

# BULGARIAN WONDERS

TOUR DURATION: 9 DAYS/ 8 NIGHTS

AVAILABLE: ANY TIME OF THE YEAR



**This tour will present 7 of the Bulgarian wonders included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. We will meet you with ancient towns – like the capital Sofia, Plovdiv and Nessebar, with the old Thracian culture, with the world famous Valley of Roses, with the unique Madara Horseman, with the nature of the Ropotamo Reserve.....and you will reach the Black Sea Coast. The “Bulgarian wonders” tour will be a truly wonderful experience for you!**

## **Day 1: Welcome to Sofia – a 7 000 years old city**

Arriving at Sofia – airport. Transfer to your hotel. In the evening, you will enjoy a folklore dinner in a traditional restaurant. Overnight.

(D)

## **Day 2: Boyana church - Rila Monastery /UNESCO site/**

Breakfast. Visit to the Boyana Church - the frescoes of the church date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. They have high artistic value and are a vital contribution to the European art culture. The church was included in the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural heritage list in 1979. Continue to the Rila Monastery, founded in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. It is the largest and most famous Eastern Orthodox monastery in Bulgaria. The monastery complex houses a rich collection of icons, wall paintings, old-printed books – some 15 000 volumes, etc. The monastery became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983. You will take a guided tour of the monastery complex. You will see the gold-plated iconostasis in the main church; the monastery museum, famous for housing Rafail’s Cross; the tower of Hrelyu and the residential part of

the complex that consists of chambers, four chapels, an abbot's room and a kitchen (noted for its uncommonly large vessels). In the afternoon your journey will take you to Borovets - one of the most famous ski resorts in the country. Free time at leisure. Dinner and overnight.

(B, D)

### **Day 3: Plovdiv**

After breakfast you will pay a visit to the Bachkovo Monastery – important monument of Christian architecture and one of the largest and oldest Eastern Orthodox monasteries in Europe. You will have the opportunity to see the Cathedral Church of the Virgin Mary (dating from 1604), home of the wonder-working icon of the Virgin Mary Eleusa from 1310. Later you will continue to Plovdiv – the second largest city in Bulgaria, famous for its ancient and diverse culture and millennial history. You will take an afternoon city tour of the Old Town of Plovdiv - you will see well-preserved houses of the National Revival Period /18-19 century/, the St. Constantine and Elena Church, the Roman Theatre and the Roman Stadium.

Overnight.

(B)

### **Day 4: Nessebar /UNESCO site/ - Ropotamo reserve**

Following breakfast you will head to the Southern Black Sea Coast and enjoy a sightseeing tour of the ancient town of Nessebar. The town is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Nessebar offers a unique atmosphere with its romantic narrow streets, the old architecture of its houses and more than 40 churches dating from the Roman Era. In the afternoon you will continue to the Ropotamo Reserve – one of the most exotic places at the Black Sea Coast of Bulgaria. You will enjoy a boat excursion down the Ropotamo River – you will have the opportunity to observe wild animals and birds, unique rock figures and rare plants. In the evening you will return to Nessebar, where you will overnight.

(B)

### **Day 5: Varna – Madara National Reserve /UNESCO site/ – Sveshtari Tomb /UNESCO site/ - Rousse**

After breakfast you will travel to Varna. You will take a guided sightseeing tour of the city including the Varna Archaeological Museum, exhibiting the Gold of Varna; The Dormition of the Theotokos Cathedral; the Sea Garden and many more interesting places.

In the afternoon you will continue to the village of Madara. Visit to the Madara Rider - an early medieval large rock relief carved on the Madara Plateau near the village of Madara. The relief depicts a majestic horseman 23m. above ground level in an almost vertical 100-metre-high cliff. The monument dates back to circa 710 BC and has been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1979. Your tour also features a visit to the Sveshtari Thracian Tomb /a UNESCO site/. Discovered in 1982 near the village of Sveshtari, this 3rd-century BC Thracian tomb reflects the fundamental structural principles of Thracian cult buildings. The tomb has a unique architectural decor, with polychrome half-human, half-plant caryatids and painted murals. The 10 female figures carved in high relief on the walls of the central chamber and the decoration of the lunette in its vault are the only examples of this type found so far in the Thracian lands. Your journey continues to the town of Rousse, located on the right bank of the Danube River. It is known for its 19th- and 20th-century Neo-Baroque and Neo-Rococo architecture. Overnight in Rousse.

(B)

#### **Day 6: Ivanovo rock churches /UNESCO site/ - Veliko Tarnovo**

Following breakfast you will head to the Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo - a group of monolithic churches, chapels and monasteries hewn out of solid rock and completely different from other monastery complexes in Bulgaria, located near the village of Ivanovo, along the Russenski Lom River. In the 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> centuries the monastery complex was a scholarly and cultural centre and a holy place visited by pilgrims from Russia. Wall paintings and inscriptions that preceded the ones in the Boyana church denote the highly developed culture of medieval Bulgaria. The Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo were included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979. Your journey continues to Veliko Tarnovo, famous as the historical capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire. Visit to the historical hill Tsarevets with the Fortress, the Patriarchal Church and the Emperor Bolduin's Tower. Stroll along the Samovodska Charshiya Street in the Old Town. Afterwards, you will pay a visit to the ancient village of Arbanassi, known for its rich history and large number of historical monuments, such as 17th and 18th century churches and examples of Bulgarian National Revival architecture. Overnight.

(B)

#### **Day 7: Etara - Kazanlak and the Thracian tomb /UNESCO site/**

After breakfast you will travel to the Etara Architectural-Ethnographic Complex. It is a unique open-air museum which presents the Bulgarian customs, culture and craftsmanship. In the afternoon you will continue to Kazanlak - the capital of the

world famous Bulgarian Rose Valley. You will pay a visit to the Rose Museum where you will be shown the original way Bulgarian Rose oil was produced. Also on the agenda is the Thracian Kazanlak Tomb dating back to the 4th century BC, under the protection of UNESCO as part of the World Heritage List. Dinner and overnight in Kazanlak.

(B, D)

#### **Day 8: Sofia**

Breakfast. Departure back to Sofia. Sightseeing tour of Sofia (a 7000 years old city!) – visit to the most interesting places in the capital: the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral; the St. Sofia Church, built in the 6<sup>th</sup> century; the former royal palace; the Ivan Vazov National Theatre and the National Palace of Culture. Farewell dinner. Overnight.

(B, D)

#### **Day 9: Sofia**

Breakfast. Transfer to the airport and flight back home.

(B)

#### Price list:

Group size /min/	10 pax	20 pax	30 pax	40 pax
Price per pax	DBL – 702 euro	DBL – 557 euro	DBL – 534 euro	DBL – 496 euro

#### **THE ABOVE PRICES ARE PER PERSON AND INCLUDE:**

- \* 8 overnights on BB in 4\* hotels as per program
- \* Transportation by minibus/ coach all along (A/C, A/V, microphone, mini bar, WC). All road taxes, parking and driver's salary included
- \* 4 dinners /including dinner in a traditional Bulgarian restaurant on day 1/
- \* Entrance fees for the sites and museums visited according to the program
- \* English speaking guide all along

#### **THE ABOVE PRICES DO NOT INCLUDE:**

- \* Air transport to and from Bulgaria

- \* Any optional excursions
- \* Any meals apart from listed above
- \* Personal expenses.

- **B – breakfast**
- **D – dinner**