



"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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PAN PARKS in BULGARIA

Hiking and Wildlife

Dates:

24 June 2011

15 July 2011

19 August 2011

09 September 2011

Or any other date at your convenience from the end of June till mid September



Trip Highlights:

- Hikes in the wildest areas of Bulgaria: Rila and Central Balkan National Parks
- Walk around the Sacred Seven Rila Glacial Lakes
- Visits of Orthodox monasteries and painted churches
- Experience the local culture and traditional village life
- Taste the Balkan's culinary traditions and cuisine



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Trip Summary:

The trip passes through the two certified Pan Parks of Bulgaria: Central Balkan and Rila National Parks. There you can enjoy the most interesting mountain views of the untouched nature and wildlife of Bulgaria. You will hike the highest peak on the Balkan Range (2376m) and will visit the highest waterfall on the Balkan Peninsula. You will make pilgrimage to the most important Orthodox sanctuaries in the country: Rila Monastery (UNESCO) and Troyan Monastery. And finally you will feel the spiritual energy along the Seven Rila Lakes – one of the symbols of the country. The hiking and cultural experience will be garnished with family home-stays, local folklore and traditional cuisine.

Day 1: Welcome to Bulgaria!

Arrival in Sofia and direct transfer to the Northern footsteps of the Balkan Mountain Range.

Night stop: Apriltsi village

Accommodation: Family-run Guesthouse

Included meals: dinner

Day 2: Central Balkan National Park

Today we will reach mountain hut Pleven, hidden in the footsteps of Mt. Botev (2376m) – the highest peak in the Balkan Range. The views to the Northern Djendem Nature Reserve are stunning! We will make a picnic break at the hut and later in the afternoon, we will go back to the bus. Transfer back to the village.

Option: try a traditional handicraft in the local craft center

Walking time: 4 hours (Ascent: 500m/ Descent: 500m)

Night stop: Apriltsi village

Accommodation: Family-run Guesthouse

Included meals: breakfast and dinner





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Day 3: Central Balkan National Park

Transfer to one of the main Balkan Mountain passes: Beklemeto. From there we will cross the wide mountain ridge from North to South. On our way we will stop in Orlovo Gnezdo Refuge (Eagle's Nest). There we will make picnic with stunning views to both Southern and Northern Bulgaria. In the afternoon we will get to Kalofer town (600m. above the sea level) – the most popular starting point for hiking in the area.



Optional visit: walk to Kalofer Monastery

Walking time: 3,30 hours (Ascent: 350m/
Descent: 50m)

Night stop: Kalofer town

Accommodation: Family-run Guesthouse

Included meals: breakfast and dinner

DAY 4: Central Balkan National Park

After breakfast we will take a local bus for a short transfer or we walk some 5km from the town to reach the Kalofer Monastery "The Nativity of Mary" (17th century). From there we will enter into Southern Djendem Nature Reserve, part of the Central Balkan National Park. Our hike we will be part of "Byala Reka" (White River) Eco-trail, famous for its many wooden bridges and white-water pools.



In the afternoon we descend to the Valley of the Thracian Kings. First, we will visit Kazanlak Thracian Tomb – a UNESCO World Heritage site, famous for its paintings dating back to 4thc. BC. Second visit will be to the Golyama Kosmatka Thracian Tomb – 5thc. BC, famous for the bronze head of King Seuthus III discovered in front of the main façade and the decorated marble



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gates of the chamber. On our way back to Kalofer, we will stop at Shipka Russian Church "The Nativity of Christ" – one of the most beautiful churches in the country.

Walking time: 2.30 hours (Ascent: 100m/ Descent: 100m)

Night stop: Kalofer town

Accommodation: Family-run Guesthouse

Included meals: breakfast and dinner

DAY 5: Koprivshtitsa Town Museum

In the morning we will go to Koprivshtitsa: a town museum, famous for its revival style houses and rich history. Optional visit of: Oslekova House-museum; Lyutova House-museum; the Church "The Assumption of the Virgin Mary". We will have free time for shopping and walk around this magical town.

Night stop: Koprivshtitsa

Accommodation: Guesthouse

Included meals: breakfast and dinner

DAY 6: Mountain Railroad Trip



Morning walk around Koprivshtitsa in Sredna Gora (The Forest in the Middle) Mountain Range. Transfer to Velingrad through Panagyurishte, stop for lunch at a traditional restaurant. Arrival in Velingrad at 14:44 p.m., just on time to catch the picturesque mountain train connecting Rhodopi, Rila and Pirin Mountains. This is the only narrow-gauged railroad in

Bulgaria today and is used mainly by the locals, living in these mountainous areas. The train runs slow enough to enjoy the scenery and the endless pine forests. Our last train stop we will be at the footsteps of the Rila Mountains – a Certified Pan Park. We will sleep in a small mountain village with great



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views to the nearby sceneries. In the evening: home-made traditional dinner.

Walking time: 2.30 hours (Ascent: 100m/ Descent: 100m)

Night stop: Gorno Draglishte village

Accommodation: Family-run guesthouse (a truly authentic rural house)

Included meals: breakfast and dinner

DAY 7: Rila National Park

The day will be dedicated to our first hike in National Park - Rila Mountains. We will start from Semkovo resort (1500m) to Makedonia Hut (2169m). The highest point will be 2300m and from there we make a descent to Dobarsko village. The village is famous for its 17th century church "St. Theodor Tiron and Theodor Stratilat" – with unique frescoes.



Walking time: 6.30 – 7 hours (Ascent: 800m/ Descent: 1100m)

Night stop: Gorno Draglishte village

Accommodation: Family-run guesthouse (a truly authentic rural house)

Included meals: breakfast and dinner

DAY 8: Rila Monastery (UNESCO)

We start the day with a transfer to the biggest monastery in Bulgaria – Rila Monastery. The sanctuary was founded in the 10th c. by the saint hermit Ivan Rilski. Nowadays the monastery is UNESCO World Heritage Site and consists of church of the Holy Virgin, monastery museum, medieval kitchen, and medieval tower. After lunch, an easy walk will bring us to St. Ivan Rilski's hermitage cave, situated in the deep forests of Rila Monastery Nature Reserve. In the afternoon: transfer to Panichishte resort (1600m) and walk to the Seven Rila Lakes Hut.

Walking time: 3.30 -4 hours; (Ascent: 600m/ Descent: 150m)

Night stop: Seven Rila Lakes Hut

Accommodation: Mountain hut

Included meals: breakfast and dinner



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DAY 9: The Seven Rila Lakes



The Seven Rila Lakes are one of the symbols of the country. Every year, thousands of people gather around the lakes to honor the sun and to feel the spiritual energy in the area. First we will pass by the lakes to reach the ridge of the mountain, from where we will have a nice bird's-eye view. Later we will continue in the direction towards the village of Govedartsi, where we will spend

the next two nights.

Walking time: 6 hours (Ascent:600m, Descent:800m)

Night stop: Govedartsi village

Accommodation: Family-run guesthouse (Pan Park Partner)

Included meals: breakfast and dinner

DAY 10: Malyovitsa Alpine Region

We will start the hike along the River Malyovitsa, in about 1 hour we will reach Hut Malyovitsa (1960m) and the second glacial terrace, from where we will have a nice view to Malyovitsa Peak (2729m) and the surrounding jagged peaks. Later passing through the Elenino Lake we will get to the summit! Descent back on the same way to the starting point.

Walking time: 6 hours (Ascent:1000m, Descent:1000m)

Night stop: Govedartsi village

Accommodation: Family-run guesthouse (Pan Park Partner)

Included meals: breakfast and dinner



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DAY 11: Sofia and departure

In the morning: transfer to Sofia and walking city tour. Later: free time for shopping and walk around. Special dinner in a traditional Bulgarian restaurant.

Night stop: Sofia

Accommodation: 3* Hotel

Included meals: breakfast and dinner

Day 12: Departure

Transfer to the airport and flight back home.

PRICE: 740 Euro (for a group of 6 people)

*All prices indicated are per person in double room, except at the mountain huts

The Price Includes:

- ✓ 10 % PAN Parks Fee
- ✓ Accommodation in family-run and 3* hotels and mountain huts
- ✓ All breakfasts and dinners (including a special dinner on day 11)
- ✓ English speaking mountain guide
- ✓ Transfers by private bus
- ✓ Train ticket for narrow-gauged mountain train in Rhodopi Mountains

The Price Excludes:

- ✓ Personal expenses
- ✓ Drinks and beverages
- ✓ All lunches
- ✓ Optional gratuities to leader, guides and local staff