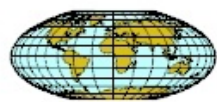


**Jim Gold International Folk Dance Tours**



Travel  
broadens  
one!

# **Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia**

## **A Balkan Adventure!**

Sofia, Belogradchik, Vidin, Nish,  
Skopje, Ochrid, Korca, Lake Prespa,  
Bitola, Sandanski, Plovdiv,  
Local Koprivshtitsa folk festival



**Folk dancing, folk music, culture, history, art, and adventure!**

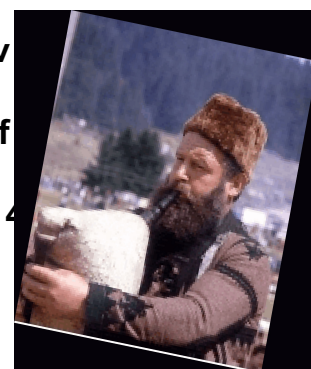
**July 29-August 12, 2018**

**Led by Jim Gold and Lee Otterholt**



- ★ Meet local folklore groups in Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Greece.
- ★ Dance workshops with choreographer Nicolai Enceva and gaida player Ventzi Andonov.
- ★ For dancers, non-dancers, and anyone with a love of travel and culture
- ★ 5 UNESCO World Heritage sites, 16 historical cities, 4 National parks, 2 tectonic lakes, breath-taking scenery, prehistoric cave with Neolithic drawings.
- ★ International folk dancing with Lee Otterholt
- ★ Visit Eastern Orthodox churches and monasteries that helped save Balkan national identity through 500 years under Turkish rule.
- ★ Attend local folklore festival in Koprivshtitsa
- ★ 14 overnights with breakfast at 5-star hotels (4), 4-star hotels (8), Koprivshtitsa guest houses (2).

- ★ Land and Air price includes round-trip airfare, city tours, transfers, transfers, hotels, two meals daily, and our own private bus.



## ITINERARY

### Day 1: July 29, Sunday: Sofia

Transfer to our hotel. Orientation and meet-and-greet dinner. Overnight in 5 star Grand Hotel Sofia.

### Day 2: July 30, Monday: Sofia & National Museum of History

Morning guided walking tour of ancient and contemporary Sofia. Visit churches from Roman and Byzantine time, erected on top of older Thracian sanctuaries. Continue down Sofia's unique yellow-brick road, lined with attractive architecture, to St. George Roman Rotunda - the oldest fully preserved building from the 4th century, Alexander Nevski Cathedral – one of the largest Eastern Orthodox cathedrals in the world; National Theater and the ex-Royal Palace. Then St. Nedelya Church, Banya Bashi Mosque, and Sofia Synagogue. These three stand close together and are spoken of as “the triangle of tolerance” among faiths. Afternoon visit to National Museum of History. Evening folk dancing with Lee. Overnight in 5 star Grand Hotel Sofia.

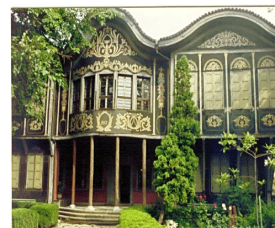


### Day 3: July 31, Tuesday: Sofia – Vratsa – Montana – Belogradchik

Drive north - to the unknown Northwest of the country via Vratsa and Montana to visit Belogradchik - world-famous for its miraculous rocks decorated with a medieval fortress. We'll meet a local youth folk group eager to show us dances of northwest area. Evening dance workshop with Nicky and Ventzi. Overnight in 4 star Skalite Hotel (The Rocks)

### Day 4: August 1, Wednesday: Belogradchik – Vidin – Magura Cave – Belogradchik

Visit Vidin, ancient Celtic Dunonia and Roman Bononia. City tour including visit to Baba Vida Fortress built in 1704-1735, on the foundations of Roman bastion. After a short walk along the Danube River, we'll have lunch at a local river-view restaurant. Afternoon return to Belogradchik via **Magurata Cave** - to see prehistoric wall paintings. Evening dance workshop with Nicky and Ventzi. Overnight in 4 star Skalite Hotel (The Rocks)



### Day 5: August 2: Thursday: Belogradchik – Zajechar (SERBIA) – Nish – Skopje (MACEDONIA)

Drive into Serbia at Vrushka Chuka check point. Visit Zajechar city and UNESCO listed Felix Romuliana memorial complex built in the 3rd c. AD by Emperor Galerius. Continue south to Macedonia. Stop in **Nish**, Serbia's third largest city, famous as the **birthplace of Constantine the Great**, founder of Constantinople. Short tour of the city center includes visit to Medieval Fortress. Continue south to arrive in Skopje. Evening dance workshop with Nicky and Ventzi. Overnight in 5 star Marriott Hotel.



### Day 6: August 3, Friday: Skopje

Morning walking tour of old and new Skopje. Since gaining independence some 20 years ago and aiming at strengthening its identity, Macedonia has many new and dramatic monuments in the center of the capital. See statues of **Alexander the Great**, his father and **Philip of Macedon**. We'll visit the House of **Mother Teresa, born in Skopje in 1910**. Then cross the historic Stone Bridge and enter Oriental Skopje. Stroll through the Old Bazaar, try freshly made traditional food, offered all around you; savor a



cup of Turkish coffee or hunt out bargains at the markets. Evening dance workshop with Nicky and Ventzi Overnight in 5 star Marriott Hotel.

**Day 7: August 4, Saturday: Skopje – Struga – Ohrid**

Morning drive south to Ohrid via Struga for a folk workshop in a nearby village. We will see central Struga and its crystal clear Drim River flowing from Ohrid Lake. Late afternoon check-in at your Ohrid hotel on the bank of eponymous lake. Evening dance workshop with Nicky and Ventzi. Overnight in 4 star Royal View Hotel.



**Day 8: August 5, Sunday: Ohrid & St. Naum Monastery**

Morning walking tour of Ohrid, the City of Lights: Cradle of Slavic written Language and literature. Explore the Bazaar, and the Lower Gate, a remnant of citadel surrounding the entire city, St. Sofia Church, and site of the first Slavic University, all amidst stunning views of the lake. Afternoon boat trip and panoramic drive around the Lake Ohrid, one of the oldest, deepest and clearest lakes in the world with very unique flora and fauna. Traveling south you will visit the Bay of Bones Museum – a fine reconstruction of a Neolithic settlement from 1200 BC. A bit further south, in a breathtaking natural setting, is the famous St. Naum Monastery with its flock of peacocks. Evening dance workshop with Nicky and Ventzi. Overnight in 4star Royal View Hotel.



**Day 9: August 6, Monday: Ohrid – Pogradets (ALBANIA) – Korcha – Lemos Village (GREECE)**

Morning drive to Albania. We'll follow the eastern coastal line of **Ohrid Lake** though scenic National Park Galichitsa. After crossing the border, we'll arrive in Pogradets, the Albanian pearl on the southern lake coast, a tentative UNESCO site. Sightseeing tour of the old town and Drilon Park. If permitted, we will visit the villa of the former Albanian dictator **Enver Hoxha in Tushemisht village**. Then, travel to the historical town of Korcha, a unique mixture of religions and ethnic groups since Roman times. Then, in less than an hour, you're on the eastern side of **Prespa Lake** at our choreographer Yannis Konstantinou—Mimallones hotel. Overnight in Mimallones Family owned Hotel.

**Day 10: August 7, Tuesday: Lemos Village and local villages and Prespa Lake**

Full day dancing and nature sightseeing with Yannis. Visits to characteristic **villages Agios Germanos and Agios Achillios**, situated on an island in the smaller Prespa Lake. Near the latter village, in Agios Achillios basilica in 1965 a Greek archaeologist discovers the grave of the Bulgarian king Samuel (997-1014). Free time to hike around or sunbathe on the big terrace of the hotel. **Yannis will teach and show us popular folk dances from the Florina/Greek Macedonia region**. Also a costume demonstration with photos and videos on the history, traditions and culture of the area. Overnight in Mimallones Family owned Hotel.



**Day 11: August 8, Wednesday: Lemos Village – Bitola (MACEDONIA) – Strumitsa – Sandanski (BULGARIA)**

Drive to Macedonia across its southern border to historic Bitola. **Folk dance**



**workshop with Zlatko's group, Folklore Association Pletenka from Bitola,** along with the original Bitola orchestra Rudina. After lunch, stroll Shirok Sokak (Wide Street) with its cafés, colorful neo-classical buildings, Clock Tower, and St. Demetrius Church. Then drive eastwards to the border with Bulgaria to our spa hotel—a good chance for body and soul recovery through its water therapy. Evening dance workshop with Nicky and Ventzi. Overnight in a 4 star SPA Hotel in Sandanski.

**Day 12: August 9, Thursday: Sandanski – Rila Monastery – Samokov – Plovdiv**

Drive to Plovdiv. Vist UNESCO listed, 10<sup>th</sup> century Rila monastery before stopping in Samokov to see the 19<sup>th</sup> century Home of the Arieah family. Hear the dramatic story of the first modern banker in the country from the turn of the 20th century. The Sephardic family Arieah built a minor empire of metallurgy, banking, real estate, tanning and textile as well as bridges and public fountains in and around Samokov. Afternoon arrival in Plovdiv, artistic capital of Bulgaria. Overnight in a 4 star Ramada Trimontium Hotel.

**Day 13: August 10: Friday: Plovdiv – Starosel – Koprivshtitsa**

Morning walking tour of Plovdiv's Old Town, often compared to Montmartre Hill in Paris. See masterpieces of 18-19th century Bulgarian city architecture, orthodox churches, a 15th century Mosque, and the 2nd century Roman Theater, built by Emperor Trajan. Visit the country's richest Ethnographic Museum – set in a baroque house from 1847. Then join the pedestrian stream in the main shopping street, offering numerous opportunities for shopping, snacks, coffee amidst the elegant atmosphere of early 20th century architecture. Afternoon departure for Koprivshtitsa, stopping at Starosel village for a visit at a Thracian Temple from 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. In Koprivshtitsa join the local folk festival opening. Overnight in Traditional Country Guest Houses.

**Day 14: August 11, Saturday: Koprivshtitsa and it annual Local Folk Festival**

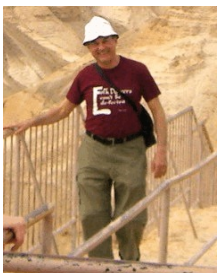
Full day at the festival. folk dancing, singing, ethnic costumes, performing groups, and photo opportunities! Visit preserved houses from the Bulgarian revival period. Farewell dinner with wine and tour memories sharing in traditional Country Guest Houses.

**Day 15: August 12, Sunday: Koprivshtitsa – Sofia Airport**

Breakfast . Transfer to Sofia Airport for your flight home. (2 hours)

**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.



**About Lee Otterholt**

Lee Otterholt, born in USA of Norwegian-American parents, has lived and worked in Norway as a professional dancer, teacher, and choreographer. He founded the Center for

International Folk Dance in Oslo, and was professor of dance folklore at the Norwegian National College of Ballet, and University College of Oslo. Lee established folk dance and performing groups in Norway, taught at festivals and workshops throughout Europe, United States, and East Asia, and authored folk dance and instructional manuals for Norwegian schools. He was a choreographer for the Opening Ceremony of the Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer.

**Visit [www.jimgold.com](http://www.jimgold.com) to see YOUTUBE tour videos !**

## **Land only: \$3495**

Land plus group airfare: \$4995\*

\*Due to changes in airline policies, individual airfares (if booked early) are now lower than group rates.

### **REGISTRATION FORM:**

Enclosed is my registration deposit of \$200 per person. Single supplement: \$595. Additional charges: \$145 hotel taxes and service. Gratuities and drinks during meals not included.

Program subject to change without notice. Cancellations 90 days prior to departure: Total refund: Less than 60 days: No refund. Travel insurance always recommended.

**Total balance due May 1, 2018.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Make checks payable to: **Jim Gold International**

497 Cumberland Avenue Teaneck, NJ 07666 U.S.A. Phone (201) 836-0362.

Web site at [www.jimgold.com](http://www.jimgold.com) Email: [jimgold@jimgold.com](mailto:jimgold@jimgold.com)

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**Rates:** Tour rates are subject to change in the event of currency fluctuations or increase in costs. Inclusive tour rates are per person in double occupancy. In case of computer or human billing errors, we reserve the right to re-invoice clients with corrected billing.

**Reservations:** Deposits and Payments: Deposit of \$200 per person is required at time of reservation. Balance is due 90 days prior to departure date.

**Changes:** Prices and program subject to change without notice

**Baggage:** One baggage per person and a carry on is allowed.

**Cancellations:** Cancellations 45 days prior to departure: Refund 50% of total price. Less than 30 days: No refund. Additionally, any cancellation fees imposed by the respective hotels, airlines, tour companies and cruise lines will be charged. Travel Insurance is non-refundable as are unused services.

**Gratuities:** Tipping to guides, drivers, transfer personnel and hotel staff is left to the discretion of the participants and is not included.

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