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NATIONAL AND NATURAL PARKS

multimedia



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The project is financed by the European Regional Development Fund
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Grant Scheme BG161PO001/3.3-01/2008 "Support for Effective National Marketing of Tourist Product and Improvement of Information Service", Contract No BG161PO001/3.3-01/2008 /001-5 "Multimedia Catalogue of the Tourist Sites and Electronic Marketing of Destination Bulgaria"

This multimedia brochure is created within the framework of the project "Multimedia Catalogue of the Tourist Sites and Electronic Marketing of Destination Bulgaria", Contract No BG161PO001/3.3-01/2008/001-5, which is performed with the financial support of Operative Program "Regional Development" 2007 – 2013, co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund. The entire responsibility for the contents of this multimedia brochure is brought by the beneficiary – The Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, and under no circumstances it can be considered that this multimedia brochure presents the official position of the European Union and the Managing Body.



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GENERAL INFORMATION



The Bulgarian national and nature parks are an enormous wealth - they have a magnificent wilderness, biodiversity, endemic and rare plant and animal species and unique natural landmarks.



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The national Parks – Rila, Pirin and Central Balkan are primarily managed for biodiversity conservation in very strict regime regarding the use of natural resources.

There are 11 Natural Parks in Bulgaria - Belasitsa, Balgarka, Vitosha, Vrachanski Balkan, Zlatni Pyasatsi, Persina, Rila Monastery, Rusenski Lom, Sini Kamani, Strandzha and Shumen Plateau. They have a relatively liberal regime regarding the use of natural resources, as long as it does not affect the biological and landscape diversity. They cover areas of various ownership - state, municipal, private, religious.

Both park types encourage the development of sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism, educational activities and traditional livelihood of the local people.



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NATIONAL PARK “CENTRAL BALKAN”

The National Park “Central Balkan” is located in the heart of Bulgaria, in the central and highest parts of the Balkan Mountain. It preserves a unique diversity of plant and animal species - common beech, fir, mountain maple, edelweiss, wolf, marten, otter, wild cat, bat tricolor, imperial eagle,

semi-whiteheaded flycatcher, etc. The park includes 9 natural reserves - Boatin, Tsarichina, Kozya Stena, Steneto, Severen Dzhendem, Peeshti Skali, Sokolna, Dzhendema and Stara Reka. The reserve covers an area of 20,019.6 hectares. In 2003, the National park Central Balkan became a





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member of the PAN Parks - an international recognition for its well preserved and managed wildlife. The park has held a PAN Parks certificate since 2004. The highest point of the park is Botev peak with a height of 2,376 meters.





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NATIONAL PARK "RILA"



The national park Rila is located in the southwest part of the country, in the Rila Mountain. The park preserves rare plant and animal species, such as the Rila cowslip, lady's

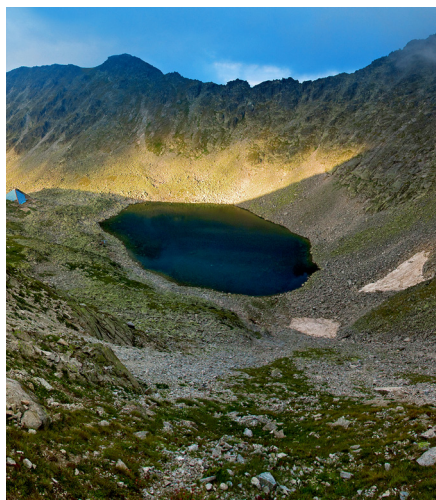
mantle, Rila rhubarb, Balkan chamois, ground squirrel, alpine newt, tiny owl, etc.

The park has over 100 peaks with an altitude of over 2,000 meters, and the highest



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peak in Bulgaria and on the Balkan Peninsula is also among them - peak Musala (2,925 m). The National Park Rila consists of 4 reserves (Parangalitsa, Skakavitza, Ibar and Central Rila Reserve). The reserves and the park are included in the UN List of



National Parks and Equivalent to them Reserves.

In 2007 the park received a certificate of full membership in the European network of national parks - PAN Parks. In 2010 the park was recertified by the PAN Parks for the next five years.



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NATIONAL PARK “PIRIN”

The national park Pirin is situated in the Pirin Mountain, located in southwest Bulgaria. The park preserves the natural relic forests of white and black fir, a great diversity of plant and animal species – Pirin iris,

Pirin cabbage, David’s mullein, Hermann’s tortoise, brown bear, wolf, marten, peregrine falcon, Lesser Spotted Eagle, etc. In 1983 the national park was included in the UNESCO List of Natural Heritage.





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There are two reserves within the park area - Bayuvi Dupki - Dzhindzhiritsa and Yulen. The highest point is peak Vihren (2,915 m), which is the second highest peak in Bulgaria after Musala. The Baykusheva Mura is located within the park territory - it is the oldest tree in Bulgaria (older than 1,300 years).





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NATURAL PARK "VITOSHA"



Vitosha is the first park in Bulgaria and on the Balkan Peninsula. The park preserves precious plant and animal species - pine trees, yews, marsh vegetation, red deer, roe deer, wild boar, bear,

nutcracker, pine tit, eared lark, etc. There are two reserves on its territory - Bistrishko Branishte biosphere reserve and Torfeno Branishte reserve. The natural landmark Duhlata - the longest cave in Bulgaria -



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*lies within the park area.
Ten of the Vitosha peaks are
on an altitude of over 2,000
meters; the highest among
them is Cherni Vrah (2,290 m).
It rises in the central part of the
mountain.*





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NATURAL PARK “BELASITSA”

The Natural Park Belasitsa is located in the eponymous mountain in southwest Bulgaria, on the border with Greece and Macedonia. The park preserves valuable plant and animal species, such as Kosta’s sedum, Belasitsa mullein, Stoyan’s violet,

Spruner’s bell, Orpheus warbler, small olive warbler, Balkan lark, motley-necked accentor, etc.

The Kongura reserve is located within the park area. There are eight villages at the foot of Belasitsa. Many of the marked hiking trails lead to them.





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NATURAL PARK "BALGARKA"



are the protected areas Studen Kladenets, Stolishta, Mahchenitsa-Yovovtsi, Sokolski Monastery, as well as the natural landmarks Mahnatite Skali, Vikanata Skala, the

The Natural Park Balgarka lies at the northern slopes of the central part of the Balkan Mountain - over Shipka and Tryavna areas of the mountain. The park was declared a preserved territory in order to preserve plant and animal species, such as beech, oak and white pine, brown bear, wolf, red deer, etc. In the natural park Balgarka





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Natural Yew Habitat and the ancient tree Golemiyat Buk (The Big Beech).

The architectural and ethnographic complex Etara and the Sokolski Monastery are situated at the park territory and provide opportunities for cultural tourism.





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NATURAL PARK “VRACHANSKI BALKAN”



The Natural Park Vratsa Balkan covers a vast territory in northwest Bulgaria and almost the entire territory of Vratsa Mountain. The park preserves plant and animal species, such as heather scaly, long-leaved bupleurum, oak, beech, black stork, golden eagle, deer, wild cat, etc. Some of

the most visited attractions in the country - such as Ledenika cave, Temnata dupka cave, Vratsata pass, Lakatnishkite rocks, Ritlite, Okolchitsa peak, and 3 monasteries - Cherepishki, Osenovlashki (The Seven Altars monastery) and “St. Ivan Pusti” are located within the park territory.



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NATURAL PARK "GOLDEN SANDS"

The smallest natural park in Bulgaria is called Golden Sands. Its basic purpose is preservation and protection of precious plant and animal species, such as hornbeam, oak, flowering ash, lilac, smin brush,

spadefoot, tree frog, marten, polecat, etc. The natural park surrounds the resort complex Golden Sands.

Five tourist routes and five specialized hiking trails are developed for nature lovers and





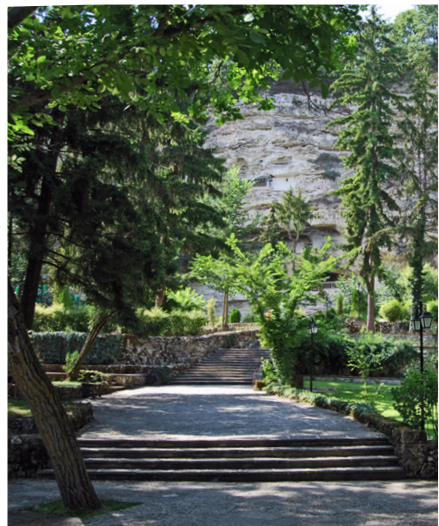
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hikers.

The routes present the area's biological and landscape diversity.

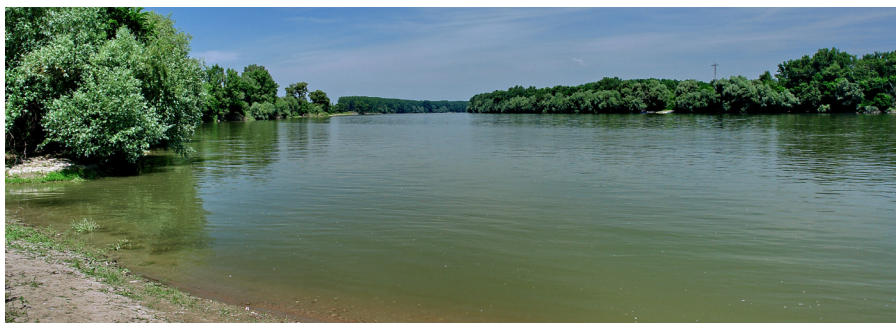
In the southwestern part of the park is located the most famous tourist spot in the region - the rock monastery Aladzha. Remains of a basilica and medieval castles have been discovered in the park.





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NATURAL PARK “PERSINA”



The Persina Natural Park is situated along the bank of Danube river.

The park was declared a protected territory in order to preserve and restore the by-Danube wetlands and to protect species, such as water salvinia, devil's nut, marsh snowdrop, little cormorant, night heron, sea eagle, etc. Within the boundaries of the park fall all Bulgarian Danube islands in this part of the Danube river: Persin,

Golyama Barzina, Magaretsa, Shturetsa, Milka, Kitka, Predela, Gradina, Srednyak, Lakat and Palets.

The park consists of 6 protected areas: the reserve Persina Swamps, the natural landmark Persin - East, Kitka reserve on Kitka island, Milka Reserve, which is located on Milka island, protected area Kaikusha and a natural landmark in the area of Plavala.



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NATURAL PARK “RILA MONASTERY”

The natural park Rila Monastery covers the medium high and the alpine parts of Rila mountain. The highest point is the mount Rilets – 2,713 meters above the sea level.

The basic aim of the park is the preservation and the maintenance of diverse plant and animal species, such as Rila oak, Rila primrose, water buttercup, grouse,

rockclimber, snow vole, etc.

The reserve Rila Monastery Forest is situated on the territory of the park, near the most important monument of the Bulgarian culture and spirituality - the Rila Monastery, declared by UNESCO a global monument of culture.

There are 28 lakes within the park territory.





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NATURAL PARK “SINITE KAMANI”



The natural Park Sinite Kamani is situated in the Balkan Mountain, in close proximity to the town of Sliven. The park preserves valuable species, such as Urumov's tulip, tender mullein, wood anemone, mouse-catcher snake, polecat, wolf, owl, imperial eagle, golden eagle,

small vulture, etc.

There is a reserve within the park territory, called Kutelka, and 6 natural landmarks; the most famous among them is Halkata.

The highest point of the park is Bulgarka peak - 1,181 meters above the sea level.



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NATURAL PARK “RUSENSKI LOM”



The Natural Park Rusenski Lom is located 20 km south of Ruse and bears the name of Rusenski Lom river - the last right tributary of the Danube river. The park preserves diverse species, such as hornbeam, red oak, various types of orchids, irises, horseshoe bat, deer, wolf, golden eagle, Egyptian vulture, long-legged buzzard,

ruddy shelduck, etc.

The park has several separate ecopaths. The greatest attractions are the Ivanovo Rock Churches, which are included in the UNESCO List of Global Cultural Heritage. The only active rock monastery in Bulgaria – Basarbovski Monastery - is located within the park territory.



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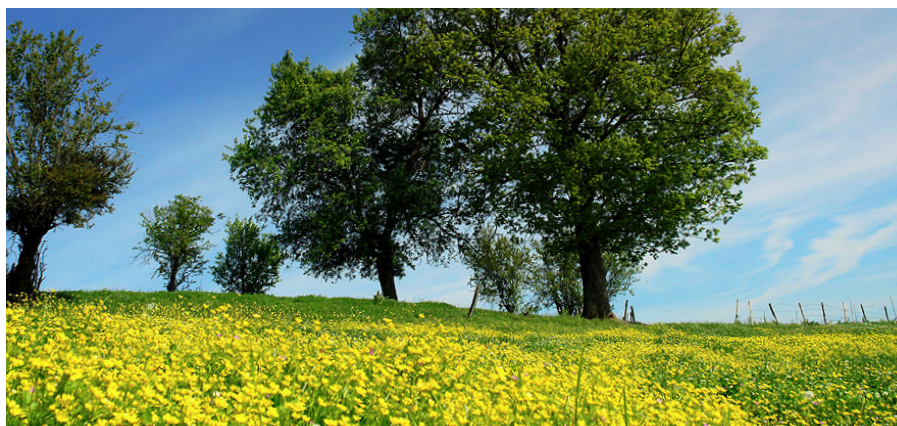


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NATURAL PARK “STRANDZHA”

The natural park Strandzha protects the largest preserved broad-leaved forest complex in Europe, forests typical for the end of the Tertiary period, valuable species, such as Strandzha periwinkle, Caucasian blueberry, large-headed goby, river goby, south leucotos, corncrake, etc. It is

situated in the southeast part of the country, and on the south its boundary coincides with the political borders of Bulgaria with Turkey; its eastern boundary reaches the Black Sea coast. The park contains five reserves, 14 protected areas and 8 natural landmarks. The bird migration route Via





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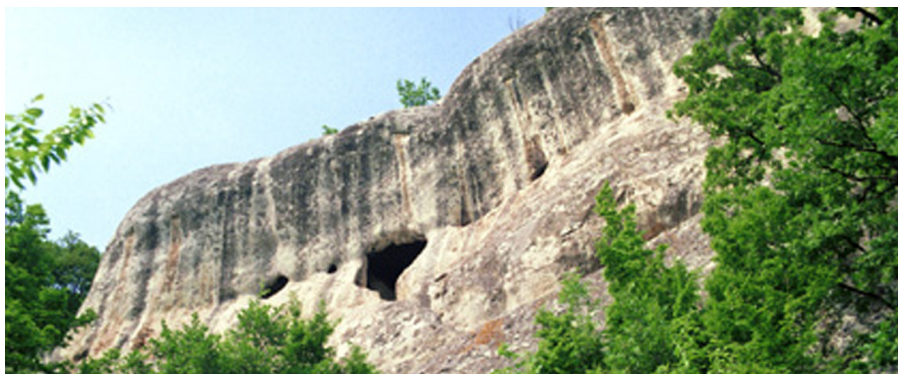
Pontica passes through the coastal areas of the Strandzha park. Besides the variety of protected plant and animal species, Strandzha mountain is also known for its fire dancing - an old ritual of pagan origin, in which the participants in the ritual dance on live coals.





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NATURAL PARK “SHUMEN PLATEAU”



The Natural Park Shumen Plateau is located near the town of Shumen. The highest point in the park is 502 meters above the sea level. The park was declared a protected territory in order to preserve the precious plant and animal species, such as hornbeam, oak, maple and black pine, 14 species of orchids, red deer, roe deer, wild boar, fox,

big hawk, lesser spotted eagle, etc.

In addition to the diversity of plant and animal species, the park attracts attention with its magnificent natural landmarks, such as Biserna cave.

The monument “Founders of the Bulgarian State”, as well as the remains of the Shumen Fortress, are situated in the park.



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