Bulgaria

Your destination for tourism and spa activities

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Invest Bulgaria Agency

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Tourism in Bulgaria
Bulgarian VISA Policy
Bulgarian Flight Connections
Come for a visit - return on investment
TOURISM IN BULGARIA
### Bulgaria in numbers and facts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population:</strong></td>
<td>7.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Force:</td>
<td>3.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Population:</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital:</strong></td>
<td>Sofia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time zone:</td>
<td>EET (UTC+2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer (DST):</td>
<td>EET (UTC+3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Area:</strong></td>
<td>110 879 sq.km.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Area:</td>
<td>108 489 sq.km.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Area:</td>
<td>2 390 sq.km.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Languages:</strong></td>
<td>Bulgarian (official) 85.20%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turkish 9.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roma 4.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English, German, Russian, French Widely spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religions:</strong></td>
<td>Christian Orthodox 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Currency:</strong></td>
<td>Lev (BGN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed exchange rate</strong></td>
<td>€1=BGN 1.95583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Income Tax</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Income Tax</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government type:</strong></td>
<td>Parliamentary Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme legislative power:</td>
<td>Unicameral 240-seat National Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive state body:</td>
<td>Council of Ministers; head: Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Republic of Bulgaria** is a country in Southeast Europe - member of the European Union.
- Borders with: Greece and Turkey, Romania, the Black Sea, Serbia and Macedonia.
- The country has a network of about 540 rivers and 378 km coastline along the Black Sea.
- Bulgaria ranks FIRST in Europe by diversity of wildlife spread in three national parks, eleven nature parks and seventeen biosphere reserves.
Tourism Statistics:

**Number of foreign citizens who have visited Bulgaria in 2013 by country of origin**

- Total: 9,191,782
- The rest of the world: 579,243
- Other countries (Israel, Canada, USA): 202,181
- Other European countries: 3,047,582
- EU: 5,362,776

**Number of Bulgarian citizens travelling abroad in 2013 by destination**

- Total: 3,929,648
- The rest of the world: 389,816
- Other countries (Israel, Canada, USA): 41,613
- Other European countries: 1,768,687
- EU: 2,080,367

- More than 6,800,000 foreign citizens have visited Bulgaria in 2013.
- A 5.5% increase in 2013 in the number of foreign tourists that have visited Bulgaria in comparison to 2012.
- There has been a 6.3% increase in the vacation visits.
- The income generated by international tourism in 2013 increases by 4.9% in comparison with the previous year.
- More than 740,000 foreign citizens have visited Bulgaria for tourism purposes only for the month of June 2014.
- More than 70% of the income generated by tourism is generated by sea tourism.

Source: NSI
Different types of tourism can be developed in Bulgaria:

**Sea tourism** – each year approximately 4 million tourists come to visit main Bulgarian sea resorts on a 378 km Black Sea coastline – Sunny Beach, Golden Sands, Albena, Sozopol, Nessebar.

**Mountain tourism** – Bulgaria has 5 major mountains with a large number of peaks surpassing 2000 m. of altitude. Most of them are located in the Southwestern part of the country. Great opportunities for winter sports – total length of the ski tracks in Bulgaria is 210 km.

**Cultural tourism** – Bulgaria is a country with more than 13 centuries of history with 9 UNESCO World heritage sites within its territory. More than 330 museums and 160 monasteries are open for a visit in Bulgaria.

**SPA and balneology tourism** – great opportunities for developing SPA and balneology tourism, there are many SPA resorts in the country built on proximity to mineral water springs – only 5% of existing mineral water deposits in Bulgaria are in use.
An attractive destination for treatment, prophylactics and recreation:

**Spring**
Typically continental and changeable

**Summer**
Hot and dry

**Autumn**
Mild and pleasant

**Winter**
Wet and snowy

- Moderate climate with 4 seasons and considerable reflection of the Mediterranean
- Variety of favorable climatic regions – combination of balneotherapy with climatic treatment
- The most precious natural treasures of Bulgaria - uniqueness, variety and abundance of hydrothermal, bioclimatic, mud treatment, sea cure, and other health resources
  - healthy sea and mountain climate
  - lovely scenery and landscapes
  - numerous mineral springs (over 600)
  - dozens of lagoon firth mud sources
  - curative peat deposits

Every kind of known mineral water may be found in Bulgaria!

The Bulgarian mineral waters are known for their greatly varied chemical composition and, mineralization, type of dissolved mineral salts, curative gases and biologically active micro components
Tourism in Bulgaria

Sandanski – The warmest town in Bulgaria
- Sandanski is located halfway between Sofia and Thessaloniki, in the foot of the Pirin mountain
- Considered the birthplace of Spartacus
- Suitable climate (with the highest average annual temperature, +14.1°C)
- Over 80 mineral water springs

Bankya - National center for rehabilitation for patients with cardiovascular disease
- A prestigious national and international resort, about 17 km west of the capital Sofia
- Lots of greenery and sunny days
- Moderate continental climate
- Many mineral springs

Hissarya - A favorite SPA destination since antiquity
- Hissarya was found 4-5 millennium BC and was a major Roman SPA center
- One of the largest Roman settlements in the region
- Very well preserved fortress (4 gates, 44 towers, wall is over 11m high)
- Contains one of the best preserved Roman public baths (thermae) in Europe

Velingrad - “The SPA capital of the Balkans”
- 40 km from Sofia, located in one of the most picturesque part of The Rhodope Mountains
- Inhabited since 5 century BC. Legends say that Orpheus lived there
- “Kleptuza” is the largest Karst spring in Bulgaria (1200L ice-cold water / second)

Sapareva Banya - The hottest mineral spring in Bulgaria, with temperature of 103°C
- Located 75 km southwest of Sofia, at the foot of the Rila mountain
- The only one in Bulgaria and continental Europe geyser-fountain
- Natural resources, climate and location are prerequisites for development of balneology, ecological and rural tourism
- Archaeological excavations from Thracian times, indicate that the Thracians have evaluated healing qualities of mineral waters for healing

Kyustendil - One of the oldest Bulgarian towns, with over 8000 years of history
- Major Thracian settlement, dating from 5-6 century BC
- Roman town, Pautalia, built in 45AD, religious and administrative center
- One of the most important medieval administrative centers
TOURISM IN BULGARIA

Tourism cooperation between Bulgaria and China:

- Bulgaria took an active part at the 1-st High-level Meeting of CHINA-CEECs on Tourism Cooperation in Budapest, Hungary between 21-22 May 2014.
  - Bulgaria has signed the Protocol of China-CEECs on Tourism Cooperation.
  - According to the Protocol Bulgaria works on developing of tourism products and packages with duration of 7 days for Chinese tourists in cooperation of three EU countries - Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia.

- Bulgaria elaborates long-term program for organized tourism which will start in April 2015.
  - 40 000 Chinese citizens from the Province of Sichuan will travel to Bulgaria annually.
  - Their number will increase to 200 000 in five years period.
  - An agreement for the above has been reached between a company registered in Bulgarian and Chinese authorities.

- Bulgaria has become more attractive tourist destination.
  - Increased visits from the region of East Asia - China, South Korea, Japan.
  - Direct flights from Istanbul – Sofia.
  - Daily flights Istanbul-Varna-Istanbul, as well.

- Bulgarian Government has established working committee in order to support foreign investors in tourism sector for projects over BGN 50 million.
Bulgarian VISA Policy
Legislation and practices:

- As a member of the EU Bulgaria is obligated to implement the Unions’ legislation in the area of visas.

- The dynamic development of trade relations, the cultural, economic and sports exchange, and tourism have made prudent the initiation of some measures that have practically mitigated the visa regime with China.

- With resolutions №48/2012 and 459/03.07.2014 the Bulgarian Council of Ministers has decided that individuals that have a Schengen visa or valid visas in Romania, Cyprus and Croatia don’t need to apply for Bulgarian visa.

- The Bulgarian diplomatic representatives in Shanghai and Beijing have been instructed to shorten the legal period for processing visa applications from 15 days to 7, or in some cases to 2-3 days.

- The tourist visa applications are processed for 3-4 days.

- The Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expects significant increase in the tourist trips by Chinese citizens into Bulgaria in 2015 and the administration is working towards unburdening the admission and processing of visa applications, and respectively easing the issuing process.

- The last amendments of the Foreigner in the Republic of Bulgaria Act have created additional opportunities for issuing a long-term residence visa and entry visas for foreign investors or businessmen.
Bulgarian Flight Connections
Just a short flight away from:
Bulgarian Flight Facts:

- The number of flights from all over the world to major airports in Bulgaria is growing every year.
- Many low-cost airlines provide direct flights to Sofia, Plovdiv, and Varna.
- The Sofia Airport is one of the easiest and fastest to check in and go through airport security.
- In 2014 there is an 11% rise in the passenger flow that goes through Sofia Airport.
- In the first six months of 2014 the people who went through Sofia Airport amounted to 1,838,148 or 200,000 more in comparison to the same period in 2013.
- A Bulgarian airline has received a license from the US to perform direct flights from Sofia to New York and Chicago.
- Until now only the Turkish airlines have flown to these destinations on the Balkans.
- In the autumn the flights will be available for booking and the first one is scheduled for the spring of 2015.
- It is planned for the new “Airbus 330-200” to fly four times a week to New York and Chicago.
- The same airline is in the process of obtaining license to perform direct flights to China, Russia and India.
Come for a visit – return on investment
InvestBulgaria Agency:

**Government investment promotion arm,\npart of the Ministry of Economy and Energy**

IBA services:

- Macroeconomic data on Bulgaria
- Legal advice
- Data on operational costs
- Regional information: industrial zones and infrastructure, data on unemployment, skilled labor force and level of education
- Recommendation of investment project sites
- Identification of potential suppliers, contract manufacturers and joint-venture partners
- Personalized administrative servicing
- Liaison with central and local governments
- Liaison with branch chambers and NGOs
Legal framework for investing in Bulgaria:

The incentives for class A and B investments could be:
- Shortened administrative procedures
- Acquiring state or municipal land without a tender procedure
- Reimbursement of labor costs paid by the employer
- Financial support of up to 25% of the entire costs for specific training of minimum 50 employees
- Financial support for construction of technical infrastructure elements (only for class A)

The incentives for Priority investment projects could be:
- All the incentives for Class A and B
- Financial grants of up to 50% for education and R&D projects and up to 10% for manufacturing projects
Why you should invest in Bulgaria:

- **Political and business stability**
  - EU and NATO member
  - Currency board
  - Low budget deficit and government debt

- **Low cost of doing business**
  - 10% corporate tax rate (0% in high unemployment areas)
  - 10% personal income tax
  - the most competitive labour costs within the EU
  - favorable office rents and low cost of utilities

- **Access to markets**
  - EU / EFTA
  - Russia
  - Turkey / Middle East

- **Educated and skilled workforce**
Thank you for your attention!