

BULGARIA

BLACK SEA
COAST



www.bulgariatravel.org

Unique facts about Bulgaria



The Black Sea Coast is a place of great wildlife variety – there are hundreds of rare bird species due to the fact that Via Pontica (one of the main bird migration routes) passes through the Bulgarian coast. Numerous wildlife conservation parks with riverside forests and beautiful landscapes located along the coast preserve many rare and protected plant and animal species.



The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast has been populated for thousands of years. You can visit precious historical memorials in many Bulgarian seaside towns and resorts – a fine opportunity to diversify your vacation and feel the atmosphere of ancient times. Amongst the most popular places of interest is the Old Town of Nessebar – UNESCO recognized cultural heritage site.



The Bulgarian Black Sea coast offers many and diverse opportunities for recreation and entertainment. With an impressive 378 km of shore line, the coast offers 70 beaches, many bays, picturesque estuaries with beautiful dense forests and a delightful mixture of mountain and sea climates.

Bulgarian beaches are popular worldwide for their fine, clean sand. Eleven Bulgarian beaches were awarded the Blue Flag in 2010 – a distinction recognizing a clean and ecological environment.

INTRODUCTION



The Black Sea is of low salinity and its tides are barely noticeable. It is excellent for bathing during the summer months. The summer temperature is moderate, rarely exceeding 28 °C.



The proximity of two mountains - the Balkan Range, in the middle of the Black Sea coast, and Strandzha Mountain to the south – contributes to a pleasant and enjoyable climate. This gives an excellent opportunity to combine a seaside holiday with fresh mountain air.

NORTHERN BLACK SEA COAST

The northern Black Sea coast starts where the Balkan Range runs into the sea at Cape Emine and runs north to Cape Sivriburun at the Romanian border. The beauty of this area is impressive and varied – golden beaches, ragged coastlines with caves, dense forests and seaside lakes follow one after another and paint fabulous landscapes.

Here you will find excellent opportunities for recreation. Fans of classic seaside holidays will enjoy the charming little resort towns, expansive beaches with fine golden sand and clear, inviting sea. Luxurious resort complexes and small family hotels are plentiful in this area.

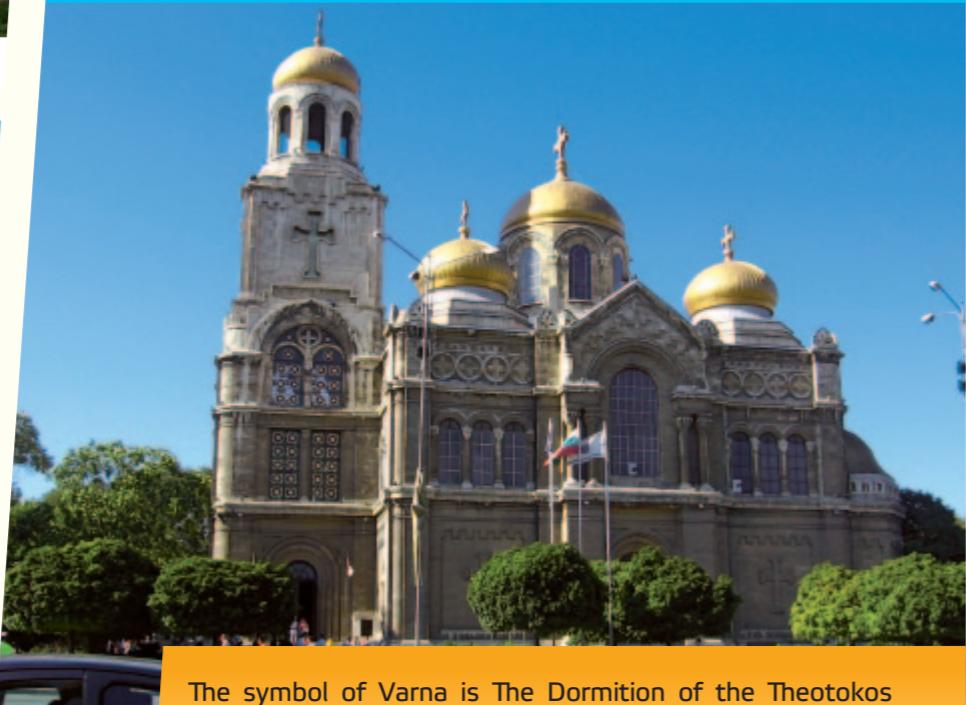
VARNA



The city of Varna is the heir of an ancient Thracian settlement which later became a popular recreational site for Roman and Byzantine aristocracy. Today Varna is a large modern coastal city offering many opportunities for entertainment and recreation. There are many hotels in the city to satisfy every taste and budget. Guests of Varna are enchanted with the cool freshness of the Sea Garden, the golden beaches and azure sea, the rich cultural life of the city and the countless places of interest.



The Dormition of the Theotokos Cathedral



The symbol of Varna is The Dormition of the Theotokos Cathedral, which was built in 1886. It is located in the city centre. To appreciate the full beauty of the building it is best viewed after sunset. It is at this time of the day when spectacular lighting drenches the facade in magnificent hues.

Balchik is a lovely town nestled in the northern part of the Black Sea. Here the beauty of nature truly enchants. It so captivated the Romanian Queen Maria that she built her summer home, Quiet Nest, here. For this purpose she hired world-renowned architects and botanists to create one of the most uniquely beautiful places in the world.



Botanic garden

Another landmark of the town is the world-famous botanic garden with the second-largest collection of giant cacti in Europe. The garden is also known for its variety of sizes and species of plants collected over the years from around the world, these include the metasequoia – a contemporary of the dinosaurs – until recently considered extinct. The garden is exquisitely beautiful and is a favourite spot for both romantic and inspirational walks.



The palace

The palace incorporates several different architectural styles reflecting with Mauritanian elements, Christian culture and typical Bulgarian residences from the Revival. The desire of the Queen to unite many religions finds its physical expression in the Arabic and Roman inscribed slabs of stone around the garden, the minaret towering over the palace and the chapel built in the yard of the complex.

BALCHIK



Rusalka is a holiday villa complex located about 90 km northeast of Varna. The resort is surrounded by the virgin beauty of Tauk Liman nature reserve, home of many rare bird species. Nearby is Cape Kaliakra - an important archaeological and nature reserve. Charming small bays harbour the beaches of Rusalka. The resort complex has a swimming pool, several tennis courts and good conditions for various other sports. It is ideal for families looking for a relaxing holiday combined with varied entertainment options.



RUSALKA



Golden Sands is one of the oldest Black Sea resorts in Bulgaria. It is situated 16 km north of Varna and is the maritime capital of Bulgaria. There is a large number of hotels of various sizes and categories. They are situated among the cool freshness of the National Park Golden Sands forest right next to the golden beach. Golden Sands (Zlatni Pyasatsi) is famous for the fine sand of its beaches. A legend tells about Black Sea pirates who buried a large treasure of gold on the beach of today's resort. However, the sea took revenge on the bandits for the evil they had done by changing the jewellery and gold into fine golden sand.

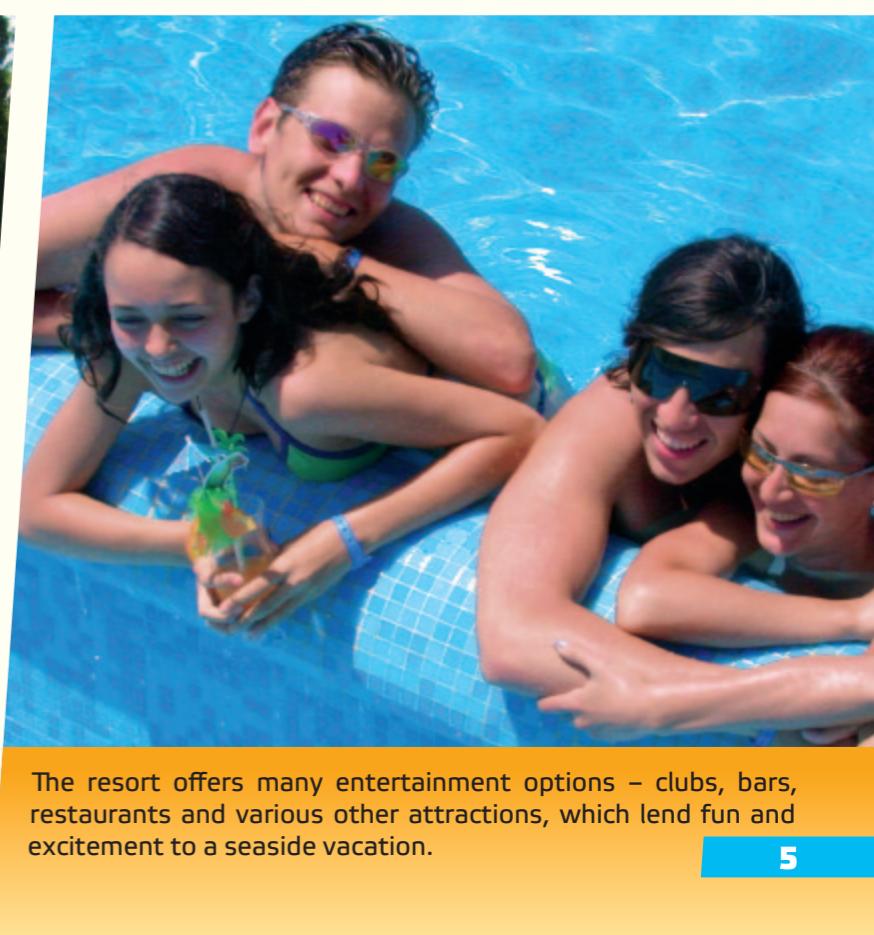


GOLDEN SANDS

Albena is a large Black Sea resort located 25 km northeast of Varna and only 12 km southwest of Balchik. The resort is surrounded by a dense green forest and offers a relaxing recreational experience. The beach is long and wide, with fine white sand. The complex offers accommodations in various hotels and villas – from 2 to 5 stars. Most of the hotels operate on an all-inclusive basis. Albena is the preferred resort for families with children because of the numerous entertainment facilities for the young and the excellent possibilities for relaxation. The complex also offers good sporting activities – football pitches, tennis courts and a sports centre. Three of the most attractive golf courses in the country are located nearby. The resort also offers wonderful restaurants, shops and personal services.



ALBENA



The resort offers many entertainment options – clubs, bars, restaurants and various other attractions, which lend fun and excitement to a seaside vacation.

Riviera is a small but luxurious resort very close to Golden Sands. With the mineral springs there it creates a coastal spa resort. The exclusive number of all-luxury hotels makes it a superb place to relax. A large forest surrounds the resort and brings freshness into the hot summer days. Riviera boasts many spa centres, a kindergarten and various attractions for children, there are restaurants, sports centres, tennis courts, shops and even an art gallery.

RIVIERA



ST. ST. KONSTANTIN AND ELENA



For those who prefer a holiday centred around a close communion with nature, the Northern Black Sea offers many alternatives. There are varied camping options in the cool forests along the entire coastline. Bulgarian camping sites offer excellent accommodations for their guests, whether they prefer to stay in a bungalow or use a caravan, camper or tent. There are camping sites near Durankulak, Shabla, Kavarna, Albena Resort, Nature Park Golden Sands, Varna's residential complex Galata, at the mouth of Kamchia River, in the village of Shkorpilovtsi and in the town of Byala.

CAMPING



The southern Black Sea coast runs south from Cape Emine to the village of Resovo on the Turkish border. The sunny beaches in this area are numerous. Little resort towns alternate with large luxury complexes, there are reserves, landmarks of natural beauty and camping sites. Here are the famous Bulgarian Sunny Beach Resort and the city of Burgas. There can be found a multitude of hotels and restaurants, as well as the architectural reserves of Nessebar, Pomorie and Sozopol.

SOUTHERN BLACK SEA COAST



BURGAS



The city hosts many cultural events – music festivals, competitions, flower exhibitions.

Burgas is a city with more than 2,000 years of history which can be explored through its numerous museums and churches.

Sunny Beach (Slanchev Bryag) is the largest Bulgarian resort. It is located 30 km northeast of Burgas, between Nessebar and St. Vlas. There are hundreds of hotels of all categories, including small family hotels, apartment-hotels and big luxury complexes. The resort is a favourite destination for young adults because of its popular clubs and parties. During the summer months world-famous celebrities and DJs are often invited to give performances. In addition to its many modern clubs and bars, Sunny Beach offers other attractions – aqua parks, water sports, and many other sports and entertainment facilities. There are many shops, restaurants and even big shopping centres.



ELENITE



SUNNY BEACH



Nessebar is another popular Bulgarian resort. The coastal town has modern hotels, a beautiful sandy beach and a rich historical and cultural heritage. It is several kilometres south of Sunny Beach. It boasts a wide range of hotels, guest houses, luxury complexes, along with restaurants and taverns. The proximity of the town to Sunny Beach Resort is an advantage for guests looking for fun and variety.



NESSEBAR



Nessebar is undoubtedly one of the most romantic resorts in Bulgaria. The charm of the Old Town and the glimpse of the past it offers will help visitors experience new emotions and fill them with unforgettable memories.

MAJOR SITES

BULGARIAN BLACK SEA COAST



The town of Pomorie is probably one of the oldest in Bulgaria. It is located on a small rocky peninsular halfway between Burgas and Sunny Beach.

Pomorie's beaches attract many visitors with their interesting black sand and clear seas. Nearby lie the protected areas Blatno Kokiche and Koriyata, and lake Pomorie, where salt is extracted.

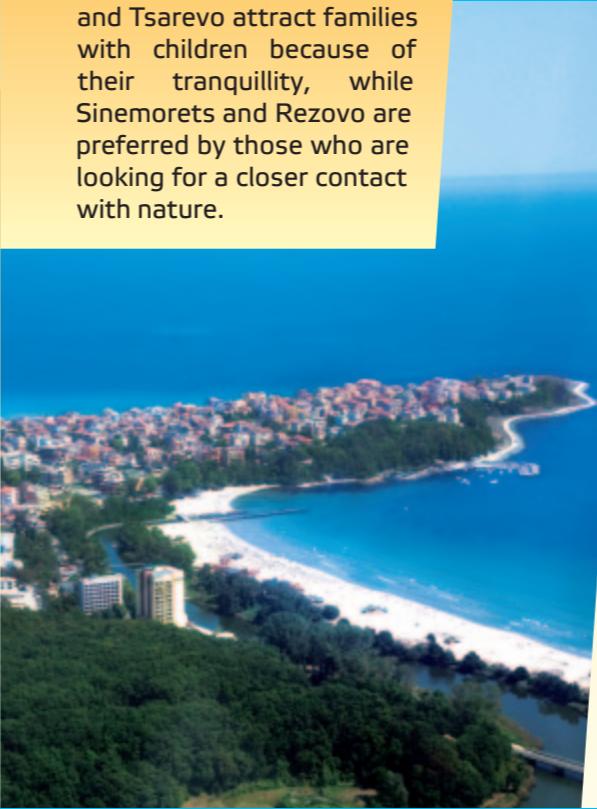


POMORIE

Other places of interest are St. George Monastery, Preobrazhenie Gospodne (Transfiguration of Jesus) Church, a Thracian domed tomb and an architectural reserve for old Pomorie houses.

Moreover, Pomorie is one of the most popular spa and balneologic resorts in Bulgaria because of its healing mud and mineral springs.

There are many more resorts and complexes along the southern Black Sea coast. Primorsko, Kiten and Lozenets are favourites with the young people seeking fun and excitement. Ahtopol and Tsarevo attract families with children because of their tranquillity, while Sinemorets and Rezovo are preferred by those who are looking for a closer contact with nature.



KITEN, PRIMORSKO, LOZENETS, SINEMORETS



Sozopol is one of the most popular Black Sea resorts. Small restaurants perch on the coastal cliffs of its Old Town and offer a magnificent view of three islands. In its narrow streets tourists can buy authentic Bulgarian goods – knitwear, leather goods, and even have their portraits done by a local artist.



SOZOPOL

There are two beaches in the town and nearby there are several camping sites, Ropotamo Reserve and other places of interest. There are also hotels and guest houses. Restaurants by the beach, merry taverns, clubs make your holiday unforgettable.

CAMPING



This stretch of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast provides numerous camping sites which offer good facilities and added value. Among the most popular ones are camping sites Gradina, Zlatna Ribka, Kavatsi and Smokinya near Sozopol, Coral, Oasis and Arapya next to Primorsko and Siliistar between villages Resovo and Sinemorets.

Water skiing is a popular extreme water sport. In Bulgaria this sport is practised mainly at the Black Sea. Water skis are available in almost all Bulgarian resorts, with preliminary training and detailed instructions. The experience is one of a kind and is hard to forget.



Windsurfing

Windsurfing is another popular sport which can be enjoyed at the Black Sea. There is only one condition – the speed and direction of the wind. The best windsurfing conditions in Bulgaria are offered at several camping sites on the southern Black Sea coast – Gradina, Zlatna Ribka, as well as the windier coast of the northern Black Sea. Some sports clubs offer training and rental equipment.

WATER SPORTS



Kitesurfing

Kitesurfing is a relatively new challenge for the fans of the extreme. It is a combination of a kite and a surfboard, with propulsion power provided by the kite. It can be practised in windy bays when weather conditions are favourable.



Diving

Diving has become especially popular in recent years. Most Bulgarian diving takes place not far from the coast. Near some resorts – Golden Sands, Nessebar, Sozopol and near Cape Kaliakra and Cape Emine, there are remains of ships sunk in ancient times, these are highly attractive for divers.



Aqua parks

The aqua parks at the Bulgarian seaside - some of which especially large and attractive, with modern facilities, are a favourite amusement for both children and adults. Here everyone has a good time and the attractions are many and varied. The most popular seaside aqua parks are in Golden Sands, Sunny Beach, Nessebar and Primorsko but there are water parks inland as well.



Yachting

Yachting is an especially enjoyable way to explore the beautiful latitudes and coastlines of the Black Sea. With a motor yacht or sailing boat, in the open sea or in the azure shallows, the breeze will whisper pleasantly in your ear and the exciting memories will warm your winter months. In Bulgaria there are several yachting marinas offering very good conditions – in Balchik, Varna, St. Vlas and Sozopol.

Spearfishing

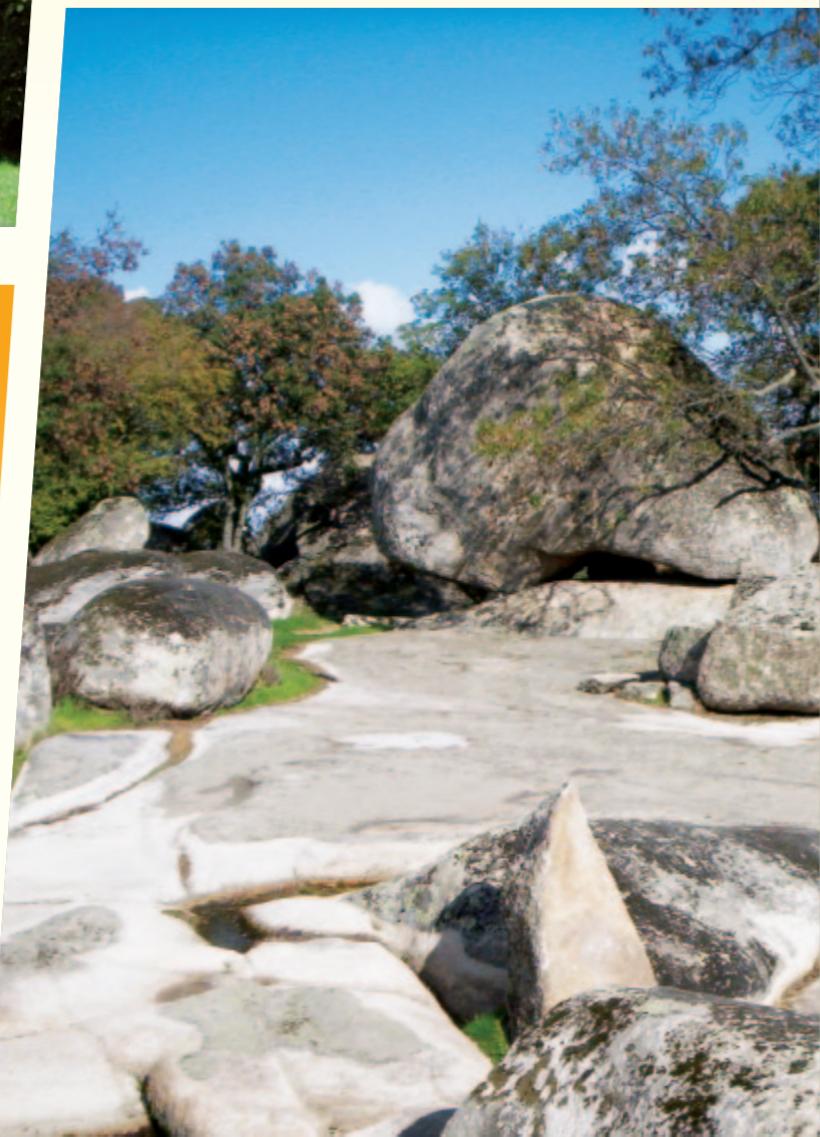
Spearfishing is a challenge for fans of both diving and fishing. The combination of these two passions ensures an exciting, amazing experience. There are several clubs in the country which offer training and organize special spearfishing excursions. There are spearfishing clubs in Varna and Burgas. The most commonly sought fish are the flathead mullet, the golden gray mullet, the European seabass and the Atlantic bonito. Sheltered bays with small underwater caves and places where the sea bed is clear, not muddy, offer the best conditions for spearfishing – Tyulenovo, Taukliman, St. St. Konstantin and Elena, Cape Galata and Cape Kochan at the northern Black Sea and St. Vlas, Pomorie, Sozopol, Snake Island, Kiten, Tsarevo, Varvara and Resovo to the south.

CULTURAL HERITAGE



Begliktash

One of the most mysterious temples discovered in our land – Begliktash – is located 4 km away from Primorsko in Ropotamo Reserve. The temple spans an area of 12 decares. It is a huge circle of rocks laid out on the stony surface. Large boulders, some of which 9 meters high, were partially processed by human hand and arranged in amazing shapes. The site was a place of worship by the ancient Thracians. Here they brought gifts for the gods and gradually turned it into a temple. Over the years they built houses for the priests who maintained it. The calendar of the ancient Thracians discovered in the temple is in fact carved holes in the rock surface over which the rays of the sun travel during solstice and illuminate them. The clock, dividing the day into 6 parts, is also made of stones. The round stones are so masterfully arranged that the shadow cast by the main altar falls on the six smaller stones north of it.



Old Nessebar

Nessebar was founded nearly 3,000 years ago. The old town recounts the history of the people who lived in these lands. It was declared an architectural reserve and in 1983 it was included in UNESCO's World Heritage List.

The old part of Nessebar is located on a small patch of land barely 850 m long and 350 m wide. It is connected to the mainland by a narrow isthmus. Over the centuries almost one third of the old town has disappeared into the sea. Today parts of its fortification wall still remain standing underwater and can be seen at about a hundred meters away from the shore.

Many buildings from the Bulgarian Revival have been preserved - typical representatives of the Bulgarian Black Sea-type of Revival house. There are also old windmills and drinking fountains.

A lot of history about this region can be found by visiting the Archaeological Museum, St. Spas Church and St. Stefan Church. The rich history of Nessebar and the beautiful mix of modern and ancient make it one of the most romantic places at the Black Sea.



Pomorie Tomb

The ancient domed tomb Heroon is located close to the entrance of the town of Pomorie. It was built under a raised mound in the area of Palekastro. It dates back to 2nd – 4th century AD and it was most likely a mausoleum-tomb of a rich Anhialo family where religious rituals were held.

The tomb was discovered in 1888 and is the largest tomb ever found in Bulgaria. The unique ancient monument consists of a circular chamber with diameter 11.6 m and height 5.5 m, and a corridor 22 m long, 1.7 m wide and 2.4 m high.

The tomb was built with stone and bricks cemented with mortar. There are traces of plaster and paint, suggesting that there were drawings in the central chamber. The central column is of particular interest as it is hollow, expanding like a mushroom and merging with the circular wall. There are five niches along the surrounding wall which are believed to have held urns with the ashes of the deceased.



Old Sozopol

Sozopol is one of the oldest towns on Bulgarian land. It was established 6 centuries BC by Greek colonists. The history of the town spans 2,600 years, leaving a remarkable imprint on its current appearance. There are ample historical and cultural attractions in the town.

Today Sozopol is divided into Old Town and New Town. The old part still embodies the spirit of bygone eras with its small wooden houses stretching their eaves over curving cobblestone alleys. Small restaurants perch on the coastal cliffs of its Old Town and offer a magnificent view of three islands. In its narrow streets tourists can buy authentic Bulgarian goods – knitwear, leather goods, and even have their portraits drawn by an artist.

The Old Sozopol has preserved many marks of its ancient history. The local archaeological museum boasts a unique collection of rare Greek vessels from 4th century BC and a collection of 120 intact amphorae. The museum is housed in the building of St. Cyril and Methodius Church. The museum's exhibits are grouped into two exposures - Archaeology (5th century BC – 7th century AC) and Christian Art (17th – 19th century).

The Old Sozopol still holds parts of fortification walls, temples, St. Bogoroditsa Church from 7th century and many wooden houses from the period of the Revival, typical representatives of the Bulgarian Black Sea-type of house.

LANDMARKS AND RESERVES

Pobiti Kamani



The Black Sea region abounds in natural and cultural landmarks and many sightseeing excursions can be organized to diversify a summer holiday.

Ropotamo Reserve

Ropotamo Reserve is located 50 km south of Burgas and covers large areas along the Ropotamo River. It hosts dense forests not characteristic for these latitudes and some fascinating rock formations, dunes, terraced banks, marshes and bogs. To explore the natural attractions of the reserve it is best to use the services of the boat trip organisers.

Durankulak Lake

Durankulak Lake is located 15 km north of Shabla and 6 km away from the border between Bulgaria and Romania. It is a coastal lake (firth) and has been declared a protected area as it provides habitat to 260 plant and animal species. The area is located on a migratory bird route - Via Pontica.

Shabla Lake

Shabla Lake is a complex of two inlets connected by an artificial canal and separated from the sea by a sandspit. It is located 3 km east of the town of Shabla. The location is particularly important because of the rare birds that nest here. In the region of Shabla there are other places of interest – the Shabla Lighthouse, archaeological reserve Yalata, etc.

Silistar

A few kilometres south of the village of Sinemorets on the road to Rezovo there is one of the most picturesque beaches on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast - Silistar. At this point the Rezovo River flows into the sea, which is the reason for the extremely rich vegetation and the wealth of birds, animals and fish.

Nature Park Golden Sands

Nature Park Golden Sands, 17 km north of Varna, forms a picturesque backdrop around the Golden Sands Resort. There are five tourist and five specialized routes developed on its territory suitable for hiking, children outings, cycling, photo safari, and hiking for people with special needs. In the park guides are available in order to help explore the most beautiful and remote places.

Kamchia Reserve

Kamchia Reserve covers a beautiful area situated 25 km south of Varna. This is where the river flows into the sea and where some of the most beautiful dense forests are located. Some of the activities to enjoy in the region include a boat or pedalo ride in the placid waters of the river.



Pobiti Kamani (Standing Stones) are rock formations near Varna located about 18-20 km west of the town, by the road to Sofia. The phenomenon covers a rather large area and the formations can be divided into several groups. The stone blocks are shaped like columns standing upright on the ground, creating the illusion that they have been positioned carefully in order to stand upright, hence their name. Their heights vary and can reach up to 5 meters, with diameters between 30 cm and 3 m.



Bird-watching

The Bulgarian Black Sea coast is one of the best bird watching locations in Europe because parts of it lie along migratory bird route Via Pontica. To the north, on Cape Kaliakra many species can be observed, such as the European shag, the rock-thrush, the calandra lark and other rare species.

To the north of Cape Kaliakra there are two wetland zones – Bolata and Taukliman (the "Bird Bay"), - where waterfowl nest - the little bittern, the little grebe, ducks. One of the most popular sites in Bulgaria for watching of rare and interesting types of birds is in the vicinity of the city of Burgas – the lakes Atanas, Mandra, Burgas and Pomorie. In the area of Poda near Burgas is one of the most visited bird watching sites with 226 types of birds, predominantly waterfowl.

To the south, in Ropotamo Reserve and swamp Alepy there are also some interesting species to see – the tawny pipit, the little ringed plover, the semi-collared flycatcher, the short-toed tree-creepers, the middle spotted woodpecker and others.

In the areas in the vicinity of the rivers Veleka and Silistar near Sinemorets little egrets, grey and squacco herons, white and black storks and other species can be spotted at certain times of the year.

EVENTS AND FESTIVALS



Kaliakra Rock Fest

Kaliakra Rock Fest is a traditional rock festival held every summer in the coastal town of Kavarna, 60 km northeast of Varna. In the few days of the festival the whole town comes to life with thousands of rock fans and their idols - popular rock bands and performers. Legends such as Accept, Motley Crue, Scorpions and many others have blown away the audience from the stage of the festival.

Spirit of Burgas

The Spirit of Burgas is perhaps the most popular musical event in Bulgaria. On several stages set up near the beach of Burgas during the hot August days and nights, dozens of popular foreign and local bands and performers from all genres - rock, rap, dance, drum n 'bass, jazz, blues, reggae, ska and electronic music - perform round the clock. Good music, the proximity of the sea and the incredible spirit of the festival attract huge audiences.

Apolonia

At the end of each summer the Apolonia Festival of Arts gathers together cultural icons and their fans in the sunny town of Sozopol. During the days of the festival the seaside town comes alive with the many guests gathered to honour and appreciate Bulgarian art - music, theatre, plastic arts, poetry, literature and cinema.

July Morning

July Morning is a Bulgarian hippie tradition which originated in the mid 80's. It is still very popular and attracts thousands of adherents. In the early hours on July 1, rockers from all over the country, and even from abroad, gather at the rocky beach of the village of Kamen Bryag (Rocky Beach), 80 km northeast of Varna, and welcome the sunrise with Uriah Heep's July Morning. The ritual is also performed in other places along the Black Sea coast, but the highest number of people comes to the village of Kamen Bryag. This custom is purely Bulgarian and cannot be seen anywhere else in the world. It originated as part of the hippie culture as a peculiar form of peaceful protest against Communism.

Varna Summer

The International Music Festival Varna Summer is held in June and July in Varna. The festival is an important forum for Bulgarian and world classical music composition and performance.

Love is Folly

In late August and early September each year love and cinema meet in Varna. International Film Festival Love is Folly honours the best romantic movies from around the world.

Folk groups

In August Burgas gathers folklore dance groups from around the world, who over a few days give performances and concerts on several stages in the city. The event includes festive processions and academic workshops on folklore-related topics.

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GENERAL INFO ABOUT BULGARIA

Geographic location: Republic of Bulgaria is a European country, located in the Eastern part of the Balkan peninsular. Its Eastern boundary is the Black Sea; Greece and Turkey are situated southbound, its Western neighbours are The Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, and to the North it shares border with The Republic of Romania.

Climate: Bulgaria has a mixed Mild-Continental and Mediterranean influenced climate.

Average winter temperatures: 0 °C to -2 °C

Average summer temperatures: 20-22 °C

Territory: 110,099 sq. km.

Population: 7 928 901

Official language: Bulgarian

Capital: Sofia

Currency: Bulgarian Lev (1 € = 1.955 BGN)

Single European emergency call number: 112

Average height above sea level: 470 m

Highest point: Musala peak (2925 m.)

Time zone: GMT+2 (EST+7)

Main denomination: East-orthodox Christianity

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OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE YEAR

