



"ODYSSEIA-IN" AND "ZIG ZAG HOLIDAYS" TRAVEL TEAM
Sofia 1000, 20-V "Al. Stamboliiski", (entrance from "Lavele" str.)
Tel: +359 2 989 05 38, Fax: +359 2 980 32 00
WWW.HIKING-BULGARIA.COM



Hiking in Rodopi–Rila–Pirin Mountains

Bulgaria

15 Days/ 14 Nights

DAY 1 Welcome to Bulgaria!

Start from Sofia airport or Sofia downtown. Transfer to Plovdiv – the cultural capital of Bulgaria (130km, 2 hours). Plovdiv is situated at the footsteps of Rodopi Mountains – the Land of Orpheus and are starting point for hikes and adventures in the pristine Rodopean forests.

Night stop: Plovdiv

Accommodation: 3* downtown hotel

Meals included: no meals included

DAY 2 Bachkovo Monastery

In the morning we will stroll and visit the cobbled streets of Plovdiv Old Town with its Roman Amphitheatre; Djumaya Mosque - one of the three examples of the oldest type of Ottoman worship buildings still preserved on the Balkan Peninsula; Orthodox Church "St Konstantin and Elena" and will enjoy the unique architecture of the Bulgarian Revival Houses.

At noon time we will head to Bachkovo Monastery, Bulgaria's second largest monastery, famous for its incredible 17th century murals. In the afternoon we will make a pilgrimage walk to the holy spring and rock chapel of the miraculous icon of Virgin Mary. The chapel is situated in the "Red Rock" Nature Reserve with rich flora and fauna.

Later: drive to Chepelare town (1.30 hours, 75km)

Night stop: Chepelare town

Accommodation: family-run hotel

Meals included: breakfast and dinner

Walking time: 2 hours (ascent: 200m/ descent: 200m)

DAY 3 Wonderful Bridges Rock Phenomenon

The massif of Rhodope Mountains is the biggest one in Bulgaria. We will head to the heart of the mountains, to the so called Wonder Bridges - 2 great stone arches rising up to 70 m. From the nature phenomenon we will head to the village of Orehovo, where we will have a break and in the afternoon we will have another transfer back to Chepelare town.

Night stop: Chepelare town

Accommodation: family-run hotel

Meals included: breakfast and dinner

Walking time: 3-4 hours (ascent: 300m/ descent: 650m)



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DAY 4 Gela and Shiroka Laka Authentic Villages

Today we will drive to the village of Gela (45 min, 30 km), situated in one of the the highest parts of the Rhodope Mountains. According to legend, the mythical hero Orpheus was born in Gela village. We will make a round panoramic walk to the nearby villages. In the afternoon we will visit Shiroka Laka village, famous as an "architectural and ethnographic reserve".

Night stop: Borino Muslim Village

Accommodation: family-run hotel

Meals included: breakfast and dinner

Walking time: 4 hours (ascent: 400m/ descent: 400m)

DAY 5 Yagodina Cave and Trigrad Gorge

The day will start with a short transfer to Yagodina cave, one of the biggest and longest caves opened for visits in Bulgaria and will continue with a walk pass pastures, flower meadows and pinewoods to the gorgeous Trigrad Canyon, a 300m-high rock canyon carved by Trigrad River. We end our walk with a visit to the Devil's Throat Cave, famous for its 42-m high underground waterfall, related to the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice – the search of Eurydice in the Underworld. Short transfer back to Borino village.

Night stop: Borino Muslim Village

Accommodation: family-run hotel

Meals included: breakfast and dinner

Walking time: 3-3.5 hours (ascent: 500m/ descent: 350m)

DAY 6 Kovachevitsa Authentic Village

Today we will head to Pirin National Park. On the way we will pass by Dospat Lake and Kovachevitsa village. Kovachevitsa is a fabulous mountain village of 300-year-old slate-roofed houses nestled into the hillside. This village's architecture and spectacular setting make it a popular location for film shoots--many movies have been filmed here. From the village we will start a 2-hour walk to St.George Chapel. In the afternoon: transfer to Bansko town – gate point to Pirin Mountains.

Night stop: Bansko Town

Accommodation: family-run hotel

Meals included: breakfasts

Walking time: 2 hours (ascent: 200m/ descent: 200m)

DAY 7 Pirin National Park

In the morning we can look at the old town of Bansko and then we start our first hike in Pirin Mountains after a short transfer(15 min). Our goal is the refuge Demianitza, located on the same river at an altitude of 1900 meters. We walk in the woods along the river, on a forest trail and climb



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slowly uphill. At the lodge we make a comfortable rest - in the coming days we expect a long hike.

Night stop: Demianitsa Hut

Accommodation: mountain hut (dormitory)

Meals included: breakfast and dinner

Walking time: 3 hours (ascent: 700m/ descent: 0m)

DAY 8 The "Elfy" Mountain Pass and "No God" Lake

After breakfast we begin our trek to Besbog refuge (2,360 m). First we will have to climb to Samodivska "The Elfy" Pass (2,600 m), where we can enjoy a great view. The trail continues to the beautiful mountain lake Bezbog with fantastic views.

Night stop: Bezbog Hut

Accommodation: mountain hut (dormitory)

Meals included: breakfast and dinner

Walking time: 5 hours (ascent: 700m/ descent: 300m)

DAY 9 The Wild Flowers Walk

Today we will walk through wildflower meadows, small lakes and pristine pine forests to Pirin mountain hut. The trail will bring us to Demirkapia Pass (2,450 m) and wonderful views to the nearby peaks. At the end of the day we will reach Pirin Hut at 1620m.

Night stop: Pirin Hut

Accommodation: mountain hut (dormitory)

Meals included: breakfast and dinner

Walking time: 5 hours (ascent: 200m/ descent: 800m)

DAY 10 Walk to Southern Pirin

Today we walk through meadows and forests in direction South to Melnik – an architectural reserve village. Melnik is famous for the natural beauty of its surroundings, but also as a old trade center of excellent wine. The town of Melnik is an architectural reserve and 96 of its buildings are cultural monuments. With a population of 285, it is the smallest town in Bulgaria, retaining its city status today for historical reasons (12.000 inhabitants in 1912).

Night stop: Melnik

Accommodation: family-run hotel

Meals included: breakfast

Walking time: 6 hours (ascent: 100m/ descent: 1000m)

DAY 11 Melnik Sandstone Pyramids

First in the morning after breakfast we will visit the nearby Rozhen Monastery (located 6 km southeast of Melnik). A walk through stunning sandstone pyramids and rock formations will bring us to Rhojen Monastery, a 16th century building perched on a grassy plateau above the sandstone pyramids. Later: panoramic descent to Melnik and visit to the Byzantine's Kordopulova House,



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built in 18th c. and known as the biggest Revival Architecture House. Walk around the town and admire the unique architecture of the place.

Night stop: Melnik

Accommodation: family-run hotel

Meals included: breakfast

Walking time: 3-4 hours (ascent: 300m/ descent: 300m)

DAY 12 Rila Monastery (UNESCO)

Transfer to the great Rila Monastery. We will enjoy an easy pilgrimage walk to the cave of the founder of Rila Monastery, the St Ivan Rilski. From there we descent through Rilski Manastir Nature Park. In the afternoon we will visit the Rila Monastery (founded in the 10th century), a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the church has more than 1200 murals. Later: transfer to Govedartsi village, situated on the northern footsteps of Rila National Park.

Night stop: Govedartsi

Accommodation: family-run hotel

Meals included: breakfast and dinner

Walking time: 1.50 hours (ascent: 100m/ descent: 200m)

DAY 13 Seven Rila Lakes Hike

Transfer from Govedartsi to hut Vada (1500m). Today we will have the chance to visit one of the most sacred places in Bulgaria – the Seven Rila Lakes. The area is scientifically proven to be a place with high spiritual energy. The path starts in pinewoods and ascends above the tree line to the fist of the interesting shaped lakes: Dolnoto Ezero (2100m). Then we go further on to hut Sedemte ezera (2200m.). Here you can have a break, next to the hut is the lake Ribnoto Ezero "The Fish Lake". The other lakes are situated on different levels in the valley. If you have more strength you can hike up to lake "The Kindey", lake "The Eye", lake "The Tear" and back to the starting point. A tough but rewarding hike!

Night stop: Govedartsi

Accommodation: family-run hotel

Meals included: breakfast and dinner

Walking time: 7 hours (ascent: 800m/ descent: 900m)

DAY 14 Mussala Peak – The Roof of the Balkans

Today we attempt to climb the highest peak on the Balkan Peninsula. We take a gondola lift, which brings us up to nearly 2370m. From there we ascend above the tree line. The trek to the peak is about 3.30 hours. Mussala is 2925m high and the panorama is unbeatable. Next is a descent and again take the gondola lift. In the afternoon: transfer back to Govedartsi village.

Night stop: Govedartsi

Accommodation: family-run hotel



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Meals included: breakfast and dinner

Walking time: 6 hours (ascent: 550m/ descent: 550m)

DAY 15 Sofia Walking City Tour

In the morning; transfer back to Sofia and a 3-hour walking city tour of the capital of Bulgaria. We will visit the impressive Alexander Nevski Cathedral, Sveta Sofia Byzantine Church, the Roman Ruins, the Rotunda St. George.

In the afternoon: transfer to Sofia airport and flight back home.

Price per person:

715 Euro (for a group of 8 people)

The price includes:

- 14 overnights in hotels or huts
- 14 breakfasts and 10 dinners
- English-speaking mountain guide
- All transfers and drives according to itinerary