



# Macedonia Македонија

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## Why Go?

Macedonia is hard to beat. Part Balkan and part Mediterranean, and offering impressive ancient sites and buzzing modern nightlife, the country packs in much more action, activities and natural beauty than would seem possible for a place its size.

In summer, try hiking, mountain biking and climbing in remote mountains, or explore the Old Towns of Skopje, the capital, and Ohrid, noted for its sublime Byzantine churches and an immense lake great for swimming. Winter offers skiing and food-and-grog festivities.

Macedonia retains an undiscovered feel that is somewhat lacking elsewhere in Europe, as visitors will discover among the hospitable, laid-back locals. Agriculture remains vital, as seen by the endless vineyards, watermelon pyramids, hanging red peppers and tobacco plains dotted with storks' nests. Although infrastructure impatiently awaits upgrading, travelling is cheap, easy and hassle-free.

## Best Places to Eat

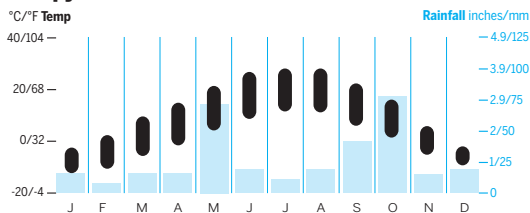
- » Restaurant Lyra (p534)
- » Stara Gradska Kuča (p534)
- » Letna Bavča Kaneo (p542)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel Radika (p538)
- » Villa Dihovo (p545)
- » Hotel Pelister (p532)
- » Chola Guest House (p544)

## When to Go

### Skopje



### June–August

Enjoy the Ohrid Summer Festival's concerts and dive into Ohrid's 34km-long lake

### September & October

Get into Skopje's Beer Fest, Jazz Festival and harvest celebrations

### December–February

Ski Mavrovo and enjoy Macedonia's winter carnivals

## AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Macedonian denar (MKD)
- » **Language** Macedonian
- » **Money** ATMs widespread in major towns
- » **Visas** None for EU, US, Australian, Canadian or New Zealand citizens (p555)

## Fast Facts

- » **Area** 25,713 sq km
- » **Capital** Skopje
- » **Telephone country code** 389
- » **Emergency** 194 (ambulance)

## Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	45MKD
Canada	C\$1	44MKD
euro	€1	61MKD
Japan	¥100	51MKD
New Zealand	NZ\$1	34MKD
UK	UK£1	69MKD
USA	US\$1	43MKD

## Set Your Budget

- » **Hotel room in Skopje** 2500MKD
- » **Two-course meal** 320MKD
- » **Beer in bar** 120MKD
- » **Skopje bus fare** 25MKD
- » **Petrol (1L)** 70MKD

## Resources

- » **Macedonian Information Agency** ([www.mia.com.mk](http://www.mia.com.mk))
- » **Exploring Macedonia** ([www.exploringmacedonia.com](http://www.exploringmacedonia.com))

## Connections

From Skopje, buses serve Sofia, Belgrade, Budapest, Pristina, Tirana, İstanbul, Thessaloniki and more. Thessaloniki's also the terminus for a train serving Belgrade via Skopje. Other ground borders include Novo Selo – near Strumica – for southern Bulgaria, and Lake Ohrid's border with Albania, past Sveti Naum Monastery.

## ITINERARIES

### One Week

Spend two nights in Skopje, visiting its Čaršija (old quarter), with historic churches, mosques and an Ottoman castle. Then travel southwest to Ohrid, with its nightlife, Old Town and lake. After two days, continue to cultured Bitola, and explore ancient Heraclea and Pelister National Park.

### Two Weeks

After Skopje, Ohrid and Bitola, return via Kruševo, a historically significant mountain town, before visiting Prilep and the nearby Byzantine churches; finish with sampling wines in the Tikveš wine region and ancient Stobi.

## Essential Food & Drink

- » **Ajvar** Sweet red pepper sauce; accompanies meats and cheeses
- » **Šopska salata** Tomatoes, onions and cucumbers topped with flaky soft *sirenje* (white cheese)
- » **Uviač** Rolled chicken or pork wrapped in bacon and filled with melted yellow cheese
- » **Skopsko** and **Dab lagers** Macedonia's favourite brews
- » **Rakija** Grape-based firewater, useful for a toast (and cleaning cuts and windows!)
- » **Vranec** and **Temjanika** Macedonia's favourite red- and white-wine varietals