

“Joint Initiative for promotion of Bulgaria – Turkey cross-border region as an attractive tourism destination” JOINTTOUR, CB005.1.22.055

JOINT TOUR

TOUR-GUIDE LECTURE HANDBOOK

Tour Programme For International/Asian Tourists

INTRODUCTION

The tour of the cross-border region Bulgaria - Turkey starts with Edirne (Odrin (in the historical context of Adrianopol, in Turkish: Edirne, Edirne, in Greek: Αδριανούπολη, Adrianupoli, Catharina: Αδριανούπολις, Adrianupolis) which is a city in the Turkish part of Thrace, near the borders of Bulgaria and Greece. The city is an administrative center of one-time villa and has a celebration of a distinguished university center. The Thracian University is one of the best in the country. It has been operating since the 1980s and has many good medical faculties, hospitals and symphony orchestras. All of the main streets in Odrin start from the central square, which is surrounded by three impersonal dzamies - Selimie, Uch Sherefeli and the Old Jamie Talat Pasha Bulvari. There are two Bulgarian churches in Odrin, from which they operated until the day of Saint Georgi from 1880. and "St. sv. Constantine and Elena ", built in 1869.

After that is the city of Kırklareli where where the tourists can visit different places and experiences for 4 days Kiraklarelili also known as Lozengrad, is the administrative center of the one-time villa Lozengrad. It is located in the western foothills of Strandzha, near the border with Bulgaria. A holiday on the city is November 10.

On the fourth day:

The tourists will move to Bulgaria, where they will visit placeses such as Malko Tarnovo - Brashlyan - Burgas - Pomorie - Nessebar and will spend the night in one of the most famous Bulgarian Black Sea resorts in Nessebar.

In Malko Tarnovo and the surrounding areas, numerous archaeological finds are of particular importance related to the ribbons. According to a number of famous investigators, there is an

area of longevity, for which the discovered revenues from different epochs are available. Very interesting for visitors with two dome-shaped tracheal tombs near the city. Costs of precisely treated marble blocks, and with the production of the Thracian monumental construction from the 5th to the 3rd century BC, representing the aristocracy's funeral customs. The archaeological findings show that cemetery facilities were used in the Roman era with the same purpose. The first excavated, documented and published Thracian cults of the building (tomb) under a mighty embankment in the Bulgarian territory of Strandzha is in the town of Propada, 5 km northwest of the city. It is built on the top of a hill and gives the beginning of a necropolis of 40 moguls. In the examination of two of them in 2001 with the discovery of two new interest generations from the Roman era. A lot of impressive and imposing graveyards are in the town of Miškova Niva, 13 km southwest of the city. Used as a heroon (the grave of a mythical or real being car-girly or geroy) or as a mausoleum of a significant Thracian ruler, it refers to the 5th - 3th century BC. - the flowering of the Thracian culture.

The entire area around Malko Tarnovo is surrounded by dolines, necropolises, tombs and ancient sanctuaries that deserve to be seen.

Burgas is the largest city in South East Bulgaria and the second largest Bulgarian Black Sea coast, with its 253,644 km² it is one of the largest in the country. According to the latest revision of the NSI, by 31 December 2015, the population is 203 017 inhabitants, and such is the fourth quarter of a city in the country. Burgas is the most important business, transport, management and education center in South East Bulgaria. The city is the administrative center of the single municipality and oblast, as well as the headquarters of regional and national institutions.

Burgas is the largest in the South East Europe chemical and petroleum refinery, which is the largest employer in Bulgaria. The international and the second loading ports are the Bulgarian airport, the largest Bulgarian port and the only cheap port in the country. The Black Sea fishing fleet is located in Burgas, part of the Bulgarian military fleet and security breaches.

Several natural reserves and protected areas, ancient and medieval areas, the Black Sea and the annual festivals will attract many tourists. Burgas Cathedral, bearing the name of the Byzantine goddess Kiril and Methodius, and the protected area of Poda with the 100th national tourist destination. Monastery "St. Anastasia" on one-eyed islands in the waters of the Burgas Bay is the only remarkable medieval

The modern town of Pomorie is situated on a narrow, rocky peninsula of the same name, located 3.5 km inside the Black Sea, on the northwest coast of Burgas Bay. From the south, east and northeast the town is surrounded by the sea, from the north - from the Pomorie Lake, and only from the west-northwest, through a narrow isthmus, flooded too often by the sea, connects with the Pomorie field, which is part of the Bourgas valley. Over the millennia, the configuration of the terrain has changed, and the settlement has changed its location. Nowadays 10 km to the south is the present town of Burgas, 18 km to the north is Nessebar.

Then they will head to Aytos - Karnobat - Straldzha - Yambol.

Yambol is a town in Southeastern Bulgaria. It is the administrative center of Yambol District, as well as the center and the only populated place of Yambol Municipality.

Straldja is a small city which is famous for one of the oldest Orthodox temples in the country - "St. Archangel Michael ". It preserves valuable relics and literature dating from the time of the Ottoman domination over Bulgaria. Today the temple continues to serve the world liturgy, the traditions of Orthodox Bulgarian worship are preserved. The most significant Christian holidays - Easter and Nativity - gather many people.

Along with the Orthodox Church in the city there is also an evangelical church and several of its branches. Karnobat is a small town in southeastern Bulgaria, famous for its vineyards and tasty wines

The next places for the tour and the last stop include Elhovo Topolovgrad - Harmanli – Haskovo.

The municipality of Elhovo is located in the south-eastern part of the Republic of Bulgaria. And it can provide interesting stuffs because pre 72 g. pr. Hr. this region falls under the rule of the Romans. They moved the village and drew Orudica ad burgum - a road between Kabila and Adrianopol. Since the time of the Roman emperor with the rest of the fortress, much follows from the material culture, the most fragments of building and brick ceramics, coins, and bronze plastics. Through the early medieval city, the town is known with the name Joanica. In the 7th century, on the Balkan Peninsula, the Slavjanites permanently shuffled. In the technical pronunciation, the name of the city sounds like Janja.

In the Haskovo region, it is the fastest and shortest route connecting Europe with Asia and the Middle East. Not far from the borders with Turkey and Greece, Haskovo turned into a center of international, commercial and cultural exchanges. The presence of these indicators transforms Haskovo and the region into an attractive destination for the development of industry, in the field of construction and machinery for food-processing, chemistry, wine production, food production, beverages and tobacco products, sewing and textile industries.

In the town of Haskovo, a lot of culture and tourism took place. Annually, the international festivals "Kitna Trakia Pee and Dance" are held in the city, musical days "Nedyalka Simeonova", festival of Bulgarian Choir and Dance "Hajduka sofr", national competition for debut literature "Southern Spring" and many others.

On the territory of the municipality of Haskovo is located one of the most striking tectonic tombs - Alexandrov tomb. An unmistakable part of the city is the highest in the world statue of the Holy Virgin Mary with Mladenec.

Harmanli

Testimonies of an archaeological nature about the existence of settlement life in the vicinity of today's town of Harmanli have been registered for various years. In 2004, archaeologists Krum Bachvarov, Ventsislav Bozhkov, Victoria Petrova and a team of 5 student interns conducted a study of a prehistoric settlement located 3 km north of the city. It dates back to the late Neolithic and Early Chalcolith (Copper Stone Age). Since the late Bronze and Early

Iron Age, a small settlement has been set up near the present-day town, in the area known to the Harmanians as Chortlene. It continues its beating in later eras. The existing mound in the area of the local recreation park called Gradska Garden, as well as the city's foundations in the city, are evidence of the existence of an ancient settlement in the area of the city itself. This is what the ceramics from the excavations in the area of today's park "The Spring of the Belomon" is revealing. Since the Middle Ages, the remains of a fortress and ceramic fragments found above the town of Harmanli have been discovered during excavations in the vicinity of today's park "The Spring of the Belomon". Today, however, Harmanli appeared only around 1510. This year, it is considered the beginning of the existence of the modern city - the heir of a population living in a former epoch with a rich material and spiritual culture.

The mosque of Harmanli, 1930

Everything starts with the caravansera built to house the passengers on their way to and from Constantinople, around which a village and a "hammer" are gradually being formed - a place where the wheat was planted. The site was suitable for a hammer because of the water (Olu-de-River). The people working on the garnish were called "Hormanli", from where the name of the city originated.

According to historical sources, and according to local legends, near Harmanli there is the tomb of the bat-king Valkasin Mrnjavceovich, the father of Marco - left in the memory of the people as Krali Marko, defeated by the Ottomans in a battle near the nearby village of Chernomen (now Ormenio in Greece) September 1371

In 1833 a church school was established in Harmanli, in 1835 - the church "St. Atanasii ", and after 1833 - and school. Shortly before the Liberation was established a community center (1870), called in 1899 under the name "Druzhba". In 1873, the section of the Istanbul-Belovo baron-irish railway was put into operation, later turned into a part of the route of the notorious Oriental Express.

Bulgaria and Turkey are Balkan countries with rich historical and cultural heritage. Both share not only a common border but also a long history of ancient history interwoven with interesting traditions. It is interesting that in this region can be found modern newly built sights and ancient preserved their beauty with the years.

The cross -border region of Bulgaria-Turkey combines a wide variety of historical and cultural heritage as well as various natural landmarks. The region is extremely diverse and it can discover new experiences for every different type of tourist

The Balkans are known for their hospitality and delicious, specific food. The tourists will feel the Bulgarian and Turkish spirit and will enjoy the Balkan atmosphere, which enchants with its charm.

Tourists can easily enjoy different cultures combining both the modern and historical heritage of the region. The region is famous for its beautiful nature which combines both sea and mountain, and captivates even the most discerning tourists.

Cities in Turkey are the perfect shopping destination for every tourist. Markets offer a wide variety of products ranging from a variety of modern clothing accessories to a variety of traditional delicacies such as baklava, lycus and so on.

The Bulgarian Black Sea coast is famous for its long beaches and modern infrastructure, where tourists can indulge in fun and relaxation combined with sightseeing and rich history. In addition, seaside resorts offer a range of entertainment and have a nightlife. Tourists can enjoy evening cocktails at the beach with sea views. Nessebar is considered one of the oldest castles in Europe. It is a gordee with a famous historical chronicle dating back more than 7,000 years.

The unique atmosphere and the charm of the sea resort are due to the incredible combination of intense architecture, which includes the remains of more than 40 churches dating from the third century, Roman and Greek antique remains and beautiful houses from the 16th century. The islands of Nessebar are considered one of the best on the Black Sea coast. Meet the authentic spirit of antiquity, stored in the vintage ancient monuments of culture and history, enjoy the soft climatic and sweeping laziness of the sun and go on a trip to the region, which only one rest in Nessebar can offer you.

The city is declared a architectural and archaeological reserve and monument to the world cultural heritage of UNESCO. Some of the attractions of the Nessebar include a 6th-century basilica, a Turkish bath, a windmill and part of the fortress wall that has been around the city at one time. Expensive slip from the old town of Nessebar is the unscrupulous, mysterious and magnificent old buildings and the half of history will make you feel special.

1. DAY

İstanbul Airport - Edirne

Edirne is 232 km away from Istanbul.

- *The first step in Edirne is Karaağaç district*

Karaağaç;

Historical Karaağaç Neighborhood is one of the places that should be seen in Edirne with its colorful, single storey houses and wide streets. Many restaurants and tea garden is available in Karaağaç. The historic railway station and the Lausanne Monument are also here. Karaağaç is 4 km southwest from the center of Edirne, across the river Maritsa and opposite the Greek village Kastanies. In 1890, the large Karaağaç railway station was built in the town, which also served Edirne, becoming the last train stop in Turkey to Europe. In 1971, Turkish State Railways (TCDD) constructed a new railway station at the opposite side of the river, abandoning the former one, which is now used as Trakya University's Faculty of Fine Arts. Historical Train Station was built by Mimar Kemalettin Bey, taking Sirkeci Station as an example in 1913-1914. The Lausanne Monument was built here in memory of the Lausanne Treaty signed on 24 July 1923.

The Treaty of Lausanne Monument and Museum (Lozan Anıtı ve Müzesi)

are a monument and a museum dedicated to the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923. The monument, opened in 1998, is located at Karaağaç, Edirne in Turkey, and the museum is next to it in the former train station building.

Coffee break in Meriç Bridge in Protokol House

Meriç Bridge is a historical Ottoman bridge in Edirne.

The Complex of Sultan Bayezid II Health Museum (Turkish: Sultan II Bayezid Külliyesi Sağlık Müzesi)

II. The Beyazit Külliyesi was built between 1484 and 1488 and is the largest social structure of the Ottoman Empire. It is also one of the most important historical treasures of Edirne. The museum is situated at the hospital (Darüşşifa) section of the Complex of Sultan Bayezid II. This Complex was built by the 8th Ottoman Emperor Sultan Bayezid II who was the son of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror. Throughout centuries, students of medicine were brought up, patients were healed and the hunger of the poor was allayed in this complex. Hospital section was one of the most important Health Centers of its period. In later years, the hospital began to serve lunatics. Patients were treated with the sound of water, music, odorous scents, various occupations, as well as medical knowledge and medicine. Having been serving as a health museum today, Darüşşifa was awarded the Council of Europe Museum Prize in 2004.

Edirne Palace (Turkish: Edirne Sarayı), Saray-ı Cedid, known as Edirne New Palace, was built with Sultan II as being the second palace in this region. It was started after the capture of Edirne by Turks during Murat period and the construction was completed in 1451 during the reign of his son Fatih Sultan Mehmet. The palace is one of the biggest palaces of Ottoman Empire after the Topkapı Palace in İstanbul. Only a very small part of the palace can be reached today.

Justice Pavilion (Kasr-ı Adalet), Erected in 1561 by Suleiman the Magnificent, who is called in Turkey as Suleiman the Lawmaker, the "Kasr-ı Adalet" (literally: Justice Pavilion) is the only structure as part of the palace complex, which remained intact. In the form of a rectangular tower with a pointed metal roof, it is situated next to the tiny Fatih Bridge over the Tunca river, which was built in 1452 by Mehmed the Conqueror (Turkish: Fatih Sultan Mehmet).

Historic Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling Square, Oil wrestling (Turkish: Yağlı güreş), Across the grassy field come the quavering voices of *zurna* woodwind and the stick-beaten bass of the heavy *davul*. Pairs of men in leather pants grapple for dominance, pushing and flipping each other to the ground while spectators cheer them on. Turkish wrestlers wear leather waist-to-ankle pants called *kispet*, and before the match they cover each other's bodies in olive oil, making it much harder to grip the opponent. Traditionally the wrestling matches had no time limit, lasting as long as it took for one pehliwan to surrender. The **Kırkpınar oil wrestling tournament** in Edirne is documented as far back as 1346, making it the oldest recorded competition in the world. In this competition, wrestlers battle for the coveted Kırkpınar Golden Belt and the honor of being Turkey's chief wrestler.

- **Second Step is Edirne city center**

Passing through the oldest historic bridge of Edirne, Gazimihal Bridge, we arrive the city center. The tour bus leaves the tourists on Saraçlar Street.

With its mosques, religious complexes, bridges, old bazaars, caravanserais and palaces, Edirne is a living museum.

Saraclar Caddesi, A pedestrianized shopping street with pleasant cafés on sides. The old shop buildings on this street has a distinctively neoclassical architecture and the lively bazaars of "**Bedesten**" and "**Arasta**" make the province colorful and bring back the ancient times.

Lunch break: Edirne Tava Ciğeri (Edirne is well-known with its tava ciğeri) It is prepared in a unique local way (whole pieces, not puree, of liver, covered in flour, are deep fried inside a cauldron full of boiling vegetable oil) and served with an infernally hot dried and crunchy pepper. It possible to find a livery restaurant in many places in the city center.

After the lunch break and free time;

Walking to Grand Synagogue and passing through Ali Pasha Bazaar,

Üç Şerefeli Mosque, Old Mosque, Selimiye Mosque and museums are visited here.

Grand Synagogue of Edirne (Edirne Büyük Sinagogu), is a historic Sephardi synagogue located in Maarif Street of Edirne. There once was a thriving Jewish community in Edirne, numbering around 20,000 people. It was Europe's third largest temple and the biggest temple in all of Turkey.

Ali Pasha Bazaar: The Ali Pasha Bazaar in Edirne is a covered market designed by Mimar Sinan in 1569. Decorated with red and white stone arches, there's six different gates into the bazaar. Similar to the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, this atmospheric market is much smaller in size, but no less fun to explore with over 130 vendors selling everything from knock-off Nikes, to underwear, dishes, etc. It's just one of three such bazaars in the city where you'll find a wealth of locally produced and imported goods available.

Üç Şerefeli Mosque (Üç Şerefeli Camii) (just north of Old Mosque, close to Selimiye). This mosque is easily recognizable, having four distinctive minarets that all have very different designs, uncommon during the 15th century, one of which has three balconies, giving it its name which literally means "three balconied"..

Old Mosque (Eski Camii), (at the central square, across the street from Selimiye). The Old Mosque is the earliest monumental structure of Edirne reached from the Ottoman times. The mosque, known as the first original abridged mosque, is one of the most important mosques built in the 15th century. Inside the mosque large calligraphy works can be seen.

Selimiye Mosque (Selimiye Camii) was built by Mimar Sinan between 1569-1575. A grandiose piece of art by Sinan, the Ottoman architect of 16th century, Selimiye is usually considered the zenith of Ottoman architecture and has been listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 2011. It was considered by Sinan to be his masterpiece and is one of the highest achievements of Islamic architecture. The dome of the building, which hangs high over main hall, encloses a huge space which gives the place an expansive atmosphere, had the largest diameter (31.28 mt) of all domes in the world for several centuries. And its minarets (towers) are the second highest minarets (70.89 mt) in whole world, surpassed only by Qutb Minar (72.50 mt) in Delhi, India. There is a small museum in the courtyard of the mosque with no admission fee.

Edirne City Museum- Gallery of the Museum (Edirne Kent Müzesi): From Selimiye to Saray-i Cedide-i Amire, from Mimar Sinan to Fatih, from the game of sultans to Kırkpınar, from the occupation to liberation, from the neolithic period to the hills of Thrace, from the sunflowers, every information about Edirne's past and present like Clarinetist mad Selim to Kakava, Kapıkule to Meriç and 3D silicone sculptures and digital screens are presented.

After visiting these areas, getting on the tour bus in the parking area.

Moving towards Sveti George Bulgarian Church.

Sveti Georgi Bulgarian Church (Bulgar Kilisesi);

A 15 minute walk from the city center to the north will get you to an old neighborhood of Edirne, named Kıyık, and in one of the alleys you'll come across with a brown little church, which was built in 1880. The interior of the church is decorated with many icons and the priest is happy to give you information about the church. Sveti Georgi Bulgarian Orthodox Church is located in the Kıyık District, Barutluk Neighborhood, Tavukçu Street of Edirne. The church was built in the XIX century and worship service started in Sveti Georgi by July 24, 1880. The priests who served in the church were Bulgarian citizens until 1940, but later came Bulgarian pastors of Istanbul. The building was worn out due to lack of maintenance in time and only the roof was repaired in 1996. It was restored between 2003 and 2004 and re-opened on May 9, 2004. In the year 2008, the terrace of the church was started to be used as a little ethnographic museum, including traditional clothes and the upper floor of Sveti Georgi church is a library with over 3000 books in Bulgarian language.

At the end of the day free time and shopping break is given for those who want to buy Edirne's famous Deva-i Misk Tatlısı, Badem Ezmesi, Kavala Kurabiyesi, Edirne Cheese, Local fruit soaps etc.

Moving to Macedonian Clock Tower and our hotel after free time.

Beginning the tour the next morning in Kırklareli.

2. DAY

Kırklareli

After breakfast, checking out of the hotel in Edirne and heading towards Demirköy district of Kırklareli.

- **First step is Demirköy**

The Dupnisa Cave (Turkish: Dupnisa Mağarası), is the second largest cave in Thrace, about 6 miles south of Sarpdere Village in Demirköy District, about 50km north of Kırklareli. Dupnisa cavern is a large underground system that has continued its formation and development since about 4 million years. Dupnisa Cave has two floors and consists of three caverns: Dry Cave, Girl Cave and Watery Cave. Its total length is 2720 meters and it is one of the longest caves of Turkey.

The Demirköy Foundry (Turkish: Demirköy Dökümhanesi), Demirköy; It is a town of Kırklareli and is located in the mountains of Yıldız Mountain. Fatih Dökümhane, which was built during the Ottoman period, is located here. Fatih Dökümhanesi is the place where the balls used in the conquest of Istanbul were molded.

- **The second step is İğneada**

Accommodation in İğneada.

Free time (sea time) or Special Tours İn İğneada

1.ATV tour

2.Trekking towards Longoz

3.Limanköy / Lighthouse

3. DAY

After breakfast, checking out of the hotel in İğneada and heading towards Vize district of Kırklareli.

- **First step is Vize**

Little Hagia Sophia Church (Gazi Suleiman Pasha Mosque) (Turkish: Küçük Ayasofya Kilisesi (Gazi Süleyman Paşa Camii)), is a former Byzantine era Orthodox church built during Emperor Justinian I (reigned 527-565) times, which was converted later in the Ottoman era into a mosque. Designed in an Orthodox Basilica plan, the church was constructed upon the foundations of the Temple of Apollo with masonry stone and brick. The church was built in the 6th century during the period of the Jewish.

Vize Fortress (Turkish: Vize Kalesi), Vize is the first slow city of Thrace and the eighth slow city of Turkey. Vize received the title “Slow City” with the application made in 2012 to the Association of International Slow Cities (Cittaslow). The Vize Castle consists of two castles; an inner castle and an outer castle. The Vize Castle and its walls are based on the Roman period.

Vize Amphitheatre (Turkish: Antik tiyatro), is an open-air theatre built in the 2nd century during the Late Roman era, the only known one in Thrace. It dates back to the 2nd century AD and has a capacity of 4000 spectators.

- **Second step is Kıyıköy**

St Nicholas Monastery (Aya Nikola Manastırı), is a quite small religious complex engraved into a rocky slope of a hill in the forest, about 15-30 minutes walk from town centre, near the bank of the stream. is a Byzantine era Orthodox monastery, built during the time of Emperor Justinian I (reigned 527-565). It is one of the most beautiful examples of rock monasteries belonging to 6-9th century. In addition, the monastery has cells obtained by carving rocks.

Lunch break in Kıyıköy and free time in this sweet small village.

- **Third step is Kırklareli City Center**

Hızır Bey Külliye: Hızırbey complex consist of Hızırbey Mosque, double bath, arasta (Ottoman bazaar) and fountain. Hızırbey Mosque, also known as Great Mosque, was built in 1383.

Kırklareli Museum (Turkish: Kırklareli Müzesi) It was built as a municipality building in 1894 by Mutasarrıf Neşet Pasha and Hacı Mestan Efendi, the mayor of that period. The building which was actually used until 1962 by the municipality was allocated to the Ministry of Culture in order to be transformed into an museum in 1970.

Yayla Neighborhood Historical Houses and Atatürk House, Kırklareli Yayla Neighborhood, it is a place with Bulgarian, Greek and Jewish populations. It is an open-

air museum where houses are found reflecting Turkish architecture. Atatürk House is in Yayla Neighborhood. It is similar to the house where Ataturk lived in Thessaloniki.

Asağı Pınar Mound, It is a mound located to the south. Historical remains obtained as a result of excavation works, it was learned that the region was used as a settlement in the Neolithic Age. Aşağı Pınar Mound is the oldest farm-village settlement in Trakya. Located on an area of 3000 square meters, the Aşağı Pınar Mound is the largest archeological excavation site in Kırklareli.

Kanlıgeçit Mound, It is 300 meters west of Asağı Pınar Mound. Historical background of it is based on 3000 B.C. It is the oldest urban settlement known in the Balkans and is the settlement of the Anatolian colony belonging to the first and only Bronze Age in Thrace.

Accommodation in Kırklareli.

Dinner: Special Kırklareli meatball

Most popular gastronomic values of Kırklareli: Hardaliye, Kırklareli Cheese, Kırklareli Meatball, Turbot and Seasonal Fish Varieties, Demirköy Honey, Poyralı Molasses, Pumpkin Dessert in Lime, Kid Chawarma, Boza, Water Buffalo Yoghurt, Kırklareli Cherry.

Beginning the tour next morning in Bulgaria. Departure from Dereköy (Aziziye) border gate to Bulgaria.

4. DAY

Malko Tarnovo – Brashlyan – Burgas – Pomorie - Nessebar (overnight in Pomorie/Nessebar/Sunny beach)

Travel to Malko Turnovo – visit to the Historical Museum of Malko Turnovo and Strandzha Nature Park visitor centre

Located in the center of Strandzha Mountain, on the bigger part of the territory of the natural park of the same name, the *municipality of Malko Tarnovo* is the heir of the centuries-old connection between the mountain and the sea. This connection has marked with its beneficial influence all the cultural layers and historical epochs – starting from the time of mythical Phineus and the Argonauts set out for the Golden Fleece to Colchis and getting to today’s artistic and creative manifestations provoked by the magic of this mountain.

The modern look of the municipality, which collected in itself the millenary history of Europe – from Thracians to Christianity form it as one of the attractive tourist centers in Bulgaria. Here the spirit of the past has been carried over through time.

The unique atmosphere of Malko Tarnovo is created by the two churches – Catholic and Orthodox, the Museum of History located in the buildings of three typical Renaissance houses from the middle of the 19th century, the walks to the Thracian tombs from the Roman epoch in the surroundings of the town and last but not least the spring in the center which became a

symbol of Malko Tarnovo – The Big Vris. Local people say about it that if a girl or a boy from another town drinks water from it, they will marry in Malko Tarnovo.

Historical Museum of Malko Turnovo - The region of Malko Turnovo has been populated since antiquity. Many legends are told about Thracian kings, fortresses and hidden treasures. The historical and ethnographic wealth of the town and the region is well presented in the Historical Museum in Malko Tarnovo, comprising six expositions. Archaeological monuments found in the last decades in the sites around and in the town are arranged in the first one. The epitaph monuments are arranged in a lapidarium in the museum yard. Separately an icon painting exposition is arranged, presenting icons made by Strandzha artists. Multiple attractions are included in the nature oriented exposition, especially for children. The non-material cultural heritage of Strandzha is represented by fire-dancing and the White Mummer (a custom which is only observed in the region of Strandzha). A carpet-weaving workshop is also in function. The ethnographic museum presents authentic local clothes from East Ropian ethnographic area.

Strandzha Nature Park visitor centre - With its area of 1160 km² Strandzha Nature Park is the largest protected area in the country. It has no analogue in the country by the number of natural habitats (120), the most significant of which are Strandzha forests from the Tertiary with laurel-type undergrowth, coastal dense forests, the Strandzha rivers and their estuaries, rare Pontic dunes and numerous caves (which are known for their diversity of many species of bats). The wealth of species in the park is maintained primarily thanks to the clear waters and the old natural deciduous forests, which represent 61% of old forests in the country. Information and Visitor Centre of Strandzha Nature Park, providing information on the rich biodiversity functions in Malko Tarnovo.

Travel to the village of Brashlyan - visit to St. Dimitar church and to old Bulgarian houses from the Revival. Lunch at Sarmashik Hotel Complex.

The village of Brashlyan - The village of Brashlyan was declared an architectural and historical reserve in 1982. It consists of 76 houses - architectural cultural monuments, 9 of which are of national importance. Of special interest are the church "St. Dimitar" with a church school and the chapel "St. Panteleymon".

Travel to Burgas – walk to and around the Seaside Garden and visits to the Archaeological and the Ethnographical Museums

Burgas is one of the biggest towns in the country. It is located on the coast of the Black Sea, in Burgas Bay, at 400 km from Sofia and 130 km from Varna. Burgas is an administrative center of the region of the same name. The population of the town is over 230 000 people.

The proximity of the sea and the flat nature of the area is the reason for its being populated as early as from ancient times. The earliest finds in the region refer to the Bronze and the early Iron Age. The archeological finds from the Thracian time period (4th century before Christ) are a lot in number. Some of the biggest fights of the Bulgarian state with the Byzantine Empire were conducted within the region of Burgas. The victories of Khan Tervel (8th

century) in Anhialo field in 708 and of Khan Kardam (who ruled 777 - 802) at Karnobat fortress Markeli in 792 ratified the Bulgarian state.

During the Ottoman rule the town developed as an educational and spiritual center. During the 18th century the port of Burgas had already turned into the biggest one to the south of Stara Planina (the Balkan Mountain). Burgas was liberated from Ottoman rule on 6 February 1878. The town underwent intense industrialization and modernization at the beginning of the 20th century.

Along with its good transport connections, the access to the sea, developed industry and preserved history simultaneously with that, Burgas nowadays is an attractive destination for the tourists. The town and the region offer diversified possibilities for tourism - sea, cultural tourism with the multitude of museums and cultural sites, balneological and SPA, ornithological, wine tourism and so on.

Archaeological Museum - Collections of archeological finds related to ancient Thrace, the Greek colonies along the Black Sea and the time of the Roman Empire are exhibited in the archeological exposition. Unique exhibits show the earliest history of navigation in the Black Sea as well as the development of the prospering Southern Black Sea ports in Bulgaria during the Middle Ages up to the fall of the country under Ottoman Rule at the end of the 14th – the middle of the 15th century.

Ethnographical Museum - The ethnographic exposition to the Regional Museum of History in Burgas offers the richest ethnographic collection in Southeastern Bulgaria. The exposition is located in the known in Burgas Brakalov's house, twice Mayor of the town of Burgas. The house was built in 1873 and in conformity with its architectural plan belongs to the type "Balkan" urban house of the 19th century – the only preserved such in the town of Burgas. The most attractive collection of Bulgarian national costumes of the ethnographic groups in the region, inclusive of the Bulgarian migrants from today's Greece and Turkey, is exposed here.

Seaside Garden - The first trees in the area of today's seaside garden were planted by the soldiers of the 24th Black Sea Regiment (established in 1889). In 1910 the architect Georgi Duhtev was assigned to the Burgas Municipality and started the construction of Primorski Park. He transformed the windy bare space between the town and the sea into one of the most beautiful parks in Bulgaria. Thanks to his passion for exotic plants, to this day hundreds of plants are present in the garden, from all continents, and the old part of the Seaside Garden (nearly a quarter of it) has been declared a monument of garden art.

Travel to Pomorie – visit to the Cupola Thracian tomb, St. George monastery and the Museum of Salt

The ***town of Pomorie*** is located in the southern part of the Bulgarian Black seaside, at 22 km from Burgas and about 400 km from Sofia. The population of the town is about 14 000 people. Main Road E87, which connects the Northern and the Southern Black Seaside also passes through Pomorie. One can get to Varna, Burgas, Sozopol and Nessebar through the

port of Pomorie. The town is also located quite near the international airport of the town of Burgas.

The earliest traces of human activities in Pomorie were from the Stone Age (6th millennium before Christ), there are traces from the Stone-Copper Age (5th millennium before Christ), the Bronze Age (3rd – 2nd millennium before Christ) and the Iron Age (the end of the 2nd millennium before Christ). During the 2nd century before Christ the name of Pomorie was Anhialo. In 45 AD Anhialo became a part of the Roman Empire. During the second century the town grew up when it was built up in a new place (in the locality Paleocastro). Whilst it was a part of the Roman Empire, Anhialo experienced intensive growth. The fact that it coined money was an expression of the economic and political development of the town.

The cult to the nymphs was also intensely disseminated during that time, these were the so called “Anhialo Nymphs” – according to the local people these were three girls who inhabited the mountains, the forests and the rivers. They were deemed as Goddesses – protectors of the springs. This cult is related to the located in the proximity mineral baths – Aquae Khalid – the present Burgas mineral baths which in the past were called Anhialo Baths. The town was visited in person by the rulers of the Roman Empire and lavish celebrations were organized for the visit of Emperor Diocletian on 28 October 294.

The town occupied a significant strategic location also during the Middle Ages. The area was frequently a field of heavy fights between Bulgarians and Byzantine warriors and its territory was frequently in Bulgarian or in Byzantine hands during different time periods. In 1453 Anhialo fell under Ottoman Rule. During the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century the sea town was an administrative center. The town was liberated from Ottoman Rule on 26 January (7 February – according to the Julian calendar) 1878.

Anhialo continued to develop also after the Liberation – the local people dealt with viticulture, wine production, fishing, production of salt. The production of salt in the area of Pomorie has always been of great significance for the town. Fishing is also of significance for the subsistence and the economy of the town. Crafts and trade, implemented mainly by sea, developed. Anhialo was renamed to Pomorie in 1934.

Cupola Thracian tomb - The Cupola Thracian tomb near Pomorie is from the Roman period and in its construction the Thracian domed vault model was applied. The tomb is located under the embankment of a burial mound, with western corridor 22 m long, a circular chamber with a diameter of 11.60 m and height of 5.50 m. The facility was built from stone and brick, with original vault of the central room. One of the interesting things that strikes at first glance is the central column, in which there is an incised spiral staircase leading to the top of the tomb. It is an architectural monument of culture of national significance since 1965.

St. George Monastery - St. George male monastery in the town of Pomorie was established in the end of XVIII c. although there is a legend telling that in VII c. there already was a temple or monastery, dedicated to St. George the Martyr, in this place. In 1856 a new church was built and the old one still remains to this day under its roof. Together with the new buildings, a 20-meter bell tower was built (1966). Today, many valuable examples of the iconographic

art of the XVIII and XIX c. are kept in the monastery. The temple icon was painted by the Anhialo icon-painter Themistocles Diamandopulo.

Museum of Salt and Pomorie Lake - The first "Museum of Salt" in Eastern Europe was built at Pomorie Lake. Healing mud is produced in the southern part of the lake for the sanatoria in the town and the northern part is used for traditional salt production, preserved for longer than 2000 years. The lake became a protected area in 2001, it is an important ornithological site of national importance, and Ramsar wetland of international importance since 2002. Several species of the Red Book of Bulgaria are found here, e.g. Trachomitum venetum - the largest find in the country, Tatar spurge and sea wormwood. The lake welcomes the first autumn migratory birds along "Via Pontica" like sea pelicans and storks.

Travel to Nesebar – bus tour of Sunny beach and walking tour of Old Nesebar. Dinner and overnight in Nesebar.

Sunny beach - Sunny beach is the largest and most popular beach resort in Bulgaria. It is a Blue Flag winning resort, located in a picturesque and ecologically clean gulf on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, close to the town of Nesebar, the yacht port of St. Vlas resort and the international airport of Burgas (30 km). Sunny Beach is situated along the widest beach strip. With its hundreds of hotels, numerous bars and restaurants, multiple entertainment and shops and its developed infrastructure, the resort attracts thousands of tourists from around the world. The tourist season here lasts from May through October.

The ***town of Nesebar*** today has an old and a new part, which are divided by a narrow isthmus. The old town is located on a small peninsula. There are traces of different historical epochs everywhere. A part of the fortress wall is seen on the territory of the Old Town, which was announced as an architectural-construction monument of culture of national significance. There is a great number of preserved churches and two of them – Saint Spas and Saint Stephen were turned into museum sites. A great part of the houses in the old part is from the epoch of the Renaissance (18th – 19th centuries). Except that it connects the old and the new towns, the isthmus is also a favorite place for walks of the guests and the inhabitants of Nesebar. There are pedestrian lanes from its two sides, in the proximity of the sea. The wind mill which is located in the middle of the isthmus is one of the symbols of the town as well.

Old Nesebar - The Historical and Architectural Reserve Nesebar is located in the Old Town of Nesebar on a small peninsula about 850 m long and 350 m wide. The old town was declared an architectural and historical reserve in 1956. In 1983 it was encribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Nesebar is one of the most ancient cities in Europe, founded 3200 years ago. In antiquity the city was called Mesambria, in the Middle Ages Mesembria and later - Nesebar. Throughout its existence the city has always been surrounded by fortress walls, the remains of which have been preserved until today. So far 44 churches from the period from Vth to XIXth c. have been found on the small territory of the old town, many of them still existing. The oldest Early Christian basilicas in Bulgaria are among them.

5. DAY

Nessebar – Aytos – Karnobat – Straldzha – Yambol (overnight in Yambol)

Travel to Karnobat via Aytos – visit to the Genger Architectural and Ethnographic Complex in Aytos, Markeli Fortress next to Karnobat and Wine Cellar

Genger Architectural and Ethnographic Complex - The Genger architectural and ethnographic complex in Aytos is an open-air ethnographic exhibition presenting the most typical for the Aytos region folk artistic crafts. The complex has an alley of old Aytos craft workshops, built in the Renaissance style and a shop for Bulgarian souvenirs. The tavern offers delicious Bulgarian cuisine and other specialties.

Markeli Fortress - Situated 7.5 km west of the present town of Karnobat the fortress is one of the most impressive medieval monuments throughout South Bulgaria. Due to its strategic location Markeli Fortress experienced several major battles between Byzantium and Bulgaria. Archaeological research at the site began in 1986 and continues nowadays.

Travel to Straldzha – Zimnitsa. Coffee break at Petolachkata.

Ethnographic museum - the village of Zimnitsa (Straldzha municipality) - The museum was opened in 1994. on the initiative of the local patriot Yordan Banchev and thanks to the support and donations of the inhabitants of the village of Zimnitsa. And it exists under the auspices of Chitalishte "Vazrazhdane" village of Zimnitsa. Expositions: Includes mainly ethnographic exposition: with agricultural equipment, household items and jewelry and costumes from the past of the village of Zimnitsa.

Travel to Kabile. Visit National Archaeological Reserve Kabile.

National Kabile Archeological Reserve - 6 km north of the city. In it are the ruins of the ancient Thracian town of Kabile - economic, cultural and political center of ancient Thrace. The ruins are impressive. Since 1972 regular archeological excavations have been conducted there. The visitors to the reserve can see the ruins of Kabile one of the most significant antique Thracian cities on the territory of today's Bulgaria; it has a museum of area 960 sq.m showing a standing exhibition with exhibits representing the historical development of the antique city. There is a conference room with 60 seats at the museum, where scientific symposia, conferences and others are held.

Travel to Yambol. Visit Historical Museum and Bezistena in Yambol. Accommodation in the selected hotel in Yambol.

Yambol is one of the oldest cities not only in Bulgaria but also in Europe. Data about life around the city dates back to the 6th millennium BC. Near the town is the large Thracian settlement named Kabile, which is an important fortress in the state of Philip of Macedon and flourished in Roman times until the invasion of the Goths, which destroyed it in 378. Coins were minted in Kabyle, crafts and trade were developed.

In 293, Roman Emperor Diocletian crossed the valley of the Tundja River and the ancient settlement on the territory of today's Yambol is called Diospolis, the city of Zeus. Its important strategic position makes it always desirable, both by the Bulgarian and the Byzantine rulers.

The medieval chroniclers mention the city with the names of Diapolis, Yampolis, and others. In an inscription from the time of the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Alexander, the town is called Dabililino. In the Middle Ages Yambol is an important fortress in the Bulgarian state.

In 1373, after a long siege, the medieval Yambol fortress fell under the Ottoman Turks. During the Ottoman domination of the city there was a busy trade in cereals, leather, wool, tallow, honey, cocoons, rice, cheese, cattle that were sent to Edirne and Constantinople. For centuries, in the center of Yambol was built the large covered market "Besistena", for which in 1667 the Turkish voyager Evlia Chelebi said: "There is ... a solid Bezisten with four iron doors. Such a lively and ornate Bezisten in no other country. All precious things are in him in abundance and priceless".

The "Salt Path" passed from Anhialo to Plovdiv. In the Bulgarian neighborhood of Kargona was the big craft and the market. In Kargona are built two church temples "Holy Trinity" and "St.Georgi", to which a bell tower built 36 meters high. Yambol has given many vojvods and haidouts who took part in the liberation wars.

Already in 1875 the town was connected to the railway line through Nova Zagora with Zlaty dol and Marichina lowland, and in 1890 the line was continued to Bourgas. It has a positive impact on the economic development of the city for the export of many products through the growing port of Burgas.

In 1884 the city numbered 10 771 inhabitants, in 2003 there were registered 80 315 inhabitants by permanent address. In time Yambol develops as an industrial center, a center of a rich agricultural area, an important transport node, a cultural and educational center. Yambol is permanently present on the cultural map of Bulgaria. Already in 1862 in the town was founded Chitalishte "Saglasie" and a library. In 1921, a theater "Modern Theater" was built. In 1949, the State Drama Theater was established, bearing today the name of the great Bulgarian actress Nevena Kokanova, and in 1957 the State Puppet Theater. In 1967 Yambol Choir School "Prof. Dimitrov Dimitrov" was established, which celebrated our city all over Europe. In the city are also present the chamber ensemble "Dianopolis", the choir "Gusla", the wind orchestra, the folk ensemble "Tundja"

Historical Museum of Yambol (website: <http://www.yambolmuseum.com/>) - The museum was founded in 1952. It has the following specialized departments: Archeology, Bulgarian lands XV-XIX century, New and new history, Public relations and Restoration. Funds: prehistory - 4,000 exhibits; antiquity - 2,600 exhibits; Middle Ages - 1,600 exhibits; numismatics - 6,200 exhibits; Renaissance - 3 050 exhibits; ethnography - 4,500 exhibits; a new story - 15,000 exhibits; the most recent story - 15 000 exhibits. Expositions: 115 years of

musical work and 50 years. Historical Museum - Yambol NAB "Kabile" - Architectural Exhibition

Bezistena in Yambol city was built in the second half of 15 c. in the center of today's Yambol city. It is the only building of this type in Bulgaria and is one of the most interesting and well preserved monuments of 15 c. It gives the specific image of Yambol city and is one of its symbols. Bezistena was restored in 1970 - 1973 in an appearance quite similar to the original one and has been adapted to the environment in the modern city;

6. DAY

Yambol – Elhovo – Topolovgrad – Harmanli - Haskovo (overnight in Haskovo)

Travel to Elhovo. Visit Ethnographic Archaeological Museum in Elhovo.

If you are traveling south of the main transport connections in Bulgaria after the town of Yambol you will reach one unknown and preserved region of ecological atmosphere and biodiversity. This is the region of Elhovo located on the lands of Lower Tundzha river. Now slow down and enjoy the flat landscape of Elhovo field surrounded by Sakar mountain, Derventski, St. Ilia and Monastery Hills. Reduce a little more, because you're getting into a several protected areas and it is possible to meet various representatives of the Wildlife which is typical for the nature along the river of Tundzha. The river of Tundzha is the main natural reason for the large biodiversity of the region and for life existing on these lands centuries ago.

Arriving in this part of Bulgaria every visitor is returning 50 years back in time and have the exceptional opportunity to discover the forgotten traditions and customs of our forefathers. In these lands the main features of the modern way of life occurred with very slow speed. Values and traditions are still transmitted from generation to generation which prevent them to be loss or forget.

Local people called visitors "guests of the town", and in every house everybody knows ... when there is a guests, tables is order with homemade products, tradition Bulgarian pastry and homemade wine called "Alzhirka" (it is local red aromatic wine).

Linden along the central pedestrian area of Elhovo, arranged gardens in every house, beautiful buildings of the church, museum, municipality administration, schools, hospitable people – friendly and helpful and do not forget the delicious meals – all this things make guest-passenger to go with excellent impression.

The town of Elhovo is a center of civilizations since ancient times in the lands along the river of Tundzha. Staying there you have the opportunity to explore and observe the whole area and feel the spirit of the local people. Don't miss to see the three reserves located along the river of Tundzha, discover the Thracian heritage, exceptional ethnography, cultural heritage and extraordinary natural landscapes.

Ethnographic Archaeological Museum - Elhovo (Elhovo Municipality) - The museum was established in 1958. Specialized departments: "Agriculture and Livestock", "Transport, Hunting and Fishing", "Clothing and Decorations", "Fabrics and Embroidery", "Housing and Housing", "Traditional Crafts", "spiritual culture, customs and folklore". Fonds: documentary and photoarchives, original documents and photographs related to the development of this end of the Liberation to this day - 8 000 exhibits. More than 20,100 exhibits are stored in the museum's stock, 13,700 of which are the main museum fund. The museum exposition is situated on an area of 244 square meters. in 4 halls, the ethnographic part of the exposition is preceded by a brief introduction to the historical past of Elhovo. The museum is included in the 100 tourist sites of Bulgaria. It has one of the richest ethnographic expositions in the country with examples of the folk crafts and costumes of Bulgarians - immigrants from Belomorska Thrace, Lozengrad and Odrin.

Pass and stop in Topolovgrad and Harmanli.

Travel to Haskovo.

The tourist route goes straight to ***The Monument of the Holy Mother of God***. The monument is dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus and was unveiled in 2003. Standing at a total height of 31 meters or 102 feet (of which the statue itself is 14 m or 46 ft.), the monument has been certified by the Guinness Book of World Records as the tallest statue of the Virgin Mary with the Infant Jesus in the world. The monument's pedestal includes the small Bulgarian Orthodox Chapel of the Nativity of the Mother of God, the interior of which resembles an ancient church and features a stone altar. A large Christian cross relief on the front side of the pedestal points to the chapel entrance.

The Monument of envy. This is the first and only Monument of Envy in the world – of the Bulgarian Icarus –, it was inaugurated on 8 September 2014 in the town of Haskovo. The sculpture represents a man spreading out his arms, with feather wings, determined to fly. But two skeletal hands grab his wings, pulling them down, trying to break them. This unique art creation is bronze-cast, its height is 3 meters, and its weight is 1 ton. It is positioned in the downtown of Haskovo on a massive granite pedestal. Monument of Envy – Bulgarian Icarus was entirely erected by public subscription.

Coffee break in Haskovo and free time to feel the town spirit.

Lyutitsa. It is one of the largest and best preserved castles in the easternmost part of the Eastern Rhodopes. It is also known as the "Marble City" because its walls are made of white marble. The fortress occupies an area of 26,000 m² and has 12 towers of which eight have been preserved. The walls are up to 10 meters high. The ruins of two churches have been excavated as well as a necropolis with 15 graves. Among the numerous archaeological finds are rare coins, ceramics from Preslav, jewelry and tools.

10 minutes to buy souvenirs and postcards.

Haskovo Regional History Museum. The Haskovo Regional History Museum treasures more than 120 000 pieces and artifacts of the historical cultural heritage, many of which have an exceptionally high value. Unique collections of prehistoric, antique and medieval artifacts made of ceramics, stone, iron and glass, contributing to part of the rich museum collection. Among the most interesting exhibits are two rarely found on the Bulgarian lands goblets, “Troy type”, dating back to 1st c. B.C., one of which became the symbol of the museum. The museum also hosts a remarkable collection of extremely high value consisting of more than 22 000 antique and medieval coins.

7. DAY

Departure to Svilengrad – Edirne – Istanbul Airport