

BULGARIA - BALKAN RIDES - KINGDOM OF THRACIANS

ITINERARY

Day 1

Return transfers from Sofia are included at set times. Flights should arrive between 12:00 noon and 16:00. The transfer vehicle will depart once everyone has arrived, but no later than 16:00.

Your return flight should depart after 11:00. If you have an evening flight, you can be dropped off in Sofia city centre where there is a luggage storage area while you explore.

Hotel collections and drop offs are also available on the first and last day.

If your flight times do not fit with the standard times, then it is possible to have a private transfer at extra cost.

Overnight Green Hisar Hotel. The trail commences in the spa town of Hisarya, 180 km southeast of Sofia on the southern side of the Balkans (to where the horses will have been trucked from their stables).

The Kingdom of Thracians Trail takes you into the Bulgarian Rose Valley and the Sredna Gora Mountain - the land of Thracians, mineral springs, roses and fine wine.

Enjoy the combination of daily riding with the option of spa treatments and massages at the end of the day. The trail has three days in the mountains and three days in the valley so you get to explore the century-old beech forests and also to marvel at the breathtaking sights from the top of the mountains.

The following is the proposed itinerary but it is subject to change due to local conditions. Riding times and distances are approximate. Sometimes it is necessary for the horses to overnight a short distance away from where you are staying and then you transfer to and from the horses by vehicle.

The Green Hisar Hotel is located near the Hisarya Forest and Momina Banya spring. There is free access to the swimming pool and sauna. There is WiFi throughout and the rooms have en-suite bathrooms and air conditioning.



A bedroom at Green Hisar Hotel

Day 2

After breakfast you first visit (on foot) the remains of the fortress wall of the ancient Roman town of Dioclecianopolis, the third largest town in the ancient province of Thrace. The wall is one of the best preserved of its kind, not only in Bulgaria but also on the entire Balkan Peninsula. Hisarya was an active Roman Spa Resort and was at one point used as a rehabilitation centre for wounded Roman soldiers.

Arrive at the Ezdul Stables just outside Hisarya. Be introduced to the horses and set off for your first introductory ride. Later you will be met by the support vehicle and have a picnic lunch next to Matenitsa village.

In the afternoon continue riding to the village of Krasново, situated on the southern slopes of Sredna Gora Mountain and famous for its mineral baths and to your accommodation at the Spa Hotel Aqui Termi. Before dinner you could relax in the spa, have a massage or swim in the mineral pools.

About 26 km/4.5 hours riding.



Overnight Aqua Termi Resort. This spa hotel has a natural hot thermal pool, salt cave, sauna and steam bath. It is also possible to book a massage



Aqua Termi Resort

Day 3

Set off riding from Krasново village and ride through rose gardens, climbing into the heart of the mountains.

Lunch will likely be at the Buntovna Hut (at 1,180 metres) which is in an ancient beech forest in the area of Konska Polyana, Kulata and Kanara.

In the afternoon you continue through the beech forest climbing to the open mountains and ending near the town of Koprivshitsa.

About 35 km/6 hours riding.



Overnight Eagle Rock. The Eagle Rock hotel is located in the mountains near Koprivshitsa. The hotel has a swimming pool, jacuzzi and sauna.



Typical bedroom at Eagle Rock

Day 4

Today you ride to the Spa Resort of Strelcha. On the way you reach the very top of the beautiful 'Wolf' peak at 1,240 m from which you have amazing panoramic views of the Upper Thracian plains and the surrounding mountains.

You have a picnic lunch and continue onto your hotel where you will stay two nights.

Before dinner you have time to relax with a massage and swim in the mineral pools.

About 25 km/4.5 hours riding.



Overnight Hotel Sredna Gora. The hotel has a sauna, hot tub and heated outdoor swimming pool.



The swimming pool at Hotel Sredna Gora

Day 5

Today is a shorter ride of around 2.5 hours in and around the area of Strelcha.

After lunch at a restaurant you have an afternoon visit to the historical museum in the town of Panagyurishte.

Later there is time to explore the galleries and craft shops in the town.

The museum is dedicated to the April Uprising of 1876 and the historical site "Oborishte". The Panagyurishte treasure dates from the 4th century BC and was discovered by three brothers – Pavel, Petko and Michael Deykovs in 1949.



Overnight Hotel Sredna Gora.

Day 6

This morning's ride is through a varied landscape of rose fields, vineyards and along sandy lake shores.

Enjoy a picnic lunch near the village of Krastevich.

This evening you have the opportunity to join a wine tasting tour (optional and payable locally - about €20) as well as enjoy the spa.

About 28 km/5 hours riding.



Overnight Starosel Wine and Spa Complex. This Wine & Spa Hotel is on the southern slopes of Srenda Gora Mountain. Enjoy the spa facilities (indoor and outdoor pools, sauna and massage treatments) with a glass of local wine. All the rooms are en-suite with a contemporary design.



A typical bedroom at Starosel

Day 7

After breakfast you visit the Thracian temples.

The temples at Starosel date back to the 5th century BC and are the best preserved Thracian buildings in southeast Europe.



Back in the saddle - today there should be some long, fast canters through the meadows as you ride near the Pyasachnik reservoir.

After a picnic lunch you continue riding through forests, meadows and along the lake shore heading back towards Hisarya.

Enjoy a farewell dinner.

About 25 km/4 hours riding.



Overnight Green Hisar Hotel.