

# WELCOME TO BULGARIA !



## Recommendations and useful information for your safe and pleasant travel

BULGARIA is situated in the southeastern part of Europe, in the eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. For centuries, the country has been on the roads connecting Europe with Asia and Africa. Here intersect four Pan-European transport corridors running from Western and Northern Europe to the southern and eastern part of the continent. Bulgarian countryside is characterized by extremely varied relief – spreading plains strewn with wide valleys and lowlands, rolling countryside and plateaus. The Balkan Mountains, known for their many caves and picturesque cliffs, draw a natural boundary between North and South Bulgaria. At the foot of the mountain, Nature has tucked away scenic hollows, and among them, the one most famed, Rose Valley, where the famous attar rose is grown and the unique Bulgarian rose attar is produced. To the South, in the Rila Mountains, towers the highest peak on the Balkan Peninsula – Mount Mussala. For centuries, Bulgaria has been known throughout Europe for its numerous mineral healing waters – there are more than 600 natural springs, some of which were chosen by the old Thracians to settle their communities. Lake Srebarna by the Danube is a natural reserve for a population of more than 160 rare bird species; it was included in the UNESCO list of biosphere reserves in 1977. Ten more national parks treasure the natural wealth of Bulgaria - Vitoshka, Pirin, the Blue Rocks near Sliven, Shoumen Plateau. The smaller parks – Yaylata on the Northern Black Sea Coast, Etera, Strandja, etc. – have great archaeological value. The Bulgarian seacoast is one of the most attractive tourist opportunities. It provides a unique combination of picturesque mountains, wide beaches and architectural museum towns of ancient history.

The territory of present day Bulgaria has been populated since ancient times. It was the center of the Thracian civilization, which dominated the Balkan Peninsula until two thousand years ago. Archaeological excavations during the recent decades revealed priceless evidence for the Thracian's flourishing in the Bulgarian lands. At the end of the seventh century (681) AD, the First Bulgarian Kingdom was founded. In the ninth century Bulgaria already established as one of the three realms in Europe, along with Byzantium and Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire. In 855 two Bulgarian scholars and saints, the brothers Cyril and Methodius, invented the Slavonic alphabet, which was officially adopted by the Bulgarian state alongside Christianity. Starting from here, the alphabet was spread to other Slavic countries. The cultural flourishing during the age of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom (13th - 14th century) bred literature and architectural masterpieces of world significance (the frescoes in Boyana Church near Sofia and Zemen Monastery, etc.)

In 1762 the monk Paissy of Hilendar Monastery wrote Slavic Bulgarian History setting the beginning of the Bulgarian Renaissance. Bulgaria experienced a continuous economic progress; the famous craft centers in the mountain regions (Gabrovo, Koprivshtitsa, Plovdiv, Bansko, Melnik, etc.) evolved; trade connections were established with the European countries, Russia, Egypt, etc. Struggling through secular education and fight for religious and territorial independence, Bulgaria won its autonomy after the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878. In 1908, Bulgaria's independence was officially proclaimed. Numerous monasteries – among the most renowned are: Aladja, Bachkovo, Dragalevtzi, Dryanovo, Zemen, Kilifarevo, Preobrazhene, Rila, Rozhen, Sokol, Troyan, Cherepish, Chiprovtsi – bring evidence of the enduring Christian tradition in the Bulgarian land.

|               |                               |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| TERRITORY     | 110 993 square kilometers     |
| POPULATION    | 7 977 646 inhabitants         |
| CAPITAL       | Sofia (1 173 811 inhabitants) |
| TIME ZONE     | Greenwich + 2                 |
| MONETARY UNIT | Lev                           |
| CURRENCY      | 1 Euro = 1.95 Levs            |

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFE TRAVEL

**Here are some basic recommendations for safe travel. Their observance will guarantee your safe journey from and to your home country and destination!**

- Have a rest every 2 hours and avoid traveling at night, which will decrease the risk of incidents;
  - For a short rest, avoid stopping in abandoned areas and prefer inhabited areas close to motels, petrol stations or guarded parking lots;
  - When stopping for the night in a hotel or motel, prefer parking your vehicle in guarded parking lots. It is recommended not to leave any valuable objects, bags with money or documents inside your car. Activated alarms and other security systems are additional factors for the safety of your vehicle;
    - Beware of slow vehicles;
    - In case of a road accident you may immediately find assistance with the traffic police at **Tel. 166.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR STAY

- When staying in a hotel, you may use the safety boxes of the hotel to store your valuables and jewelry;
- The bank system in Bulgaria is well developed, so you do not need to carry a large amount of money. Most of the big hotels and shops would readily accept international credit cards and debit cards; cash machines are easily available;
  - In order to avoid the risk of fraud, you should only exchange money in the exchange bureaus in the towns and at hotels;
  - If you lose your identity documents or if they are stolen, you should immediately contact the nearest police station. It is important to ask for a copy of the protocol drawn up on your case. The next step is to contact the diplomatic or consular mission of your country, in order to obtain the necessary documents which would enable you to continue your travel or go back to your home country;
  - Call 166 or go to the nearest police station for assistance should you become a victim of an assault.

## ROAD TRAFFIC

For your convenience, please note the following information on **THE DRIVING LICENSES** valid on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria:

1. Those issued by the states that have signed the Vienna Convention.
2. Certified translation of the driving license.
3. International driving license.



This is how the traffic police and their police cars look like: (PHOTOGRAPH of a traffic policeman) - with a light-reflecting vest, white peak cap, badge with a photograph, standing by a police Opel Astra with a "wing" type blue lamp.

**YOU WOULD FIND IT USEFUL TO KNOW BEFOREHAND** that in case of violation of the Road Traffic Act of the Republic of Bulgaria the controlling traffic police can only impose a sanction by issuing administrative citation.

The drivers traveling in Bulgaria have **to be prepared to present** upon request:

- a registration and an ownership documents of the motor vehicle or a certified letter of attorney by the owner. (A foreign national – owner of the car or having been authorized, who have entered the country by a car, can leave it only by that car. Leaving Bulgaria without the motor vehicle can be done only after arrangement of customs requirements.)
- International motor insurance card – Green Card

**If you travel by a rent car** you can enter the country only if your contract of rent allows expressly for such a possibility and the international insurance covers the territory of Bulgaria.

**USING SAFETY SEAT BELTS, NO MATTER WHERE YOU SIT IN THE AUTOMOBILE, BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE POPULATED AREAS, IS OBLIGATORY!**

Talking on a cellular telephone while driving is **PROHIBITED**, unless a hands-free telephone device is used.

In Bulgaria it is **PROHIBITED** to drive after drinking alcohol!

The most frequent reasons for road accidents caused by foreign drivers are over fatigue and falling asleep while driving, speeding, incorrect overtaking and driving at a short distance.

**TRAFFIC POLICE RECOMMENDS THE STRICT OBSERVANCE OF THE TRAFFIC RULES AND THE ROAD SIGNS ALONG THE ROADS AND HIGHWAYS OF THE COUNTRY, AS WELL AS THE SPEED LIMITS!**

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING:**

- Import and export of all types of narcotic drugs and substances in the Republic of Bulgaria is **PROHIBITED**;

- Import of firearms, explosives and ammunition into the country is **NOT ALLOWED**;

**EXPORT OF OBJECTS WITH ARTISTIC, HISTORICAL OR CULTURAL VALUE OUT OF THE COUNTRY IS ALLOWED ONLY UNDER THE SPECIAL PERMISSION OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE!**

**FIRST AID FOR DRIVERS**

In case of a road accident and in need of technical assistance on the road or repatriation of your automobile, you can call First Aid for Drivers by calling the police or the following telephone numbers: **/+359 2/ 980 33 08; /00359/ 146 (from a mobile telephone)**

**NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE WITH YOUR DAMAGED CAR, YOU WILL BE SENT A MECHANIC ON DUTY WITH A SPECIALIZED VEHICLE.**

## RECOMMENDED DAY&NIGHT GUARDED PARKING LOTS

### Along the road /E-80/ Kalotina - Sofia - "Trakia" Highway - Plovdiv - Haskovo - Kapitan Andreevo:

"Atlantic Inn" PL; "Dolno varshilo" PL (left); PL at "Tzerovo" road junction; PL at "Shell"-South petrol station (on both sides of the road); "Impulse" complex (left); "Merita" motel (right); "Chaya" complex (left); PL in town of Haskovo (on the way out to town of Harmanli); "Izvor na belonogata" PL in Harmanli town.

### Along the road /E-85/ Rouse - Veliko Tarnovo - Gabrovo - Kazanlak - Stara Zagora - Nova Zagora - Radnevo - Simeonovgrad - Harmanli - Kapitan Andreevo:

PL in town of Gabrovo (Bryanska str.); PL in village of Beli Bryag; PL in "Zhrebcheto" motel; PL in town of Nova Zagora; "Europe" PL in village of Bogdanovo.

### Along the road /E-79/ Vidin - Montana - Vratza - Botevgrad - Sofia - Blagoevgrad - Kulata:

PL in town of Vidin (on the way out to Sofia); PL at the circuit road of Vidin; PL in town of Vratza ("Sportna" str.); PL at "Rebarkovo" control checkpoint; PLots on the right side of "Hemus" Highway - "Rumoil" and "Zherkovo"; "Monza" complex (after Blagoevgrad); "Kresnenski Hancheta" PL; "Karelia" complex; "Drag Dallas" complex; "Kulata" PL.

### Along the road /E-83/ Rouse - Byala - Pleven - Yablanitza - Sofia:

Plots on the right side of the highway - "Rumoil" and "Zherkovo"

**IN CASE OF PROBLEMS** WHEN CROSSING THE BORDER, THE NATIONAL BORDER POLICE SERVICE ADVISES FOREIGN TRAVELERS TO USE THE FOLLOWING TWO TELEPHONE NUMBERS, AT WHICH FOREIGN NATIONALS CAN ASK FOR ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE IN ENGLISH OR GERMAN LANGUAGE FROM 8.30 H. A.M. TO 6.00 H. P. M.:

**Tel.: (02) 982 33 08; (02) 982 33 73**



# FOREIGN EMBASSIES TO THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

## • AUSTRIA

No. 4 Shipka Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 950 50 60, Fax: 981 05 67

## • BELARUS

Izgrev Quarter, No. 6 Charles Darwin Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 971 34 88; 971 95 28

## • CZECH REPUBLIC

No. 9 Yanko Sakazov Blvd.  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 946 11 11  
Fax: 946 18 00

## • DENMARK

No. 54, Dondoukov Boulevard  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 980 08 30  
Fax: 980 08 31

## • FRANCE

No. 27-29 Oborishte Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 965 11 00  
Fax: 965 11 20

## • GREECE

No. 33 San Stefano Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 946 10 30; 943 34 53  
Fax: 946 12 49

## • IRELAND (Chargé d'Affaires)

No. 55, Alexander Stamboliyski Boulevard  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 981 23 40; 981 20 94

## • ITALY

No.2 Shipka Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 921 73 00

## • ALBANIA

No. 10 Krakra Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 943 38 57

## • BELGIUM

Lozenetz Quarter, No. 1 Velchova Zavera Square  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 988 72 90; 988 72 80, Fax: 963 36 38

## • CYPRUS

Iztok Quarter, No. 22 Iurii Gagarin Street,  
Block No. 154 A, Floor 1, Apt.2  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.; (02) 971 22 41, Fax: 971 37 70

## • FINLAND

No. 16 Krakra Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 942 49 10, Fax: 942 49 20

## • GERMANY

Izgrev Quarter, No 25 Frederic Joliot Curie  
Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 918 380, Fax: (02) 963 16 58

## • HUNGARY

No. 57 Shesti septemvri Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 963 11 35; 963 11 36  
Fax: 963 21 10

## • ISRAEL

No. 1 Bulgaria Square Administrative Building  
of the National Palace of Culture Floor 7  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 951 50 44 (46), Fax: 952 11 01

## • JAPAN

No. 14 Lyulyakova gradina Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 971 27 08, Fax: 971 10 95

- **MACEDONIA**

Izgrez Quarter, No. 17 Frederic Joliot Curie Street,  
Block No. 2, Apt.1  
1000 Sofia  
Tel./Fax: (02) 870 15 60; 870 50 98, Fax: 971 28 32

- **NORWAY**

No. 54B Dondoukov Boulevard  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 921 195, Fax: 981 90 10

- **PORTUGAL**

Yavorov Quarter, No. 6 Ivatz Voyvoda Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 943 36 67, Fax: 943 30 89

- **RUSSIA**

No. 28 Dragan Tzankov Boulevard  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 963 40 21; 963 09 14  
Fax: 963 41 03

- **SLOVAKIA**

No. 9 Yanko Sakazov Blvd.  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 943 32 81(5), Fax: 943 38 37

- **SWEDEN**

No. 4 Alfred Nobel Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 930 19 60, Fax: 973 37 95

- **THE NETHERLANDS**

No. 15 Oborishte Street  
1504 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 816 03 00, Fax: 816 03 01

- **TURKEY**

No. 80 Vassil Levski Blvd.  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 935 55 00/22, Fax: 981 93 58

- **UKRAINE**

Ovcha kupel Quarter, No. 29 Boryana Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 955 94 78, Fax: 955 52 47

- **MOLDOVA**

No. 152 Georgi Rakovski Street  
1142 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 935 60 11 (12,13,14,15)

- **POLAND**

No. 46 Khan Krum Street  
1504 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 987 26 70, Fax: (02) 987 29 39

- **ROMANIA**

No. 4 Mihai Eminescu Blvd.  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 971 28 58, Fax: 971 36 19

- **SERBIA AND MONTE NEGRO**

No. 3 Veliko Tarnovo Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 946 16 33; 946 16 35  
Fax: 946 10 59

- **SPAIN**

No. 27 Sheinovo Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 943 36 20; 943 30 32  
Fax: 946 12 01

- **SWITZERLAND**

No. 33 Shipka Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 942 01 00, Fax: 946 16 22

- **THE UNITED KINGDOM**

No. 9 Moskovska Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 933 92 22; 933 92 90  
Fax: (02) 933 92 19

- **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

No. 1 Saborna Street  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: (02) 937 51 00, Fax: 981 89 77