

endeavor  
BULGARIA

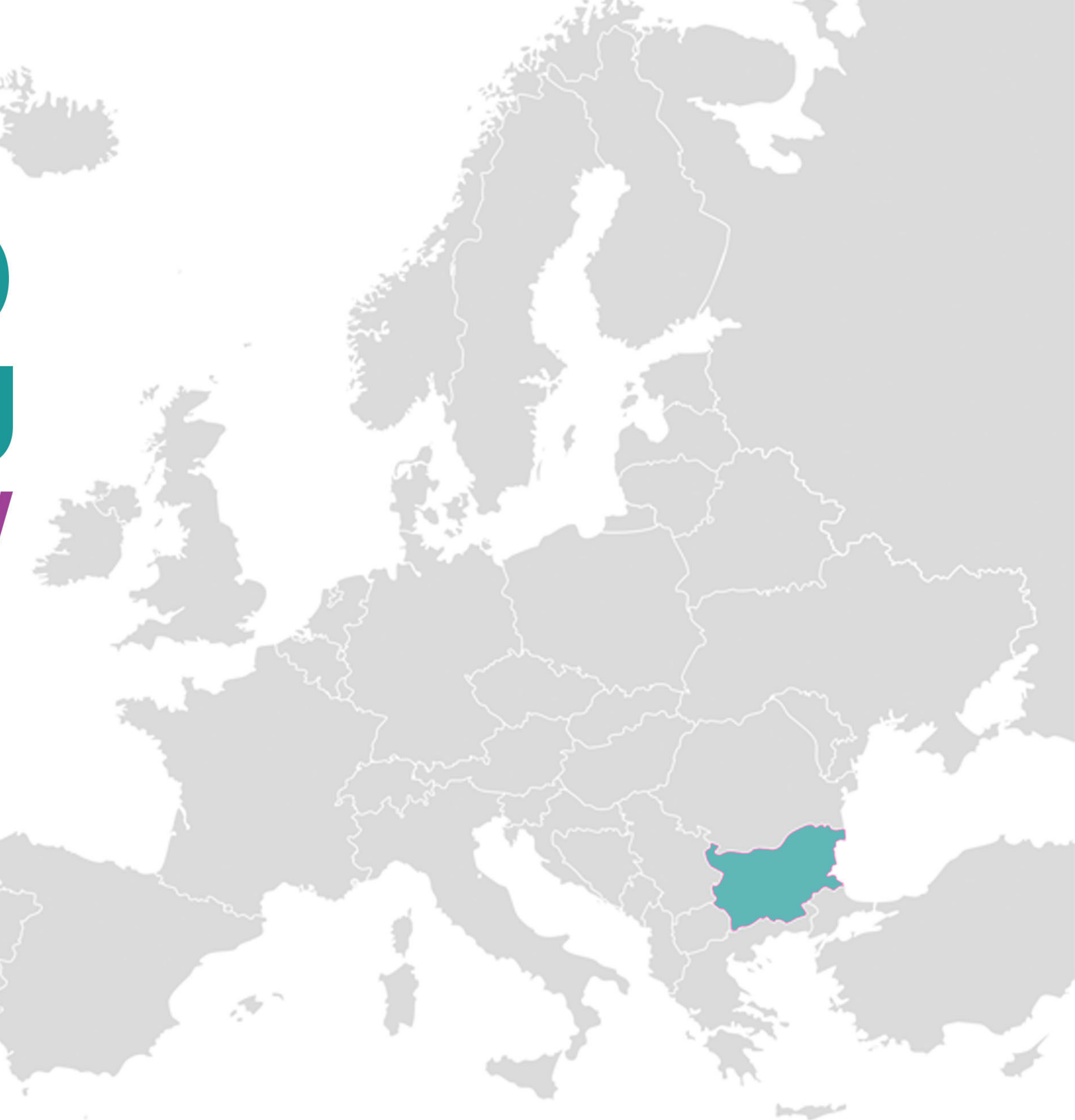


# SOFIA

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## Travel Guide

# DID YOU KNOW?



- Bulgaria is the oldest country in Europe that has not changed its name since it was first established in 681 AD.
- Roses grown in Bulgaria's "Rose Valley" account for ~80% of the world's rose oil production, which is a key component in perfumes.
- Bulgarian yogurt is the best in the world, no doubt about it. This is thanks to the unique bacteria *Lactobacillus Bulgaricus* used for its production that can only be found on the territory of the country. Make sure to try the yogurt (in Bulgarian: kiselo mlyako) - it is sold in every grocery store.
- The oldest gold treasure in the world - dating back to over 6000 years ago - was recently found in Bulgaria.
- Bulgarians use the Cyrillic Alphabet, which was developed during the 9th century. Cyrillic became the third official alphabet of the EU with the accession of Bulgaria in 2007.
- More information on Bulgaria you can find [here](#).



## USEFUL PHRASES

Hello  
How are you  
Goodbye  
Yes / No  
Please  
Excuse me  
Where is...  
When  
Thank you

Zdrasty  
Kak si?  
Chao  
Da / Ne  
Molya  
Izvinete  
Kyde e...  
Koga  
Blagodarya

Здрави  
Как си?  
Чао  
Да / Не  
Моля  
Извинете  
Къде е...  
Кога  
Благодаря

## SOFIA

- At 550 meters above sea level, Sofia is one of the highest capitals in Europe - the city is situated at the base of [Vitosha Mountain](#), a beautiful place to hike, mountain bike, and ski
- [Sofia Valley](#) boasts more than 30 hot mineral springs, most of which are low in mineralization, making the water perfect for consumption
- Around 5000 BC, Thracians created a settlement around the area of Sofia and named it Serdica. Given its strategic location along major trade and military routes linking Asia and Europe, the city became the seat of the Roman province Inner Dacia during the 2nd century AD. It reached its grandeur under [Emperor Constantine the Great](#) during the 4th century AD who often referred to Serdica as "My Rome". The remains of the old city can still be viewed today.



**ractical tips: Bulgarians express approval by shaking their heads from left to right, and say "No" by nodding their head. It's the exact opposite of Western cultures! Weird, huh?!**

- Tap water is safe to drink
- In Bulgaria the power sockets are of type F. The standard voltage is 230 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz
- Smoking is forbidden in closed areas. You can freely smoke in open public areas and in restaurants' open-air sections
- The dialing code for Bulgaria is +359. The country-wide emergency hotline is 112

*Bulgaria's currency is the Lev (BGN) and it's the only currency accepted as cash. At most places, you can also pay with a credit card.*

**1 EUR ~ 2 BGN  
1 USD ~ 1,7 BGN**

## WEATHER

Considering its relatively small area, Bulgaria has variable climate with all four seasons well-expressed - from hot summer of around +30 C (86 F) to snowy winter at -10 C (14 F)

October is a typical autumn month with temperatures in the range of 4 C to 18 C (40 F - 65 F). Low temperatures occur early in the morning and late at night, while it is usually sunny during the daytime, sometimes reaching 20 C (70 F) degrees.

In case temperatures are on the low side, make sure you pack some warm clothes and a raincoat!

# TRANSPORT



## From the airport

As you exit Sofia Airport's Arrival Hall, the official taxi stand ("OK" company) is on your right. It's best to take a taxi from there, and have some cash prepared, as many do not accept credit cards. Beware of random taxi drivers offering rides in the airport, as there are many with abnormally high prices. The average rate for a ride from airport to the city center should be around 20 lev (~10 euro).

Sofia's subway connects Terminal 2 to the city center. To get to Hilton, change trains at Serdika Station and get off at European Union Station - the hotel is within 10 minutes walking distance (600 m).

Hilton, which is the official ISP hotel, is also offering Hilton's shuttle service upon request at least 24 hours prior to arrival for 16 euro per person, one way - a request with the flight details should be addressed to [sofia.information@hilton.com](mailto:sofia.information@hilton.com).

## Around the city

At its heart, Sofia's center is compact and very pleasant for walking sightseeing tours. However, if you need transport to get around town, you can use:

**Taxi** – there are many different taxi companies operating in Sofia. Every taxi must have a rate on the passenger door window with the prices. Normal rate is around 0,80 lev per kilometer (~0,4 euro.) We recommend to order a taxi via a mobile application – you can download the "Yellow Taxi" or "Taxi me" app. Remember to add final destination to see the estimated price for the ride and pay cash at the end of the trip, as most cabs do not accept credit cards.

Uber is unfortunately not available in Bulgaria.

**Public Transport** – the city is well connected via a subway system and many residents use it to get around town. Public transport ticket costs 1,60 leva (~0,80 euro) per way or 4,00 leva (~2,00 euro) for the day and can be purchased at kiosks of each subway station or at ticket machines. Normal running hours are 5am to 12am.



# TRADITIONAL FOOD AND DRINKS

## Food

Banitsa and Mekitsa are two favorite flour-based items that Bulgarians love to have at breakfast. They are sold at small shops all around town.

Tripe soup - Shkembe Chorba - is a traditional soup cooked with meat, milk, and spices. It is served with vinegar, garlic and dried chili peppers. It's great remedy for a hangover.

Traditional meatballs - Kiuflte - are a must on Bulgarian's dinner plate.

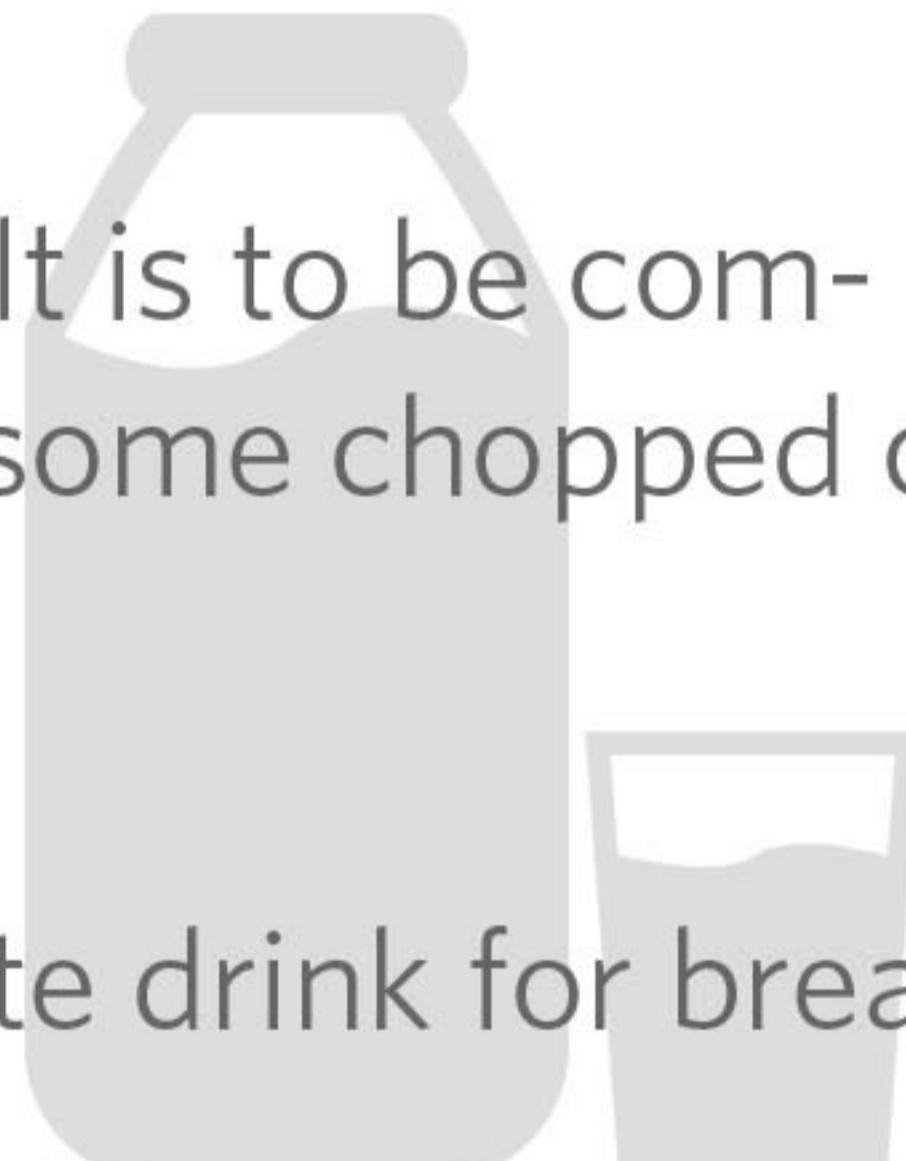
Shopska Salad - similar to Greek salad, it is made of cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, and onions; however, what makes it special is the delicious Bulgarian white cheese.



## Drinks

Ayran, a refreshing drink of traditional yogurt, water, and a pinch of salt is to be combined with a Banitsa or Mekitsa for breakfast. If you add to the Ayran some chopped cucumbers and dill, you get a traditional cold soup - Tarator for lunch.

Boza, a non-caffeinated drink from fermented wheat, is another favorite drink for breakfast.



## Alcohol

Wine - Bulgaria ranks among the most prolific (although far from the most famous) of the world's wine-producing countries. Wine production has a long history in Bulgaria, dating back to Thracian times; in recent times, Bulgaria was the world's 2nd largest wine producer! We recommend you to try some local wines from the Thracian valley.



Rakia is a national strong drink. It is made out of fermented fruit. Most popular Rakia types are made of plums, grapes or apricots. The alcohol by volume is ~40 degrees and goes up to 50-70 degrees when homemade. Rakia is best combined with a Shopska salad.

# SIGHTSEEING



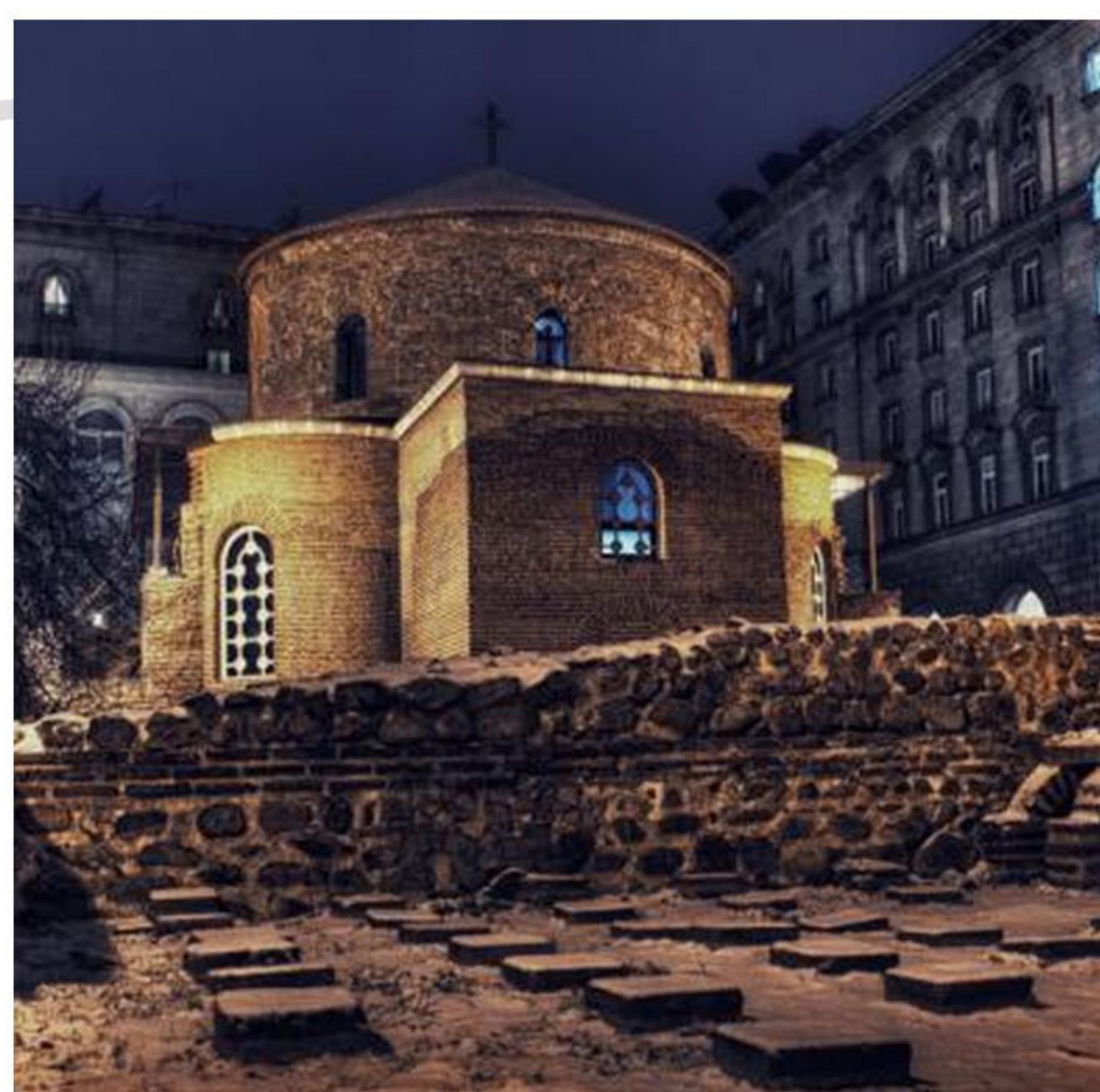
## The Largo

The Largo is a complex of buildings in downtown Sofia that are a great example of socialist classical architecture. The main buildings are – the Party House (the former Communist Party's headquarters), TZUM department store, the President's office, Sofia Hotel Balkan, and the Ministry of Education.



## Ancient Serdica Complex

This remarkable, partly covered excavation site, situated just above the Serdica metro station, displays the remains of the Roman city, Serdica, that once occupied this area.

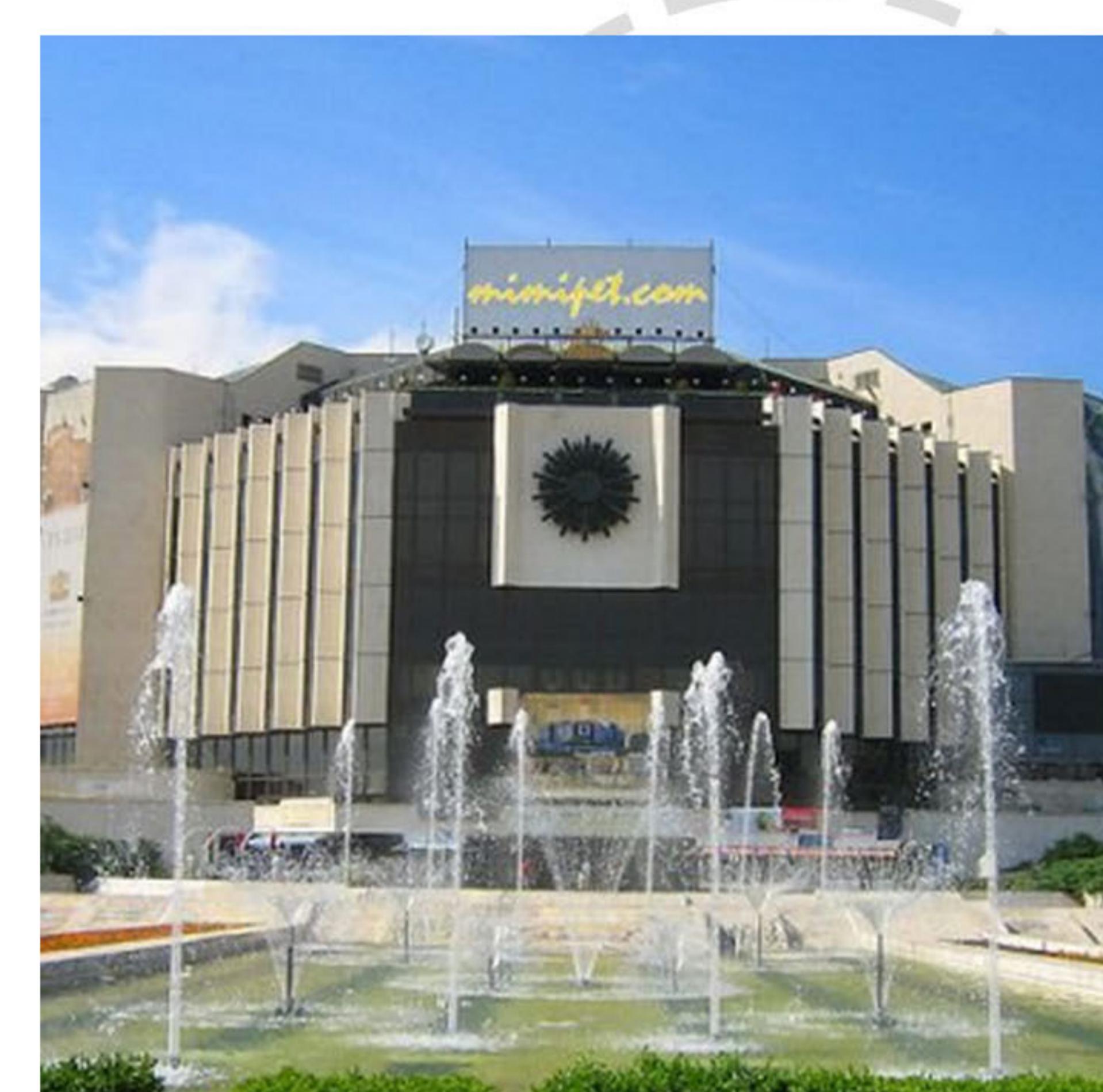


## The Rotunda of St. George

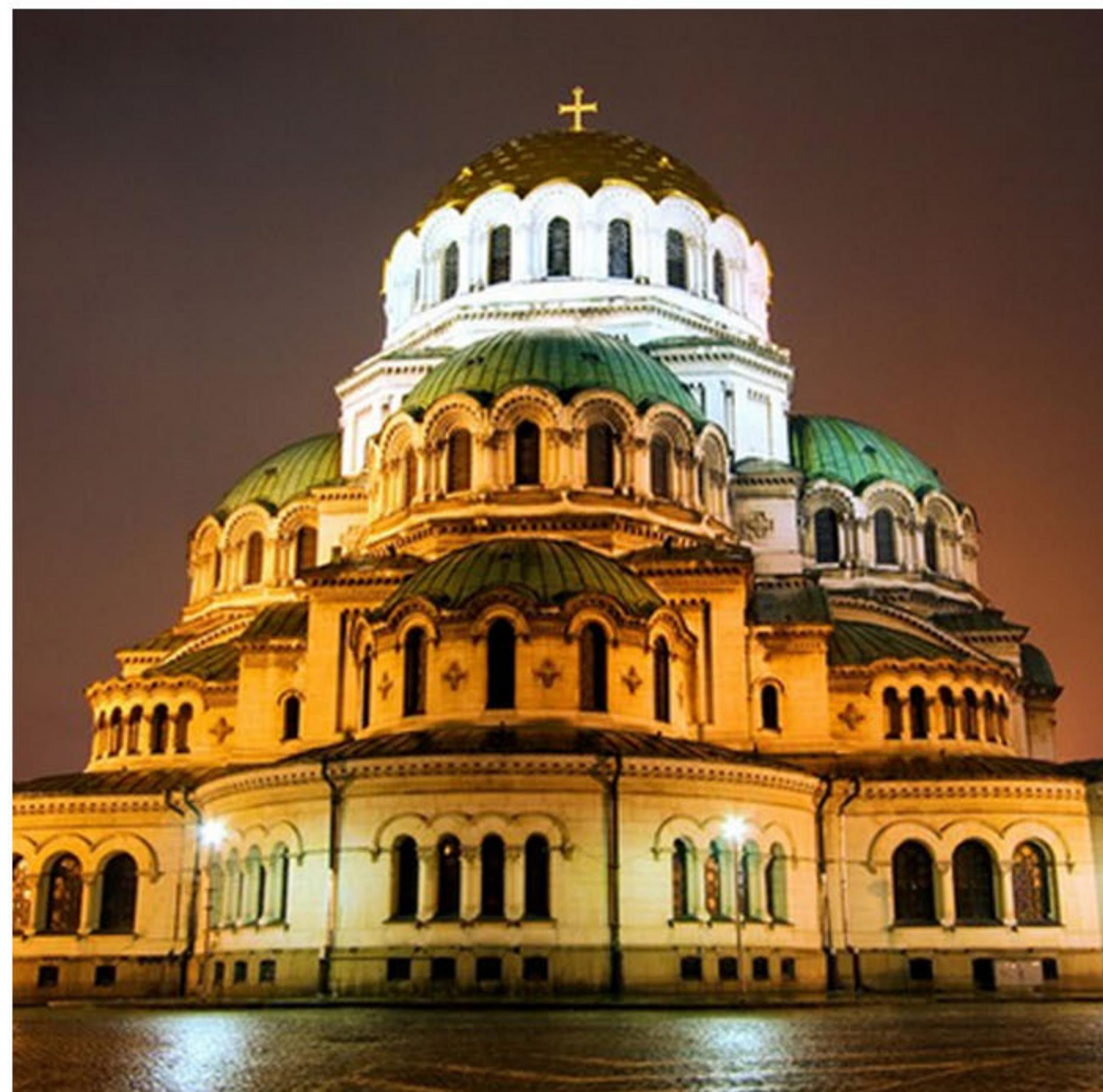
St. George's church was built in the 3rd century AD as a pagan temple and is the oldest preserved structure in Sofia. The Rotunda is located at the city center in the courtyard of the Presidency.

## National Palace of Culture

The National Palace of Culture, also called NDK, opened in 1981 and is a cultural center for conferences and exhibitions. It is an impressive building, situated in a beautiful park. In the period 1 July – 31 December 2018, Bulgaria will take over the presidency of the Council of the European Union and most of the plenary meetings will be held in NDK's Hall 3. The venue is just a 5min walk from the Hilton Hotel, and worth a visit both in daytime and at night.



## St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral



St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral is a Bulgarian Orthodox cathedral at the heart of Sofia. Built in Neo-Byzantine style, it is one of the biggest Eastern Orthodox cathedrals in the world, as well as one of Sofia's symbols and primary tourist attractions. In the construction of the Cathedral the ground floor was to be a tomb for the late Bulgarian kings. However, none of the kings were ever buried there and in 1965 the space under the church was converted into a branch of art National Art Gallery for Orthodox art.

## The National Assembly

The National Assembly situated in downtown Sofia is one of the first public buildings erected after the Liberation in 1878. The project was completed in 1885 and serves as tribune for parliamentary debates.



## National Theatre "Ivan Vazov"

Ivan Vazov National Theatre, situated in the center of the city, is the oldest and most authoritative theatre in Bulgaria after the Liberation. It opened in 1907 and nowadays hosts some of the most exciting plays in Bulgaria's cultural life.

The theatre is situated in a popular city garden, where street musicians often perform.

# MUSEUMS

## National Archaeological Institute and Museum

Address: 2 Saborna St., Sofia

## National History Museum

Address: 16 Vitoshko Iale St., Sofia

## National Gallery Square 500

Address: St. Alexander Nevski Square,  
1, 19th February Str., Sofia

# WALKING AROUND AND SHOPPING



## Vitosha Boulevard

The main commercial street in the center that is closed for cars and is always a very lively place to meet up with friends. Vitosha blvd. is well-known for its shopping, restaurants and bars.



## Graf Ignatiev Street

A popular street that runs parallel to Vitosha Boulevard and has a vibe of its own.



## Borisova Garden

Borisova gradina is the largest park in Sofia and is located near the city center.

## Sofia Sightseeing Tour

This is perfect option if you have limited time and want to have a full tour of the city. Check out [FreeSofiaTour](#) for more info.



# RESTAURANTS AND CAFÉ'S

## Raketa Rakia Bar

A modern, yet traditional restaurant that serves Bulgarian and Balkan cuisine in a great atmosphere that includes symbols from the communist-era.

Address: 17 Yanko Sakazov Blvd., Sofia  
Phone: +359 2 444 6111  
Hours: 11 AM - 12 AM



## Cosmos Food and Drinks

The restaurant serves international gourmet Cuisine and is located in the center.

Address: 19 Laveleye str., Sofia  
Phone: +359 888 200 700  
Hours: 11 AM - 1 AM

## Sense Hotel Roof Bar

A beautiful roof bar offers a panoramic view of Vitosha Mountain on one side and St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral on the other. Sense serves also food and is great to visit both during the day and at night.

Address: 16 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd., Hotel Sense, Sofia  
Phone: +359 884 544 108  
Hours: 10 AM - 02 AM



# CAFÉ'S & PUBS



## Memento

A great venue for coffee at daytime and drinks in the evening with three different locations all in the center of Sofia.

Address: 106 G.S. Rakovski str., Sofia  
Phone: +359 888 402 333  
Hours: 8 AM - 12 AM

## Gelateria Confetti

A café with original desert recipes and delicious ice cream.

Address: 4 Graf Ignatiev str., 1000 Sofia  
Phone: +359 2 988 4444  
Hours: 9 AM - 12 AM



## Parkbar

A busy and fun bar for late-night drinks.

Address: 26 Shipka Street, Sofia  
Phone: +359 89 846 3039  
Hours: 8 AM - 12 AM

# DAY TRIPS

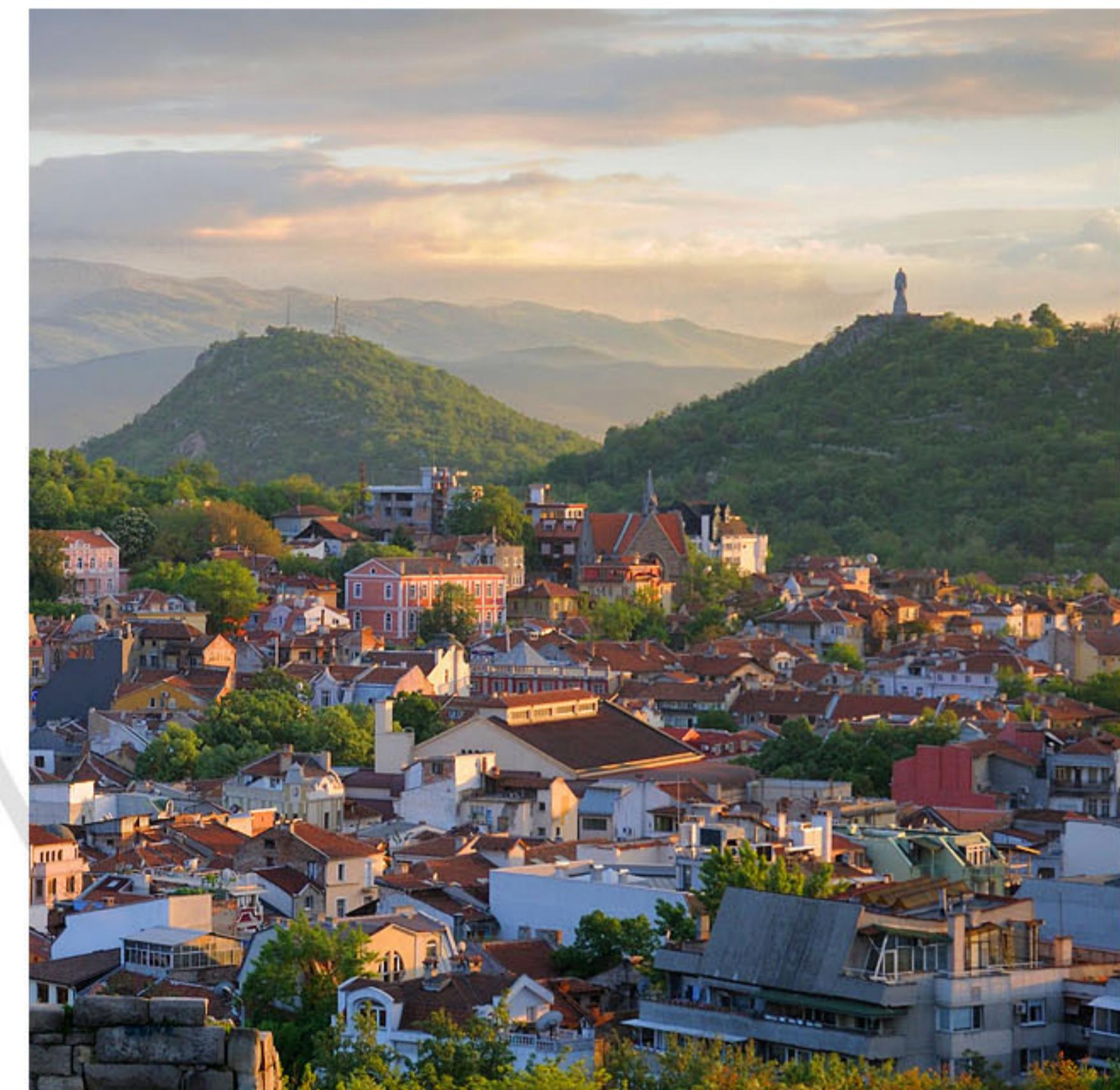


## Rila Monastery

One of Bulgaria's most popular tourist destination, Rila Monastery is a fortress-like complex that is located in Rila Mountain and has over 1000 years of history. Within its stone walls you will find remarkably colorful architecture and religious art. The Monastery is about 2-hour drive (117 kilometers) from Sofia.

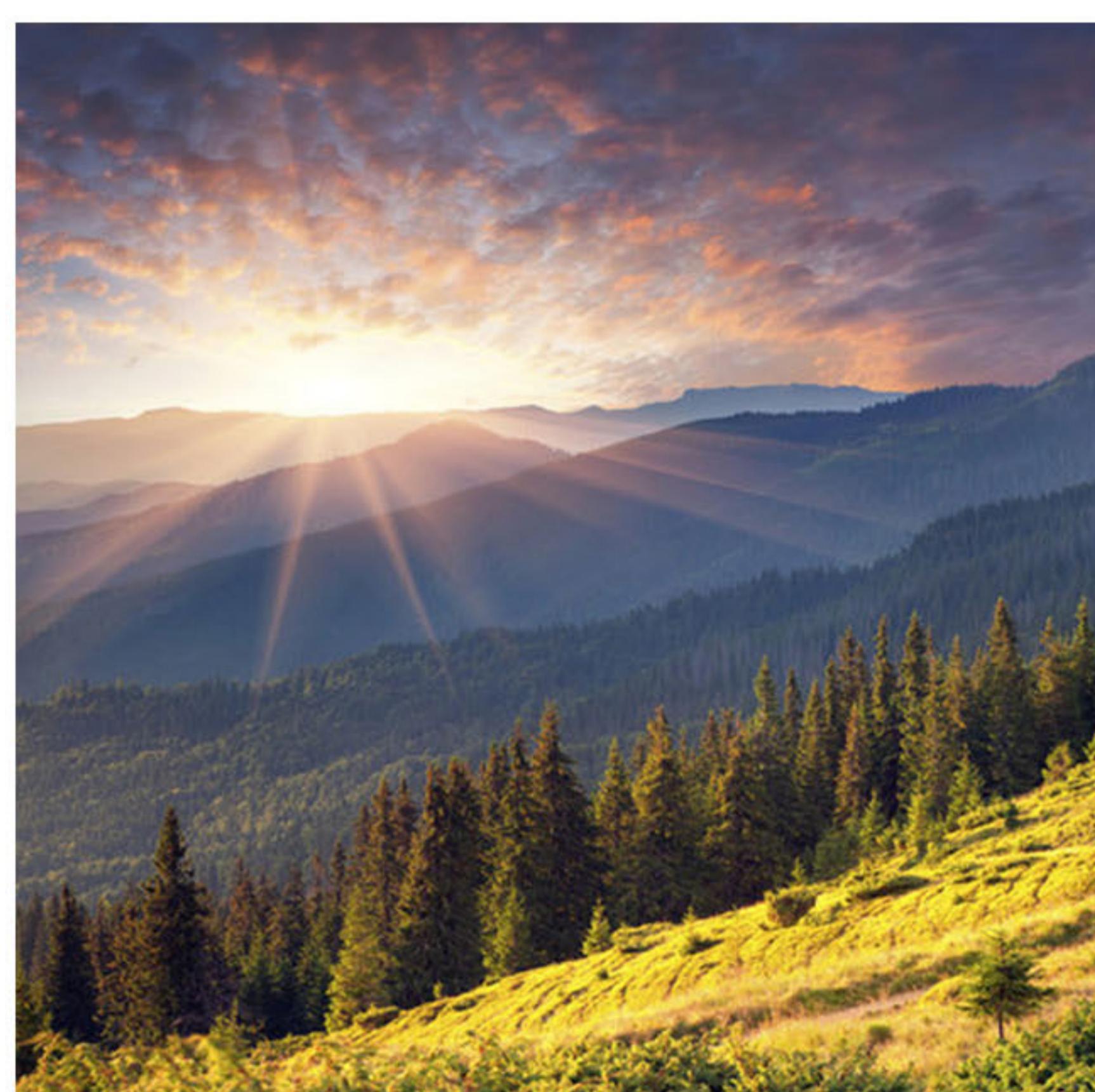
## Plovdiv

Plovdiv is the second biggest city in Bulgaria and one of the oldest towns in the world, offering its visitors many interesting neighborhoods, parks and historical monuments. The city was selected as a European Capital of Culture 2019. Plovdiv is situated in the south-central part of Bulgaria and is about 2-hour drive from Sofia.



## Vitosha Mountain

Sofia is probably the only European capital with such a big mountain so close to the city center. It is a very popular hiking destination year round.



## Questions?

Do not hesitate to contact Endeavor Bulgaria Staff at [office@endeavor.bg](mailto:office@endeavor.bg) or at +359 883 290 450. You are also welcome to drop by at our office at 5 Slavyanska street in Sofia.

# Contact us

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