

## Bulgaria - TETEVEN – Balkan Mountains Adventures

### Introduction

Teteven (415 m, or 1,361 ft) is a small town situated in the valley of the Vit River among Lisets, Vasiliovska and Lestvitsa Mountains, close to the Central Balkan ridge. Monuments discovered accidentally prove that this area has been populated since ancient times. The Teteven region's nature is truly unique, fascinating, picturesque and exceptionally diverse, with beautiful and interesting flora and fauna. The area offers a great variety of trekking tours and destinations. The broadest Beech forest belt in Bulgaria, one of the largest protected beech massifs in Europe, is to be found in the region of Teteven in Boatin Biosphere Reserve. Century-old woods, with steep, even vertical rocks in some places, meadows, waterfalls and caves are just some examples of the natural wonders that can be found here.

### Special highlights:

#### The Central Balkan National Park

(716 sq. km) was established for the conservation of the unique nature of the Central Balkan Mountains. One-third of the Park's territory comprises nine reserves, four of them - Boatin, Tsarichina, Steneto and Dzhenema are part of the world Biosphere Reserves Network under the UNESCO "Man and Biosphere" Program.

**Ribaritsa village** is a beautiful mountain resort with numerous little country houses and villas, which according to latest measurement has the biggest concentration of oxygen in the air in Bulgaria.

**Glozhene Monastery** was built in the 13-th century by the Ukrainian prince Glozh, housing an icon at the age of about 1000 years.

**Sueva dupka Cave**, considered to be probably the most-beautiful cave in Bulgaria, was named after the two brothers Seyuo and Sayuo, who hid themselves there from the Turks during the yoke.

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Arrival at Sofia or Plovdiv airport and transfer to the city of Teteven in the Balkan Mountains (about 1,5 hrs from Sofia; 3 hours from Plovdiv), where we stay overnight.

**/dinner/**

**Day 2-7.** Three trekking days (the first three) with a local guide are included in the program, which could be spent walking along the following routes:

**1.** Cherven peak (1,221 m, or 4,005 ft.) is the easternmost summit of the three peaks located on the northern side of Teteven. This giant is today's target. The path starts from Teteven and travels upwards through broad-leaved forests and

vast meadows to the rocks of Cherven peak, offering a superb panoramic view over the town of Teteven and the valley of the Beli Vit River. We take some time to rest at the platform located on the very edge of the rocks, where we can enjoy the whole valley. From there we continue along the new eco-path leading to Babintsi village. From the village it is a further two-hour walk downhill to Teteven.

Walking distance: 13 km, or 8 miles; walking time: around 5 hrs; uphill walk:

700 m (2,296 ft); downhill walk: 700 m (2,296 ft)

**2.** After a transfer to the village of Glozhene (some 8 km, or 4.9 miles from Teteven) a short trek through the Beech woods delivers us to Glozhene Monastery, where you can see the 1000-year-old icon of St. George. From the monastery we will come across a dirt road leading to the pass between Goliam Izvor village and Teteven, and then following the quiet road, we reach Goliam Izvor (450 m, or 1,476 ft) – a typical mountain village, situated along the stream of a small river, with its barns, carts and cattle living with the locals next to each other. From there we have a 30min transfer back to Teteven. Walking distance: 13 km, or 8 miles; walking time: about 4 hrs; uphill: 400 m (1,312 ft); downhill walk: 350 m (1,148 ft)

**3.** This morning we embark towards Boatin Reserve. We have a transfer of about 30 min to get to the village of Divchovoto where the path starts. The track passes through the century-old Beech forests of the reserve (at 825 m, or 2,706 ft), reaching the peak at 1,080 m, or 3,500 ft, after an hour of gentle ascent. From there, it descends over the other side of the hill, reaching a forestry road that leads to the region of Kostina, where one of Bulgaria's national heroes (Georgi Benkovski) was killed by the Turks. We can have lunch there. From this point we walk 3 km, or 1.8 miles, along a peaceful asphalt road amongst gardens, meadows, villas and houses, arriving in the village of Ribaritsa also known as the longest Bulgarian village (at 545 m, 1,788 ft). Then we have a transfer to Teteven (10 min).  
Distance: 10.5 km, or 6.5 miles;  
walking time: about 3,5-4 hrs; uphill walk: 250 m (820 ft); downhill walk: 530 m (1,738 ft)

\* There are several options for spending the rest days of your stay (please note that guidance and arranged program is not included for them in the package price and they are to be paid additionally in advance or to the guide on the spot depending on the services requested):  
- Additional hiking tours in the mountains (to be decided on the spot; payable to the guide)  
- Sightseeing/shopping in Teteven (self-guided)

- Cave tour to Sueva Dupka Cave (to be decided on the spot; payable to the guide)
- Swimming in the mineral pools of Ribaritsa or Shipkovo resorts (to be decided on the spot; payable to the guide)
- Cycling tour (to be purchased at least 2 weeks in advance; payable in advance prior departure)

Provisional prices (subject of negotiation with the guides): excursion to Ribaritsa or Shipkovo (incl. transfer & guide; no entrance fees included) – 40 Euro/car (price for up to 3 pax); visit to Sofia for sightseeing/shopping (incl. transfer & guide for the sightseeing tour in the centre) – 80 Euro/car (price for up to 3 pax); cave tour to Sueva Dupka Cave – 40 Euro/car (price for up to 3 pax); Troyan Monastery & Oreshaka crafts exhibition – 60 Euro/car (no entrance fees included).  
**/breakfast, dinner/**

**Day 8.** After breakfast you will have transfer to Sofia or Plovdiv airport for departure  
**/breakfast/**

**Accommodation:**

We stay in a hotel in Teteven with en-suite facilities on HB (breakfast & dinner included).

**Tour type: IT+**

**Difficulty grade: B**

**Best period:** May - September

**Weather:**

Temperatures expected for this period are between +10 and +30°C. Noontime could be quite exhausting for trekking or simple

walking over open territories. Rainfalls or short but heavy showers are possible, being a bit prolonged during spring and late autumn.

**Equipment and clothing:**

Necessary items: daypack (35 l); 3-season walking waterproof boots with suitable ankle support; waterproof outer shell garment (breathable if possible!); sunscreen lotion.

For the full list with recommended items see "General".

**Vaccination:**

Optional. See "General" for more information.

**Group size:** Min. 2 persons

**The price includes:** accommodation and boarding as mentioned above; transfer to/from Sofia or Plovdiv airport to Teteven; transfers for the 3 trekking days (Teteven-Glozhene; Goliam Izvor-Teteven; Teteven-Divchovoto; Ribaritsa-Teteven); English-speaking guide for 3 trekking days; VAT and all local taxes.

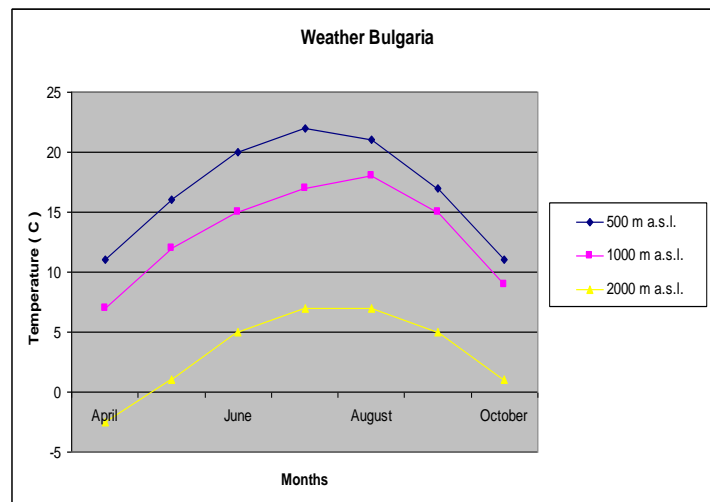
**The price does not include:** map (could be requested in advance when booking the tour); guidance and transfer for the rest days outside the program; tips; entrance fees; lunches/lunchpacks; alcohol drinks; cigarettes and other personal expenses.

great variety of means of accommodation - from home stays (no meals) to 2, 3 and 4-star hotels (BB or HB) on the Southern Bulgarian Black Sea Coast:

- Sunny Beach - a big modern resort with hundreds of hotels, cafes, pubs, casinos, water-sports facilities etc.
- Sozopol, Nessebar - small towns (founded by the ancient Greeks) with picturesque old quarters and a specific atmosphere.
- Lozenets - a peaceful small village with a beautiful beach. Only 4-5 km from the forests of the Strandzha Mountains where you can go walking, biking or riding horses.

Here are some examples of comparative costs in Bulgaria (NB: prices in mid-range restaurants!):

- Coffee – 0,3 Euro



- Tea – 0,3 Euro
- Beer (0,5 l) – 0,5-1 Euro
- Soft drink (0,5 l) - 0,4-0,5 Euro
- Bottle of water (0,5 l) - 0,3-0,4 Euro
- Bottle of mark red wine (0,75 l) - 5-10 Euro
- Three-course lunch - 4-10 Euro
- Lunch pack - 2-3 Euro

**GENERAL**

**TOUR TYPES & GRADES**

We provide different varieties of tours as regards to their types and difficulty grades! Whether you will choose individual and group tours with a guide or combined tours with a guide for some part of the trip depends on you. We emphasize on using local experienced guides with knowledge of the local language, culture, history, art, etc. The tours are conducted in the English language. Guides in other languages are available upon request.

**Tour types**

Our tours are divided in different tour types, regardless of being guided or not or if someone travels alone or in a group. We have prepared your vacation so that you can concentrate on new impressions and experiences, awaiting you all the time. Here is a description of the various tours:

**IT+; Individual tours with a guide**

The same as the Individual tours, with the only difference that there is a local guide provided for some of the days. During the days with a local guide most probably you will be together with other tourists.

**Difficulty grades**

To prepare yourself for the best of your vacation we recommend that you start planning it in an advance. Good physical condition is required. In order to achieve it we advise you to start walking, jogging or cycling everyday. Swimming a couple of times a week is also highly recommended. You do not need much to get yourself in shape. And don't forget that the most important tip for an unforgettable active holiday is to choose a trip which corresponds to your physical condition!

**B; Moderate**

Most of you, who are used to walking during a long weekend, will be in condition to cope with a tour of this level. You should be in good health condition and not too bad physical condition. We have successive days of longer and more difficult walking and days of lighter walking. Some parts of the day routes are done at a higher altitude. The paths are in good condition. We walk for 5-7h a day. You are free to skip some walks and have a rest.

**Extensions: Yes, Black Sea**

This is a unique proposal, which gives you the opportunity to stay in Bulgaria for one week more at the incredibly low price! We can offer a

**Equipment and clothing:**

You should always remember that you must try to keep the weight of your hiking equipment down to a minimum. Your packed daypack should weigh no more than 10-15 kilograms.

Recommended items: waterproof rucksack (60 l) & daypack (35 l); walking waterproof boots with suitable ankle support; light casual shoes/sandals for walking and/or for travelling; gaiters; loose, casual trousers for trekking; waterproof trousers; fleece windstopper jacket; windproof, waterproof outer shell garment (breathable if possible!); hat for sun protection; sunglasses with UV protection; sunscreen lotion and lip balm; water bottle; torch (headlamp); mobile phone; underwear (not cotton); mosquito repellent; trekking sticks.

**Vaccination:**

Tick-borne encephalitis, Marseille fever and Crimea haemorrhagic fever is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure.

**Money and personal expenses**

You will need some extra money to cover meals, drinks and extra trips not included in the tour price. Additional money for souvenirs and personal things could also be spent. That is why it is always necessary to have Bulgarian money in cash.

The payments in Bulgaria are usually made in "LEV" (BGN), which is the official currency. The exchange rate with EU and USD is quite changing sometimes, but approximately it is: BGN:EU - 2:1; BGN:USD - 1,6-1. Credit Cards could be used primarily in some supermarkets and restaurants in the biggest cities as well as in the petrol stations. Usually it is marked on their front doors if Credit Cards are accepted. ATMs ("bankomates") are more frequent (again in the biggest towns only!). Traveler's cheques take quite a lot of time to handle and not each bank deals with them (in many cases it takes even few days since their deposition in the bank!) - thus they are not recommended!

**Cell phone coverage**

Currently the whole territory of Bulgaria is covered with a mobile connection. However the trekking & cycling tours are done in mountainous areas where the signal could be weak or even lacking from time to time. In such a situation you just need to change your location a bit in order to find available network.

**Electricity**

In Bulgaria two-pin sockets are normal. Voltage is 220 watts. If you come from the U.S. or UK you need to purchase an adapter, which is available only in Bulgarian cities and biggest winter and sea resorts.

**Brief about Bulgaria**

Territory - 110 912 sq. km.  
Population - 7 538 000 (2003) (83,9 % ethnic Bulgarians; 9,4% Turks; 4,7% Roma; rest – smaller minorities Russians, Armenians, Vlachs, Jews, Karakachans etc.)  
Relligion – 82,6% Orthodox, 12,2% Islam, 0,7% Protestant, 0,5% Catholics, 4,1% Others.  
Capital city - Sofia (1 377 531 people in 2006)  
Bigest towns - Plovdiv, Varna, Bourgas, Rouse, Stara Zagora, Veliko Tarnovo, Pleven  
Mountains - 37 (biggest - Balkan Mountain: length - ~ 550 km.; width ~ 30-60 km.); (highest - Rila Mountain - peak Musala - 2 925 m.a.s.l.)  
Boundaries - North - Romania; East - Black Sea (coastline 378 km.); West - Serbia, Macedonia; South - Greece, Turkey;  
Distribution of the lands - 0 - 400 m.a.s.l. - 59,8 %; 400 - 1000 m.a.s.l. - 27,6 %;

1000 - 2000 m.a.s.l. - 11,9 %; over 2000

m.a.s.l. - 0,7 %

Protected areas - 3 national parks, 10 nature parks, 55 reserves, 35 managed reserves, over 350 protected areas and 500 natural monuments

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**Weather**

Mean year temperature - + 10,5 °C (Abs. Min. - -38,3 °C ; Abs. Max. - + 45,2 °C)

Mean rainfall per year - 416 - 650 mm. in the lowlands; 650 - 1193 mm. in the highlands

Rainy days per month – May – 7; June – 8; July – 6; August – 3; September – 6; (number may be higher in the mountains)

Mean daily/night temperatures (up to 1000 m a.s.l.) - May + 22/12 °C; June + 26/16 °C; July + 28/17 °C; August + 26/15 °C; September + 23/13 °C;

**Altitudinal distribution of annual temperatures in Bulgaria**