



ODYSSEIA-IN Sport & Travel Agency Ltd

Sofia 1301, Bulgaria 20-V, Al. Stamboliiski Blvd, Entr."Lavele"

T + 359 2 9890538 | F + 359 2 9803200 | Mobile (office) + 359 886 880100

<http://www.hiking-bulgaria.com/>

SKI TOURING **IN** **RILA AND PIRIN NATIONAL PARKS** **BULGARIA**



HIGHLIGHTS:

- Rila and Pirin National Parks
- Mussala 2925m – highest peak in Southeastern Europe
- Vihren 2914m – second highest in Bulgaria and third highest in the Balkan Peninsula
- Seven Rila Lakes – symbol of Bulgaria
- Rila Monastery (UNESCO)
- Traditional cuisine and Family-run accommodations



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TRIP SUMMARY:

The south-western part of Bulgaria is a land of mountains – a rolling sea of independent massifs separated by deep cut gorges and high passes. This is where Rila and Pirin Mountains rise high – the highest mountain ranges in Southeast Europe! The peaks tower well above 2500m – with the main one reaching nearly 3000m.

During our trip we will enjoy Rila National Park: Mussala Peak (the highest on the Balkans); Malyovitsa valley (the Bulgarian Matterhorn) and the Seven Rila Lakes (symbol of Bulgaria). In the heart of Rila Mountain we will visit the magnificent painted Orthodox monastery: Rila Monastery (UNESCO).

After we finish with Rila we will jump over to Pirin National Park (UNESCO Nature Heritage). In Pirin we will enjoy two ski tours: one to Mt.Vihren (2914m) and another one in the area of Mt.Todorka (2746m) and Mt.Bezbog (2645m). After the two day of skiing we will relax and enjoy the natural hot springs of the region as well as change the hut life with the conveniences of the town and hotel.



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Day 1: Arrival

Arrival at Sofia Airport where you will be met by a driver holding a sign with your name. You will be taken from the airport straight to your hotel.

Transfer: 30 minutes

Night stop: Sofia city

Accommodation: 3* hotel Sofia Place <https://sofiaplacehotel.com/en/page/accommodation>

Included meals: none

Day 2: Rila Mountains

Arrival in Sofia and direct transfer to Panichishte resort(1.30 hours) in the footsteps of Rila National Park.

The bus drops you off at 1400m close to Pionerska hut. From here you have to reach Rila lakes hut which is at 2100m and it takes about 2,00 hours of touring from Pionerska hut.

Another option to do that is by taking the local chairlift, which will take you right in front of the hut and no touring will be needed. The lift operates until 1600PM, so in order to take it you have to arrive there at 1500 at latest.

Your main luggage will be transferred to the accommodation for the second night. You have to take clothes and necessities for this night and the next day.

Transfer: 1,30 hours, ~80km

Ski touring time: 2 hours, +500m

Night stop: Rila Mountains

Accommodation: mountain hut "Rila lakes" <https://www.rilskiezero.bg/>

Included meals: breakfast, dinner



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Day 3: Rila lakes



The area of the Seven Rila lakes.

Today you ski in the area of the Seven Rila lakes.

Your hut is at 2100m altitude which is great start of the day. From the hut you make your way through the circuit of the Seven Rila lakes, each one of which is located on different altitude with the first one at 2000m and the last at 2500m.

In the area you can take the winter trail and make your way to Zeleni Rid ridge from where you can reach peak Ezeren vrah and the highest of the lakes. From here you can descent back to the hut following the "summer trail" or continue on the Otovitsa ridge and find a more demanding downhill.

In good condition you can ski down up to 1500m altitude on the tiny ski run that starts from the hut or ride the local pine forests.



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At the end of the day you return to the hut and spend one more night here.

Transfer time: none

Ski touring: 3 – 5 hours, + / - 500m (Easiest option for the day. More ski time could be added if needed.)

Night stop: Rila mountains

Accommodation: mountain hut "Rila lakes" <https://www.rilskieзера.bg/>

- Double rooms with ensuite bathroom available on request. Not a lot available. Otherwise there is one men and one woman bathroom on the floor.
- The hut usually has hot water and showers in the winter. Depends on the conditions.

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Day 4: Seven Rila lakes and Maliovitsa Peak (2729m)



Rila main ridge, Maliovitsa area in the background

Today you ski from Rila lakes hut to the small, ski & mountaineering center Maliovitsa.



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In the morning you have to make your way to Ezeren vrah peak, similar as the previous day. When you reach it you move to the Razdela pass which is a big crossroad on the main crest of Rila Mountains. From here you continue in east direction, following the main ridge of Rila Mountains at average altitude of 2500m. On your way you pass by a couple of 2300m+ peaks until you reach Mt Malyovitsa, 2729m. Here starts your descent in the valley of river Golyama Malyovitsa where you will pass through the Dear's lake followed by the so called 2nd and 1st terrace. There are several ways to go down, but you will definitely make 900m of downhill.

The day ends up at Malyovitsa mountain hut at 1900m.

Dinner and overnight.

Transfers: none

Skiing time: 5 – 7 hours, + 800m, - 800m

Night stop: Rila Mountains

Accommodation: mountain hut "Malyovitsa"

- 4 bedded rooms available.
- Shared toilet and bathroom.
- The hut usually has hot water and shared shower in the winter. Depends on the conditions.

Included meals: dinner



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Day 5: Rila Monastery and Pirin Mountains



Today you ski from Malyovitsa ski resort to Rila Monastery and then transfer from the Monastery to Pirin Mountains and Bansko town.

In the morning short transfer from Govedartsi village to the area Ovnarsko (30 – 45min). The tour starts from here at 1550m. First you follow river Golyama Preka reka which will take you through the pine forest to glacial lake Yonchevo, 2100m. Your ascent continues and 2-3 hours you reach the main ridge of the Mountain at 2500m close to Mt Lopushki. Your descent starts here and you go down in the valley of Rila Monastery. This is a long downhill with about 1000m displacement and final stop at the area Kirilova Polyana, at 1500m. From here you get on the bus and start your transfer to Bansko town in Pirin Mountains. On the way you will make a stop at Rila Monastery – a popular tourist site and the largest Orthodox Monastery in Bulgaria. You do a short sightseeing of the Monastery complex and continue your transfer to Dobrinishte town (2,00 hours).

Overnight in Dobrinishte town. Dinner at your own expense.

Night stop: Banya village

Skiing time: 5 – 7 hours, +800m, -1200m

Accommodation: SPA hotel "Villa Victoria"

Included meals: breakfast, lunch



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Day 6: Mt Polezhan and glacial lake Bezbog



Today you ski in the area of glacial lake Bezbog and Mt Polezhan in Pirin Mountains.

In the morning you have a short transfer to Gotse Delchev area where you board a chairlift which takes you to 2200m up in the Mountains. From here you start ascending Mt Polezhan 2840m passing via its neighboring peak Mt Bezbog. From the peak you go down in south direction towards the glacial lake Popovo ezero located at 2250m. From the lake you go back in north direction towards the Mountain hut Bezbog, where you can take a nice break. From the hut you ski down to Gotse Delchev area and lower station of the chairlift at 1400m, if the conditions are good.

Next you have a transfer from Gotse Delchev area to Shiligarnika area, which is located a few valley to the west (1,15 hours). From Shiligarnika you have to ski up to Vihren hut (2 hours.)

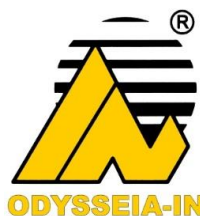
After arrival in the hut you can do a short touring in the area.

Dinner and overnight in Vihren hut.

Night stop: Pirin Mountains

Skiing time: 6 - 8 hours, +1000m, -1500m

Accommodation: mountain hut "Vihren"



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Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Day 7: Second highest peak in Bulgaria – Mt Vihren 2914m



Ascending the south face of Vihren Peak, Central parts of Pirin at the background

Today you ski Vihren peak and the circuit of Bunderitsa river.

Vihren hut is located at 1900m at the beginning of the circuit of Bunderitsa river. From here you enter the valley and soon start ascending towards the highest peak of Pirin – Mt Vihren 2914. It takes 3 hours and 1000m up from the hut to the peak with one stop at the glacial lake Muratovo ezero.

From Mt Vihren you could either take the same way down which is the more easy option or ski down the east face of the peak. The downhill to the hut is 1000m, but you can descent all the day down to Bansko town which will make a total of 2000m.

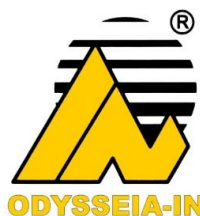
Overnight and dinner at Vihren hut.

Transfer: none

Skiing time: 4 – 6 hours, +1000m, -1000m

Night stop: Pirin Mountains

Accommodation: mountain hut "Vihren"



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Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Day 8: Todorka peak



The circuit of Bunderista river above Vihren hut

Today you ski Mt Todorka 2746m.

You start from Vihren hut, enter Bunderitsa circuit but instead of going West to Muratovo glacial lake you go East under the ridge Donchovi Karauli. Your next stop is at the Dulgo Bunderishko ezero glacial lake at 2350m, before going up to Todorka peak. From Vihren hut to the top will take you about 3 hours, but you will be rewarded with great views to the Mountain massif and two glacial lakes, considered as the Eyes of Todorka.

From Todorka peak there are two options:

One is to descent back on the same way to Vihren hut.

The other is to go downhill in East direction towards the valley of Demyanitsa river. In front of you is a descent of 1000m. Finally you will go back to Vihren hut.



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Transfers: none

Skiing time: 4 – 6 hours, +900m, -900m (For the option Vihren hut – Mt Todorka west face – Vihren hut)

Night stop: Pirin mountains

Accommodation: family hotel "Rahoff"

Included meals: breakfast

Day 9: Your tour ends today



Your tour ends today.

Transfer from Bansko to Sofia airport.

If you have time until your flight your guide could do a walking tour in the center of the city.

Transfers: 160km, ~2,30 hours

Skiing time: 0,45min, -1000m

Night stop: none

Accommodation: none

Included meals: breakfast



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Technical information:

Ski touring: 5 -8 hours per day of skiing in the mountain

Displacement: + 1200 / - 2000m

Guides: our guides hold national mountain leader diplomas and are professional ski instructors. Some of them are members of the Bulgarian mountain rescue team. All of them have years-long experience in leading ski groups.

Level: easy to moderate, requires good level of fitness

Accommodation:

In Mountain huts in Rila Mountains:

- ✓ Mountain hut "Rila lakes"
- ✓ Mountain hut "Malyovitsa"

In Mountains hut in Pirin Mountains:

- ✓ Mountain hut "Vihren"

One overnight in SPA hotel in Banya town

One overnight in family hotel in Bansko town

Duration: 9 days/ 8 nights

Best period: mid January – mid March

Transport: transfers by a private bus



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Price per person for a group of 7

✓ 830E

Price includes:

- 1 night in Sofia, 5 nights in Mountain huts, 1 in SPA hotel in Banya and 1 in family hotel in Bansko
- 8 breakfasts and 5 dinners
- Licensed English-speaking ski-touring guide
- Two guides in group of 8 people and more
- All Transfers described in the itinerary in private vehicle

Price excludes:

- flight and taxes
- insurance
- Ski equipment
- Avalanche safety equipment
- breakfast on day 1, all lunches and 3 dinners (day 5, 8 and 9)
- museum entrance fees
- Chairlift and gondola tickets
- Transfer of main luggage with snowmobile or chairlift on day 2, day 4, day 6 and day 8
- anything not specifically mentioned as included

Avalanche safety equipment rent:

1. Pips only - 42€
2. Pips, probe, shovel - 56€