



Travel to  
Bulgaria  
broadens  
one!

***Jim Gold International Folk Tours***

# Bulgaria !

**Folk Culture, Folk Dancing, History, Art, Music, Adventure**



**August 3-16, 2015**

**Sofia, Plovdiv, Bansko,  
Veliko Turnovo,  
Koprivshtitsa Folk Festival !**

**Led by Jim Gold**

- ★ Visit historic Bulgarian cities and folkloric villages !
- ★ Meet Bulgarian folk dance groups!
- ★ Our traveling staff includes guide: *Stefan Gendjov*, gaida player: *Ventsi Andonov*, and a Bulgarian folk dance teacher!
- ★ Land and Air price includes round-trip airfare, city tours, transfers, hotels, two meals daily, and our own private bus.



**Join our Bulgarian adventure!**

Travel with us to the famous **Folk Festival** held in the historic Balkan mountain village of **Koprivshtitsa**. Performing groups, traveling in full costume with musicians and dancers from all over Bulgaria come to participate. Learn their songs and dances. Meet and mingle. Explore historic sites from ancient Thracian, Greek, Roman, and Byzantium, as well as medieval Bulgaria, visit Sofia, artistic Plovdiv, the 10th-century **Rila Monastery** with its historic icons and murals, **Veliko Turnovo**, medieval capital and birthplace of the Second Bulgarian Empire in 1187, **Bansko** and **Pirin Mountain** region.



## **Our Itinerary**

**Day 1: Monday, August 3:** Depart on Turkish airlines from JFK airport in New York City.

**Day 2-3: Tuesday-Wednesday, August 4: SOFIA.**

Arrival in Sofia. Transfer to our 5-star Radisson Hotel. Welcome dinner and wine at our

hotel. Meet and greet. Overnights at Radisson Hotel.

**Day 3: Wednesday, August 5: SOFIA.**

**Sightseeing tour of Sofia: Alexander Nevski Cathedral, National Parliament, Saint Sofia Basilica, 4th century Saint George Rotunda, ruins of Roman Serdica, and the National Museum of History.** Optional visit to the Sephardic Synagogue, largest in Eastern Europe. Afternoon free. Dinner and live folklore show at Hotel or Tavern.

**Days 4-6: Thursday to Sunday, August 6-9: KOPRIVSHTITSA FOLK FESTIVAL!**

Held once every five years, the Koprivshitsa Folk Festival brings together over 12,000 performers from all over Bulgaria, making it one of the biggest festivals in Europe! **Three days of unforgettable folk dancing, singing, ethnic costumes, performing groups, and photo opportunities!** Plus visit preserved houses from the Bulgarian revival period. Dinners and overnights in our country hotel in Koprivshitsa.



**Day 7: Sunday, August 9: KOPRIVSHTITSA—VELIKO TURNOVO**

Collect your last glimpses of the Festival finale. Afternoon departure to **Veliko (Great) Turnovo, Bulgaria's medieval capital**, established in the distant 1185. Dinner and overnight at Gurko Boutique Hotel.

**Day 8: Monday, August 10: VELIKO TURNOVO and Arbanassi Village**

Morning sightseeing tour of Veliko Turnovo. Visit the dramatic Tsarevets Royal Hill with palaces and churches perched on cliffs of Yantra River gorge. Afternoon drive to the charming **village of Arbanassi**, summer residence of medieval royalty where we'll take a walking tour. Dinner and wine served at a local restaurant with **live folk music show and folk dancing!** Optional Sound & Light Show at the Tsarevets Royal Hill. 2nd overnight at our boutique Gurko Hotel.



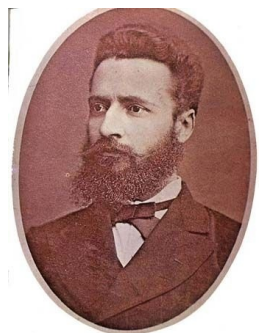
**Day 9: Tuesday, August 11: VELIKO TURNOVO—Etara—Shipka Pass—PLOVDIV**

Morning drive south through the Balkan range and the world-famous **Valley of Roses and Valley of the Thracian Kings** (in UNESCO World Heritage list since 1952).



We'll stroll around **Etara – open air Crafts Museum** displaying two centuries of country houses and crafts. We'll pay a visit to the exquisite gold-domed Shipka Memorial Church and to one of the richest and best preserved Thracian Tombs in the area. Afternoon arrival in Plovdiv. After hotel check-in, enjoy a sightseeing tour of **Plovdiv's Old Quarter**, often compared to Montmartre Hill in Paris

for its art galleries and antique shops. View masterpieces of 18-19th century Bulgarian city architecture, a 15th century Mosque, a 2nd century Roman Theater, and the country's richest Ethnographic Museum. Dinner at Alafrangi Restaurant where Pope John Paul 2nd lunched during his visit in 2001. Overnights in the 4-star Trimontium Ramada Hotel in Plovdiv.



**Day 10: Wednesday, August 12: PLOVDIV—Bachkovo Monastery**

This morning sleep late or walk along the city's main pedestrian street, offering excellent shopping opportunities. Noon departure to **11th-century Bachkovo Monastery** with its exquisite murals and icons. Meet the monks. Then we'll stop at the 13th-century Assenova Fortress and enjoy panoramic views of the Thracian Plain and city of Plovdiv. Overnight in the 4-star Trimontium Ramada Hotel in Plovdiv.

### Day 11: Thursday, August 13: PLOVDIV – across the Rhodopes – BANSKO

A day in the deep countryside. After breakfast, we'll carry on southwest across the Rhodopes, birthplace of mythological Orpheus; first on board of our coach and then on the highest-on-the Balkans narrow-gauge railway! During the 1 ½ hour mountain ride, enjoy a dancing workshop. See if the locals travelling along will share with you this unique *on-wheels* dance experience. Upon arrival in Bansko we'll check-in at the luxurious Hotel Kempinski Grand Arena, and if still full of energy and eager to explore we'll journey on to one of the many quaint villages and small towns around Bankso. Dinner at hotel or local tavern. Overnight in 5-star Kempinski Grand Arena in Bansko.



### Day 12: Friday, August 14: BANSKO and Dobarsko Village

Walking tour through **Bansko**, a stronghold of Bulgarian culture and tradition. Then we head for the mysterious **village of Dobarsko**, where the local choir **Dobarski Babi** will give us a private performance followed by a traditional Bulgarian “Banitsa” and yogurt snack. In late afternoon come along for a **picnic dinner at Chalin's Farm**, including horse cart ride, wine, and live folk music. Second overnight in Bansko.



### Day 13: Saturday, August 15: BANSKO – Rila Monastery – SOFIA

Following breakfast our journey will take us north into Rila Mountain (highest on the Balkans) to the world famous **UNESCO listed site, 10<sup>th</sup> century Rila Monastery**, one of the most impressive on the continent with its abundance of frescoes and unique architecture. En route – an hour stop in **Blagoevgrad** (home to the US University in Bulgaria), including a walking tour of its charismatic Old Quarter. At Rila Monastery if you wish you may have freshly caught mountain trout lunch. Then continue north to Sofia once again. Afternoon and evening free for extra Sofia sightseeing and shopping. Farewell dinner with wine at 5-star Radisson Hotel. Overnight at 5-star Radisson Hotel.

### Day 14: Sunday, August 16: Aug 16, DAY 14: SOFIA, Departure

Transfer to Sofia Airport for return flight to JFK airport in the USA.

**Land Only: \$3295      Land and Air: \$4195**

### About Jim Gold



Jim brings a love of music, people and languages to his tours and dance classes, making them a joy for all ages. For over 25 years, he has led **Jim Gold International Folk Tours** to Bulgaria, Greece, Norway, Turkey, Hungary, Israel, Jordan, Croatia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Egypt, Tunisia, Russia, the Baltics and Spain to experience their history and culture, from a folk dance perspective. He is also the author of ten books. His latest is: 50 Folk Dances Choreographed by Jim Gold. Jim is a classical guitarist and folk singer as well. He has performed on TV, at universities and schools, and on national radio.



**REGISTRATION FORM:** Enclosed is my registration deposit of \$200 per person. Single supplement: \$495. Additional charges: \$85 hotel taxes and service, air tax: \$495. Gratuities and drinks during meals not included. Program subject to change without notice. Cancellations 45 days prior to departure: Refund 50% of total price. Less than 30 days: No refund. **Total balance due May 1, 2015.**



Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
No. of \_\_\_\_\_  
people \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

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