



**code:**

**Duration: 8 days**

**Departure dates 2017/2018: Every day from May to June**

**Price: 440 €/adult \*Please contact us for more information**

History and geography have played role in making the Rhodopes (Rodopi mountains) in Southern Bulgaria, one of Europe's most beautifully wild and fascinating regions, the birth place of the legendary Orpheus.

Our days are spent on walks, through canyons, virgin forests and remote villages.

We pass through some of the most spectacular parts of the Rodopi Mountains, namely; the Trigrad Gorge, the Devil's Throat Cave, the Miraculous Bridges amongst others. The trail affords breathtaking views over high rocky cliffs, woods, alpine meadows and the tiny villages where you can observe Bulgaria at its best untainted by the influence of western society.

### **TOUR HIGHLIGHTS**

- ▣ **Shiroka Luka** - An architectural reserve hosting a bagpipe music school
- ▣ **Gela** - A small village at the foot of Rodopi highest peak: Golyam Perelik (2191m a.s.l.), considered the birth place of Orpheus
- ▣ **Yagodina Cave** is among the longest caves in Bulgaria (more than 10 000 m mapped so far), one of the most spectacular
- ▣ **The Devil's Throat Cave** has its name from a legend. It tells that if you let something flow in the cave river it will never come out again. And there is one of the highest underground waterfalls in Europe, 42 m high;

- **The Miraculous bridges** - unique rock formation (about 40 m. high) covering an area of 40,3 hectares;
- **Lyaskovo** - stay with a local family, enjoy its hospitality and taste the local specialties
- **Bachkovo Monastery** is the second largest Bulgarian monastery;
- **The old town of Plovdiv** - Europe's oldest inhabited city

□

### Itinerary:

#### Day 1: Plovdiv

Arrive Sofia and transfer to Plovdiv for accommodation in the old town.

#### Day 2: Plovdiv - Shiroka Luka - Gela

We leave Plovdiv after breakfast and two hours later we reach the village Shiroka Luka. We spend about an hour in the village taking a walk along its cobbled streets and then continue for another 20 min. drive to Gela.

Rodopis highest situated village (1500 m. asl.) Gela hosts the annual Bagpipe Festival in August. The afternoon offers a delightful introduction to the Rodopi Mountains by taking several hours circular walk from our guest house to the nearby villages of Stikul and Solishta.

Walking distance: 16km; Uphill walk: 770m; downhill walk: 770m; walking time: about 5 hrs

#### Day 3: Gela - Lednicata Hut - Mugla - Chairski Lakes

A long and rewarding day of walking through the heart of the Rodopi. We walk most of the time above the tree line enjoying the magnificent views over Mt Turlata and Mt Perelik. This walk combines forest tracks with old mule trails without any steep ascents and descents. After a short rest in the small village of Mugla, we reach our final destination Chairski Lakes Hut for overnight. The hut is named after the seven lakes nearby formed by melting glaciers during the Ice Age. The origin of the name of the lakes is Turkish. It comes from the word "chair", meaning "meadow".

Walking distance: 18.5km; Uphill walk: 950m; downhill walk: 960m; walking time: about 6 hrs

#### Day 4: Chairski Lakes - Trigrad Cave - Trigrad

An easy day walking lies ahead of us. After two hours along a dirt road following the Chairska River we reach the main road Devin-Trigrad and we walk another 30 min. to get to the Devil Throat cave of Trigrad. The cave waterfall is one of the highest in Europe; some 42 m a spectacular underground experience.

Walking distance: 8.5km; Uphill walk: 305m; downhill walk: 500m; walking time: about 4 hrs

### **Day 5: Trigrad - Yagodina Cave - Yagodina - Lyaskovo**

This day starts with gentle 30-40 min. ascent North-West from the village to a forest trail leading into alpine meadows offering views over Trigrad Gorge. The spectacular, 8 km Yagodina Cave is the longest known Rodopi cave and, with its many abysses and labyrinthine tunnels, also one of Bulgaria's deepest. The 45-minute tour highlights the remarkable stalagmites and stalactites, which resemble curtains, and mentions the Neolithic settlers who lived here 8000 years ago

Walking distance: 8.2km; Uphill walk: 285m; downhill walk: 495m; walking time: about 4 hrs

### **Day 6: Lyaskovo - Ziburdo**

After leaving the village we follow ancient trails criss-crossing streams as we ascend. Then after a steep climb we reach the highest point in the trek at 1470 m enjoying the panoramic views.

Now descend through thick pine forests to the village of Ziburdo where we will stay overnight.

Walking distance: 17.5km; Uphill walk: 920m; downhill walk: 795m; walking time: about 6 hrs

### **Day 7: Miraculous Bridges – Kabata Hut – Orehovo - Bachkovo Monastery - Plovdiv**

After breakfast our hosts will transfer you to the Miraculous Bridges, two natural bridges of solid rock rising up to 45 m, peacefully set among the pinewoods. You will first hike to Kabata Hut (1 hour 20 min) following a blue marked dirt road. After another 30 min. climb from the hut we reach Tsirikova Church - a small chapel at 1740 m asl. The trail affords breathtaking views over Chaya Valley and Chernatitsa Ridge. From here descend to Orehovo where our guide will be waiting for you to take you to the Bachkovo Monastery, one of southern Bulgaria's architectural gems, and then onto Plovdiv for overnight.

Walking distance: 21km; Uphill walk: 850m; downhill walk: 1180m; walking time: about 7 hrs

### **Day 8: Departure**

Private transfer to Sofia airport for departure (1.5 hours drive).

**Included in the price:** □ □ 5 nights □ hotels and guest houses, rooms with en-suite facilities, 1 night rooms with shared facilities (day 3) □ airport transfers on arrival and departure days as set

by the itinerary (Day 1 and Day 8) □ breakfast all days and 5 dinners (days 2-6) □ Luggage transport □ All transfers □ Road book in English □ Map □ 24hrs phone assistance □ VAT and all local taxes.

**Not included:** □ flight tickets □ airport transfers outside the tour itinerary □ dinners in Plovdiv on day 1 and 7; lunches □ entrance fees for the caves and other landmarks □ insurance □ alcohol drinks, tips and other personal expenses.

**Other expenses:** Single room supplement: 80 EUR □ airport transfers outside the tour itinerary: 15 EUR per transfer for vehicle 1-3 pax / 25 EUR for vehicle 4-7 pax