

SOFIA ADVENTURES

TRAVEL & ADVENTURE IN THE HEART OF THE BALKANS

Presents:

101 Incredible things to do in Sofia

I remember my very first day of Sofia sightseeing: I walked from an Airbnb in neighborhood Izток, passed Alexander Nevsky Cathedral and the Statue of Tsar Liberator, walked towards the Central Mineral Baths, and by the time I got to Serdica Station, I was completely in love with the city.

Since that beautiful autumn day, I've spent countless hours exploring Bulgaria's romantic yet gritty capital. Allison and I have chased our favorite things to do in Sofia, plus recommendations from a few of our favorite (trusted!) locals to help us plan our trip. We've included the best landmarks, monuments, architectural achievements, tourist attractions, museums, historic sites, tours, markets, and a few of our very favorite bars and best restaurants. If you only read one post before getting to the city, this is the one you want.



Alexander Nevsky Cathedral

Alexander Nevsky Cathedral is a stunning 19th-century Orthodox cathedral built in a neo-Byzantine style. It is named after the Russian saint Alexander Nevsky in honor of Russia's assistance liberating Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire. If you come to Sofia and only do one thing, make a stop by this lovely cathedral in the heart of the city.

Alexander Nevsky Crypt Icon Museum

Originally intended to be the resting place of the Bulgarian Kings, the space under the cathedral was converted into a museum in the 1960s. This museum is the largest collection of Orthodox icons in Europe and covers the entire history of Orthodox Christianity.

Antiques Market

This is an informal market which sets up daily near Alexander Nevsky Cathedral to draw in tourists after their visit to the church. There are two rows of tables full of items for sale, both new souvenirs and used and antique items from Bulgaria's past. Across the street, there are women who set up tables to sell linens and other embroidered items.

Arena di Serdica

Whenever there's a new construction project in the city, there's always a good chance that Roman ruins will be found during the digging process. This is exactly what happened when the Arena di Serdica hotel was being built – they found a Roman arena underneath! Visitors to the city can go in and see this piece of history, preserved under plexiglass.

Art Street Samuil

This street is a must-see for art lovers and collectors. Samuil, known alternatively as the art street or as the art zone Samuil, is full of galleries, art shops, and smaller museums. It's also the center of the local art scene.

National Ethnographic Museum (Ethnographic Institute with Museum)

Across the hall from the National Art Gallery, the National Ethnographic Museum is also housed inside the Royal Palace.

Covering Bulgarian traditions and ways of life, you can learn about Easter egg painting, regional costumes, and local folklore.

Banya Bashi Mosque

Bulgaria worked hard to forget the centuries spent under the Ottoman rule, and there aren't many buildings in Sofia that reflect this Turkish chapter in the city. However, it's impossible to ignore the Banya Bashi Mosque's presence in Serdica. The Ottoman mosque was constructed in the 16th century, and it remains a beautiful monument in the middle of the city. It underwent repairs in the last year that blocked some of the views, but it is now fully restored and the only mosque left in the city.

Battenberg Mausoleum (Memorial Tomb of Alexander I of Battenberg)

After Bulgaria regained independence from the Ottoman Empire, Prince Alexander I of Battenburg reigned as Bulgaria's first independent head of state in nearly five hundred years. Ruling for almost forty years, he eventually died in exile. His mausoleum is an eclectic mix of architectural styles, including Neo-Baroque and Neoclassical. The mausoleum was closed to the public during the Communist era to avoid celebrating the monarchy, but it was reopened in 1991 and underwent restorations in 2005. It is now open to the public and includes displays of some of the prince's personal possessions and documents.

National Historical Museum (National History Museum)

Another great museum, this one is housed in the former residence of the last communist leader of Bulgaria. This brutalist palace deserves to be toured in its own right, but it's even better with hundreds of thousands of Bulgarian historical objects on display. Since it's out in the neighborhood of Boyana on the foot of Mount Vitosha, couple a visit out here with a stop at Boyana Church or a hike on the mountain.

Borisova Gradina Park (Knyaz-Borisova Gradina) (Formerly Freedom Park)

Named after Tsar Boris III, Borisova Gradina Park holds many honors in Sofia. It is the oldest park in the city, the largest, and the most well-known. Proclaimed a monument to Bulgarian parks and garden art in 1986, it is a large, multi-faceted place with untold statues, corners, and pathways to discover. It's easy to lose yourself wandering through the beautiful space. Highlights include the lake, the Japanese Corner, and the Mound of Brotherhood.

See the full list here

We, the team of Sofema Aviation Services, want to invite you in our city not only to enjoy your free time, but also to enhance your aviation qualifications with our regulatory training courses. Our Training Academy is close to the city center and after 5 pm. you can have a walk and see all of the mentioned places. Please visit our website or email team@sassofia.com