

There is a lot to explore in Bulgaria – it has been in existence for more than thirteen centuries. The World Register of Historical Sites, established by UNESCO, includes seven cultural sites

in this gateway to the East.

Sofia, the capital, has been ruled by the Romans, the Huns, the Byzantines, the Slavs and the Ottomans. The Romans called it Serdica, and a large part of the ancient capital is underneath many modern buildings. Since ancient times the city was famous for its cold and thermal mineral water springs

“*The self-explorer,
whether he wants to or not,
becomes the explorer of
everything else.*”

Elias Canetti (1905 – 1994),
Nobel Prize winner for literature, 1981,
born in Bulgaria

At almost every step, as you walk around the city, you see the fingerprints of former lives and cultures: the Byzantine Rotunda of St George, the late fifth-century AD St Sofia Church, the 1912 gold-domed Alexander Nevsky Cathedral.

Veliko Turnovo was once the capital of Bulgaria, and its hilltop mediaeval fortress is one of the most recognisable landmarks in the country. At night when it is illuminated it really does have a magical quality about it. Not far away is Arbanassi, the best surviving example in Bulgaria of an Ottoman town.

WE SUGGEST:

Two nights Sofia, one full day with private guide to see the **Rila monastery**. **One night Veliko Turnovo**, **two nights** to unwind in the Musala Palace hotel, **Varna**, and a trip to **Nessabur**.