



ref.№ 006EG

The Legacy of Bulgarian History !

8 days – 7 nights

Day 1 : Sofia.

Arrival at the airport. Accommodation in hotel in Sofia. Guided tour of Sofia. Visit of the Historical museum and the largest orthodox cathedral on the Balkan peninsula – “Alexander Nevski”, the churches : “Sveta Nedelia”, “Boyana” church with unique renaissance architecture Dinner. Overnight.

Sofia through the Centuries

Founded seven thousand years ago, Sofia is the second oldest city in Europe. It has been given several names in the course of history and the remnants of the old cities can still be seen today. Serdika was the name of the central dwelling of the ancient Thracian tribe known as “Serdi”. It bore that name when it became part of the Bulgarian state at the beginning of the ninth century and was soon recognised as one of the most important feudal towns, acquiring the Slavic name Sredets. Near Sofia lies Boyana church, which is one of the most valuable memorials of Bulgarian and European culture. The church boasts frescoes, acclaimed by specialists as “the best examples of eastern mediaeval art during its twelve century history”. The decline of Sofia during the Ottoman Empire was followed by the rejuvenation after the liberation in 1879, when Sofia was chosen as the capital of Bulgaria at the First National Constituent Assembly. The plans of 1881-1882 were followed by a brisk and straight-forward period of construction.

In 1900 the City Council approved the emblem of Sofia and the motto “It Grows but Does not Age”.

During the years of the totalitarian regime (9 September 1944 - 10 November 1989) Sofia became the major national economic, academic and cultural centre. From its years of socialist growth, however, the capital inherited a great deal of problems, which are at present the priorities of the democratically - elected council of Sofia. In 1992, in honour of the celebration of St. Sofia the Martyr, the Government chose September 17th as the Day of Sofia. The flag of Sofia

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Municipality was also consecrated on that day.

Day 2: Breakfast, Free time in Sofia. Departure for Plovdiv. Lunch. Accommodation in hotel**** in Plovdiv. Guided tour in the ancient part of Plovdiv including the ethnographic museum located in a gorgeous house built on the top of the ancient fortress wall from Roman times. Dinner. Overnight.

PLOVDIV.

Plovdiv is very, very old. The Eternal City, as Rome is conventionally called, is much younger. Athens, Carthage and Constantinople came into being later. A contemporary of Troy and having survived Mycenae, Plovdiv is a city upon layers of cities and an epoch upon layers of epochs. Plovdiv is all in one: a Thracian and classical Greek polis, the pride of Philip of Macedonia, the capital of Thrace under the Roman Empire, a centre of Byzantinism, a stronghold of the Bulgarians, a dream of the crusaders -- a magnificent, wealth and most important city: Kendros, Eumolpia, Philippopolis, Pulpudeva, Thrimonzium, Pulden, Populdin, Ploudin, Filibe -- those were the ancient names of Plovdiv throughout its 6000 to 8000 years of existence. The name Plovdiv first appeared in 15 century documents and has remained till today.

The practical Romans called the town Thrimonzium (lying on three hills) because the Roman town was In the distant past Plovdiv was situated on seven hills: Taxim, Nebet, Jambaz, Sahat, Jendem and Bunarjik. The seventh hill, Markovo Tepe, has nowadays subsided completely under the pavement of modern Plovdiv. In 432 B.C. the town was conquered by Philip II of Macedonia. During his rule the ancient Thracian fortress and towers were rebuilt. The vain Philip II gave the city his own name, Philippopolis. Soon it became a Thracian town again, called Pulpudeva. During the 1st century A.C. it was situated on three hills, Taxim, Nebet, and Jambaz Tepe. The Roman emperors Trajanus and Marcus Aurelius built solid fortresses around the town. They introduced many improvements, as well as coin minting. At the time Plovdiv was known as Ulpia Thrimonzium, the most flourishing metropolis of the Thracian province.

The magnificent amphitheatre above dates back from Roman times. Now it is restored and classical drama, operas, and concerts are presented on stage in the open air...

In 447 the Huns ruined the town. In the sixth century the Slavs settled in the Balkan Peninsula and introduced the names Pulden and Plundiv.

In 815 Khan Kroum seized the fortress. In the following five centuries the town was ruled by Bulgarians, then conquered by Byzantium. The Bulgarian army came again later. The Crusaders demolished and plundered the town several times on their way to Mecca.

1365 was a fateful year for Plovdiv. The town fell under the Turkish yoke. Later it was renamed Filibe and became an important administrative and military center of crafts. Filibe was the seat of the ruler of the district of Rumelia. At that time the town possessed a mysterious charm and striking poverty typical of the Orient. The functioning Jumaia Mosque attracts visitors to the center of modern Plovdiv with its fine minaret and its sun-dial.

The commercial area of the town was between that mosque and the river Maritza. One of the oldest clock towers in Eastern Europe is located behind Sahat Tepe. The clock is working even nowadays. As the Turkish traveller Evlya Chelebi wrote in 1651, "Philibe is the biggest one among 10 big towns in the European part of Turkey, and is getting richer every day".

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The 19th century brought Plovdiv closer to the renaissance from cultural oppression during the Turkish occupation. That was the time of spiritual awakening when the Bulgarian people began their struggle for religious, cultural and political independence. Many citizens of Plovdiv sacrificed their lives because they had the courage to rise against the sultan.

In 1850 the well-known enlightener Najden Gerov established a class school. In the following year the anniversary of the Slavic enlighteners Sts. Cyrillus and Methodius was celebrated for the first time. Hristo G. Danov founded the first Bulgarian publishing house in 1855. He circulated the printed books, newspapers and magazines around the Bulgarian land. The first printing press in Bulgaria appeared at that time. The Bulgarian revolutionist Vassil Levski organized a revolutionary committee in Plovdiv.

The long cherished liberation came to Plovdiv on January 19, 1878, after 500 years of waiting. However, the extasy of it was short. The Berlin Congress divided newly liberated Bulgaria into the Principality of Bulgaria and the autonomous region of Eastern Rumelia with its capital Plovdiv. Just seven years later the unification of Bulgaria was proclaimed on September 6, 1885. That was the first blow against the unfair Berlin Agreement. This is a photo of the lovely monument in the middle of Unification Square that honors the hundredth anniversary of that great event. The monument depicts the Mother-Country with the laurel wreath of victory stretched in her hands, with her two wings, the two regions brought together, ready for the coming 20-th century.

Day 3: Breakfast. Departure for the town of Kardjali. Accommodation in hotel. Lunch. A guided tour to the ancient city of Perperikon . Dinner. Overnight.

PERPERICON:

The ancient Thracian city of Perperikon Perperikon Perperikon Perperikon is located in the Eastern Rhodopes, 15 km northeast of the present-day town of Kardzhali, Bulgaria, on a 470 m high rocky hill, which is thought to have been a sacred place. The village of Gorna Krepost ("Upper Castle") is located at the foot of the hill and the gold-bearing Perpereshka River flows near it. Perperikon is the largest megalith ensemble in the Balkans.

It is thought that the famous sanctuary and oracular shrine dedicated to Dionysus of the Bessie was situated there.

History

Human activity in the area dates back to 5000 B.C. The first traces of civilization on the hill date from the Bronze Age, while the ceramics found on the place date from the Early Iron Age, as well as the impressive round altar, almost 2 m in diameter, hewn out of the rocks.

At the time of the Roman Empire, a giant multi-story palace was erected according to archeological evidence, and an imposing with its size fortress was built around the hill, with walls as thick as 2.8 m. Temples and quarters of residential buildings were also constructed in the fortress.

The megalith complex had been laid in ruins and recreated many times in history.

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ЛЕГЕНДА

Сградни	Пътна мрежа	Не бележи	Горски парк	Местоположение
ПЪТЕНА	Горски парк	Горски парк	Горски парк	Горски парк
МЕСТОПЛОЖЕНИЕ	МЕСТОПЛОЖЕНИЕ	МЕСТОПЛОЖЕНИЕ	МЕСТОПЛОЖЕНИЕ	МЕСТОПЛОЖЕНИЕ
МЕСТОПЛОЖЕНИЕ	МЕСТОПЛОЖЕНИЕ	МЕСТОПЛОЖЕНИЕ	МЕСТОПЛОЖЕНИЕ	МЕСТОПЛОЖЕНИЕ

Day 4: Breakfast. Departure for Nessebar. Accommodation in hotel. Lunch. Guided tour in the ancient part of the town. Dinner. Overnight.

Nessebar:

A small piece of land embraced by the sea, tied with a narrow rope-like neck to the quay of the continent. The time and waves were merciful and have left us, the descendants, this marvelous creation of the nature, together with the ruins of the built by our ancestors architectural inheritance. The town is situated southwards of the last branches of the ancient Hemus Mountain (today's Stara Planina), which gradually lower to the Black Sea and at Cape Emine their rocks touch the water.

The old town is long only 850 m and is 350 m wide. During the different periods of its existence it has lost 1/3 of its territory, which sank into the sea. Under the water, 80 meters away from the coast still can be seen remains of the fortress's walls.

At present is preserved only the western wall with the gate, which defended the town from the mainland. The Nesebur Peninsula - the ancient Mesambria, which was called Mesemyria in the Early Middle Ages and later - Nesebur, was populated more than three millenniums ago, at the end of the Bronze Age. The ancient Thracians named it Melsambria, what in their language means "the town of Melsa" - the legendary founder of the settlement. Melsambria has had two convenient harbours - a northern and a southern one, in which still are being found remains of the ancient ships' equipment.

About the end of the 6th B.C. century, the first Greek colonizers arrived in the settlement - they were Dorians by origin. The settlement was gradually fortified; temples, gymnasium and theater were built. The settlement transformed itself in a classical polis - a town with the respective structure, functions and administration.

In the town were built ships, a number of handicrafts was developed - mainly processing of metal. Mesambria began making own coins around 440 B.C.

The town has reached its boom during the 3rd-2nd B.C. centuries when also gold coins were emitted. It maintained busy trade relations with the towns along the Black and Aegean Seas, as well as those on the Mediterranean coast. The numerous findings from that period, exhibited in the town's Archeological Museum, are material expression of the rich economic, cultural and spiritual life of the town. In 72 B.C. the town was conquered without resistance by the Roman army. After a short period of occupation, about the beginning of the 1st A.D. century, it was permanently included in the Roman Empire. Mesembria, as it was called at this time, has preserved untouched its fortress walls and the big public buildings. It kept making own bronze coins and remained an important commercial and cultural center on the Black Sea coast of the Roman Thrac. The high cultural level reached by the town is visible from findings as the base of the bronze statue of Emperor Claudius, preserved parts of marble embossments, inscriptions and statues.

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After the capital of the Roman Empire was moved to Constantinople and Christianity was adopted as an official religion, favourable conditions for the revival of the Black-Sea towns were created. In Mesemvria were built new Christian temples -basilicas; fortress walls were erected, new water-supply system and town's termas were built. All that construction work was performed under the supervision of leading empire's architects and builders, following the pattern of the capital's prototypes.

Day 5:Breakfast.departure for Varna. Accommodation in hotel****.Lunch. Guided tour of Varna. Free time. Dinner. Overnight.

Varna:

Ancient as the sea and new as the sunrise, Varna stands out against a back-ground of sea and sky that meet and mingle in a vast expanse of bleu. It was born 26 centuries ago, when sea-farers from the town of Miletus came to the lands of the Thracian tribe of Crobisi and after long struggles found their colony named Odessos, circa 580 B.C. The Ionic civilization was not the first to leave traces of an advanced material culture on the high coast. Excavations of the Varna necropolises have revealed monuments of older civilizations, which can vie in antiquity and splendour with the Sumerian civilization. The small Ionic colony warmly welcomed the peace-loving Pericles; the aggressor Phillip II of Macedonia, however, encountered such stubborn resistance that he was forced to lift the siege he had laid to the city. In 341 B.C. he triumphantly entered Odessos, coming that time not as a conqueror but as a friend and ally. When the Romans conquered Moesia, Odessos lost its political independence, preserving only an appearance of self-administration; but it kept its military, economic and cultural importance. This is witnessed by the fortress wall of the city and the thermae which were built at that time. Their ruins, rising to a height of between three and 18m, are of considerable architectural interest. After the establishment of the Eastern Roman Empire, the city became a busy trade center. In 536 Emperor Justinian I declared Odessos the centre of an administrative region covering a large territory. Construction continued in the city. Remnants from Christian basilicas have survived from that time to this day in the vicinity of Varna. In the late 6th and early 7th century compact Slav masses settled in the Balkan Peninsula. The ethnic character of the coastal region changed. The Slavs gave the city the name of Varna. In 680 the Proto-Bulgarians, who came from the East, defeated the Byzantine army and alliance with seven Slav tribes founded the Slav-Bulgarian state, officially recognised by Byzantium in 681. The most important defence facility built by the Proto-Bulgarians in the Dobroudja, called Asparoukh's Rampart, is associated with the name Khan Asparoukh, the founder of the Bulgarian State. In the 8th century Varna was won back from the Byzantine Emperor Constantine V, Copronymus, to crush the young Bulgarian state. Varna suffered a decline during the years of Byzantine domination (1018-1187), but in 1201 Tsar Kaloyan liberated it, taking its fortress with the help of a big turret. In the course of two centuries the city was a major centre of the Second Bulgarian State. Its heyday coincided with the reign of Ivan Assen II (1218-1241) In the 13th century the Varna fortress withstood the siege of the Byzantine army commander Michael Glava, who had set out on a campaign against the troops of Ivailo, the leader of a mass peasant anti-feudal uprising in Bulgaria. The crusaders of Amadeus of Savoy in the 14th century also had to retreat from its walls. In 1372 Varna remained within the boundaries of the break-away Karvouna Principality of Dobroitsa and in 1391 it fell under the yataghan of the Ottoman Turks. The battle at Varna in 1444 extinguished the last spark of

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hope. The crusaders' army, made up of Polish and Hungarian knights, Czechs, Wallachians and Serbians, led by the young Polish and Hungarian King Vladislav III Jagelo and the Transylvanian commander Janos Hunyadi, lost the battle against the Ottoman Turks. Today there is a park-museum of comradeship-in-arms near Varna on the scene of the fighting, to commemorate this battle and heroic Polish and Hungarian king who lost his life in it. During the centuries of Ottoman domination the town assumed an oriental appearance. Thanks to the thriving trade and handicrafts, Varna began to revive from its economic decline. More than 500 ships cast anchor in its harbour every year, and 43 countries had consulates in the city. The national self-awareness of the Bulgarian people awakened in the early 19th century, giving rise to a rapid patriotic upsurge. A Bulgarian municipality was set up in Varna. The first Bulgarian school in the city was opened on July 25, 1862. Sava Dobroplodni, an eminent Bulgarian enlightener and man of letters taught in it...

Day 6: Breakfast. Departure for Shumen. Visit the wonder Madara horseman on the rocks near Madara village. Tour of Shumen. Departure for Veliko Tarnovo - the medieval capital of Bulgaria. Accommodation in hotel****. Dinner. Overnight.

MADARA:

It is in the north-east of Bulgaria, 20 km from the town of Shumen, near the village of Madara. The relief was cut in a vertical rock at 23 m height during the 8th century. It measures 2.6 m in height and is 3.1 wide at the base. The relief comprises a life-size horseman, a lion, a dog, and Greek inscriptions. The horseman is wearing a knee-length garment and is holding the reins in his left hand. With the right hand, he has thrown a short spear with a flag at the lion lying at the horse's front legs. The high back of a saddle is visible behind the horseman. The man's right foot is thrust in a stirrup. The dog is running behind the horse. The image is believed to show the victorious khan Tervel. It carries resemblance to the scenes of triumph in the Iran's east and the artistic traditions of antiquity. The details of the relief make likely its Proto-Bulgarian origin. The proto-Bulgarian inscriptions, written in Greek, announce events in Bulgarian-Byzantine relations under the rule of the khans Tervel, Khormisosh, and Omurtag during the 8th and 9th centuries. One of the inscriptions presents the forceful abdication and the exile of the Byzantine emperor Justinian in 705. Having managed to escape, Justinian sought help from the Bulgarians. Khan Tervel and his army helped him to recover the throne of Byzantium. In return, Tervel received honours and gifts, and recognition of the title of Caesar- Tsar, as well as land south of Hemus and an annual tax from Byzantium.

The Madara horseman is a part of the national history and archaeology reserve of Madara. It was once connected with the large worship complex of heathen temples, palaces and houses, and other premises, built by khan Omurtag on the Madara rock terrace. At the rock base, there is also a large cave called the Nymphs' Cave, where the Thracians worshiped their deities in ancient times. Scientists have found many prehistoric cult figures and tablets dedicated to the three local nymphs, Zeus, Heracles, Dionysius, Cibbela, the Thracian horseman-hero Heros, etc. The Madara horseman is the only rock relief in Europe dated back to the early Middle Ages. The Madara Rider was included in the World Cultural and Natural Heritage List at the World Cultural and Natural Heritage Committee session of 1979 in Luxor, Egypt.

Day 7: Breakfast. Guided tour of Veliko Tarnovo. Departure for Sofia. Accommodation in

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hotel****. Lunch. Free time. Dinner. Overnight.

About Veliko Tarnovo:

In the 5th-7th cc on the territory of Veliko Turnovo rose Zikideva the largest Byzantine settlement in the province of Moesia Inferior. Its citadel was situated on the strongly fortified Tsarevets Hill. In the 9th c on the ruins of the Early Byzantine citadel on Tsarevets Hill grew up a Bulgarian medieval settlement. Gradually it extended during the period of the First Bulgarian Kingdom and especially during the period of the Byzantine rule. In the 12th settlement was already fortified and within in were erected a nobleman's castle and several Christian religions buildings. The rebellion against Byzantium was proclaimed in 1185 during the consecration of the Church of "St.Demetrius" -The leaders of the rebellion were two local noblemen - the brothers Peter and Assen. Bulgaria recovered its independence and Turnovo became its capital.

And for more than two centuries the town was the political, economic and cultural centre of the state. The mail fortress was on Tsarevets Hill-within it was the Royal Palace - an enclosed fort with representative, administrative and residential buildings. The Residence of the Bulgarian patriarchy rose at the highest site of the hill. The Patriarchal Church of the Ascension where the relics of St.Michael the Warrior of Potouka were kept was in the centre of the inner courtyard.

Between the strongly fortified hills of Tsarevetz and Trapesitsa, along the Jantra river in the so - called "New City" were built six churches. Around some of them there were monasteries. The most famous were:"The Great Laura" around the church of the Forty Holy Martyrs and the Monastery around the SS Peter and Paul church. At the south-eastern slope of Tsarevets Hill was the Quarter of the foreign merchants, known, under the me of Frenk Hissar. In that time Bulgarian was in trade relations with Venice, Genoa, Dubrovnik, Pisa.

Many cultural and artistic valuables were created in the capital. They define the priority of the town in the fate of the Bulgarian state. For two centuries Turnovo was the main production and spiritual centre. The economic development led to the minting of Bulgarian coins. In the capitals monetary mint King Ivan Assen II struck his first gold coins with Bulgarian inscriptions.

Gradually the Bulgarian coins began to circulate at the international market. In the second half of the 14th c. they began to be used in Serbia, Bosnia, Wallachia, Venice. An evidence for the international prestige of the Bulgarian state and its capital were the seals of the rulers and the high clergy with the seals were affixed the international contracts the private and the state correspondence.

The sculpture in the capital was a kind of decorative art, connected with the secular and the cult architecture. Along with the works of the monumental sculpture there are diverse samples of small plastics - stone and steatite icons crosses of local and imported origin the manufacture of small ceramic icons became very popular. During the period of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom a very well developed craft was the bone carving.

Naturally the manufacture of ornaments was very important for the capital. The ornaments for the aristocracy were made of gold and silver, while the mass production was of copper and alloys, but they repeated the shape of the ornaments made of precious metals. The most popular and attractive technique of filigree, granulation and cellular enamel were applied by the jewelers when they manufactured the ornaments. Skilful potters produced building, kitchen and decorative ceramics.

Of particularly great importance was the manufacture of luxurious vessels with high artistic qualities. In Bulgaria, under the influence of the Byzantine centers penetrated the "sgraffito" technique. Turnovo became the largest centre for production of sgraffito ceramics. The medieval Bulgarian masters assimilated the complex technique of its production perfectly.

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