

# DISCOVER THE EAST!

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## The Classic Pirin and Rila Walking Trip

### Overview

This is a must do 8-day walking route that covers the best of the [mountains of Bulgaria](#) and is designed for keen walkers who like to spend 5 to 8h/day up the mountains, 6 days in a row. The day treks are strenuous, but totally doable for active people in average fitness condition. The terrain is sometimes rocky and demanding, but the routes entirely follow marked and established tourist hiking trails within the Rila and Pirin national parks.

The route covers the peaks of Polezan and Vihren in the [Pirin Mountains](#), as well as numerous glacial lakes in the area – Todorini, Vasilashki, Bunderishki, Bezbog. Further you`ll visit Rila with the peaks of Musala (the highest on the Balkans) with Musalenski Lakes and Malyovitsa with the Dear`s Lake – both the highest and the most beautiful in [the Rila Mountains](#). A cultural and rest day in the middle of the itinerary includes a visit to the world famous Rila Monastery.

Transfers and luggage transfers are provided everyday and hiking is with a day pack only. The accommodation is in family type hotels – 4

Pirin&Rila Ranges, Bulgaria

8 days/7 nights

▲2925m ⌚4-8hrs ↪7-14km

↑650-1150m ↓650-1000m

Cost for 2 pax: 550EUR/person

Transfers included: Yes✓

Luggage Transport: Yes✓

Bed&Meals: Yes✓

Accommodation: Family hotels

Best season: July to  
September

nights in Bansko – a small town, located between the main mountain ranges of Bulgaria, and 3 nights in Govedartsı village, Rila.

Options to add a night in Sofia or to upgrade to higher class SPA hotels are available. Beside the detailed road book and assistance in the mountains, we are more than happy to provide you with info on all other aspects of the trip – cultural, entertainment, additional activities, travel options – please contact us.

## **Trip Price**

550 EUR/person in a minimal group of 2.

Single room additional supplement: +80EUR

## **Price includes**

- Accommodation for 7 nights in a family 3\* hotels, on a double/twin en suite room basis.
- Meals – 7 breakfasts and 5 dinners (two of the dinners in Bansko we leave on your preference).
- All the transfers and luggage transfers from/to Sofia according to the itinerary.
- Our self-guided service – road book, maps, phone navigation assistance&gps tracks, 24/7 assistance during the trip.
- Local taxes.

## **Not included**

- Mountain guide.
- GPS unit (we provide assistance in using your smartphone for navigation).

- 2 of the dinners in Bansko, packed lunches, drinks.
- Lift tickets (appx. 17.5 EUR per person).
- Travel/mountain rescue insurance – obligatory.
- Entrance fees to museums and other sights.

## Short Itinerary

**Day 1:** Arrival in Bansko, Pirin Mountains, accommodation for 4 nights.

**Day 2:** Pirin Mountains – Polezan Peak, up to 2851m, 4:30h of walking.

**Day 3:** Pirin Mountains – Vasilashki&Bunderishki Lakes, up to 2600m, 7:30h of walking.

**Day 4:** Pirin Mountains – Mount Vihren, up to 2914m, 7h of walking.

**Day 5:** Pirin Mountains – Rila Monastery – Rila Mountains, Govedarsti – 3 night stay.

**Day 6:** Rila Mountains – Malyovitsa Peak, up to 2729m, 7h of walking.

**Day 7:** Rila Mountains – Musala Peak, up to 2925m, 6:30h of walking.

**Day 8:** Departure to Sofia.

## Detailed Itinerary

**Day 1:** Arrival day

On the first day of your trip you`ll be collected from your hotel in Sofia or the Sofia airport and driven to the first location of your walking trip in Bulgaria - [the town of Bansko](#). While it is a bustling ski destination during Winter, now you will find Bansko a charming quiet town that is worth to visit and explore for a while – the old stone houses own and the church, the small museums and the lively main square with mountain view. If you have the time do not miss the

Sunday open market where locals (and not only) from the region offer their production. Bansko also has a good choice of traditional restaurants, some bars and other entertainment. The natural thermal pools of the nearby villages of Dobrinishte and Banya are easily accessible.

Accommodation in a quiet family hotel in the center of Bansko for 4 nights – double/twin en suite rooms and delicious homemade dinner. During your stay in Bansko, 2 of the dinners are arranged with the hotel, two are left to your own choice - we will recommend places to eat outside in Bansko.

### **Day 2: Mount Polezan**

▲2851m ⌚4:30hrs ↪6.3km ↑595m ↓595m

First day up the mountains. About 40 min transfer will take us to Gotse Delchev Hut at around 1400m above the sea level. There is a chair lift service up to 2240m near Bezbog Hut, the start point of the trek for today.

The highest point for today is Mount Polezan, the fourth highest peak in Pirin. It is a very panoramic peak, with views towards the main mountain ranges in the region – [Rhodopes](#), Rila, Pirin and some Greek mountains are clearly visible in good weather. Lift back down and transfer to Bansko, some free time to look around the town.

### **Day 3: Vasilashki&Bunderishki Lakes**

▲2588m ⌚7:30hrs ↪14km ↑1150m ↓650m

This is our "Lakes" day. The route goes through a couple of valleys, where we will see quite a few of the numerous glacial lakes of Pirin.

The day starts with a 20 min transfer up to the start point above Bansko. Initially the large walking trail follows the crystal clear river of Demyanitsa through the forest until you reach Demyanitsa Hut near the border of Yulen Reserve. Further you enter the territory of the reserve which protects some of the oldest conifer forests of Pirin, especially the so called Bosnian Pine (*Pinus Heldreichii*) – impressive centuries-old pine giants.

The first steeper ascent after the hut will take us above the forest line and up to the lowest one of Vasilashki Lakes – Golyamo Vasilashko Ezero (The Big One). Further we slowly gain elevation following the valley and more and more views and lakes will open up in front of us. By lunch time we should pass near the highest two lakes in the valley – Todorini Ochi Lakes (The Eyes of Todorka) and reach the pass of Todorka.

The descent starts from the col on the ridge at nearly 2600 m – a zig-zagging trail leads us down to Bundersihka Valley in the foot of Mount Vihren. Another 5 lakes (Bunderishki Lakes) are located in this area and we will spot them all in good weather – The Long One, The Fish Lake, Muratovo Lake, The Frogs Lake and The Eye. After the initial steeper ascent a gentle trail goes down to Vihren Hut – end of the trek for today. 30 min transfer back down to Bansko.

#### **Day 4: Mount Vihren**

▲2914m ⌚7:00hrs ↪8km ↑1000m ↓1000m

Exciting day is in front of us – ascent of the highest peak of Pirin Mountains – **Vihren Peak**, the stone kingdom of the Balkan Chamois and the Edelweiss flower. Transfer back to Vihren Hut, which is the start point of the route today. The route is short in km but with steady inclination and rocky terrain, so be well prepared with walking sticks and good boots.

Note: in case you have fear of heights and rocky passages, we would recommend you to follow the south trail only – up and down the same way. Otherwise the loop we suggest initially traverses the slopes of Vihren and we ascent from the north, where the last passage is a bit more technical (please read below), than we descent from the south back to Vihren Hut.

The ascending trail traverses the east slopes of Vihren until we enter the so called Big Pot – a glacially formed cirque which divides Vihren from the Marble Ridge, with impressive views towards the north face of Vihren. We ascent up to Premkata Col (possible detour to the Foal Ridge and back) and finally follow the markers up along the rocky slope of Vihren. This part of the trail requires little scrambling and although it is not risky (secured by a metal chain)

nor requires any special skills, it is not suitable for people with strong fear of heights. The descent from the top is on the other (south) side, until we reach Vihren Hut and get our transport back to Bansko.

**Day 5: Rila Monastery and rest day**

Optional 2:15h walk ~3km ↑50m ↓300m

Today we will change the region and move from Pirin to the Rila Range. After breakfast, a 2h morning transfer will take us to the world famous UNESCO heritage site in Bulgaria – [the Rila Monastery](#).

Optionally you could be drive a few km above the monastery in order to visit the chapel and the grave of Ivan Rilski – the Founder. A 2h enjoyable hike passing by the grave will take you to the monastery to visit.

After lunch, 1:45h drive to the village of Govedartsı, your next location. Accommodation in a family hotel for 3 nights.

**Day 6: Mount Malyovitsa**

▲2729m ⌚7:00hrs ~13.7km ↑1000m ↓1000m

We are aiming the most beautiful prominent peak in the Rila Mts today – Mount Malyovitsa. 25 min transfer will take us to the start point at 1760 m, at the border of the [Rila National Park](#). The walking trail follows Malyovitsa River and for about an hour we reach Malyovitsa Hut. Further up the valley the route follows the easiest terrain in order to reach the Dear`s Lake, located at 2480 m. The last section up to the top takes less than an hour – we reach the main ridge, with clear views towards the Rila Monastery at the bottom of the valley south from us, as well as the Pirin Range, Vitosha Mountains, large parts of the Rila Mountains and Musala Peak. After we reach the peak of Malyovitsa, we would walk back on a similar path, drive to the hotel in Govedartsı.

## **Day 7: Mount Musala**

▲2925m ⌚6:30hrs ↪14.4km ↑650m ↓650m

The natural finish of our walking adventure in Bulgaria is to climb its highest peak – **Mount Musala**. This morning, a 30 min transfer will take us to the ski resort of Borovets, where we take the Yastrebets gondola lift up to nearly 2400 m.

We would start hiking with 1h of nearly flat terrain until we reach Musala Hut. The next stage is up to Ledeno Ezero Hut, located in the foot of Musala, at 2700 a.s.l. We follow a marked tourist trail winding through the bottom of the glacial valley, near the blue Musala Lakes. Last effort will take us up to the peak – around 45 min of walking a steeper zig-zagging trail up to the top of Musala. Same way back to your hotel in Govedartsi for a last third night there.

## **Day 8: Departure**

There are a few options for that day:

- Main one, calculated in the cost – we will drive you from Govedartsi straight to the Sofia airport or Sofia city center. The ride takes less than 2h.
- We can drive you to Sofia on the previous evening, after climbing Musala and change the last night in Govedartsi with accommodation in Sofia. Please request us for the additional cost.
- We can extend the itinerary with a day of self-guided cultural&historical explore of Sofia plus additional night there. We will offer you a great way to get to know the city self-guided.

## **General Tour Info**

## **The service we provide**

It includes 24/7 assistance, a detailed road book which day by day route descriptions and the general advice you need on all aspects of the trip – equipment, important phone numbers and online resources, general safety rules, do-s and don`t-s. We will also provide you with the best available maps, instructions and support when installing a navigation app and the relevant maps on your phone, gpx tracks of the route, including alternatives and emergency escapes, if needed.

## **The best period for this tour**

Best time to take this trip is July to September. More info on [hiking in Bulgaria in Spring](#) and [hiking during Autumn](#).

The [Weather forecasts](#)

More about [Rila Mountains](#)

More about [Pirin Mountains](#)

General safety advice: [here](#)

## **Equipment list**

- hiking boots with ankle support or waterproof trainers with stiff sole plus trekking poles
- rainproof/windproof jacket with hood
- quick dry type long sleeve pants
- a thin down jacket or a fleece layer
- rucksack 25-45l
- sun protection – lotion, glasses, hat
- rain protection – rucksack cover or raincoat
- a pair of thin gloves and a warm hat
- personal first aid kit – any medicines you take, blister kit
- trekking poles highly recommended
- Water bottle – 1-1,5l, snacks
- Although nearly all huts provide bed sheets, we recommend you to use your own travel liner.