

BULGARIA

WINE AND
CUISINE



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Unique facts about Bulgaria



Wine production has over a thousand year long tradition in Bulgaria. The ancient Thracians, who populated the land in ancient times, worshipped the gods Zagreus and Dionysius and used the wine during their religious rituals. Nowadays Bulgaria is a proud producer of fine quality wines, some of which are made from unique sorts of vine, impressing wine connoisseurs worldwide.

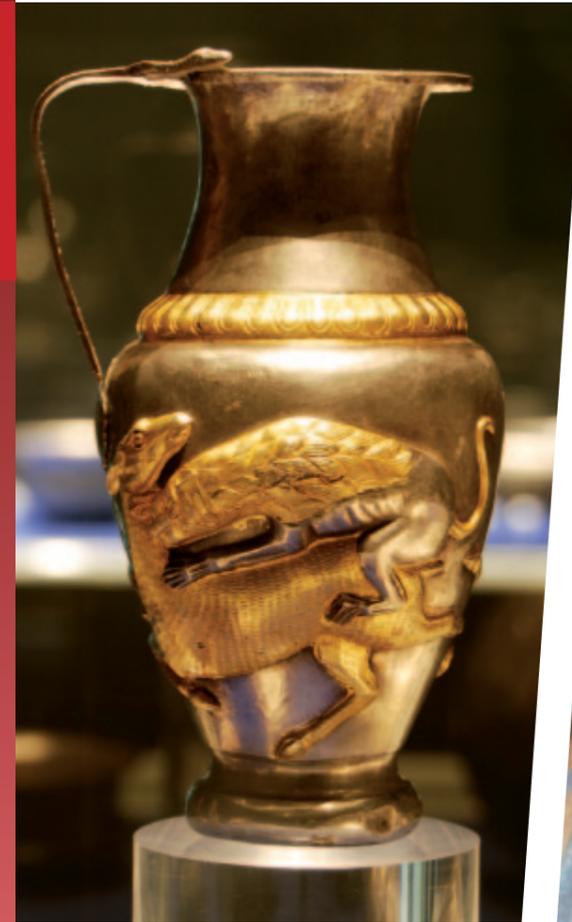


The traditional Bulgarian cuisine is rich in spices, with specific and unique taste. Most Bulgarian meals are easy to prepare – if you follow a traditional recipe to prepare an authentic Bulgarian meal, you will feel the Bulgarian spirit and cosy atmosphere.



The spices, fruit and vegetables used are organic. Only in Bulgaria one can experience the taste of the world-famous Bulgarian yoghurt, as well as delicacy prepared with it. Bulgaria produces the rich flavoured white cheese and rich tasting herbal honey.

History of wine in the Bulgarian lands



Wine is an integral part of the history of Bulgaria, it is also very much a part of Bulgarian culture, customs and spirit. The Bulgarian lands are rooted in ancient civilizations which have left an indelible imprint on modern Bulgaria. The ancient Thracians used wine as an important part of their religious rituals and as a mean of communing with their gods. Evidence for this can be found in the many shrines discovered throughout the country, which bring to mind the ancient rituals and the cult of the god of wine, Zagreus. Bulgaria is home to some of the most important archaeological discoveries, including gold and silver Thracian pieces, most of which were parts of beautiful sets used for serving and consuming wine.

The use of the Orphic drink in religious rituals is associated with traditions in viticulture and winemaking. Homer often mentions in his works the superior quality of Thracian wines.



With the establishment of the Bulgarian State these wine-making traditions were absorbed and preserved. Many medieval travellers who passed through Bulgaria referred to the many different types of good quality wines they were offered. In the late 19th and early 20th century a professional approach to viticulture and winemaking began to emerge and the foundations of the modern production methods were established for Bulgarian wines. Today, high-quality wines from Bulgaria can be sampled around the globe. Many of the local wines win international awards and astound foreign oenophiles with their high quality and exquisite taste.

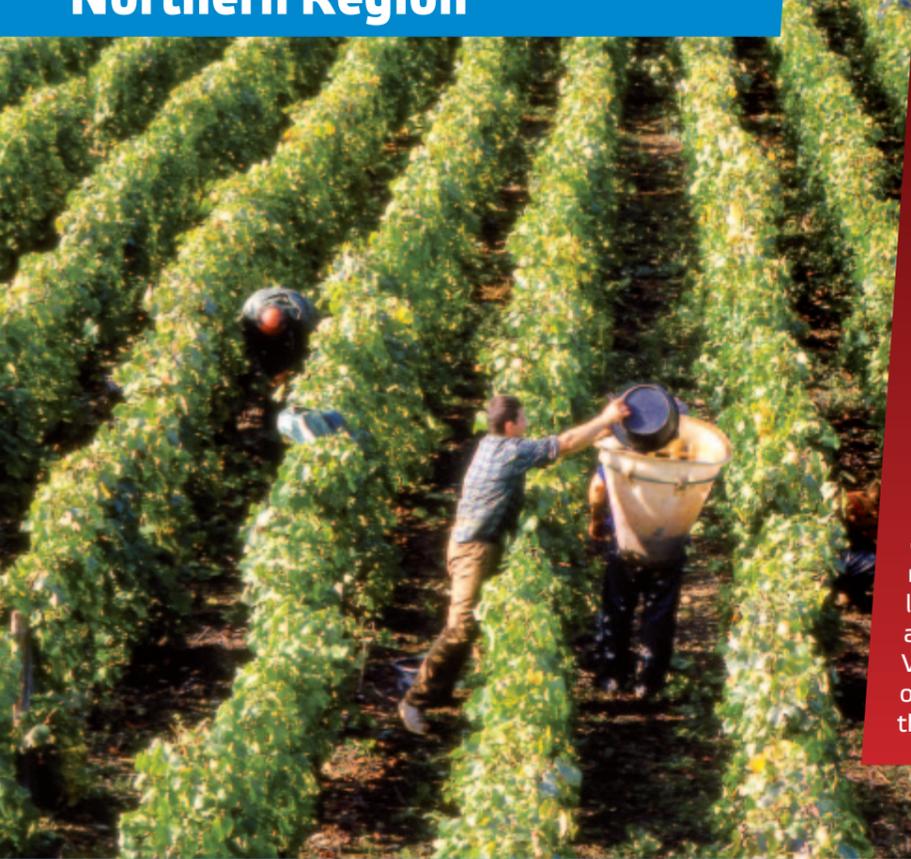
The love of good wine and the interest in local varieties has brought about an increase of wine tourism in Bulgaria - wine tours and wine tastings. Many of the wineries in the country organize special events to introduce their newest and best products.



MAIN WINE REGIONS

Bulgaria is divided into five wine regions, each with its own specifics and peculiarities.

Northern Region



The Northern Wine Region stretches between Balkan Range (Stara planina) and the Danube. It is very large and extensive and includes many smaller regions with specific microclimates and different soil and climatic characteristics.

Good conditions for growing primarily red grape varieties are found in this area - Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pamid, Gamza and Pinot Noir. However, some white varieties with very good quality are also represented, these include Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Aligoté, Tamyanka and Muscat. The region produces good dry white wines, naturally sparkling wines using traditional technology, high-quality red wines with rich fruity flavours. Here the traditions of viticulture and winemaking are highly respected and some of the oldest and largest winemaking centres in the country are in this region - those in Russe, Svishtov, Vidin, Lyaskovets, Suhindol and Pleven. The only Wine Museum in the country is located in the region of Pleven.

Southern Region

The Southern Wine Region includes the districts of Plovdiv, Haskovo, Pazardzhik, Stara Zagora, Lyubimets and Harmanli, this is the Upper Thracian Plain (Gornotrakiyska nizina) and part of Sakar Mountain. The Balkans provide protection against the extreme cold and high winds from the north. This creates good conditions for the cultivation of red varieties with excellent taste properties - Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Rubin. Soil and climatic conditions are also suitable for the cultivation of some white varieties. The districts of Asenovgrad, Pazardzhik and Perushtitsa grow Mavrud - a unique Bulgarian variety. The more important wineries of this region are located in Asenovgrad, Haskovo, Brestovitsa, Stara Zagora and Lyubimets.



The Eastern Wine Region comprises three sub-regions – the Black Sea, Dobrudzha and Ludogorie. The mild climate is favourable for the cultivation of white grape varieties. These include Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Ugni Blanc, Dimyat, Rkatsiteli, Traminer, Aligoté and Riesling. The long warm autumn is conducive to the production of excellent semidry white wines. Some micro regions also create suitable conditions for cultivation of red grape varieties - Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc. The largest wineries in the region are found in Varna, Pomorie, Burgas, Targovishte, Shumen and Preslav Khan Krum.

Eastern Region



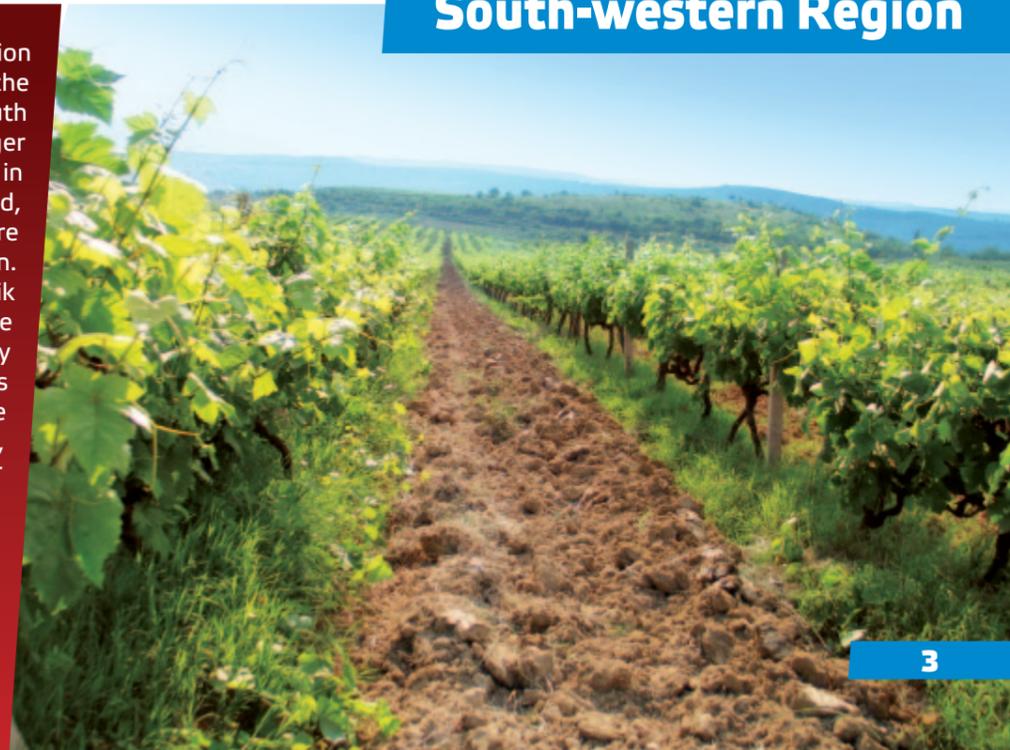
Sub-Balkan Region



The Sub-Balkan Wine Region includes the territories south of the Balkan Range to the northern slopes of Sredna Gora Mountain and the largest wineries are located around Sliven, Karnobat, Karlovo, Slavyantsi and Sungurlare. The Balkan Mountains create a barrier to keep out the colder northern weather. This generates exceptionally favourable conditions for the cultivation of many grape varieties. The local variety Cherven Misket is typical of this region and produces good white wines. Cabernet Sauvignon, Shevka, Pamid, Chardonnay and Merlot also thrive here. The region is known for its excellent dry and semidry white wines and to a lesser extent for its red wines.

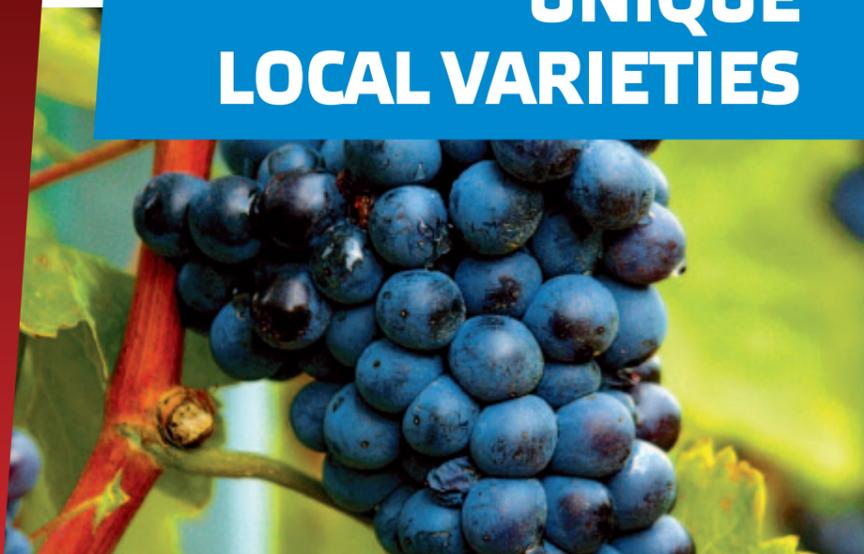
South-western Region

The South-western Wine Region is relatively small and includes the land along the Struma River south of the town of Dupnitsa. The larger wineries of this region are located in Damyanitsa, Sandanski, Blagoevgrad, Petrich and Harsovo. The climate here is very similar to the Mediterranean. The climatic conditions around Melnik and Sandanski are most favourable for growing grapes. The variety Shiroka Melnishka, which grows only here, is important for wine production in the region. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and other varieties are also cultivated.



Gamza

Gamza is a local red variety, which thrives best in North-western Bulgaria - Suhindol, Vidin and Pleven. The grapes of this variety mature late and produce red dessert and table wines. These have a clear bright raspberry colour and a fruity, prevailingly raspberry aroma. They are fresh, light-bodied and should not be flavoured with oak. Gamza wines are usually consumed young. The variety is grown in Macedonia, Romania and Hungary, under different names. The best-quality Gamza wines can be found in Northern Bulgaria, in wineries in the region of Vidin and Pleven in Northern Bulgaria.



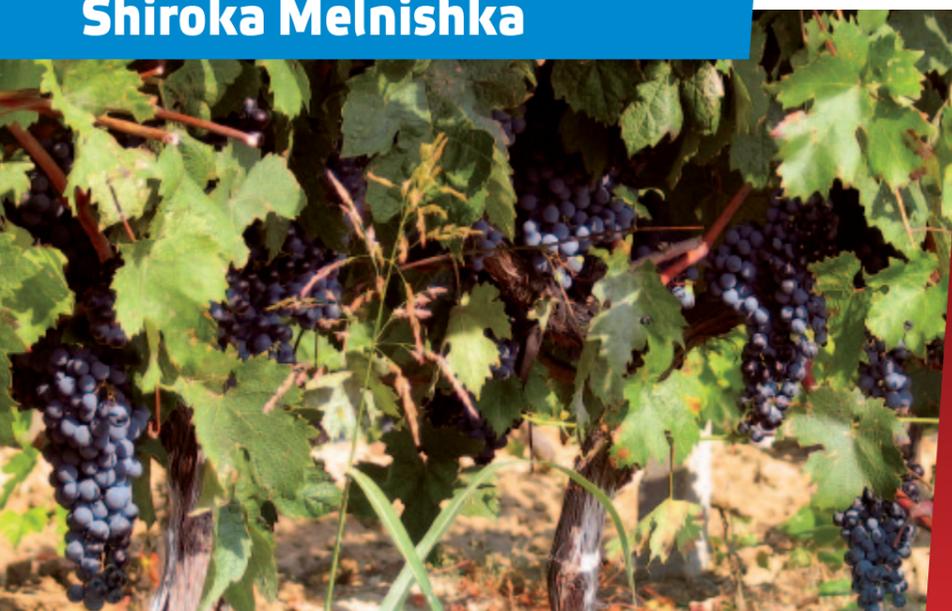
UNIQUE LOCAL VARIETIES

Cherven Misket is an old Bulgarian variety, mostly cultivated in the Sub-Balkan region. It is the Bulgarian grape variety that is most highly resistant to cold. Wine made from it has an interesting pink tint. It is known that the variety is a hybrid created from Riesling and Dimyat. Its aroma is a bouquet of herbal nuances, quince and honey. Cherven Misket wine can be sampled in wineries in the regions of Straldzha and Sungurlare.

Cherven Misket



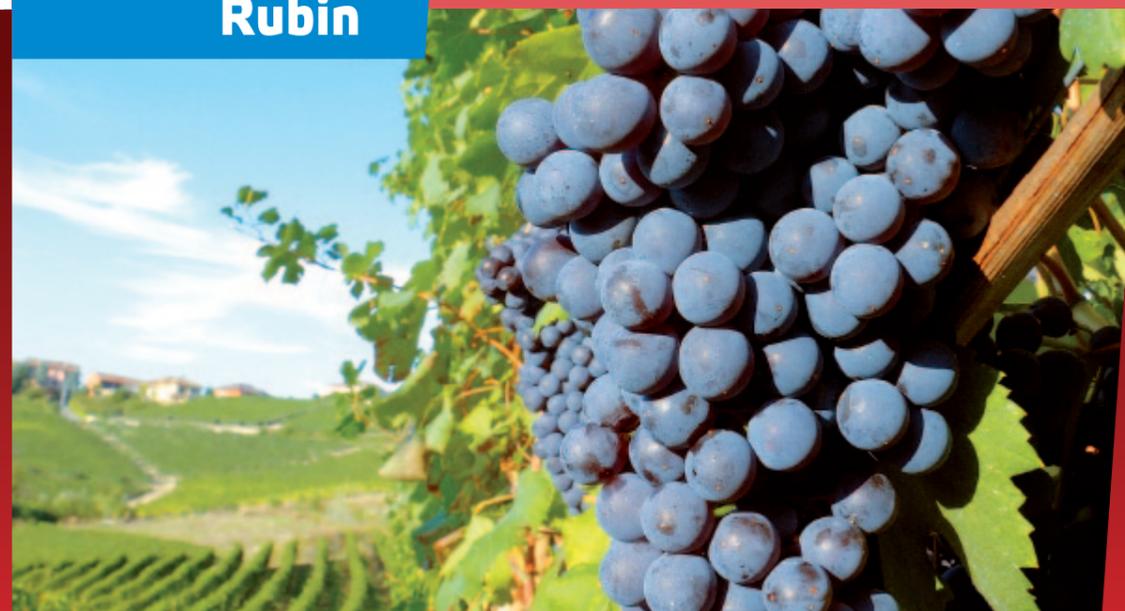
Shiroka Melnishka



Shiroka Melnishka is a local red variety which grows only in the regions of Melnik, Petrich and Sandanski, since it is vulnerable to low temperatures. The colouring of the wine is medium deep. The wine produced from this grape variety is of excellent quality, with ripe cherry and herbal aromas, and in the presence of oak it develops undertones of tobacco and leather. The flavour of the young wine is fresh, with pronounced tannins.

With maturity its taste becomes softer but retains its spicy finish. The unique flavour of the wine from grape variety Shiroka Melnishka can be experienced in the wineries in the region of Sandanski and Melnik.

Rubin



Rubin is a local variety created by cross fertilization from two varieties - Nebbiolo and Sora. Its wines have a deep colour and a full-bodied flavour with a soft aftertaste. Its aroma is intense, fruity, with a predominance of ripe blackberry. In contact with oak it develops a hint of fruit jam. Rubin wines can be tasted at wineries in the region of Plovdiv and Septemvri.

Dimyat

Dimyat is a typical Bulgarian white grape used for production of dry white wines as well as aromatic wines and brandies. It develops a fruity aroma with hints of ripe peach. Its flavour is mild with a pleasant freshness. It grows best in the region of Varna but is also grown in other parts of the country. You can sample it in the wineries in the region of Evksinograd Varna, Shumen and Stara Zagora.



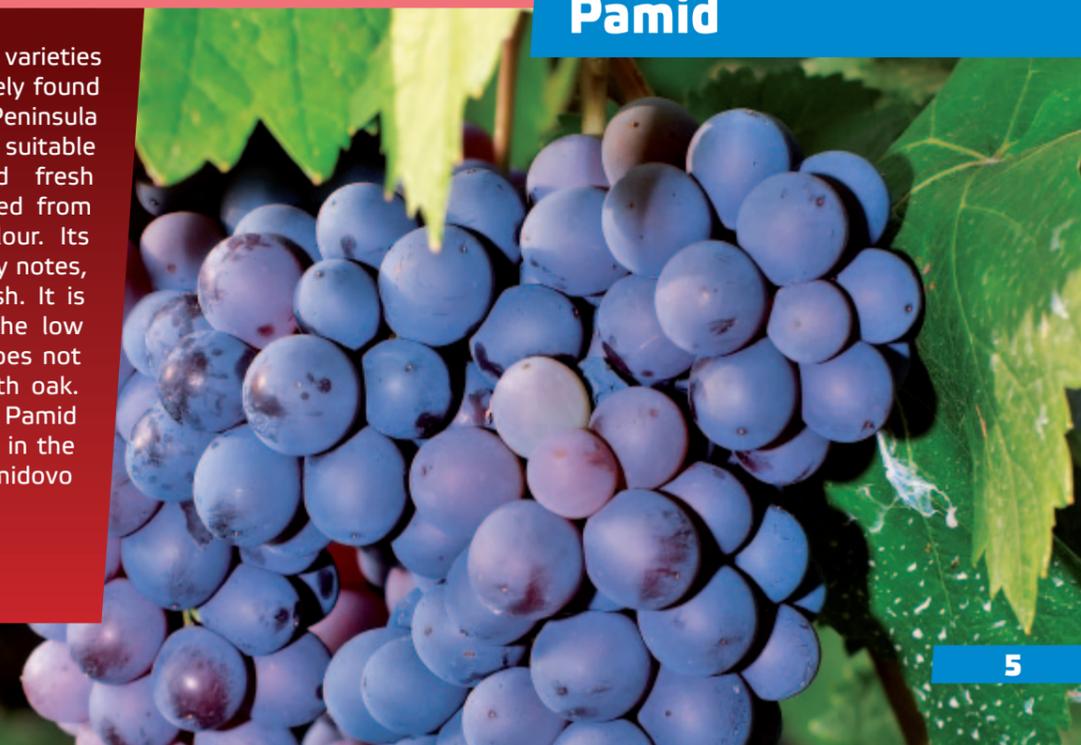
Mavrud



Mavrud is a very old local variety grown mainly in the areas of Asenovgrad, Plovdiv, Pazardzhik and the foothills of the Rodopi Mountains. Wine produced from Mavrud is a saturated ruby purple and has an excellent flavour. It has a pronounced rich texture and a luscious aroma with strong overtones of ripe berry and spices. It ages very well in contact with oak. Several wineries in the region of Asenovgrad, Plovdiv and Pazardzhik offer tasting of Mavrud.

Pamid is one of the oldest varieties grown in Bulgaria. It is widely found throughout the Balkan Peninsula under different names. It is suitable for wine production and fresh consumption. Wine produced from Pamid has a light red colour. Its aromas are fresh, with fruity notes, elegant body and soft finish. It is consumed young due to the low content of phenolics and does not respond well in contact with oak. It is often used in blends. Pamid can be sampled at wineries in the region of Pazardzhik, Pamidovo and Plovdiv.

Pamid



Wineries and Wine Tasting



Almost all wineries in the country offer wine tasting and have areas specially equipped for this purpose. Both group and private events can be organized. For more information, contact your tour operator, the local tourist information centre or one of the many wineries.

The region of Pleven, Kaylaka Park, hosts the only Wine Museum in the country. There you can learn about the history of Bulgarian winemaking and the subtleties of wine tasting. At the museum many different wines can be tasted. The museum houses around 7,000 exhibits - old wines and wine storage and winemaking vessels. The oldest wine in the museum was produced almost 100 years ago.



THE BULGARIAN CULINARY TRADITION



Bulgarian cuisine is colourful and diverse. It is rooted in centuries-old traditions and practices. In some places recipes have been passed down from generation to generation and have remained unchanged for hundreds of years.

Characteristic of Bulgarian cuisine is the simultaneous heat treatment of most products. The recipes include a large number of vegetables and spices, among which are garlic, black pepper, thyme, spearmint, savory, bay leaf and paprika.

Some dishes are prepared for specific Bulgarian holidays - Christmas Eve, Easter, St. George's Day and St. Nicholas Day.

Herbs and Spices

Herbs have a prominent place in Bulgarian cuisine. Various healing herbs are used for seasoning in many traditional dishes. These include basil, thyme, oregano and spearmint.

Almost all Bulgarian dishes include parsley. It is used in main dishes, soups and salads, both fresh and dried. It is not only used as seasoning, but according to folk medicine it helps cure digestive and kidney diseases.

Basil also has a special place in Bulgarian cuisine. It is most often used to season meat, beans and potato dishes.

No one in Bulgaria can imagine bean soup without spearmint. This aromatic spice is used both fresh and dried. The taste of wild mint is also excellent.

Thyme is also used as a spice and has various medicinal qualities. It has been believed since ancient times that it is a cure for colds, bronchitis, heart disease and rheumatism.



Traditional dishes by region

Thracian Cuisine



The Thracian region is rich and fertile. As in other parts of Bulgaria Thracian towns offer some very special local dishes. Thracian rice pie, burania (sauerkraut with rice or spinach), beans with sauerkraut and Thracian katmi (pancakes) and tarhana are very special. These are only a small part of the culinary temptations in the Thrace region. The local villages prepare the most delicious flatbreads and banitsa found anywhere in the country.

Many Thracian dishes are cooked in clay pots. The spices most frequently used in the Thracian region are paprika, spearmint and basil. Cumin, which is a characteristic spice for the region of Plovdiv, is also used in some dishes.

Pirin cuisine is diverse and deliciously interesting. It utilizes a wide variety of spices. You can best explore this local cuisine in the area of Bansko.

The taverns of Bansko, as well as larger establishments in other towns of the Pirin region, are charming with their old-style furnishing and authentic atmosphere. Here a visitor can sample some of the most interesting dishes and delicacies in Bulgaria - banski staretz, kapama, chomlek, banska kavarma and katino meze.

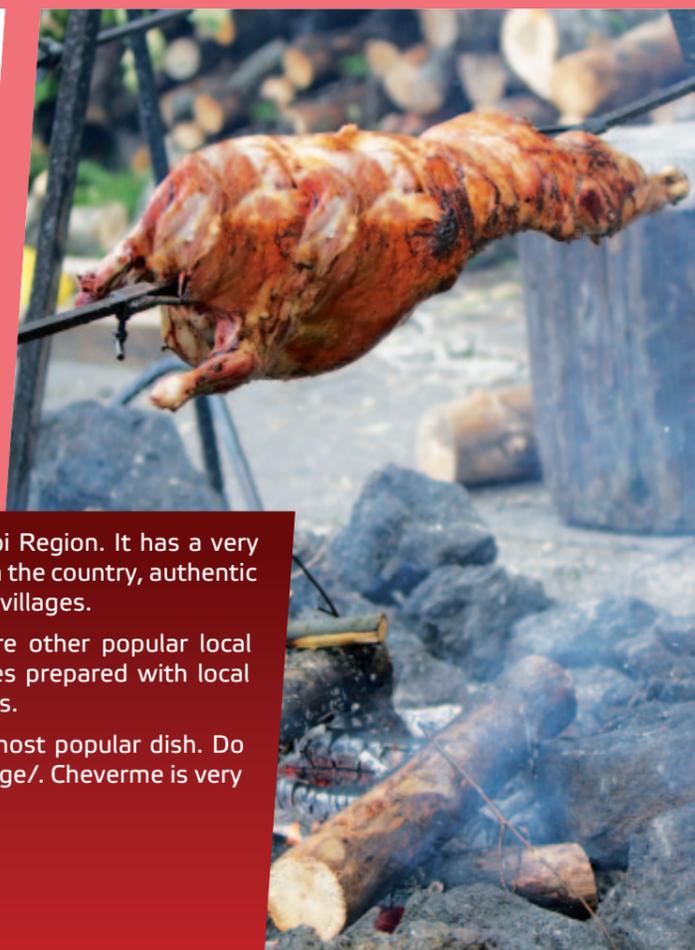
Many guest houses will even offer to teach a guest to cook some of these dishes. While in Pirin red Melnik wine is a "must try".

Also in the region of Pirin the local versions of kachamak, sarmi and pastarma are a must.



Pirin Cuisine

Rodopi Cuisine



Rodopi cuisine contributes to the unique charm of the Rodopi Region. It has a very specific taste. Although the dishes are offered in many places in the country, authentic patatnik or klin potato dishes can be tasted only in the Rodopi villages.

The Rodopi cheverme /barbecue/ and the Smilyan beans are other popular local dishes. In the Rodopi village of Smilyan many different dishes prepared with local beans can be tasted - bean salad, bean soup and breaded beans.

Potatoes are widely used in Rodopi cuisine. Patatnik is the most popular dish. Do not miss the Rodopi cheverme and kachamak /cornmeal porridge/. Cheverme is very delicious and is prepared in a very interesting way.



MAJOR SITES

WINE AND CUISINE



- 1 Danubian Plain (Northern Wine Region)
- 2 Thracian Valley (Southern Wine Region)
- 3 Black Sea (Eastern Wine Region)
- 4 Rose Valley (Sub-Balkan Wine Region)
- 5 Struma Valley (South-western Wine Region)
- 6 Vidin
- 7 Pleven
- 8 Ruse
- 9 Varna
- 10 Pomorie
- 11 Stara Zagora
- 12 Sliven
- 13 Karnobat
- 14 Plovdiv
- 15 Melnik
- 16 Sandanski
- 17 Bansko
- 18 Smilyan
- 19 Banitsa (Vrachansko)
- 20 Tran
- 21 Kyustendil
- 22 Beli Iskar
- 23 Tutrakan
- 24 Nessebar
- 25 Troyan
- 26 Klisura
- 27 Sevlievo

Shopska Salad

Ingredients: 500 g tomatoes, two cucumbers, 1 pepper, 1 onion, 200 g white cheese, parsley (to taste), vinegar, salt and oil (to taste)

Dice the tomatoes into cubes. Slice the cucumbers into rings and finely chop the onion or cut it into crescents. Slice the pepper into thin strips, add the spices and stir. Crush or grate the cheese on top of the seasoned vegetables. Chop parsley finely and sprinkle. It is best to serve the salad well chilled. Olives may be added if desired.



BULGARIAN CUISINE

(Cheese Pastry)

Ingredients: To make the pastry from scratch: 2 cups milk, 1 tsp sugar, 1 tbsp salt, 2 eggs, flour – as much as can be absorbed, 50 g yeast

Or: 1 package ready pastry sheets, 400 g white cheese, 2 eggs, 400 g yoghurt, butter

To prepare the pastry dough mix the milk, salt, sugar, eggs, yeast and flour and allow dough to rise. Then tear small balls from the dough and roll out on a floured surface.

Place the rolled-out sheet on aluminium foil or wrapping foil. Spread a mixture of the eggs and cheese on each sheet. Use the foil to roll up the sheet. The rolled-up sheets are placed on a baking pan in the form of a spiral. Bake in preheated oven at 200-250 °C until brown.

Banitsa



Hotchpotch

Ingredients: 500 g pork, 500 g potatoes, 200 g green beans, 200 g eggplant, 100 g okra, 100 g peas, 1 onion, 2 carrots, 1-2 tomatoes (fresh or canned), parsley, savory, salt, pepper (to taste)

Dice the meat into cubes and sauté or stew briefly and put in a crock pot. Cut the vegetables into cubes and add to the hotchpotch. Add the spices and stir. Bake with the lid on for about an hour and a half to two hours in hot oven. The lid may be taken off in the last 20 minutes to get a crust. In some regions of the country a cup of rice is added to the dish.



Flatbread

Ingredients: 1 kg flour, ½ litre of water (or 400 g of yoghurt), 3 eggs, 1 tsp sugar, 1 tbsp salt, vegetable oil, yeast, butter

Dissolve the yeast in water and add 2 eggs stirring constantly. While stirring, add the flour until a homogeneous dough ball is formed. Add 1-2 tablespoons of vegetable oil and leave for 30 minutes to rise, pat into a flat, round shape. Bits of the dough can be used to decorate the surface of the loaf. Use one egg to glaze the surface. Separate the yolk from the white of the egg and spread the yolk evenly with a cooking brush. The flatbread is baked in a preheated oven. It takes about an hour at 200-250 °C.



Tarator

(Cold Cucumber Soup)

Ingredients: 2 cucumbers, 400 g yoghurt, crushed walnuts (to taste), 1 clove of garlic, vegetable oil, dill

Peel cucumbers and cut into small cubes. Stir yoghurt while still in the pot. Add to the cucumbers and continue stirring. Add ½ litre of cold water. More or less water may be needed depending on the desired density. Use a pestle and mortar to crush the clove of garlic with some salt and add to the soup with the ground walnuts and finely chopped dill. Season with a little vegetable oil. Tarator is served cold as an appetizer.



Ingredients: (For a 3-litre jar), 2 ½ to 3 kg vegetables: bell peppers, cauliflower, carrots, cabbage, 500 g sugar, 100 g salt, 1 head celery, garlic, 250 ml vinegar, 1 litre of water, aspirin, black pepper, bay leaf

Clean the vegetables and cut into cubes. Pack vegetables in a jar as tightly as possible. Bring to boil the water, sugar, salt, vinegar and aspirin (finely ground). Add the spices after removing the marinade from the stove. Pour over the vegetables and seal while still hot. Arrange the jars and turn over every few days. After two weeks the pickles are ready for consumption.

Royal Pickle



Bean Soup

Ingredients: 250 - 300 g white or pinto beans, 1 carrot, 1 onion, 1 dried red pepper, 2 tomatoes (fresh or canned), savory, spearmint and salt to taste, sliced sausage may be added to the soup, if desired.

Soak the beans in water for at least 5-6 hours. Wash them, put them in a pot of water and bring it to a boil. Pour off the water. Rinse the beans again and add fresh water. If a pressure cooker is used it takes 50 minutes to 1 hour. If an ordinary pot is used, cook them for a minimum of 2 1/2 and a half hours.

In a separate pan sauté the finely chopped onions, tomatoes and carrots and add them to the beans. Reduce heat to simmer until all vegetables are soft. Before removing the pot from the stove add the spices.



Ingredients: 1 kg pork, 2 tomatoes, 2 onions, 2 peppers, thyme, salt, black pepper, vegetable oil

Dice the meat, remove the fat and season with thyme, salt and pepper. Oregano and red wine can also be added. Soak the meat in the marinade for several hours.

Cut the tomatoes and onions into rings and the peppers into strips. Thread the meat and vegetables on skewers and barbeque. Turn the skewers to cook the meat evenly on all sides.

BULGARIAN BARBEQUE Skewers



Cabbage Sarmi

(Stuffed Cabbage Leaves)

Ingredients: 20 cabbage /sauerkraut/ leaves, 2-3 onions, 500 g minced meat, 1 cup rice, paprika, black pepper, savory, parsley, vegetable oil.

Fry the finely chopped onions and add the minced meat and some water. When the meat is almost done add the rice and a cup of water. Stir until the rice absorbs the water. Add the spices to taste.

Cut the solid part of each cabbage leaf. Put a little of the stuffing in the centre and wrap the sarma. Arrange the ready sarmi in a saucepan and add one to two cups of water, cover with a few cabbage leaves and simmer.

The sarmi may be prepared without meat. If not using meat, add raisins and walnuts to the rice stuffing.



Kebapche

(Minced Meat Sausage)

Ingredients: 1 kg minced meat (beef or mixed beef/pork), salt (to taste), pepper (to taste), 1 tsp cumin

Mix the minced meat with the spices and let stand to absorb the flavour. Shape as sausages and grill, turn periodically to cook evenly.



Stuffed Peppers

Ingredients: 8 peppers, 1 onion, 1 cup rice, 1 carrot, 1/2 kg minced meat, salt, paprika, black pepper, flour.

Cut the onions and carrots into small pieces, fry them in oil and add water to cover. Add minced meat and continue to fry until the meat changes colour and is broken down into small pieces. Then add the rice, half a cup of water and seasoning. Stir until the rice absorbs the water.

Clean the peppers and remove the stems and seeds. Stuff each pepper with the prepared mixture. Cover the hole and arrange the peppers in baking dish. Add several cups of water. Place pan in a preheated oven.

Serve with yoghurt or sauce. For the sauce use an egg, cup yoghurt, two cups of water and 2-3 tablespoons of flour. Mix these ingredients and let them sit for 5 minutes. Pour over the peppers just before serving.



Ingredients: 1 kg minced meat, 1 onion, 1 egg, 1 slice bread, chopped parsley, black pepper, savory, salt, cumin

Soak the bread in water or milk, crumple it and add to the minced meat. Add the finely chopped or pressed onions, the egg and spices. Knead the minced meat until well mixed. Shape balls from the mixture. Flatten the balls slightly to make a patty. Grill on a pre-heated barbecue, turn periodically.

Meatballs



THE TYPICAL BULGARIAN FOODS

Honey



Bulgarian honey is very high quality honey, and its taste and nutritional values are impressive. The country produces many kinds of honey and bee products - acacia, herbal, pine, honeydew and poly-floral honey. The different regions of the country produce different kinds of bee products depending on their natural resources. Some herbs are found only in Bulgaria and there are also some rare or endangered plants here. This makes Bulgarian honey delicious and very unique. It also increases its healing qualities.

Bulgaria produces very high quality propolis with proven healing powers. Propolis has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties and also stimulates the immune system. The propolis produced in the region of the Ródopes is of the highest quality.



Yoghurt



Yoghurt is a traditional Bulgarian product. The microorganism responsible for the fermentation of the milk bears the name "Lactobacillus bulgaricus".

This dairy product has a very pleasant taste and is used in the recipes for many beloved Bulgarian dishes: tarator, banitsa, snezhanka salad and as topping for some main dishes as well as a soup thickener. In addition to its excellent taste, it is also beneficial to good health. Studies have shown that it has anti-cancer effect.

According to some legends, yoghurt has been around since Thracian times. The Thracians learned to add sour sheep's milk to fresh milk in order to make it keep longer. Therefore a product named "prokish" or leavened milk was created. Other theories associate yoghurt with the Bulgars and the drink "kumis", a drink made from horse milk.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



A Motley Culinary Festival to Visit my Town

This culinary festival travels around the country in a effort to collect authentic recipes and to acquaint visitors with the diversity and wealth of Bulgarian cuisine. Chef contests and culinary demonstrations are held.

Where: in Bulgaria. **When:** A Motley Culinary Festival to Visit my Town is most frequently held during the official holidays of the individual towns. For more information visit: <http://culinaryfestival-bg.com>

In Kyustendil some of the most delicious Bulgarian cherries are grown. The celebration of this delicious fruit is held annually in Kyustendil. At the cherry exhibition visitors are encouraged to try different varieties of cherries. They can also learn more about dishes with cherries - jams, compotes and pastries.

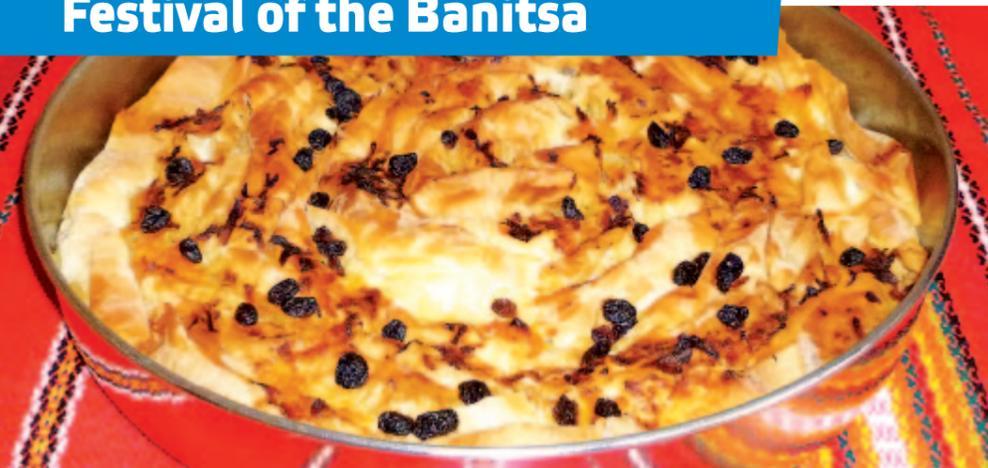
Where: Kyustendil

When: June

Festival of the Cherry



Festival of the Banitsa

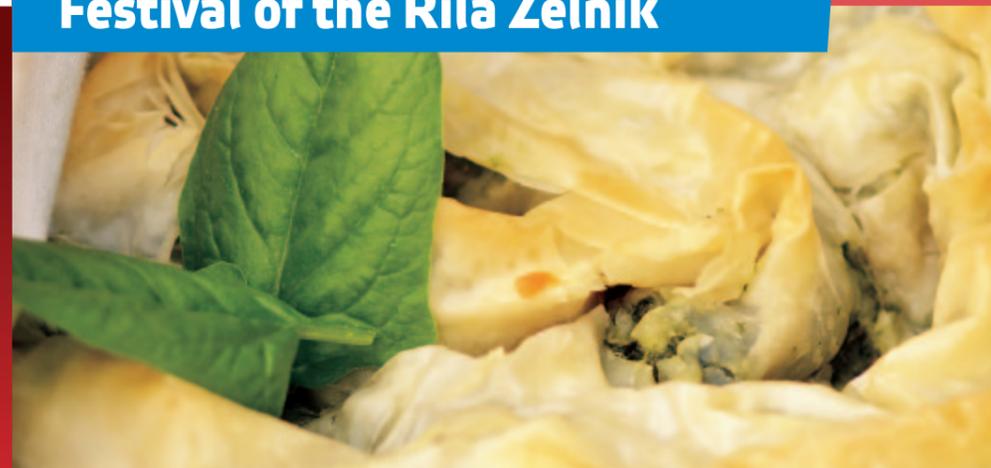


In the village of Banitsa in the region of Vratsa the Banitsa has been celebrated for many years. Naturally, one event is The Most Delicious Banitsa contest. Visitors to this festival can taste a variety of different Banitsa and enjoy folklore song and dances.

Where: Banitsa village

When: In May

Festival of the Rila Zelnik



(Banitsa with Cabbage)

An annual celebration of the zelnik is held in the village of Beli Iskar in the Samokov region. Local culinary masters compete to produce the most delicious zelnik. Guests can enjoy this interesting type of banitsa as well as other dishes unique to the region of Samokov.

Where: Beli Iskar

When: June

This annual festival introduces visitors to the town of Gorna Oryahovitsa to the sudzhuk - dry spicy sausage. It is produced in this town and has various culinary applications. At the exhibition visitors can try different kinds of sujuk and learn more about how it is prepared.

Where: Gorna Oryahovitsa

When: Late May



Festival of the Sudzhuk

To try different varieties of apricots and foods prepared with them be sure to visit Tutrakan. There an annual celebration of the apricot is held, where in addition to tasting different varieties of apricots, one can sample the famous Bulgarian apricot rakiya, the Bulgarian brandy.

Where: Tutrakan

When: July

Festival of the Apricot



Festival of the Yoghurt



In the town of Tran one can learn more about yoghurt by visiting the Yoghurt Museum located near (7 km) Tran, in the village of Studen Izvor. There is also an annual yoghurt celebration. Guests can sample genuine homemade yoghurt and dairy products.

Where: Tran

When: June

Sea of Wine



The coastal town of Pomorie holds an annual celebration and exhibition dedicated to wine. During the event there is wine tasting and awards are given to the winning wine producer.

Where: Pomorie

When: August

International Honey Festival

Each year the town of Nessebar hosts the International Honey Festival. It not only allows guests to learn more about honey and other bee products, but also includes workshops where honey producers exchange knowledge.

Where: Nessebar

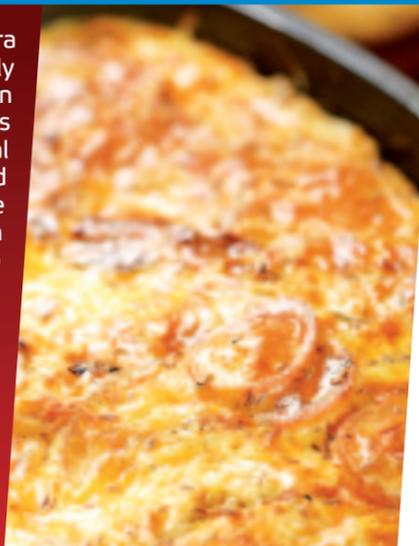
When: Late August



Festival of the Potato

The town of Klisura houses the only Potato Museum in the country. For this reason the Festival of the Potato is held there. During the event a visitor can try many potato dishes and enjoy an exciting folklore program.

Where: Klisura
When: October



Festival of the Plum and the Trojan Plum Rakia

In the village of Oreshak and the town of Troyan traditional celebrations dedicated to this Bulgarian alcoholic drink are held every year. Folk music performances are augmented by a best home-made rakia (Bulgarian brandy) contest.

Where: Troyan
When: Last weekend of September



Festival of the Beans

It is not difficult to guess that the Festival of the Beans is organized in the Rodopi village of Smilyan. Here a visitor can taste various dishes that have beans as an ingredient and can also buy Smilyan beans and enjoy an exciting entertainment program.

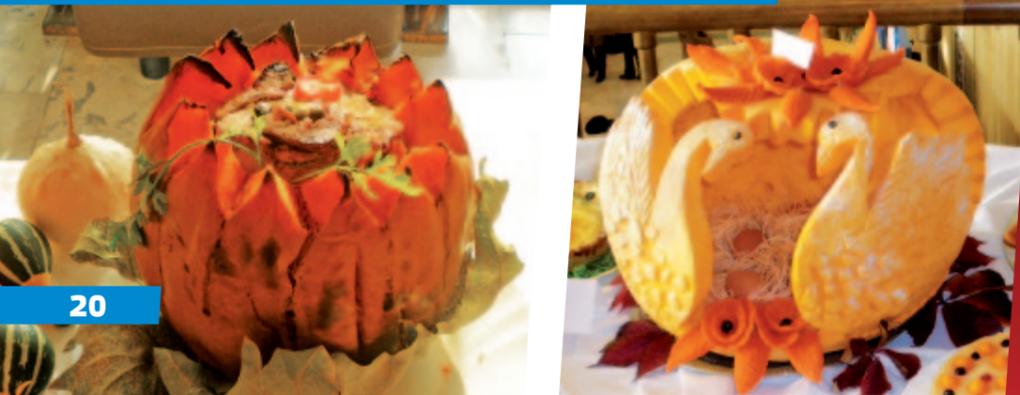
Where: Smilyan.
When: November



Festival of the Pumpkin

Pumpkin is widely used in Bulgarian cuisine. It is used to prepare tikvenik (pumpkin pastry), jams, creams and desserts. In Sevlievo one can explore these culinary delights during the annual Festival of the Pumpkin. Of course, there is also a largest pumpkin contest.

Where: Sevlievo
When: November



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GENERAL INFO ABOUT BULGARIA

Geographic location: Republic of Bulgaria is a European country, located in the Eastern part of the Balkan peninsular. Its Eastern boundary is the Black Sea; Greece and Turkey are situated southbound, its Western neighbours are The Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, and to the North it shares border with The Republic of Romania.

Climate: Bulgaria has a mixed Mild-Continental and Mediterranean influenced climate.

Average winter temperatures: 0 °C to -2 °C

Average summer temperatures: 20-22 °C

Territory: 110,099 sq. km.

Population: 7 928 901

Official language: Bulgarian

Capital: Sofia

Currency: Bulgarian Lev (1 € = 1.955 BGN)

Single European emergency call number: 112

Average height above sea level: 470 m

Highest point: Musala peak (2925 m.)

Time zone: GMT+2 (EST+7)

Main denomination: East-orthodox Christianity

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OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE YEAR

