

# TOUR WITH ALL THE NINE BULGARIAN UNESCO SITES

8 nights / 9 days

**Sofia - Ruse /Ivanovo Rock monasteries/ - Sreburna Lake – Sveshtari tomb – Madara horseman – Varna – Nessebar – Veliko Turnovo – Kazanlak /Thracian tomb/ - Plovdiv – Bansko /Pirin National park/ - Rila monastery - Sofia /Boyana church/**

For several decades now, under UNESCO aegis, attempts have been made to preserve the planet's most valuable cultural and natural heritage.

The UNESCO List of World Heritage now features over 300 landmarks.

Nine Bulgarian wonders - seven cultural and two natural sites - are included among them:

- Rila Monastery
- Nessebur
- Kazanluk Tomb
- Sveshtari Tomb
- Madara Horseman
- Boyana Church
- Ivanovo Rock Monasteries
- Pirin National Park
- Sreburna Lake



## 1 Day – Sofia



*Alexander Nevski Cathedral*

Meet and greet by your guide at Sofia airport, transfer to the hotel. Panoramic city tour including National Archaeological Museum, National Theatre, Russian Church St. Nikola, Parliament Square, Alexander Nevski Memorial Cathedral with the most valuable collection of Bulgarian Icons (13-19<sup>th</sup> c), St. Sofia Church (6<sup>th</sup> c), St. George Rotunda (4<sup>th</sup> c), National Palace of Culture. **Overnight in Sofia (D)**

## 2 Day – Sofia – Ivanovo – Russe

Departure to [Ivanovo Rock monasteries](#), situated in the valley of the Russenski Lom river, in north east Bulgaria, a complex of rock-hewn churches, chapels, monasteries and cells developed in the vicinity of the village of Ivanovo. This is where the first hermits had dug out their cells and churches during the 12th century. The 14th-century murals testify to the exceptional skill of the artists belonging to the Tarnovo School of painting. **Overnight in Russe. (B, L, D)**



### **3 Day – Ruse – Sreburna – Sveshtari – Madara horseman - Varna**



Morning departure to [Sreburna Lake Nature Reserve](#) - a freshwater lake adjacent to the Danube and extending over 600 ha. It is the breeding ground of almost 100 species of birds, many of which are rare or endangered. Some 80 other bird species migrate and seek refuge there every winter. Among the most interesting bird species are the Dalmatian pelican, great egret, night heron, purple heron, glossy ibis and white spoonbill.

The tour continues to [Sveshtari tomb](#) – Discovered in 1982 near the village of Sveshtari, this 3rd-century BC Thracian tomb reflects the fundamental structural principles of Thracian cult buildings. The tomb has a unique architectural decor with 10 female figures carved in high relief on the walls. It is a remarkable reminder of the culture of the Getes.



Departure to Varna. On the way visit the [Madara horseman](#) - a spectacular figure of a knight triumphing over a lion, is carved into a 100-m-high cliff near the village of Madara in north-east Bulgaria. Madara was the principal sacred place of the First Bulgarian Empire before Bulgaria's conversion to Christianity in the 9th century. The inscriptions beside the sculpture tell of events that occurred between AD 705 and 801. **Overnight in Varna (B, L, D).**

### **4 Day – Varna – Nessebar**

Morning sightseeing tour of [Varna](#) – the pearl of Bulgarian Black Sea Coast. Founded in 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC the town was called Odessos and one can still marvel at the remains preserved from the times of the Romans and Byzantine. Magnificent examples of the different periods art and culture are the Roman Thermal Baths and the early Christian Basilica from the 4th. c. Some of the city's sights of interest are: the Roman fortress wall and Round Tower, Cathedral of the Assumption, Old Clock Tower in the City Gardens, residential quarters and others.





Departure to the unique museum town of **Nessebar**. Situated on a small peninsula one of the oldest towns in Europe still exudes the spirit of different ages and peoples – Thracians, Hellenes, Romans, Slavs, Byzantines and Bulgarians. Nessebar's greatest wealth are its many churches: the Old Bishop's Residence in an early Byzantine style (4th-5th c.), the New Bishops Residence (St. Stefan), containing valuable 12-th century murals, the Christ Pantocrator and Aliturgetos churches (13-th -14th c.). Nessebar's National Revival houses with stone foundations and broad wooden

eaves, overhanging narrow cobbled lanes leading right into the sea, are also remarkably beautiful.

**Overnight in Nessebar. (B, L, D).**

### **5 Day – Nessebar – Veliko Turnovo**

Morning departure to **Veliko Turnovo** - the medieval capital of Bulgaria. The is situated amphitheatrically on 4 hills - Tsarevets, Trapezitsa, Momina Krepost and Sveta Gora, the ridges of which were indeed the deeply inclined steep banks of the Yantra river meanders. Most attractive of all hills is **Tsarevets** with its solid fortress walls, royal palaces, **patriarchal church** and **Baudouin's Tower**, reminding of the Latin Emperor Baudouin of Flanders who was captured by Tsar Kaloyan.



Down by the river Yantra in **Assen's quarter**, where the craftsman lived, one can visit three Medieval churches – **The Church of St. Dimitrius**, **The Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Pavel** and **The Church of the Holy Forty Mortyrs**.

One should not leave Veliko Turnovo without taking a walk along **Samovodene market** with its original workshops from the period of the National Revival.



Lunch in the museum village of **Arbanassi**, situated only 5 km. from Veliko Turnovo. The architecture of the houses in Arbanassi is unique, they resemble minor fortresses on the outside with high, solid walls and heavy gates, iron grids and secret hiding-places, but which are spacious and comfortable, richly decorated and furnished on the inside. The oldest of Arbanassi's five churches is **The Birth of Christ (1637 - 1649)**, dug into the ground without a belfry and with hidden cupolas, but hiding a genuine art gallery with over 3,500 stunningly realistic figures and Biblical scenes, painted by unknown artists throughout the ages.

**Overnight in Veliko Turnovo (B, L, D).**

### **6 Day – Veliko Turnovo – Kazanlak – Plovdiv**

Departure for Kazanluk, situated in the middle of the Valley of Roses. Visit the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC **Thracian Tomb** included in UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List and famous for its beautiful and extremely valuable murals; Visit **Goliamata Kosmatka Tomb** dating back to 5-4<sup>th</sup> c. BC belonging to the Thracian king Seuthes III. En route visit **Etura**, architectural-ethnographic open-air museum and the Russian Memorial Cathedral of **Shipka**.





Continue to **Plovdiv** - An ancient crossroads between East and West and Bulgaria's second largest city today, Plovdiv has preserved unique treasures from its 24 centuries long history. Evmolpia - the city of the ancient Thracians, Philippopolis (372 B.C.) - the city of Philip II of Macedon, the Roman Trimontium - the city on three hills, and Old Plovdiv - a picturesque architectural National Revival period ensemble fashioned by the generous talent, heart and mind of the Bulgarian masters. The Old Town of Plovdiv is one of the most remarkable places in Bulgaria with its steep cobblestoned streets, unique houses and romantic atmosphere. See 4<sup>th</sup> century BC Thracian wall paintings, the **Roman amphitheater**, Byzantine and medieval fortifications and 15th century Ottoman mosques.

**Overnight in Plovdiv (B, L, D).**

**7 Day – Plovdiv – Bansko – Rila monastery**

Departure for **Bansko** – famous ski resort and museum town situated, at the foot of **Pirin National Park**. The Bansko houses look almost like monasteries - just as austere and inaccessible, with high stone walls and small latticed windows, The true Bulgarian spirit is hidden behind the solid walls and heavy gates - in the spacious rooms with friezes and bay windows, carved ceilings and doors, pretty rugs and embroidered cushions, in the murals, icons and amazingly carved iconostasis of the **Holy Trinity Church** (1832-35), which combines the functions of a church belfry and a town clock.



Continue to the **Rila monastery** - the most impressive monument from the Bulgarian National Revival, lies in Rila mountain, at 1,147 meters above sea level. It is situated 120 km away from Sofia to the south, and is no doubt the most popular tourist site among all monasteries in Bulgaria equally for its size, natural surroundings, architecture, wall paintings and ancient history. With its 1200 scenes of decorative paintings and a multitude of figural images, the open arcade is a genuine art gallery. At the center, the church itself, with richly colored frescoes in the shelter of its porch is the focus of attention. The intricate carvings of the gilt iconostasis, the church plates and murals will amaze and captivate you.

**Overnight at Rila monastery (B, L, D).**

**8 Day – Rila monastery – Boyana church – Sofia**

After breakfast departure to Sofia. En route visit the **Boyana church** included in UNESCO list of World Heritage with astonishing 13<sup>th</sup> c. AD frescoes, one of the most complete and perfectly preserved monuments of east European Medieval art.

In the evening farewell show dinner in National restaurant at the foot of Vitosha mountain with folklore program and Nestinary dances.

**Overnight in Sofia (B,L,D)**



**9 Day – Sofia – airport transfer**

After breakfast transfer to Sofia Airport **(B)**

<b>PACKAGE PRICE / EURO/:</b>	<b>20 pax +</b>	<b>10-15 pax</b>	<b>6-9 pax</b>	<b>2-5 pax</b>
Per person in double/twin room:	675.00	785.00	925.00	1230.00
Single room supplement:	120.00	120.00	150.00	150.00

**PRICE FEATURES:**

- Accommodation at 4 star hotels, HB basis
- Lunches at local restaurants;
- One dinner at Folk style restaurant with program;
- Professional Guide throughout the whole tour;
- Transfers and transportation by deluxe A/C coach/ mini-coach;
- Entrance fees for the museums and sights, included in the tour;