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**BULGARIA - The Cultural Heritage
(Sofia, Plovdiv, Kazanlak, Nessebar)
8 - Day Itinerary**



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The program includes 7 nights – 4 nights in Sofia, 1 night in Plovdiv and 2 nights in Nessebar or Sunny Beach.

Day 1 – Arrival at the Sofia Airport

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

Day 2 – Depart for Plovdiv

One of Europe's most ancient cities, older than Athens, Rome and Constantinople. 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, the Roman Theatre, and the Regional Ethnographic Museum. Lunch. Free time in Plovdiv. Dinner. Overnight in Plovdiv.

Day 3 – Visit of Asenova Krepost (The Fortress of Asen)

Visit of Asenova krepost (The fortress of Asen) - a medieval fortress in the Rhodope Mountains, 3 km south of the town of Asenovgrad, 20 km from Plovdiv. Visit of 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. Depart for Nessebar or Sunny Beach. Accommodation at the hotel. Dinner. Overnight stay in Nessebar or Sunny Beach.

Day 4 – Sightseeing Tour of Nessebar

Visit the old town which is included in the UNESCO List of World Cultural Heritage Sites (churches have dates from the 10th, 11th, 13th and 14th centuries). Lunch. Free time in Nessebar. Dinner. Overnight in Nessebar or Sunny Beach.

Day 5 – Depart for Sofia

On the return journey to Sofia, there will be a stop at the Shipka Memorial Church in the village of Shipka. This is a Russian church built in honor of the perished Russian soldiers and Bulgarian volunteers in the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878). A visit to the ossuary at the top of Shipka, where in August 1877 one of the most crucial battles in the Russo-Turkish war took place. It was part of a series of battles that brought freedom to Bulgarians after five centuries of enslavement. Lunch in Kazanlak followed by a sightseeing tour of the city of artists, roses and Thracian kings. A visit to the Rose

Museum, which has unique exhibits relevant to the production of rose oil from the year 1660 until today; the Iskra Museum of History (the most recently discovered gold, silver and bronze findings from the Thracian mounds are on display in the new treasury) and the Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak. The tomb is part of a great Thracian necropolis that dates back to the 4th century BC. It has been part of the UNESCO List of World Cultural Heritage Sites since 1979. We continue our drive to Sofia. Arrival and accommodation at the hotel. Dinner. Overnight stay in Sofia.

Day 6 – A Tour of the National Art Gallery

A museum of art and sculpture, which holds pieces of Bulgaria's most famous artists from the 19th and 20th century. Depart for the Rila Monastery and visit. 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 for cultural and spiritual life of the Bulgarian people, during centuries of foreign enslavement. The tour includes a visit to the monastery, the main church and the monastery museum. We then stop for lunch before returning to Sofia. Dinner. Overnight stay in Sofia.

Day 7 – Tour of Sofia

Enjoy a visit to St. Nedelya Cathedral, St. George Rotunda, The Russian Church of St. Nicolas, St. Sophia Church, Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, and the Ivan Vazov National Theater. We stop for lunch followed by a visit to the National Museum of History and the Boyana Church, included in the UNESCO List of World Cultural Heritage Sites. The church has preserved frescoes of an unknown artist, which date back to 1259. The frescoes impress with the spirituality and expressiveness of their images, created 7 years before the birth of Giotto di Bondone, who is considered to be the first Renaissance artist. Dinner in a typical Bulgarian restaurant with a folklore program. Overnight stay in Sofia.

Day 8 – Sofia and Departure

Check out and transfer to the Airport for your onward journey.