

BULGARIA – HISTORY AND CULTURE – summer 2014

This tour (around 900 km) is divided in 4 parts and will get you acquainted with some of the valuable historical and cultural sites of Bulgaria.

1st day – Monday

- ARRIVAL in Sofia (22.00h) & transfer to Park hotel***Superior located in a huge park amongst a forest.
<http://s806.photobucket.com/user/MarianaEmil/library/Park%20hotel%20Moskva-Sofia?sort=6&page=1>
- free mineral water in the minibar of the room
(to reach the centre of Sofia – you need just 10 min. by the subway (ticket 0.50 c.) or by taxi – 15 min.
(cost per car - appr. 2-3 eu)

2nd day- morning: organized transfer to the city centre and – guided walking tour of **Sofia** (3-4 hours).

- afternoon – free time for leisure, or organized tours (optional) to the Zoo or shopping.
- Dinner at hotel in the panorama restaurant – on the 20th floor offering fascinating views

3rd day –

- full day tour(appr.7 hours) to the Rila monastery–the biggest Orthodox monastery on the Balkan peninsula



http://www.rilamonastery.pmg-blg.com/Home_page_en.htm

Distance - about 120 km.

- after lunch in the vicinity (additional charge) – back to Sofia and free time /dinner at hotel

4th day –after breakfast travel to the city **Pleven** (162 km)

<http://s806.photobucket.com/user/MarianaEmil/library/PLEVEN?sort=6&page=1>



-accommodation in a park hotel 4**** situated in a huge park-Kailyka-



one of the biggest in Bulgaria. In this green paradise with small forests, lakes, caves, outdoor swimming pools, playgrounds, cafeterias and restaurants you will really enjoy your free time.

- late afternoon - wine tasting in one of the biggest Wine museums, situated in a cave in the park
- dinner in the garden restaurant of the hotel

5th day- after breakfast visit to the **Panorama museum of Plevn** – a remarkable monument included in



the list of the 100 Bulgarian historical monuments.

*Plevn Epopee 1877, more commonly known as **Plevn Panorama**, is a [panorama](#) located in [Plevn, Bulgaria](#), that depicts the events of the [Russian-Turkish War of 1877–78](#), specifically the five-months [Siege of Plevna](#) (Plevn Epopee) which made the city internationally famous and which contributed to the [Liberation of Bulgaria](#) after five centuries of [Ottoman rule](#). The panorama was created by [Russian and Bulgarian artists](#) and was constructed in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Plevn Epopee and was officially unveiled in 1977. The panorama expanded the already existing [Skobelev Park](#), which is located on the site where three of the four major battles which led to the liberation of Bulgaria took place. In the first three years after its opening, 2.5 million people visited this remarkable monument which is one of nearly 200 built by the people of Plevn in tribute to the battle and to the 35 000 lives lost.*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plevn_Panorama

- late afternoon- visit to the Catholic church OUR LADY FROM FATIMA. The statue of OUR LADY MARIA was blessed by the Pope John Paul the 2nd and was brought to the church in 1997.



-after mass back to the hotel for dinner.

6th day –after breakfast the trip continues to **Veliko Tyrnovo**, distance – about 110 km.

<http://s806.photobucket.com/user/MarianaEmil/library/Veliko%20Tyrnovo?sort=3&page=1>



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87GytEII5IQ&feature=related>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0x8_Z5kTjAE&feature=related

-check-in hotel Aquaia*** -centrally located and close to many shops, restaurants, cafeterias. The hotel offers nicely furnished rooms, restaurant in Bulgarian style where you can choose from a large variety of typical local food. And if choose to have a drink on the roof terrace you will enjoy nice views and spoil yourself in the Jacuzzi.





-afternoon – guided tour to the historical part of the city and the fortresses of the old town-the first Bulgarian



capital.

-evening – **OPTIONAL** visit to the amazing **Light and Sound show** (it's a must!).

http://www.welcome-to-bulgaria.com/show_static.htm

Price of tickets approx. 20-25 Euro p.p. for a group of min. 20 pax.

7th day– after breakfast half day tour to the Open air crafts museum ETURA. – distance 55 km.

*The Architectural and Ethnographic Complex **Etar** is situated on the outskirts of the Balkan mountains. It is an open air crafts museum. The purpose of which is to present the architecture and the style of life of the region during the second half of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. The Architectural and Ethnographic Complex Etar was established in 1964 and was declared as an architectural and ethnographic monument of national significance.*

The museum contains a total of 50 sites – houses with craft workshops, water installations and other buildings. The only one collection in Bulgaria of technical installations driven by water – filling mills, water mills, grindstones, etc., are situated there. 16 houses can be seen on the crafts bazaar (the central commercial street) in the Etar, which are exact copies of buildings existing in the past in Gabrovo city and the region. On the crafts street the visitors can watch in real time the work of the craftsmen. Multiple crafts are presented – bell-making (manufacturing of wrought iron bells for animals), pottery-making, sugar-making (manufacturing of sugar articles), furriery, manufacturing of copper pots, etc. Besides observing the authentic technology which the craftsmen are using, the visitors can purchase the articles made before their eyes. Upon a preliminary request, the people working in the complex can organize trainings in traditional crafts. <http://www.etar.org/liato/welcome.htm>

-back to Turnovo and folklore dinner outside the city – in a picturesque village (Bulgarian music, dances, drinks and food)

8th day –

- extended half day excursion – to the town of Tryavna. Distance - 50km.

A settlement had existed there as early as the 18th century, and by the 19th century the town had already become a cultural and craft centre. During the Bulgarian Revival Period (18th – 19th centuries) Tryavna Artistic School was established in the town. Tryavna still keeps the spirit of this period even today. The Clock Tower – the symbol of Tryavna, stands in the centre of the town. It was built in 1814 and is 21 m high. The works of Tryavna Artistic School are displayed in several museums such as The Museum of Wood-Carving, the Museum of Icons, art galleries. Crafts' shops all situated in charming winding streets, in old wooden houses of 19th century, which is also housed there. <http://www.tryavna-museum.com/mainLEN.htm>.



<http://www.pbase.com/ngruev/tryavna>

- late afternoon - departure to Sofia (2 stops for coffee/dinner on the way to Sofia. (not included in the price)
- around 20.30h arrival at the Airport and check-in for the back flight to Malta
- departure at 22.45 h

Price will vary as per size of the group

and includes:

- Accommodation- 2 nights in a 4* *** hotel, 5 nights in 3*** hotels, 6 HB and 1 BB
- Wine tasting in the Wine Museum in Pleven (Return transport)
- Visit to the Catholic Church in Pleven (Return transport)
- Extended Half day excursion to the open air crafts' museum - village Etura with entrance included
- extended half day excursion – to the town of Tryavna
- full day excursion to the Rila Monastery
- English guided walking tour in Sofia with transport to the city centre.
- Transport as per itinerary
- English Guided tours in Pleven (entrance ticket for Panorama monument) and Veliko Tarnovo

- Bulgarian tour leader (the director of Marianna Co. who will give on spot many useful advices for the sites (mentioned in the programme), as well as for suitable places for lunches, coffee breaks, shopping and many others. ☺

N.B.

1/ This tour could also be organized for individuals with English speaking guide and private transport.

2/ Both optional visits – the Sound and Light show and the folklore dinner must be pre booked in order to secure free seats

3/ The official price for the Sound and Light show is 410 eu (as a group) and must be divided by participants. No limitation of number of visitors.