

Balkan Mountains Self-guided Trek (Bulgaria)



The area around Teteven in the Balkan mountains offers unique and diverse landscape, dotted with tiny villages lost in greenness and flowers, offering visitors not only tranquillity and calmness.

In this region, traditions are a big part of modern life. Old water mills are still at work; fulling mills continue to wash colourful carpets; the famous "rakia" (brandy) is prepared right before you; Bulgarian housewives prepare unforgettably sweet jams made with wild berries; and the old farmers still make the famous Balkan brine cheese with sheep and goat's milk. And all this surrounded by the wild nature of the Central Balkan National Park and one of its nine green pearls – the biosphere reserve of Boatin, housing one of the largest belts of Beech forest in Europe.

Tour highlights

- ◆ **Central Balkan National Park** was established for the conservation of the unique nature of the Central Balkan Mountains.
- ◆ **Glozhene Monastery** was built in the 13-th century by the Ukrainian prince Glozh, housing an icon at the age of about 1000 years.
- ◆ **Saeva dupka cave** – although it is only 400 m long the cave is considered to be one of the most beautiful ones in Bulgaria housing a great number of beautiful cave formations

Itinerary:

Day 1. Arrival

Arrive at Sofia Airport, transfer to hotel for overnight.

Day 2. Saeva Dupka cave - Glozhene monastery - Goliam Izvor

Drive to the cave „Saeva dupka” (1.5 hours). After visit it transfer to the village of

Glozhene where a nice trek expects you to through old beech forest to Glozhene Monastery, where you can see the 1000 years old icon of St. George. From the monastery we follow the path climbing to Mt. Lisets offering stunning views over the Teteven Valley and the Central Balkan range. We continue along some narrow paths and a dirt road to Goliam Izvor for overnight.

Walking time: 4-5 hrs; Uphill: 400 m; Downhill walk: 350 m

Day 3: Golyam Izvor – Brusen

We start our walk directly from our guest house in the village center crossing plum tree orchards and pine forests.

After a gentle ascent to Mt Orlyak we follow a dirt road to the small village of Brusen. Lunch and dinner will be in the guest house where we will stay for the night, and the afternoon is dedicated to a trip by car to Etropole Monastery and the waterfall near it. We may take a short walk in the town of Etropole.

Walking time: 4 hrs; Uphill: 600 m; Downhill walk: 350 m

Day 4: Brusen – Cherni Vit

The trail again passes through mixed forests, but this time - uphill. We will then walk along unwooded ridge, after that we will descend to the village of Cherni Vit.

Overnight in guest house in Cherni Vit.

Walking time: 4 hrs; Uphill: 450 m; Downhill walk: 300 m

Day 5: Kordela Hut - Boatin Reserve - Ribaritsa

Short transfer to Kordela hut where our walk starts crossing Boatin Reserve. The path goes through the century-old beech forests of Boatin and descends over the other side of the hill to the region of "Kostina", where one of the Bulgarian national heroes has been killed by the Turks. From this point a short walk along gardens, meadows, villas and houses of local people brings you in the village of Ribaritsa, where you stay overnight.

Walking time: 3-4; uphill walk: 250 m; downhill walk: 530 m

Day 6. Ribaritsa - Debeli Dial - Ribaritsa

Today you will walk along "Debeli Dial" - the ridge surrounding Ribaritsa from North. The path continues to Vasiliov Hut but before that you will turn right descending at the upper parts of Ribaritsa, which is actually the longest village in the country (12 km long). You will have the opportunity to see the way of live of the local people and to enjoy the idyll of a typical Balkan Mountains village. Overnight in Ribaritsa.

Walking time: 5 hrs; uphill walk: 400 m; downhill walk: 400 m

Day 7: Teteven - Opasen zab - Petrahilya Peak - Teteven

Transfer to Teteven. We start the trek through a rocky, but easy to pass area and a beautiful forest with trees with strange forms. Getting to Opasniya Zab (The Dangerous Fang) Shelter from where you have a very nice panoramic view to Teteven and the surrounding area (1179 m.a.s.l.). You continue up climbing Petrahilya Peak, which is the highest mount in the surrounding area. After you climb the peak you descent back to Teteven by a different route, heading to South-East. Overnight hotel in Teteven.

Walking time: 4 hrs; Uphill walk: 810 m; Downhill walk: 810 m

Day 8: Departure

Transfer to Sofia airport for departure (1,30hrs drive).

Included in the price: ► Accommodation at family-run hotels en-suite facilities (days 1,5,6,7), and in a guesthouse with shared facilities (days 2,3,4). ► Breakfast and dinner included (except dinner on day 1 and 7). ► Roadbook in English and map of the area, ► private transfers from/to Sofia airport on day 1 and 8, luggage transfers and transfers where specified during the walk ► local back-up and emergency phone.

Not included: Meals not mentioned ► tips ► entrance fees ► drinks and other personal expenses.

Price of extra services: Single room supplement: 85 EURO

Recommended travel period of the year: April- October