

 DataArt

Guide

RELOCATION TO
BULGARIA

ENG





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Dear readers,

This document was created to provide more information to anyone interested in relocation in the Bulgarian office of DataArt, situated in Sofia. In this relocation guide, you will find detailed information about the life in Bulgaria, interesting places you can visit, facts and tips about the stay here, as well as what is necessary for you to relocate.

If you still could not find the information that you need, do not hesitate to ask us about everything you are interested in!

We wish you a pleasant reading and looking forward to seeing you in Bulgaria!



Relocation guide

DataArt Bulgaria

REASONS TO LIVE IN BULGARIA

1

Low cost of living which allows for a high living standard

4

Country with four beautiful seasons

2

Beautiful beaches & ski resorts

5

Friendly people who speak English and Russian

3

EU member with fast growing economy

6

Amazing & delicious cuisine

7

Country with rich history and unique traditions

POPULATION
7 million people

CURRENCY
Bulgarian Leva (BGN)

TIME ZONE
GMT+2

COUNTRY CODE
+359

SERBIA

SOFIA

MACEDONIA

GREECE



ROMANIA

ROUSSE

VARNA

BULGARIA

BURGAS

THE BLACK SEA

STARA
ZAGORA

PLOVDIV

TURKEY

THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Bulgaria is situated on the Balkan Peninsula and occupies an area of 111 000 square kilometers. It is bounded by Romania to the North, Serbia and Macedonia to the West, Greece and Turkey to the South, and the Black Sea to the East.

Almost 35% of the country is covered by forests where some of the oldest trees in the world grow. Bulgaria's biodiversity is one of the richest in Europe. It is conserved in 3 national parks, 11 nature parks, 16 biosphere reserves and 565 protected areas.

The Republic of Bulgaria consists of 27 administrative divisions and the population amounts to 7 364 570 people.

The official religion is Eastern Orthodoxy and the official language is Bulgarian. The Cyrillic alphabet was developed in Bulgaria, which is now widely used in Bulgarian, Russian, Serbian, Ukrainian and Belarusian languages, as well as some other countries from the Soviet Union, Asia and Eastern Europe.

Democratic constitution was adopted in 1991, since then Bulgaria has functioned as a unitary parliamentary republic with a high degree of political, administrative, and economic centralization. The Bulgarian national symbols include the flag, the anthem, the coat of arms and National guards.

Bulgaria is among the biggest producers of several agricultural products including cereal, raspberries, goat, sheep and buffalo milk, as well as tobacco and cherries.

Moreover, the country is considered to be the motherland of yogurt as well as the Damask rose.

THE CAPITAL AND THE BIG CITIES

Sofia (София)

In Sofia — the capital of Bulgaria, live more than 18% of the country's population. This is the only city in Bulgaria that has over 1 million citizens (according to the latest stats — 1 700 000).

The city of Sofia is famous for its rich history, various cultural events, its mineral water springs and Vitosha mountain. Sofia is situated at Vitosha's foot and is only 15 minutes away by car or a public trans-



Sofia

port. It is a true treasure for the nature lovers and ski tourists. Comfortable public transport, the job opportunities, education and entertainment are among the things that make Sofia such an attractive city to live in, not only for Bulgarians, but also for numerous foreigners.

Extra tip: If you want to go sightseeing in Sofia, you could take free tours with professional tour guides organized by the NGO — Free Sofia Tour.





Plovdiv

Plovdiv (Пловдив)

Plovdiv is the second biggest city in Bulgaria with population of 343 424 people. This is a city with more than 8000 years of history and unique historical monuments, such as — the Ancient Theater, The Roman Odeon, the Plovdiv Roman Stadium, the Bishop basilica of Philippopolis and many more.

Plovdiv is the center for various artistic, theatrical, cultural and business events. It has also been chosen for European Capital of Culture for 2019. One of the most symbolic neighborhoods is “Kapana”, where every guest of the city can indulge in delicious food, amazing wine, music, stage arts and unforgettable local atmosphere. Plovdiv is just an hour and a half away from the capital of Sofia.

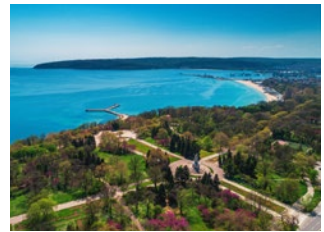
Extra tip: In the beginning of every season, Plovdiv celebrates by organizing the festival “Kapana” Fest which is a must-see for every visitor.

Varna (Варна)

The city of Varna is famous as the “Sea capital” or the “Summer capital” of Bulgaria as it combines a unique sea atmosphere with a modern city environment. Varna is situated in the Northern part of the Black Sea coast and it offers a fast access to the sea resorts like the Golden Sands resort, Saint Constantine & Saint Elena resort, Albena resort and more. Varna also has its own airport and many beautiful sand beaches.



Plovdiv



Varna



Nessebar

The Sea garden of Varna is situated on 850 decares along the seaside line. It is a national monument of urban and park arts. This is also where the Varna aquarium and the dolphinarium can be found.

Extra tip: There are various opportunities for accommodations in Varna, including hostels and hotels. The price for a 3-star hotel could be around \$30 per night. The prices are a bit higher in the months of July and August as it's the peak tourist season in Varna.

Burgas (Бургас)

Burgas is a seaport town situated in the most Western part of the Black Sea, with its own international airport and a very well developed



city infrastructure. It is also known as one of the greenest towns of Bulgaria. Additionally, Burgas is an important economic, tourist and industrial center.

Near Burgas you can also find Nessebar, a town with a unique atmosphere, traditions and culture, which is also a part of the World Cultural Heritage. Burgas's guests have an easy access to the beautiful town of Sozopol as well as to the ancient Tracian sanctuary of Begliktash. In Burgas can be found numerous parks and green areas, the most famous of which is the Sea garden that attracts tourists from all over the world.



Sozopol

Extra tip: If you are in Sofia, you can easily get to Burgas by car, it's 4.5 hour drive. In summer, besides the sea resorts and the beautiful beaches around it, you can also visit the Sand Figures Festival, which happens every year in the sea town of Burgas.

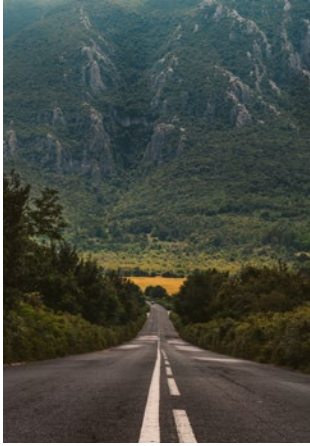
Rousse (Pyce)

Rousse is a Bulgarian town on the river valley of the Dunabe river. It is situated in the northeastern part of Bulgaria where it borders Romania. Rousse is an economic, cultural and educational center of regional and national significance.

Rousse is one of the cities in Bulgaria that attracts tourists not only with its magnificent architecture, but also with its rich historical past. Thousands of years ago (2nd century BC), where the town is situated now, there used to be an ancient



Seven Rila Lakes



Vratsa

Roman fortress — Sexaginta Prista. Nowadays, its ruins are still being preserved.

Extra tip: If you go to Rouse, you should definitely visit the Basarbovo monastery, which is situated near the city. The monastery was carved out of the rock during the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. Following the rock steps, you can get to the natural cave, which has been turned into a museum.

Stara Zagora (Стара Загора)

Stara Zagora is a town in the South of Bulgaria with more than 8000 years of history, which makes it one of the most ancient towns in Europe. The town prides on having the most beautiful parks in Bulgaria — ‘Аязмо’, which is a home to hundreds of unique plants. Like in many other Bulgarian towns, there are numerous mineral water springs in Stara Zagora and its surroundings.

Today, Stara Zagora is a town with modernized urban structure, a well-developed economy (top 10 municipalities in Bulgaria) and a rich cultural life.

Extra tip: The ancient forum of Augusta Trayana is located in the central part of the city, so do not miss to visit it. Nowadays, there is a grand tribune stand, and the forum itself is a stage for various opera, theatrical, ballet and festivals, which are definitely worth attending.



Stara Zagora



THE BULGARIAN HISTORY

Bulgaria is the oldest country in Europe, founded more than 1300 years ago. Its beginning is marked in 681 AD when the Slavs and the proto-Bulgarians unite, led by khan Asparuh.

During the reign of Boris, the Duke of Bulgaria (852–889), the country accepted Christianity and its inhabitants proved that Bulgaria is a stable country. It entered the rank of the strongest countries of that time, relentless in power just like the Byzantine and the French empires.

Bulgaria developed as an independent and self-sufficient country with its own alphabet, literacy and culture, thanks to the founders of the Slavic alphabet (Cyrillic) — the brothers Kiril & Metodi (855). During the reign of Tsar Simeon (893–927), the Bulgarian territory has access to three seas and became the most powerful country and a center for literature and culture.

In the following decades, though, the country weakened and had to withstand constant attacks from the Byzantine empire, which managed to overpower Bulgaria in 1018. This period lasted until 1185 when the Asenevci uprising restored Bulgaria's independency. During the reign of



Bulgar warriors slaughter Byzantines, from the Menologion of Basil II, Vat. gr. 1613



Ivan Asen II, Tsar of Bulgaria (1218–1241). Portrait from the Zograf Monastery on Mount Athos, 1817.

tsar Ivan Asen II (1218–1241), Bulgaria reached its peak of political power and is again leaning on three seas — the Adriatic Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea. Soon after that, the country's stability weakened again. The Balkan countries regularly led battles between one another, which attracted the Turks on the Balkan Peninsula. Bulgaria failed to withstand the Ottoman Empire, which led to its conquest in 1396.

And so began the five-century-long period of Bulgarian history, known as Ottoman Bulgaria. During that time, the Turks unceasingly tried to assimilate and enslave the Bulgarian population who managed to revolt 500 years later.

With the help of Russia in the Russian-Turkish war in 1877/1878, Bulgaria was once again free and independent. The country restored its ethnic borders (172 000 square kilometers). However, it contradicted the desires and the interests of the Western countries and on July 13th 1878, Bulgaria was torn apart by the Treaty of Berlin. This separation lasted until September 6th 1885 when the Bulgarian Unification act succeeded.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the Balkan countries united against the Ottoman Empire, and October 5th 1912 marked the beginning of the First Balkan War in which in less than a month the Balkans overpowered their prior oppressor. On May 17th 1913, the

The Defence of the Eagle's Nest, Alexey Popov, 1893



Members of the Balkan union and Turkey signed the Treaty of London, under which Turkey ceded all its territory west of the Midia-Enos line.

The Balkan union, however, could not withstand its ally conflicts and the pressure from the outside countries, and so began the Second Balkan War (June 16th 1913), which led to a fatal end for Bulgaria. The country lost South Dobrudzha to Romania, Western Tracia to Greece, a big part of Macedonia to Serbia and Adrianopol to Turkey. The following year began the World War I (1914–1918), in which Bulgaria united with the Central Powers and came out with numerous casualties and territorial losses.

In the World War II (1939–1945) Bulgaria joined Germany, but in reality, the Bulgarian army didn't have any battles with Russia and was not involved in the Jewish diaspora. In fact, the country hid the Bulgarian Jews from Germans. On September 5th 1944 Russia declared war on Bulgaria and the Russian army invaded the country. South Dobrudzha was restored to Bulgaria in 1940.

On September 9th 1944 the Fatherland Front staged a coup and took over the power. Bulgaria became a Republic with the prime minister Georgi Dimitrov, who died in 1949 in Moscow.

In 1954 Todor Zhivkov became the head secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP), and Bulgaria started to develop following the example of Russia. The government of Todor Zhivkov continued until the collapse of the communist regime in November 1989. Since then, Bulgaria has been walking down the road of democracy. Since March 2014, the country has been a member of NATO, and since the beginning of 2007, a full member of the European Union.



Life in Bulgaria

EDUCATION

If you plan to relocate to Bulgaria with your children, here are some details regarding the education system in the country. Childcare centers are available in Bulgaria for children from 10 months to 3 years old. There are state and private childcare centers (day nurseries) with usual working hours from 7:30 until 18:00h. They provide food, a playground inside and outside, as well as the afternoon nap.

The pre-school education system welcomes children from 3 to 6/7 years old. Besides the state kindergartens, which amount to 90% of the kindergartens in Bulgaria, there are also more and more private ones. Just like the childcare centers, the kindergartens are also working from 7:30-18:00h. The fees for the state kindergartens are some of the lowest in the EU — 60 Leva per month (\pm \$35).

The children of permanent foreign residents have the right to attend state kindergartens and childcare centers by applying the same way as Bulgarian citizens' children do. In order for that to happen, you need to apply and be listed in the annual ranking for childcare centers and kindergartens. Important criteria for these rankings are the proximity of the kindergarten, your workplace and your home.

Bulgarian education is mandatory until the age of 16. The school year consists of two semesters; it usually starts on September 15th and ends in May or June (depending on the age and school year of the student). Students that successfully finish 4th grade, receive a certificate of primary education. The certificate of lower-secondary education is received after successfully finishing 8th grade, and after 12th grade the students get a certificate of upper-secondary education. At the end of the school year of 4th, 7th and 12th grade, the students are obliged to take a state examination called matriculation.

The higher education system is EU accredited. In Bulgaria, there are over 50 universities, 22 of which are in Sofia. In Blagoevgrad (90 km away from the capital — Sofia) there is the American University — the one and only US-accredited university on the Balkan Peninsula.

CARS AND ROAD TRAFFIC RULES

In Bulgaria, the maximum speed limit in populated areas is 50km/h, if not shown otherwise. On the highway, the maximum speed



Motor road



Highway

limit is 140km/h and on republican roads outside of populated areas is 90km/h.

The drivers are prohibited from getting behind the wheel if their blood alcohol content is more than 0,5. They are also prohibited from driving a car that is not in a safe operating condition or without proper documentation.

It is mandatory to drive with your headlights at all times. Seatbelts are required to be worn by all passengers in the car.

If you are driving with a baby or a small child, it is mandatory to have a suitable car seat. By law, a car seat is a must-have for all children under 150 cm in height and 36 kg in weight, hence approximately until 12 years of age.

The highways are marked with a green rectangular sign with white fonts.

The road police in Bulgaria (KAT) has the right to stop Bulgarians as well as foreigners, and ask them for identification as a routine procedure, in case of traffic regulations infringement, or in case of a road incident.

It is prohibited to use your mobile phone while driving, unless using a hands-free one.

Driving on the republican roads and highways requires all drivers to have a valid vignette affixed on a car's windshield. Such a vignette sticker can be bought at any gas station or border control for various periods — 1 day, 1 week, 1 month, 3 months or 1 year.



The average price for 1 liter of gasoline is around \$1.45

PHARMACIES



There is a well-developed network of pharmacies in Bulgaria that are easily accessible. Most of them work 8:00–20:00h., and in the bigger cities like Sofia, you can also find pharmacies that work 24/7 or at least till 22:00h.

The pharmaceutical products that do not require a prescription can be bought without any additional documentation. However, other medications like antibiotics, pain killers, or anticoagulants, you will be required to present an original prescription from a doctor.

RENTING AN APARTMENT



When renting an apartment, you are required to pay a 1 or 2-month rental deposit plus 1 month of rent. The rent prices vary depending on the type of apartment as well as on its location (city, closeness to the city center, the size of the apartment, etc.). Renting an apartment in a good neighborhood in Sofia could cost around \$375–\$490.



BANKS & CREDIT CARDS

After your arrival in Bulgaria, you will need a new local bank account, which is mandatory if you want to receive a permanent residence permit. In order to open an account in any bank, you will need to personally go to any of its branches/local offices. There are no restrictions for locals or foreigners when it comes to the type of the account or the currency you'd wish to open it in.

The required documents for physical persons are as follows: a copy of your ID card (if the person is Bulgarian or from a member country of the European Union), or any other identification document (if the person is a citizen of a country outside of EU).

When opening an account, you can also get a debit card issued, which you can use to withdraw funds from ATMs or to pay in stores, restaurants, etc. If you meet the requirements for a credit card, you can also get it issued (VISA, MasterCard, Maestro, etc.).

Normal bank working hours are from 8:00 till 17:30h., but many of them have branch offices with prolonged working hours (until 19:30-20:00h.) or offices that even work over the weekend.



LOCAL CURRENCY

The current local currency though is Bulgarian lev (Lv., BGN). The lev is fixed to the euro under a currency board arrangement at a rate of $Lv1.95583 = \text{€}1$.

Exchange rate for US dollar to 1 Bulgarian lev is around \$0,59.

You can exchange currencies in any of the local bank branches as well as in specialized exchange centers.

INTERNET

The Internet connection in Bulgaria is one of the best ones across Europe. You can use 4G network access via your mobile service provider or to have it installed at home. The price usually depends on the speed of the Internet or if it's packaged with other services like cable TV, mobile phone, etc. The monthly fee for a 50 Mbps plan is around \$16.



SMOKING

Smoking in public places is officially prohibited in Bulgaria. Most public places like restaurants and coffee shops have designated zones for smokers and non-smokers. Cigarettes are sold only to adults (18+) and the regular price of an average quality pack of cigarettes is around \$3.70.

RAILROADS

AND BUS TRANSPORTATION

Bulgaria has a well-developed transportation network. By bus or by train you can get to almost any part of the country and for a very affordable price. The train ticket from Sofia to Plovdiv, for instance, is around \$4.50, and the bus ticket for the same destination is \$8.30. The ticket from Sofia to Burgas costs around \$10.70 by train and \$16.50 by bus, depending on the season.



MOBILE SERVICES

There are 3 mobile service providers in Bulgaria — Telenor, A1 and Vivacom. All of them offer subscription plans via contracts as well

as prepaid cards. The country code is +359 which is dialed before the phone numbers.

The prices of mobile services are quite affordable as well, and they usually include unlimited phone calls and mobile 4G Internet (6000MB). The cost is around \$17 per month. The roaming while traveling in other EU countries doesn't have any additional costs.

OFFICIAL NATIONAL HOLIDAYS



1 JANUARY	New Year
3 MARCH	National holiday, Liberation day
APRIL–MAY	Easter (flexible dates)
1 MAY	Labor day
6 MAY	St. George's Day (Day of the Bulgarian army)
24 MAY	Slavic Culture and Cyrillic alphabet day
6 SEPTEMBER	Unification of Bulgaria Day
22 SEPTEMBER	Independence day
24–26 DECEMBER	Christmas

TAXI



You can easily distinguish the taxis, as they are all yellow (in rare cases green). In different Bulgarian cities, there are different taxi companies, which you can stop on street or call via a phone or a special mobile application, for instance, taxi.me. The price per km is around \$0.48 during the day (06:00–22:00h.) and \$0.58 during the night (22:00–06:00h.). The taxi companies have a primary tax rate of \$0.42 and an idle tax of \$0.14 per minute.

HOW MUCH DO COMMON ITEMS AND SERVICES COST?



The prices of products and services in Bulgaria are some of the most affordable in the EU. For instance, the price of one loaf of bread is around \$0.90, a kilo of apples — \$1, a liter of cow milk — \$1.10. A cup

**USEFUL WEBSITES**

programata.bg — cultural guide with information about all sorts of events in Sofia

peika.bg — cultural guide with information and news about Sofia and the country

olx.bg — a website for e-commerce (the Bulgarian version of Ebay)

imot.bg — a website for real estate (buying/selling as well as for rentals)

sinoptik.bg — a weather forecast website

foodpanda.bg — a food delivery services website for various restaurants

rezzo.bg — a restaurant reservation website

**EMERGENCY LINE**

112 — In Bulgaria there is only one phone number for emergency contacts with the police, the fire department, emergency medical services or social emergencies. The phone line is free of charge and can be dialed via any mobile or stationary phone.

of coffee in a café is around \$1.80, the beer in most pubs and shops is around \$2, and a dinner in a nice restaurant could amount to around \$20 per person.

One bread — \$0.90

Apples (kg) — \$1

Milk (1L) — \$1.10

Bus/Metro ticket — \$1

Cinema ticket — \$6.40

Beer (supermarket) — \$0.70

Taxi (city center to the airport) — \$9

Dinner in a restaurant — \$20

Apartment rent — \$375–490

Rent a car (per day) — \$45

Internet (per month) — \$16

Utilities (per month) — \$160

**WORKING HOURS**

It's not that hard to find a 24/7 convenience store, pharmacy or restaurant, especially in the bigger cities. The state institutions usually work from 8:00 to 17:00h., and the private sector usually works from 9:00 to 18:00h., including an hour lunch break. The weekends as well as the national holidays are non-working days for state institutions and most private companies. The restaurants usually work until 23:00h., and the nightclubs and bars — until 02:00-03:00h.

**BULGARIAN CUISINE**

The traditional Bulgarian cuisine is quite diverse. Here you can find a wide

→
Banitza



→>>
Shopska
salad



→
Sarmi



→>>
Tarator



variety of delicious and very specific dishes that cater to both carnivores and vegetarians.

Yogurt is the most popular among Bulgarians and it's considered a Bulgarian invention after the discovery of the *Lactobacillus Bulgaricus* (a.k.a. the yogurt ferment) in our geographical region.

Among the most popular traditional meals are:

- **Banitza** — a doughy dish that is made from thin slides of dough, eggs and cheese
- **Sarmi** — fermented cabbage rolls filled with rice and ground meat
- **Tarator** — a delicious cold soup made from yogurt, cucumbers, walnuts, garlic and fennel

- **Shopska salad** — a traditional salad with fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, onion and parsley, topped with some shredded white cheese.

Other traditional national meals are kapama, musaka, chicken or pork kavarma. In Bulgaria, a lot of people indulge in a soup called Shkembe chorba, which is also known as the national hangover remedy.

If you want to try a traditional Bulgarian dessert, you should definitely taste tikvenik (made of shredded pumpkin, thin sheets of dough, cinnamon and walnuts), or you can also try strained yogurt with honey and walnuts.

Bulgaria has strongly established traditions when it comes to wine production. Here you can find all sorts of wine both white as well as red. In different regions, you can also find local quality beers and the quite famous craft breweries that are popping up everywhere. One of the most traditional beverages in Bulgaria is Rakia. It is made by distillation of fermented fruits or wine. The distillation process is accomplished by boiling, after which the alcohol concentration of rakia reaches around 50-60 degrees. It is usually served cold without any diluents and with the traditional salad.

INTERESTING BULGARIAN TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS

Martenitsi (Baba Marta)

This is a traditional Bulgarian holiday celebrated on the first day of March a.k.a. Baba Marta. By tradition, on this day everybody gives away bracelets and ornaments, made of red and white threads, called 'martenitsi'. They are a symbol of health and the coming of the spring season. Martenitsi are worn on the wrist or pinned on clothes until you see a stork — a symbol of spring, after which you can tie the martenitsa up on a blossoming tree.

Mummers (Kukeri)

The mummers' games aim is to scare away the bad spirits by doing special magical dances and scary masks, which will ensure a rich harvest in the upcoming year. The mummers' carnival occurs every January.



Kukeri

Anastenaria (Nestinarstvo)

Anastenaria involves a barefoot dance on smouldering embers. According to the tradition, the nestinari (dancers) complete their ritual in the evening of Saints Constantine and Elena. Nowadays, this custom takes place on other days of the year as a tourist attraction. Dressed in white and holding sacred icons, the nestinari dance on the smouldering embers is considered to be a prayer to God for good luck, fruitfulness and protection against illness.

Man's horo (The Ice horo)

The horo is a dance that is an invariable part of the Bulgarian folklore. It occurs every year on January 6th, in the ice cold waters of Tundzha river. Only men dressed in national costumes are allowed to do the traditional horo dance. The ritual is accompanied by throwing a holy



Man's horo

cross in the water, which has to be found by the dancers. It is believed that the dancer that finds the cross first and takes it out of the icy waters will be healthy and happy throughout the whole year.

Koledari

Koledari is another Bulgarian tradition. The koledari carolers start their rounds at midnight on Christmas Eve. According to the national perceptions, that is the time when the evil spirits like vampires and goblins come out, and the koledari with their singing scare them away. They go from house to house, sing and wish health, happiness and good luck. In return, people give them *kravaicheta* (ring-shaped buns), money, meat, wine, etc.

Coloring Easter eggs

Despite the fact that this is quite common tradition globally, the coloring of Easter eggs holds a special place in the Bulgarian traditions and culture. The eggs are usually painted with bright colors on Thursday or Saturday before Easter. By tradition, the first egg must always be red. Traditional egg fight begins on Easter, the one that wins has the strongest egg.



EVENTS CALENDAR

"SURVA" FESTIVAL

It occurs every January in the town of Pernik. It's a national custom with masked kukeri.

NIGHT OF THE MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

In unison with the European tradition several cities in Bulgaria organize the popular Night of Museums & Galleries. The event in Sofia happens in May, and in Plovdiv — in September.

FESTIVAL OF THE SAND SCULPTURES IN BURGAS

The festival is quite popular and attracts a lot of Bulgarians as well as foreigners to the sea city of Burgas in July, August and September. Every year the sand sculptures have a different theme — animated characters, movie stars, circus, animals, etc.

KAPANA FEST IN PLOVDIV

The festival occurs in the beginning of every season in Plovdiv's most popular cultural neighborhood — Kapana. The visitors have a chance to indulge in delicious food, amazing wine, craft beers, music, stage arts and, of course, the unique atmosphere of the place.

FRANCOFOLIS IN BLAGOEVGRAD

This festival is all about modern French music and it occurs every year in June in Blagoevgrad.

THEATER IN FRONT OF THE THEATER

This is a unique event that happens at the end of June and beginning of July in front of the National Theater in Sofia. The viewers have the chance to see different plays while being outside.

BANSKO JAZZ FEST

The international Jazz Fest in Bansko occurs every year in the beginning of August.

APOLONIA

The art celebration in the sea town of Sozopol — the festival happens every year in the beginning of September, and involves music, theater, ballet, cinema, literature, architecture, plastic arts and a diverse children's program.

BEGLIKA FEST

The annual festival that happens every August attracts a community of like-minded people — free spirits and dreamers, people who look for harmony with nature. There is a lot of music, arts, workshops, craft shops, discussions, meditations, yoga, etc. And it all happens around the Golyam Beglik lake.

SOFIA FILM FEST

The annual festival occurs every March and April and includes a rich program of screenplays and movies from all over the world. Every year the festival attracts more than 100 000 visitors.

LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR RULES

The Bulgarian language is one of the South Slavic languages. It is very close to Russian and Serbian. In contrast to other Slavic languages, though, Bulgarian is not an inflected language.

In most cases, the Bulgarian pronunciation is exactly as its written form, which makes it easier for foreigners familiar with the Cyrillic alphabet to read.

In Bulgaria a big portion of people know at least one foreign language. The most common ones are English and Russian. The movies in cinemas, for instance, are not dubbed, and can be viewed by foreigners as well.

The locals are quite friendly and forthcoming, so they will always point you in the right direction or answer your questions.

Bulgarians have one significant difference in gestures that is always weird and commonly misunderstood by foreigners. In contrast with the rest of the world, in Bulgaria, when you shake your head (which usually means no) it means yes, while nodding your head — means no (which usually means yes).

A SHORT PHRASE BOOK:

ДА [Da] — Yes — Да

НЕ [Ne] — No — Нет

ЗДРАВЕЙТЕ [zdra-vej'-te] — Hallo — Привет/ Здравствуйте

ДОБРО УТРО [do-bro' u't-ro] — Good morning — Доброе утро

ДОБЪР ДЕН [do'-bær de'n] — Good afternoon — Добрый день

ДОБЪР ВЕЧЕР [do'-bær ve'-cher] — Good evening —

Добрий вечер

ДОВИЖДАНЕ [do-vi'zh-da-ne] — Good bye — Пока/ До свидания

ЛЕКА НОЩ [le'-ka nosht] — Good night — Доброй ночи

БЛАГОДАРЯ [bla-go-da-rya'] — Thank you — Спасибо

МОЛЯ [mo'-lya] — You are welcome — Пожалуйста

ПРИЯТНО МИ Е [pri-ya't-no mi e] — Nice to meet you —

Приятно познакомитъся

ИЗВИНЕТЕ [iz-vi-ne'-te] — Excuse me — Извините

КАК СТЕ [kak ste] — How are you — Как дела?

КАК СЕ КАЗВАТЕ [kak se ka'z-va-te] — What is your name? —

Как тебя зовут?

КАЗВАМ СЕ... [ka'z-vam se]... — My name is... — Меня зовут...

КАК ДА СТИГНА ДО...? — How to get to the...? —

Как добраться до...?

КЪДЕ СЕ НАМИРА ...? — Where is...? — Где находится...?

НЕ ГОВОРЯ БЪЛГАРСКИ — I don't speak Bulgarian —

Я не говоря по-български

ЛЕКАР [le-kə'r] — Doctor — Врач

ЗЪБОЛЕКАР [zə-bo-le'kər] — Dentist — Дантист

АПТЕКА [ap-te'-ka] — Pharmacy — Аптека

БЪРЗА ПОМОЩ [bə'r-za po'-mosht] — Emergency — Скорая помощъ

ГАРА [ga'-ra] — Railway station — Железнодорожната станция

ЛЕТИЩЕ [le-ti'-shte] — Airport — Аэропорт

МАГАЗИН [ma-ga-zi'n] — Shop — Магазин

РЕСТОРАНТ [res-to-ra'nt] — Restaurant — Ресторан

НАЗДРАВЕ [na-zdra'-ve] — Cheers! — На здорвье!

Б

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Т

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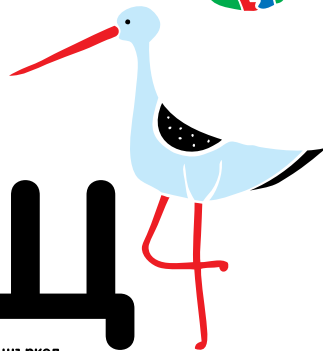
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SOFIA — THE CAPITAL OF BULGARIA



7 REASONS TO LIVE IN SOFIA

- 1 The combination of modern urban environment, culture, art and entertainment in a historical city.
- 2 The only capital of Europe that has a mountain within its territory, only 15 minutes away by car.
- 3 Sofia is a city that offers amazing cafes, restaurants and bars, all of which are quite affordable.
- 4 Suitable public transport and a well-organized subway network with a direct connection to the Sofia airport.
- 5 A city with numerous beautiful parks (over 10 000 dka), suitable for family walks and hanging out with friends.
- 6 Sofia is the host to various events, initiatives, concerts and festivals.
- 7 It is a city that boasts 20 universities and over 45 000 students.



Old Sofia with the clock tower. Joseph Oberbauer, 1890s.

THE HISTORY OF SOFIA

The city itself has a history of nearly 7000 years, with the great attraction of the hot water springs that still flow abundantly in the centre of the city. The Neolithic village in Slatina dating to the 5th–6th millennium BC is documented. Remains from another Neolithic settlement around the National Art Gallery are traced back to the 3rd–4th millennium BC, which has been the traditional center of the city ever since.

An ancient Thracian town has been established in 7th century BC which has been called later by the Romans — Serdika — a name which is derived from the local Thracian people ‘Serdi’ who lived in the surrounding region. In Roman epoch (1st–4th century BC), the town used to blossom as a center for the Inner Thracian province. In the 5th–6th century, during the so-called “Migration Period”, the town suffered the invasion of Huns, Goths and other barbarians.

In the middle of the 6th century, the town was rebuilt by Byzantine Emperor, Justinian I. During the reign of Justinian it was renamed to Triaditsa; the town flourished, surrounded by the great fortress walls whose remnants can still be seen today.

Since 809, the city was a part of Bulgaria and was given the Slavic name — Sredets. From the end of the 14th century until the 70s of the 19th century, the town as well as the whole country was invaded by the Ottoman Empire.

The latest name of the city dates back to the 15th century when it was called Sofia and it was later chosen as the capital of Bulgaria on April 3rd 1879.

LANDMARKS IN SOFIA

The cultural itinerary of Sofia is a charming combination between ancient history and a modern city. The present center of the city is situated above the Ruins of Ancient Serdika and could be seen in immediate vicinity. In total, in the municipality of Sofia over 1400 cultural landmarks have been registered, 840 of which are situated in the central part of the city.

One of the best tours of the cultural and historical heritage of the city could be done absolutely for free with professional tour guides as a part of the non-governmental organization Free Sofia Tour.

If you go from the Sofia Court House in the direction of the National Palace of Culture (NDK), you can indulge in the magnificent view of Vitosha mountain. You will be walking down what used to be the



Knyaz Aleksandar Dondukov Boulevard, late 19th century — early 20th century



Lovers Bridge

famous commercial boulevard Vitosha, named after the mountain itself. It is now a nice pedestrian zone where people can visit various bars, restaurants and cafes, accompanied by the sounds of street musicians and artistic manifestations.

Once you reach NDK, you can take the road down the beautiful park alleys or go onto the “Lovers’ bridge” and merge with the crowd of young people.

In the perfect center of the city, you can see the emblematic ‘yellow paving blocks’. The interesting story behind them is that they were given as a present to Ferdinand I to celebrate his marriage. On these yellow paving blocks are now situated the Government, the Presidency and the National Assembly of Bulgaria.



Vitosha mountain view



Alexander Nevsky Cathedral

This is also where the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral is positioned, which has been built in 1904–1912 as a gratitude present to the Bulgarian nation for their actions during the Russian-Turkish war in 1877–1878. The bell tower of the cathedral has 12 bells with images that have been moulded in Moscow.

In close proximity is the Russian Church, built in 1912, which stands out with its unique beauty, despite the fact that it's not nearly as big as the cathedral. According to the legend, if you write your wish on a piece of paper and put in the church's crypt, it will come true.

Even if you are not a big theater fan, one of the places you should definitely visit is the National Theater, "Ivan Vazov". It allures with its beautiful architecture, and the park-garden in front of it is the perfect place for artistic events, hanging out with friends and enjoying the view of the charming fountain in front of the theater.



The Central Mineral Baths

OTHER POPULAR PLACES IN SOFIA

Church of St. George

It is situated in the Presidency of Bulgaria's yard and it's one of the oldest temples in town.

The National History Museum

It is undoubtedly the richest and most visited museum of Bulgarian history. You can discover exhibits from ancient until modern times within its halls.

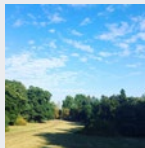
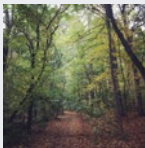
The Sofia Zoo

The zoo has over 1800 inhabitants and more than 280 different animal species. The most favorite zones for the visitors include the primates, the terrarium and the aquarium. In the summer, there are organized summer schools for kids that allow the students to learn more about the animals and how to take care of them.

Borisova garden

It is the biggest and the most popular city park in Sofia. There are numerous kid zones, summer theaters, reading rooms, tennis courts, horse riding and more. The National Stadium, "Vasil Levski", is situated on the territory of Borisova garden. There is also the Bulgarian army stadium and the biggest outdoor pool in Sofia. Borisova garden is a landmark of the urban and park arts of national significance.

Borisova Garden





Natural park Vitosha

Sofia is blessed to have a great mountain that is only 30 minutes away from the center of the city. The largest part of the mountain is a protected zone in the Natural park Vitosha, which is surrounded by various paths, mountain huts and shelters. You can reach some of the higher parts of Vitosha by public transport (The Aleko hut, The Golden bridges, Dragalevtsi, Bistritsa, Zheleznitsa).

The Boyana waterfall and the Boyana Church

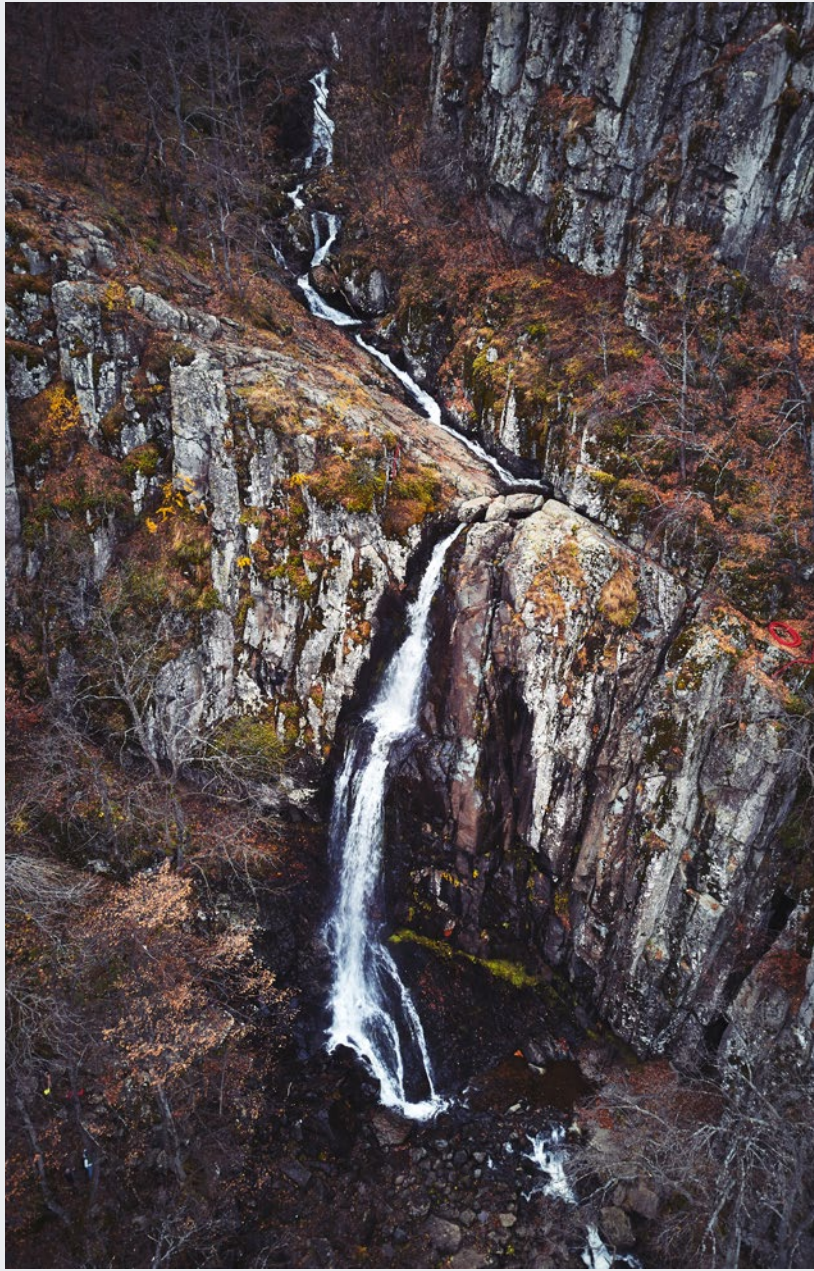
The Boyana waterfall is situated in Vitosha mountain, close to the Boyana neighborhood in Sofia. It is the highest waterfall in the mountain (around 15m). When the snow melts in the spring, it is at its fullest. There are two marked paths, which start from above the Boyana Church. One is shorter but a lot steeper, and the other one — longer but slant. The Boyana Church itself is one of the 7 cultural landmarks of Bulgaria, protected by UNESCO as a part of the world cultural heritage, famous for its mural paintings.

Vrana Palace

The extensive lot was bought by Tsar Ferdinand I in 1898 and is situated just outside Sofia, where the royal family spent most of their days back when Bulgaria was still a monarchy. In the park, which is, nowadays, open for tourists, you can see over 400 different plant species. It is also declared as a national landmark of culture.



Boyana Church



LIFESTYLE

PARKING

IN SOFIA

In the central part of the city you have to pay for parking, unless you live (which requires you to have an annual sticker for parking) or you work in that zone (which requires you to have a business parking permit). There are two paid zones in the center of Sofia — Blue and Green. The Blue zone includes the parts of the main part of the center, and the Green one includes the periphery of the center. In the Blue zone, it is prohibited to park for more than 2 hours and the price is 2 lv per hour (\$1.18). In the Green zone, the maximum period for parking is 4 hours and the price is 1 lv per hour (\$0.58).



THE AIRPORT

Sofia Airport is situated in the city and includes two terminals, most of the flights depart from the most recent Terminal 2. The airport is just 20 minutes away by car from the city center. Besides, you can also easily reach it using the subway (Sofia metro) which gets you directly to Terminal 2, or you can take the buses 84 or 184.

You can transfer from one terminal to the other using a free shuttle bus, which goes every 15 minutes between 7:00 and 19:00h. At the 'Arrival' zone in both terminals, there is a booking office for taxis where you can get a cab to go to any part of the city.

SOFIA CENTRAL STATION

The Sofia Central Station includes a train station and a bus station, and is situated in the periphery of the city center. From there you can reach various parts of Bulgaria or other European cities either by train or by bus.

Since it's one of the most important transport networks in Sofia, the Central station can be reached via various public transportation:

- Bus lines: 60, 74, 77, 78, 82, 85, 101, 213, 285, 305, 404, 413
- Tram lines: 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 12
- The Sofia metro (Central station)



Sofia



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Sofia has a well-developed public transportation network, including trolleys, trams, buses and a metro/subway that connects different regions and neighbourhoods. The price of a one trip with any public transportation is 1.60 lv (\$0.95) and the travel card for the whole network for 1 month is 50 lv (\$30) — personalized, and 60 lv (\$35) — non-personalized. Some of the bus lines work during the night as well which allows you to move around at any time.

The city's public transportation has a specific schedule and most of the stops have an electronic display where you can see when the next means of transportation is expected to arrive.

TAXI SERVICES

It is essential that you always check the prices and fees of the cabs, which are displayed on the front window of the car. You can also order a taxi using a mobile app like taxi.me or to call a car using your phone +359 2 9732121 (OK SuperTrans), +359 2 91 119 (Yellow taxi).

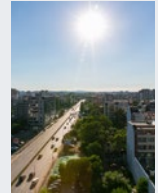
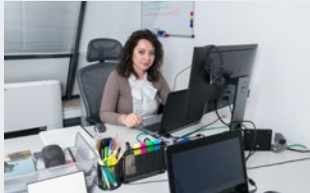
INTERNET CONNECTION AND FREE WI-FI ZONES

Sofia is at the top of the list of capitals with the fastest Internet connectivity in EU. Most restaurants, bars and cafes offer you Free Wi-Fi. There are free networks in the metro/subway, at the airport, as well as in some parks in special Free Wi-Fi zones.

DATAART'S OFFICE IN SOFIA

DataArt opened its R&D center in Sofia in June 2016. The office is situated in a modern business building in the heart of the city, only a couple of steps away from the metro station (Opylchenska) and several tram & bus stations. The office offers a vast office space, a relax/gaming room, as well as a gorgeous conference room with a balcony with a great view of the city and Vitosha mountain.





FAQ

WHAT DOES THE RELOCATION PROCEDURE INCLUDE?

In order to relocate to Bulgaria, you first need to talk to your PM and then the Head of the office where you are currently working. After that, you can get in touch with the colleagues in Sofia. The HRM department in Sofia then sends an offer to the candidate and after it's signed — the relocation procedure and the document preparation for their arrival begins.

The applicant should provide the following documents:

- A copy of the first page of their passport
- A warrant of attorney
- A notarized copy of their diploma
- A signed employment contract and a job description
- A criminal record certificate

All these documents should be sent via courier to the DA office in Sofia.

After the colleagues in charge receive the necessary documents, the next step is the issuing of a personal number of a foreigner,

registration of the employment contract, translation and legalization of the applicant's diploma and preparation of a package of documents for application for EU blue card.

As of 1 June 2021 changes in the application process for blue card are in force and all the required documents are to be submitted in the beginning of the procedure at the Migration directorate.

The application is processed within 15–20 days. After that Migration directorate sends electronically a written resolution to the application stating that the candidate is eligible for highly skilled employment.

The employer notifies the foreigner about the resolution and the foreigner should take actions to submit application for visa D (as per art. 15, paragraph 1 from the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act)

Then you need to apply for Visa 'D' for which you need the following documents:

DOCUMENTS	CANDIDATE	SPOUSE	CHILD
Application (doc 2)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Passport (original)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Copy of the first page of passport and all pages with Schengen visas (if any)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Up-to-date colored photo passport format	Yes	Yes	Yes
Employment agreement (original and copy)	Yes (original and copy)	Yes (copy)	Yes (copy)
Work permit (original and copy)	Yes (original and copy)	Yes (copy)	Yes (copy)
Medical insurance with Minimum coverage of 30 000 euro	Yes	Yes	Yes
Certificate of clearance (original and copy)	Yes	Yes	
Civil marriage certificate (original and copy)		Yes	
Birth certificate for every child (original and copy)			Yes

RECEIVING A BLUE CARD

Visa D application takes 2–3 weeks. After getting visa D the foreigner should visit Migration directorate within 7 days after their coming to Bulgaria and to provide to the initially submitted application a copy of their passport containing the page with the visa, as well as an obligatory medical insurance valid for the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria for the whole period of the stay.

After that director of the Migration directorate issues or rejects blue card within a three-day period. With the enforced changes, the whole procedure for issuing a permission for a prolonged stay and employment, type “EU blue card” should not take longer than three months. The permission for a prolonged stay and employment, type “EU blue card” is issued for a period of 4 years.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW IF I WANT TO RELOCATE TO BULGARIA WITH MY FAMILY?

If you have a spouse and children and want to relocate to Bulgaria together, you need to prepare their documents together with yours (the documents needed for them are listed in the table above). However, a residence permit of your spouse won't allow them to work in the country. A work permit is issued by the respective employer, so they would have to be hired in order to get it.

CAN I TAKE MY PETS?

According to the European law, pets can travel freely with their owners if they have a European pet passport. An important note here is that the law only considers dogs, cats and polecats as pets. You can get such a passport in any authorized vet clinic or doctor. The passport needs to have data regarding a valid vaccine against rabies (hydrophobia).

If you have a pet that is under 3 months old (without the rabies vaccine yet), you can see all the rules and regulations for each EU country [here](#).

The European Pet Passport is only provided for dogs, cats and polecats. If you have a different pet, like a hamster or a canary, you need to check the laws of the respective country for entering and exiting it with such pets.

Your pet needs to have an electronic chip or a readable tattoo with the same code as the one listed in the pet passport.

RELOCATION WITH A PERSONAL CAR — WHAT ARE THE RULES?

Cars registered in EU can be driven freely in Bulgaria in the span

of 6 months after entering the country. Afterwards, they are required to be reregistered in Bulgaria or to exit the country through the border and then enter back again. After that, you have another 6 months to use your car freely in the country.

A foreigner that enters the country with a personal car has to have documents with proof of registration and ownership of the car, a mandatory insurance and a driving license.

WOULD MY DRIVING LICENSE BE VALID IN BULGARIA?

A driving license issued by a member country of the EU is valid everywhere within the European Union. This means that if you are moving from another EU country, you don't need to reissue your driving license.

Foreigners from countries outside of EU that are permanent residents of Bulgaria can drive cars within the country with their own driving license in the span of 1 year from the date of their official entrance to the country.

HOW MUCH WOULD THE RELOCATION PROCESS COST ME?

Government fees Translation & legalisation of documents	\$300	
Average range for good apartments	\$375–\$490	Landlords usually ask for deposit that costs up to 2-months' rent
Airline tickets	\$250–\$300	

WHERE CAN I FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

If you wish to relocate to our lovely office, go ahead & get in touch with us hr-sf@dataart.com

**We are
looking
forward
to seeing
you in
DataArt
Bulgaria!**



