



**Black Sea Cultural Animation Program**  
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**Bulgaria: Black Sea Cultural Heritage**

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## I. Customs and traditions

### Fire-dancing



In its full custom, this tradition is common only in some villages between Strandzha Mountain and the Black Sea, Burgas region, even though the fire dancing has become a popular tourist attraction and could be seen on specially organized touristic events. In its traditional custom it is practiced also in some regions of Greece. According to the tradition, the custom is made on the holiday of St. Constantine and

Elena, and sometimes also during village fairs and church holidays. The main event in the custom is the play in the fire (live coals). The whole village participates in the festivity, but the ritual play is done only by the fire-dancers. According to the beliefs, the fire-dancers are chosen by the saint, patron of the holiday. They “see” his image, “hear” his voice, his soul instills in them and in his name they see in the future, tell fortunes, they advise and scold.

The fire-dancing is hereditary. The main fire-dancer could be only the son or daughter of the current one, and only after he is too old or after his death. The house of the main fire-dancer is holy, because it has inside a place like a small chapel with the icons of St. Constantine and Elena, and around them are the icons of St. Mother of God, St. George, St. Panteleimonos, prints from the Holy Sepulcher and red handkerchiefs with drawn sun. In the chapel is kept the holy drum, which measures the rhythm of the dance. It is believed that it has a magical power and it could heal the one who carries it, if he is ill and this drum is not used on any other occasion.

On the day of the holiday, after the church service, everyone heads to the chapel, lead by the main fire-dancer and the priest. There, the main fire-dancer incenses the icons and the other fire-dancers and gives them the spiritual strength and the inspiration of St. Constantine. They beat the drum and with a bagpipe they play a special fire-dancing melody. Some of the fire-dancers are instilled (religious extreme condition,



trance) and start playing with the icon of the saint in their hand. After this everyone heads to a spring, bearing the name of the saint, and there they make a common feast with brought traditional food. After sunset they come back to the square and there they make a big fire, around which they play a dance under the sound of the bagpipe and the drum. When the fire gets down and becomes live coals, the fire-dancers start their dance on the coals. The fire-dancer plays his dance barefoot on the live coal and while he dances he can see and tell the future, and after the dance his skin is untouched by the fire.

### Historical recreation of the Battle in Varna



Since 2006 association “Chigot - historical restorations” celebrates the anniversary of the Battle of the People, which happened near Varna on 10.11.1444.

The ferocious battles from the last crusade against the Ottoman Empire are re-created near the sea under the motto “The last battle of the king”.

The recreation retells the march of Wladislaw III Jagiello and John Hunyadi against the Ottoman Empire - actually the last crusade of Medieval Europe; the reasons which led to its tragic end; the troops which took part in it as well as the course of the battle. The participants in the event demonstrate medieval armors, arms and the ways to use them. The members of the association and their guests present the final stage of the battle - the death of the young Polish-Hungarian king from the hands of the janissaries and the burning of the Czech fortification, covering the retreat of John Hunyadi.

Wladislaw III Jagiello remains in the history with the name Varnenchik after he loses his life only at the age of 20 on the battle field near Varna. In 1434 he heirs the Polish throne and six years later, with the help of the famous Hungarian commander John Hunyadi is elected as a ruler of Hungary. The march, organized by the two and blessed by the pope is the last realized attempt for unification of Christian Europe against the Ottoman invasion.



Members of association “Chigot - historical restorations” research and reconstruct all aspects of the ancient Bulgarian custom of living - crafts, warfare, clothing and tradition, as well as their promotion in Bulgaria and abroad. The recreation of “The last battle of the king” is the biggest event, organized by the association and the only event with a pure war direction.



The event is implemented with the kind support of Direction “Youth activities and sports”, Regional Administration Varna and Varna Municipality.

## July Morning



Each year, on the last day of June, one could see the way young and adult emotionally minded people head to the Black Sea coast. Real native followers of the hippie movement in America from the 60s of XX-century middle-aged, but keeping alive their young spirit, boys and girls looking for short adventures or simply curious to learn what is happening there on the first July morning, as well as many rock music fans - they all arrive at the sea to become part of the next July Morning.

Along with big bonfires, guitars and beer, a symbol of the hippie festival has become the title track song "July Morning" of the British group "Uriah Heep".

The July Morning is unique for Bulgaria because of the nature of its origin and could not be seen in any other European countries. It is believed that it started in 1986 in Varna as a protest against the communistic authority, represented in the symbolic of the song of Uriah Heep. The symbolic greeting of the sunrise was like a greeting of a new beginning and a better future for the first participants. Some say that the idea has already lost its original meaning, and that the young people are not always aware of the conditions, at which the celebration originated or even who the author of the song is. Despite this, the feeling of excitement from the first sun rays as a symbol of the new beginning is still the main reason why the people decide to be a part of this celebration. There are stories

about the relationship with the cult of the sun (as well as the teacher Petar Danov) and the marking of the Midsummer, which is grounded in the pagan traditions from ancient times.<sup>1</sup>

Among the popular places for greeting the July Morning in Bulgaria is the region Ogancheto near Kamen Bryag, where the sun first shines over Bulgaria.

## II. Cultural objects and sceneries

### Ancient Nessebar



The Nessebar peninsula - the ancient city Messambria called Messemvria in the late Middle Ages and later Nessebar, was inhabited thousands of years ago, at the end of the Bronze Age. The Old Thracians called it Melsabriya, which means "town of Melsa", the legendary founder of the settlement. Messambria has two convenient harbours - south and north, where even today there are many remains of ancient vessels.

Messambria began to mint its own coins around 440 BC, approximately since then the first minted gold coins are dated. The town had good trade relations with the polis of the Black Sea and Aegean Sea as well as the Mediterranean Sea. Findings testifying to the rich economic, cultural and spiritual life of this period are set out in the archaeological museum in the city.

In the late 6th century BC the first Greek settlers - Doric of origin, arrived. The city gradually expanded, built temples, schools and theater.

According to the legends in its existence Nessebar had about 40 churches. Data for 23 of them is currently available. And now due to the many well-preserved churches, especially from the period XIII - XIV century the town has been called by local and foreign researchers "The Bulgarian Ravenna." Almost throughout its history Nessebar has been a residence of a bishop. Thus, two of the churches - "St. Sofia "and" St. Stephen "- are more commonly known as the Old and the New Bishop Churches.



The cultural heritage of Nessebar is preserved in five expositions. The Archaeological Museum presents a rich collection of Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance exhibits.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://kamenbryag.info/ot/july-morning-fest/>

Because of its unique nature and very well preserved monuments from different eras on the seventh session of the World Heritage Committee in Florence in 1983, Old Nessebar is listed as a monument of world cultural heritage.

## Ancient village Fanagoria, Varna

The Ethnographic complex Proto-Bulgarian village of Fanagoria is a unique active museum of its kind in the country.

The complex is a copy of a Proto-Bulgarian battle temporary settlement of the 6-8 century and includes wood firewalls towers, furnished yurts, acting craft workshops, restored antique costumes, weapons, household items and furniture. A square with a temple is formed, The Khan's and the Religious leader's yurts, a shooting range and a stand for spectators.



The visitors are offered a guided tour, a visit to the yurts and craft center, archery, information leaflet and many souvenirs - copies of antiques. Visitors can look inside the old Name List of the Bulgarian monarchs, in which the names of the first rulers and their offspring are recorded.



The evening program includes a very interesting and dynamic horse show, recreating the proto-Bulgarian celebration of horses and young warriors. The show offers visitors the opportunity to feel like honoured foreign guests of the proto-Bulgarian tribes, visit the Khan's yurt, the tent of the first priest of the tribe. The guests have the opportunity to attend the festivities dedicated to the ancient Bulgarian celebration - the spring review of the Bulgarian cavalry and to witness the most sacred ritual in the history of the Bulgarian tribes - the dedication to a military rank and granting of a combat belt. After the equestrian demonstrations, the Khan invites everyone to join and celebrate with wine, music and dancing<sup>3</sup>.

2

[http://www.ancient-nessebar.com/html/main\\_bg.php](http://www.ancient-nessebar.com/html/main_bg.php)

3

<http://www.bulgarian-tourism.com/fanagoria/>

## Hesichastic monastery “St. Mother of Christ”, village of Voden



35 km to the South-East of the town of Elhovo in the land of the Bolyarovo village of Voden the ruins of the hesichastic monastery "St. Mother of Christ" are located. The founder of the monastery is the founder of Hesychasm in Bulgaria - an ascetic monk called Gregory of Sinai. Even though it existed for quite a short period (only 15 years), the Parorian monastery became a centre of Hesychasm. Hesychasm is a mystical trend in

Orthodoxy, according to which retreat, deep prayer and fasting can help one achieve union with God, who descends into the man. Hesychasm enjoys great popularity among the elite of Bulgaria at that time. Not long after the construction of the monastery Hesychasm became an official religion in Bulgaria.

The monastery has a very large contribution to the development of the Bulgarian culture. The literary activity of the monastery of Sinai consists primarily of translating hesichastic works.

The ruins remaining from the Parorian monastery make it clear that the monastery was fortified - one can see remains of the wall which surrounded it. The entrance of the temple wall was just opposite of the wall gates- originally built as a basilica. The church was painted with frescoes. The lower parts of the walls were decorated with painted plinth, which imitated marble. Back then on both sides of the dromos 24 columns were symmetrically located, now only the bases remain. The columns had an oval shape, achieved by laying bricks, each with a quarter-ring form. They were decorated on the upper and bottom part with marble capitals<sup>4</sup>.



<sup>4</sup>

[http://www.elhovo.org/zabelejitelnosti\\_elhovo/kulturno\\_istoricheski/manastir\\_voden/](http://www.elhovo.org/zabelejitelnosti_elhovo/kulturno_istoricheski/manastir_voden/)



## National archaeological reserve “Kabile”

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The National archaeological reserve “Kabile” is located 8km North-West of Yambol. In ancient times the city of Kabile was an important economic, religious and cultural centre in South-East Thracia and Lower Tundzha. It was created towards the end of the II millennium B.C. around a big cult center on the hill “Zatchi vrah” near the turn of the Tonzos river (today the Tundzha River).

Kabile was the capital of the first country on this land - the one of the Thracian tribe Odrisi. In ancient times it was also called Diospol, Diampol, all the way to the current Yambol.

The city was established during the second millennium B.C. and quickly gained power and strength, and the main reason for this rise was the agreeable climate, the natural defence, given by the river and the dominating over the plain hill Zaychi. On the hill during ancient times there was a sanctuary of the goddess - mother Kibela, whose name the city has. The continuous archaeological studies of the acropolis of the antique city Kabile, situated on the East cliff side of the hill show that the main premises were concentrated along a rock made monument in the base of the cliff.

The monument is probably much more ancient than the ancient village, which is turned into an open museum today. Many authors have written about the role of the acropolis as a sacred place and the relations between it and the city, located in its foot. There is a hypothesis about a possible astronomic use of the top side of the cliff sanctuary “Zaychi vrah”<sup>5</sup>.



<sup>5</sup> [http://rock-cut.thracians.org/bg/s\\_m\\_cabyle.php](http://rock-cut.thracians.org/bg/s_m_cabyle.php)

## Madara Rider, Shumen

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The Madara Rider is a rock relief, cut on 23 meter height on the vertical cliff of the Madara table-land. It is located only about a kilometre and a half away from the village of Madara, and 20km from the city of Shumen.

The relief represents in real size a rider at pace, an eagle, flying by him, a dog, following the rider and a pierced with a spear lion. Each one of these images has a rich heraldic content. The composition symbolizes a triumph of a Bulgarian ruler over the

enemy.

The composition of the Madara relief is completed with three groups of chronicle writings. One of them is above and it is of khan Tervel (VIII century), and the other two are below - the left one is of khan Kormishiy (VIII century), and the right one is of khan Omurtag (IX century). The time and the erosion have severely damaged the writings, but what is left of the text gives a clear idea of the content of the relief composition. In the upper text it is hinted that the rider is khan Tervel, however the researchers accept that it is related to the representation of a common image of a Bulgarian ruler from 701 until 831. The Madara writings, even in Greek language, show extremely important events from the history of the young Bulgarian country, established permanently on the Balkan Peninsula. There is a sanctuary in the cave under the Rider

The region around the Madara rider is extremely rich on historical sights. Nearby are located the Old Bulgarian capitals Pliska and Preslav.

The Madara rider is one of the five Bulgarian monuments, protected by UNESCO and included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979. The Madara rider is the only rock relief in Europe from the early Medieval times. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008, after a national survey, the Madara rider was called a global symbol of Bulgaria. It will be proposed to the Bulgarian government to put an image of the Madara rider on the first Bulgarian Euro coin.

## National archaeological reserve “Yaylata”

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Two kilometres south of Kamen Bryag and 18km North-East of Kavarna is located the National archaeological reserve “Yaylata” - seaside terrace with an area of 45,3 hectares, separated from the sea with 50-60 meter rock masses.

There is a cave ‘city’ made of 101 ‘houses’, populated during the V millennium B.C. Three necropolises (family tombs) from III-V century have been made in the rocks. Necropolis No1 was created around a carved sanctuary, facing the rising sun. In the north part of the “Big Yayla” is located a small Early-Byzantium fort, built at the end of V century. Four towers and one tower-gate have been partially preserved. Since antiquity have been also preserved a sanctuary, sacrifice stones, wineries, four carved tombs and others. During the Medieval times the caves were used as a monastery complex. There are proto-Bulgarian signs on some of the walls - runes, crosses and stone icons.

The region “Yaylata” has been called an archaeological reserve with a decision of the Ministry Council in 1989.

The discovered diverse archaeological materials - objects made of copper, bronze, bones and clay, as well as many coins, show that the fort in the region has been built at the end of the V and the beginning of the VI century.



The tomb instruments in the discovered three necropolises in the reserve, carved in the rock smooth table-land or in the vertical slopes are over 120. In the South part of the terrace have been researched several tombs from the so called cave type. They are in the base of the rock mass and are composed of small vestibules, through which one can enter the tomb chamber, which has a rectangular plan<sup>6</sup>.

With few exceptions almost all tombs have been robbed in ancient times or in newer times. The discovered tomb inventory - clay dishes, pots, cups, lamps, bronze and iron buckles, glass beads, coins and others date back to II-V century. The tombs were family, functioned for long time, and in some of them have been found up to 15 skeletons.

<sup>6</sup> <http://kamenbryag.info/yailata/>

### III. Expositions and fairs

#### Ethnographic complex “Old Dobrich”, Dobrich



The ethnographic complex “Old Dobrich” is located in the city of Dobrich, in its central part. The complex is located on the place of the former Odun Charshiya. In the past the crafts took an important part of the life in Dobrich, determined by the rich on resources region, the populous villages, as well as the fact that since its establishment the city is an important administrative, business and cultural centre.

The complex was created in the 80s with the aim to preserve the connection between the modern future and the old traditions of the ancestors. The complex is exceptional because of the fact that it has been preserved in the time of modern technologies and that it allows the visitors to touch the history of the people, to see and participate in activities made in the same way that they were done in the past.

The ethnographic complex “Old Dobrich” is an open museum with 25 functioning workshops, in which even today work craftsmen, who recreate the custom and the lifestyle of the population at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many diverse crafts are presented before the eyes of the visitors and tourists, who have decided to visit the complex. You could see: knitting, carpentry, turnery, tailoring, goldsmiths, embroideries, smiths, pottery, weaving, cooperage. Most popular in the complex is the pastry-shop, serving the traditional boza. The boza is prepared by an old Bulgarian recipe. Near the pastry-shop is the place, from where one could buy warm pretzels, also prepared by an old Bulgarian recipe.

There is a coffee shop in the complex, where one could try a cup of traditional Turkish coffee and a white jam, cooked on sand. There is a pub in the complex, where in a nice atmosphere one could taste delicious meals from the Bulgarian national cuisine.

On the territory of the ethnographic complex “Old Dobrich” is located an exposition hall, representing a school from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is also a restored clock tower, which has become the symbol of the old city.



## Ethnographic house-museum, Dobrich

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The ethnographic house-museum is located in one of the most interesting old buildings, preserved in the city of Dobrich. It was built in 1860-1861. It was restored in 1970. It was called an architectural culture monument. The ethnographic house is located in the centre of the city, near the church “St. George”. The house is on two floors with a big yard and lots of greeneries. There are seating places in the yard.

In its premises is the exposition “Dobrudzha national custom and old Bulgarian ornaments”. The collections of beautiful Dobrudzha fabrics, indigenous costumes and ornaments are masterpieces of the national art.

The house has several rooms and each one of them represents a different exposition. The expositions are made in a modern way in the form of recreations of the custom of the Dobrudzha citizen. The house has an exhibition of small, hand made dolls, dressed in traditional costumes. In two of the rooms on the first floor one could see pots, used for the preparation and storage of food. There is a diversity of exhibited farming instruments.

## Guest house “Maria-Nevena”, Bezmer



The guest house “Maria-Nevena” is located in the village of Bezmer, 6km from the main road Varna-Dobrich-Tervel-Silistra. In December 2008 the house was awarded by the Bulgarian association for alternative tourism with a certificate of Green House for the fact that it offers local eco products, takes care of the environment and actively presents the local culture.

The house combines an opportunity for recreation and a discovery journey. The guests can see the traditional Dobrudzha customs,

lifestyle and culture. The house offers live national music, the guests can see a recreation of a Dobrudzha wedding, as well as of the custom “rain prayer”. There is also an authentic collection, presenting the characteristics of the Dobrudzha crafts, objects of the lifestyle and culture. The rooms are furnished and organized like an authentic house, and where the functionality and the comfort of the tourists did not allow the use of authentic elements of the traditional old Dobrudzha house, they are separated in a different exposition. Inside the guest house “Maria-Nevena” are knitted objects of the old Dobrudzha custom, typical holiday and everyday clothing and musical instruments, some of them have only a decorative function, and many of them could be used by the visitors. The cuisine, offered by the owners is also made according to the traditional Dobrudzha customs.



Some of the nearby touristic sights include the Dry River canyon, a monastery with 100 year old history, game stationary, pheasant house, 8 micro dams with fish and a spring of healing water called Koru Cheshma.

One could reach the touristic sights walking. As an alternative the hosts offer exotic ride with a decorated donkey cart, and for the farther sights the company offers a car ride.

### Dobrudzha house, Dabovik



The owner of the “Dobrudzha house”, Dabovik says that she wants to show the typical traditions of the people from this region. Everything she has has been gathered from her grandmothers, who had received it from their grandmothers. Everything is authentic; there are shirts from 100 years ago.

In the summer the owner greets the guests in the yard, which she has turned into a cozy ethnographic spot with Dobrudzha table-centers, wooden tables, woven carpets and wooden dishware. The feast includes also typical Dobrudzha meals. In the yard, the amateurs from the authentic folklore group “Izvor” show how to spin wool, clear cotton and make banitsa. The old ladies from Dabovik sing authentic Dobrudzha songs and dance traditional dances.

Two of the rooms present the custom of the Dobrudzha resident. One can see here copper kettles, yokes, wooden spoons, swaphook, pitchfork, sickle, bread-trough, weaving

loom, hackle, machine for cotton clearing, distaff and everything that is typical for the Dobrudzha custom. One of the rooms is for the young family - in it is the baby cradle, as well as the bed of the couple and the obligatory icon of Virgin Mary with Christ.

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The typical Dobrudzha house has a double plan with rectangular shape, similar to the Shoppe house. The similarity is also in the entrance placements. It is common to see a non-marked vestibule along the length of the house. Sometimes there are asymmetric shapes in the plan, again like in the Shoppe houses. The roof construction has four eaves, which in the past were covered with reed or smashed straw, and in newer times with tiles. The floors are made of clay. The ceiling is constant in all premises and is also covered with clay. The main characteristic of the Dobrudzha house is the fireplace next to the dividing wall with the birck-laid stove on the other side, fired from the fireplace. The cellar by rule is halfway underground, because of which the living area is a few steps above the level of the yard. In this case the vestibule is encircled by low wooden railing. Often the cellar is also used as a cattle-shed. Its entrances are most often from the facade, even if they are underground.



## Cape Kaliakra

Cape Kaliakra is the end of a long and narrow peninsula on the Bulgarian North Black Sea coast. It is located 12km East of Kavarna and 60km North-East of Varna. The coast is steep with sheer cliffs, descending 70 meters downward to the sea. These are hard limestone and conglomerates, formed in an old shallow Sarmat sea. The iron oxides, which they contain are the reason for the crimson - red colour of the rocks.



Kaliakra is a protected zone since 1941. The reserve contains a land territory and aquatory with a common area of 687,5 hectares. The nature reserve has a unique nature and it is the only place in Bulgaria where one can see steppe grass communities.

The antique geographer Strabo, describing Kaliakra, says that this was the capital of king Lysimachus, one of the heirs of Alexander the Great and a superior of Thracia. In the Hellenic era on the inner side

of the land part was built a second fort wall, and during Roman times the Thracian fort has been enlarged. In 341-342 were completed round towers, there is already an outer and inner towns. During the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, deeper inside from the end of the cape has been built a third fortification with 10-meter walls, 2,90m thick. During archaeological excavations, done during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, on Kaliakra were discovered the remnants of antique and early-Christian necropolis.



The constantly increasing importance of the village in the late antiquity is mainly due to the incredible natural gifts, making its fortification easier and contributing to its transformation into one of the brightest creations of the fortification thought and practice on the territory of provincial Scythia. Thanks to the archaeological excavations, made during 20 years, the late-antique fortification system of Tirizis/Acre is thoroughly researched.

Cape Kaliakra is also related to the devotion of the local people to the Orthodox Christianity and the block against the pressure, done during the years by the Ottoman domination for religious assimilation of the local people. The most famous legend is about the 40 Bulgarian girls, who tied their hairs onto each other and jumped into the sea, so that they do not fall into the arms of the Ottoman invaders. One of them was Kaliakra, whose name the cape bears. Another legend is about St. Nicolas, the protector of the sailors. The saint ran from the Turks and God prolonged the land hardness under his feet, so that he could run away, and this is the way the cape was formed.



### Thracian Tomb in Kazanlak

The Thracian Tomb in Kazanlak is a brick-laid circular beehive tomb, located in Kazanlak, and it is part of a big necropolis, located near the ancient capital of the Odrysian Kingdom Seuthopolis. It dates to the end of the IV century B.C. - the beginning of the III century B.C. and is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1979.

The tomb belongs to the Thracian ruler Roygos. It was discovered accidentally during the excavations of one of the mounds in the Kazanlak Park “Tyulbe”, which looked like it had a natural end of a natural hill. The mound was 7m high, with a base diameter of 40 meters.



On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1944, while making a gallery for air-bombing refuge, soldiers from the Air Force found the Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak. Their curiosity made them break in, after which they entered into a low and narrow hallway with a fallen granite plate, and from there they entered into a circular overarched area. They realized that they have discovered something important and called an archaeologist, who confirmed their suppositions. This is how the memorable monument from the Early-Hellenic era was discovered in Bulgaria.



In the burial chamber were found insignificant number of objects, a sign that the tomb was robbed in ancient times. The tomb is made of bricks. In the dromos they have rectangular form, and in the dome space they are sectorial (trapezoidal). The sectorial bricks served for building premises with circular form. The bricks in the tomb are connected with plaster, made of lime and sand. In its architectural plan the tomb was an object of long studies by specialists and today we can say that it is one of the so called dome tombs<sup>7</sup>. Its world fame the tomb owes to its unque murals in the hallway and in the dome space premises - some of the best preserved murals of antique paintings from the



Early-Hellenic times. The walls of the dromos and the burial chamber are filled with artistic decorations, which take an area of 40 sq.m. It represents different moments of the earth, war and after life of the Thracian ruler laid in it. The results from the studies show that during the “coloring” of the tomb have been used two techniques at the same time - wet fresco and distemper. Widely used in the decoration is also the encaustic technique, at which the plaster gets a glossy, almost mirrored shine.

<sup>7</sup>

<http://vilibg.net/attractions.php?id=31>

## Mosaics Museum, Devnya

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The Mosaics Museum in Devnya represents Roman and early-Byzantine mosaics from Marcianopolis. During an archaeological research, which started in 1976, was discovered a big late-Roman building with mosaics (villa urbana), which was later turned into the museum.



The museum is built based on a project by architect Kamen Goranov, onto part of the antique bases of the building with mosaics. It is built at the end of the III and the beginning of the IV century (the time of Constantine I The Great) on the place of an earlier building (buildings) destroyed during the Gothic invasions in 250-251. With repairs and reconstructions the building has survived through to the beginning of the VII century.

The building has the area of a whole neighborhood (insula) with length of 37,15m (North-South) and width 37,75m (East-West). Its plan follows the traditions of the Greco-Roman atrium-peristil living area. Around an inner yard (atrium), covered with stone tiles, with brick-laid well in the middle, surrounded on three sides with covered gallery with limestone colonnade (peristil) are situated 21 living, farm and storage areas with a common area of 1402 sq. m. The walls of the living areas have been covered with colourful coat and mural paintings with plaster stucco. Five of the premises of the building and portico are covered with colourful floor mosaics - some of the best examples of the Roman mosaic art from that time, discovered in Bulgaria.

Three of these mosaics are represented in the museum on the spot (in situ) in the premises, where they have been discovered, and the rest, after conservation and partial restoration have been moved on a new bearing base.



The mosaics are made with classic techniques *opus tessellatum* and *opus vermiculatum* from small stones - cubes (tessers) from marble, limestone, clay and colourful glass (smalt) in 16 colors. They represent mainly characters and scenes from the Greco-Roman mythology, exotic animals and birds, plant and geometric motives<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup>

[http://www.devnya.bg/index.php?area=1&p=static&page=museum\\_of\\_mosaics](http://www.devnya.bg/index.php?area=1&p=static&page=museum_of_mosaics)

#### IV. Festivals

### International Youth Festival - Competition “Folklore Without Boundaries”, Dobrich

The International Youth Festival - Competition “Folklore without boundaries” is a yearly celebration of diverse and unique folklore traditions. It is implemented in Dobrich and the Black Sea resort “Älbena” and it is a representative forum, attracting Bulgarian and foreign singers, musicians, choirs, orchestras and ensembles. It is implemented under the patronage of the mayor of Dobrich - Detelina Nikolova and it is included in the national cultural calendar of the Ministry of Culture. Apart from the Municipality of Dobrich, organizers of the festival are also TA “Romantic Travel” - St. Petersburg, Russia, “Älbena” resort, The Association of the Bulgarian composers and the Association of the Bulgarian musicians and dancers.



Established in 2001, the festival aims to stimulate a highly professional craftsmanship and to motivate young performers to preserve and develop the folklore traditions in the time of globalization today. In 2011 in the composition of the international judges with head prof. Milcho Vasilev, were included well known musicians from Bulgaria, Greece, Russia, Macedonia, Romania, Turkey.

The Youth Festival-Competition “Folklore without boundaries” is done in two forms - competition and festival. During the competition solo performers and different ensembles of singers and musicians compete in their craftsmanship in three age groups and in 12 categories. The festival part includes five categories among which are ethno music, folk-jazz, Costume Theatre, concerts of well known Bulgarian and foreign guests, concerts of the international judges with head prof. Milcho Vasilev, art meetings, master voices, courses, expositions, presentations of methodical works, collections, CDs and others.

So far in the festival-competition have participated over 5000 performers from Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, Belorussia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, USA, France, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Australia, Latvia, Armenia, Georgia, Mexico, Russia and the autonomous republics Tatarstan, Kalmykia, Sakha (Yakutia), Udmurtia, Mordovia, Adygea, Buryatia.



## National Festival of the Kukeri - village of Kalipetrovo

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The National Festival of the Kukeri in the village of Kalipetrovo happens once every two years during the month of March and continues for one day. In 2011 the event gathered over 300 kukeri (mummers) from Bulgaria and Romania. The organizer is the local library “Probuda - 1940”, with the kind support of the Municipality of Silistra and the Council of Kalipetrovo. The goal of this event is to represent and preserve the kukeri traditions. The participants include kukeri groups from the villages of Dzherman, Kyustendil region, Bozveliysko and Dobrina, Varna region, Chargan, Kalchevo and Straldzha, Yambol region, Veselinovo and the Makak neighbourhood, Shumen. There are participants also from the villages of Varnentsi and Professor Ishirkovo, Silistra region. The kukeri groups from Romania open the festival, and the program ends with presentation of the hosts from the village of Kalipetrovo. The festival itself ends with a big common dance and many fireworks.

The kukeri tradition is extremely well preserved in the region of Silistra. Traditional kukeri holidays are organized by the residents of Aydemir, Kaynardzha, Professor Ishirkovo and other villages from the Danube Dobrudja region. Typical for the region are the black kukeri from the village of Varnentsi. According to a study of the ngo “A world for everyone”, related to the kukeri tradition in the village of Sredishte, Silistra region, the custom has been brought to the North-East Bulgaria by the Thracians, who came in this region during the Russian-Turkish wars. The implementation of the kukeri rituals is related to the work activities of the people and their hopes for a fertile year. The local tradition is passed from father to son, as well as the bells, which weigh up to 40kg. To be a kuker is considered a privilege. The presented by the Romanian guests traditions are typical Balkan and are recreated in some villages.

The festival pays attention to the authenticity and the jury gives prizes for authenticity, costumes, mass participation and rites. The uniqueness of the kukeri festival in Kalipetrovo however is not comprised only of authentic recreation of the tradition, but also of comprehensive presentation of the national aesthetics.



## Rose Festival, Kazanlak

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Every first week of June, in the city of Kazanlak is celebrated the Rose Festival. In 1903 the citizens of Kazanlak celebrated for the first time the Rose Festival, dedicated to beauty, flowers and charity. They collected things for poor families, orphans and old people. They organized rich expositions of flowers and roses, and organized hiking to the Shipka Monastery. They made special cards with views from the Rose Valley. Today the program of the Festival is still very interesting and

the visitors have the opportunity to witness the coronation of the Rose Queen and the traditional rituals of rose-picking and rose-boiling, re-created in an authentic atmosphere with good spirit, songs, dances and carnival parades.

Young girls and boys, dressed in traditional costumes greet the guests and decorate them with garlands of rose petals, offer them banitsa, rose jam, rose liquor.

After the festivities comes the festival parade, in which the most attractive are the participants in the International Folklore Festival, which is made during the same time.

Oil-bearing roses are of a big importance for the tourism in the Kazanlak region, world known as the Rose Valley. This plant was imported from the Middle East 300 years ago and is used for the production of rose oil since then.



## Festival of the Traditional Costume - Zheravna village

Since the summer of 2008 the Foundation “Balgare” in cooperation with the the Kotel Municipality, the Mayor of the Zheravna village, the Association “Zheravna” and “Bona Fide” combine their efforts for the establishment of an one of a kind festival which can be compared to a time machine - the Traditional Costume Festival. The idea of the organizers of the festival is that the visitors have fun, sing, play musical instruments and dance the way their grandparents did 100 or 150 years ago. The main element which connects all people who decide to visit the event is the traditional costume, which is obligatory in

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order to be granted access to the main square - the where traditionally public happenings took place in the past. The presence and participation in this festival guarantees an extraordinary, authentic and unforgettable experience during which one can taste cheverme (traditional lamb barbeque), old style appetizers, fresh cheese and sausage, bread that just got out of the oven and pretzels, drink rich-flavoured wine and rakia. Apart from the culinary specialties the guests and participants in the festival can enjoy the sound of bagpipes from the Rhodopa Mountains and traditional musical instrument from the Macedonian region, have the opportunity to see traditional wrestling, to get to know the costumes of traditional kukeri rites and masquerade games. They can hold their breath to the

performance of mystic fire dancers, to take part in ancient games and rites and get closer to the old masters and crafts...

Clothing from the early twentieth century, as well as traditional costumes of other countries are allowed. Officers may be with old military uniforms and weapons. During the festival the use of mobile phones is forbidden except in the designated places as well as the wearing of contemporary women's and men's handbags, luggage, backpacks, bags etc. For those who fail to get traditional bags, ones are sold at the festival. Any use of modern rugs and mats is forbidden-the organizers sell or rent traditional rugs and mats. Contemporary hats and towels, and sunglasses are prohibited, too. The use of caps, white handkerchiefs against the sun and headscarves is allowed.

During the festival Bulgarian folk dances are presented by the professional group, and their performance can be compared to the dances by folklore groups coming from all ethnographic regions of Bulgaria to demonstrate their lifestyle, culture, customs...<sup>9</sup>



<sup>9</sup> <http://www.folklore-bg.com/%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B8-%D1%84%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BB-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%84%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%B8%D1%8F-%D0%B2/>

## Kavarna Rock Festival



Kavarna Rock Fest was first organized in the summer of 2006 and since then has become one of the major hard rock/metal festivals in Bulgaria. The initial name of the festival was Kaliakra Rock Fest after the picturesque cape Kaliakra which is located about 20 km away from the small town and the stadium where bands from all over the world play in August each year.

The festival is organized by the Municipality of Kavarna in cooperation with Joker Media and brings together fans from all over Bulgaria and the Balkan Peninsula who are eager to see their idols live. The focus of the festival is placed on hard rock, heavy metal trash and death metal music. Over the years some of the most renowned bands which performed at the Kavarna Rock Fest are Heaven and Hell, Motorhead, Menowar, Alice Cooper, Slayer, Scorpions, Dream Theater, Accept, Sonata Arctica, Tarja Holonen and many others.

## Kavarna Fish and Clam Festival

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The Kavarna Fish and Clam Festival is a traditional event which takes place in the small town of Kavarna on the north-eastern coast of the Black Sea. It was first organized in 2004 and in the next 7 years has become one of the major culinary festivals on the Black Sea coast.

The festival takes place in the late summer, usually in September each year. The visitors, who wish to try the numerous fish and mussel specialties, may do so during a special celebration tents stretched in the centre of Kavarna, where chefs both compete and demonstrate their skills in the preparation of seafood.

Side by side with the professional chefs Bulgarian and sometimes even foreign celebrities demonstrate their cooking abilities and share special recipes with the audience. Traditionally, the mayor of the town Tsonko Tsonev cooks a fish dish by his own recipe.

For those who do not enjoy seafood that much, the festival includes live performances of famous Bulgarian and International musicians and bands which take place on the central square of the small Black Sea town and are free of charge.





## Spirit of Bourgas

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SPIRIT of Bourgas was first organized in the summer of 2008 but has gained large popularity despite its young age. This is the largest and most impressive musical event in Bulgaria following the rules and standards of Europe and conforming to the true definition of a festival. And the true festival is not only a sequence of concerts, held by various bands on one or two stages but a special happening at a special place and point in time.

SPIRIT of Bourgas means not one but several stages, various musical styles: rock, reggae and ska, jazz and blues, hardcore and punk, ethno, trans, techno, drum & base and more, some of the most attractive names from the world's musical stage, many of whom visit Bulgaria for the first time, high quality Bulgarian original music, played and sung by its creators, a festival town full of attractions with bars loaded with cold beer and fresh food, it has its own camping grounds where you can rest from the high powered musical marathon.

But most importantly - all of this is happening on a carpet of the finest sand and the most spectacular views in the World - the large shining moon reflected on the waters of the sea below a rain of stars, some coming from the august night sky and some of the stages of the festival.

The SPIRIT of Bourgas is the festival without rain, mud or dust but only soft sand, the warmth of August and the waves of the sea, the shrieks of the gulls, thousands of smiling people happy and relaxing...in short a party without an end!

Considering its young age, this festival has won quite a number of nominations and considerable praise.



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