

# Bulgaria: Europe's Ancient Gem

Discover the cradle of European civilisation, where history whispers through ancient stones and vibrant traditions. Journey with us through millennia of heritage, from Thracian gold to medieval monasteries, exploring the timeless legacy of one of Europe's most fascinating nations.



# One of Europe's Oldest Nations



## A State Born in 681 AD

Bulgaria stands proudly amongst Europe's oldest continuous states, founded in 681 AD by Khan Asparuh. This strategic crossroads between Europe and Asia witnessed the rise and fall of empires, shaping a rich tapestry of cultural exchange.

Long before the Bulgarian state emerged, ancient Thracian tribes inhabited these fertile lands for millennia, leaving behind mysteries that still captivate archaeologists today.



## The Thracian Heritage: Europe's Mysterious Ancestors



### Ancient Gold Mastery

Thracians crafted exquisite gold treasures dating back to 5,000 BC—the oldest worked gold in the world, showcasing sophisticated metallurgy.



### UNESCO Tomb Treasures

The Kazanlak and Sveshtari tombs feature unique murals and caryatids, preserving Thracian funeral artistry for eternity.



### Lasting Cultural Impact

Thracian culture profoundly influenced later Balkan civilisations, from religious practices to artistic traditions.



## The Kazanlak Tomb: A Window into Eternity

Step inside the Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak, where vivid frescoes from the 4th century BC capture scenes of funeral feasts and chariot races. These remarkably preserved artworks reveal the sophistication of Thracian culture and their beliefs about the afterlife.

# Bulgaria's UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Bulgaria's landscape is adorned with cultural treasures recognised by UNESCO, each telling a unique chapter of the nation's extraordinary story.

## Rila Monastery

Bulgaria's largest and spiritual heart, founded in the 10th century by Saint Ivan of Rila. A masterpiece of Bulgarian National Revival architecture.

## Boyana Church

Medieval frescoes from 1259 showcase a masterpiece of Eastern European art, predating the Italian Renaissance.

## Ancient Nessebar

Over 3,000 years old, blending Thracian, Greek, Roman, and Bulgarian architecture on a picturesque Black Sea peninsula.

## Madara Rider

An 8th-century rock relief symbolising Bulgaria's early medieval power, carved 23 metres above ground level.





## Rila Monastery: The Soul of Bulgaria

Nestled in the Rila Mountains at 1,147 metres elevation, this architectural jewel represents the resilience of Bulgarian culture through centuries of Ottoman rule. Its vibrant frescoes and striped arches create a symphony of colour against the mountain backdrop.

# The Birth of the Cyrillic Alphabet

1

## 7th Century

Slavic tribes merged with Bulgars, creating a unique cultural synthesis that shaped language, customs, and identity.

2

## 9th Century

Saints Cyril and Methodius developed the Glagolitic script. Their disciples, Clement and Naum, created the Cyrillic alphabet in Bulgaria.

3

## Medieval Period

The Cyrillic script spread across Eastern Europe from the Preslav and Ohrid literary schools, becoming the foundation of Slavic literacy.

4

## Today

Over 250 million people worldwide use the Cyrillic alphabet, a testament to Bulgaria's profound cultural contribution to civilisation.



## A Script That Changed the World

The elegant curves and lines of early Cyrillic manuscripts represent more than beautiful calligraphy—they symbolise Bulgaria's gift to Slavic civilisation. These sacred texts enabled the spread of Orthodox Christianity and literacy across vast territories, preserving knowledge and culture for future generations.



# Bulgaria's Living Heritage



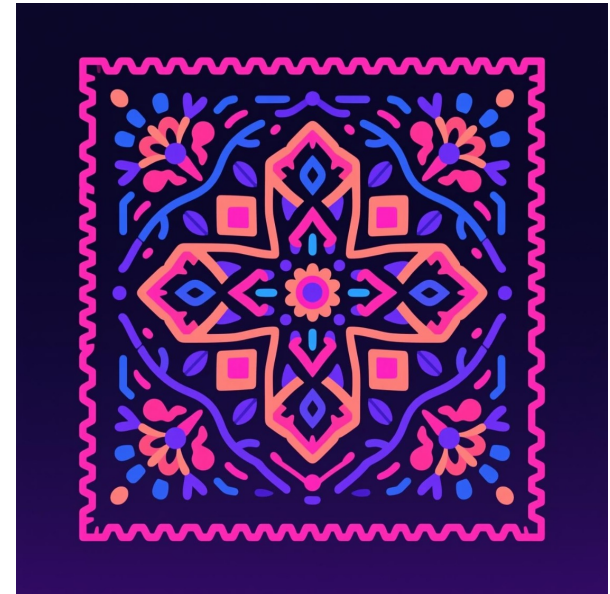
## Ancient Rituals Alive

Folk customs like Kukeri (masked dancers warding off evil spirits) and Nestinarstvo (fire-dancing) preserve pagan traditions dating back thousands of years.



## World-Famous Rose Oil

Bulgaria produces 70% of the world's rose oil from the Valley of Roses. This liquid gold has been cherished since the 17th century.



## Artisan Craftsmanship

From intricate embroidery to pottery and woodcarving, Bulgarian crafts showcase centuries of artistic excellence celebrated worldwide.

Modern Bulgaria embraces its past whilst thriving in Europe's cultural mosaic, where ancient wisdom meets contemporary innovation.

# Bulgaria: Europe's Timeless Gem

## Ancient History

From Thracian gold to medieval glory, Bulgaria's 7,000-year heritage continues to inspire wonder and scholarly fascination.

## Cultural Legacy

The birthplace of the Cyrillic alphabet and home to UNESCO treasures, Bulgaria shaped European civilisation.

## Living Traditions

Where ancient rituals, folk art, and modern vitality unite in a celebration of enduring spirit.

Experience the enduring spirit of one of Europe's oldest nations—a land where every stone tells a story, every tradition carries meaning, and the past illuminates the future.

Thank you! Discover Bulgaria—where Europe's story began.

