



**"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)



## 'GREEN LODGE' TOUR

### BULGARIA

#### DATES:

- 20 MAY 2012
- 03 JUNE 2012
- 08 JULY 2012
- 26 AUGUST 2012
- 09 SEPTEMBER 2012



\*OR ANY DATE AT YOUR CONVENIENCE (BEGINNING OF APRIL END OF OCTOBER)

#### TRIP HIGHLIGHTS:

- Bucolic villages and meeting the locals
- Balkan hospitality and delicious home-made food
- Mountain views and soft walks in tourist-free areas
- Guided visits to Rila & Bachkovo Monasteries, Sofia and Plovdiv Old town



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### **TRIP SUMMARY**

Experience a real Bulgarian journey! The Bulgarian villages are an oasis of hospitality and traditions. In 2008 the Bulgarian Association of Alternative Tourism In cooperation with the ECEAT developed the "GREEN LODGE" certificate. More than 35 small family-run hotels are now certified and they guarantee sustainable services and comfort.

*If you want to feel the spirit of the country, you should deviate from the well-known tourist route and look for the charm of the villages, located in the scenic natural areas of Bulgaria.*

### **DETAILED ITINERARY**

#### **DAY 1: Welcome to Bulgaria!**

Meet and assist by your Bulgarian tour leader at Sofia airport.

Start your trip in Bulgaria with a walking city tour of the capital Sofia. Visit the impressive Alexander Nevski Cathedral, Sveta Sofia Church, and the Rotunda of Sveti Georgi.

Next: drive to Govedartsi village (75 km.) where we will be accommodated in the Dzhambazki family hotel: a Green Lodge certified house and also a local PAN Parks partner.

**Transfers:** 80km; 1.30 hours

**Night stop:** Govedartsi Village

**Accommodation:** Family-run Hotel "Djambazki" (<http://www.house-djambazki.com/>)

**Included meals:** breakfast and dinner

#### **DAY 2: Rila Monastery and Rila Mountains**

Today right after breakfast we head to the worldwide famous Rila Monastery, a UNESCO Heritage site. The monastery dates back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD and was founded by the hermit St. Ivan Rilski. Before visiting the monastery we will enjoy an easy pilgrimage walk to the Saint's grave and hermitage cave, situated in the deep forests of Rila Monastery Nature Reserve. After visiting the monastery we drive to Gorno Draglishte village where we will be accommodated in Guesthouse "Deshka", famous for its delicious local cuisine and interesting interior resembling a small ethnographic museum.



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**Walking time:** 2.00 hours

**Transfers:** 210 km; 3.30 hours

**Night stop:** Gorno Draglishte Village

**Accommodation:** Family-run Hotel "Deshka"

<http://www.panparks.org/visit/our-parks/rila-national-park/accommodation-services/guesthouse-deshka>

**Included meals:** breakfast and dinner

### **DAY 3: Rhodopi Mountains Bucolic Villages**

First thing in the morning will be a visit to the nearby Dobarsko village where another religious masterpiece awaits us. The old church "St. Theodor Tiron and Theodor Stratilat" dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century reveals unique frescoes of Jesus Christ in a rocket. In the Dobarsko village we will also enjoy wonderful views to the alpine Pirin Mountains. Next, we will take the narrow gauge train which will bring us to the magical Rhodopi Mountains. We will have the chance to meet the interesting pomac ethnicity and enjoy some splendid views. At the end of the day we will arrive at Kosovo village, an architectural reserve with stone-roofed houses. Accommodation is in one of these houses, certified as Green Lodge.

**Transfers:** 200km, 3 hours

**Night stop:** Kosovo Village

**Accommodation:** Hotel Complex "Kosovski Kashti"

<http://www.selokosovo.com/?p=home&language=en>

**Included meals:** breakfast and dinner

### **DAY 4: The "Marvelous Bridges" in Rhodopi Mountains**

We will start the day with a short transfer to the 'Marvelous Bridges' - 2 great stone arches rising up to 40 m. We will make a 2-hour walk following the traces of the local woodmen and hunters and will arrive just on time in the village Orehovo for our home-made lunch. After that we head south to the village of Arda, located on the border between Bulgaria and Greece. The people from the area are famous for their hospitality and wide-open hearts. We will stay for two nights in the village, enjoying the surrounding areas.

**Walking time:** 2.00 hours

**Transfers:** 100km, 2 hours

**Night stop:** Arda Village



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**Accommodation:** Guesthouse "Argirovi Kashti"

<http://www.kyshti-argirovi.com/indexen.html>

**Included meals:** dinner and breakfast

**DAY 5: Walk On the Bulgarian-Greek Border**

You can choose between numerous activities such as horseback riding, hiking, visit to a nearby cave. The day is ours!

**Transfers:** 20 km

**Night stop:** Arda Village

**Accommodation:** Guesthouse "Argirovi Kashti"

<http://www.kyshti-argirovi.com/indexen.html>

**Included meals:** dinner and breakfast

**DAY 6: Bachkovo Monastery and Plovdiv Old Town**

In about 2-hours we will reach Plovdiv, the second biggest city in the country. On the way we will stop for a visit at Bachkovo Monastery, one of the most important sanctuaries in the country. Later, in Plovdiv we will look back in the past where Thracian, Romans, Slavs, Turks, Bulgarians have all left their marks. We will stroll along the narrow cobbled streets, lined with some 150 Ottoman times-style houses. We will visit the Roman Theatre; St. Konstantine and Helena Church; the Ethnographic museum. In the afternoon we drive north to the Rose Valley. We will spend two nights in the small town of Kalofer, at the foot of the Balkan Mountains.

**Transfers:** 200km, 3.30 hours

**Night stop:** Kalofer Town

**Accommodation:** Family-run Hotel "Tutsova Kashta"

[http://www.cucovata.com/hotel\\_en.htm](http://www.cucovata.com/hotel_en.htm)

**Included meals:** dinner and breakfast

**DAY 7: Balkan Mountain Villages**

Today we will enjoy a walk in the Central Balkan National Park. The walk starts at Kalofer Monastery "The Nativity of Mary" (17<sup>th</sup> century). From there we will enter into "Southern Djendem" Nature Reserve, part of the Central Balkan National Park. Our hike will be on a part of "Byala Reka" (White River) Eco-trail, famous for its many wooden bridges and white-water pools. In the afternoon we will return to Tutsova House where we will learn more about ancient rose-growing and preparation of rose products.



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**Walking time:** 2 hours

**Transfers:** 30km

**Night stop:** Kalofer Town

**Accommodation:** Family-run Hotel "Tutsova Kashta"

[http://www.cucovata.com/hotel\\_en.htm](http://www.cucovata.com/hotel_en.htm)

**Included meals:** dinner and breakfast

### **DAY 8: Departure**

Today we head west back to Sofia. The drive is scenic with views to the Balkan Mountain Ridge. Once in Sofia, you will have some free time at your leisure.

Departure from Sofia Airport or extension to the Black Sea coast.

**Transfers:** 170km, 2.30 hours

### **PRICES PER PERSON:**

**555 EURO** (BASED ON A GROUP OF 6 PAX)

### **SERVICES INCLUDED:**

- 7 nights in family-run hotels labeled with "Green Lodge" certificate
- Accommodation in double rooms with private facilities
- 7 breakfasts and 7 dinners (home-made traditional dinners)
- Trips/walks according to the itinerary
- English-speaking tour leader and guide
- All transfers during the itinerary

### **PRICE EXCLUDES:**

- Flights and insurances
- Drinks and failing meals
- Museum entrance fees
- Personal expenses such as tips, etc.