



Macedonia

Македонија

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Why Go?

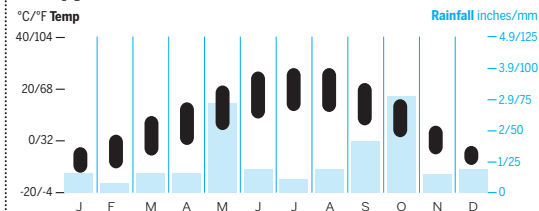
Pound for pound, Macedonia's hard to beat. Part Balkan and part Mediterranean, and offering impressive ancient sites and buzzing modern nightlife, the country packs in much more action, activities and natural beauty than would seem possible for a place its size. Because it's small, getting around is easy and cheap.

In summer, try hiking, mountain biking and climbing in remote mountains, or explore the Old Towns of the capital, Skopje, and Ohrid, noted for its sublime Byzantine churches and an immense lake that's great for swimming.

Still largely undiscovered, Macedonia retains an authenticity 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.

When to Go

Skopje



Jun–Aug Enjoy the Ohrid Summer Festival's concerts and nightlife, and dive into Ohrid's lake.

Sep & Oct An Indian summer sees Skopje's Beer Fest, Pivlend, and harvest celebrations.

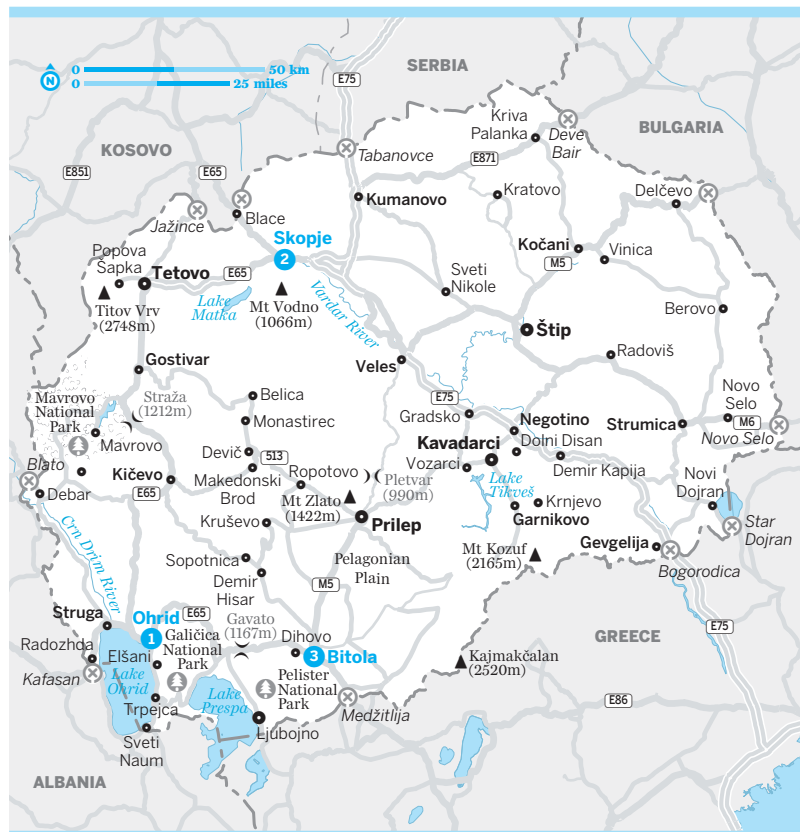
Dec–Feb Ski mountain getaways and experience Macedonia's idiosyncratic winter carnivals.

Skopje Ckonje

202 / POP 670,000

Skopje's transformation continues: once a drab, foregone former communist conclusion, it's still concrete, but now adorned with an odd assortment of statues, sculptures and grand buildings. While still thus reserved for experiments in architecture, Skopje's also becoming a livelier place to visit galleries, eat, drink and make merry, as well as boasting numerous historic and cultural attractions to entice visitors.

Confined by the forested Mt Vodno and bisected by the Vardar River, Skopje in winter is enveloped by an all-pervasive fog, symbolic of the conspiratorial overtones of a small Balkan city haunted by foreign diplomats and partisan intrigue. But it also offers Ottoman- and Byzantine-era wonders such as the 15th-century Kamenii Most (Stone Bridge), the *Čaršija* (old Turkish bazaar), the Church of Sveti Spas, with its ornate, hand-carved iconostasis, and the nearby Tvrđina Kale fortress, Skopje's guardian since the 5th century.



Macedonia Highlights

- 1 Gaze out over Ohrid from the **Church of Sveti Jovan at Kaneo** (p831), immaculately set on a bluff above the lake
- 2 Unwind in historic **Skopje** (below), combining Ottoman and Byzantine architecture with nightlife
- 3 Enjoy the old-world ambience of **Bitola** (p833) and visit nearby Pelister National Park