

BULGARIA

WINTER
TOURISM



www.bulgariatravel.org

Unique facts about Bulgaria



Bulgarian winter resorts have always been a popular destination for skiing and other winter sports. The fascinating combination of great nature and modern sports facilities attract thousands of visitors every year; many international competitions are being held on the slopes of the Bulgarian winter resorts. Bulgaria is considered as a paradise destination for skiing, snowboarding and extreme winter sports.

Besides the sport activities, the Bulgarian winter resorts offer a wide range of entertainments for active relaxation. There are a number of mineral thermal springs, which make the country a popular destination for spa and wellness treatment. Spa centers offering a variety of classic and exotic procedures are built in most winter resorts across the country.



The vast cultural and historical heritage of Bulgaria has spread its treasures in all parts of the country. Most winter sport centres are located close to various historical or natural places of interest; you can diversify your stay in the country by visiting some of them. In Bansko you can appreciate the authentic architecture, combined with a visit to a traditional Bulgarian 'mehana' (tavern). Close to Pamporovo you can visit one of the most picturesque Bulgarian villages, which has preserved the spirit of the ancient traditions. Rila's resort Borovets is situated just a few kilometers from the town of Samokov – a place with numerous sightseeing spots and a historical museum.



Bulgaria is blessed with beautiful majestic mountains which cover much of the country. Its unique climate is affected by both the Mediterranean and the Northern Russian steppes. This provides a large amount of snow in the high mountains which lasts for months every winter.

INTRODUCTION



There are four large, world-renowned ski resorts in Bulgaria and a number of smaller ski zones which are developing rapidly and generate much interest. Bulgaria has more than 210 km of ski slopes. The highest of these trails start at an altitude of 2,600 m and have a maximum vertical drop of 1,630 m. All trails are serviced by modern chairlifts and cable cars in addition to ski tows. From early December to April conditions for winter sports are excellent due to the modern facilities and the well developed infrastructure. Also, most of the large ski zones make use of snow making equipment to augment the natural snow. This ensures an extremely high quality of snow throughout the entire season.



Ski schools in the primary ski zones employ the services of qualified instructors who provide lessons for both children and adults. Resorts in Bulgaria offer all inclusive package deals at affordable prices for a great winter holiday experience.

Altitude of the trails: **from 1,512 to 2,290 m**

Total length: **11,8 km**

Maximum vertical drop: **725 m**

Longest trail: **3.8 km**

Lifts: **14**

VITOSHA

The ski area on Vitosha Mountain is the closest to the capital of Sofia – only a 30-40 min walk away from the city center. Vitosha is one of the most popular holiday and recreational places near Sofia.

Semi-advanced and advanced skiers and snowboarders enjoy a great variety of ski trails there.

The Aleko Ski Center is the oldest in Bulgaria and probably the most popular Vitosha destination in the wintertime. It is located at an altitude of 1,800 m and the ski trails slope down the mountain in a northern direction. The second ski center on Vitosha is Vetrovala. It is located at an altitude of 1,507 m.

Aleko Ski Area offers good option for snowboarders and the area is suitable for freestyle snowboarding. Vitosha hosts many Alpine skiing, cross country skiing and snowboard competitions.

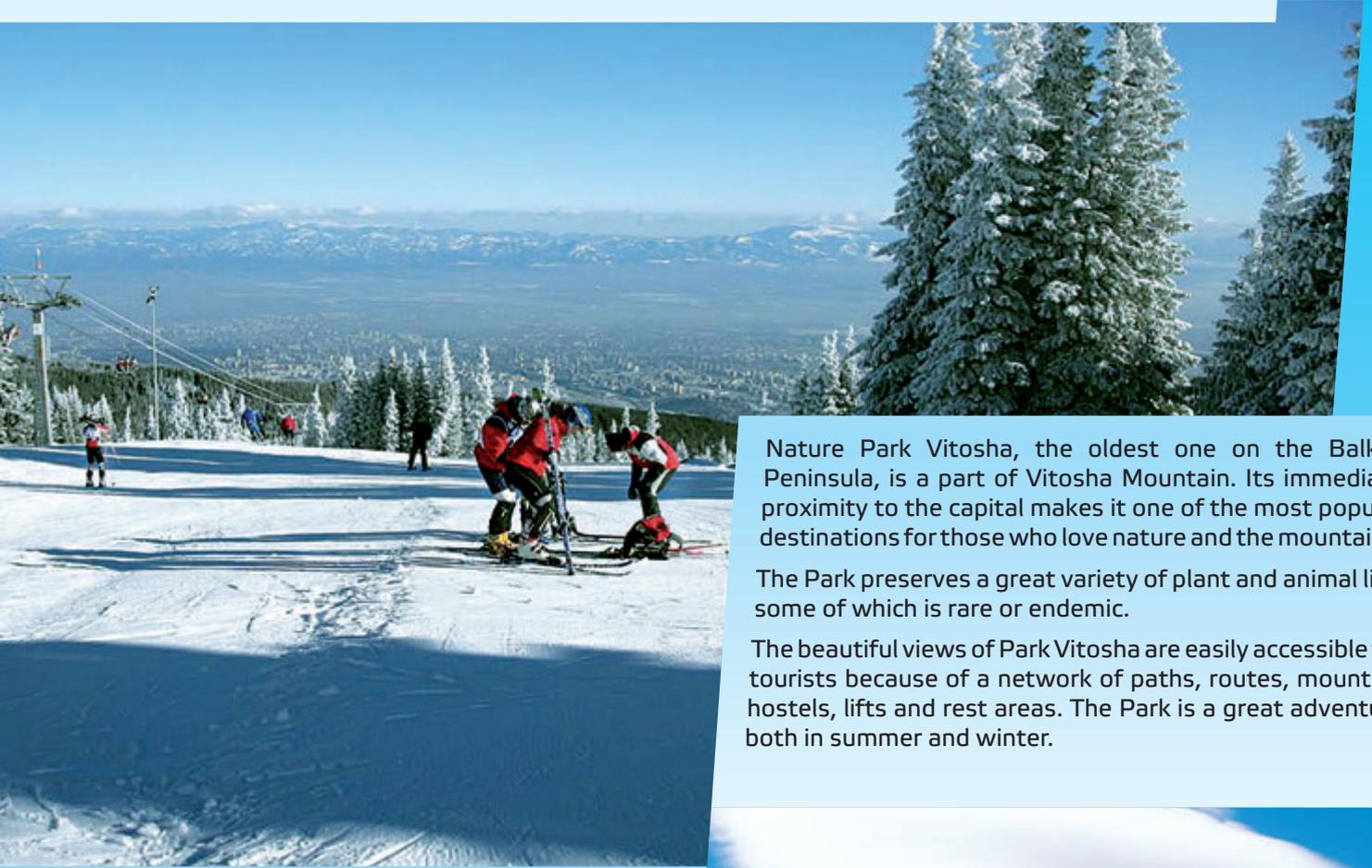
The mountain offers wonderful conditions for night skiing. The Vitosha Lale 1 Trail is lit up at night the whole week.



The use of a single access card for all ski zones is very convenient for skiers and snowboarders.

The ski zones of Vitosha offer group and individual ski and snowboard instructions in several languages. The programs to help children take their first steps into the world of winter sports are also excellent. Special school and preschool children programs are available. The resort also offers ski equipment rental services.

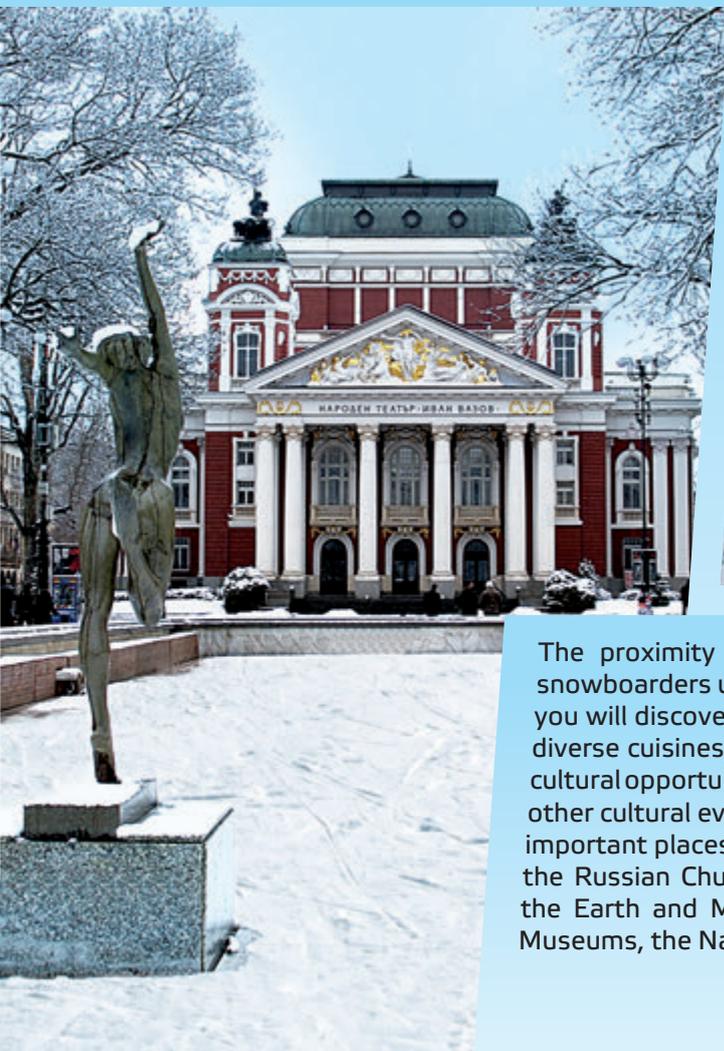
In addition to sports Vitosha has other exciting activities to offer. The highest peak of the mountain is called Cherni Vruh (Black Peak) and it can be reached even in winter. The trek to reach the top is relatively easy and takes only one day. Cherni Vruh's height is 2,290 m and this alpine adventure will show to you the beauty of the mountain beyond the ski zones.



Nature Park Vitosha, the oldest one on the Balkan Peninsula, is a part of Vitosha Mountain. Its immediate proximity to the capital makes it one of the most popular destinations for those who love nature and the mountains.

The Park preserves a great variety of plant and animal life, some of which is rare or endemic.

The beautiful views of Park Vitosha are easily accessible for tourists because of a network of paths, routes, mountain hostels, lifts and rest areas. The Park is a great adventure both in summer and winter.

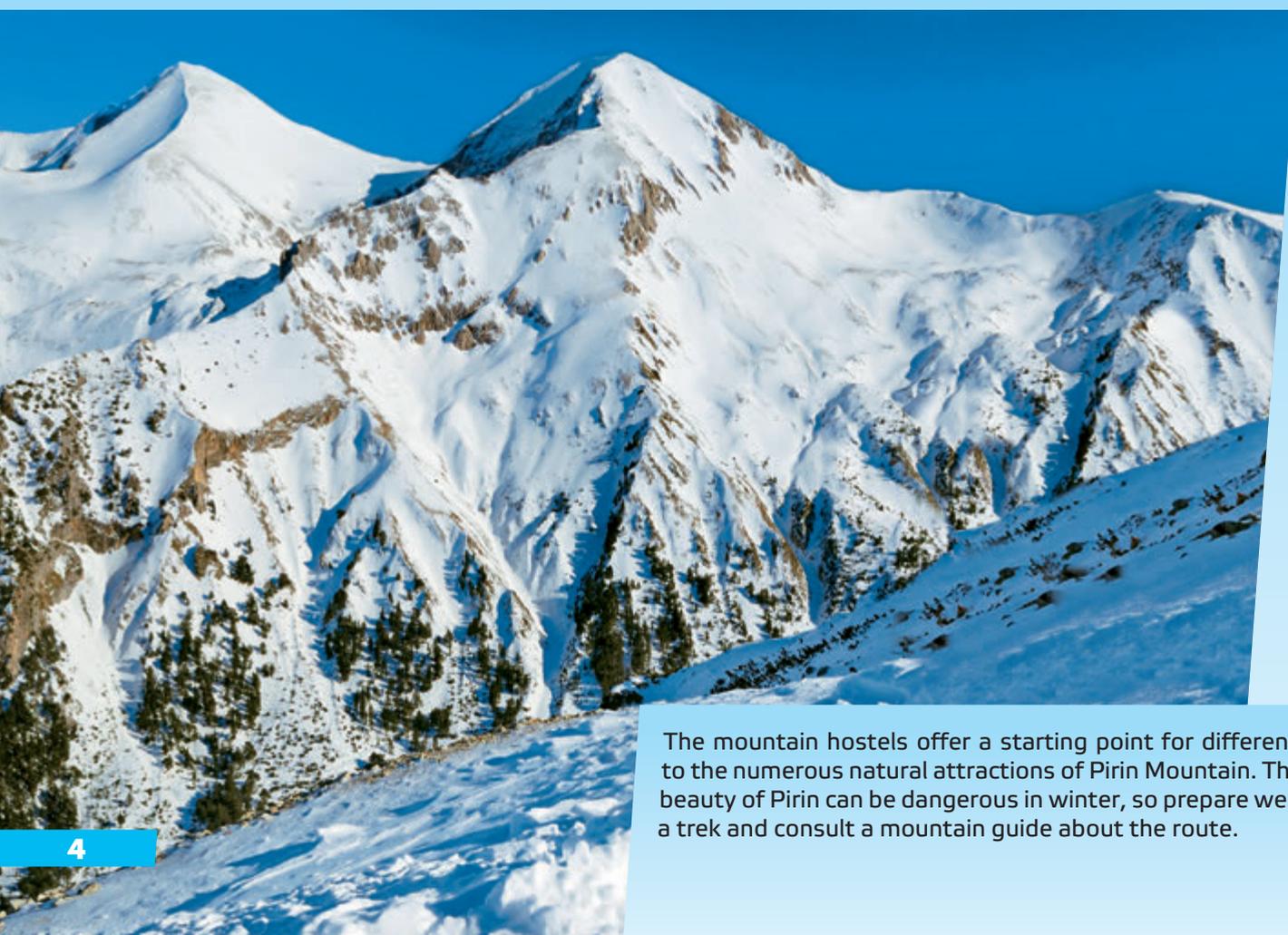


The proximity of the ski zones of Vitosha to Sofia affords to skiers and snowboarders unlimited opportunities for recreation and entertainment. In Sofia you will discover a large number of hotels, numerous restaurants offering highly diverse cuisines, discos, piano bars and nightclubs. The capital also offers ample cultural opportunities - theatres, cinemas, concerts and exhibitions, as well as many other cultural events. Sofia is famous for its churches and museums. Some of the important places to visit include St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Boyana Church, the Russian Church, the National Museum of History, the National Art Gallery, the Earth and Man National Museum, the Archaeological and Anthropological Museums, the National Museum of Natural History.

PIRIN

The Pirin National Park is within the boundaries of Pirin Mountain. There are two reserves located in its territory – Bayuvi Dupki – Dzhindzhirtsya and Yulen. The first one was established in 1934 and was included in the list of biosphere reserves under the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme. Yulen Reserve provides protection for rare, endangered and endemic animals and plants. A large number of tourist routes allow visitors to explore the sights of the Park.

Experienced mountaineers may enjoy the beauty of Pirin with a two-day trek to Polezhan Peak (2,851 m). Accommodation can be found at some of the mountain hostels. Skishoes are mandatory, as well as the presence of an experienced guide.



The mountain hostels offer a starting point for different routes to the numerous natural attractions of Pirin Mountain. The scenic beauty of Pirin can be dangerous in winter, so prepare well before a trek and consult a mountain guide about the route.

Altitude of the trails: **from 990 to 2,600 m**

Total length: **75 km**

Maximum vertical drop: **1,570 m**

Longest trail: **16 km**

Lifts: **10-14**

Ski tows: **8-10**

BANSKO

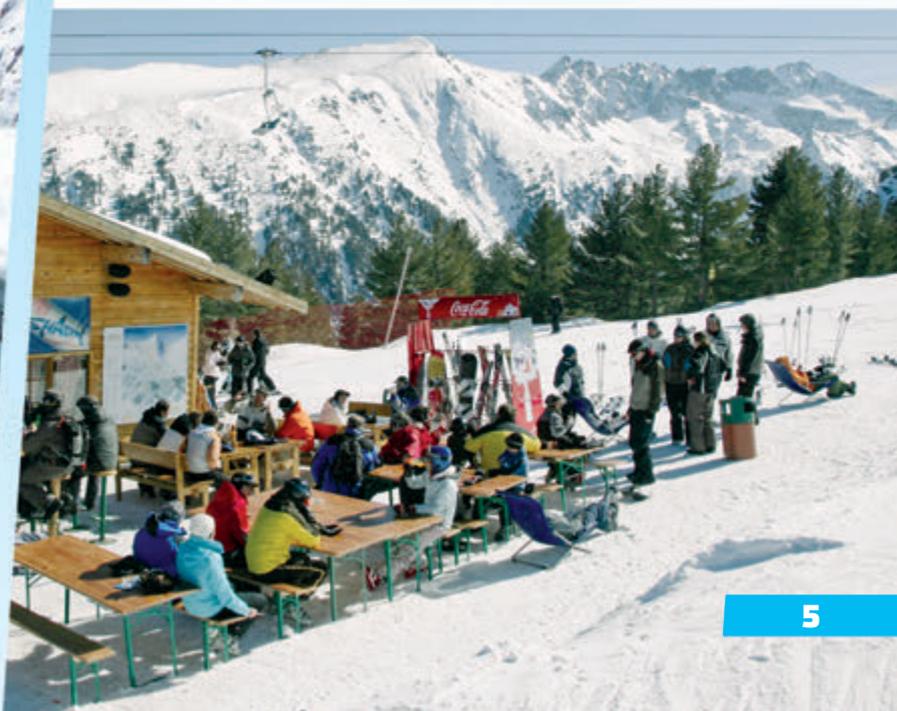


The mountain ski resort of Bansko is one of the most popular in Bulgaria. It is located in the Southwestern Bulgaria 150-160 km away from Sofia and 57 km away from Blagoevgrad. Besides offering modern conditions for sporting activities, Bansko is a beautiful town which has preserved its authentic charm and historic heritage. In Bansko the snow lasts from December to April and most trails are equipped with snowmaking facilities. The ski zone of the resort provides very good conditions both for beginners and for advanced skiers and snowboarders. The best challenge of the Bansko Ski Centre is the Tomba Trail – the most attractive and difficult trail of the resort. It was tested by its namesake – the legend Alberto Tomba, and by other winter sport stars, among whom Franz Klammer, Rosi Mittermaier and Marc Girardelli.

The ski centre offers a fabulous 16-km ski trail starting from the highest part of the resort, Todorka Peak, and reaching the town of Bansko, with the last 7-km being equipped with lighting and providing conditions for night skiing.

The ski centre also offers a fabulous 7-km ski trail equipped with snowmaking machines and lighting, which connects the high parts of the resort with the town of Bansko.

The fact that races of the Alpine Ski World Cup circuit and other international sport events are held here is a proof of the high quality of Bansko as a ski resort. In 2016 Bansko was awarded The Best Winter Ski Resort in Bulgaria at the World Ski Awards, a recognition that places the resort in a group together with the most significant winter destinations.



Furthermore, Bansko ski runs offer fabulous conditions for snowboarding. The first snowboard fun park in Eastern Europe, suitable for freestyle boarding, was opened here. Bansko often hosts national and international snowboarding competitions.

The resort offers great conditions and facilities for paraskiing - a tandem flight with an experienced paraglider. There is also an option for skiers to be towed by a kite instead of a paraglider. Such extreme adventures are organized upon an advanced request.



Bansko ski schools offer a variety of services and courses for both children and adults. Group and individual training is available. There are lessons in skiing, snowboarding and cross country skiing. Equipment rentals are available for guests.

Bansko offers also a big modern open-air skating rink available for guests even after sunset. By helicopter you can reach some of the most beautiful and inaccessible peaks of Pirin. Other activities include snowmobiling, trekking with snowshoes or simply relaxing in one of the many spa centers of the resort.

When the sun sets and you feel the pleasant fatigue from a day of outdoor activities, you may retire for some deserved relaxation. The atmosphere of Bansko is fascinating - while the challenges of winter's sports rule the ski runs, merriment and good cheer reigns in the many local taverns. The central part of Bansko has preserved its authentic architecture from the time of the Bulgarian Revival. You will be enchanted by the beautiful old houses, churches and museums.

You will also enjoy the taverns offering local delicacies from the region of Pirin such as 'kapama', 'shashlik', 'chomlek', appetizers such as 'katino meze' and 'banski starets'.

Most hotels here offer beauty and rehabilitation programs which make Bansko an excellent spa destination.



Altitude of the trails: **from 1412 to 2240 m**

Total length: **5 km**

Maximum vertical drop: **826 m**

Lifts: **1**

Ski tows: **2**

DOBRINISHTE



Ski Complex Dobrinishte is located 6 km away from Bankso and 156 km away from Sofia. It includes the hotel of the same name and two hostels. There is one ski trail with a length of 5 km and vertical drop of 826 m. It has a double-chair lift and ski tows. Dobrinishte is at an altitude of 850 m. Accommodation is offered by the hostels and the town of Dobrinishte.



Rila National Park is the largest in Bulgaria. It is situated about 100 km to the south of Sofia. The nature reserves Parangalitsa, Central Rila Reserve, Ibar and Skakavitsa are located within its territory.

The Park preserves centuries-old forests of spruce, Macedonian pine and Scots pine. Within the boundaries of Rila National Park there are over 100 peaks, rock walls, caves, canyons, waterfalls and lakes. Seventy of the lakes originated from glaciers.

Rila Mountain is beautiful both in summer and in winter. Its scenic beauty is accessible for tourists due to a network of routes and marked paths. A favourite destination in Rila is Mount Musala - the highest peak on the Balkan Peninsula (2,925 m). The winter trek to the top is a serious challenge and requires good preparation and the presence of an experienced guide. The trek takes several days and in addition to Musala you may also reach some of the lower peaks of Rila. The hostels are an excellent place to stop for a rest.

RILA



The trek to the beautiful Seven Rila Lakes is relatively easy. If you are in good shape and wish to see more of the mountain scenery you could continue on to Skakavitsa Falls is possible.

The mountain hostels of Rila offer starting points for various mountain treks.

Altitude of the trails: **from 1350 to 2560 m**

Total length: **58 km**

Maximum vertical drop: **1230 m**

Longest trail: **12 km**

Facilities: **15**

BOROVETS



peak on the Balkan Peninsula – Musala in Rila Mountain. Built at the end of 19th century for the royal family, the resort is located only 70 km away from Sofia. The ski season in Borovets is from December to April.

The resort has three connected ski zones – Sitnyakovo /Central Borovets/, Yastrebets and Markudzhik and 24 ski trails that offer a different degree of difficulty, with most of them being snowed artificially, and 8 ski trails being equipped with night lighting. In the high ski centre Markudzhik during the high season the snow cover reaches 2 m and affords excellent conditions for extreme skiing and freeride. Freestyle lovers can enjoy two fun parks: Borosport Snow Park in the Yastrebets Ski Center and Promo Snow Park Borosport in Central Borovets.

Borovets has also a children's snow park, Borokids, with activities for kids and specialized ski training.

Traditionally, Borovets is on the map of the big Alpine skiing competitions. Throughout the years the resort has hosted two World Cups and eleven European Cups, the most recent of which in 2016.



Built in an Alpine style and equipped with modern sport and spa centers, the hotels in Borovets are placed at the very foot of the ski trails. At night the resort pulsates in numerous lights and offers various ways of entertainment: from cozy restaurants with Bulgarian and world cuisine to night clubs and discotheques.

The area around the resort is rich in historical and natural places of interest. The Belchin Mineral Baths and Cari Mali Grad, a spiritual center in the Thracian times and a restored ancient Roman fortress, are situated nearby. The beautiful mountain villages of Beli Iskar and Govedartsy are only 16 km away.

MAJOR SITES



WINTER TOURISM



- 1 Vitosha, Cherni Vruh
- 2 Bansko
- 3 Dobrinishte
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- 6 Malyovitsa
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- Airport
- Border crossing
- Port

There are several ski and snowboard schools and sports clubs in the resort and most hotels offer ski rentals. Both individual and group ski and snowboard training is available. There are more than 150 instructors, all are recognized professionals. Children can be enrolled in ski classes or in a ski kindergarden.

Besides skiing and snowboarding, Borovets offers snowmobile rides and treks with ski shoes across the beautiful mountain.



Total length: **4 km**

Longest trail: **1.2 km**

Lift: **1**

Ski tows: **5**

MALYOVITSA



The resort of Malyovitsa is located approximately 80 km away from Sofia, also in Rila Mountain, at the foot of Malyovitsa Peak (2,729 m). The guests of the resort can make use of three trails equipped with ski tows. Facilities for children are also available. The ski runs start at an altitude of 1,600 m.

Total length: **900 m**
Longest trail: **470 m**
Ski tows: **3**



PANICHIShte

The resort of Panichishte is also situated in Rila. It is 84 km from Sofia and about 40 km from Samokov, at an altitude of 1,350 m. Panichishte has two ski tracks – an alpine track and a children's track. Three more tracks are located in the vicinity of mountain hostels. All ski tracks are serviced by ski tows.

Total length: **3,2 km**
Longest trail: **1200 m**
Ski tows: **8**



SEMKOVO

The resort complex of Semkovo is located in the southwest part of Rila. It is 90 km from Blagoevgrad, 190 km from Sofia and about 160 km away from Plovdiv. The altitude of the ski zone is between 1,600 and 1,750 m. The guests of the complex can enjoy seven ski runs with a total length of 4 km. The runs are serviced by eight ski tows.

The Rhodopes are one of the most picturesque mountains in Bulgaria. They are rich in natural, cultural and historical places of interest and have a climate suitable for practicing various sports throughout the four seasons.

The big ski resorts, Pamporova and Chepelare, which offer the most favorable conditions for all winter sports, have the greatest economic and tourist significance for the region. In the rest of the year some of the biggest landmarks of international significance can be visited – the Marvelous Bridges natural phenomenon, the Yagonin Cave, the Devil's Throat Cave, the Uhlovitsa Cave, the Momchil's Fortress. The typical Rhodope villages of traditional architecture offer visitors hospitality, coziness and an incredible variety of culinary temptations (the villages of Shiroka Laka, Momchilovtsi, Smilyan, etc.).

THE RHODOPES



Altitude of the trails: **from 1440 to 1926 m**

Total length: **37 km**

Maximum vertical drop: **476 m**

Longest trail: **3.9 km**

Lifts: **9 - 13**

PAMPOROVO



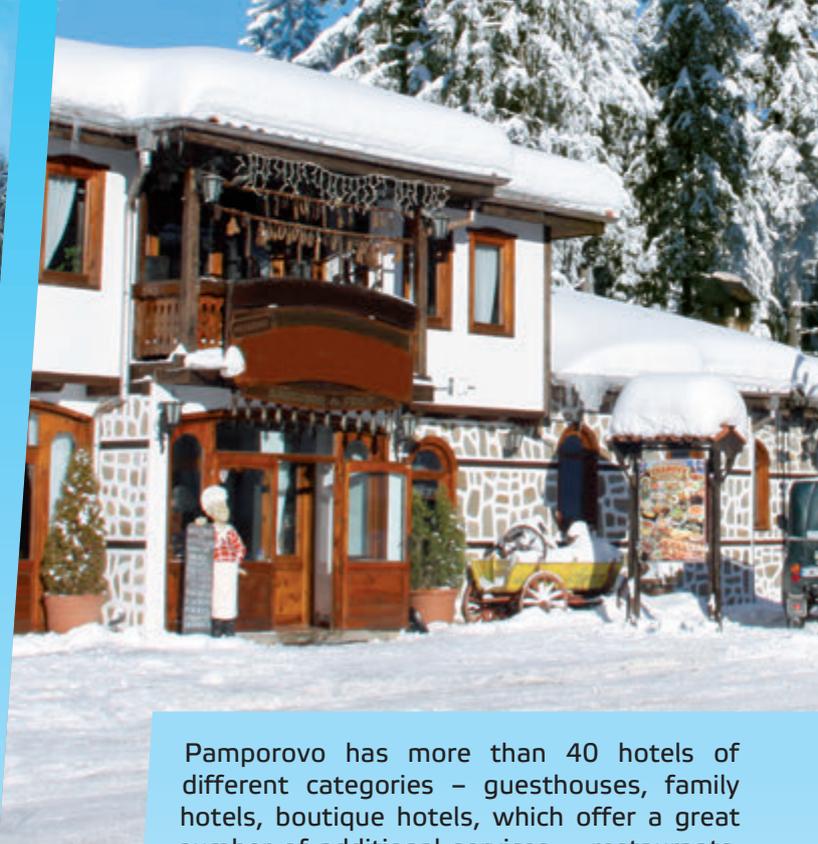
Pamporovo is the largest resort in the Rhodope Mountain.

The ski trails of the resort offer different degree of difficulty and are well suited for all ages and skills – from green for beginners to black for experienced skiers.

The main ski centers – Studenets, Malina, Stoykite, Smolyanski Ezera and Ski Center 1 – are the points of greatest tourist interest where the lift facilities, the biggest ski schools, ski rental services and places to eat are concentrated. They are a starting point for Snezhanka where most of the ski trails begin in the Pamporovo ski area.

The resort has more than 15 ski schools with highly skilled ski instructors offering individual and group professional training for beginners and advanced skiers. A special separate zone for 4-12 year-olds at the Malina Ski Center is available for kids to make their first steps in the ski sport helped by skilled teachers and instructors.

The Fun Park built recently is becoming more and more popular among extreme skiers and snowboarders and the halfpipe facility and the pro-line are annual hosts of a number of prestigious competitions. For five consecutive years the resort is the host of the biggest freestyle snowboard and ski event in Bulgaria – Pamporovo Freestyle Open.



Pamporovo has more than 40 hotels of different categories – guesthouses, family hotels, boutique hotels, which offer a great number of additional services - restaurants, taverns, spa centers, conference rooms, places for recreation and entertainment, kids centers, bowling, billiard, souvenir and sport equipment shops, Apres ski bars, discotheques, etc. In the Studenets Ski Center you can enjoy a real Arctic attraction suitable both for children and adults – a husky-pulled sled, symbolic for Pamporovo. Thus, the resort guests who don't ski may spend their time fully resting.



Altitude of the trails: **from 1,150 to 1,873 m**

Total length: **20 km**

Maximum vertical drop: **710 m**

Longest trail: **6 km**

Lifts: **1**

Ski tows: **2**

CHEPELARE



One of the newest ski zones in the country is close to the Rhodope town of Chepelare, located 220 km from Sofia and about 70 km from Plovdiv.

Chepelare is a town with long traditions and history of skiing. The first ski school in the town opened its doors in 1954. The athletes who trained here achieved great recognition for Bulgaria in winter sports.

All tracks are expanded to meet all international requirements.

In the ski area, new routes are planned, with complete processing and marking according to European standards, and a final zone is formed to accommodate international competitions and a large flow of tourists.



Chepelare offers good conditions for fans of snowboarding as well. There is a small snowboarding park in the resort, and in the region of Mechi Chal there are several tracks suitable for freestyle boarding.



Sports Centre Mechi Chal offers ski and snowboard training for beginners, intermediate and advanced students. The instructors will guide you through all stages of the training. Both individual tuition and group training is available. There is a ski kindergarten in the resort.



THE BALKANS

The Balkan Range (or “Old Mountain” in Bulgarian) are long and multifaceted. National Park Central Balkans is a part of it and preserves natural sites of majestic beauty in the central part of the mountain. The Park protects ancient beech forests, pastures, many peaks and nine reserves – Boatin, Tsarichina, Steneto, Dzhendema, Kozya Stena, Severen Dzhendem, Stara Reka, Peeshti Skali and Sokolna.

Beside conservation, the Park’s objective is to show nature to the tourist in all its glory. A network of many eco paths leads the guests of the mountain through places of beauty. Information boards provide additional data about the plant and animal species preserved in the area.



If one wishes to explore the Central Balkans in greater depth they can stay for a few days - over 25 mountain hostels and shelters offer accommodation or a place for a short rest. Various mountain treks start from all mountain huts in the Balkans.



Mount Botev in the Balkans is one of the most difficult to conquer in the country and the trek is recommended only for experienced mountaineers. You will need a few days and winter equipment in order to reach the far-away 2,376 meters of the highest peak of the Balkan Range.

Total length: **1.5 km**

Ski tows: **2**

KOM-BERKOVITSA



Ski Centre Mount Kom-Berkovitsa is located at the foot of Mount Kom (2,016 m), 15 km away from the town of Berkovitsa and 100 km away from Sofia. The region is exceptionally beautiful and the snow cover is stable during the whole winter season.

The resort has an alpine trail 1.5-km long. It starts from Maluk Kom Peak, located at an altitude of 1,959 m. The trail is serviced by a modern T-bar lift and a children's tow.

There are good conditions for winter sports other than skiing and snowboarding in the region as well. It is possible to go paragliding or explore some of the many foot paths starting from the nearby mountain hostel. The huts has been renovated and offers good accommodation.

Altitude of the trails: **from 1300 to 1400 m**

Maximum vertical drop: **256 m**

Total length: **8 km**

Longest trail: **1.3 km**

Ski tows: **8**

UZANA



The resort of Uzana is located in the Balkan Mountains, at the geographical centre of Bulgaria, and offers excellent conditions for a ski holiday. Its altitude is from 1,220 to 1,350 m. In the ski zone there are several trails, among which Uzana Tour (1,100-m long), Edelweiss and Impulse. Most of the trails are suitable for beginners.

Equipment for skiing and snowboarding can be rented at the resort. Snowmobiles can also be rented. A ride around the area or down the short trails is an unforgettable experience. The ski season starts from mid-December and ends in mid-April.

Altitude: **1600 m**

Ski tow: **1**

FUN PARK OSOGOVO



Fun Park Osogovo is located in Osogovo Mountain, 20 km from the town of Kyustendil and 95 km from the capital, Sofia. The park has various snowboarding facilities and a ski run with night lighting.

Altitude of the trails: **1,700 m**

Total length: **800 m**

Ski tows: **2**

FUN PARK KARTOLA

Fun Park Kartola is a winter sports centre located at an altitude of 1,700 m, 10 km away from the Rhodope village of Momchilovtsi and 240 km from Sofia. The centre offers good conditions for rough terrain snowboarding. The track is 800-m long and is serviced by two tows, with several snowboarding facilities adding to the fun.



Kartola is a suitable place for young boarders just beginning in the sport, and also for the more advanced boarders who wish to improve their skills.

Tourist Information

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GENERAL INFO ABOUT BULGARIA

Geographic location: Republic of Bulgaria is a European country, located in the Eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. Its Eastern boundary is the Black Sea; Greece and Turkey are situated southbound, its Western neighbours are The Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, and to the North it shares border with The Republic of Romania.

Climate: Bulgaria has a mixed Mild-Continental and Mediterranean influenced climate.

Average winter temperatures: 0 °C to -2 °C

Average summer temperatures: 20-22 °C

Territory: 110,099 sq. km.

Population: 7 364 670 (2011)

Official language: Bulgarian

Capital: Sofia

Currency: Bulgarian Lev (1 € = 1.955 BGN)

Single European emergency call number: 112

Average height above sea level: 470 m

Highest point: Musala peak (2925 m.)

Time zone: GMT+2 (EST+7)

Main denomination: East-orthodox Christianity

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OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE YEAR

