



Guided and self-guided tours in Bulgaria and the Balkans – hiking, ski touring, mountain biking and snowshoeing trips

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Walking in Bulgaria - Rila and Pirin 1000+, 8 days

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 visiting and exploring for a while – the old stone houses 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 2 nights – double/twin en suite rooms.

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: Mount Vihren& The Marble Ridge

2914m; 9:30hrs ~15.3km ↑1500m ↓1660m

This is your most challenging day. The route goes through the highest peak and the main ridge of Pirin, crossing the famous Foal ridge. Close to the Edelweiss flowers ,the chamois and with endless panoramas of the mountains in all directions.

The day starts with a 20 min transfer up to the start point above Bansko. An 800 m ascent will take us to the col between the highest peaks of Pirin – Vihen and Kutelo. First we climb Vihren, then, returning back to the col, we will climb the peak of Kutelo and further follow the ridge towards The Foal.

The Foal is the dream of every local mountaineer and hiker, a 300 m knife sharp part of the ridge. It is well secured with a metal railing and no specific equipment or technical skills are required to cross it, but good stamina, focus and lack of strong fear of heights.

Further we continue along the ridge and finally descend to Yavorov Hut, one of the best mountain huts in the country.

Accommodation in dormitory rooms. Please note the main luggage is not transported on that day, so we bring toothbrush, towel and spare clothes with us.

Day 4: Yavorov Hut – Rila Monastery

1720m; 4:00hrs ~10km ↑200m ↓700m

This is a more relaxing day after the big ridge day and before our next challenge. Today we have a 2h pleasant ascent through the beautiful forests of Pirin down to the meet point with our transport.

1.45h drive will take us to the area of the Rila Monastery – the biggest one in the country and a UNESCO site. We will stop for lunch by one of the local fish farms. Further 30 min drive to the start point of our afternoon hike through Rila Monastery Nature Park, famous with its biodiversity and forests. We will visit the cave of the founder of the Rila Monastery – Ivan Rilski, and will finally descend back down to the monastery. Visit and accommodation in a nearby family hotel.

Day 5: Sapareva Banya – The Seven Rila Lakes - Mount Malyovitsa - Govedartsı village

2600m; 8:30hrs ~14 km ↑1125m ↓1030m

We start our day with a short transfer to the bottom station of the chair lift at Panichishte. We take the lift up to 2140 m, our start point for the day. Rila Lakes hut is located here, at the bottom of the beautiful valley of the Seven Rila Lakes.

We will pass by the lakes, gently ascending up to the main ridge. Further we follow the ridge, crossing the peak of Dodov Vrah and,

finally, the peak of Malyovitsa - the beauty of Rila. 1000 m of descent along a challenging trail will bring us down to the transport for a short ride to our next accommodation. On the way down we will pass by the Dears Lake and Malyovitsa Hut.

Accommodation in a family hotel for 3 nights.

Day 6: Strashnoto and Yonchevo Lakes

6:30hrs ~11.8km ↑815m ↓815m

We are aiming for the hidden gem of the area today - Strashnoto (The Scary) Lake, located at the foot of Kupenie peaks. Firstly, we will reach Yonchevo Lake, located at around 2100 m, before the final ascent to Strashnoto. There is a little shelter on the shore of the lake and the views to the rocky peaks of the main ridge are magnificent. Descent via Malyovitsa Hut back to the transport.

Accommodation at the same hotel in Govedartsi.

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 Yastrebits 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.