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# Information and Travel Guide for Sofia, Bulgaria

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## Country Profile

<b>Full name</b>	Republic of Bulgaria																																																																																																																																																																								
<b>National Flag/Emblem</b>	 																																																																																																																																																																								
<b>Geography</b>	<p>110 994 km<sup>2</sup></p> 																																																																																																																																																																								
<b>Population</b>	7 153 784 (31.12.2015)																																																																																																																																																																								
<b>Capital</b>	Sofia																																																																																																																																																																								
<b>Religions</b>	Eastern Orthodox Christianity (59.4%), none/unspecified (31.1%), Sunni Islam (7.4%), Protestant Christianity (0.9%), Roman Catholic Christianity (0.7%), Shia Islam (0.4%)																																																																																																																																																																								
<b>Language</b>	Bulgarian																																																																																																																																																																								
<b>Economy</b>	GDP (nominal): \$ 47.167 Billion (2015)																																																																																																																																																																								
<b>Political System</b>	Unitary parliamentary republic President: Rosen Plevneliev Prime Minister: Boyko Borisov																																																																																																																																																																								
<b>Climate</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="13">Climate data for Sofia (NIMH-BAS) 1981–2010 normals, extremes 1941–present</th> <th>[hide]</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Jan</th> <th>Feb</th> <th>Mar</th> <th>Apr</th> <th>May</th> <th>Jun</th> <th>Jul</th> <th>Aug</th> <th>Sep</th> <th>Oct</th> <th>Nov</th> <th>Dec</th> <th>Year</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Record high °C (°F)</td> <td>19 (66)</td> <td>23 (73)</td> <td>27.5 (81.5)</td> <td>31 (88)</td> <td>34 (93)</td> <td>38 (100)</td> <td>41 (106)</td> <td>39.4 (102.9)</td> <td>36.1 (97)</td> <td>33.9 (93)</td> <td>25.5 (77.9)</td> <td>23 (73)</td> <td>41 (106)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average high °C (°F)</td> <td>3.4 (38.1)</td> <td>5.6 (42.1)</td> <td>10.6 (51.1)</td> <td>16.2 (61.2)</td> <td>21.1 (70)</td> <td>24.7 (76.5)</td> <td>27.3 (81.1)</td> <td>27.5 (81.5)</td> <td>22.9 (73.2)</td> <td>17.1 (62.8)</td> <td>9.7 (49.5)</td> <td>4.3 (39.7)</td> <td>15.9 (60.6)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Daily mean °C (°F)</td> <td>-0.5 (31.1)</td> <td>1.1 (34)</td> <td>5.4 (41.7)</td> <td>10.6 (51.1)</td> <td>15.4 (59.7)</td> <td>18.9 (66)</td> <td>21.2 (70.2)</td> <td>21 (70)</td> <td>16.5 (61.7)</td> <td>11.3 (52.3)</td> <td>5.1 (41.2)</td> <td>0.7 (33.3)</td> <td>10.6 (51.1)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average low °C (°F)</td> <td>-3.9 (25)</td> <td>-2.9 (26.8)</td> <td>0.8 (33.4)</td> <td>5.4 (41.7)</td> <td>9.8 (49.6)</td> <td>13.2 (55.8)</td> <td>15.1 (59.2)</td> <td>14.9 (58.8)</td> <td>11 (52)</td> <td>6.6 (43.9)</td> <td>1.4 (34.5)</td> <td>-2.4 (27.7)</td> <td>5.8 (42.4)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Record low °C (°F)</td> <td>-28.3 (-18.9)</td> <td>-25 (-13)</td> <td>-16.1 (3)</td> <td>-6 (21)</td> <td>-2.2 (28)</td> <td>1.4 (34.5)</td> <td>2 (36)</td> <td>3.5 (38.3)</td> <td>-2 (28)</td> <td>-6 (21)</td> <td>-15.3 (4.5)</td> <td>-21.1 (-6)</td> <td>-28.3 (-18.9)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average precipitation mm (inches)</td> <td>33.2 (1.307)</td> <td>31.5 (1.24)</td> <td>38.1 (1.5)</td> <td>50.7 (1.996)</td> <td>67 (2.64)</td> <td>75.4 (2.969)</td> <td>52.6 (2.071)</td> <td>57.6 (2.268)</td> <td>45.7 (1.799)</td> <td>45 (1.77)</td> <td>43.3 (1.705)</td> <td>41.7 (1.642)</td> <td>581.8 (22.907)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average snowfall cm (inches)</td> <td>23.4 (9.21)</td> <td>19.2 (7.56)</td> <td>15.2 (5.98)</td> <td>2.8 (1.1)</td> <td>0 (0)</td> <td>0 (0)</td> <td>0 (0)</td> <td>0 (0)</td> <td>0 (0)</td> <td>1.9 (0.75)</td> <td>10.8 (4.25)</td> <td>24.8 (9.76)</td> <td>98.1 (38.61)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average precipitation days</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>12</td> <td>10</td> <td>9</td> <td>7</td> <td>11</td> <td>10</td> <td>12</td> <td>125</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average snowy days</td> <td>7.2</td> <td>6.3</td> <td>5.8</td> <td>1.4</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.8</td> <td>3</td> <td>7.2</td> <td>31.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mean monthly sunshine hours</td> <td>87.8</td> <td>114.3</td> <td>159.6</td> <td>182.2</td> <td>229.6</td> <td>257.7</td> <td>302.1</td> <td>288.3</td> <td>220.1</td> <td>163.6</td> <td>105.5</td> <td>66.1</td> <td>2,176.9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Climate data for Sofia (NIMH-BAS) 1981–2010 normals, extremes 1941–present													[hide]	Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year	Record high °C (°F)	19 (66)	23 (73)	27.5 (81.5)	31 (88)	34 (93)	38 (100)	41 (106)	39.4 (102.9)	36.1 (97)	33.9 (93)	25.5 (77.9)	23 (73)	41 (106)	Average high °C (°F)	3.4 (38.1)	5.6 (42.1)	10.6 (51.1)	16.2 (61.2)	21.1 (70)	24.7 (76.5)	27.3 (81.1)	27.5 (81.5)	22.9 (73.2)	17.1 (62.8)	9.7 (49.5)	4.3 (39.7)	15.9 (60.6)	Daily mean °C (°F)	-0.5 (31.1)	1.1 (34)	5.4 (41.7)	10.6 (51.1)	15.4 (59.7)	18.9 (66)	21.2 (70.2)	21 (70)	16.5 (61.7)	11.3 (52.3)	5.1 (41.2)	0.7 (33.3)	10.6 (51.1)	Average low °C (°F)	-3.9 (25)	-2.9 (26.8)	0.8 (33.4)	5.4 (41.7)	9.8 (49.6)	13.2 (55.8)	15.1 (59.2)	14.9 (58.8)	11 (52)	6.6 (43.9)	1.4 (34.5)	-2.4 (27.7)	5.8 (42.4)	Record low °C (°F)	-28.3 (-18.9)	-25 (-13)	-16.1 (3)	-6 (21)	-2.2 (28)	1.4 (34.5)	2 (36)	3.5 (38.3)	-2 (28)	-6 (21)	-15.3 (4.5)	-21.1 (-6)	-28.3 (-18.9)	Average precipitation mm (inches)	33.2 (1.307)	31.5 (1.24)	38.1 (1.5)	50.7 (1.996)	67 (2.64)	75.4 (2.969)	52.6 (2.071)	57.6 (2.268)	45.7 (1.799)	45 (1.77)	43.3 (1.705)	41.7 (1.642)	581.8 (22.907)	Average snowfall cm (inches)	23.4 (9.21)	19.2 (7.56)	15.2 (5.98)	2.8 (1.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.9 (0.75)	10.8 (4.25)	24.8 (9.76)	98.1 (38.61)	Average precipitation days	9	10	10	12	13	12	10	9	7	11	10	12	125	Average snowy days	7.2	6.3	5.8	1.4	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	3	7.2	31.7	Mean monthly sunshine hours	87.8	114.3	159.6	182.2	229.6	257.7	302.1	288.3	220.1	163.6	105.5	66.1	2,176.9
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## *Sofia Travel Information*

<b>Airport</b>	Sofia International Airport (SA) 10 km east of Sofia, Airport Transfer via Subway, Bus or taxi to the city center						
<b>Time zone</b>	EET (UTC+2) EEST (UTC+3) - summer						
<b>Currency</b>	Bulgarian lev (BGN)  <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">1 € = 1.95583 BGN</td> <td style="width: 50%;">1 BGN = 0.5113 €</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 USD = 1.78143 BGN</td> <td>1 BGN = 0.561347 USD</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Update: October 2016</b></p>	1 € = 1.95583 BGN	1 BGN = 0.5113 €	1 USD = 1.78143 BGN	1 BGN = 0.561347 USD		
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<b>Money Exchange</b>	Euro preferred; exchange at airport, at banks, at large hotels and at independent currency exchange offices, where the rates are clearly displayed. Travelers should not be tempted by a 'better rate' offered at unofficial sources on the street.						
<b>Credit Card</b>	Credit Cards (American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, Visa) and Debit Cards are accepted in larger hotels and in some restaurants and shops, mainly in Sofia. However, Bulgaria is still a country that operates <b><u>mainly on Bulgarian cash</u></b> . ATMs are widespread, although it is best to check with the relevant bank/card provider prior to travel. Not all Bulgarian bank machines accept every overseas credit or debit card.						
<b>Telephone</b>	Bulgaria: +359; Sofia: (+359) 2 <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 100px;">Fire</td> <td>112</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Police</td> <td>112</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ambulance</td> <td>112</td> </tr> </table>	Fire	112	Police	112	Ambulance	112
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<b>Sightseeing</b>	St. Alexander Nevski Cathedral – the largest on the Balkan Peninsula St. Georgi Rotunda - included in UNESCO's World Heritage list The Russian Church, officially known as the Church of St Nicholas the Miracle-Maker Ethnographic Museum The Ivan Vazov National Theatre						
<b>Shopping</b>	Pirotska Street (from supermarkets to cafes, restaurants and small shops selling souvenir) Vitosha Boulevard (expensive cafes, restaurants, fashion boutiques and luxury goods stores) Graf Ignatiev Street (shops, restaurants, fast food) Mall of Sofia (shopping mall, restaurants, fast food, cinema)						
<b>Average Prices</b>	Food and Drink (inexpensive Restaurant): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coffee – 1–3 leva (0.5–1.5 euro)</li> <li>• Salad – 4 - 7 leva (2 - 3.5 euro)</li> <li>• Vegetable meal – 5 - 7 leva (2.5 - 3.5 euro)</li> <li>• Bottle of water – 1 lev (0.50 euro cents)</li> <li>• Dessert – 3 - 5 leva (1.5 – 2.5 euro)</li> <li>• Local Transportation (one-way ticket for Bus, Tramp, Trolleybus and Subway): 1.6 leva (0.82 euro cents)</li> </ul> Taxi: 0.70 leva (0.35 euro cents) (Start) + 0.80 - 1 lv/km (0.4 - 0.5 euro/km)						

## *Hotel Recommendation – Close to the city center*

Hotel	Address	Price	Specifics
<b>Sofia Hotel Balkan</b>	5 Sveta Nedelya Square 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria  Tel: (+359 2) 937 8787  E-mail: <a href="mailto:reservation@sofiabalkan.net">reservation@sofiabalkan.net</a>  Web: <a href="http://www.sofiabalkan.com/">http://www.sofiabalkan.com/</a>	Standard single room  <b>90 euro</b>  *Included buffet breakfast and VAT  **Excluded Tourist tax – 0.67 euro per person per night	Located in city center  The hotel is directly beside to the “Serdika” subway station  Situated just a stroll from the business and commercial district
<b>Arte Hotel</b>	5 Dondukov Blvd. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria  Tel: (+359 2) 402 71 00  E-mail: <a href="mailto:reception@artehotelbg.com">reception@artehotelbg.com</a>  Web: <a href="http://www.artehotelbg.com/en/index/">http://www.artehotelbg.com/en/index/</a>	Standard single room  <b>65, 45 euro</b>  *Included buffet breakfast, city tax, insurance and 9% VAT	Located in city center  Just a 5-minute walk to “Serdika” subway station
<b>Best Western Plus City Hotel</b>	6 Stara planina Str. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria  Tel: (+359 2) 915 15 00  Email: <a href="mailto:reservations@sofiacityhotel.com">reservations@sofiacityhotel.com</a>  Web: <a href="http://www.sofiacityhotel.com">www.sofiacityhotel.com</a>	Standard single room  <b>59.56 euro,</b> *Included buffet breakfast, VAT, insurance and tourist tax	13-minute walk to “Serdika” and “Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” subway stations

## *Bulgarian Cuisine*

<b>Bulgarian Cuisine</b>	Bulgarian cuisine is exceptionally diverse and delicious, consisting of various salads, breadstuffs, stews, salami, and other local dishes. The key ingredients in Bulgarian cuisine are onion, garlic, herbs, and spices. Some of the most popular Bulgarian dishes are grilled – meat balls, kebabche, grilled meat pieces, grilled sausages, and others. The products with which Bulgaria is internationally known are yogurt and white brine (feta) cheese.	
<b>Breakfast</b>	Banitsa	It is a made of dough with various fillings, such as eggs with white cheese, spinach, rice, and meat.
	Printsesa	A toasted piece of bread topped with a thin layer of seasoned, ground pork or with melted yellow cheese
	Mekitsa	Deep-fried, breakfast pastry/ dough pieces. Typically, mekitsa is topped with powdered sugar or served with white cheese
	Kifla	It is crescent-shaped, breakfast pastry filled with jam or chocolate
<b>Soups</b>	Bob chorba	A traditional bean soup seasoned with herbs
	Shkembe Chorba	A tripe soup made with milk and seasoned with garlic, vinegar and chili peppers
	Tarator	Cold Soup served like appetizer during summer. It is made from yogurt, cucumbers, dill, sunflower oil, water and sometimes with walnuts
<b>Appetizers/ Starters</b>	Salami	Such a lukanka (flat sausage), sujuk and sushenitsa
<b>Salads</b>	Shopska salata	It consist cucumbers, tomatoes, white Bulgarian cheese, onion, red wine vinegar, and sunflower oil. It is topped with a sprig of parsley and one black olive
	Ovcharska Salata	Shepherd's salad – ham, mushrooms, boiled eggs, and all ingredients of the Shopska salata
	Ruska salata	Russian salad – boiled potatoes, carrots, eggs, peas and mayonnaise

<b>Main Dish</b>	Gyuveche	A casserole dish baked in a covered earthenware pot. It is combination of pork, tomatoes, peppers, onion, mushrooms, peas and potatoes
	Kebabche	Ground meat (either a combination of beef and pork or only pork) seasoned with black pepper, cumin and salt, and formed into an elongated cylindrical form and grilled
	Kyufte	It is similar to kebabche but includes onion and parsley, the mixture is formed into a patty
	Shishche	Marinated pork or chicken grilled on a skewer with onions, peppers
	Moussaka	Bulgarian moussaka consist alternating layers of potatoes, meat, onion, tomatoes, garlic, herbs. It is topped with a crust made from eggs, flour and yogurt
	Sarma	It is similar to Greek <i>Dolmas</i> , rice-stuffed grape or cabbage leaves. It consist ground meat (usually pork), rice, onion, and herbs
	Mish-Mash	An egg casserole made with tomatoes, onion, peppers, sunflower oil, parsley and white cheese
<b>Drinks and Sweets</b>	Ayran	A drink consist yogurt, water and salt
	Boza	Is a popular fermented beverage. It is a malt drink made from wheat or millet
	Rakia	It is a collective term for fruit brandy. The alcohol content is normally 40%. Common flavors are produced from plumps, apricots and grapes
	Kozunak	Easter bread – braided sweet bread made from milk, eggs, sugar, butter, raisins, lemon zest and dusted with sugar
	Baklava	A rich pastry consisting chopped nuts and flooded with sugar syrup

## *Restaurants in Sofia*

<b>Restaurants in the city center/close to city center</b>	Happy Bar and Grill (it is in front of the Sofia Hotel Balkan)	4, Sveta Nedelq, Sq. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria + 359 888 181 070 BBQ, sushi, seafood, a little bit expensive
	Pizza Einstein	5, Pirotska Str. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria + 359 896 813 131 Mix cuisine – BBQ, pizza, Bulgarian, lunch menu – good food and reasonable price
	Beerhouse “Halbite”	13, Tri Ushi Str. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria + 359 878 737 782 Good food and different kind of beer, reasonable price
	Raffy Bar & Gelato	18B, Vitosha Blvd. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria +359 895 515 041 Mix cuisine – BBQ, pizza, pasta, sushi – good food but expensive and always is crowded
	Restaurant Shtastliveca	27, Vitosha Blvd. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria +359 2 441 11 55 Bulgarian cuisine – expensive restaurant

## *Cafés*

<b>Tea/Coffee cafe and dining</b>	Lime	40, Graf Ignatiev Str. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria +359 2 421 97 03
	Costa Coffee	4, Knyaz Aleksandyr 1 Square 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria
	Laguna	13, Hristo Belchev Str. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria +359 2 980 30 01 Fine atmosphere, delicious food, varied menu and reasonable price
	Nedelya Café and Pasteria	98, Vitosha Str. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria +359 885 600 826



## *European Commission Representation in Republic of Bulgaria*

	<p>Address   124, G.S Rakovski Str. 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria</p> <p>Tel.   +359 2 933 52 52</p> <p>Fax   +359 2 933 52 33</p> <p>E-Mail   <a href="mailto:COMM-REP-SOF@ec.europa.eu">COMM-REP-SOF@ec.europa.eu</a></p> <p>Homepage   <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/home_bg">https://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/home_bg</a></p>
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### *Contact Information*

If you have other inquiries or questions regarding the practical information, please do not hesitate to contact us by [ESS-bdw-Sofia2017@nsi.bg](mailto:ESS-bdw-Sofia2017@nsi.bg):

<b>Big Data Focal Point in the BNSI</b>	<p>Mr. Galya Stateva</p> <p>Tel: +359 2 9857 773</p> <p>Tel: +359 888 884 022</p> <p>Tel: +359 882 600 030</p> <p>E-mail: <a href="mailto:GStateva@nsi.bg">GStateva@nsi.bg</a></p>
<b>Head of Planning, Projects and Coordination Department</b>	<p>Ms. Veneta Petrova</p> <p>Tel: +359 2 9857 505</p> <p>E-mail: <a href="mailto:venetapetrova@nsi.bg">venetapetrova@nsi.bg</a></p>
<b>Junior expert at Planning, Projects and Coordination Department</b>	<p>Mss. Doroteya Dicheva</p> <p>Tel: +359 2 9857 212</p> <p>E-mail: <a href="mailto:DDicheva@nsi.bg">DDicheva@nsi.bg</a></p>
<b>Head of International Cooperation and Protocol Department</b>	<p>Ms. Yordanka Anastassova</p> <p>Tel: + 359 2 9857 779</p> <p>E-mail: <a href="mailto:YAnastassova@nsi.bg">YAnastassova@nsi.bg</a></p>

### *More information*

More information about Bulgaria and its capital - city Sofia you may find in these websites:

- [http://bulgariatravel.org/en/official\\_tourism\\_portal](http://bulgariatravel.org/en/official_tourism_portal)
- <http://www.visitbulgaria.net/en/sofia/sofia.html>
- <http://www.worldtravelguide.net/bulgaria/money-duty-free>
- <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/bulgaria/sofia>