

Bulgaria - Monasteries and Churches

Sofia, Bansko, Plovdiv, Veliko Tarnovo, Troyan

8 days / 7 Nights

 Coach



The program includes 7 nights on FB basis – 2 nights in **Sofia**, 1 night near the **Rila Monastery**, 1 night in **Bansko**, 1 night in **Plovdiv**, 1 night in **Veliko Tarnovo**, 1 night near **Troyan Monastery**; transfer in an air-conditioned bus; English speaking guide throughout the entire trip.



PROGRAM

◆ DAY 1: ARRIVAL AT SOFIA AIRPORT.

Transfer to the hotel. Dinner and overnight stay in Sofia.

◆ DAY 2: BREAKFAST - SIGHTSEEING TOUR OF SOFIA

St. Nedelya Cathedral, St. George Rotunda, Russian church of St. Nicolas, St. Sophia Church, St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Ivan Vazov National Theater. Lunch. In the afternoon – departure for the **Rila Monastery**. The Rila Monastery is the biggest monastery in Bulgaria, founded in the 10th century by the monk and hermit St. John of Rila, patron and protector of Bulgaria. The monastery served as the center of cultural and spiritual life of the Bulgarian people, during the centuries of foreign enslavement. The tour includes a visit to the monastery, the main church and the monastery museum. Dinner and overnight stay near Rila Monastery.

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◆ **DAY 3: BREAKFAST - DEPARTURE FOR MELNIK**

A picturesque town at the foot of Pirin Mountain. Melnik is famous for its wine cellars. A visit to the Kordopulov's House, a monument of the Bulgarian Revival architectural style, built in 1754. On the ground floor there are wine cellars, where the famous wine of Melnik is kept. Lunch in Melnik combined with wine tasting. Visit of **Rozhen Monastery** – the biggest cloister in the Pirin area, founded in the 13th century. Departure for **Bansko** – the centre of the Bulgarian way of life from the **Revival period** and a famous ski resort today. Visit to the Holy Trinity Church, whose frescoes are the work of artists from the famous Debar Art School, visit to the Velyanov's House – the best-preserved house from the Revival Period and to The exhibition of icons from the Bansko Art School. Dinner and overnight stay in Bansko.

◆ **DAY 4: BREAKFAST - DEPARTURE FOR PLOVDIV**

One of Europe's most ancient cities, older than Athens, Rome and Constantinople. On the way – a stop at **Bachkovo Monastery**. Situated at the foot of the Rhodope Mountains. It is the second largest Bulgarian monastery, founded in the 11th century, keeping frescoes from 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the legendary wonder-working icon of Virgin Mary Eleusa from 1310. Lunch. Departure for Plovdiv. Sightseeing tour of **Plovdiv** – a tour of the old town which consists of one of the most spectacular ensembles of town houses from the period of the Bulgarian National Revival. Visit to the Saints Constantine and Helena Church, Roman Theatre, Regional Ethnographic Museum. Dinner. Overnight stay in Plovdiv.

◆ **DAY 5: BREAKFAST - DEPARTURE FOR VELIKO TARNOVO**

The capital of the **Second Bulgarian Empire** (1187-1396). Visit to **Dryanovo Monastery**, established in the 13th century and situated in the picturesque gorge of Dryanovo River. Lunch. A visit to the historical village of **Arbanasi** - the Konstantsaliev's House – one of the biggest and most lavishly decorated houses of the Bulgarian National Revival and at the Church of the Nativity of Christ, the oldest church in Arbanasi, unique with its frescoes. Return to Veliko Tarnovo. Dinner. Possibility to attend the "Sound and Light" show on Tsarevets hill (additional payment). Overnight stay in Veliko Tarnovo.

◆ **DAY 6: BREAKFAST - SIGHTSEEING TOUR OF VELIKO TARNOVO**

Tsarevets hill, Samovodska Charshia. Lunch. Departure for the **Troyan Monastery** - the third biggest monastery in Bulgaria, founded in the 16th century. In 1847 the monks requested that the famous Bulgarian artist Zahari Zograf work on the decoration of the monastery. Visit to the monastery. Dinner. Overnight stay near the Troyan Monastery.

—◆ **DAY 7: BREAKFAST - DEPARTURE FOR SOFIA**

Visit to **Boyana Church**, which is included in the UNESCO List of World Cultural Heritage. It has preserved frescoes of an unknown artist, which date back to the year 1259. The frescoes impress with the spirituality and expressiveness of their images, created 7 years before the birth of Giotto di Bondone, considered the first Renaissance artist. Lunch. Free time in Sofia. Dinner in a typical Bulgarian restaurant with a folklore program. Overnight stay in Sofia.

—◆ **DAY 8: BREAKFAST. TRANSFER TO THE AIRPORT. DEPARTURE**

END OF SERVICE