

Wines of Bulgaria**9 days – 8 nights****Sofia, Boyana, Vratsa, Prevala, Magura, Belogradchik, Vidin, Plevan, Troyan, Oreshak, Veliko
Tarnovo, Melnik, Rila****Wines, Gastronomy, History, Culture, Discovery**

**This program may be operated for individuals or for groups
This is a suggested itinerary**

A thousand years before the Romans, the Thracians planted the first vines on the north and south slopes of the Balkan Mountains. They introduced vinicultural techniques, worshiped Dionysus, the god of wine, by eating, drinking and partying, and developed special tools for growing vines and producing wine.

Day 1: Sofia (Boyana)

After you pass customs and immigration at Sofia airport you'll be met and driven to your hotel. In the afternoon take a sightseeing tour of the city center including Saint George Rotunda (4th century), National Theater, Russian Church of Saint Nicholas, National Assembly Square, Alexander Nevsky Cathedral with the Museum of Bulgarian Icons (13-19th century). Then visit the Boyana Church, a UNESCO site in the outskirts of city, and the National History Museum, one of the most important and richest in the Balkans, housing more than 700,000 artefacts that trace the history from 7,000 years ago to present-day Bulgaria. Return to the Sofia for a folk dinner at the traditional restaurant Vodenitzata. Overnight in Sofia. [D]

Day 2: Sofia, Vratsa, Prevala, Magura, Belogradchik

After breakfast a 90-minute drive will take us to Vratsa for a short-guided tour of the city before a visit to the Ledenika Cave, a short 10 miles away. The cave is approximately 1,000-foot long and features an abundance of galleries and 10 halls with impressive karst formations including stalactites and stalagmites dating back a thousand years. Continue to Prevala for a homemade lunch in the village. Get acquainted with the local production of sweets, jams and bread and old-fashioned weaving. Then, we head for Magura to visit the cave that, according to geological studies, began to take shape about 15 million years ago. In one of the caverns prehistoric paintings depict the silhouettes of women and men dancing and hunting, people wearing masks, animals, stars, tools, and plants. Continue to Rabisha for a tour of the Magura winery and tasting local vintages and sparkling wines. Short drive to Belogradchik for dinner and overnight. [B/L/T/D]

Day 3: Belogradchik (Vidin)

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel and start your visit the Belogradchik fortress built by the Romans during the first 3 centuries of the Modern Era. Then, continue to Vidin for a city tour and to visit the medieval castle of Baba Vida, built on the ruins of the ancient city of Bononia. After the visit enjoy a wine tasting at the Borovitzia Winery, famous for its selected Cuvée Blanc and classic red wines. Return to Belogradchik for dinner at Mislen Kamak, a restaurant with a great view and great traditional eastern European food. Overnight at the hotel. [B/T/D]

Day 4: Belogradchik, Plevan

Before leaving the city, we visit "Chateau Burgozone" a winery that receives and processes only grapes from its own vineyards. The aging of the wine is made in vessels in a variety of volumes from 2 to 15 tons and in oak barrels, which allows the production of boutique wines of the highest quality. We leave the winery for a 3-hour drive to Plevan, a very old town, where we stop for lunch. The first vestiges of human civilization in the region date from the end of the 5th millennium BC. At the beginning of our era, the territory was attached to the Roman Empire and was accessible through a road linked the Roman city of Ulpia Oescus (on the Danube, now Oescus) to Philippopolis (now Plovdiv). Visit Plevan Panorama – 1877, a unique monument built on the battlefield to celebrate the centenary of Plevan's liberation from Ottoman rule during the Turkish War. After a guided city tour, continue to the Kailaka

Wine Museum for a tasting of local wines. Free time. This evening your guide will take you to “Pinch of Love” restaurant for a typical dinner. Overnight in Pleven. [B/T/D]

Day 5: Pleven, Troyan, Oreshak, Veliko Tarnovo

A 1-hour drive will take us to the Troyan Monastery, the third in size in Bulgaria, a cultural monument of national importance founded in 1600 and restored to its present state between 1830 and 1865. Then, visit the National Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Oresha, a permanent exhibition for Bulgarian artists and craftsmen. A quick drive to the village of Beli Osam for a traditional lunch. ON the way to Veliko Tarnovo stop at Troyan for a tasting of plum brandies, for which the city of Troyan is very famous. Continue to Veliko Tarnovo for a walking tour of the city center and dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight at Veliko Tarnovo. [B/L/T/D]



Day 6: Veliko Tarnovo, Sofia

The city has remained in Bulgarian history and collective memory as the majestic and flourishing capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. We'll visit Tsarevets, the medieval fortress, and the 17th century shopping street “Samovodska Tcharchia”. Free time before departing for Sofia where, in the late afternoon, we stop at the Sofia Wine House, the oldest wine museum in the city, for wine tasting before dinner and overnight at your hotel. [B/T/D]

Day 7: Sofia, Melnik

Departure for Melnik, a picturesque town at the foot of the Pirin mountain, famous for its wines. Visit the Kordopoulova house, built in 1754 by the wine merchant Manolis Kordopoulis famous throughout Europe at the time. In the wine cellar you can see large barrels that keep the famous Melnik wine. End the morning with a wine tasting at Villa Melnik wine cellar, a family-owned producer of brave wines from indigenous and international grapes with a distinct Melnik character. Lunch in the city. In the afternoon, visit the monastery of Rozhen, the largest monastery in the Pirin mountain, founded in the 13th century. Dinner and overnight in Melnik. (B/L/T/D)

Day 8: Melnik, Rila, Sofia

After breakfast we drive around 2 hours to Rila Monastery, a UNESCO site, the most famous and fascinating monastery in Bulgaria. The entire complex is quite impressive for its size. The 4-floor residential part consists of no less than 300 monks' cells, 4 chapels, an abbot's room, kitchen, library and guestrooms for donors. The kitchen is particularly interesting for its really huge cooking vessels. The exterior of the monastery is no less intriguing for its high and severe stone walls (reaching 4 floors and even more at some places) cut through by small windows – reminding of a military fort rather than a monastery. Once in the complex, it is worth visiting the monastery's museum, which hosts a unique work of art, namely The Raphael's Cross. The cross is made of a whole piece of wood (32" x 17") and is named after its creator. Continue to Sofia and free time until this evening's traditional Bulgarian Farewell dinner at Hadjidraganov's Cellars Restaurant Wine and Taste for connoisseurs. Overnight in Sofia. {B/T/D}

Day 9: Sofia, USA

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel. At the appointed time you'll be picked-up and driven to the airport to board your flight back home. [B]

[B] = Breakfast | [D] = Dinner | [B/T/D] = Breakfast, Tasting and Dinner | [B/L/T/D] = Breakfast, Lunch, Tasting and Dinner

Your Tour includes:

- Round-trip airfare USA-Sofia
- Arrival and departure transfers
- 8 nights' accommodation:
 - Sofia 3 nights
 - Belogradchik 2 nights
 - Pleven 1 night
 - Veliko Tarnovo 1 night
 - Melnik 1 night
- Meals
 - Buffet breakfast daily
 - 3 lunches
 - 8 dinners
 - 7 wine tastings
- Sightseeing:
 - Walking tour of Sofia
 - Boyana Church
 - Ledenika Cave
 - Magura Cave
 - Belogradchik Fortress
 - Medieval Castle of Baba Vida
 - Pleven Panorama 1877
 - Troyan Monastery

- Veliko Tarnovo Tsarevets
- Kordopoulova House
- Rozhen Monastery
- Rila Monastery
- Wineries:
 - Magura
 - Borovitzza
 - Chateau Burgozone
 - Villa Melnik
- Entrance fees for sites visited
- Porterage service at airport and hotels
- Transportation by A/C vehicles
- English-speaking guide or driver guide
- All local taxes

Tour does not include:

- Taxes or surcharges related to airline tickets
- Travel insurance
- All alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks
- Other meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Extras and gratuities
- Early check-in, late check-out
- Expenses of personal nature

Recommended hotels in your Tour:

City	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
Tourist Class		
Sofia	Hotel Budapest	4.5
Belogradchik	Hotel Skalite	4
Pleven	Park Hotel	3
Veliko Tarnovo	Hotel Gurko	4.5
Melnik	Melnik Hotel	4
First Claa		
Sofia	Crystal Palace Boutique Hotel	4.5
Belogradchik	Hotel Skalite	4
Pleven	Park Hotel*	3
Veliko Tarnovo	Meridian Hotel Bolyarski*	4
Melnik	Lamparov's House	n/a
Deluxe		
Sofia	Sense Hotel	4,5
Belogradchik	Hotel Skalite*	4
Pleven	Park Hotel*	3
Veliko Tarnovo	Meridian Hotel Bolyarski	4
Melnik	Zarnitza Family Estate	4.5

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

* Best hotel in town.

Tour Prices:

From: \$1,365 including airfare

Add-ons available from all US gateways.

Prices are per person and may change without notice

These programs can be customized for individuals and for groups

Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

- **Airfare**

We also be glad to add the necessary airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares

- **Program**

You may add or remove;

- Trip days
- Cities and sites
- Meals

- **Other options**

- The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available
- If you prefer deluxe services we may operate this program including private driver, private guide and concierge service.

- **Quotation**

Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

Tour Code: BG03SOF21TB

Options:

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for individuals, families and groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.

Group Quotations

- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the land journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.
- We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.