

BULGARIAN MUSEUM TOWNS TOUR

8 nights / 9 days

Sofia – Rila monastery – Melnik – Bansko – Leshten – Kovachevitsa – Shiroka luka – Plovdiv – Zheravna – Kotel – Elena – Veliko Turnovo - Arbanassi – Tryavna – Bozhenci - Etara – Koprivshitsa - Sofia

Bulgarian museum towns provide the unique opportunity to feel and experience a lifestyle from the Bulgarian National Revival period. About 8,000 houses and buildings have been preserved in the country along with thousands of frescos, icons and, works of the woodcarving art.



1 Day - Arrival in Sofia.



National Palace of Culture

Meet and greet by your guide at the 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 (13-19th c), St. Sofia Church (6th c), St. George Rotunda (4th c), National Palace of Culture.

Overnight in Sofia (D)

2 Day – Sofia – Rila monastery – Melnik - Rozhen monastery

After breakfast departure to the 10th century AD **Rila Monastery**, the biggest and most spectacular in Bulgaria, one of Europe's oldest and included in UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List.



Rila monastery



Melnik



Rozhen monastery

Continue to **Melnik** – the smallest town in Bulgaria, known for the good wine and picturesque sandstone pyramids. Take a walk and enjoy lovely houses perched on the slopes of steep sandstone rocks. See the ethnographic **house of Kordopulov** dating back to the 17th century and sample the delicious local wine in the house's cellar. Continue to the nearby **Rozhen Monastery** where you will find magnificent murals from 16th, 17th and 18th century and impressive wood carving work.

Overnight in Melnik or Sandanski (B, L, D)

3 Day – Melnik – Bansko – Leshten – Kovachevitsa



Bansko



Kovachevitsa



Leshten

Morning departure to **Bansko** museum town. A walk through the old quarter, see the houses, looking as fortresses, as well as the tower-clock. The tour continues via the Rhodopi Mountains to the picturesque museum village of **Kovachevitsa** with impressive architecture. The atmosphere is so charming with the narrow cobbled little streets, stone walls of the houses rising extraordinarily high, grayish slabs covering the roofs, tranquility, countless swallows perching along the electric lines, goats climbing up the fences, fireflies in summertime. Visit to **Leshten** mountain village – a pretty post-card architectural and ethnographic reserve with thirty traditional homes. See the remains from the roman city "**Nikopolis ad Nestrum**", founded by the emperor Trajan, celebrating the victory over the Dacians in 2nd AC.

Overnight in Leshten or Kovachevitsa (B, L, D)

4 Day – Leshten – Shiroka luka – Bachkovo – Plovdiv



Shiroka Luka



Bachkovo monastery



Frescos from Bachkovo monastery

Departure towards **Shiroka Luka** museum-village and architecture and ethnographic reserve, well known for its original Rhodopi architectural style, musical traditions and history. Continue to **Bachkovo Monastery** - one of the oldest monasteries in the Bulgarian lands and the second biggest in the country. It is mainly known for its original architecture, rich collections of old icons, jewelry, coins and church plate. Continue to Plovdiv. **Dinner and overnight in Plovdiv (B, L, D)**

5 Day – Plovdiv – Zheravna



Ethnographic museum - Plovdiv



Roman theatre



Zheravna

Breakfast. Tour of the **Old Town of Plovdiv** – an imposing open-air museum situated on the three hills of the ancient Trimontium with its remarkable examples of houses of the National Revival Period. Visit the Roman amphitheatre, Ethnographic museum Church of St. Constantine and Helena, Lamartine’s House and Jumaya Mosque. Continue to **Zheravna** - architectural reserve. Visit the museum houses of Yordan Yovkov and Sava Filaret, the Church and Zlatna Oresha Complex.

Dinner and overnight in Zheravna (B, L, D)

6 Day – Zheravna – Kotel – Elena – Veliko Turnovo



Kotel



Kotel city hall



Elena

Morning departure to **Kotel** – a town from the National Revival period. Visit the Ethnographic Museum, the **Old water mill** and the **Inn**. Passing through Stara Planina, will reach **Elena** – a beautiful town known for the typical local cuisine, situated in the skirts of the woody Elena Balkan range, in the nice valley of Elena river. Visit the most sacred place in Elena - the old church “Saint Nikola” and the native house of Ilarion Makariopolski. Continue to Veliko Turnovo.

Dinner and overnight in Veliko Turnovo (B, L, D)

7 Day – Veliko Turnovo – Arbanassi – Bozhenci - Tryavna



Tsarevets



Nativity church – Arbanassi



Bozhentsi

Morning sightseeing tour of **Veliko Turnovo**, the medieval Bulgarian capital. Visit **Tsarevets Holy Hill**, 9th c. AD church of **St. 40 Martyrs** and the **Church of St. Peter and Pavel**. Then visit the museum village **Arbanassi** with the **Church of Nativity** (unique frescoes dating 16-17th c. AD) and **Konstanzaliev's House**. The tour continues to the **Bozhentsi** architectural village keeping the 19th c. AD romantic atmosphere of the National Revival Period. Visit *the Old coffee house, the Church of Prophet Elijah* (1839), *the school* from 1872, *the museum*. Continue for **dinner and overnight in Tryavna (B, L, D)**

8 Day – Tryavna – Etara – Koprivshitsa



Tryavna



Etara



Koprivshitsa

Morning sightseeing tour of **Tryavna** - famous for the skill and artistry of its former builders, wood carvers and painters. Tryavna's narrow streets are evocative of the 19th century and there are 140 protected National-Revival buildings. Masterpieces of the Revival architecture are the **St Archangel Michael Church**, the **Clock tower**, the Tryavna Museum School of Painting, the **Slaveykov Museum**, the **Daskalov House** and the **Museum of Icon-painting and Woodcarving**. Visit **Etara** architectural-ethnographic open-air museum and continue to **Koprivshitsa** - the best preserved architectural reserve in Bulgaria. Visit **The Oslekov, Kableshekov** and **Lyutov** houses , which are fine examples of the work of art.

Dinner and overnight in Koprivshitsa (B, L, D)

9 Day – Koprivshitsa – Sofia.

Morning departure to Sofia and transfer for your flight to the airport.

PACKAGE PRICE / EURO/:	20 pax +	10-15 pax	6-9 pax	2-5 pax
Per person in double/twin room:	635.00	730.00	870.00	1240.00
Single room supplement:	100.00	100.00	130.00	130.00

PRICE FEATURES:

- Accommodation at 4 star hotels & local hotel-houses, 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;