



“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
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HIKING THE BALKAN RANGE

DATES:

12 JUNE 2011

21 JUNE 2011

OR ANY DATE AT YOUR CONVENIENCE FROM
BEGINNING OF MAY TO THE END OF OCTOBER



TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- CENTRAL BALKAN NATIONAL PARK
- STENETO NATURAL RESERVE (UNESCO)
- SCENIC PATHS
- RURAL BULGARIA
- VELIKO TARNOVO – BULGARIA’S MEDIEVAL CAPITAL

TRIP SUMMARY

The Balkan Range is the longest and amongst the wildest mountains in Bulgaria. It includes the Central Balkan National Park, the “Steneto” UNESCO listed natural reserve and several other protected territories. The Balkan Range is also part of the [PAN Parks](#) network of Europe’s national parks

We start from Sofia – the capital of Bulgaria and head for the Cherni Osam village, set right on the foot of the Balkan Range. We will spend three days here exploring the area on foot. We will also visit Bulgaria’s third largest monastery - the Troyan Monastery as well as the nearby town of Troyan and its interesting ethnographical museum.

On the fourth day we will hike to Dermenka hut, set right on the mountain. Following the path through the “Steneto” natural reserve is at some sections strenuous but very rewarding – century-old forest, stunning rock formations, high-mountain rivers and untouched wild life.

The city of Veliko Tarnovo will be our next stop. The medieval capital of Bulgaria has much to offer – the Tsarevets fortress, the Old town, the former bazaar with a number of handcraft shops... Upon request we can also visit the open-air ethnographical museum – Etara.



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Our walks on the following days will bring us closer to the highest parts of the mountain. We will hike on the foot of Mt. Botev (2376m) – the highest peak in the Balkan Range.

On the way back to Sofia we will stop to visit the Glojene Monastery, set on top of steep rocks, with preserved architecture from the 18th c.

In Sofia we will finish the tour with a city tour of the capital and its main sights.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Welcome to Bulgaria!

Arrive in Sofia – the capital of Bulgaria. From the airport we make a transfer to the region of Troyan, which is set on the foot of Balkan range. Here we stay for 3 nights in a family-run guesthouse. Enjoy a traditional meal for dinner and discuss the tour with your guide.

Night stop: Cherni Osam village

Accommodation: Family-run guesthouse

Included Meals: Dinner

Day 2: Troyan Monastery

We start with morning walk on the neighboring hills. The walk ends in Troyan Monastery, the third biggest monastery in the country. It's famous for the miracle icon of Mother Mary. Next to the monastery there is a permanent folklore exhibition and we are welcome to visit it.

Walking time: 4 h. Ascent: 400 m.

Descent: 400 m

Night stop: Cherni Osam village

Accommodation: Family-run guesthouse

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 3: Zelenikovski monastery

In the morning we start with a walk to the Zelenikovski monastery – a wonderful place with an amazing panoramic view to the main Balkan ridge. The monastery, found in the beginning of XIXc, is huddled up in the foothills of the mountain. On our way we pass through a small old village with authentic old-houses. In the afternoon we visit the museum of Natural Science in Cherni Osam. The overnight is again in our family-run guesthouse and their hospitable hosts.

Walking time: 4 h. Ascent: 500m. Descent: 500 m

Night stop: Cherni Osam village



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Accommodation: Family-run guesthouse

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 4: The Central Balkan Ridge

We will spend the next two days in the area of the Central Balkan National Park. This day we will walk from Beklemeto mountain pass to the Dermenka hut. Our path follows the main ridge of the mountain. The dinner and the overnight are in the cozy mountain-hut.

Walking time: 4 h. Ascent: 500m. Descent: 100 m

Night stop: Balkan range

Accommodation: Hut Dermenka

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 5: Steneto Natural Reserve

From the hut we descend to our village Cherni Osam. Our path follows a river canyon and passes the unique reserve Steneto, one of the 9 reserves in the National Park. Dinner is served at a local restaurant.

Walking time: 4 h. Ascent: 100m.
Descent: 900 m

Night stop: Cherni Osam village

Accommodation: Family-run guesthouse

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 6: Veliko Tarnovo – the old Bulgarian capital

This day is cultural one. Our direction is Veliko Tarnovo – the medieval capital of Bulgaria during the Second Bulgarian Empire. We will make a walking tour along the little streets in the Old part of the town, visiting Tsarevets fortress, which once housed the royal and patriarchal palace. Upon request we drive further to the “Etara”: open-air architectural-Ethnographical complex. Transfer to the town of Apriltsi, where our next overnight will be.

Night stop: Apriltsi





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Accommodation: Family-run guesthouse

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 7: Djendem Natural Reserve

We will start with a short morning tour in the town of Apriltsi. The region of Apriltsi is famous for the Bulgarian revolutionary movement during the Ottoman yoke and with the battle in 1876. We will visit local craft shops and the old church. In the afternoon we will make 4-5 hours hike in the region of Botev, the highest peak in the mountain. All the day we will be in the area of Djendema reserve. Overnight and dinner in a mountain hut with a wonderful panorama view of the highest climbing wall in Bulgaria.

Walking time: 5 h. Ascent: 600m. Descent: 100 m

Night stop: Balkan range

Accommodation: Hut Pleven

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 8: Glojen monastery and Sofia

In the morning we descent from the hut. Transfer to Sofia passing through the towns of Troyan and Teteven. In the afternoon we will visit the 18th C. Glojen monastery which is built on steep rocks. Dinner in a restaurant. Overnight in a hotel in Sofia.

Walking time: 5 h. Descent: 500 m

Night stop: Sofia

Accommodation: Hotel

Included Meals: Breakfast

Day 9: Flight back home

Morning city walk in the center of Sofia, visiting the main sights of the Bulgarian capital. Transfer to Sofia Airport for your departure.

Included Meals: Breakfast



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Prices:

550 EUR (valid for a group of 6 people)

All prices indicated are per person in a double room

Prices Include:

- Accommodation in family-run guesthouses and mountain-huts
- 8 breakfasts and 7 dinners
- Professional English-speaking mountain guide
- Transfers and drives according to the itinerary

Prices Exclude:

- Flight and airport taxes
- Failing meals
- Alcoholic and soft drinks
- Insurances
- Museum entry fees

Essential Info

Accommodation

1 night in a hotel in Sofia

1 night in a family-run guesthouse in Apriltsi

4 nights in a family-run guesthouse in Cherni Osam

2 nights in mountain huts in the Balkan Range

Double or twin rooms with ensuite WC/shower (Shared facilities at the mountain-huts)

Transport

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

Meals 8 breakfasts and 3 dinners

Staff The English-speaking guide for this tour is Marin Sirakov.

Marin Sirakov is one of our most experienced guides. He feels the Balkan Range as his second home – as he has been born here and has hiked all the paths.

Numerous people have enjoyed his company and leadership.

Marin Sirakov is also member of the local mountain rescue team.

Age Restriction This trip is designed for adults and hikers with average level of fitness

Group Size 2 persons and above

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