

Tourism

Bulgaria is a small country (2% of the territory of Europe), but it is blessed with magnificent nature. 37 mountains can be found on a territory of only 111 993 sq.km., each different from the others, with its own charm and attractions. The temperate climate makes Bulgaria an attractive destination during all four seasons of the year. All of these favorable factors contribute to making tourism the fastest growing branch in the country over the past 5 years. In 2006 and 2007 Bulgaria was visited by 15 225 747 foreign tourists and the revenues from tourism were more than 4 billion Euro.

Virgin natural beauty, ancient cultures, picturesque villages frozen in time, where life marches in the rhythm of centuries long past – these are only some of the visions and emotions you will be able to store forever in your memories. Thousands of opportunities to study the wild flora and fauna and tempting hiking trips await all those wishing to enjoy of the beauty of Bulgarian nature. To witness the colorful traditions, preserved in many parts of the country, to taste local culinary specialties and wines or to master some traditional craft – these are some more opportunities offered by an exciting tour of this small country with rich history and culture. Village, spa, ecological, mountain, adventure, religious, and cultural tourism are the fastest growing branches of tourism over the past few years.

Black Sea Coast

Bulgarian sea resorts offer excellent accommodation at five, four, three, and two-star hotels, both seasonal and working all year round, offering a variety of opportunities for sports and entertainment.

The following Bulgarian sea resorts were awarded the prestigious Blue Flag Award: Roussalka, Albena, Golden Sands, Riviera, Sunny Day, Elenite, Nessebar Beach, Sunny Beach, Pomorie Beach, Duni, and the International Youth Center in Primorsko. Various harbours and piers provide opportunities for yachting, surfing, water skiing, scuba diving, motor driving.

Congress Tourism

There are major congress centres in Sofia, Varna and Plovdiv. Many municipal centres have also the potential to turn into centres for congress tourism. The National Palace of Culture and the Universiada Hall in Sofia, the Festival and Congress Center in Varna, the Palace of Sports and Culture in Varna - they all are of great significance for the country. The following

hotels offer excellent conditions for the development of congress tourism: in Sofia - the Sheraton Sofia Hotel Balkan, Kempinski-Zografski, Rodina, Princess and Park Hotel Moskva; on the Black Sea - the Riviera Vacation Club, Frederic Joliot-Curie International Academic Centre, Grand Hotel Varna, the Congress Centre in Albena.

Ski Resorts

The winter tourism develops even more intensively. More than EUR 500 million investments were allocated to the Bansko resort, and even more are planned for other traditional winter resort like Borovets and Pamporovo in the coming year. The sustained growth stimulates investments in the branch. The facilities are being renovated while the prices in Bulgaria remain considerably lower than in competitive countries. The capacity of the winter resort increases. During the summer Alps-like mountains offer opportunities for mountain, rock climbing and caving in the 4300 caves (12 are supplied with electricity). Higher mountain areas provide excellent conditions

Tourist Opportunities

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UNESCO Heritage

The UNESCO List of World Heritage now features over 300 landmarks.

Nine Bulgarian wonders: seven cultural and two natural sites are included among them: Rila Monastery, Nessebur, The Kazanluk Tomb, The Sveshtari Tomb, The Madara Horseman, The Boyana Church, The Ivanovo Rock Monasteries, Pirin National Park, Sreburna Lake.

Wine Tourism

Wine tourism in Bulgaria is the latest attraction for foreign tourists. Wine routes will lead you to incredible places, and the taste of Bulgarian wines will overwhelm you with its richness and body. Combined with the irresistible temptations of the traditional local cuisine, the wine tasting parties can become true gastronomic celebrations. Bulgarian people have inherited the rich traditions in wine making from their early antecedents, the ancient Thracians. Over the past few years, many leading Bulgarian wine producers have opened wine tasting rooms where their guests can enjoy the excellent quality, taste and aroma of Bulgarian red and white wines - table, sparkling and fizzy. Wine tours are organized throughout the year.