



Bulgaria

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Manastirska Magernitsa (p232)
- ➔ Mehana Chavkova House (p236)
- ➔ Han Hadji Nikoli (p241)
- ➔ Grazhdanski Klub (p238)
- ➔ Panorama (p246)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Red B&B (p232)
- ➔ Sofia Residence (p232)
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- ➔ Hotel-Mehana Gurko (p241)

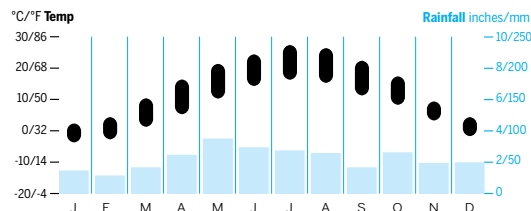
Why Go?

There's a lot to love about Bulgaria: just ask the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines and Turks, all of whom fought to claim it as their own. Billed as the oldest nation on the continent – it preceded ancient Greece by at least 1500 years – Bulgaria is rich with ancient treasure: stories abound of locals planting gardens only to have them ripped up by archaeologists after a turn of the spade unearthed priceless antiquities. The past has been preserved to remarkable effect; everything from Thracian tombs and Hellenic hoards to Roman ruins and medieval fortresses are easily accessible.

Centuries later, this Balkan beauty still beguiles, with a come-hither coastline, voluptuous mountain ranges and lush, fertile valleys laden with vines and roses. Plovdiv is the European Capital of Culture for 2019, Sofia has cool cred to rival any major metropolis, and the lively resorts of the Black Sea coast teem with modern-day pleasure pilgrims.

When to Go

Sofia



Feb Pop your cork at Melnik's Golden Grape Festival.

Jun Celebrate the sweetest harvest at Kazanlak's Rose Festival.

Jul-Sep Spend lazy days on the Black Sea beaches and nights at Bulgaria's best clubs.

Bulgaria Highlights

- 1 Soak up the ancient ambience of **Plovdiv's** awesome Old Town (p237).
- 2 Sip a glass or two of Bulgarian vino in the wine town of **Melnik** (p235).
- 3 Explore the artistic and religious treasures of Bulgaria's most revered monastery at **Rila** (p235).
- 4 Relax on the sands of the Black Sea at **Sozopol** (p246).

- 5 Go clubbing, have a splash, and stroll through Primorski Park in cosmopolitan **Varna** (p243).
- 6 Head back in time through the National Revival houses in **Koprivstitsa** (p239).
- 7 Visit the Tsars' medieval stronghold in **Veliko Tŕnovo** (p240).

