



**“ODYSSEIA-IN” AND “ZIG ZAG HOLIDAYS” TRAVEL TEAM**  
SOFIA 1000, 20-V “AL. STAMBOLIISKI”, (ENTRANCE FROM “LAVELE” STR.)  
TEL: +359 2 989 05 38, FAX: +359 2 980 32 00  
[www.hiking-bulgaria.com](http://www.hiking-bulgaria.com) E-mail: [odysseia@omega.bg](mailto:odysseia@omega.bg)



## **BIRDS AND BEARS OF BULGARIA**

### **DATES:**

10 APRIL 2011

18 APRIL 2011

OR ANY DATE AT YOUR CONVENIENCE IN APRIL – MAY  
AND OCTOBER - NOVEMBER



### **TRIP HIGHLIGHTS**

- BIG CHANCE TO SEE A BEAR IN THE WILD
- 100% GUARANTEED OBSERVATION OF VULTURES IN THE EASTERN RODOPI MOUNTAINS
- OPTIONS TO EXPLORE THE AREA AROUND DEVIN (WESTERN RODOPI MOUNTAINS) AT DAY TIME
- NICE ACCOMMODATIONS AND HOSTS
- DRAMATIC NATURE SCENES

### **TRIP SUMMARY**

This is a tour designed for nature lovers and people who want to discover Bulgaria in a different way. We have divided the itinerary into 2 parts – we start with bearwatching in the area of Devin (Western Rodopi Mountains) and then continue with birdwatching in the area of Madjarovo (Eastern Rodopi Mountains) and Topolovgrad (Sakar Mountain). The absolute best period to make this tour is between the end of April and the beginning of June. You will be accompanied by professionals and you will learn a lot about the brown bears and bird life of Bulgaria. There are some 750-800 brown bears that live in the wild and nearly 75% of all European birds can be seen in Bulgaria. Among them are the very interesting and rare vultures. This tour involves also some hiking in order to reach the best places for observation. Binoculars and good cameras are essential – do not forget your equipment!

On the last day we will visit also the capital city – Sofia.



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## **DETAILED ITINERARY**

**Day 1:** Tour starts in Sofia, followed by a transfer to Devin

**Itinerary:** Arrive in Sofia – the capital of Bulgaria. From the airport we make a transfer to Devin. The town lies in the vast Rodopi Mountains and is famous for its healing mineral waters. Of course, it is also famous for the population of brown bears that live in the wild areas around the town and usually can be seen at nighttime. Enjoy a traditional meal for your dinner and discuss the tour with your guide.

**Night stop:** Devin

**Accommodation:** Family-run guesthouse

**Included Meals:** Dinner

**Day 2:** Optional activities during the day, bear watching tour at the end of the day

**Itinerary:** We offer different optional activities during this day (paid separately):  
- visit to the Trigrad Gorge -if you feel like traveling around - there you can try to spot some of the local birds. You can visit the nearby Devil’s Throat Cave (famous with its high underground waterfall). Or you can visit Yagodina Cave, which is limestone cave with stalactites and stalagmites. There are some walking routes in the vicinity of Devin too. Just ask your guide!

At sunset we make a short transfer with 4WD vehicles and then do a walk in the forest to reach the best observation point. In order to observe bears in their natural habitat we will stay in a special hideout. Return back to Devin for overnight – this can be very late depending on how long we stay in the hideouts.

**Night stop:** Devin

**Accommodation:** Family-run guesthouse

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

**Day 3:** Optional activities during the day, bear watching tour at the end of the day

**Itinerary:** Optional activities during the day:

- Horseback riding in the forests of Rodopi Mountains.
- Hike on the Devin-river Eco-path.
- Swimming pools and spa-centers in Devin.

In the evening we once again travel to our hideouts for another bear watching tour. Return back to Devin for overnight.

**Night stop:** Devin

**Accommodation:** Family-run guesthouse

**Included Meals:** Breakfast



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**Day 4:** Bird watching in the Eastern Rodopi Mountains

**Itinerary:** Transfer from Devin to the Eastern Rodopi Mountains. This will be a long transfer, which will show us much of Bulgaria’s nature. On the way we stop for some bird watching at Studen Kladenets Dam. In the afternoon we visit the nature information and conservation center in Madjarovo. This is Bulgaria’s realm for birds of prey. On spot we will learn more about the conservation projects of the local people and their work for preserving the vultures. Enjoy a traditional meal for dinner at a family-run guesthouse.

**Night stop:** Gorno Pole

**Accommodation:** Family-run guesthouse

**Included Meals:** Breakfast and Dinner



**Day 5:** Bird watching in the Madjarovo area

**Itinerary:** Today we spend time in Madjarovo area. This is paradise for nature lovers. In the area there are some nature reserves, great places for bird watching. You can observe the following bird species: Griffon Vultures, Black Storks, Black and Egyptian Vultures, Long-legged Buzzards, Golden and Short-toed Eagles, Peregrine Falcons. Bird watching can be combined with hiking.

**Night stop:** Gorno Pole

**Accommodation:** Family-run guesthouse

**Included Meals:** Breakfast and Dinner



**Day 6:** Bird watching in Sakar Mountains

**Itinerary:** Transfer to Topolovgrad and bird watching in Sakar Mountains. During the breeding season in Sakar you will have the chance to see Black Stork, Goshawk, Eastern Imperial Eagle, Woodchat, Lesser Grey and Masked Shrikes, Eastern Bonelli’s Warbler, Wheatear, Black-headed Bunting, etc.

**Night stop:** Topolovgrad

**Accommodation:** Family-run hotel

**Included Meals:** Breakfast



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**Day 7:** Bird watching and transfer to Sofia

**Itinerary:** Spend some time in Sakar Mountains for more bird watching there. In the early afternoon we make a long transfer back to Sofia. This evening your guide will show you around and suggest places for dinner.

**Night stop:** Sofia

**Accommodation:** Hotel

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

**Day 8:** Tour ends in Sofia

**Itinerary:** This is the last day of this tour. We make a sightseeing tour of Sofia and see the main cultural highlights like the Alexander Nevski Cathedral. Transfer to Sofia Airport. Tour ends here.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

### **Prices:**

625 EUR (valid for a group of 6 people)

All prices indicated are per person in a double room

Single Room Supplement: 100 EUR

### **Prices Include**

Accommodation in a family-run guesthouses/hotels

7 breakfasts and 3 dinners

English-speaking guide + local bear-guide

Transfers and drives according to itinerary

### **Prices Exclude**

Flight and taxes

Failing meals

Alcoholic and soft drinks

Museum entry fees



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## **Essential Info**

### **Accommodation**

Family run guesthouses and hotels

Double or twin rooms with ensuite WC/shower

### **Transport**

Depending on group size – either a mini van or mini bus

**Meals** 7 breakfasts and 3 dinners

**Staff** English-speaking guide and driver, as well as local guides for the bear watching

**Age Restriction** This trip is suitable for adults and families with children at the age of 6 or more

**Group Size** 2 persons and above

**Operator Remarks** This tour can be easily tailored depending on your preferences

The best period for bird watching is May and please note that not all of the birds mentioned in the itinerary will be seen in April and November!