

**THE ANCIENT TREASURES OF BULGARIA TOUR**

*Discover the Thracian, Roman and Byzantine Past*

23 – 30 SEPTEMBER (Tour Code: ATB) Price: £1,200

(Based on a group of 6 or more, a smaller group will incur a supplement)

**EARLY BOOKING DISCOUNT: £50 PER PERSON IF BOOKED BY 30 SEPTEMBER 2017**



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



Balkania Travel



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 23 September**

Flight from Heathrow to Sofia. Transfer to the hotel. A short sightseeing walk in Sofia. Visit the Rotunda of St. George, the Basilica of St. Sofia and its underground necropolis. Attend the magnificent Alexander Nevski Memorial Church and see and hear the evening service.

### **Monday 24 September**

Visit the heart of modern Sofia, where excavations for the Metro have revealed huge areas of Roman Serdika. See the remains of the Emperor Constantine's quarter (4th C. AD). Visit the National Archaeological Museum, housed in the 15th C. former Buyuk Mosque. The Treasure Room has a wonderful display of Thracian finds, and the Roman and Byzantine galleries are worth exploring. Late afternoon drive to Haskovo for a 3 night stay.

### **Tuesday 25 September**

Visit to Perperikon, probably one of the most spectacular archaeological sites, even in Bulgaria where there are so many exciting discoveries. It is the largest and oldest megalithic ensemble in Europe, with the remains of a sanctuary and city, with evidence of Roman and medieval civilisations too. Afternoon visit to the museum in Kurdzhali.

### **Wednesday 26 September**

Visit to Tatul, an ancient Thracian surface tomb and sanctuary, it was a religious centre of importance to the whole region. It is thought to date from around the 2nd millennium BC. Afternoon visit to Haskovo Museum.

### **Thursday 27 September**

Drive to Stara Zagora for a two night stay. Visit on the way to the Church of the Assumption at Uzundzhovo, the largest rural church in Bulgaria, combining elements of Christianity and Islam.

Our second visit en route is the Thracian Tomb and Museum at Alexandrovo. The 4th C BC tomb has impressive monumental proportions and well preserved frescoes. The adjacent Thracian Art Museum was opened in 2009.

Afternoon sightseeing walk in Stara Zagora. Visit the Roman Forum, where remains of the fortified walls and the western gate of Augusta Trayana can be seen. The theatre is used sometimes for opera and concert performances. Beyond it are the remains of thermal baths from 2nd C AD.

The Eski Dzhamiya (Old Mosque) was built in the early 15th C, apparently on a site used by different religions as far back as the Thracians. Its conversion to a Museum of Religions is therefore apt.

The Hilendar cloister in the yard of St. Dimitur Church is a reconstruction of the first monastery school, destroyed in the 1877 fire. There are exhibits about Vasil Levski's stay in the town, 1855-58, and his establishment of revolutionary committees.

### **Friday 28 September**

Morning visit to the Regional Museum of History, to see its strong and extensive archaeological sections, including the largest prehistoric collection in Europe, antique glass and bronze, a valuable numismatic collection and Thracian chariots.

We can see a lovely piece of art in the basement of the Post Office building, a multi-coloured mosaic representing the four seasons and the circle of life, 4th – 6th C AD. Other mosaics from the 4th C can be visited, and depict the water world, the earthly world and the heavenly world.

Some free time to explore further, visit the lovely park or relax with a coffee.

### **Saturday 29 September**

Visit the Neolithic Dwellings Museum which contains the remains of two small homes from around 6000 BC. Leave Stara Zagora for Karanovo and Diadovo. Karanovo tell had its earliest level of habitation around 6000 BC. In recent years there has been considerable archaeological activity in the area nearby with the discovery of a vaulted tomb with a lavish inventory, including two silver cups with images of the god of love Eros being among the most valuable objects discovered so far. The tomb is part of a funeral complex along with the four-wheeled chariot discovered in 2008.

Diadovo, at 18 m high is one of the tallest tells in SE Europe, the various levels New Stone, Copper, Bronze and Iron Ages have left their mark.

### **Sunday 30 September**

Time for a morning visit to Boyana to see the National History Museum, before your departure to the airport for the return flight.

# Bulgaria 2018

## OUR PRICE INCLUDES:

- Return scheduled flights from Heathrow to Sofia with all government, airport and other taxes and charges.
- Accommodation in 3\* and 4\* hotels with en-suite facilities on a twin bedded shared occupancy basis.
- Half board.
- Coach/mini-coach with driver for all transfers and excursions.
- Guide/interpreter, throughout. Specialist guide at Perperikon.
- Archaeology lecture.
- Entrance fees.

## NOT INCLUDED:

- Travel Insurance (Compulsory). Balkania Travel can advise.
- Lunches (about £4 - £5).
- Drinks and personal expenses such as gratuities.
- Single room supplement (£120).

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Further Information from Dr Annie Kay, B-BS Tours Organiser,  
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