



## **5 festivals that attract tourists to Bulgaria from all over the world**

Bulgaria attracts tourists from all over the world every year, and this is by no coincidence. With its temperate climate and diverse tourism opportunities throughout the year, the country has something for everyone. Bulgaria combines beautiful scenery, a rich historical heritage, and excellent recreational opportunities. The traditional and untraditional festivals held in different parts of the country are particularly attractive. The summer season is the most active, filled with exciting festivals that showcase Bulgaria's unique lifestyle, culture and traditions woven into the modern day.

Whether it is music enthusiasts, folklore lovers, art connoisseurs or families looking to spend time in nature, visitors to Bulgaria will find a festival to suit every taste and interest. That is because attending these festivals offers the chance to sample the country's rich cultural heritage, experience the hospitality of the Bulgarian people, and at the same time, visitors can also enjoy stunning landscapes.

Here are five festivals that take place in the country, each offering a unique insight into either Bulgarian traditions and rituals or contemporary art and music:

### **HILLS OF ROCK**

The biggest Bulgarian festival for rock and metal music HILLS OF ROCK is coming back for yet another year to Plovdiv – the European Capital of Culture 2019. The leading band that will ignite the stage on the very first day of the festival will be the American heavy metal band Korn. A curious fact is that it is the third most sought-after global band for a concert, according to the wishes expressed by rock fans in Bulgaria. The event will be attended by several other world-famous artists as well. The organizers promise that visitors will enjoy unforgettable performances between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the 27<sup>th</sup> of July. Before the main event on July 25, Spiritbox and Loathe will also perform on the main stage located at the Plovdiv Rowing Base - a popular sports facility dedicated to the sport of rowing, but also for organizing events.

Plovdiv ranks among the top ten most attractive antique cities for tourism. The concert can be combined with a visit to the Ancient Stadium and the Ancient Theatre, alongside the fortress complex of Nebet Tepe - these are some of the most impressive ancient buildings and structures that have remained intact since the Roman era.

### **Bansko Jazz Festival**

For fans of jazz music, we highly recommend the Bansko Jazz Fest, which is traditionally held in the town of Bansko - the most famous ski resort in Bulgaria. Bansko is a wonderful town, mainly aimed at tourists, which is just as beautiful in summer as it is in winter. At the height of the summer season, between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of August, the picturesque town will host another event for jazz fans. Performers from Bulgaria, Turkey, the UK, USA, Portugal, Sweden, Austria, Greece, Brazil, Switzerland, Slovenia, Italy, France and



Indonesia will take to the stage. The organizers promise quality music and a good mood, and if history is anything to go by, the after-parties after the concerts are a must-see in restaurants and hotels in Bansko.

Besides music, visitors to Bansko will be impressed by its unique architecture - a mix of authentic buildings and the most luxurious 5-star hotels. The town is located at the foot of one of the most beautiful mountains in the country - Pirin. The mountain itself combines beauty and excellent opportunities for hiking or relaxation, with amazing natural views. In the area you can also find some of the most beautiful and high-quality spa hotels with mineral water, which is thought to cure all kinds of illnesses.

### **Opera of the Peaks - Belogradchik Rocks**

Between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> of August, the Belogradchik Rocks will become a stage for the performances of the summer opera festival of the Sofia Opera and Ballet. The Belogradchik Rocks are a natural phenomenon, comprising impressive rock formations that offer incredible panoramic views and create a unique atmosphere for each event. The natural beauty of the Belogradchik Rocks, together with the innovative idea of the project director - Plamen Kartalov, will be a truly unique combination. The director's goal is to create a magical experience for opera fans. They will be able to enjoy their favourite works under the open sky, in front of the natural wonder of the rocks. Held in the midst of nature, the performance broadens the cultural horizons of every visitor, adds spiritual power to the performances and energizes the spectators. During their stay, visitors will have the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of Northwest Bulgaria, taste traditional Bulgarian cuisine and enjoy excellent Bulgarian wines.

### **International Folk Costume Festival in Zheravna**

The next destination we highly recommend is the village of Zheravna, located in southeastern Bulgaria. The small village has preserved its ancient beauty and atmosphere and every year tries to pass on its secrets to visitors from all over the world who want to learn more about one of the most precious Bulgarian cultural treasures - the folk costume.

The Bulgarian folk costume is a major element of the lifestyle and mythology surrounding Bulgarian creativity. It is a truly unique garment that has preserved motifs typical of a bygone era and carries the spirit of Bulgarian beauty, hard work, and national values. The festival dedicated to this important element of the Bulgarian past is held annually in the amazing village of Zheravna, which seems to have been frozen in time. The event itself has a very strict set of rules that are adhered to in order to enhance the authenticity of the experience, which include the mandatory wearing of folk costumes and the lack of modern technology. Foreign visitors can find similarities with Renaissance fairs, which also present a certain historical setting. The International Folk Costume Festival in Zheravna will take place between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2024. The village is located just over 100 km away from the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, which is an additional opportunity to combine a day trip to Zheravna or vice versa.

### **"VIA PONTICA" - International Kite Festival**

And speaking of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast - Varna, the maritime capital of Bulgaria and the third largest city in the country, is a popular destination with lively beaches and an active nightlife. The Via Pontica bird migration route passes over the city, attracting tourists



every year inspired by the idea of flying like the birds. The International Kite Festival "VIA PONTICA" is organised along this route, where a variety of kite models, including children's kites, are displayed.

This year the VIA PONTICA festival will take place from the 16<sup>th</sup> of August to the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2024. The event follows the path of migratory birds along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, starting from Sinemorets and continuing to Shabla (both of which are popular Black Sea destinations in Bulgaria). The festival attracts visitors with unique kite models and impressive demonstrations by international kite clubs and aerial artists. It also includes kite flying competitions and children's workshops.

The highlights of the festival are the unique kite demonstrations, competitions, and children's workshops. Kite artists and kite masters from different countries such as Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, and others participate in the event. The festival conveys important messages about environmental protection and endangered species and includes art events such as exhibitions, screenings, and concerts.

With its spectacular and diverse outdoor events, the festival attracts the attention of photographers, artists, and visual arts enthusiasts. The event receives widespread coverage in media outlets such as EURONEWS, National Geographic and the Associated Press. Some of the partners of the festival include the municipalities of Varna, Tsarevo, Shabla and others. The aim is to bring the festival to the scale of major kite art festivals such as Berck in France and Artevento in Italy, which gather over 250,000 spectators and participants.