



# Republic of Bulgaria



## Location of Bulgaria

- in [Europe](#) (light-green & grey)
- in the [European Union](#) (light-green)

Capital (and largest city) [Sofia](#)

Official language(s) [Bulgarian](#)

[Official script](#) [Cyrillic](#)

84.8% [Bulgarians](#)

Ethnic groups (2011) 84.8%

8.8% [Turks](#)

4.9% [Roma](#)

[Unitary](#)



[Prime Minister](#)

[Boyko Borisov](#)



[Rumen Radev](#)

[President of Bulgaria](#)



[Area](#) - Total 110,994 km<sup>2</sup>

[Population](#) - 2011 ce

Drives on the right

[ISO 3166 code](#) [BG](#)

[Internet TLD](#) [.bg](#)

[Calling code](#) [359](#)

# Sofia- the capital of Bulgaria



From top left: Tsarigradsko shose, National Assembly Square, [Sofia University](#) rectorate, National Palace of Culture detail, [Mall of Sofia](#), Ivan Vazov National Theatre, [Holy Sophia Church](#), [Eagles' Bridge](#) detail



# Welcome to BULGARIA Magic Lives Here



**A country with a history over 1300 years...**

**A place where the mists of Spring embrace the green summits  
and in the valleys beneath them forgotten kings rest in their eternal place.**

**A place where Sun illuminates the vanishing remains of destroyed empires...  
and the wild forests still remember the footsteps of mighty warriors.**

**This is Bulgaria...**

# Nature

Bulgaria is like a miniature of all natural beauties

On a territory of nearly 111 000 square kilometers you can see and enjoy magnificent mountain ridges, cozy sand and stone beaches, scenic tectonic and glacial lakes, patchwork plains, green pastures and deep caves.

In the North is the Danube plain, bordering with the Balkan Ridge Mountain. In the South is the Thracian Lowland, bordering with the Rila, Pirin and the Rhodopes Mountains.

To the East is the 354 km Black sea coastline.



Some of the main rivers running through the territory of the country are: Danube, Maritza, Mesta, Struma, Iskar and Yantra.

There are 3 national parks, 9 nature parks and 55 nature reserves.

If you chose for a stay in Bulgaria you will be lucky to enjoy the beauties and aromas of all four distinct seasons





## Mountains

Snow-capped peaks and soft green slopes, cool forests carrying the aroma of herbs and wild fruit, fast rivers and crystal-clear blue lakes, mineral springs and bio-reserves, rich plant and animal life, modern ski resorts and small picturesque villages with living traditions and folklore - each Bulgarian mountain has its own original trademark, fascination and name.

There are five main mountain wonders: Rila, Pirin, Rhodope, Stara Planina and Vitoshka. The Rila Mountain prides to have the highest peak on the Balkan Peninsula – Musala (2925 m), over 219 lakes, 2000 plant varieties and 500 animal species. The jewels in the mountain's crown are the Seven Rila Glacial Lakes.

### Belogradchik Rocks

These rocks resemble fantastic human figures up to 200 meters high and form a strip of land that is 30 km long and 3 km wide. The central group of rocks is situated to the South of Belogradchik town in North- Western Bulgaria. Here are the most interesting and impressive formations - Adam and Eve, The Schoolgirl, The Bear, The Shepherd boy, The Dervish, The First slabstone, The Camel, The Mushrooms, The Cuckoo, The Red Wall, The Madonna, The Horseman, The Monks, The Mental Stone, Rebel Velko and The Pine Stones. They are declared as natural landmarks.

### The Melnik Rock pyramids

The Rock pyramids in the region of Melnik in Southern Bulgaria rank among the most remarkable natural phenomena in Bulgaria. Over an area of about 17 sq. km. millennia-long erosion has created a truly unearthly world. It is up to the visitor's imagination to distinguish obelisks, ancient towers, pyramids and giant mushrooms among the various forms of erosion.



Musala





## The Sea



The Bulgarian Black Sea coast was inhabited centuries ago – the earliest records date from 5th century BC. The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast, stretching for 236 miles (380 km), marvelous stretch of beaches, calm and safe sea,



clear water and healthy air. Nowadays it is a magnet for hundreds of thousands of Bulgarians and foreign visitors every year. The welcoming climate

from late May to late September with average sea temperatures of 25C, the beaches with fine golden sands, and the modern resorts not surprisingly

attract more and more tourists. The Black Sea coast is also one of the best

spa areas in the country where the combination of sea climate, mineral baths, hot springs and curative mud adds to the possibilities of holiday

enjoyment. The two international airports of Varna and Burgas connect the Bulgarian Riviera to the world.



### Ancient City of Nesebar

The town of Nessebar is under the aegis of UNESCO.

It is one of the oldest towns in Europe



## History and culture

Bulgaria is a cradle and crossroad of ancient civilizations like Thracians, Romans, Slavs and Bulgarians. Bulgaria is the birthplace of the Cyrillic alphabet, which was developed in Preslav and Ohrid Literary Schools during the 10th century. Today, more than 200 million people from different countries use the developed version of the Cyrillic alphabet. Bulgaria has nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 5 of which are with historical cultural origin.



### **Rila monastery**-Rila mountain,

Rila Monastery was founded in the 10th century by St. Ivan Rilski.

He was revered as a saint when he was still alive and the legend says that wild animals were coming to him, and birds were landing on his hands.

Today St. Ivan Rilski is honoured one of the most important saints of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. His ascetic dwelling and tomb became a holy site and were transformed into a monastic complex which played an important role in the spiritual and social life of medieval Bulgaria.

Destroyed by fire at the beginning of the 19th century, the complex was rebuilt between 1834 and 1862.



### **Boyana Church**

Located in the outskirts of Sofia, Boyana Church consists of three buildings.

The Eastern Church was built in the 10th century, then enlarged at

the beginning of the 13th century by Sebastocrator, the whole building being finished with a further expansion to the west in the middle of the 19th century. The church owes its world fame mainly to its frescoes from 1259. They form a second layer over the paintings from earlier centuries and represent one of the most complete and well-preserved monuments of Eastern European medieval art. A total of 89 scenes with 240 human images are depicted on the walls of the church.





## Etar

Architectural ethnographic complex “Etar” is the first one of this type in Bulgaria. The museum is situated 8 km South of Gabrovo. Inside Etar is the only one and unique collection of old-times water-driven machinery in Bulgaria. It consists 10 objects and its one of the most richest and well preserved active technical collection around the European museums in the open air.



## Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak

Discovered in 1944, this tomb dates from the Hellenistic period, around the end of the 4th century BC. It is located near Seutopolis, the capital city of the Thracian king Seutes III, and is part of a large Thracian necropolis.

The tholos (ceremonial room) has a narrow corridor and a round burial chamber, both decorated with murals representing Thracian burial rituals and culture. These paintworks are Bulgaria’s best-preserved artistic masterpieces from the Hellenistic period.



The golden treasure of PANAGYURISHTE



The golden treasure of VALCHITRAN

## Golden treasures of Bulgaria

In Antiquity Bulgarian lands were inhabited by Thracians. They have left us amazing artifacts-unique stone tombs with murals and precious

# History and culture

## Historical figures



**St. Cyril and St. Methodius**  
- creators of the Slavic alphabet and the first translators of liturgical books from Greek into Old-Bulgarian.



**Tsar Simeon I**  
(Simeon Veliki – Simeon The Great, 893-927) - the greatest ever ruler of Bulgaria, who was the driving force for The Golden Age of Bulgarian Medieval Civilization.



**Paisiy Hilendarski**  
(1722 - 1773)  
- the father of the Bulgarian Renaissance and author of the first Bulgarian history.



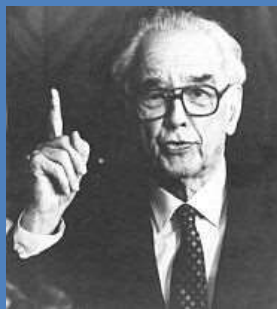
**Vasil Levski**  
(1837-1873)  
- theoretician and strategist of the struggle of Bulgarian people for liberation from Ottoman rule, called by Bulgarians “Apostle of Freedom”.



**Hristo Botev**  
(1848-1876)  
– genius of the Bulgarian literature. Brilliant Bulgarian poet and revolutionary. A verse of Hristo Botev is written in golden letters in the Sorbonne– Paris, as an example of his poetry masterpiece.



**Ivan Vazov**  
(1850-1921)  
- for more than fifty years Ivan Vazov was the most prominent figure in Bulgarian literature after The Liberation.



**John Atanasoff (1903-1995)**  
– creator of the world’s first electrical digital computer between 1939 and 1942. Before him, a great number of mechanical calculating machines were built. However it was he who came to the idea of abandoning mechanics and designed electronic calculating circuits operating through a binary system of numbers. His invention opened the door to world information revolution.



**Vladimir Dimitrov – Maistora**  
(1888 - 1960)  
-one of the most talented -20<sup>th</sup> century Bulgarian painters and probably the most remarkable stylist in Bulgarian painting in the Post-Russo-Turkish War era.



**Raina Kabaivanska - opera singer,**

one of the most renowned sopranos in the second half of the 20th century. *“Raina has the ability to focus on what is essential in a character. This is why her heroines are always stripped of any deceit. She possesses the honesty that allows her to reach down to the depth of her characters... When Raina appears, the stage becomes replete with her presence.”* Mauro Bolognini



**Valya Balkanska - one of the most famous Bulgarian folklore singers, whose voice is traveling in deep space on NASA’s “Voyager”.**



**Vasko Vasilev** –is world famous violist and Concertmaster & Creative Director of The Royal Opera House –London. Teacher of Vanessa May.



**Chris Todorova** presented

Bulgaria at the twelfth edition of the children’s song contest “Eurovision” in Malta together with pianists Hassan and Ibrahim Ignatovi song “Planet of the Children”, ranking the honorary second place, recording the best result of Bulgaria in the history of the competition

**Mystery of Bulgarian Voices**

- *“These are the singers that won the Grammy Award and endorsement from such pop superstars as Paul Simon, Linda Ronstadt, George Harrison, Bobby McFerrin, Midori and many others all over the world. They create a crossover sensation everywhere they perform as listeners of all music faiths gather in the presence of sounds more strangely wonderful than almost any they have heard before... Everyone could consider himself richer in spirit for having heard Le Mystere des Voix Bulgares”, Chicago Tribune*



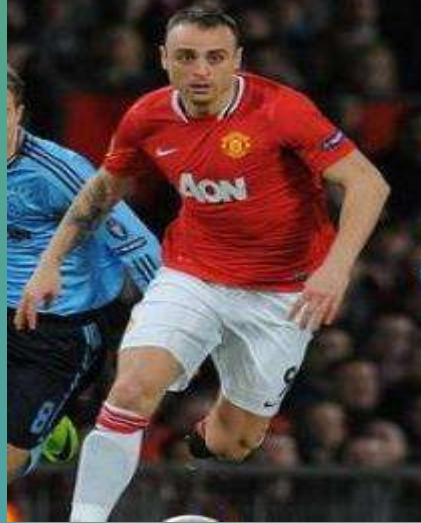
**Kristalina Georgieva** – A Bulgarian economist and politician, currently serving as European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response in the second college of the Barroso Commission. She was appointed as Vice President and Corporate Secretary of the World Bank Group in March 2008; in January 2010 she announced her intention to resign from this post in view of her nomination to the Commission of the European Union. In 2010 Kristalina Georgieva was named European of the Year and EU Commissioner of the Year.





## Hristo Stoichkov Stoichkov

born 8 February 1966 in Plovdiv) He is regarded as one of the best footballers of his generation and the greatest Bulgarian footballer of all time. His awards include the European Golden Ball, the European Golden Shoe, the World Cup Golden Boot and the World Cup Bronze



## Dimitar Berbatov is a

Bulgarian footballer who plays at the moment in Greece.

He was captain of the Bulgarian national team 2006-2010, and his all-time leading scorer and also won the Bulgarian Footballer of the Year a record seven times.

Berbatov is the first foreigner in the history of the Premier League, which notes five goals in a match for Manchester United in November 2010



## Stefka Kostadinova born March 25, 1965 in Plovdiv)

is a Bulgarian retired athlete and the current women's world record holder in the high jump.

She is the current president of the Bulgarian Olympic Committee.



## Yordan Yovchev born February 24, 1973), is a Bulgarian gymnast.

He won silver in the men's rings at the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens with a score of 9.850.

In the same Olympic Games, Yovchev won bronze in the men's floor exercise. In the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia, he won the bronze on both floor exercise and still rings with 9.787 and 9.762 respectively.

He also won two World Championship Bronze medals in the all around (1999, 2001).

In 2009, he was elected president of the Bulgarian Gymnastics Federation. Yordan Yovchev qualified and participated in the 2012 Summer Olympics in London,

which was his 6th appearance at the Olympic Games, a record for a gymnast. He was also his country's flagbearer during the opening ceremony.



## Grigor Dimitrov Bulgarian tennis player, winner of the championship

titles at Wimbledon and the US Open in

2008 for adolescents. ■



## Lazarka

*Lazarka, this name is given to little girls, participating in the rituals on "Lazarovden" – a celebration dedicated to nature and life's rebirth. The name Lazarisa symbol of health and long life. On the last Saturday before Easter all Lazarki go around the village, enter in every house and sing songs to each family member. There is a different song for the lass, the lad, the girl, the child, the host, the shepherd, the ploughman This tradition can be seen only in Bulgaria.*

## Bulgarian traditions



### Baba Marta – Aunt Marta – martenitsi

Martenitsa is a small piece of adornment, made of white and red yarn and worn from 1st of March until around the end of March (or the first time an individual sees a stork, swallow or budding tree).

The name of the holiday is Baba Marta.

"Baba" is the Bulgarian word for "grandmother" and "Mart" is the Bulgarian word for the month of March.

Baba Marta is a Bulgarian tradition related to welcoming the upcoming spring. The month of March, according to Bulgarian folklore, marks the beginning of springtime.

Therefore, the first day of March is a traditional holiday associated with sending off winter and welcoming spring.

**Thanks**  
**for attention!**