

# Bulgaria България

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Veliko Tŕrnovo** Chilled-out student town boasting hiking, cycling, rock-climbing and a sprawling citadel along a gorge that hosts a night light show (p240)
- **Varna** It'd be cool even if it weren't on the Black Sea, with good beaches, open-air clubs at night, and day trips to resorts and rock-climbing spots hanging over the water (p243)
- **Sinemorets** The remote beach village, near Turkey, isn't much to look at until you reach the southernmost beach via a cliff-top hike (p247)
- **Plovdiv** Roman ruins litter the laid-back central streets, including the cobbled hilltop Old Town with a couple of hostels and open-air bars (p238)

### FAST FACTS

- **Area** 110,910 sq km (about one-third of Finland)
- **Budget** 45lv to 75lv per day
- **Capital** Sofia
- **Country code** ☎ 359
- **Famous for** Black Sea beaches, 'cheap' ski runs, yoghurt
- **Language** Bulgarian
- **Money** leva (lv); A\$1 = 1.08lv; C\$1 = 1.23lv; €1 = 1.95lv; ¥100 = 1.53; NZ\$1 = 0.85; UK£1 = 2.20lv; US\$1 = 1.45lv
- **Phrases** *zdrasti* (hello), *blagodarya* (thank you), *imati li?* (do you have?), *kolko strubo?* (how much?), *oshte bira molya* (another beer please)



- **Population** 7.3 million
- **Visas** not required for citizens of Australia, Canada, EU, New Zealand, USA and several others for stays of up to 90 days (p248)

### TRAVEL HINTS

Buddy up with travellers and rent a car for DIY day-trip experiments from only 25lv per day – the steal of the country.

### ROAMING BULGARIA

Start in Sofia, bus to Veliko Tŕrnovo, then on to Varna, where – with time – you can bus via Burgas to Sinemorets.

The last postcommunist stop heading south, newly EU-christened Bulgaria is having its coming-of-age party at last. For good and bad. Brits are buying up beach property, so free spots of Black Sea sand are running out, but there are still a couple of stray golden beaches. Inland offers many pockets of Alplike mountain villages with hut-to-hut walks in summer and good skiing in winter.

This chapter focuses on the 'big four': Sofia, the busy capital; Veliko Tŕrnovo, the chilled student town; Varna, the bustling sea hub; and Plovdiv, the Roman survivor in the Thracian plain. All have hostels and day trips that could detain you several days. The best is in-between them, where you're still likely to spot shepherds taking their four-legged pals by whitewashed revival-era homes from the 19th century. Go and explore now; things may look different in a few years.

