



From 19/6 to 27/06/2020 - from 03/07 to 11/07/2020

Sports and cultural trip

Bulgaria

### 8 Night-9 Days Tour

first day Friday: Sophia-Rila Monastery

Departure from Milan airport with direct flight. Entry formalities and then head to the centre of the Capital for a quick lunch. Soon after the break the tour guide will be joining us and will start the city tour outside and inside the selected places. Sophia booming metropolis, full of charm, is a cross between the coexisting Eastern and Western cultures. The vibrant neighbourhoods are characterised by large buildings in Soviet style sided by modern structures; restaurants, taverns, markets, and parks take life at the foot of Mount Vitosha. As the tour ends, we will reach our hotel near Rila Monastery by van, just in time for dinner. Km 100

Second day Saturday: Melnik

Departure from the Hotel by bike and head to the most important monastery in the country, registered in the list of the World Heritage Site. It is situated in Rila's National Park and represents the place where the so-called period of the "Rinascenza" over expressed. Visit inside. We will continue on our bikes along a back road, immersed in a wood of beech, birch trees and old spruces from where several excursions start. During the ascent along a different path, we will leave the bicycles and reach in a short walk Saint Ivan's cave; after that with a pleasant and very long naturalistic descent,



we will move to a natural area characterised by water, ice and snow land erosions that have been going on for centuries. A few steps on foot and then back to the van, heading to Melnik (km 119), small town rising on a minor branch of the Pirin Mountains, at the most extreme South west corner of Bulgaria, between Macedonia and Greece, at the base of amazing pyramids of sandstone. Dinner at a characteristic tavern and overnight stay.

1<sup>^</sup> step: 50 km by bike, 640m difference in level ascent and 970m descent

Third day Sunday: Bansko

Departure from the Hotel on our bikes. The excursion among wonderful sandstone pyramids will be both on paved and dirt roads. We will head to the Monastery of this small city located in a beautiful landscape. Though Melnik is the smallest village in Bulgaria, it is still called “a joyous little town” for its old reputation as great wine producer and for its history. Lunch break and then visit to a cellar home of wine merchants, built in 1754 and now a museum. We will then be leaving to Bansko by van km 111, where dinner and overnight stay will be waiting for us in the best and most typical restaurant, characterised by a warm and comfortable atmosphere.

2<sup>^</sup> step: 32,4 km by bike - 820m difference in level ascent and 850m descent

fourth day Monday: Plovdiv

Departure from the Hotel on our bikes off to a lodge where lots of trekking or ski mountaineering paths originate. From there we will admire Mount Vihren, the highest mountain in the Pirin massif. It looks like silver, standing beautiful and amazing among the other mountains. Lunch/snack at the lodge and then we'll go down through an enjoyable forest path. On a few short sections, we will have to hold the bike and go



on foot until we reach our starting point. Bansko is the main resort area in the Pirin National Park (Unesco World Heritage site) for winter sports and for cyclists and walkers in the summer. In the XVIII-XIX Centuries it had one of the most important school of the Rinascenza period. In the afternoon, we will visit the small town, getting to know the maximum Bulgarian Educationalist who lived here. By Van we will then head to Plovdiv, the second Bulgarian major town km 150, that rose on the Thracian area. Dinner and overnight stay.

3<sup>^</sup> step: 27,4 km by bike, 1022m and descent 1030m difference in level ascent

Fifth day Tuesday: Kazanlak

Departure from the hotel on our bikes. Today the path is going to be completely different from the day before and will take us along the river bank, going through vineyards in a very nice and easy dirt road. A good glass of wine won't be missing. In the early afternoon return to Plovdiv and meet the tourist guide who will take us around the old city, stopping over several historic buildings like the Roman theatre, which is really worth visiting. Cobblestones, nineteenth century buildings, Roman ruins and many others again through restaurants and coffee shops, which make the town very welcoming and lively. At the end of the sightseeing tour, we will join the heart of the Thracian land, Kazanlak km 105. Dinner and overnight stay.

4<sup>^</sup> step: 53,4 km by bike , 242 m difference in level ascent

Sixth day Wednesday: Kazanlak

We will be pedalling charmed by the atmosphere of this great plain lying at the eastern edge of the Roses Valley and so rich in history. You will get closer to this ancient Thracian people visiting hermitage site places. It will be possible for us to have



lunch either in the city centre square or along the path. In the afternoon we will continue our tour going back again in time, 2500 to 2300 years B.C. Dinner and overnight stay.

5<sup>^</sup> step: 48,5 km by bike, difference in level ascent 721 m.

#### Seventh day Thursday: VelikoTarnovo

Departure by van after breakfast. In a short time we will have reached the starting point of our first destination, headed to by bike. Today we will be going through a completely different historical period. Those who wish to be led by history, will find themselves in one of the most cherished historical places of Bulgarian memory. Here the Russian army restored the independence of the Country fighting against the Turkish Armada. At the end of our visit, we will be riding along a mountain paved road to a typical, lively and interactive spot to see traditional XIX century outfits, jobs and furniture.

Free lunch and then off to the capital of the second Bulgarian reign km 51, where the tour guide will take us up to the city walls and the hill, a proper natural fortress. Tour of the citadel and visit of a home museum; free time for shopping or a drink. Dinner and overnight stay.

6<sup>^</sup> step: km 31 by bike of which 18 of descent

#### Eighth day Friday: Sofia- Monte Vitosha

End of our tour. As soon as we reach Sofia km 221, we will leave our luggage at the airport and set off to Mount Vitosha, so dear to the citizens and not to be missed. We will head to the oldest monastery in the capital, riding both paved and dirty roads to



get to a beautiful viewpoint of the city. Free time for those who won't join the tour. Dinner in a typical restaurant and overnight stay.

7<sup>th</sup> step: 33,2 km – 1055 m ascent – 1282 m descent.

Ninth day Saturday: transfer to the airport in the morning and back to Italy.

### **Important notes:**

- transport by van is provided for those who won't fly, cost and details to be set out.
- customised tour for group of minimum 6 people are available. (example: different dates have to be arranged or sports only on foot or alternatively on foot or on bike)
- no additional cost for recovery and delivery of your e-bike. The e-bike cannot fly.
- electrical bike rental on request with an extra charge if you require more than two already included in the price of the trip.
- For enrolment within 31 January with the bikes offered in this program, 5% discount.
- Registration within 60 days of departure date
- valid I.D. required for EU citizens.
- Yours Bikes must be checked and serviced before departure.
- The van is equipped with a small workshop but spare parts are not included. As you register you will be asked for your bike model and told what to bring with you.
- Compulsory helmet.
- The time zone in Bulgaria is one hour ahead of Italy.
- Schedule may vary due to technical and organisational problems.



- Accommodation, tickets, restaurants and tourist guides are provided by the Bulgarian tour operator or the Italian travel agency.
- Either a decrease or an increase in fee will be requested for accommodation in single or triple room.

**COST: € 1,295.00 PER PERSON. JUST 8 PEOPLE BICYCLES INCLUDED.**

#### INCLUDING:

- Bikes (MTB Trek 8Xcaliber and n. 2 e-bikes Trek powerfly 5+)
- Tour by Mercedes Sprinter van with qualified driver; the van is accessorised with 220 volt outlets, fridge, DVD screen and indoor bike compartment.
- Tour by Italian MTB guide.
- Half board accommodation at selected restaurants and 3/4 stars typical or family-run hotels, in double rooms.
- Visit and wine-tasting at a winery in Plovdiv.
- Tickets for historical and cultural centres sightseeing selected by the operator.
- Tourist guide in Sofia, Plovdiv and Veliko Tarnovo.
- Flight booking fees.
- Allianz-Globy Rosso Insurance (medical and luggage) for foreign or Italian residing citizens.
- Bulgarian tour operator assistance.
- Baggage, sports equipment and e-bikes collection at the arranged spots in Italy, return transport to Sofia.

#### FEES DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Direct flight to and from Sofia.
- Extra charge if you require more than two e-bikes already included in the price of the trip.
- Food, drinks, tips, extras and all that is not above mentioned.
- Compulsory insurance (medical and luggage) for foreigners not residing in Italy.