



**VIA PONTICA TOURS**  
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## TOUR INFO

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### **BULGARIA**

#### ***MOUNTAIN BIRDWATCHING TOUR (9 DAYS)***

**DATES: 12-20 June 2024**

**Suitable period: End of May – End of June**



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On this tour we can visit many mountain areas for birdwatching. We will visit two National Parks – Rila and Pirin (in the World Heritage list) and many other protected natural sites. During this tour you can observe a large number of birds: *Black Stork, Black, Griffon and Egyptian Vultures, Eastern Imperial Eagle, Long – legged Buzzard, Levant Sparrowhawk, Black, Syrian and Grey-headed Woodpeckers, Pallid and Alpine Swifts, Rock and Blue Rock Thrushes, Somber Tit Alpine chough, Nutcracker, Rock Bunting, Alpine Accentor, Ring Ouzel, Crag Martin, Rock Nuthatch, Masked Shrike, Wallcreeper, Subalpine, Orphean, Bonelli's and Olivaceous Warblers.*

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### Day by day itinerary

#### Day 1

Arrival at the Sofia Airport and transfer to the mountain of Rila and we will explore the slopes near the Belmeken Dam. Late in the afternoon we will arrive to our hotel close to the town of Bansko. We will spend two overnights there.

#### Day 2

We will spend a day in the Pirin Mountain near Vihren Peak (2914m). We will make a short walk from Vihren Hut to Bunderitsa Hut and there we can observe many interesting birds: *Alpine chough*, *Nutcracker*, *Rock Bunting*, *Alpine Accentor*, *Ring Ouzel*, etc. Afterwards we will return to our hotel for a second overnight.

#### Day 3

After breakfast we will travel to the South part of Bulgaria. We will spend the time exploring the Kresna Gorge and the Struma River Valley. This gorge is a part of the famous bird migratory corridor called Via Aristotelis. In Tissata natural reserve, a landscape with predominantly Mediterranean Flora we can observe many birds, and especially *Rock* and *Blue Rock Thrushes*, *Somber Tit*, *Red-rumped Swallow*, *Syrian Woodpecker*, *Barred*, *Subalpine* and *Orphean Warblers*, *Lesser Grey*, *Red-backed* and *Woodchat Shrikes* and many others species. We will also visit the biggest monastery in Bulgaria included in the Unesco list of World Heritage - **The Monastery of Rila**. Late in the afternoon we will arrive in the town of Melnik - a picturesque historic village famous for its locally produced wines. We will spend at this town two nights

#### Day 4

On this day we will explore the region around the town of Melnik and the Rozhen Monastery. We expect to see many birds: *Somber Tit*, *Roller*, *Bee Eater*, *Hoopoe*, *Rock Sparrow*, many warblers. Late in the afternoon we will return to our hotel. We will visit a typical wine cave and we will taste some regional wines. We can also visit the beautiful monastery of Rozhen.

#### Day 5

On this day we will cross the Mountain of Pirin. In the afternoon we will arrive in the Valley of the river Mesta where we will have a short walk. Late in the afternoon after many stops for birdwatching we will arrive in our hotel situated near the Trigrad Gorge. We will spend one night there.

#### Day 6

After breakfast we will visit the famous Trigrad Gorge. This spectacular gorge is one of the best places to watch the *Wallcreeper* in Europe. We can observe also *Peregrine Falcon*, *Golden Eagle*, *Pallid* and *Alpine Swifts*, *Grey-headed Woodpecker*, *Dipper* *Crag Martin* etc. Late in the afternoon we make a transfer to our hotel in the Eastern part of the Rodope Mountain. We will stay two nights there.

#### Day 7

Early in the morning we will go to the region with the unique breeding colony of *Griffon vulture* in Bulgaria. We visit also the feeding place when we can observe *Egyptian* and *Black Vultures*, *Golden* and *Imperial Eagles*, *Long – legged Buzzard*, *Levant Sparrowhawk*, *Black Stork*, *Rock Nuthatch*,

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*Subalpine, Orphean and Sardinian Warblers, Somber Tit* and many other birds. In the afternoon we will visit the Krumovitza River Valley. In this very interesting valley we can observe *Egyptian and Griffon vultures, Black Stork, Stone Curlew, black-headed bunting, Bee-eater, Roller, Golden Oriole, Rock Nuthatch, Red-rumped swallow, Somber Tit, Masked and Lesser Grey Shrikes*, etc. Late in the afternoon we will return to our hotel.

### Day 8

On this day after breakfast we will make a transfer to the nearest Mountain of Sakar. Here we can observe many birds and especially *Lesser Spotted Eagle, Short-toed Eagle, Montagu's Harrier, Booted Eagle, Black Kite, Olive-tree Warbler, Masked and Woodchat Shrikes, Isabelline Wheatear, Black – headed Bunting, Spanish Sparrow* etc. Late in the afternoon we will make a long transfer to Sofia. Overnight and dinner.

### Day 9

Depending of your departure flight we will stop for birdwatching in the Mountain of Vitosha near Sofia and expect to observe: *Common Crossbill, Coal Tit, Goldcrest and Firecrest, Alpine Accentor, Nutcracker, Black Woodpecker, Pallid Swift*. If time permits we can also visit the Dragoman Marshes near the town.

<b>Group size:</b>	4-12 persons	1.035 EUR
<b>Individual:</b>	2-3 persons	1.215 EUR
<b>Deposit:</b>		200 EUR
<b>Single room supplement:</b>		120 EUR

**Price includes:** Transport with comfortable bus and coach, accommodation in good hotels with private facilities, full board, professional guide, all entrance taxes.

**The price does not include:** Airfares, travel insurance, alcohol drinks and cigarettes, room service, telephone calls.