



# Bulgaria България

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## Best Places to Eat

- » Pri Yafata, Sofia (p247)
- » Malŕk Bunardzhik, Plovdiv (p251)
- » Dream House, Sofia (p247)
- » Ego Pizza, Veliko Tŕrnovo (VT; p253)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel Romantica, Plovdiv (p250)
- » Hotel California, Nesebŕr (p258)
- » Red House, Sofia (p246)
- » Phoenix Hostel, VT (p253)
- » X Hostel, Varna (p255)

## Why Go?

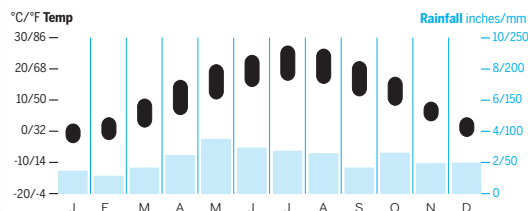
Bulgaria may be best known for its long, sandy Black Sea beaches, but there's much more to see. Bulgaria boasts no fewer than seven mountain ranges and varied landscapes ideal for hiking, cycling, climbing and wildlife watching, as well as modern ski resorts.

You'll find churches and monasteries full of vibrant icons, picturesque villages of timber-framed houses and cobbled lanes, and dramatic reminders of the country's ancient heritage, from Thracian tombs and Roman ruins to medieval fortresses, Ottoman mosques and communist monuments slowly crumbling away into history.

Bulgaria's cities, too, reward visitors, with treasure-filled museums and galleries and cafe-sprinkled parks. Getting around is easy and still remarkably cheap so brush up on your Cyrillic, buy a bus ticket and get ready to explore.

## When to Go

### Sofia



**Jan** Skiing or snowboarding down Mt Vitoshka is just the thing.

**Mar–May** The fine spring weather welcomes folk and music festivals across the country.

**Jun–Sep** Spend lazy days on Black Sea beaches and nights at Bulgaria's best clubs.

## Connections

Although Sofia has international bus and train connections, it's not necessary to backtrack to the capital if you're heading to Bucharest (Romania) or İstanbul (Turkey). From central Veliko Tărnovo, for example, there are daily trains both ways – and several cities offer overnight buses to İstanbul. Heading to Greece or Belgrade (Serbia) by train means going through Sofia; for Skopje (Macedonia), you'll need to catch a bus from Sofia, too.

## ITINERARIES

### One Week

Start off with a full day in Sofia, visiting the Archaeological Museum and Aleksander Nevski church, then take the bus to Veliko Tărnovo for a few days of sightseeing and hiking. For the rest of the week, head to Varna for some sea and sand.

### Two Weeks

After a couple of days in Sofia, catch a bus to Plovdiv and wander the cobbled lanes of the Old Town. From there, take a day trip to visit the Roman spa town of Hisar. After a few days in Plovdiv, make for the coast, staying a couple of nights in ancient Sozopol. Head north to overnight in Varna, then hop on a bus to Veliko Tărnovo.

## Essential Food & Drink

- » **Banitsa** The ultimate Bulgarian street snack, the *banitsa* is a flaky cheese pastry, often served fresh and hot.
- » **Kebabche** There's no escaping this thin, grilled pork sausage, a staple of every *mehana* (tavern) in the country. *Kyufte* is a round, flat, burger-like variation of the same, sometimes filled with cheese.
- » **Tarator** On a hot day there's nothing better than this delicious chilled cucumber and yoghurt soup, served with garlic, dill and crushed walnuts.
- » **Beer** You're never far from a cold beer in Bulgaria. Zargorka, Kamenitza and Shumensko are the most popular nationwide brands, but look for regional brews, too.
- » **Wine** They've been producing wine here since Thracian times, and there are some excellent varieties to try, including the unique, blood-red Melnik.

## AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Lev (lv)
- » **Language** Bulgarian
- » **Money** ATMs are everywhere
- » **Visas** Visas not required for citizens of the EU, UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand

## Fast Facts

- » **Area** 110,910 sq km
- » **Capital** Sofia
- » **Country code** 359
- » **Emergency** 112

## Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	1.44lv
Canada	C\$1	1.41lv
euro zone	€1	1.96lv
Japan	¥100	1.63lv
New Zealand	NZ\$1	1.08lv
UK	UK£1	2.22lv
USA	US\$1	1.34lv

## Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** 40lv
- » **Two-course evening meal** 10lv
- » **Museum entrance** 4–10lv
- » **Beer (bottle)** 1.80lv
- » **City transport ticket** 1lv

## Resources

- » **Bulgaria Travel** ([www.bulgariatravel.org](http://www.bulgariatravel.org))
- » **City Info Guide** ([www.cityinfoguide.net](http://www.cityinfoguide.net))
- » **Novinite** ([www.novinite.com](http://www.novinite.com))
- » **Sofia Life** ([www.sofia-life.com](http://www.sofia-life.com))