



Travel to
Bulgaria
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Jim Gold International Folk Tours

Bulgaria !

Folk Culture, Folk Dancing, History, Art, Music, Adventure

August 1-13, 2012

**Sofia, Plovdiv, Bansko, Veliko Turnovo,
Koprivshtitsa Folk Festival!**

Led by Toba Goddard

The magic and adventure of Bulgaria !

Join us as we travel with local musicians and Bulgarian folk dance teacher, dance at the local **Koprivshtitsa Folk Festival**, explore monuments of ancient **Thrace, Greece, Rome, Byzantium**, and medieval **Bulgaria**, visit **Sofia**, scenic **Bansko** in the **Pirin Mountains**, artistic **Plovdiv**, 10th-century **Rila Monastery** with its icons and murals, dramatic **Veliko Turnovo**, medieval capital and birthplace of the Second Bulgarian Empire, and **Black Sea extension!**. Our price includes round trip jet from New York, transfers, hotels, two meals daily, an English speaking guide, our own private bus and driver, and all entrance and performance fees.

Our Itinerary

- Day 1: Wednesday, August 1:** Depart on Air France from JFK airport in New York City.
- Day 2: Thursday, August 2:** Arrival in Sofia. Transfer to 5-star Radisson SAS located in the heart of the city. Welcome dinner at **Victoria Restaurant**. Overnights at **Radisson Hotel**.
- Day 3: Friday, August 3:** Sightseeing walking tour of Sofia: **Alexander Nevski Cathedral, National Parliament, Saint Sofia Basilica, 4th century Saint George Rotunda, ruins of Roman Serdica**. Optional visit: Sephardic Synagogue, largest in Eastern Europe. Afternoon free to explore museums, galleries, shops, bistros. **Folklore Dinner** with live show and wine.
- Day 4: Saturday, August 4:** Further sightseeing, this time of greater Sofia. Visit the **National Museum of History** in the prestigious Boyana District. Continue through the wooded Vitoshka mountain, to the village of Kovachevtsi to attend the singing workshop at the Summer School of **Kremena Stancheva, world famous Bulgarian folk singer**. After a traditional home-made lunch, return to Sofia through the picturesque Iskar River Gorge, with stops in the Town of **Samokov**. (optional visit to synagogue and Museum House of Ariel, a Jewish family known as first modern bankers in Bulgaria) and the **Iskar dam**, largest artificial lake on the Balkans. Evening free.
- Day 5: Sunday, August 5:** Drive to 10th-century Rila Monastery (in UNESCO's list of world heritage). Enjoy a fresh trout lunch on the bank of a mountain river, then drive downhill to the city of Blagoevgrad, home of **the American University in Bulgaria**, continue through Predela mountain pass separating the Rila and Pirin mountains, highest ranges in the Balkans, to the town of **Bansko**. Overnights in luxurious five-star **Hotel Kempinski Grand Arena**.
- Day 6: Monday, August 6:** Walking tour of Bansko, a stronghold of Bulgarian culture and tradition. Then visit the **mysterious village of Dobarsko**, where the local choir **Dobarski Babi** will give us a private performance followed by a traditional Bulgarian banista and yogurt snack. Late afternoon **picnic dinner at Chalin's Farm** including horse cart ride, wine, and live music.

- Day 7: Tuesday, August 7:** This morning we'll journey into the heart of wild nature, a unique ride on the **narrow-gauge railway** from Bansko to Avramovi Kolibi, highest railway station on the Balkans! Then drive through the beautiful pine forests of the Rhodopes—the mountain of Orpheus, to Velingrad, spa-capital of Bulgaria. Stop for a delicious lunch before driving through the Upper Thracian Valley, a fertile land known as Bulgaria's fruit and vegetable basket, on to the artistic capital. Of Plovdiv. Evening free. Overnights at hotel **Trimontium-Princess.**
- Day 8: Wednesday, August 8:** Morning sightseeing tour of **Plovdiv's Old Quarter**, known as Bulgaria's Montmartre for its art galleries and antique shops. View masterpieces of 17th to 19th century Bulgarian architecture, a 2nd century **Roman Theater**, and the country's richest **Ethnographic Museum.** Afternoon at leisure. Dinner with chamber music at famous **Alafrangi Restaurant** where Pope John Paul 2nd lunched during his visit in 2001.
- Day 9: Thursday, August 9:** Drive through **Valley of the Roses to the Valley of Thracian Kings (UNESCO's site).** Visit the recently discovered **Kosmatka Tomb**, the gold-domed **Shipka Memorial Church** before crossing the **Balkan Mountains** through the **Shipka Pass** with **Liberty Monument** commemorating Bulgaria's Liberation from Turkey in 1878. Afternoon visit to **Etura Open Air Crafts Museum** displaying two centuries of country houses and crafts. Arrive in **Veliko Turnovo**, Bulgaria's medieval capital. Overnights at **the Grand Yantra Hotel.**
- Day 10: Friday, August 10:** Sightseeing tour of **Veliko Turnovo.** Visit the dramatic **Tsarevets Royal Hill** with its palaces and churches perched on cliffs of Yantra River gorge. In the afternoon, we'll drive to the charming village of **Arbanassi**, summer residence of medieval royalty. Dinner in a stylish local restaurant with live music.
- Days 11-12, Saturday-Sunday, August 11-12: KOPRIVSHTITSA FOLK FESTIVAL!**
After early breakfast, drive through the scenic Beklemeto mountain pass to Koprivshitsa, for the opening of the local Koprivshitsa Folklore Festival! Morning walking tour to see the authentic architecture of Bulgaria's National Revival Period (18-19th century). In the afternoon, enjoy singing and dancing at the festival! Overnights at the small country hotels Bashtina Kashta, Astra, Kolorit, and Dahlia.
- Day 13, Monday, August 13:** Transfer to Sofia Airport for your flight home.

Land Only: \$2595 app Land and Air: \$3595 app

REGISTRATION FORM: I can't wait to go! Enclosed is my registration deposit of \$200 per person. Single supplement: \$395 app. Additional charges: air tax: \$475 app \$85 hotel taxes and service charges. Gratuities not included. Cancellations 30 to 45 days prior to departure: Refund 50% of total price. Less than 30 days: No refund

Total balance due May 10, 2012.

Name _____
 Address _____
 No. of people _____ Phone_(_____) _____

Make checks payable to: **Jim Gold International**, 497 Cumberland Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666 U.S.A
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