

Wine & Dine (Bulgaria)



The sun, the vine and wine have been symbols of Bulgaria since antiquity. Thracians, the first known inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula, were experienced vine-growers and wine producers. It was believed that Thracian wine is a precious elixir which provides strength, courage and inspiration. The Thracian god of wine and fertility, Dionysius, became one of the most esteemed gods not only in Hellenic history, but also in Roman mythology and latterly all over the world. During the Roman times and after when the Slavs and Bulgarians inhabited the Balkans and founded the Bulgarian state in 681, the ancient vine-growing and wine producing traditions were inherited and greatly developed. During the Middle Ages the monasteries owned most of the lands where viticulture was widespread. Monastic wines, kept in special cold cellars, became famous abroad for their extremely good quality. Today vine-growing and wine production is an important part Bulgarian life. Not a single major event in an everyday Bulgarian's world passes without plenty of fragrant wine or fruity Bulgarian brandy being present for the celebration.

Departure dates:

01 April 2008 - 31 October 2008 **every day**

Country region: Around Bulgaria

Price with flight ticket: KD850

At the same time Bulgaria is renowned for its delicious cuisine. It is tasty, spicy and varied – which means it tends to appeal to everybody. This "culinary" geography abounds in delicious specialities and exotic dishes: Bansko-style kapama, Rhodope cheverme, Thracian katmi and Dobrudzha banitsa, Bulgarian yoghurt, and not least the famous Bulgarian Shopska salad... The list is endless. Enjoy this Wine & Dine Bulgarian Style tour and NAZDRAVE ("cheers").

Trip plan:

Day 1: Arrival at Sofia or Plovdiv Airport. Transfer to a hotel in Sofia. Dinner and overnight stay in Sofia.

Day 2: Sightseeing Sofia. Departure to the famous Rila Monastery – the largest and one of the most spectacular religious sites in Bulgaria. Afternoon drive to Melnik – the smallest inhabited town in Bulgaria, famous for its local brands of red wines. Sightseeing tour of Melnik, wine tasting and dinner. Overnight in Melnik.

Day 3: Visit to the picturesque Rozhen Monastery, noted for its magnificent woodcarvings. Drive to Plovdiv. En route stop in Brestovitsa for wine tasting. Dinner and overnight stay in Plovdiv.

Day 4: Sightseeing in Plovdiv. In the afternoon visit the Bachkovo Monastery – the second largest in Bulgaria. Wine tasting in Assenovgrad. Dinner and overnight stay in Plovdiv.

Day 5: Departure for Kazanlak and visit to a replica Thracian tomb and the museum of Roses followed by a visit of the Shipka gold-domed church and the lately discovered "Goliama Kosmatka" tomb. On the way to Veliko Tarnovo visit to the open-air museum at Etara. The museum was built as a Craftsman street. Still the craftsman here produce their unique art pieces of copper, goat's fur, wood, steel, potter's clay and silver. Dinner and overnight stay in Veliko Tarnovo or Arbanasi.

Day 6: Sightseeing Veliko Tarnovo. Afternoon visit to Liaskovets and its winery – famous for its high quality still and sparkling wines. You will have the opportunity to sample the best red and sparkling Liaskovets wines. Take a late afternoon sightseeing tour of Arbanasi. Dinner and overnight stay either in Veliko Tarnovo or Arbanasi.

Day 7: Departure for the town of Troyan for tasting the infamous Troyan brandies (made from plums). Troyan brandies are very popular and steadily gaining acknowledgement abroad. Continue to Koprivshitsa via the famed Rose Valley. Tour of this romantic National Revival museum town. Late in the afternoon drive to Sofia or Plovdiv. Dinner and overnight stay in Sofia or Plovdiv.

Day 8: Transfer to the airport for departure.

Accommodation and food: Seven nights in shared double rooms (2-3 star hotels with en-suite facilities) on HB (breakfast and dinner included); wine tasting included as per itinerary

Price of extra services: Single room supplement: KD50

Included in the price: Accommodation and board as outlined above; transfers to/from Sofia and Plovdiv Airport; English-speaking guide and private transfers throughout the tour; entrance fees everywhere; VAT and all local taxes.

Practical information: EXTENSION AT THE BLACK SEA COAST: we have a unique proposal, which gives you the opportunity to stay on a sea holiday for extra week after your active tour at an incredibly low price! We can offer a great variety of means of accommodation - from home stays to 4-star hotels in Sozopol, Nessebar, Sunny Beach, Lozenets, St. Vlas, Golden Sands etc. and all this with arranged transportation right after your tour and before your departure flight (prices vary between KD85 and

KD250 per person per week depending on the hotel category and the meal plan; transportation is included). For more information please check "Vacation extensions" below.

Recommended travel period of the year: April – October

Tour difficulty: A 

No special experience is needed; everyone who is in condition to cope with long Saturday walks in the forest can also cope with these tours. As a rule, the trips are short and at a low altitude. Often, it is your choice to join or skip a day-tour. The routes follow a hilly terrain without steep ascents and descents. Normally we walk 3/5h a day.

Group Size: min 4