



What makes Bulgaria a popular wine destination in Europe?

Bulgaria is one of the most popular wine destinations in Europe and with good reason. Wine tourism in the country emerged in the 1990s. At that time, it sounded exotic, elegant, and luxurious. Nowadays, however, day visits as well as weekend breaks to some of Bulgaria's wineries are increasingly popular among Bulgarians and visitors alike. This is due to the centuries-old traditions in wine production, as well as the excellent modern conditions for wine tourism that Bulgaria offers throughout the year. The autumn period is particularly attractive and if you are oenophiles, or simply like to have a glass of wine in the evening, you should not delay in scheduling your holiday and plan a visit to a Bulgarian winery. This is the perfect season for wine tourism in the country - the countryside is covered by a canopy of vibrant colours, the grape harvest is in full swing, and the new vintage will turn into flavourful wine or brandy. Imagine it raining outside and you are sitting with your loved ones enjoying a fragrant aged wine, settled in a cosy setting with an authentic atmosphere - sounds almost idyllic, doesn't it?

If you are still in doubt or wondering where to enjoy your wine adventure, here are some wonderful destinations in Bulgaria that blend enchanting scenery and authentic, palate-pleasing Bulgarian wine.

Wine tasting in Melnik

The first destination we turn our attention to is the town of Melnik, which captivates visitors with its nature and history. The town, tucked away at the foot of the Pirin Mountains, offers many attractions for wine lovers - visits to wineries, wine weekends, scenic walks, and authentic cuisine. The grape varieties from which the wines are made are typical of the region and the drinks themselves are warm and full-flavoured. The local variety "**Shiroka Melnishka Loza**", for example, is a favourite of connoisseurs of old wines because the exotic nuances in its flavour stand out even more with time.

In the town, you can taste wine in numerous wineries that are within walking distance of each other. Near Melnik, there are many other popular wineries that are also worth a visit. Over time, the streets and houses in Melnik have also become filming locations for popular Bulgarian series and movies, recreating the authentic atmosphere of life in the past, which Melnik retains to this day. This is part of the magic of Melnik - its history and wonderful atmosphere that is visible at every corner. In addition to aromatic wine, you can also enjoy wonderful local delicacies in the town. If after the wine and culinary specialties, you want to take a walk near Melnik - this is an excellent opportunity to visit the famous beautiful rock formations called the Melnik Pyramids.

International Day of Mavrud

This annual event is held on 26 October (Dimitar's Day, a celebration of one of the most popular names in the country - Dimitar/Dimitrina) every year and is dedicated to one of the most valuable and old Bulgarian grape varieties - Mavrud. The initiative aims to promote Bulgarian wine among local and foreign connoisseurs. Starting on the International Day of Mavrud, urban wine festivals are organized every weekend from October onwards, taking place in the cities of Sofia, Veliko Tarnovo, Varna and Plovdiv, which in turn offer numerous opportunities for relaxing holidays and entertainment.

The Wine Museum in Pleven

If you want to delight your palate and enrich your wine knowledge - you should definitely visit the Wine Museum in Pleven. As the only such attraction on the Balkan Peninsula, it provides information about the wine industry in Bulgaria, has a rich collection of contemporary wines from all regions of the country and offers a tasting with a short sommelier course. A curious fact about the Museum is that it is housed in one of the caves of the beautiful Kaylaka Park in Pleven. This town is located about 2 hours by car from the capital Sofia, and it is no coincidence that the Museum was created in Pleven, because the area is famous for its wine production. In 1890, the first school of viticulture and wine-making in the country was opened here, and in 1902 - the National Wine Institute. The long history and traditions of wine making are intertwined with the unique grape varieties, resulting in the rich and memorable taste and aroma of the region's wine.

Evksinograd Residence

Located near the "sea capital" of Bulgaria - the city of Varna, the former royal Evksinograd residence captures the attention of visitors with its architecture and gardens that resemble the palaces of the French Renaissance. The residence will immerse you in the aristocratic pleasures that have remained as a legacy of the Bulgarian rulers of the last Bulgarian kingdom. The palace also houses the Evksinograd wine cellar, which is the oldest wine cellar in Bulgaria. It was established in 1891, and to this day it is the only functioning state winery in Bulgaria.

Another curious fact is that the cellar itself is located on two levels underground. The barrels are located at a depth of over 10 meters, and for many years they have been aging wines made from Bulgarian and other European wine varieties such as Traminer, Red Muscat, German Riesling and Vrachanski Misket.

To this day, the residence continues its winemaking traditions and creates high-quality white wines aged in large oak barrels. You can sip wine under a sea breeze, which combines the royal atmosphere with Bulgarian tradition. The residence is an integral part of Bulgaria's cultural and historical heritage and is visited all-year-round by many Bulgarians and foreigners.

Whether you are motivated by your passion for wine or simply to spend your weekend differently, Bulgaria offers a unique blend of tranquillity, scenic views, great wines, delicious traditional cuisine and plenty of history.

Plovdiv and the region

The most famous wine region in Bulgaria is Plovdiv, which will also be visited after the annual meeting in Sofia.

Wine tourism in the Plovdiv region offers a unique experience combining rich history, cultural attractions, and wonderful wines. The region around Plovdiv is famous for its ancient tradition of wine production dating back to the time of the Thracians, making it one

of the oldest wine regions in the world. Thanks to the favourable climate and fertile soil, some of the finest wines in Bulgaria are produced here.

Some of the most emblematic vineyards and wineries are located in the Thracian Lowlands, a region that is the heart of Bulgarian wine production. In the area around Plovdiv you can visit various wineries, each of which offers tastings of a selection of local varieties such as **Mavrud, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Chardonnay**. Mavrud, one of the symbols of the region, is an ancient Bulgarian variety with a deep flavour and rich aroma, known for its high durability and unique character.

Visitors to the region can enjoy tours that combine vineyard visits, meetings with local winemakers and wine tastings accompanied by traditional Bulgarian dishes. The opportunity to learn more about the history of winemaking in the region, as well as to understand the production process, makes these tours particularly attractive to wine lovers.

Apart from the wine cellars, Plovdiv itself is a city rich in culture and history. A stroll through the Old Town, a visit to the Roman Theatre, or a wander round the modern art spaces in Kapana can be perfectly combined with wine tourism. Numerous wine bars and restaurants offer a selection of the best local wines paired with fine cuisine.

Wine festivals held in the region, such as the "Days of Young Wine" in autumn, further establish Plovdiv as a must-visit wine destination attracting visitors from all over the world.

If you are a wine lover and want to immerse yourself in the magic of Bulgarian wine production, Plovdiv and its surroundings are the perfect place for an unforgettable journey through the world of wine.

For those of you who have signed up for the trip to Plovdiv, the organizers have included lunch and a tasting at one of the most famous wineries in the region.