



Macedonia

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Best Places to Eat

- » Stara Gradska Kuća (p521)
- » La Bodeguito Del Medio (p521)
- » Letna Bavča Kaneo (p531)
- » Restaurant Antiko (p531)
- » El Greko (p534)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel Radika (p527)
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- » Vila Sveta Sofija (p530)
- » Chola Guest House (p533)
- » Hotel Pelister (p519)

Why Go?

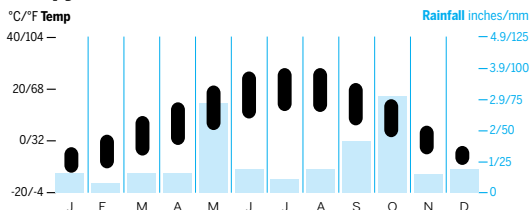
Macedonia (Македонија) is hard to beat. Part Balkan and part Mediterranean, and offering impressive ancient sites and buzzing modern nightlife, the country packs in much more action, activities and natural beauty than would seem possible for a place its size.

Easygoing Skopje remains one of Europe's more unusual capitals, where constant urban renewal has made the city a continuous work in progress. With its hip cafes, restaurants, bars and clubs frequented by a large student population, Skopje is also emerging on the region's entertainment scene.

In summer try hiking, mountain biking and climbing in remote mountains, some concealing medieval monasteries. Visit Ohrid, noted for its summer festival, sublime Byzantine churches and a large lake. Winter offers skiing at resorts such as Mavrovo, and food-and-grog festivities in the villages. Meeting the locals and partaking in the country's living culture can be as memorable and rewarding as seeing the sights.

When to Go

Skopje



Jun–Aug Enjoy Ohrid's Summer Festival and dive into its 300m-deep lake

Sep & Oct Partake in Skopje's Beer Fest, Jazz Festival and harvest celebrations

Dec–Feb Ski Mavrovo and indulge in Macedonia's holiday 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

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 25,713 sq km
- » **Capital** Skopje
- » **Country code** ☎389
- » **Emergency** Ambulance ☎194, fire ☎193, police ☎192

Exchange Rates

| | | |
|-------------|-------|----------|
| Australia | A\$1 | 50.08MKD |
| Canada | C\$1 | 47.18MKD |
| Euro Zone | €1 | 61.27MKD |
| Japan | ¥100 | 50.81MKD |
| New Zealand | NZ\$1 | 40.14MKD |
| UK | UK£1 | 72.54MKD |
| USA | US\$1 | 47.94MKD |

Set Your Budget

- » **Skopje hotel room** 3000MKD
- » **Two-course meal** 400MKD
- » **Beer** 120MKD
- » **Skopje bus ticket** 35MKD
- » **Petrol (1L)** 100MKD

Resources

- » **Macedonian Welcome Centre** (www.dmw.org.mk)
- » **Macedonian Information Agency** (www.mia.com.mk)
- » **Exploring Macedonia** (www.exploringmacedonia.com)

Connections

Skopje's buses serve Sofia, Belgrade, Budapest, Pristina, Tirana, Istanbul, Thessaloniki and more. The train from Belgrade to Skopje reaches Gevgelija on the Greek border. The long-awaited arrival of budget airlines has improved Skopje's air connections.

ITINERARIES

One Week

Spend two nights in Skopje, marvelling at its bold new architecture on the square, and visiting its Čaršija (old quarter), with historic churches, mosques, museums and an Ottoman castle. Then travel southwest to Macedonia's most evocative and historic town, Ohrid, and its lake, via the lush forested mountains of Mavrovo and Bigorski Monastery, with its spectacular carved iconostasis. After two days, continue to cultured Bitola, the long-famed 'City of Consuls' known for its vibrant cafes and nearby ancient Heraclea and Pelister National Park.

Two Weeks

After Skopje, Ohrid and Bitola, visit Prilep, seeing its historic nearby monasteries. Before returning to Skopje, enjoy wines in the Tikveš wine region and see ancient Roman Stobi.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Ajvar** Sweet red-pepper sauce; accompanies meats and cheeses.
- » **Šopska salata** Tomatoes, onions and cucumbers topped with flaky *sirenje* (white cheese).
- » **Uviač** Rolled chicken or pork wrapped in bacon, filled with melted yellow cheese.
- » **Skopsko** and **Dab lagers** Macedonia's favourite brews.
- » **Rakija** Grape-based firewater, useful for toasts (and cleaning cuts and windows!).
- » **Vranec** and **Temjanika** Macedonia's favourite red- and white-wine varieties.
- » **'Bekonegs'** Not terribly traditional, but you will see this mangled rendition of 'bacon and eggs' on Macedonian breakfast menus.