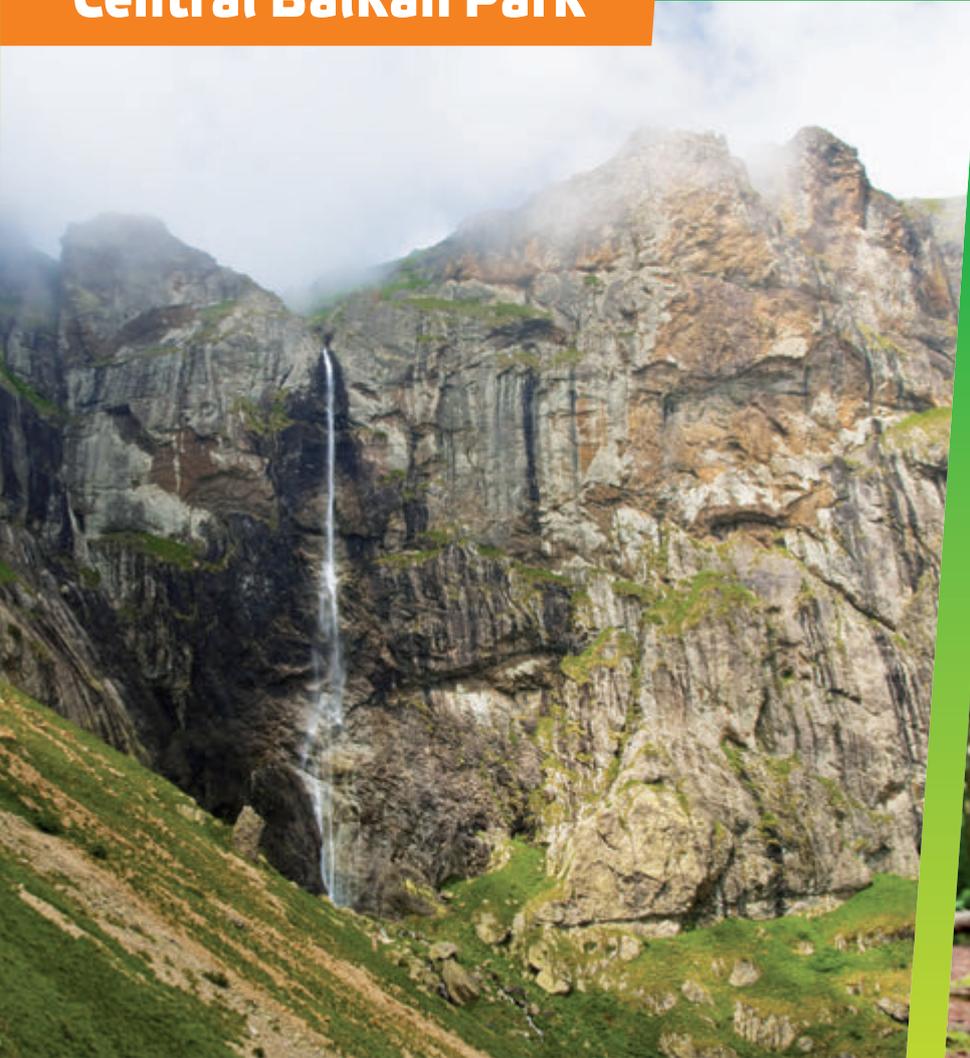
Pirin National Park

The Pirin National Park is famous for its plant diversity and is considered one of the most interesting places in the country from a botanical point of view. On its territory there are almost 1,300 plant species and the most interesting of them all is the edelweiss, which is the symbol of the Bulgarian Tourism Union.

Pirin is the home of a great number endangered and rare animal species, on its territory there are 160 bird and 45 mammal species – more than 50% of all terrestrial mammals found in Bulgaria.



Central Balkan Park



The Central Balkan Park has preserved the amazing variety of animal and plant species of Sredna Stara Planina (the Middle Balkan Range). The park is spread on 716 sq. km in the heart of Bulgaria. It has centuries-old oak forests, wide ridges, a string of crude peaks and nine conservation areas.

Almost 580 kilometres marked as tourist routes lead the visitor around the wonders of the wild world of the park. There are facilities for hiking, riding, biking, photo-hiking, bird watching, observation of plants and mammals. You can choose to stay in any of the 25 objects - tourist chalets, shelters and departmental bases.

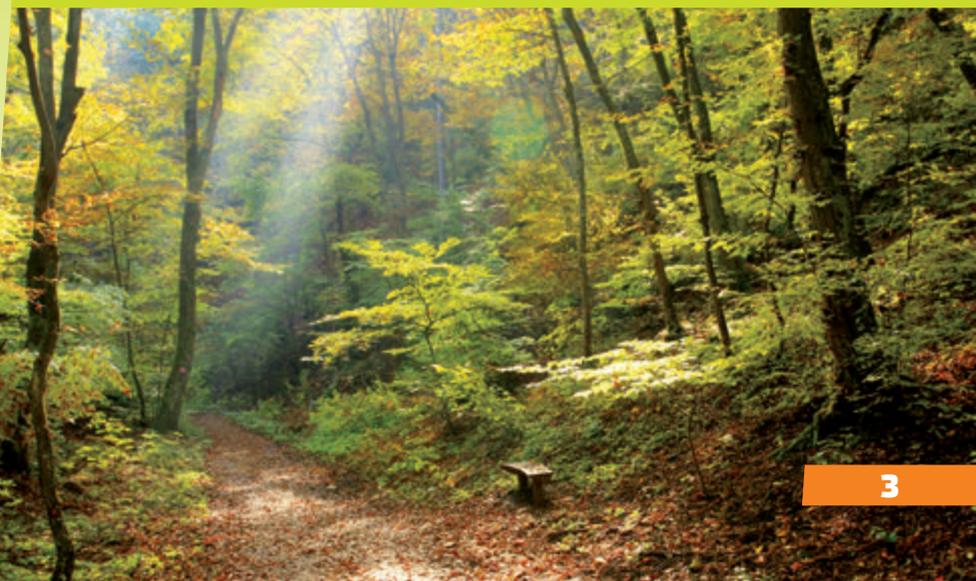


Vitosha Natural Park

The Vitosha Natural Park is one of the most visited parks in the country. Its close proximity to the capital makes it a preferred destination for nature lovers, alpinists and families. There are very good conditions for hiking, walks and relaxation in the beautiful wilderness.

In the park there are 500 spineless species, 200 bird kinds and 13 types of bats.

The flora of Vitosha is also amazingly rich – there are around 500 sweet cutwater species and over 600 mushroom species. 4 of which are found only in Vitosha.



Srebarna

Srebarna Conservation Park is located 16 kilometres west from the town of Silistra and 2 kilometres south of the river Danube. The territory of the park covers the self-titled lake, and the surrounding area. There are 65 plant species, 41 mammal species, 15 reptile species and 23 fish species.

The biggest treasure of Srebarna are the birds – 221 species. In autumn the conservation park is used as a rest stop for the migrating birds on their way to Africa. The conservation park has a natural history museum, which displays specimens of the species inhabiting the park.

CONSERVATION PARKS



Rusenski Lom



Rusenski Lom is situated 30 kilometres south of the town of Ruse. The conservation area is a fascinating mixture of caves and rock formations, historical memorials and zones with a rich variety of species.

The leisure zone is located in the Valley of Malki Lom River and the surrounding woods. In this area the visitors can enjoy various outdoor activities. Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo and the ruins of the medieval stronghold Cherven can be seen in the historical zone Rusenski Lom.

The park offers very good conditions for cave tourism and biking. The visitors looking for extreme experiences can practise canoeing, horse and mountain bike riding and rock climbing.

Ropotamo

The Ropotamo Conservation Park is situated 50 kilometres south of Burgas. The firth of the river is one of the most interesting landmarks in the country. Lilies cover the surrounding small lakes, and thick woods grow around the river.

The Ropotamo River has sections of salt water running through it, as a result of the sea flow. This is the reason for the great variety of fish species found in the conservation park. There are 257 animal and bird species, 71 of which are endangered.



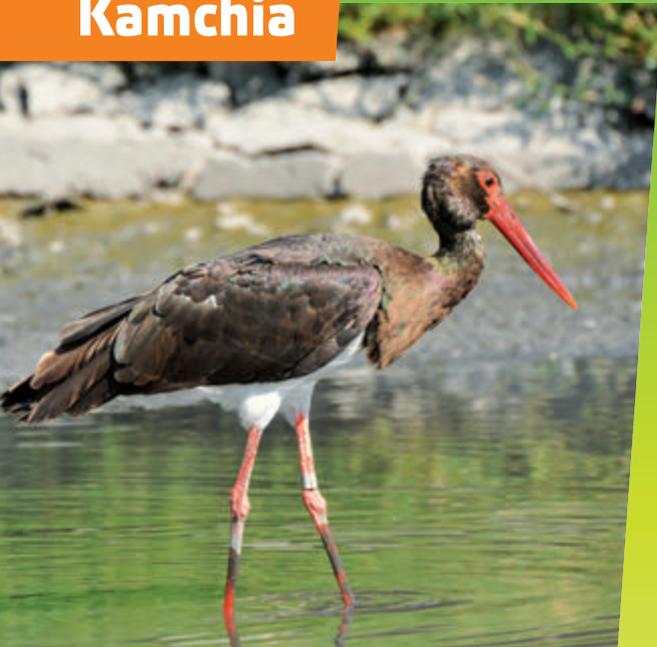
The 'Water-Lily' Conservation Park is part of the Ropotamo Conservation Park. Its greatest attraction is the diversity of water-lilies and marsh snowdrops. Rare plant species grow in the woods that surround the park.

The access to the park is limited. Visitors can enter the preserved territory only by a special bridge made from wood.

'Water-Lily' Park



Kamchia



The Kamchia Conservation Park is located in the lower valley of the Kamchia River. These are the largest centuries old river-by woods in Bulgaria. The conservation park is a wonderful place for bird watching – there are around 200 species living here, as some of them face worldwide extinction.

The river is the home of turtles and water snakes – you can see them if you take a boat ride down Kamchia.



Silkosia is a wood conservation park in Strandzha Mountain, situated between the villages of Balgari and Kosti. It includes part of the Veleka river catchment and it is the oldest conservation park in Bulgaria.

Here you can find a great variety of plants, some of which are rare and others typical for other geographic locations, which makes the place unique from scientific point of view. The end section of the park is filled with swamps.

Silkosia has rich fauna too – amphibian species are well presented – you can see green toad, tree frog, Greek long legged frog. Many interesting birds such as oriole, southern nightingale, black-headed little warbler, great white neck warbler, blackbird, jay, and common finch, different kinds of woodpeckers and raptors nest in the park. The mammals you can see here are wild cat, marten, wolf and wild boar.

Silkosia



Atanasovsko Ezero

The coast of the Atanasovsko Ezero Lake is situated north of Burgas and its northern side is connected via a channel with the Black Sea. Due to this fact, the lake is filled with salt water, and its south side is used for salt production. In the lake there are over 230 plant species, amongst which hardwood bulrush, sea wormwood, and Black sea lavender. Many of the plants in the conservation park are endangered from extinction and under the protection of the law. Some of the mammals found in the conservation area are vole, wild cat, otter and the smallest mammal in Europe – the extremely rare Etruscan Shrew.

The biggest treasure of the Atanasovsko Ezero Lake are the birds – in such a small area one can see 70% of all bird kinds found in Bulgaria – over 300 bird species, 12 of which are facing extinction worldwide.



Danube River

The river sediments of the Danube have formed several islands which constantly change their shape, as the water keeps remodelling them. The islands of Vardim, Ciber, Persina (Belene) are inhabited by colonies of rare and endangered bird species. These islands are the home of herons, cormorants, black storks and other protected kinds. Here you can also find rare plant species such as willows, oaks, cypress swamp and other interesting plants.

Belene is the biggest Bulgarian island in the Danube River. Its swamps are the home of many fish and bird kinds, and its surface is covered by woods. You can visit the island on an organised boat trip from the Svishtov harbour. The island is a suitable place for bird watching.



ECO TRAILS

South Rodopi



The South Rodopi eco trail is located in the Rodopi Mountain, close to the village of Yagodina. The trail is 18.5 kilometres long and leads through areas located among 3 rivers. The route will take you to several waterfalls, as well as the Devil's Bridge – a local place of interest.

Tran



The Tran's eco trail includes the gorges of the rivers Erma and Yablanitsa, 80 kilometres north-west from Sofia. There are several routes with different levels of difficulty as the longest one is 13.2 kilometres and on this route there are several observation platforms, seven bridges and a few resting places.

Kopren



The Kopren eco trail begins from the village of Kopilovci, located 130 kilometres from Sofia. The expedition lasts around five hours and it is recommended the group to be accompanied by a professional guide. The trail will take you to the foot of the Kopren Peak (2119 metres). The total length of the route is about 20 kilometres, as part of it passes close to the Bulgarian-Serbian border and you can enjoy the view of two beautiful waterfalls.

Emen (Negovan)



The Emen (Negovan) eco trail is 25 kilometres away from Veliko Tarnovo and the walk along this route is about 3 hours long. The hills unveil a view to the river, and the area around the trail is surrounded by small plains which are a good place to rest. The trail goes through the Emen canyon from which the 10 meter high Momin Skok waterfall can be seen. It forms a small pond, suitable for swimming and fishing. The route ends at the Negovanka dam.

Via Ferrata



Trail Via Ferrata is located in the Dryanovo region. The route takes around 3 hours, as the starting point is the Dryanovo Monastery. This trail is fairly easy to like. It takes you along the bed of the Dryanova River, close to Sini Vir and to the Strinava Plateau.



Krushun

The Krushun eco trail is located in the West Predbalkan Region. The route goes through the Maara area, close to the village of Krushuna which is based 190 kilometres from Sofia and 57 kilometres from Pleven. This trail has a system of steps, making the climbing of the steep hills easier and it takes you to the Krushun cave, from which the Krushun waterfalls start, forming a system of ponds and cascades. There are two other waterfalls in the area. The route is about an hour and a half long and a mountain guide is available for hire.



Borov Kamak (Zgorigrad)

The Borov Kamak (Zgorigrad) Trail starts close to the village of Zgorigrad, which is 6 kilometres away from the town of Vratsa. Its route follows the bed of the Leva River by the slopes of the Vratsa Balkan. Using a system of bridges and steps, after the ascent the route reaches the 63 meter tall Borov Kamuk waterfall and continues through a mountain plain where one can rest before heading towards the end of the trail at hut Purshevitsa. The descent journey from the hut to Vratsa takes about two and a half hours.



Chernelka

Eco trail Chernelka guides you through to a picturesque karst canyon located in the central part of the Danube plain right between the villages of Gortalovo and Kurtozhabene, 12 kilometres from the town of Pleven. The canyon, which is between 60 and 200 metres wide and has a rock ring of 10 to 30 metres, is seven kilometres long and runs along the river bed. There are 18 bridges built over the river.



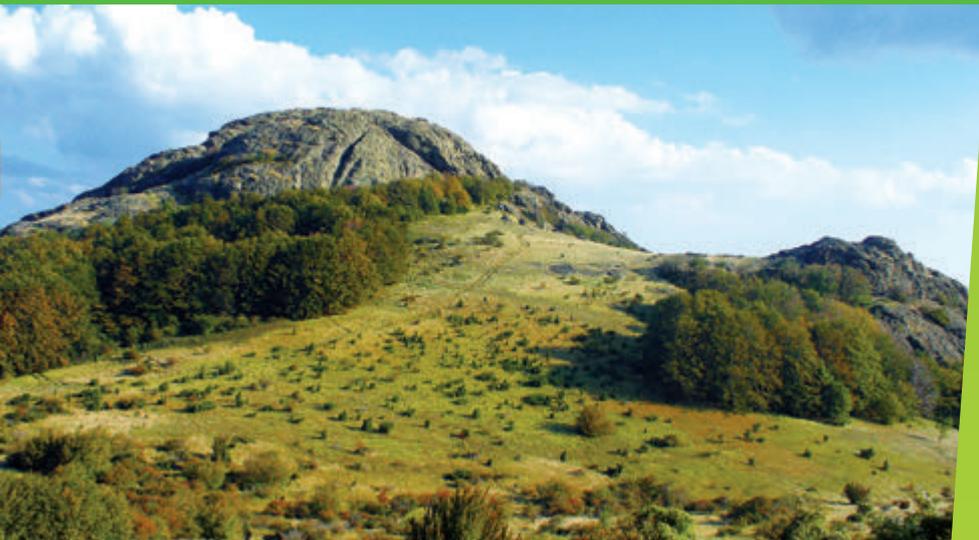
Dryanovo

The Dryanovo eco trail begins close to the Dryanovo Monastery. The route is between 3 and 4 hours long and it is considered of an average difficulty due to the steep sections. The trail follows the bed of the Andaka River. The cave Bacho Kiro is located in the same area, where through a system of bridges and stairs the route passes over a precipice and there you can enjoy the view to the river gorge. The ascending continues towards Boruna, where from the cliff you can take a glance at the whole area, where the picturesque village of Dolni Vurlishta is located.



Byala Reka

Eco trail Byala Reka is situated in The Central Balkan National Park. It begins northwest from the town of Kalofer, close to the Kalofer Monastery. The route takes you through 8 bridges over stretches of the river with a swift current and forms a trace with the shape of the number 8, with a total length of 1830 metres. Along the route there are signs with information about the animal and plant species inhabiting the park.



Bazovets

Eco trail Bazovets is 20 kilometres away from the town of Tryavna and guides through the Central Balkan Range and ascends for about 3 kilometres. After reaching the highest point of the route - peak Bazovets (897 metres) the trail descends unveiling a view to several small huts, where you can take a break from the expedition.



Strandzha

The Strandzha trail starts close to the village of Sroilovo, where the beautiful waterfall Dokuzak is situated. The length of this route is 2.5 hours and the terrain is accessible.

The beginning of the trail takes you on a narrow forest road through a beautiful mixed forest. After 20 minutes you reach a unique facility called 'forest sniper' where you can learn more about the typical of Strandzha plant species. After climbing a steep hill, you reach the peak of the Bosnen Plato, where one can enjoy a fascinating view. The end point of the route is the Kukuliat area.

Accessible Route – Beklemeto

The Accessible Route – Beklemeto is a round trail with a total length of 1.6 km. It offers access to the wild nature to people with physical disabilities in the Central Balkan National Park.

The outgoing point of the route is the town of Troyan from north and from south – the village of Karnare. The trail leads along high mountain plains and offers a picturesque view to the beautiful nature of Stara Planina (the Balkan Range).



MAJOR SITES



ECO TOURS AND VILLAGE LIFE



- 13 Uhlovitsa Cave
- 14 Haramiyska Cave
- 15 Devil's Throat Cave
- 16 Yagodinska Cave
- 17 Bacho Kiro Cave
- 18 Etara /Gabrovo/
- 19 Dobrich
- 20 Zlatograd
- 21 Leshten
- 22 Bozhentsi
- 23 Shiroka Laka
- 24 Smilyan
- 25 Arda
- 26 Mogilitsa
- 27 Momchilovtsi
- 28 Koprivlen
- 29 Gramatikovo
- 30 Kosti
- 31 Brushlian
- 32 Balgari
- 33 Trigrad
- 34 Leshten
- 35 Kovachevitsa
- 36 Ognyanovo
- 37 Zheravna
- 38 Medven
- 39 Chiflik
- 40 Ribaritsa
- 41 Shipkovo
- 42 Rozhen
- 43 Delchevo
- 44 Koprivshtitsa
- 45 Kotel
- 46 Tryavna
- 47 Elena
- 48 Arbanasi

- 1 Srebarna Conservation Park
- 2 Ruse
- 3 Ropotamo Conservation Park
- 4 Kamchiya Conservation Park
- 5 Zimzelen
- 6 Beli Plast
- 7 Standing Stones /Varna region/
- 8 Belogradchik Rocks
- 9 Chudnite Skali /Tsonevo damp/
- 10 Devin
- 11 Ledenika Cave
- 12 Magurata Cave

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Port

NATURAL PHENOMENA



Stone Wedding

The Stone Wedding is a fascinating and unusual group of rock formations. This natural phenomenon is located 5 kilometres from the town of Kardzhali, near the village of Zimzelen. The rock shapes which resemble people and animals have been formed as a result of erosive processes. The metal oxides have coloured the stones in various colours.



Stone Mushrooms

The Stone Mushrooms are rock phenomenon near the village of Beli Plast, 19 kilometres from Kardzhali. 'The mushrooms' are about 2.5 metres tall, their stumps are coloured in pink as a result of a specific mineral found in the area. A different mineral paints the caps in green. The rocks have been shaped in this way as a result of an underwater volcanic activity – after the withdrawal of the water, the erosive processes have finished the re-shaping of the stones.



Standing Stones

One of the most interesting rock phenomena in Bulgaria is the Standing Stones (Pobiti kamani) – located about 20 kilometres from the city of Varna. The rocks resemble pillars with different heights, as some of them are 5 metres tall. Most pillars are cone shaped and are hollow from the inside. Some of the stones with different shapes have names like Stone Guardians, the Camel, the Throne and the Stone Wood.



Chudnite Skali

Chudnite Skali is a beautiful natural landmark located at the shore of Tsonevo dam, 2 kilometres from the village of Asparuchovo and 90 kilometres from the city of Varna. This natural phenomenon is a composition of 10 white rocks with beautiful shapes. They have been formed by the friction of water and wind to the limestone, and they are shaped like white castles.

Elephant

The rock phenomenon the Elephant is located 4 kilometres from Devin and it resembles a large elephant with a long trunk. Its figure is abstract – you have to look closely in order to recognise it. If you ask the local people, they will guide you to the place, which is on the road to the village of Nastan.



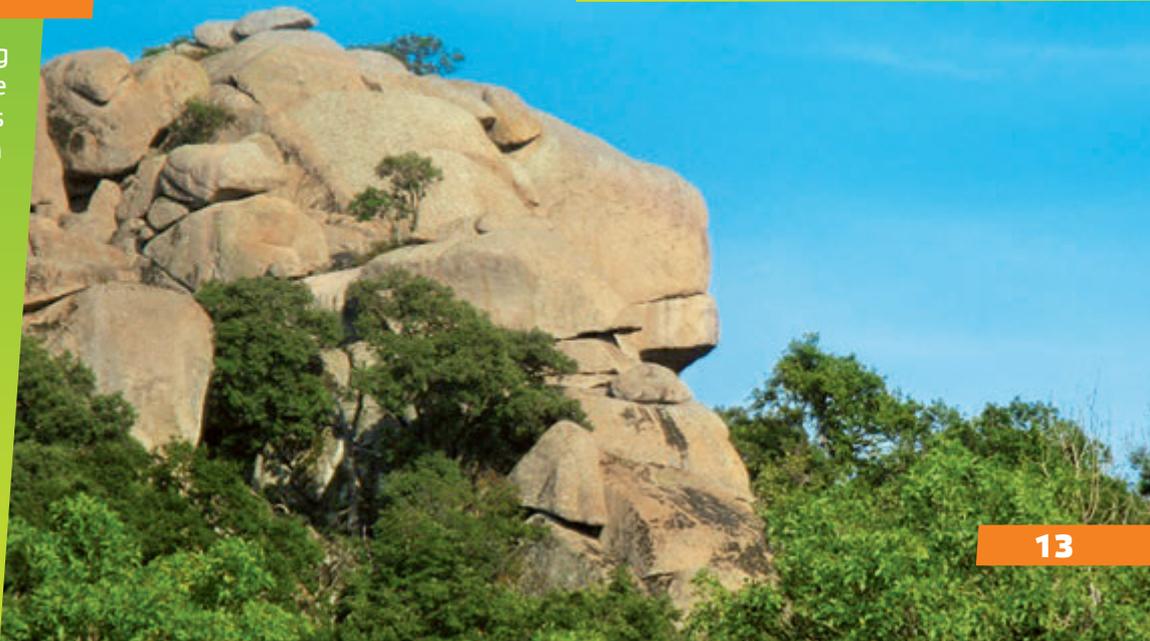
Belogradchik Rocks

The Belogradchik Rocks are possibly the most famous Bulgarian natural phenomenon. They are located in the Belogradchik region, 175 kilometres from the capital and 66 kilometres from Montana. The area of rocks is 30 kilometres long and around 3 kilometres wide. Millions of years the climate has shaped and changed the stone figures of which there are countless legends. Some of the rocks are named after the figures they resemble. The stronghold Kaleto is located right above the town of Belogradchik – it has been built in Roman times, and its purpose was to guard the Roman military and commercial route, passing through the region.



Lion's head

The lion's head is an interesting rock phenomenon whose silhouette resembles a lion's head. It is situated between the towns of Primorsko and Sozopol, near the Ropotamo River. You can notice the beautiful stone at one of the highest points of the Ropotamo conservation park. According to some legends, the Lion's Head is the keeper of a hidden golden treasure. It is quite difficult to access the rock, but you get a good view from the road.



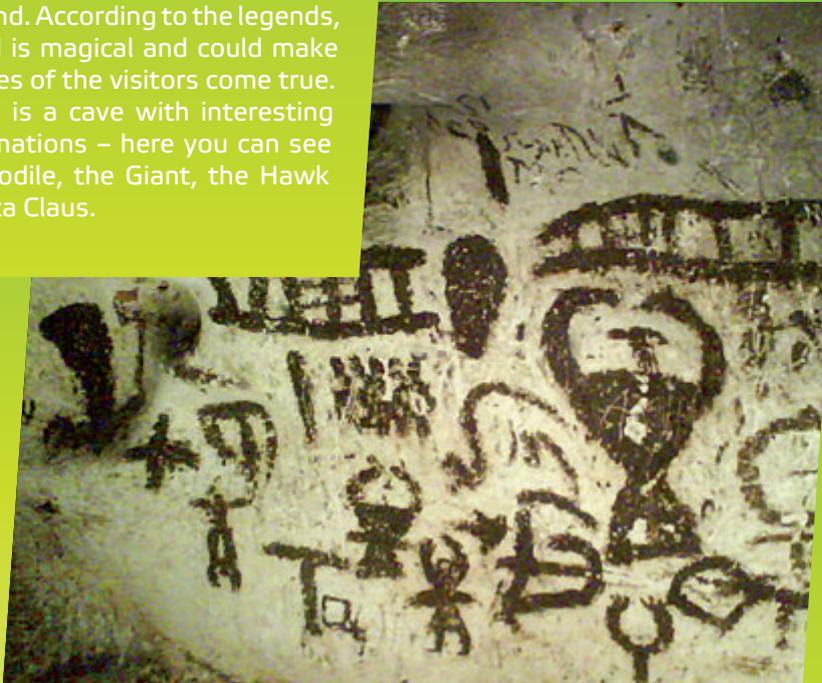
CAVES

Ledenika

The name of the cave 'Ledenika' comes from the fascinating ice sculptures which form in its antechamber during the cold part of the year.

The cave is situated 16 kilometres from Vratsa, it is 300 metres long and it has 10 halls. The temperature in the external galleries ranges from -7 to -15 °C. Inside Ledenika the temperature could reach 8 °C.

The cave has been filled with water many years ago, but now it has withdrawn and today all is left is a small pond. According to the legends, the pond is magical and could make the wishes of the visitors come true. Ledenika is a cave with interesting rock formations – here you can see the Crocodile, the Giant, the Hawk and Santa Claus.



Magurata

One of the most interesting caves in Bulgaria is called Magurata and is located in close proximity to Belogradchik. The galleries of the cave are more than 2500 metres long. The heritage of the pre-historic people found in the cave is considered to be one of the richest in Europe - the walls of the galleries are covered with rock drawings. Some of the images are thought to represent an ancient calendar and that the cave has been used as an ancient sanctuary.

The cave is famous for the largest stalagmite ever discovered in the country. It is named 'The Fallen Pine' and has the impressive length of over 11 metres.

Magurata is used for wine production, as it is stored to mature in natural conditions.

Yagodinska Cave

The Yagodinska Cave is located in close proximity to the village of the Yagodina, in the Western Rodopi Mountains. The temperature in the cave is 6 °C all year round. It is famous for the numerous stalactites, stalagmites and cave pearls found there.

The cave has 3 levels, as just the first one is provided with electrical lighting and suitable for visitors. Visiting the other levels requires a group guide and equipment. Many newlyweds choose the cave for a romantic wedding ceremony.





Uhlovitsa

One of the most beautiful Bulgarian caves – Uhlovitsa - is situated on 1040 metres above the sea level, 3 kilometres from the village of Mogilitsa, close to the Bulgarian-Greek border. A steep hill leads the visitors to the entrance of the cave, as the ascent takes 30 to 40 minutes.

The walls of the cave are decorated with fine corallites. The temperature is mild and never exceeds 10-11 °C.

The cave has a second level, connected with the first by a metal ladder. The level is called 'The Hall of Chasms', as it is surrounded by 4 chasms.



Bacho Kiro

Bacho Kiro cave is the first utilized cave in Bulgaria. It is situated close to the Dryanovo Monastery. The cave has 4 levels, and its galleries and tunnels are about 3600 metres long. Researchers and archaeologists have found that the cave has been inhabited during and after the Stone Age, as numerous artefacts such as blades, knives and other subjects made from bone were discovered there.



Devil's Throat

The Devil's Throat is also situated in the Trigrad region. The cave is deep, and not long and it is categorised as a chasmic. Here you can witness the highest situated underground waterfall on the Balkan Peninsula.

The main gallery is named 'The Roaring Hall' after the constant river roaring noise. According to the legend, this is the cave that Orpheus entered to descent to the Underground Kingdom and save Eurydice.



Haramiyska

Haramiyska Cave is situated in the rocks above the road near the Rodopi village of Trigrad. The cave can only be visited by organised groups with a qualified guide securely equipped.

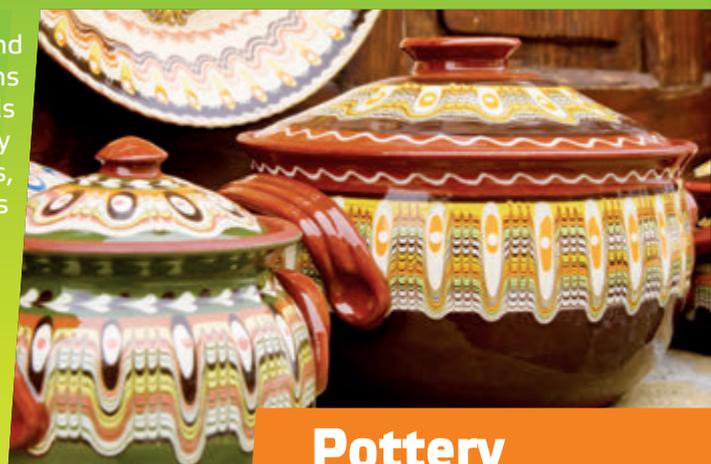
The Bulgarian village is the keeper of the spirit and traditions of the people, of its centuries-old traditions, colourful folklore and wisdom. Only in the village regions you can taste traditional authentic Bulgarian meals, enjoy beautiful folklore songs or hear regional legends and fairy tales. Many Bulgarian villages have preserved their authentic image since centuries ago and allow the visitors and guests to learn more about the local customs and traditions.

CRAFTS



Weaving

One of the most distinctive Bulgarian crafts is weaving, known and improved since the time of the ancient Thracians. The traditions have been passed on from one generation to another. The young girls were learning the skills from their mothers and grandmothers. Every craftsman added a little something from themselves to the products, making them unique. The towns Chiprovtsi and Kotel are famous with their skilled weavers and the beautiful colours of their carpets and since 2014 Chiprovtsi carpets are included in the last of the World Non- Material cultural heritage of UNESCO.



Pottery

The beautiful hand-painted plates, pitchers and pots are another part of the image of Bulgaria. Pottery is a skill which has been practised since ancient times.

Almost every Bulgarian town and village has had its own pottery craftsmen, who have created beautiful and unique products. The decorations are diverse and form an important feature of the Bulgarian folklore traditions, which differ in every region of the country.

Wood-carving

Wood-carving is a traditional Bulgarian craft. Carved wood was a compulsory element in the Old Bulgarian houses, it was used to decorate furniture and ceilings. A compulsory element in every Orthodox church is the carved iconostasis.



Cutlery

Cutlery has been one of the most popular crafts in the Gabrovo, Sliven, Visin, Panagyurishte and Sopot regions. The experienced craftsmen created different types of knives and swords with engraved handles made from wood, metal or bone. The decoration has been very sophisticated and took a long time to apply. Some of the products have numismatic value, as precious stones and metal were used. This craft still lives in modern day, and many collectors and connoisseurs worldwide highly value the products of the Bulgarian cutlers, as of their fine make and unique decoration.



Goldsmiths

Goldsmith's trade has been practised for centuries in Bulgaria. The oldest cultivated gold in Europe has been discovered in Varna's necropolis – it dates from the end of V or the beginning of IV century BC.

The Bulgarian women during the Middle Ages and the Bulgarian Revival were no less vain than the ladies in Western Europe and the Orient. Their beautiful jewellery was of different kinds – head jewellery, belts and buckles, dress jewellery and accessories. The Bulgarian goldsmiths created fine and unique jewellery. The buckles and accessories made for the traditional costumes are immensely impressive.

CRAFT COMPLEXES



Etara

One of the most interesting places in Bulgaria, where you can still witness skilled craftsmen manufacture various handmade souvenirs and jewellery, is located just a few kilometres outside the town of Gabrovo. The ethnographic complex Etara recreates a scaled-down model of the craftsmen town Gabrovo from the era of the Bulgarian Revival. In the craftsmen's complex there are several workshops, where you can witness the work of different craftsmen and to purchase products manufactured right before your eyes.



'Old Dobrich'

In the heart of modern Dobrich, at the spot of ancient Odun marketplace, nowadays stands the ethnographic complex 'Old Dobrich'. Some of the craftsmen who work in the workshops of the complex have inherited their skills from their parents and grandparents. Various crafts will reveal their secrets to you – masonry, knitting, carpentry, goldsmith and blacksmith crafts, pottery, embroidery, weaving, cooper, shoe production and many more.



Sopot's craftsmen's complex

In Sopot's Craftsmen's Complex the inheritors of the old craftsmen demonstrate their skills right in front of the visitors of the complex. The production of the Masters of the Union is diverse – wooden sculptures, engraved firearms, unique engraved blades, wood-carving, hand-made pipes, paintings and icons.



Zlatograd

Ethnographic Regional Complex Zlatograd based in the centre of the town is a unique place, situated in the heart of The Rodopi Mountains, close to the Bulgarian – Greek border. Every craftsman will invite you to their workshop, show you the way they work and answer your questions. There are various workshops in which crafts, such as masonry, lacing, saddling, blacksmith and goldsmith crafts, cutlery and pottery are practiced. In each workshop you can purchase or order a handmade product.



Samovod Charshia

Samovod Charshia in Veliko Tarnovo was formed in 19th century and quickly became the trade centre of the town. Every Friday the villagers from the region used to gather there and sell their production. Today, Samovod Charshia is an ethnographic complex, which has preserved its authentic look. There are functioning workshops, many antique shops, as well as some small art galleries.

VILLAGES

Rodopi

Many Bulgarian villages attract visitors with their cosy atmosphere, tasty food and eco-friendly activities. Amongst the most popular destinations are the Rodopean villages Smilyan, Arda, Mogilitsa, Momchilovtsi, Yagodina, Trigrad, Leshten, Ognyanovo and Kovachevitsa. Here, surrounded by beautiful nature and crystal clear air, you can taste amazing dishes, experience the peace and quiet of the countryside and feel the hospitality of the local people.

Stara Planina

The villages in Stara Planina (the Balkan Range) are numerous and diverse. There are many architectural masterpieces which have to be seen. Some of the most interesting places to visit are the villages Zheravna, Medven, Miykovtsi, Chiflik, Ribaritsa and Shipkovo.

Pirin

In Pirin there are some of the most interesting villages in the country – Delchevo, Rozhen, Musomishte and Koprivlen. Besides the accommodation in a vintage house and authentic Bulgarian cuisine, here you can indulge in great variety of activities – fishing, hiking, horse riding, herb and mushroom picking.



In the mystical Strandzha Mountain the villages keep their old houses, as well as their ancient traditions. Only here you can witness the traditional 'nestinari dance' (fire-dancing) performed on the glowing embers of the fire. The villages of Gramatikovo, Brashlyan, Kosti and Balgari can offer unforgettable holiday relaxation in the heart of Strandzha Mountain.

Strandzha



FOLKLORE EVENTS



Bulgarian folklore is rich, diverse and inspiring. If you spend just one night listening to the Bulgarian folklore music, drinking wine and dancing a traditional Bulgarian dance called 'horo' you will realize how precious and unforgettable is the national heritage preserved through the past centuries.

Bulgaria has seven folklore regions, and in each region the music, dances and the national costumes are different and unique.

Many Bulgarian villages organise folklore events which allow guests to get acquainted with the local traditions and customs. Combined with traditional meals, such events can become an unforgettable experience.

ORGANIC PRODUCTS



The production of organic foods in the villages is a well-preserved process. Every guest of the village can drink fresh milk with homemade pastry in the morning. Fruit and vegetables used in the food preparation are carefully selected from the garden of the house.

The Bulgarian traditions in extracting and usage of ethereal oils are well preserved. Rose picking in the Valley of Roses is a spectacular ritual, accompanied by festive atmosphere. If you visit Kazanlak you can learn more about this process in the specialized Rose Museum – the only museum of this kind in the whole world. Over 80% of the overall production of rose oil in Bulgaria is made in the region of Karlovo and Kazanlak. Rose picking and rose production take place in the months of May and June. The rose flower needs to be picked in early morning, before the sun evaporates the dew drops.



Tourist Information

NATIONAL TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE,
MINISTRY OF TOURISM
SOFIA 1040, 1 Sv. Nedelja Sq.
Tel.: +359 2 9335826; +359 2 9335821; +359 2 9335811
E-mail: e-docs@mee.government.bg

SOFIA, subway next to Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“
Tel.: +359 2 491 83 44; +359 2 491 83 45
E-mail: tourist@info-sofia.bg

TROYAN 5600, 133 Vassil Levski Str.
Tel.: +359 670 6 09 64; +359 889 719941
E-mail: infotroyan@yahoo.com; troyantour@abv.bg

SMOLYAN 4700, 5 Bulgaria Blvd.
Tel.: +359 30162530; E-mail: toursmolyan@abv.bg

TETEVEN 5700, 2 Petko Milev Strashnia Str.
Tel. + 359 679 95056; E-mail: infoc_teteven@mail.bg

TRYAVNA, 5350, 33 Angel Kanchev Str.
Tel. + 359 677 62247; E-mail: tourinfo-tryavna@globcom.net

BANSKO, 4, Vazrazhdane sq.
Tel.: +359 749 885-80; +359 749 88633
E-mail: infocenter@bansko.bg

BELOGRADCHIK 3900, 1A Poruchik Dvorjanov Str.
Tel: +359 877 881283; E-mail: tourism@belogradchik.bg;

KOPRIVSHTITSA, 6 20-ti April Sq.
Tel.: +359 7184 21 91; E-mail: info@koprivshtitza.com

SHIROKA LAKA 4710; obl. Smolyan
Tel.: +359 3030 2222; E-mail: pesponedelnik@abv.bg

MALKO TARNOVO, Preobrazhenie Sq.
Tel.: +359 59 523 017; E-mail: tic_mtarnovo@mail.bg

IVANOVO 7088, 75 Olimpijska Str.
Tel.: +359 8116 22 85; E-mail: tur_iv@abv.bg

ELENA 5070, 13 Ilarion Makariopolski Str.
Tel.: +359 6151 7430; E-mail: otic@elena.bg

SANDANSKI, 28, Makedoniya str.
Tel.: +359 884 898 976, +359 882 050 176
E-mail: tour_centre@abv.bg

„USANA“ – GABROVO, 3 Vasrazhdane Sq.
Tel.: +359 885 825 224; E-mail: uzana1@abv.bg

DURANKULAK, 9670; obsht. Shabla, obl. Dobrich
Tel.: +359 888 476601; +359 887 308753
E-mail: lebalkan@lebalkan.org

VRATSA, 3000; 27-29 Pop Sava Katrafilov Str.
Tel.: +359 888 866 529; E-mail: naturacenter@abv.bg

DEVIN 4800, 5 Osvobozhdenie Sq.
Tel.: +359 876 535435; E-mail: tic_devin@mail.bg

GENERAL INFO ABOUT BULGARIA

Geographic location: Republic of Bulgaria is a European country, located in the Eastern part of the Balkan peninsular. Its Eastern boundary is the Black Sea; Greece and Turkey are situated southbound, its Western neighbours are The Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, and to the North it shares border with The Republic of Romania.

Climate: Bulgaria has a mixed Mild-Continental and Mediterranean influenced climate.

Average winter temperatures: 0 °C to -2 °C

Average summer temperatures: 20-22 °C

Territory: 110,099 sq. km.

Population: 7 364 570 (2011)

Official language: Bulgarian

Capital: Sofia

Currency: Bulgarian Lev (1 € = 1.955 BGN)

Single European emergency call number: 112

Average height above sea level: 470 m

Highest point: Musala peak (2925 m.)

Time zone: GMT+2 (EST+7)

Main denomination: East-orthodox Christianity

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Bulgaria, Sofia 1000, 1 Saborna Str.
Tel.: +359 2 904 6809
Fax: +359 2 44 70 899
e-mail: edoc@tourism.government.bg
www.tourism.government.bg

OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE YEAR

