

Bulgarian Snowshoe Adventure

Trip Code: BSA

Version: BSA Bulgarian Snowshoe Adventure



WINTER



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Stay in colourful Sofia and experience Bulgaria's larger than life capital city
- Enjoy a snowy journey through the beautiful region of the Seven Lakes
- Snowshoe on the slopes of Mount Maliovitsa and in the Vitosha Natural Park
- An off-the-beaten-track winter and cultural holiday in the heart of the Balkans

AT A GLANCE

- 6 days snowshoeing
- Max altitude - 2250 metres
- Join at Sofia

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- All meals included
- 6 nights Guesthouse
- 1 nights Hotel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

With its jaw-dropping alpine scenery, dramatic mountains, tasty cuisine, undiscovered trails and larger than life welcome, Bulgaria is a unique destination for a snow-shoeing adventure in the heart of the Balkans. This fantastic holiday takes you through a Narnia landscape as we follow hidden trails through secret forests and up to stunning mountain views. We start in the eclectic capital of Sofia before heading to Bulgaria's first national park of Vitosha. Here the fun starts as we learn how to snow shoe or brush up techniques. During the holiday we explore this incredible area and experience a secret side to Bulgaria that sees very few tourists.

Next we head to the area of Mount Maliovitsa and follow trails which take us up onto the slopes of this beautiful peak. We'll enjoy a beautiful walk to the Lake of Fear with breath-taking views towards Mount Musala - the highest peak in Bulgaria. A grand finale is snow-shoeing to the Rila Lakes refuge in the heart of the Rila Mountains where we'll explore the magical seven lakes and visit the highest waterfall in the Rila Mountains. If you're looking for a very special snowshoeing destination which is excellent value for money and away from the Alpine crowds, then KE's Bulgarian Snowshoe Adventure is the perfect choice.

Is this holiday for you?

This holiday is perfectly designed to appeal to regular and active walkers who would like to learn some snowshoe techniques as well as those with previous snow-shoeing experience. During the holiday we'll cover a variety of ground from relatively easy snow covered trails at the beginning to steeper slopes in the mountains. The holiday is suitable for snow shoe novices and also active walkers with previous snowshoeing experience. As with a grade 5 holiday a higher level of fitness is required but previous snow shoeing experience is not necessary. (Please note: During the week the exact itinerary will be flexible and the guide will use their expertise and local knowledge to determine the best routes to take advantage of snow conditions and the abilities of the group.) If snow conditions do not permit snow-shoeing on any of the routes, the group will follow an alternative winter hiking itinerary.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at the group hotel in Sofia. A single timed transfer from Sofia Airport is included.

Meet at the group hotel in Sofia. A single timed transfer from Sofia Airport is included. Depending on your arrival time you may have time to explore the centre of Sofia and take in some of the sights that this interesting capital has to offer. Sofia is steeped in history and with its laid back approach is a great place to explore. A highlight is The Crypt Icon Museum in the Aleksander Nevski Cathedral which holds the largest collection of Orthodox icons in Europe, a total of 200 icons dating from the 13th to 19th Century. This impressive basilica, the largest Eastern Orthodox cathedral in the world, can hold up to 10,000 people and its showcase is a beautiful gold plated dome. The city centre is great for wandering through and you'll pass onion-domed churches, Ottoman mosques and a rich mixture of architecture plus welcoming restaurants and cafes. Late afternoon we'll take a stroll through the streets of Sofia before enjoying dinner in a local restaurant.

Meals: **D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Brush up your technique or learn how to snowshoe in Vitosha National Park.

After breakfast we'll take a short transfer to Vitosha National Park, Bulgaria's first national park and the oldest park on the Balkan Peninsula. Declared a national park in 1934 and visible from Sofia, the park is home to Mount Vitosha (2290m) and a rich variety of flora and fauna including Balkan wild goat and brown bear. Today we enter a stunning mountain environment which we'll explore as we get used to snowshoeing and take in the beauty of the area. As with each day, the exact route will depend on the snow conditions and our leader will decide on each day's route daily depending on weather and snow conditions. After a lovely first day of snowshoeing we transfer to the area of Maliovitza, staying in a small mountain village, which at 1700m is surrounded by lovely scenery.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Guesthouse



Ascent
550M



Descent
550M



Time
5 - 6 hrs Snowshoeing



Distance
11KM

DAY 3

Snowshoe over the slopes of Mount Maliovitsa in the Rila National Park.

Today we'll be walking on the slopes of Mount Maliovitsa, a Bulgarian mountain which is so well respected, that its North Face is the symbol of the Bulgarian Alpine Association. We start with a short 20 minute transfer from our guesthouse to the small alpine resort of Maliovitsa. It was in this area during the times of Communist Bulgaria that the country's only mountain leader school was situated. We'll be exploring an area called the Chamonix of Bulgaria as we walk gently along the valley to the Maliovitsa hut (1960m). Next we head up to a terrace at 2250m, which makes a perfect lunch stop as we get to admire views over the surrounding summits of Kamilata (2621m) and Orlovets (2685m). In the afternoon we'll either retrace our steps back down or depending on energy levels we may zig-zag our way up to the Elenino Lake (2470m) before descending back down to Maliovitsa, where we will transfer back to our guesthouse.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Guesthouse



Ascent
500M



Descent
500M



Time
4 - 5 hrs snowshoeing



Distance
8KM

DAY 4

A circular adventure to the Lontchevo Lake for views of Mount Kупenite.

We start the day with the same 20 minute transfer to the main resort where we'll enjoy a second day of snowshoeing to the Lontchevo Lake. It's a circular walk as we take in some stunning scenery which includes dramatic views of the rocky peak of Kупenite. The lake is named after a painter from the nearby town of Samokov, who used to visit the area for his art. From the lake we aim, depending on the snow conditions, to make a small loop on a ridge with some views over the surrounding valleys. Towards the end of the day, we'll return to Maliovitsa and transfer back to our guesthouse for our final night in this area.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Guesthouse



Ascent
450M



Descent
450M



Time
4 - 5 hrs snowshoeing




Distance
7KM

DAY 5**Transfer to Panichishte and experience the Skakvitsa Reserve with views of Mount Kabul**

This morning we start with a transfer (approx. 90mins) to the area of Panichishte which is where we stay for the next 3 nights. This small alpine resort (1400m) lies on the border of the Rila National Park, an area of outstanding natural beauty. Today we'll enjoy a day of snowshoeing on a circular route in the Skakavitsa Reserve. This beautiful area includes the valley of the Djerman River valley, a rich region containing rare plants, ancient forests and waterfalls plus excellent fauna including deer, bear and wild boar. We start by ascending through pine forest until we reach trails above the tree line where we'll be rewarded with views over Mount Kabul and the area of the Seven Lakes. As an area that sees very few winter visitors we should get to see the tracks of wild animals including deer and mountain hares. After a lovely snowy adventure we take a short transfer of 15 minutes to our hotel.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Guesthouse		Ascent 625M		Descent 625M		Time 5 - 6 hrs snowshoeing
	Distance 7KM						

DAY 6**An adventure on snowshoes to the Rila lakes.**

This morning we start with a short transfer before heading out into forest. We'll be snowshoeing through a true Bulgarian winter wonderland whilst surrounded by fantastic views. Today's plan is to make our way to the Rila lakes hut and enjoy the breath taking scenery. This little Bulgarian gem has fascinated mountaineers for years and is a summer meeting place for religious followers of Danovism. Every August around 2000 people gather at the lakes to celebrate the danovists New Year. A combination of Eastern Orthodox and paganism, danovism was formed at the beginning of the 20th Century by the Bulgarian Peter Danov and includes yoga, meditation and nature worship. With its beautiful scenery and pristine location you can see why this little Bulgarian gem is a great place to explore on snowshoes. In the afternoon we'll descend back to Panichishte.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Guesthouse		Ascent 600M		Descent 600M		Time 4 - 5 hrs Snowshoeing
	Distance 10KM						

DAY 7**Snowshoe up to highest waterfall in the Rila mountains.**

Another day exploring the local area of the Seven Lakes and hopefully we'll pay a visit to Skakavitsa Waterfall, the highest waterfall in the Rila Mountains. This magical area is part of the Skakavitsa Reserve which is one of the smallest reserves in Bulgaria. The reserve was established in 1968 and set up to protect its century old endemic pines. Balkan Pines are native to Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria and as a member of the white pine group, is known by its pine needles which grow in bunches of five. Hopefully the snow conditions are on our side and we'll reach the 70m high Skakavitsa waterfall (2000m), which even when frozen is an impressive sight. Today is a lovely day of snow shoeing and a great way to finish the week. In the afternoon we'll return to Panichishte for our final night in Bulgaria.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Guesthouse



Ascent
740M



Descent
740M



Time
6 - 7 hrs snowshoeing



Distance
14KM

DAY 8**Departure day.**

Your holiday ends after breakfast. A single timed transfer to Sofia Airport (about 120 km) is provided. Sofia is a great place to spend an extra night or two, so if you would like to extend your time in the city then please contact the KE office and we can assist you on booking extra nights in the group hotel and a private transfer.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival and departure
- All land transport required including luggage transfer
- All meals
- All accommodation as described
- Snowshoes and poles

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Airport transfers other than group transfers
- Tips
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

TRAVEL TO YOUR DESTINATION

If flying from the UK there are low cost airlines available to the start and from the end of your holiday.

To benefit from full financial protection, ease your holiday planning, and avoid dealing with airlines, we can book scheduled flights from the UK as part of a flight inclusive package. Scheduled flights are usually more expensive than low cost alternatives, however potentially less stressful if your flight is cancelled or delayed. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will offset the carbon of your flight.

The group will meet at the hotel in Sofia.

A single timed transfer from/to Sofia Airport to the first nights hotel is provided.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If this is not practical, we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also available.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price.

Food & Water

In Bulgaria no-one goes hungry and with a rich variety of Balkan dishes available, there is plenty of choice for all tastes. Breakfasts are generally continental in style with cereal, yoghurt, jams, honey, bread, cheese, ham and occasional eggs, cucumber, tomato, tea and coffee. Lunches are generally picnic in style that we'll make up during breakfast and carry with us - ham, cheese or tuna sandwiches with fruit and a cereal bar. Dinner is a social event and in the evening we'll enjoy a three course meal which generally starts with a mixed salad followed by pork, chicken, beef with potatoes and vegetables cooked Bulgarian style. Desserts may be ice cream, baklava or local cakes. Vegetarian and special diets can be catered for but please be aware that choices are usually limited as Bulgarians love their meat and fish dishes.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

We will spend 1 night in a centrally located hotel in Sofia, 3 nights in a traditional guesthouse in a village near Maliovitsa and 3 nights in a guesthouse in Panichisthte.

Whilst in Maliovitsa, you will find that the Bulgarian infrastructure is simpler than in some other ski resorts. However, the surrounding scenery and mountain location more than makes up for the modest facilities.

Accommodation is twin share. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights at the group hotel in Sofia are available on request.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

Altitude

The altitudes on this holiday are not extreme and the maximum altitude attained is no more than the equivalent of a pressurised cabin on an international flight. You may 'feel' the altitude the first time you trek above 2000 metres but all that is required is a slower pace to compensate. You should pay particular attention to your hydration levels while trekking above 2000 metres.

Spending Money

Approximately £75 - £100 (or equivalent in euros or dollars) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses. We recommend that you carry your travel money in the form of currency or travel with an ATM card as you'll exchange the majority of this on the day of your arrival in Bulgaria. If you are intending to buy expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly. There is an ATM machine at Sofia Airport and in the centre of Sofia.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your leader and local team. Tipping is entirely voluntary and should be dependent on good service. We advise you to tip as a group.

Baggage Allowance

Baggage will be transported between overnight stops by the support vehicle. There is no weight restriction other than that imposed by your international carrier but we do ask you to limit your luggage to one piece plus your day pack.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Currency

The unit of currency in Bulgaria is the Lev.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 4 to 6 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- The Rough Guide to Bulgaria.
- Lonely Planet. Bulgaria.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

You must bring the following items:

- Hiking boots (must be waterproof)
- Gaiters
- Trainers (for the evenings)
- Socks
- Walking socks (2 or 3 pairs)
- Spare laces
- Trekking trousers
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Underwear
- Thermal baselayer - leggings
- Thermal baselayer shirts
- T-shirts and/or casual shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm jacket (eg. down)
- Daypack of approximately 30 litres capacity
- Water bottles 1 Litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Warm and waterproof gloves or mittens
- Basic First Aid Kit - Our professional tour leaders will carry a basic medical kit. You should bring your own personal first aid kit consisting of the following: throat lozenges, painkillers (anti-inflammatory), antiseptic cream/spray, plasters, blister treatment/tape, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets are a good idea.
- Emergency Whistle (Many daypacks will have a whistle built-in)
- Survival blanket / bag
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Fleece hat
- Sunglasses with side protection
- Ski goggles
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sunhat

The following items are optional:

- Earplugs (particularly if you are not the one snoring!)
- Dry bags(s) (to ensure your contents of your luggage/day pack stay dry)
- Camera
- Travel clothes
- Spare clothes
- Small padlock (to lock your bag)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes:

Specialist Equipment: Snowshoes, ski poles, and standard safety equipment will be

provided by KE, and available to collect at the group hotel.

If you wish to take your own walking poles, make sure that they have snow baskets fitted.

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. [-> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

We sell this holiday on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The holiday starts at the hotel in Sofia and a single timed transfer is provided from Sofia Airport.

Transport SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

If flying from the UK there are a number of low cost airlines offering flights to Sofia. A flight search website such as Skyscanner or Kayak may be useful to research your options.

If you would prefer to book a 'flight inclusive package', using scheduled airlines from the UK, please contact our flights department for a quote. Whilst flight prices are likely to be more expensive, you will benefit from full financial protection.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

With a maximum group size of 8 plus all meals and snowshoe equipment included, all that is left is for you to enjoy Bulgaria's secret winter side. Join KE on a snowshoeing journey through a Narnia landscape deep in the heart of the Balkans. Book your adventure now to avoid disappointment.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 19/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change