

The Ancient Treasures of Bulgaria

Discover the Thracian, Roman and Byzantine Past.

8 – 15 October 2017 (Tour code: ATB)

Price: £1,350 (Based on a group of 4 - 5, if more people book, price will be lower. See Price Conditions at the end of the leaflet).

We invite you to our time-machine which will take us back to the age of the ancient and mysterious Thracians. Who were the northern neighbours of the Greeks? How were they influenced by the ancient Greeks and vice versa? Why do we know so little about them? During our tour you will find answers to these questions. We shall see some of the most precious archaeological finds including the world famous golden treasures.



This tour gives you the perfect opportunity to visit the remains of a civilization, which is one of the least known in Europe. Bulgaria has treasures from different eras – from Thracian to Byzantine and Ottoman. We look forward to sharing them with you.

Bulgaria's beautiful scenery, friendly people and excellent wine and food are additional highlights. The B-BS offers you the benefits of nearly forty years' experience of organising tours to Bulgaria and excellent value.

For your financial protection our tour operators for the last twenty years, Balkania Travel Ltd. are licensed by the UK Civil Aviation Authority, ATOL 4465 and bonded by the International Air Transport Association, IATA number 91-2 7839.

Projected Itinerary (which may be subject to adjustment)

Sunday 8 October Flight from Heathrow to Sofia. Transfer to the hotel. Welcome with local drinks. Lecture in the hotel by a specialist archaeologist. Dinner. Overnight stay.

Monday 9 October Visits to the National History Museum and the Archaeological Museum. Lunch, then a walking tour, including the Roman remains of the Emperor Constantine's quarter (4th C. AD), the Rotunda of St. George (4th C. AD), Alexander Nevski Memorial Church (early 20th C.) and the Basilica of St. Sophia and its underground necropolis. Independent dinner. Overnight.

Tuesday 10 October Drive to Starosel to visit the Thracian Tombs and Temples (5th - 3rd C. BC). Wine-tasting and lunch in the local winery of Starosel. Drive to Plovdiv and visit the Archaeological museum and its collection of Thracian artefacts. Later we shall have a walking tour of the Old Town and see the beautiful Bulgarian Revival period houses from 19th C. and the Roman theatre. Independent dinner.

NB! If there is a musical performance in the Roman theatre, we can arrange tickets, usually the performances start about 9.00 pm. Overnight in Plovdiv.

Wednesday 11 October First a short walk by the remains of the Roman forum and a visit to Trakart gallery, with 4th C. Roman mosaics in this small private museum. Then drive to

Stara Zagora, one of the largest cities in the Thracian Lowlands. Visit the Neolithic dwellings museum and the Archaeological museum. Lunch. Afternoon drive to Kazanluk. Tour of the Valley of the Thracian Kings, visiting the replica of the tomb of Kazanluk, included in the UNESCO Heritage List, the original Royal tombs of Kosmatka, Ostrusha and Shushmanets and the museum with some of the excavated golden treasures.

On the way visit the Shipka church built to commemorate the fallen Russian and Bulgarian officers and soldiers during the Russo-Turkish War, 1877–78. Dinner. Overnight in Kazanluk area.

Thursday 12 October Drive to Veliko Turnovo. Visit Samovodene Street with the workshops of local craftsmen, followed by a short walk to the ruins of the Royal citadel. Independent lunch. Afternoon drive to Ruse, and en route explore the Roman ruins of Nicopolis ad Istrum. Visit to the Archaeological museum in Ruse and the remains of the Roman town of Sexaginta Prista. Independent dinner. Overnight in Ruse.

Friday 13 October Drive to the Thracian tomb of Sveshtari in the archaeological reserve of Sboryanovo. The reserve includes two large necropoli, sanctuaries, remains of a Thracian fortified town, many tombs and the holy place of Demir Baba Teke, sacred to Aliani Muslims. The main tomb of Sveshtari has rich stone decoration and drawings. Picnic lunch. Return to Ruse and stroll in the centre enjoying the beautiful architecture. Independent dinner. Overnight.

Saturday 14 October Depart to Sofia. En route we shall stop at Ivanovo Rock church, with 14th C. frescoes. We also call at the town of Lovech, visiting the covered bridge from 19th C. and the old quarter. Chance to have a look at the medieval fortress ruins above the modern city. Independent lunch. Continue to Sofia, farewell dinner and overnight.

Sunday 15 October Free time before your mid-day transfer to the airport.

We hope to see you again in Bulgaria!

Price conditions: At the time of booking we shall confirm and invoice at the **starting price** of **£1,350** per person. That price will be reviewed subject to number of participants booked at the time of due balance (8 weeks before departure) and if necessary, re-invoiced accordingly. E.g., if 6 people booked, the price will be reduced to **£1,200**, if 8 people book, the price will be at its **final lowest**, i.e. **£1,100** per person.

OUR PRICE INCLUDES:

- Return scheduled flights from Heathrow to Sofia with all government, airport and other taxes and charges.
- 7 nights accommodation in 3* and 4* hotels with en-suite facilities on a twin bedded shared occupancy basis, except at Kazanluk where pension/private accommodation is arranged. 7 Breakfasts, 4 lunches and 3 dinners as described in the itinerary:
- Coach/mini-coach with driver for all transfers and excursions.
- A wine-tasting.
- Guide/interpreter, throughout. Specialist guides at Sveshtari and Ruse.
- Archaeology lecture.
- Entrance fees.
- Information pack including Bradt Travel Guide Bulgaria, 2nd edition 2015.

NOT INCLUDED:

- Travel Insurance (Compulsory). Balkania Travel can advise.
- Independent lunches and dinners as listed in the itinerary.
- Drinks and personal expenses such as gratuities.
- Single room supplement (£120).

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