



**"ODYSSEIA-IN" AND "ZIG ZAG HOLIDAYS" TRAVEL TEAM**  
Sofia 1000, 20-V "Al. Stamboliiski", (entrance from "Lavele" str.)  
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## **Bulgaria and Northern Greece Trekking in National Parks**

### **Dates:**

15 July 2011

05 August 2011

19 August 2011

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

### **Trip Highlights:**

- Rila National Park and the highest peak on the Balkan Peninsula: Mount Musala (2925m)
- Rila Monastery (UNESCO)
- Pirin National Park (UNESCO)
- Mount Olympus National Park (2917m)
- Melnik, one of the most fascinating town-museums in Bulgaria famous for its sandy pyramids and local brand of red wine.
- City of Thessaloniki and city of Sofia





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## **Trip Summary**

Joining this tour means that you will walk through the Southern Europe's highest mountain ranges – Rila, Olympus, Pirin. But not only the height is spectacular, these mountains are as well Protected National Parks with rich flora and fauna. The trip will be accompanied with panoramic views, traditional food, and local cultures.

Our first hikes are in Rila Mountains. Here we attempt to climb the highest peak, named "The is no higher than God" - Mussala . On the following days we discover the lovely Malyovitsa valley and the sacred Rila Seven Lakes. These are among the most stunning mountain landscapes of Bulgaria. Making our way from Rila to Pirin range we will stop en route to see the great Rila Monastery – Bulgaria's biggest monastery. Its architecture, art, history and setting are all fascinating and the visit is a must. Heading to Greece we will pass through Pirin Mountains, UNESCO Nature Heritage. Finally we will climb the "Mountain of Gods" – Olympus (2917m). The rocky mountain will fascinate you with its overwhelming precipices and jagged peaks. Our trip will end in the beautiful town of Thessaloniki, just on the Aegean Sea.

### **DAY 1: WELCOME TO BULGARIA!**

Arrival in Sofia – the capital of Bulgaria. From there we will have a direct transfer to Govedartsi village, set in the Northern footsteps of Rila National Park. Later in the evening we will enjoy a traditional home-dinner in the cozy atmosphere of a family-run guesthouse.

**Night stop:** Govedartsi village

**Accommodation:** Family-run Hotel

**Included Meals:** Dinner

### **Day 2: Mount Mussala (The Balkan Winner)**

Ascent to Mount Mussala (2925m, the highest peak on the Balkan peninsula!) Early transfer to Borovets resort, take Gondola lift to Yastrebets peak and from there we head to Mussala Peak. In the afternoon: transfer back to Govedartsi village.

**Walking time:** 5-6 hours (Ascent: 560m/ Descent: 560m)

**Night stop:** Govedartsi village

**Accommodation:** Family-run Hotel

**Included Meals:** Breakfast and Dinner

### **Day 3: Sacred Seven Rila Lakes**



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We will start the day with a short transfer to the starting point of our climb to Malyovitsa Peak (2729m.). Following the main Ridge we will reach the Seven Lakes Glacial Circus, considered to be one the most sacred Bulgarian lands. On our way, we will have a great view to the Rila Monastery – hidden down the steep slopes of the mountain.

**Walking time:** 7-8 hours (Ascent: 850m/ Descent: 850m)

(Please note: The day is demanding and requires good fitness condition)

**Night stop:** Rila Lakes

**Accommodation:** Mountain Hut

**Included Meals:** Breakfast and Dinner

#### **Day 4: Rila Monastery (UNESCO)**

Our last mountain walk in Rila National Park will bring us to the Orthodox Sanctuary - Rila Monastery. To reach it we will have to climb to the main ridge and from there descent more than 1000 meters through meadows and forests. But every step will be worth it as we will visit the biggest monastery in Bulgaria and a world cultural heritage of UNESCO. Late transfer to Bansko town set in the footsteps of Pirin National Park.

Traditional dinner with folklore music.

(Please note: The day is demanding and requires good fitness condition)

**Walking time:** 7-8 hours (Ascent: 350m/ Descent: 1250m)

**Night stop:** Bansko



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**Accommodation:** 3\* Hotel  
**Included Meals:** Breakfast and Dinner

### **Day 5: Pirin National Park (UNESCO)**

Today we will cross the mountain direction south to reach Melnik. Transfer to Vihren hut (1.980 m) and ascent of the beautiful marble peak of Vihren (2914m) by a steep and demanding mountain track. Later in the afternoon, transfer to Melnik (2h30).

In the evening walk around the town and admire the unique architecture of the place. The town is associated with the impressive natural sand pyramids in various forms. The town of Melnik is an architectural reserve and 96 of its buildings are cultural monuments. With a population of 285, it is the smallest town in Bulgaria, retaining its city status today for historical reasons.

**Walking time:** 5-6 hours (Ascent: 600m/ Descent: 1250m)

**Night stop:** Melnik  
**Accommodation:** 3\* Hotel  
**Included Meals:** Breakfast and Dinner

### **Day 6: Melnik - Litochoro**

In the morning we will have a round trip around the Melnik Pyramids Nature Phenomena. Later we will visit of Rojen monastery, 16<sup>th</sup> c. and after lunch we will have a transfer (3 hours) to the Greek village Litochoro.

**Walking time:** 3 hours (Ascent: 250m/ Descent: 250m)

**Night stop:** Litochoro  
**Accommodation:** 3\* Hotel  
**Included Meals:** Breakfast

### **Day 7: Hike to Mount Olympus**

Transfer to Prionia from where we will begin our walk, at an altitude of 1000 m. We will walk through shady beech and fir forests, where we will enjoy a variety of woodland birds and flowers. Our way will continue up to an altitude of 2060m, to the refuge A where we will spend the night.

**Walking time:** 3-4 hours (Ascent: 1050m)

**Night stop:** Refuge A  
**Accommodation:** Mountain Hut  
**Included Meals:** Breakfast and Dinner

### **Day 8: Olympus National Park**



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If weather permits and there is no snow, we will ascend to Mytikas (2.917meters). It is Greece's highest peak! (This involves some scrambling on a well-defined route. Then we hike towards refuge B for a last overnight in the mountain.

**Walking time:** 5-6 hours (Ascent: 900m/ Descent: 1000m)

**Night stop:** Refuge B

**Accommodation:** Mountain Hut

**Included Meals:** Breakfast and Dinner

### **Day 9: Thessaloniki (UNESCO)**

Today start your trek from Refuge B and walk down to Gortsia village. In the afternoon we will have a transfer to Thessaloniki. Later in the evening, we will enjoy a walk along the waterfront from the port to beyond the Aspros Pirgos (White Tower).

**Walking time:** 5-6 hours (Descent: 1000m)

**Night stop:** Thessaloniki

**Accommodation:** 3\* Hotel

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

### **Day 10: Derparture**

Transfer to airport. Transfer to Thessaloniki airport and flight back home.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast



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**PRICE: 920 Euro (for a group of 6 people)**

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

**The Price Includes:**

- ✓ Accommodation in family-run and 3\* hotels and mountain huts
- ✓ All breakfasts
- ✓ Dinners (on days 1,2,3,5,7,8) and Special traditional dinner (day 4)
- ✓ Gondola-lift ticket for day 2
- ✓ English speaking mountain guide
- ✓ Transfers by private bus

**The Price Excludes:**

- ✓ Personal expenses
- ✓ Drinks and beverages
- ✓ Meals (dinners in day 6, 8 and all lunches)
- ✓ Optional gratuities to leader, guides and local staff