

This morning we'll hop aboard our bus and head for the little island town of Nesebar, connected to the rest of Bulgaria by a narrow isthmus. We'll take a time-tripping walk through the old town, learning about its important Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Bulgarian, and Turkish past — a lot happened in this tiny place! We'll enjoy free time for lunch and exploration then drive along the Black Sea coast on our way to the Naval capital of Bulgaria — Varna. We'll settle into our hotel and get oriented to this bustling city before setting you free to relax on the beach, stroll around town, take a boat ride on the Black Sea, or sample the local catch direct from the fishermen.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Bus: 3 hours. Sleep in Varna.

## DAY 8

### **Treasures of Varna**

*Sun, Oct 01, 2023*

We'll start our day with a tour of the Varna Archaeological Museum where we'll marvel at the oldest gold jewelry ever discovered. Then we'll enjoy a short walking tour, admiring the city's beautiful architecture and elegant churches. The rest of the afternoon and evening are yours to explore this modern town and stroll the extensive waterfront park and promenade.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. No bus. Sleep in Varna.

## DAY 9

### **Over the Balkan Range**

*Mon, Oct 02, 2023*

Today we'll drive up and over the green Balkan Range to one of Europe's most dramatically situated towns: Bulgaria's medieval capital of Veliko Tarnovo. En route we'll see the Madara Horseman, carved high into a rock cliff 13 centuries ago, and stop to tour the stuck-in-time village of Arbanasi. Tonight we'll enjoy a hearty dinner together and admire the striking night view of Veliko Tarnovo's illuminated citadel across the valley.

Light walking: 2–4 miles throughout the day on mostly level terrain. Bus: 5 hours. Sleep in Veliko Tarnovo.

## DAY 10

### **Veliko Tarnovo**

*Tue, Oct 03, 2023*

Today we'll walk from one hill to the next, learning about Veliko Tarnovo's role in the medieval birth of the Bulgarian Kingdom, its 14th-century fall to the Ottoman Turks, and the 19th-century uprising that led to the end of Bulgaria's Ottoman occupation. As the story unfolds, we'll wind our way along narrow cobblestone streets, meeting local artisans along the way, then finally conquer the ruins of one of Europe's mightiest citadels. After our trek together, you'll have free time to continue exploring this unique town or to just work your way back through the medieval streets to where we started. We'll meet up later this evening and drive to a nearby community center to enjoy a fabulous folk performance.

Strenuous walking: 2–8 miles with lots of hills, stairs, and uneven terrain. Bus: 1 hour. Sleep in Veliko Tarnovo.

## DAY 11

### **Village to City**

*Wed, Oct 04, 2023*

This morning we'll visit the small Banat village of Asenov, where we'll be greeted by the mayor for a tour of the town, followed by lunch with the mayor and his wife at their home. This afternoon we'll return to Sofia and have a festive final dinner together, sharing travel memories and toasting new friends.

Light walking: 2–4 miles throughout the day on mostly level terrain. Bus: 6 hours. Sleep in Sofia.

## DAY 12

### **Tour Over After Breakfast**

*Thu, Oct 05, 2023*

Breakfast is provided, but there are no group activities today. Bulgaria's international airport is just outside of Sofia, or you can hop a train to other European cities. Your guide will help get you pointed in the right direction. Radvayte se na pytuvaneto!