

IN YOUR POCKET

THE BEST WAY TO REACH FOREIGN VISITORS SINCE 1992



FUROPE'S BIGGEST PUBLISHER OF LOCALLY PRODUCED CITY GUIDES

Contents

inyour pocket ESSENTIAL CITY GUIDES

GET THE IN YOUR POCKET APP

In Your Pocket City Essentials is available for Android and iOS from Google Play Store and the App Store. Featuring more than 45 cities across Europe, In Your Pocket City Essentials is an invaluable resource telling you about our favourite places, carefully picked by our local editors. All venues are mapped and work offline to help you avoid roaming charges while you enjoy the best our cities have to offer. Download In Your Pocket City Essentials now.







Arriving & Getting Around	3
Plovdiv Basics	5
History	6
Feature National Revival Architecture	7
What's on	8
Restaurants	10
Cafes	14
Nightlife	16
Sightseeing	18
Shopping	25
Directory	27
Leisure	28
Hotels	30
Мар	32



Foreword

Bulgaria's second largest city is home to the country's most impressive man-made sight: the incredibly well preserved Ancient Theatre sitting in the saddle between two of the 6 (originally 7) hills the city is famed for and providing a breathtaking view of the city and the Rhodope mountain range. Plovdiv boasts plentiful Roman ruins and an enchanting Old Town of cobbled streets and timber-framed 19th century painted houses with overhanging oriel windows. There is no better place for a relaxing, meandering day of sightseeing. Ploydiv is considered one of the oldest cities in Europe, its history going back to a Neolithic settlement dated at roughly 6000 B.C. It became an important Roman city in the early centuries of the new era and was fought over by Bulgaria and Byzantium for much of the Middle Ages. Plovdiv prospered towards the end of the Ottoman Empire and its rich Bulgarian citizens invested in the Orthodox church, Bulgarianlanguage education and culture and the vernacular 'National Revival Architecture' that we can still admire today.

Nowadays Plovdiv combines a modern and thriving city centre with the quiet and laid back Old Town, the lively developing arty district, Kapana and the long, wide main shopping street which is completely pedestrianised. In fact Plovdiv now boasts one of the largest pedestrianised areas in Europe.

COVER STORY

If you only have time to see one thing in Plovdiv then it has to be the Old Town, not least because this is where the city's best preserved Roman monument, the Ancient Theatre, lies but also to enjoy the unique atmosphere of cobbled streets lined with 150-year-old beautifully painted residences.



inyour pocket

Publisher

Inside & out Ltd.

Published in printed mini guide format once per year. Print run 10,000 copies

Editorial

Editor Paromita Sanatani, (+359) 888 408 647 paromita.sanatani@inyourpocket.com Texts Christine Milner, Paromita Sanatani

Desire Lead to the Area Fla Cost Livi

Design, layout and maps Flo Grafix Ltd.

Photography Inside & out Ltd. unless otherwise stated
Cover © Depositphotos.com

Sales

Milena Stefanova, (+359) 888 151 256 bulgaria@inyourpocket.com

Copyright notice

Text, maps and photos copyright Inside & out Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, without written permission from the publisher and copyright owner. The brand name In Your Pocket is used under license from UAB In Your Pocket (Bernardinu 9-4, Vilnius, Lithuania tel. (+370-5) 212 29 76).



Plovdiv is conveniently located on the Trakia motorway which runs from Sofia to the Black Sea town of Burgas and is about 145 km (an hour and half) from Sofia and 254 km (two and a half hours) from Burgas.

Plovdiv has its own airport, mainly used during the winter season but also with regular flights coming in from the UK via Ryan Air several times a week.

Many of the major operators fly in and out of Sofia, including package tours and low cost airlines such as Easyjet and Wizzair. There are regular bus and train services between Plovdiv and Sofia, bus being the faster option.

ARRIVING BY BUS

YUG BUS STATION (AVTOGARA YUG)

Next to the railway station, this bus station is used by coaches and buses running to Sofia, Varna, Burgas and to the south of Ploydiv.

Buses to international destinations (Istanbul, Prague, Bursa) also arrive/depart from here. ▶ bul. Hristo Botev 47, tel. (+359) 32 626937.

ARRIVING BY CAR

In all there are three exits for Plovdiv on the Trakia motorway, the second one (blue route 64) being the most direct if you want to get to the city centre. Past various industrial units and car showrooms - you will need to take a left at bul. Bulgaria and then right at the next roundabout past the Plovdiy Fairgrounds.

The speed limit is 50 km/h within the city limits, and 90 km/h on the main roads out of town. Motorway varies between 120-140 km/h depending on road conditions.

ARRIVING BY PLANE

PLOVDIV AIRPORT

Plovdiv airport operates year round low cost carrier Ryanair flights to London Stansted, Brussels Charleroi, Milan Bergamo and Frankfurt Hahn.

With no public transport to and from the city, your only choice is to use the local taxi companies - there are 4, approved by the airport authorities as reputable to wait at the taxi ranks. The fare into town should be around 10 to 15 leva. If you are driving, the car parking fee is apply 2 leva per hour with only the first 15 mins free of charge. Reasonable long term rates - deatils here.

A tourist info centre inside the terminal provides free maps, leaflets and tourist guides ► Krumovo, tel. (+359) 32 601 113, www.plovdivairport.com.

ARRIVING BY TRAIN

CENTRAL STATION (TSENTRALNA GARA)

About 1km from the southernmost point of the city centre, the Central Station is best reached by bus or taxi. ▶ bul. Hristo Botev 46.

Arriving & Getting Around

GFTTING AROUND

The city centre, with its numerous points of interest, is fairly spread out and that, combined with the hot climate, means you can easily exhaust yourself walking from one to the other.

One good way to get around the sights following what is no doubt the most logical route is to take the free walking tour that is put on every Wednesday morning and afternoon by the Tourist Information Centre.

Luckily there are cafes and bars literally everywhere so you can take frequent breaks. Bear in mind that you are best using the bathroom here, though unlike most Bulgarian cities Plovdiv does have some decent public toilets.

DRIVING IN PLOVDIV

Getting to Plovdiv by car is relatively easy compared to getting around by car once you have arrived. Much of the centre is with restricted car access, pedestrianised areas and one way streets. Street signs are hard to discover! To be honest if you book accommodation in the city centre (preferably with car park option) you do not really need to use your car, as most of the attractions are within walking distance of one another.

If visiting for the day, parking can be something of a problem, with most of the city centre designated 'Blue Zone', at a cost of 1 lev per hour. You can usually find a parking



Arriving & Getting Around

attendant selling tickets (the date and time need crossing off) but if not you can send a text message containing your car registration number by mobile phone (if you have a local account). One text message pays for 1 hour of parking. If you fail to pay your car will first be clamped and if you don't respond to that it will eventually be towed away. If clamped you should find a note on your windscreen with the number to call.

There are also several private car parks such as the one in front of the Trimontium Hotel or the edges of the Old Town, which charge 2 leva for each started hour, but generally they are safe and ideally located.



TOURIST INFORMATION

Two handily placed tourist information centres, one next to the Post Office and one in the Old Town, have a variety of maps and guides to hand out as well as leaflets for all kinds of events. hotels and restaurants.

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE 1 (TURISTICHESKI INFORMATSIONEN TSENTAR)

Right next to the Post Office on the central square, this tourist information centre has helpful staff who can answer your questions in a variety of languages. Free maps, mini cards of the sights.

A free walking tour sets off from here twice a day on Wednesdays at 9:00 and 18:00. The tour, in English and Bulgarian, takes in the main sights and lasts approximately 2 hours. > pl. Tsentralen 1, tel. (+359) 32 620229, www.plovdiv-tour.info. Open 08:45 - 12:00; 12:45 - 18:00. Sat. Sun 10:00 - 14:00.

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE 2

Situated on the main thoroughfare of the Old Town (pictured above), the tourist info centre provides advice, information, free maps and tourist information, including some rather cute mini cards with the sights.

▶ ul. Dr. Stoyan Chomakov 1, tel. (+359) 32 620453, www.plovdiv-tour.info. Open 08:45 - 12:00; 12:45 -18:00, Sat, Sun 10:00 - 14:00.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Plovdiv city buses are mostly reliable and the fleet is quite new. The ride costs 1 lev which you pay to the conductor on board. Don't be alarmed if they tear your ticket in two, this is some sort of validation. From the central train station, take bus N^0 20 or 26 to the city centre and the Old Town, or get off after the tunnel to enter the Kapana district.

REGIONAL BUS SERVICES

Plovdiv is ideally located for trips to many of the country's most beautiful attractions such as the Bachkovo Monastery, Pamporovo ski resort, Assenova krepost (a medieval fortress near Assenovgrad) and much more. There are regular bus services but these are really only recommended if you are travelling on a very tight budget.

TAXIS

Taxis are very inexpensive and offer an excellent alternative to moving around the city by car.

Taxis in Bulgaria are all painted bright yellow and are usually branded to a particular company. They charge by the kilometre, with an initial fee of anywhere up to 1 lev. Expect to pay around 50-70 stotinki daytime and slightly higher at night. Do make sure you have seen the price per kilometre and keep your eye on how the price is going up as you are travelling. Your taxi driver is obliged to display his photo and I.D. on the dashboard as well as a number for you to call with any complaints.

EKO TAXI

▶ tel. (+359) 32 6155/(+359) 87750 6155, www.ekotaxi.bg. **TAXI 1**

▶ tel. (+359) 32 6142/0800 1 6142 toll free.

VIOLET TAXI

Reputable company, modern cars with a/c operating fully licenced since 2005 ▶ tel. (+359) 32 6160/(+359)899 88 6160, www.viailet.com.

WHERE TO FIND YOUR FREE MINI GUIDE?

At the Tourist Information Centres (old and main town), Plovdiv Airport, Ritz Casino.
At the following Hotels; Bordo, Dafi, Hebros, Holiday Inn, Leipzig, Maritsa, Old Plovdiv House, Park Hotel Imperial, Star Hotel, Real, Sankt Peterburg, Trimontium and others.

At the following restaurants and cafes:

Amsterdam, Casa de Cuba, Dolce Mela, Gusto, Pavaj, Philipopolis, Raya, Raya's Kitchen, Tarte Flambee, Zlatna Krusha and others.



BASIC VOCABULARY

Good morning	Dobro utro	Добро утро
Good day	Dobur den	Добър ден
Good bye	Dovizhdane	Довиждане
Please	Molya	Моля
Thank you!	Blagodarya!	Благодаря!
Thanks!	Merci!	Мерси!
street	ulitsa	улица
square	ploshtad	площад
where is	kade e	къде е

CLIMATE

The best times to visit Plovdiv are spring and autumn when temperatures are usually between 15-24°C

Always a few degrees warmer than Sofia, summer can be very, very hot (35-40°C) though there is an abundance of shady outdoor cafes and restaurants to help you cope. Obviously most locals avoid going out in the heat from 13:00-17:00. The evenings offer great opportunities for outdoor events such as the opera and ballet performances in the Ancient Theatre. Thunderstorms are a regular occurance in the summer months, otherwise spring is probably the rainiest season in Plovdiv but rarely do the showers last for days on end.

Winters are cold and snowy but again not as severe as in other regions with temperatures rarely going much below 0°C

LAW & ORDER

In Bulgaria you are expected to carry a valid ID card on you at all times, this applies to all over 14 years of age.

The legal drinking age is 18 as is admission to nightclubs. For under 18's visiting rock or pop concerts (or other big public events) they need to be accompanied by an adult and if it is not the parent, a form needs to be filled out in advance and handed to security at the gate. These forms can usually be downloaded from the promoters webpage. Smoking is prohibited indoors in all public spaces, including schools, hospitals and restaurants!!!(The latter have found clever ways to by-pass these rules)

MONEY

The currency in Bulgaria is lev (leva - plural). One lev is 100 stotinki. Coins are 2 leva, 1 lev, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, 1 stotinki. Notes: 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 leva and still 2 leva (being phased out). The Euro is fixed at 1.95 leva.

You can get leva from banks and ATM's these days with small fluctuations on the fixed rate. We no longer



recommend Exchange Bureaus as not all are reputable. NEVER be tempted to exchange money with anyone on the street - you will be cheated!

Debit and credit cards are now generally accepted in most bigger and international brand stores, as well as in hotels and restaurants. Most smaller places still run on cash only!

PUBLIC TOIL FTS

Imagine how excited we were to find clean, working public toilets in Plovdiv! Somewhat of a rarity in Bulgaria, one is usually best advised to avoid them. However, we found toilets in the Gradska Gradina park and in the Tsar Simeon park. You pay the attendant a small fee of 50 stotinki.

Other toilets: Tsentralni Hali (Shopping Centre off main street); ul. Zhelezarska; Ploshtad Vazrazhdane; Bulevard Vassil Aprilov 15; Ploshtad Han Asparuh; Underpass of Central Station.

SAFETY

Plovdiv can be classed as relatively safe. Obviously all the usual common sense applies when visiting any tourist destination. Beware of pickpockets and keep away from dark, deserted areas at night.

There are no stray dogs in the city centre, nor are there any beggars to speak of. Likewise so much of the city centre is pedestrianised so that even the usual road hazards are less of an issue

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

1st January – New Years Day

3rd March – National Day

1st May - Labour Day

6th May - St. George's Day

24th May – Day of Slavonic Literature & Culture

6th September – Day of Reunification

22nd September – Independence Day

24th, 25th, 26th December – Christmas

History



PRE-HISTORY

6000 B.C. Neolithic settlement.

ANTIQUITY

342 B.C. Philip II of Macedonia conquers the city and names it Philippopolis:

72 A.D. The Roman general Terentius Varo Lukulus captures Plovdiv and gives it the name Trimontium (City of Three Hills), making it capital of the province of Thrace. Trimontium is an important crossroads for the Roman Empire (sitting on the main 'via militaris' from Constantinople to Rome) and Lucian calls it "The largest and most beautiful of all cities" in Thrace. The city prospers as is evident from the remains of Roman Forum, Theatre and Stadium today.

MIDDLE AGES

447 Sacked by Huns;

Middle 6th century Slavs are fully settled in the area;

681 Founding of Bulgarian state: Philipopolis remains in Byzantium and becomes an important border fortress of the Byzantine Empire;

812 Captured by Bulgarian Han Krum;

970 or 971 Plovdiv is recaptured by the Byzantine Empire and renamed Philipoppolis;

1204 – 1344 The city is subject to constant battles for power by the Byzantines and Bulgarians, at times also being ruled by Crusaders.

OTTOMAN RULE

1364 The Ottoman Turks under Lala Shakhin Pasha seize Plovdiv. The Turks call the city Filibe and make it capital of Rumelia; From 1364-1864 Plovdiv is a 'sandjak' (administrative district of the Turkish Empire within a province);

1382 Sofia falls to Ottoman rule and becomes the main city in the province.

NATIONAL REVIVAL PERIOD

As a trade centre Plovdiv plays an important role in the National Revival: its citizens were able to travel and trade with the Empire, bringing back new ideas and financing the construction of Bulgarian-style homes,

public buildings and, importantly, schools and churches;1836 First Bulgarian school established in Plovdiv; 1858 In the Church of Virgin Mary the Christmas liturgy is served for the first time in the Bulgarian language since the beginning of the Ottoman occupation; 1878 The city is liberated from the Ottomans during the Battle of Plovdiv

EASTERN RUMELIA AND UNIFICATION

March 3 1878 A preliminary peace treaty is signed with the Ottoman empire at San Stefano (near Constantinople), which foresees the creation of the Principality of Bulgaria including all areas with predominantly Bulgarian population. Plovdiv is chosen as capital and as seat of the Temporary Russian Government, Great Britain and Austria-Hungary do not recognize the treaty and hold a new congress in Berlin in the summer of 1878 at which they separate the autonomous region of Eastern Rumelia (with Plovdiv as capital) from the rest of Bulgaria. At the time, it had a population of about 33,500, of which 45% were Bulgarians, 25% Greeks, 21% Turks, 6% Jews and 3% Armenians; Spring of 1885 Zahari Stoyanov forms the Secret Bulgarian Central Revolutionary Committee in Plovdiv and actively conducts propaganda for the unification of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia; In early September 1885 a riot in Panagyurishte is followed by another in Golyamo Konare (now Saedinenie), resulting in an armed march on Plovdiv and the taking of the city on September 6. Knyaz Alexander 1 of Bulgaria approves the new government on September 8 and enters the city as its monarch the following day, dismissing the temporary government. Today the 6th of September is celebrated as the Unification Day and the Day of Plovdiv. The European powers only acknowledged the unification in 1886 after the Serbo-Bulgarian war.

RECENT HISTORY

After the unification Plovdiv remains the second city in population and significance after the capital Sofia;

1874 The first railway built:

1888 Rail link with Sofia:

1892 Plovdiv becomes host of the First Bulgarian Fair which eventually becomes the International Fair Plovdiv. First brewery is established in the city; 20th century Plovdiv grows into a significant industrial and commercial centre;

1943 1,500 Jews are saved from deportation to concentration camps by the archbishop of Plovdiv Cyril who later becomes Patriarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church;

1960s and 1970s Construction boom when many of the modern (high-rise) neighbourhoods take shape;

1970s and 1980s antique remains are excavated and Old Town is fully restored;

November 10, 1989 Plovdiv is a major centre of demonstration for democratic change in Bulgaria and earns the nickname: "the blue (democratic) capital of Bulgaria."

1990 Sports complex Plovdiv is finished, it includes the largest stadium and rowing canal in the country.

2014 Plovdiv wins the nomination European Capital of Culture 2019



he National Revival period of Bulgaria's history is the period when Bulgarians began to form their own identity and regain autonomy from their Ottoman rulers.

Starting in the second half of the 1700s the movement continued to grow in strength throughout the 1800s and culminated in the April Uprising of 1876 and the country's liberation from Ottoman rule in 1878.

In this period a new middle class Bulgarian emerged, accumulating wealth through trade with the countries of the Ottoman empire (the trade routes met in Bulgaria). Bulgarians began migrating from their remote villages back to the towns, crafts thrived. They funnelled much of this wealth and new-found self-esteem back into encouraging literacy, education, culture and a sense of national identity among the Bulgarian population. The Orthodox church, which had managed to preserve itself, hidden away in mountain monasteries, provided much needed spiritual guidance.

Plovdiv's Old Town is a living museum of the type of National Revival architecture that developed there (there were regional differences) in the early to mid 1800s. The residential buildings here are exceptionally rich, most could be described as mansions. They demonstrate a love for fancy decoration, bright colours and wall painting. One can imagine how proud their owners must have been of their archievement.

There are two main types of houses in the Old Town: asymmetrical and symmetrical depending on whether all rooms lead off symmetrically from one main central room (hayet) or not. The hayet was the main sitting room and the most elaborately decorated in the house, sporting a wood carved ceiling with a central sun and geometric shapes. Typical for the hayet are alafrangi (literally 'in the French way') wall niches with decorative murals such as vases of flowers or painted curtains creating a fake window.

Most revival houses are elaborately decorated. Walls, ceilings and parts of the façade were painted with floral motifs; ceilings, porches, doors and furniture were carved out of wood and painted.

By the mid 19th century Classicism infiltrated from Western Europe and the Plovdiv style is evident only as external decoration.

Public buildings also changed during the Revival period, having previously been the domain of the Ottoman Turks. As they took on more of the trade by the middle of the century Bulgarians started building commercial buildings. They erected clock towers, altering the town's silhouette, which was previously dominated by the minaret. During the Revival church construction moved from small to large scale, from plain ostentatious.

CULTURAL VENUES

DRAMA THEATRE (DRAMATICHEN TEATAR)

The drama theatre on the main pedestrian street has a daily programme of theatrical performances but these are usually in Bulgarian. There are occasional concerts and musicals that are accessible to non Bulgarian speakers. > ul. Knyaz Alexander 1 38, tel. (+359) 32 271270, www.dtp.bq.

EXHIBITION HALL (ИЗЛОЖБЕНА ЗАЛА) ► ul. Gladstone 32.

HACKAFE

Hackafe is a hackerspace & co-working space, run by it's members, established as an NGO. It is an open community where people with interest in software, hardware, startups, design and arts can collaborate. Regular events are held here. ▶ ul. Opalchenska 13, office 16, www.hackafe. org. Open 09:30 - 19:00.

HOUSE OF CULTURE BORIS HRISTOV

Venue for concerts, opera, theatre and art exhibitions as well as conferences and seminars. ▶ul. Gladston 15, www.domborishristov.com.

LUCKY CINEMA HALL (LUCKY DOM NA KINOTO)

▶ ul. Gladstone 1, tel. (+359) 88 920 0601.

MILITARY CLUB

▶ ul. Ivan Vazov 2.

NATURAL SCIENCE MUSEUM PLOVDIV

▶ ul. "Hristo G. Danov" 34.

SUMMER THEATRE ORPHEUS

▶ ul. Todor Kableshkov, tel. +(359) 88 764 48 53.

BALLET & DANCE

23.09 - 15.10 » One Dance Week

The International Festival for Contemporary Dance and Performance, **ONE DANCE WEEK** (previously Sofia Dance Week) already celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. Spread out over 3 weekends, the performances embrace the mission to colour the audience's brain. With a vision to expand the mind and to reflect on contemporary art as a source of universal message and awareness, the festival challenges our acceptance of diversity, love, revolution, secrets, and our deepening dependence on technology.

"Taking us through unknown continents, stories, traditions, technologies, and aesthetics, we rethink the globe and its political, geographical, social, ethnic and religious boundaries to build a new world where unity is a conscious adventure. We communicate through dance to reach an understanding beyond the power of words." > House of Culture Boris Hristov, ul.Gladston 15, 45 leva Festival pass.

23.09 19:30 » ODW: Huang Yi & KUKA

ONE DANCE WEEK 2017 kicks off on September 23 with the truly spectacular avant-garde show **HUANG YI & KUKA**. Choreographer Huang Yi dances with KUKA, one of the most advanced achievements of robotics. We will witness an impressive collaboration between a man who grew up without emotions and an industrial machine with human intelligence. Together they create a stunning representation of when people and smart machines live together.

KUKA by the way weighs 795 kg and will be flown especially from Taiwan to Plovdiv for the festival. The robot has numerous applications in production, especially in the automotive industry as this machine with a mechanical hand is capable of performing various complex tasks with great precision. One minute of the machine's choreography requires 10 hours of fine settings and programming! Definitely not one to be missed! > House of Culture Boris Hristov. ul.Gladston 15. www.onedanceweek.com/.

26.09 19:00 » Lezginka

Russian folklore dance spectacle from the Caucasus. ► C-2, Ancient Theatre, ul. Tsar Ivaylo, 15 -40 leva.

14.10 19:30 *→* ODW: Peeping Tom - Mother ► House of Culture Boris Hristov, ul. Gladston 15, 10 - 20 leva.

BUSINESS

25.09 - 30.09 » Plovdiv International Trade Fair

04.10 - 07.10 » International Meeting of Tourism

CLASSICAL CONCERTS

01.09 *→* Opening of Autumn Salon of the Arts • C-2, Ancient Theatre, ul. Tsar Ivaylo.

07.09 *→* Bavarian Youth Mandola Orchestra ► C-2, Ancient Theatre, ul. Tsar Ivaylo.

17.09 - 26.10 » Balabanov's House Music Days Autumn edition of this International Festival ▶ Balabanov House, ul. Dr Konstantin Stoilov 57, tel. (+359) 32 627082.

EXHIBITIONS

29.09 - 28.10 » Art Collage **Exhibition Hall, ul. Gladstone 32.**

FESTIVALS

01.09 - 03.09 » Shake that Хълм

08.09 - 09.09 » Trimontiada International Interactive Music Festival

08.09 Youth Chamber Orchestra 'Frank Marten Players' and movie projection 'Empress Elisabeth'

What's on

09.09 Vienna Chamber Orchestra ▶ C-2, Ancient Theatre, ul. Tsar Ivaylo. Every Friday & Saturday.

10.09 - 23.09 » International Theatre Festival 'Stage on the Crossroads' • Drama Theatre, ul. Knyaz Alexander 1 38, tel. (+359) 32 271270.

30.09 - 01.10 » Kapana Fest

Arts and crafts, fun and games in the Kapana district.

FILM

25.08 - 27.08 » Drone Up

As part of European Capital of Culture 2019 Plovdiv will host the second edition of the International Film Festival 'Drone Up' at the end of August . If you are fascinated by this amazing form of cinematography then don't miss this great festival in the heart of Plovdiv and see the world from a new perspective. • Ancient Stadium, pl. Rimski Stadion, Free, www.droneup-iff.com/

29.11 - 03.12 » Kinomania in Ploydiv

The popular Film Festival from the capital now also extends to Plovdiv. No further details available as yet. ▶ Lucky Cinema Hall, ul. Gladstone 1, tel. (+359)88 920 0601, www.kinomania.bg/en_EN.

FOOD & DRINK

22.09 - 24.09 » Wine of the Ages

Wine Tasting event in Plovdiv - Premium selection of the best Bulgarian wineries. ► Military Club, ul. Ivan Vazov 2.

24.11 - 26.11 » Young Wine Parade

As the name suggests this is a celebration of the current years wine harvest...and will take place in various locations across the old town

ROCK & POP CONCERTS

22.09 - 24.09 » Sounds of the Ages

Three nights of rock concerts in the magical ancient amphitheatre.

22.09. Devin Townsend Project and orchestra

23.09. Manfred Mann's Earth Band

24.09. Marillion ▶ C-2, Ancient Theatre, ul. Tsar Ivaylo.

SPECIAL EVENTS

15.09 - 17.09 » Night of the Museums and Galleries

Special Events, exhibitions, concerts and workshops connected to Plovdiv's museums and galleries, spread over 3 days for the first time this year at over 70 locations around the town.

On the first evening, traditionally museums and galleries will be open to the public from 19:00 till 01:00. For the first time this year visitors can enjoy exhibitions by Plovdiv's art

students from the Musical & Dance Academy of the Arts in the atelier of the Green and Blue School in the Old Town. Other attractions include the exhibition "Behind the doors of the UBB vault" marking United Bulgarian Bank's 25th anniversary, together with the Regional History Museum. The Museum of Aviation will introduce visitors to 'space', selected visitors will even be able to experience "space food" specially prepared for the event. Visitors this year will also be able to participate in a virtual tour of some of the world's most famous museums, thanks to Visa.

September 16th, the highlights include the world premiere of the American-born Mary Franck's "Liminal", the sculpting of space with light and sound. There will also be an Interactive Sensory installation at Nebet Tepe, performances by the Circus de la Lyulin. Saturday night the Fortisimo concert at the Antique Theatre like all other events is with free admission.

September 17th, enjoy afternoon workshops; walking in the city with special technology that changes the sense of reality and sensory perceptions, and more exhibitions and screenings.

SPORT

05.09 20:00 » Snooker Show

Ronnie O'Sullivan and Stephen Hendry Snooker Show Plovdiv Velodrome, ul. Naycho Tsanov, 60 - 150 leva.





There's no shortage of places to eat or drink in Ploydiv with some great new places opening up in recent years, particularly in and around Kapana.

Overall the quality of food and variety on offer is also improving although dining experiences can still be a bit of a hit or miss affair and most people opt for the safety of pizzerias of which there are plenty of good ones. We have personally checked out many of the restaurants here and encourage you to check them out for yourselves.

In the Old Town most of the restaurants are fancy and on the expensive side and there are few places to buy a snack. On and near the main pedestrian street you will find all manner of snack bars, cafes serving food, pizzerias and take away such as pizza slices, doner kebabs, cardboard cups of hot sweetcorn and more.



BULGARIAN

Bulgarian cuisine is tasty and surprisingly healthy. A meal will usually start with a salad, the most traditional one being the 'Shopska', a mix of chopped tomato, cucumber, pepper and onion topped with white sheep's cheese.

The main course will usually be some kind of grilled meat, though many of the restaurants also offer casserole-type dishes. Make sure to ask whether your main course comes with a side serving of vegetables and potatoes, known as 'garnitura', otherwise you may end up without.

ALAFRANGITE

Dating from the early 18th century, the house that houses this restaurant is required stop for premier offerings of traditional and broader European cuisine in Ploydiv's Old Town, with a snug, authentic feel within the interior and mercifully free of the latter-day kitsch of "traditional" restaurants. To secure a place in the charming summer garden, bookings are advised. Summer sees intimate classical music performances. ▶ ul. Kiril Nektariev 17, tel. (+359) 32 269 595, www.alafrangite.eu. Open 12:00 - 22:00. (10-25 leva). இ⊚ cc ⊗ ♠ ♠

PAVA J

Very hip and popular restaurant offering a fresh twist on Bulgarian staples. The relatively short menu is so refreshing after those restaurants that feel the need to present endless pages. Simple, fresh and tasty means Pavaj is busy nonstop from opening to closing. Enjoy the pavement dining experience and be sure to check out one of the mouthwatering desserts. The Bulgarian breakfast 'Mekitsi' are also recommended, especially after a night on the town. ▶ B-2, ul.Zlatarska 7, tel. (+359) 878 111 876. Open Tue-Sun 12:00 - 23:00. Closed Mon. ◎ ↑

PULDIN

High-end restaurant and cafe in the building of a Mediaeval Dervish monastery, featuring uniquely furnished and decorated dining rooms and large walled gardens. On one level the outdoor cafe features wrought iron garden furniture in a paved courtyard while below that a typical Bulgarian-style 'mehana' (tavern) has a large and leafy garden. Wall paintings show traditional scenes from life in the Old Town and a lovely portrayal of the whirling dervishes that used to entertain here. Food is international, with an emphasis on fresh fish. • ul. Knyaz Tseretelev 3, tel. (+359) 32 631720, Open 11:00 - 23:00.

STARIYAT PLOVDIV (OLD PLOVDIV)

INDIAN

INDIA RESTAURANT

INTERNATIONAL

AMSTERDAM

Large restaurant and bar on three floors with a traditional pub-style interior in the Kapana district. Shady outdoor seating is also available on the cobbled pavement. Amsterdam's menu features international cuisine and an impressive wine menu. A daily menu offers reasonably price cooked meals at lunchtime. ▶ C-2, ul. Konstantin Stoilov 10, tel. (+359) 899 406635, www.amsterdambg.com. Open 11:00 - 24:00. Closed Sun. 图 Moc Pr

GLUHARCHETO/THE DANDELION

This cosy yet fresh restaurant in the heart of Plovdiv is a little off the beaten track, but on a non-the-less charming street, and is definitely worth seeking out. The concept built around the fairytale magic of the dandelion, the



Restaurants

cuisine is fresh, healthy and yet not exclusive, combining traditional, seasonal and innovation with passion. ▶ C-1, ul. Alexander Ekzarh 15, tel. (+359) 893 677 748. Open 09:30 - 24:00. 徽 [() () () ()

HEBROS

Situated in an authentic Old Town house, the garden is the place to be in the summer. Bulgarian and International cuisine are on offer. Everything is top notch here. ▶ B-2, ul. Konstantin Stoilov 51, tel. (+359) 32 260 180, www. hebros-hotel.com. Open 12:00 - 22:30. (*) [CC (*) [7] [2]

HEMINGWAY

The extensive menu of contemporary European, Mediterranean and Bulgarian traditional dishes does not fail to deliver. A stylish interior and comfortable outdoor setting makes this an overall a good choice. Service is fast and professional. Good choice of Bulgarian and imported wines. ▶ C-2, ul. Gurko 10, tel. (+359) 32 267 350, www.hemingway.bg. Open 12:00 – 01:00. 🕸 🛦 🕝 🛇 🗇 🝱 🞟

MARMALAD

Dark designer interior for this bar/diner with chillout music and jazz. Menu offerings are primarily salads, some interesting sounding club sandwiches, pasta, and meat main courses. A large central bar creates a welcoming atmosphere and somewhere to sit if you are looking for company. ▶ ul. Bratya Pulievi 3, tel. (+359) 898 653 753, www.marmalad.bg. (5-20 leva). (*) o cc (*) 🖺

Very much an international restaurant with a wide range of deliciously cooked dishes for all tastes. Light and airy interior design in warm and neutral cream and white. ▶ D-3, ul. Kapitan Raicho 10, tel. (+359) 32 621 906, (+359) 887 447 389, www.raia.bg. Open 10:00 - 24:00. 🕸 📵 🚾 🗇

RAYA'S CUISINE

Long menu of salads, risottos, main courses and desserts and a particularly appealing fish and seafood menu. The Bulgarian speciality of barbecued meats also takes its proud place.

SYMBOL KEY	
	⊗ Non-smoking
★ Child-friendly	▶ Guarded parking
Central location	① Outside seating
c Credit cards accepted	♠ Pet-friendly
▶ Facilities for the disabled	Smoking
▶ Deliveries	
■ Fireplace	™ Wifi
Live music	

Light and modern interior with a lovely guiet garden for the summer months. ▶ D-2, pl. Tsentralen 1, tel. (+359) 877 883 900, (+359) 32 398 999, www.raia.bg. 🕸 🎯 🚾 🖎 🖹 🖺

SMOKINI

It is always a delight when you walk past a place where once there was an old run down restaurant, to find something new and exciting has taken shape. Such is the case with 'Smokini' - which recently opened right in the town centre. Trendy new interior design, with several distinct dining areas and a large sheltered balcony on the upper floor all invite you to relax and enjoy a menu that offers enough variety to please everyone from carnivore to vegan. ▶ C-2, ul. Otets Paisy 12, www.smokini.bg/en. Open 11:00 - 23:45.

TARTE FLAMBEE D'ALSACE

The menu of this charming little bistro, near the junction of the Old Town and Kapana, is based on the French/German (from the Alsace region) counterpart to the pizza 'Tarte Flambee'. Served on large branded wooden paddles, fresh from the oven, these thin crispy dough bases have a sour cream sauce base, usually topped with herbs, onions and bacon. Great for sharing before a night on the town! Being a French bistro, you will also find other traditional French dishes on the menu including baquettes, escargots, French onion soup, creme brulee and 'Absinthe' alcohol. Weekday lunch specials. Very reasonably priced. ▶ C-2, ul. Kiril Popov 2, tel. (+359) 879 933 793, www.tartflambe.com. Open Tue-Sun 11:00 - 23:00. Closed Mon. (2) @ (2) (7) @ (2)

TORRO GRANDE

This large dining facility seems to offer something for everyone's taste at all times of the day. The main focus is on grilled meats, using the 'Mibrasa' closed grills. The picture menu is beautifully presented; salads, appetisers, grilled meat, fish, seafood, pizza and more. > ul. Kapitan Raycho 66, www. torrogrande.com/. Open 07:00 - 02:00. 🕸 📵 🚾 🐠

ITALIAN

FRESH PASTA (PRIASNA PASTA)

In close proximity to the main pedestrian street, this charming eatery offers fresh homemade pasta, bruschetta, salads, sandwiches and homemade desserts accompanied by a good selection of wine and beer. Dining is available at high and standard tables. The service is fast and friendly. In all a great place for tasty fast food at very reasonable prices - what more could one ask for? ▶ B-1/2, ul. Opalchenska 12, tel. (+359) 877 877 658. Open 10:00 - 23:00, Also at Trakia, blok 173 (complex Gerbera).

MEDITERRANEAN

GREBETSA

Bulgarian/Greek cuisine just an oar's throw away from Plovdiv's rowing lake. Occasional live music outdoors in summer is not intrusive. For winter, the interior is large but cosy. Try the lamb or beef kepapcheta. ▶ul. Yasna Polyana 1, Rowing Lake, tel. (+359) 32 642333, www.grebeca.com. Open 11:00 - 01:00. (8-28 leva). 🕸 🛦 🚾 🖟 🖎 📬 🕒

LA VERANDA

Up-market restaurant in a great location, overlooking the beautiful new cascading waterfall. With the emphasis on fish, you can choose your own from the large display of freshly caught fish inside or one of the dishes from the menu. Pricey but worth it. Enjoy the 'verandah' and the view down the pedestrian area below. ▶ C-2, ul. Nayden Gerov 5, tel. (+359) 877 880 966, www.laveranda.bg. Open 12:00 - 23:00. (<a href=

MEMORY

The central location belies the somewhat rustical interior with red, orange and vellow drapery. The atmosphere is light and pleasant with background music that is truly background. The attentive staff rushes to greet you at the door. A large wine display and delicious menu of primarily Mediterranean cuisine with an emphasis on fish and herbs, though we did also spot horse meat on offer! Large outdoor seating area in the courtyard. ▶ Pl. Saedinenie 3, tel. (+359) 32 626103, www.memorybg.net. Open 11:00 - 01:00. (5-25 leva). இ⊚ cc இ 🗇 🐨

PHILIPPOPOLIS RESTAURANT AND GARDEN

Attracting food and wine connoisseurs with its fusion of national flavours and international delicacies, as well as an impressive wine list. Restaurant Philippopolis, at the entrance of Old Plovdiv, is a magical place to visit. Its garden, perched on an Ancient Roman wall, offers a wonderful city view. Whether you're looking for an elegant dinner, a light midday meal or a special dessert, you won't regret stopping by. Nominated for the Restaurant of the Year Award in 2014. ▶ C-2, ul. Saborna 29, tel. (+359) 32 624851, www. philippopolis.com. Open 10:00 - 24:00.

SALT & PEPPER

Cosy and classy restaurant near the Maritsa river, in the business district of the city. Creative dishes, beautifully presented, very tasty. The evening menu is nearly all meat (including horse) although there are also vegetarian starters. Our own positive dining experience here was endorsed by members from the local business community who all praised the restaurant for its consistently high standards. ▶ B-2, ul. Han Kubrat 1, tel. (+359) 884 999 799, www.saltpepper.bg.

TRATTORIA IL MAESTRO GIUSEPPE VERDI

Genuine Italian cuisine from chef Marco Luchiari at this cosy trattoria just over the river from the main sights. With its warm atmosphere and friendly service, the emphasis is on fresh Italian cuisine at reasonable prices. Don't miss one of the frequent thematic evenings featuring the cuisine of a specific Italian region when you can try out regional specialities. ▶ A-1, ul. Polkovnik Bonev 1, tel. (+359) 882 660 209, www. trattoria.bg. Open 11:30 - 23:00. (*) 🕝 🖎 🗇 💷

MIDDLE EASTERN

EREVAN

An institution for its traditional Armenian cuisine, Erevan is an ideal stop for lunch or supper close to Plovdiv's main shopping street. The menu also offers Bulgarian standards but the point is to sample the dishes that make this place unique - the Erevan salad (enough for two), mantu, keshkek, masis pancake. ▶ ul. Otets Paisii 15, tel. (+359) 89 8658839. Open 09:00 – 23:00. (5 – 15 leva). 🕸 📵

Tiny corner restaurant serving simple but good Turkish food, always busy. Pop in for a bite or take away. ▶ ul. Zhelezarska 13.

PIZZA

GUSTO RISTORANTE & PIZZA

The interior, in the vintage - shabby chic style, delivers a strong statement. On the lower ground floor there is a large dining area suitable for private parties up to 45 people with stunning frescoes by the well known Bulgarian artist Svilen Blazhev. Outdoor seating is screened from the pedestrian walkway by a row of potted plants. The cuisine is predominantly Italian; fresh pasta, lasagna and a large selection of original oven pizza. ▶ C-2, ul. Otets Paisii 26, tel. (+359) 32 623711, www.gustobg.com/en. Open 11:00 - 0:00. (*) OCC (*) (*) (*) (*)

TRATTORIA LA STRADA PIZZERIA

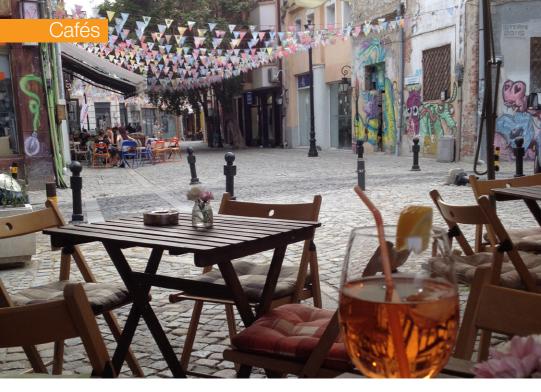
Sometimes it is worth venturing away from the 'touristy' centre - La Strada is a case in point. Italian cuisine in a homely intimate atmosphere with a delicious selection of pizzas, freshly prepared and baked in front of you. Attentive, friendly service. ▶ bul. Vassil Aprilov 116, tel. (+359) 888 699 211, www.trattoria-lastrada.bg. Open 12:00 -23:00. 徽州区沪沪广州咖

VERDI

A chain of popular pizzerias in Plovdiv, with the Naiden Gerov restaurant close to the landmark municipal city hall and the main shopping street. Amid the relaxed atmosphere of the large outdoor seating area, choose from among the largest selection of pizzas in the city, while safely at the rear of the restaurant, the children have a large, clean playground at their disposal. Pizzas range in size up to more than a kg!!! ► C-2, ul. Naiden Gerov 19, tel. (+359) 882 660 220, www.verdi.bg. Open 11:30 - 23:00. Other locations include: ul. Petko D. Petkov 41, bul. Osvobojdnie 39A and ul.Skopje 1A. ∰ ♠ ◎ cc 🏲 🌣 🕆 💵

ZLATNA KRUSHA

A wide range of choices from fish, seafood, Mediterranean salads and main course dishes as well as pizza and pasta. The oldest restaurant in Plovdiv, dating back to 1929, it has a traditional interior. ▶ C-2, ul. Otets Paisiy 30 and ul. Konstantin Velichkov 2, tel. (+359) 886 471 777, www.zlatnakrusha. com. Open 11:00- 24:00. இ © CC (*) (*) (*) (*) (*)



Having coffee in Plovdiv appears to be a must - several times a day, and there is no shortage of places to choose from in the Kapana district and in the pedestrian zone. Within the old town there are fewer options although there is a kiosk at the Ancient theatre selling coffee and drinks and there are some tables and chairs where you can relax and take in the stunning view. Listed here are a variety of cafes, each with their own charm and appeal.

CAFES

AFREDDO CREAMERY

On the central square opposite the Post Office and the Tourist Info Centre, this ice cream parlour has a large outdoor seating area and offers a wide menu of ice cream-based desserts, coffee, cakes and so on. Afreddos produces its own delicious ice creams from real milk and fresh fruit to Italian recipes. Ful. Gladston 2, tel. (+359) 32 627633, www.afreddo.com. Open 08:00 - 22:00.

COFFEE & GALLERY CU29

Contemporary art gallery and coffee shop in Kapana with a charming historic twist in that the current owner's great grandfather, the coppersmith Petar Tolev had his workshop on this site. The name is a homage to him and with the exhibition space the transition from arts and crafts to contemporary arts is complete. The arty and yet cosy self serve cafe offers excellent coffee and cakes, craft beers and other drinks. **B-2**, ul.Hristo Dyukmedzhiev 24, tel.

+(359) 88 537 0033, www.cutwentynine.com. Open 09:00 - 00:00. ◎ ↑

DA, ZA TEB

All the food on offer in this cafe/shop is home-made with products from a local dairy: cheese pastries, quiches, desserts and salads. Local wines are also available.

The fairly spacious, modern interior has bar stool seating at high tables or normal height tables at the back where the wines are displayed. You can also sit at a long bar table on the pavement with a view to the park opposite. ▶ ul. Raiko Daskalov 57 A. (2-6 leva). ③ ③ ↑ □ ⑥

DOLCE FELLINI

DZHUMAYA DZHAMIYA

Right in front of the Dzhumaya Mosque, this has to be the ultimate place to enjoy an authentic Turkish coffee with byalo sladko (the white syrup in a glass it is served with) and sweet treats like baklava and halva while watching the world go by. They have a second, less attractive location

next to the Star Hotel. The ancient Roman Stadium is right next door. ▶ C-2, ul. Zhelezarska 2.

KINOCAFE

Close to the railway station this cafe, as the name suggests, is located in an old cinema and has its own unique retro ambience, with over 100 books stacked along the bar area. On offer a great selection of coffee, drinks (both healthy smoothies or alcoholic cocktails), soup of the day, banitsa, cakes and more. Also hosts regular events such as a Hippie Bazaar 24 - 25.06.17 ▶ E-1, bul.Vasil Aprilov 3, tel. +(359) 87 850 1216. Open 08:00 - 22:00. [↑]

KOTKA I MISHKA

This ultra hip beer bar in the heart of Kapana is proving to be a popular congregation point for locals and visitors alike. Expansive selection of beers from around the world.

• B-2, ul. Hristo Dyukmedzhiev 14. Open 10:00 - 0:00.

MALKATA BIBLIOTEKA

Small hip coffee bar with pavement seating offering not only fresh coffee but also a small selection of smoothies and other health drinks. > B-2, ul.Hristo Dyukmedzhiev 12, tel. (+359) 888 938 075.

MONKEY HOUSE

Trendy cafe/cocktail bar in the Kapana district. Young, enthusiastic staff, bright colours and quirky details. Pavement seating plus two levels of seating indoors with plenty of electrical outlets for recharging exhausted phones and a great choice of coffee and daily fresh homemade desserts to recharge you! ▶ B-2, ul.Zlatarska 3, tel. (+359) 889 678 333. Open 10:00 - 23:00.

ORFEI

Next to the summer outdoor cinema, this 140-seater bar and coffee place offers a shaded retreat by day and a popular gathering place by night, with the slope of the hill as its back garden. A small and safe play area keeps children amused. ▶ Sahat Tepe, ul. Todor Kableshkov, tel. (+359) 32 633637. Open 09:00 - 01:00. (5 – 10 leva).

OTSRESHTA

Cafe/ bar with attention to local food and drink; 'Otsreshta', which in Bulgarian means as much as 'across from you', provides a creative environment, offering a variety of craft workshops, as well as exhibitions by young local artists and other cultural events. ▶ B-1, ul.Beethoven 12, tel. (+359)88 491 3567. Open 09:00 - 23:00.

TEA HOUSE

In the heart of the Kapana district this tea-house was established in 2005. The selection includes over 200 types of teas from all around the world, including special and rare varieties. Pop in for a cup of tea or buy loose tea leaves to take home with you. > ul. Abadjiyska 10, tel. (+359) 887 434 722, www. teahouseplovdiv.com. Open Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri 10:00-19:00, Sat 10:00 - 15:00. Closed Sun. 图 [] [] []

VINTAGE HOUSE

Just one step from the House of Culture "Boris Hristov" (actually it's in the same building) you will find this cafe with a good selection of drinks and nice snacks - salads and sandwiches, a large terrace and very good service. Also hosts live music. • ul. Gladston 15.

PATISSERIES AND BAKERIES

It is always a joy to find a place to stop for an afternoon treat - whether it's coffee and cake or ice cream. Many of the restaurants only carry a limited selection of desserts, so these are a much better bet - if you are having sweet cravings.

DOLCE MELA (PASTICCERIA)

This place is divine temptation; cakes, pastries, sweets and ice cream made to French and Italian recipes, using only the finest ingredients such as French cream, top quality Belgian chochate and German or French butter. Simply mouthwatering - the creations at 'Dolce Mela' tantalise all senses. There is enough seating to enjoy a piece of cake with a cup of coffee or take a refreshing break from sightseeing with some ice cream made to the original recipe of Master Giuseppe from Sicily. Speciality cakes made to order. Two locations in Plovdiv - the other ul. Neofit Rilski 17A (by the bridge near the Novotel) • C-1, ul. Preslav 34, tel. (+359) 895 562 822, www.dolcemela.bg/. Open Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri 08:00 - 20:00, Sat 09:00 - 20:00, Sun 11:00 - 19:00.

HLEBARNITSA KAPANA

This is another one of those places you just do not walk past! Everyone loves the smell of freshly baked bread, and here you will find on any given day up to 10 different types of bread - made using only the best ingredients from France and baked on the premises in the special wood burning oven. Add to that a selection of delicious cookies, cakes, pastries and croissants as well as baguette sandwiches and you can see why this is an address to remember. There are tables and chairs in the spacious lobby where you can enjoy the bakery products with a glass of juice or a cup of coffee.

▶ B-2, ul. Yoakim Gruev 20, tel. +(359) 88 233 0773. Open 09:00 - 19:00. Closed Sun.



Niahtlife

The best clubs and bars are located in the Kapana district or in the vicinity of the universities. Most places move outside in the summer months when the temperatures remain high throughout the night.

Our categories are very loose as so many of these places double up as cafe/bar/restaurant during the day and night club at night that defining them is virtually impossible.

BARS

Wine and cocktails are popular drinks, as of course is beer, of which there are some excellent Bulgarian brands. You'll be surprised at the price of locally produced spirits, which can be as low as 2 leva a shot for local whisky, gin, teguila and ouzo, though our advice is to stick with what you know!

Small cosy bar with some pleasant outdoor seating, open all day for coffee and drinks. > ul. Hristo Dyukmedzhiev. Open 08:00 - 0:00.

APARTMENT 101

Arty cafe/bar overlooking the main square. Don't be put off by the exterior of the house, which looks a bit run down. Inside is a great place to chill out in velvet armchairs or mid-Century modern plastic - something for every taste. Lounge music is a big part of the scene here, as is friendly and welcoming service. Live music and other events. ▶ ul. Gladston 8, tel. +359 89 445 5914. Open 10:00 - 01:00, Fri-Sat 10:00 - 02:00.

ART NEWS CAFE

Art news cafe is a cosy urban place, offering drinks, art-information and interesting happenings ▶ Otets Paisiy 38.

BERIOZKA

Black padded walls, neon lighting and cocktails galore. The lovely garden makes it a good choice for the summer months. Live music (usually local rock and metal bands) on Saturday evenings. ▶ ul. Ivan Vazov 25, tel. (+359) 32 578 421. Open 07:30 - 02:00. 🗇

BIBLIOTEKA

Bar and dance club with a variety of music styles such as rock, funk, disco. Frequent live bands, primarily Bulgarian rock. ▶ ul.Lady Strangford 5.

CASA DE CUBA

Ceiling fans, slatted blinds, swaying palms, Latino music and great cocktails. This is Casa de Cuba. The interior features dark wood and leather furniture, a long bar with rows of original Cuban rum and a black and white Cuban photo gallery. Away from the city centre, best to get a taxi. > bul. Vassil Aprilov 118, tel. (+359) 32 649604, www.casadecuba.bg. Open 07:30 - 01:30, Sun 09:30 - 01:30. (*) CC (*)

FABRIC

Open air bar and music club in the very centre of the city. Live music, Dj parties, occasional 'big' football matches and 14:00 every Sunday in the summer - it's Barbeque time - mixed grill. Bar food, home made lemonade and cocktails. ▶ C-2, ul. Otets Paisiy 31, tel. (+359) 89 871

FARGO

Some of the best cocktails we have tried in Plovdiv, close to the City Garden with lovely terrace. Also hosts temporary art exhibitions and regular DJ nights. ▶ D-1/2, ul. Gladston 1, tel. (+359)87 720 0607. Open 09:00 - 24:00.

KOTKA I MISHKA

This ultra hip beer bar in the heart of Kapana is proving to be a popular congregation point for locals and visitors alike. Expansive selection of beers from around the world. ▶ ul. Hristo Dyukmedzhiev 14. Open 10:00 - 0:00.

MOJITO

Lively and colourful cafe-bar with a Mexican theme. Decorated in all the colours of the rainbow, this bar has a large garden as well as an interior with several rooms, two of which are non smoking. Another area offers 'nargile' (shisha) for 8.49 - 20.00 depending on the flavour of tobacco. The dancefloor moves outside in the summer months. The menu boasts a wide variety of cocktails, both alcoholic and non alcoholic. Mexican dishes such as nachos and enchiladas along with the usual Bulgarian offerings. We were surprised to find this place already thronging at 11:00 on a working day but the adjacent Medical University probably provides an explanation for that. ▶ ul. Ivan Andonov 5, tel. (+359) 889 993935, www.moiito-plovdiv.com. Open 09:00 - 01:00, Sun 10:30 - 01:00. (*) @ (*)

ROCK BAR DOWNLOAD

Cafe and bar playing hard rock music from the early morning. Live music on certain nights. > ul. Yoakim Gruev 26. Open 08:00 - 23:00, Sat, Sun 10:00 - 23:00.

TERZO MONDO

Big cafe/bar serving food in the trendy and now pedestrianised Kapana district with floor-to-ceiling windows that open to let the outside in in the warmer months. Full of memorabilia from the Greek owner's travels around the world, the bar has a distinctly Latino/Cuban theme. Varied international menu including Argentinean, Cuban, Moroccan. ▶ B-2, ul. Benkovski 7, tel. (+359) 899 820 663. Open 08:30 - 00:00. €€. ◎ 🚾 🛦 🖹 🖫 🞟

CASINOS

RITZ STAR CASINO PLOVDIV

Casino Ritz is the largest 5-star casino in Bulgaria. Over 200 slot machines and classic live gambling games with Texas Hold'em Poker, American Roulette, Black Jack, Caribbean Stud Poker, Three Card Poker, and more as well as entertainment in this Baroque-inspired setting. The casino attracts a sophisticated crowd with its luxury interior and highly qualified staff. Big prizes are on offer with the daily supplementary bonus games. ▶ A-1, ul. Vassil Levski 11, tel. (+359) 888 508 583, www. casino-ritz.eu/. Open 00:00 - 24:00. (♣) (๑) (₢₢ @回

Nightlife

CLUBS

Plovdiv has its fair share of the enormous, expensively designed nightclubs for excess partying to the sounds of Pop Folk, a local blend of Balkan folk style with in-your-face sexuality. The latter can seem rather scary, but it will provide you with the most unique experience of the lot. Most of these places feature other types of music depending on the night of week (house, techno, retro) or you can go for one of the rock clubs or live music clubs listed here.

Plovdivs nightclubs carry on throughout the night, finishing in time for you to go and get breakfast, so if this is what makes you tick you won't run out of things to do in Ploydiv

Entry is between 3 and 5 leva though sometimes free for women

BEE BOP CAFE

Cosy jazz cafe founded in 2013 by three local musicians, that hosts a variety of cultural events - not just concerts, but also exhibitions and theatrical performances. ▶ D-2, ul. Gladston 1, tel. (+359)32 594 779, www.beebop-cafe. com/home/. Open 09:00 - 01:00, Sat, Sun 10:00 - 01:00.

GRAMOPHONE

Cafe, Bar and Dance Club - also hosts live music events and DJ nights ▶ C-2, ul. Kniaz Alexander I 36, tel. (+359) 89 469 8517. Open 10:00 - 02:00, Fri, Sat 10:00 - 04:00.

MARMALAD

Below the restaurant of the same name, the club features bare brick walls, muted lighting, black and white photos and wood and leather furniture. A variety of music styles, though karaoke appears to crop up with depressing regularity. Rock, cabaret and piano are also on the menu. Salads, sandwiches and desserts. ▶ B-2, ul. Bratya Pulievi 3, tel. (+359) 898 653 753, www.marmalad.bg.

PETNOTO NA RORSCHACH

The imaginatively named 'Rorschach's Inkblot' (after the psychological test) combines restaurant, bar and live music club in one. Enduringly popular with a young 'alternative' crowd, the music is jazz, funk, pop, rock, R&B and dance. There are also literary evenings (in Bulgarian) and other intellectual events. Entrance fee to listen to the band. ▶ul. Yoakim Gruev 34, tel. (+359) 899448896, www. petnoto.com. Open 09:00 - 02:00, Fri, Sat 09:00 - 04:00.

STAGE 51

Live music club - gigs, parties, art installations. It's not open every night so look out for posters or check the Facebook page to see what's on. ▶ E-2, bul. Hristo Botev 51-53, tel. (+ 359) 895 410 212, www.stage51.org.

VOID

Club VOID is a multi genre music club and event space in the Kapana district. ▶ul. Atanas Samokovetza 2, tel. +359 888 520 007. Open Fri, Sat 21:00 - 06:00. Closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun.







Casino Ritz is the largest 5-star casino in Bulgaria.

Casino Ritz completely justifies its 5 stars with its luxurious interior and the comfort. entertainment. and servicing by highly qualified staff it provides.

The location of Casino Ritz is undoubtedly one of its greatest advantages. It is situated near the central part of the city and close to two of the large hotels in Plovdiv which provides fast and comfortable accommodation for our guests coming from other towns. The casino has a convenient, 24-hour guarded parking lot, and provides daily catering for our regular guests.

For its guests the casino arranges daily supplementary bonus games with big prizes!

Each new customer of the casino gets 1300 bonus points or the amount of 10 BGN for the games.



City of Plovdiv, 11 Vasil Levski St., tel: +359 888 508 583 www.casino-ritz.eu. 17 Ritz Star Casino

Sightseeing

You'll need a good two days to get round the sights in Plovdiv, especially if you're planning on going in all the museums and old houses. The Old Town is compact but it is built on three hills and the streets and few pavements are made of very bumpy cobblestones, which can soon wear you out. Not all the sights are in the Old Town, however, with the Archaeological museum, the Roman stadium and part of the Roman forum down in the town centre. Kapana (The Trap) district below the Old Town is also an up and coming place for arty shops and trendy bars and cafes, so you'll want to have a wander around there as well

LANDMARKS

ALYOSHA UNKNOWN SOVIET SOLDIER MEMORIAL (BUNARDZHIKA)

Commonly known as 'Alyosha', the monument to the Unknown Soviet Soldier commemorates the arrival of the Soviet troops that marked the end of WWII. 'Alyosha' is short for Alexei, the Soviet soldier whose photo served as the model for the statue. Standing at fifteen metres tall on top of the Hill of Liberators, Alyosha is visible from every point in the city. A winding path leads up the statue. ▶ Hulm na Osvoboditelite. No entrance fee.



KOPCHETATA

The 'buttons', low stools around the fountain on the central square in front of the municipality are a popular place for locals to make their rendezvous

MAIN SHOPPING STREET (GLAVNATA)

The main street stretches all the way from the Trimontium hotel and Tsar Simeon garden in the south going via the Roman Stadium and Dzhumaya square and turning into ul. Raiko Daskalov and crossing the Maritsa river as a covered pedestrian bridge. The whole stretch is pedestrianised, wide and lined with trees and outdoor cafes, perfect for a promenade whatever the time of day. ▶ B/C-2, ul. Knyaz Alexander I.

SAHAT TEPE

One of the city centre hills, Sahat Tepe sports both the modern television tower and the Mediaeval Clock Tower atop its rocks. Climb to the top to enjoy the view.



SINGING FOUNTAIN

The unusual singing (musical) fountain on the lake in the lovely Tsar Simeon's garden is a frequent meeting place for locals. You can watch the colourful light display accompanied by classical music on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening from 21:30. > Tsar Simeon garden. Open Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings from 21:30 and on special occasions such as national holidays.

STEFAN STAMBOLOV SOUARE (PLOSHTAD STEFAN STAMBOLOV)

In the main pedestrian area, this square is surrounded by outdoor cafes overlooking a central fountain. The quaint old building of the municipality is on one side. ▶ ul. Knyaz Alexander I.

UNIFICATION MONUMENT

Erected to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the unification of Bulgaria, the monument depicts the Mother-Country with the laurel wreath of victory stretched high in her hands; her two wings represent the two regions (Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia) brought together, ready for the coming 20th century. ▶ Pl. Saedinenie.



WATER CASCADE

A new addition to the main street is the attractive water feature that cascades down the steps leading up to Sahat Tepe. ▶ ul. Knyaz Alexander I.

Siahtseeina

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Plovdiv's museums are generally fairly compact, meaning you can get around them in anything between 10-30 minutes and have good explanations in English, though they are somewhat pricey unless you take advantage of the multi-site tickets that are on offer.

Six sites in the 'Old Plovdiv' (Balabanov, Hindliyan and Nedkovich Houses as well as Zlatyu Boyadzhiev Gallery, Dimitar Kirov Exhibition and Ancient Theatre) have the same price: 5 leva for adults, 1 lev for children and students. For 15 leva you can buy a ticket that gives you entry to all five.

The City Art Gallery also does an all-in-one ticket price for its sites: the permanent exposition on ul. Saborna, the Icon "Gallery, the Tsanko Lavrenov and Encho Pironkov exhibitions and the temporary exhibition on the main shopping street: Adults 5 leva, children and students 3 leva. Many of the museums are closed on Mondays.

AVIATION MUSEUM

This large outdoor site right next to Plovdiv's airport displays military and civilian jets - primarily MIG and YAK and Mi helicopters. As there is no shade whatsoever it would be advisable to visit early morning or on a cloudy day in the summer. ▶ Krumovo, tel. (+359) 32 636677, www.airmuseum-bg.com. Open 09:00 - 17:00. Closed Mon, Tue. Adults 2 leva, Children and Students 1 lev, Disabled, Military and Children under 7 free of charge, Guided Tour 10 leva.

BANYA STARINNA: CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

Sixteenth century Turkish baths have been given a new use as exhibition space for contemporary art projects in Plovdiv. ▶ bul. Shesti Septemvri 179, www.arttoday.org. Open only when there is an exhibition on.

CITY ART GALLERY 1

Located in the building of the former girl's grammar school, the permanent exhibition of the City Art Gallery features sculptures, paintings and photographs by Bulgarian artists of the 19th and 20th centuries, including some unexpected Modernist pieces.

Good descriptions in both Bulgarian and English. ▶ ul. Saborna 14A, tel. (+359) 32 635322, www.galleryplovdiv. com. Open 9:00 - 17:00, Sat, Sun 09:00 - 18:00. Adults 2 leva, Students, OAPs and Disabled 1 lev, Children under 7 free, Guided Tour 10 leva.

CITY ART GALLERY II

Modern wing of the city art gallery situated down in the main pedestrian zone. Exhibitions of contemporary artists from both Bulgaria and abroad are held in its two floors. with a particular emphasis on artists from the Ploydiv region. ▶ ul. Knyaz Alexander I 15. Open 09:00 - 18:00, Sat, Sun 09:00 - 17:00. Adults 2 leva, Students, OAPs and Disabled 1 leva, Children under 7 free.

GEORGI BOZHILOV SLONA GALLERY

Gallery showing the works of one of Plovdiv's most famous 20th century artists. Primarily abstract modernism, there are also figurative paintings among his works. > ul. Knyaz Tseretelev 1.

HISTORY MUSEUM BULGARIAN UNIFICATION **EXPOSITION**

Narrowly focussed on the life of Bulgarian soldiers fighting in the wars for Bulgarian unification and later in the Balkan and two World Wars, the museum shows weapons. photos and other artefacts. ▶ Ploshtad Saedinenie 1. www.historymuseumplovdiv,org. Open 09:00 - 18:00, Sat 09:00 - 17:00. Closed Sun. Adults 2 leva, Children, OAPs and Students 1 lev, Guided Tour (English or German) 6 leva.

ICON GALLERY

Sharing a yard with the lovely St. St. Konstantin and Elena church, this small gallery has icons going back as far as the 15-16th centuries. Besides illustrating the development of icon art in Bulgaria and the Balkans, the collection also contains icons from Jerusalem, Sinai and Mount Athos, Copies of the miracle-working icons on Mount Athos are of particular interest. ▶ ul. Saborna 22. Open 09:00 - 18:00, Sat. Sun 09:00 - 17:00. Adults 2 leva, Students and OAPs 1 lev. Children under 7 free, Guided Tour 10 leva.

PHILIPPOPPOLIS ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM

Beautifully restored house at the beginning of the Old Town, featuring a restaurant, a gallery and a museum. Originally known as 'Hadzhi Aleko's House', after its first owner the house was one of the first in Ploydiy to introduce a more European architectural style.

The interior is full of original antique furniture as well as paintings by renowned Bulgarian artists. Of particular note is the massive carved wooden ceiling in the shape of a sun. ▶ul. Saborna 29, tel. (+359) 32 622742, www. philipoppolis.com. Open 10:00 - 19:00. Entrance to the ground floor artgallery is free and a fee of 5 leva is charged to visit the second floor museum.

REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

The relatively small museum is a pleasure to visit. The modern interior features several halls with modern glass cabinets with spotlighting and excellent descriptions in both English and Bulgarian. There are even illustrations and graphs to help your understanding.

The periods covered are Prehistory, early Thracian culture, gold treasures from Thracian burial mounds near Plovdiv, a coin collection and statues and frescoes from Roman Plovdiv (Philippopolis). A life-size copy of the breathtaking Pangyurishte treasure - over 6 kg of gold vials, rhytons, plates and more - is perhaps the most attractive display. ▶ pl. Saedinenie 1, tel. (+359) 32 624339, www.archaeologicalmuseumplovdiv.org. Open 10:00 -18:00. Closed Mon, Sun, Summer opening hours: 10:00-18:00, closed Monday.

Sightseeing

Winter opening hours:

9:30-17:30, closed Sunday and Monday. Adults 5 leva, Children and OAPs 2 leva or 1 lev as part of a group, Family (two adults plus children) 5 leva, Children under 7 and Disabled free of charge.

REGIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

This beautiful house with its richly decorated Baroque facade once belonged to the rich trader Argir Kuyumdzhioglu. Nowadays it houses Plovdiv's ethnographic museum. The rooms inside are laid out to replicate the living conditions of people from the region - the Rhodope room shows a typical village interior with its basic wooden stool and shaggy rug while the Plovdiv guest room exhibits all the finery that the Ploydiy upper class would have owned. National costumes, musical instruments and traditional crafts such as pottery making and iron working are all on display. Throughout the year the museum hosts temporary exhibitions, events and concerts of classical and folk music. Take time to sit down and enjoy the lush greenery and tranquility of the garden and imagine living in this magnificent property. > ul. Dr Stoyan Chomakov 2, tel. (+359) 32 625654, www.ethnograph.info. Open 09:00 - 12:30; 13:30 - 18:00. Closed Mon, Summer opening hours: 9:00-12:30; 13:30-18:00. Winter opening hours: 9:00-12:30; 13:30-18:00. Closed Monday. Adults 5 leva, Children, Students, OAPs 1 lev, Guided Tour 10 leva.

REGIONAL NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Something to do on a rainy day if you are stuck inside with children, a visit to the regional natural history museum reveals stuffed animals, reptiles and preserved flora of all kinds. Perhaps more interesting are the frequent temporary exhbitions, such as that of live snakes and reptiles or of life-sized dinosaur models. > ul. Hristo G. Danov 34. www.rnhm.org. Open 08:30 - 17:00, Sat, Sun 09:00 -17:00. Adults 3 leva, Students and OAPs 2 leva, Children under 7 1 lev.

SMALL BASILICA

The remains of an early Christian church (5th -6th century AD) have been packaged in a stark red utilitarian exterior. The exquisite floor mosaics have been painstakingly restored, with the pretty deer and doves around the baptismal font of particular interest.

A raised platform allows you to take in the whole floor area as well as watch a short video in English telling you about the history of the basilica. > bul. Knyaginya Maria Luiza 31A, www.romanplovdiv.org/en. Open 09:00 - 18:00. Adults 5 leva, children and OAPs 2 leva.

TRAKART CULTURAL CENTRE

Excellent exhibition of floor mosaics from a residential building from the 4th century AD, left 'in situ'. The large mosaics show a female head surrounded by geometric patterns and the name Eirene. The modern exhibition space also showcases glass art from 3rd century BC to 4th century AD. The staff is welcoming and happy to show you around for a fee. The space also doubles up as a performance area for jazz concerts and other events. Do not be put off by the surroundings - primarily cheap clothes shops in the underpass, whose wares are displayed directly on the ancient Roman walls! ▶ Archeological Underpass, bul. Tsar Boris III Obedenitel and ul. Patriarch Evtimii, tel. (+359) 32 631303, www.trakart.org. Open 09:00 - 18:00. Adults 2 leva, Children, Students and OAPs 1 lev.



OLD TOWN

If you only have time to see one thing in Ploydiv then it has to be the Old Town, not least because it combines both the unique atmosphere of cobbled streets lined with 150-yearold beautifully painted residences but also because this is where the city's best preserved Roman monument lies: the Ancient Theatre.

Ulitsa Saborna is by far the most popular street, carving its way through the Old Town from Ploshtad Dzhumava right up to Nebet Tepe. Many of the museum houses are on this street as are a plentiful supply of antique shops. The whole street has been restored and repaired, whereas off the beaten track you can still find many houses looking somewhat delapidated.

Whichever route you take, you are bound to find yourself doubling back and walking the same stretch more than once.

HISSAR KAPIYA

The imposing stone archway leading into a narrow alleyway was once the citys' fortress gate, marking the eastern portal of Philip of Macedonia's citadel. > ul. Saborna/ul. Tsanko Lavrenov



NEBET TEPE

Walk up to Nebet Tepe (Sentry or Lookout Hill) for the panoramic view of Plovdiv and surrounding mountains in the distance. The remains of the earliest settlement in Ploydiv are randomly scattered stones and some bits of wall but the vibes up here are very calming. Evidence has been found that the site was settled as early as 12th century BC as the ancient Thracian town Evmolpiya and later expanded by Philip of Macedonia. As the town expanded, Nebet Tepe became the citadel of the town's acropolis, the highest point of the three hills. There are remains of a fortress wall and tower. There is also a secret tunnel from the time of Justinian (4th century) leading down to the Maritsa river. Just before you reach the top, the restaurant 'Rahat Tepe' provides some much needed refreshment. ▶ B-3. No entry fee.

CHURCHES

Churches can be visited at any time, provided their door is open. Most of the time there will be nothing going on inside. but you are welcome to look around (not to take photos or videos!), to buy a candle and light it and stand it in one of the recepticles, Bare arms and legs are frowned upon so take a scarf or something to cover yourself up. Most churches have a collection box and you could do worse than donate your small change in exchange for the opportunity to look around one of these beautiful old buildings.

ST. DIMITER (SVETI DIMITER)

Nestled peacefully in a courtyard behind a high stone wall, this church's interior breaks with tradition. Rather than being covered in dark frescoes, the interior is starkly white with just a modest blue decoration, very much in the style of the surrounding Revival houses. Grey painted columns provide a contrast. Its marble iconostasis is unique in Bulgaria and the large gold sunburst on it catches the eye. You may make a small donation in one of the collection boxes (the church itself requests a modest 50 stotinki). If you are lucky music students will be practising violin in the academy across the alleyway, creating an unbeatable atmosphere. ▶ ul. Todor Samodumov 1.

ST. MARINA (SVETA MARINA)

Right at the edge of the Old Town, this church features a 17 metre high pagoda-shaped bell tower and brightly coloured frescoes. ▶ ul. Dr. G, Valkovich 7. Open 07:00 - 20:00.

ST. NEDELYA (SVETA NEDELYA)

▶ ul. P.R. Slaveykov 40. Open 08:00 - 18:00.

ST.ST. KONSTANTIN AND ELENA

A richly decorated, chocolate box church. On the outside the dark grey facade with a flowered border gives way to a fascinating interior. Unlike most Bulgarian churches, the ceiling is not frescoed but rather has the decoration typical of the houses in the Old Town. Enjoy the ornate iconostasis and enormous chandeliers. The icon gallery is right next door. ▶ ul. Saborna 24. Open 08:00 - 19:00.

SVETA BOGORODITSA (HOLY VIRGIN)

An imposing sight whichever way you approach it. If you are coming from below, on ul. Saborna you will see an enormous flight of steps fanning out before you and lead-

Sightseeing

ing up to the tall bell tower, designed in 1880 by Joseph Schnitter. Inside, the church is characteristically dark, with frescoed ceilings, a carved wooden iconostasis featuring carvings of roses, leaves, grapes and other native plants and several icons with hands or haloes in gold. The frescoes in the foyer are unusual for their portrayal of the educational and enlightenment role of the church, harking back to the mid-1900s when the church played a central role in spreading the fervour that led Bulgarian to rise up against the Ottoman Turks. This church saw the first Bulgarian-language service in the city (rather than Greek) on Christmas Day 1859. ▶ ul. Saborna 6. Open 07:00 - 19:00.

MUSEUM HOUSES

Some of the restored old houses have been turned into museums.

BAKALOV HOUSE (BAKALOVA KASHTA)

Also known as the 'house of tradition", this old house and the one next door have been recently restored as a showcase for traditional crafts. The two ladies working there - one weaving and the other sculpting - both use ancient techniques. Their goods are on sale and make for unique gifts at reasonable prices; a felt brooch or a bell with a felt hanger cost only 4 and 6 leva respectively. You may be lucky enough to be invited to have a go at weaving. ▶ ul. Dr. Stoyan Chomakov. Open 10:00 - 18:00. Entrance is free.

BALABANOV HOUSE (BALABANOVA KASHTA)

Boasting a tranquil walled garden full of greenery, the Balabanov house is host to frequent cultural events such as exhibitions of local art, concerts, craft workshops and literary evenings. Razed to the ground in the 1930s the house we see today was reconstructed according to the original plan. The second storey recreates the life of the wealthy merchants who would have lived here, with late Baroque furniture, painted trompe l'oeil niches and carved wood-

MUSEUM ADMISSION INFO

Old Plovdiv sites (Balabanov, Hindliyan and Nedkovich Houses, Apteka Hipokrat, Zlatvu Bovadzhiev Gallerv. Dimitar Kirov Exhibition, Ancient Theatre, Roman Stadium, Odeon, Small Basilica) ▶ www. oldplovdiv.com. Open 09:00-18:00

- Adults 5 lv, children 2 lv, under 7 free, family 10 lv.
- All-inclusive entry to any five 15 lv. All-inclusive family 30 lv.

City Art Gallery (sites I and II and the Icon Gallery, Tsanko Lavrenov and Encho Pironkov exhibitions).

www. galleryplovdiv.com.

Open Mon-Fri 09:00-17:30, Sat 10:00-17:30, closed

 Adults 4 ly
 All-inclusive ticket to all five sites adults 8 lv, children 5 lv.

en ceilings. ▶ ul. Dr Konstantin Stoilov 57, tel. (+359) 32 627082, www.oldplovdiv.com. Open 08:30 - 17:00. Adults 5 leva, Students 1 lev.

HINDLIYAN HOUSE

A porcelain blue painted house that once belonged to a family of Armenian traders whose travels have been preserved for posterity in the drawings on both the inside and outside of the building that portray Constantinople, Venice, Alexandria, St. Petersburg and Stockholm, The main living room features a wall fountain from which rose water once gushed. The family's love of water and bathing continues downstairs with the Turkish bath. On Saturdays and Sundays access is through the garden of Balabanov House only. ▶ul. Arrtin Gidikov 4, tel. (+359) 32 628998, www. oldplovdiv.com. Open 09:00 - 17:00. Adults 5 leva, Students 1 lev.



HISTORY MUSEUM BULGARIAN NATIONAL REVIVAL EXPOSITION

Situated in the lovely burnt ochre painted Georgiadi House in the Old Town, this wing of the city's history museum gives an indepth insight into life in the city from the 15th-19th centuries, when the population was under Ottoman occupation but fighting to establish its own national identity through language, religion and culture.

The house belonged to wealthy Bulgarian craftsman Georgi Kendindenoglu and was built in the typical symmetrical style where each floor had a central room ('hayet", meaning 'life') from which four other rooms were accessed. Several of the rooms are furnished and decorated to recreate the colourful interior of a Turkish home. including low furniture for drinking Turkish coffee. Original costumes are on display. ▶ ul. Tsanko Lavrenov 1, www. historymuseumploydiy.org. Open 09:00 - 18:00, Sat. Sun 09:00 - 17:00. Adults 2 leva, Students 1 lev.

HRISTO DANOV HOUSE MUSEUM

Hristo Danov was Ploydiy's first publisher and his house is now home to the museum of book publishing. Danov played an active role in the National Revival movement. disseminating information and literature in Bulgarian language. He also opened Bulgaria's first bookshops and founded Plovdiv's first daily newspaper, Maritsa, in 1878. The title still exists today. The main reception room features elaborately decorated walls and the ubiguitous wood-carved 'sunburst'ceiling. Another room recreates the 19th classroom with original textbooks. globes, atlases and maps. ▶ ul. Mitropolit Paisiy 2, www. historymuseumplovdiv,org. Open 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat. Sun.

MUSEUM HOUSE OF ATANAS KRASTEV

House of the late Ploydiv mayor Atanas Krastev, the driving force behind the restoration work on the Old Town and the establishment of several of the museums and galleries. The ground floor features 30 portraits of him by renowned Bulgarian artists, while on the upper floor his collection of primarily abstract and modern art is on show. ▶ B-3, ul. Dr. Stoyan Chomakov 5A. Open 10:00 – 19:00. Closed Wed.

MUSEUM OF PHARMACY (APTEKA HIPOKRAT)

Small museum showing what a pharmacy would have looked uring the Revival period and up to the beginning of the 20th century ▶ B-3, ul. Saborna 16. Open 09:00 -17:00. Closed Sat, Sun. Admission free of charge.

NEDKOVICH HOUSE

▶ul. Tsanko Lavrenov 3, www.oldplovdiv.com. Open 09:00 - 17:30.

ZLATYU BOYADZHIEV GALLERY

Born in the Plovdiv region, Zlatyu Boyadzhiev is one of Bulgaria's most famous artists. 71 of his works are exhibited in the house of Dr Stoyan Chomakov. To be honest, the house itself is not one of the best in the Old Town, rather dull and tatty inside with hardly any furniture but the enormous colourful paintings, particularly on the second floor, do provide an insight into everyday life in the Bulgaria of the past century. Pastoral scenes are painted in an almost naivist style, the numerous portrayals of Plovdiv show the city in a new light and there are some interesting comments on the Communist period, such as the painting that shows the farmers slaughtering a pig while above them wait the civil servants with their empty bowls. Titles are in English but there is otherwise no explanation in English. ▶ ul. Saborna 18, www.oldplovdiv.com. Open 08:30 - 17:00. Adults 5 leva, schoolchildren and OAPs 1 lev: Ticket for all 5 museums of Óld Ploydiv institute 15 leva.

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

DZHUMAYA MOSQUE (DZHUMAYA DZHAMIA)

At the heart of the pedestrian zone, Dzhumava (Fridav) Mosque is one of the oldest and largest in the Balkans. Its pink painted minaret stands a proud 23 metres tall and the dusky pink Byzantine brickwork reminds us that the mosque was built some time in the 14th century. On one side the facade is covered in a carved wooden front that must have been added at a later date. Unlike later mosques which had only one dome, the Dzhumaya Dzhamia has nine domes covered with lead. Through the entrance arch, worn by time but grand nonetheless, we find a light and ornately decorated interior with large chandeliers. Remember to take off your shoes and not to enter with bare legs or arms, **\rightarrow** ul. Zhelezarska 2. Open 06:00 - 23:00. Entrance is free of charge.

ROMAN PLOVDIV

ANCIENT FORUM AND THE ODEON

Accessible from behind the Central Post Office, the forum and the well preserved 300-seater Odeon once covered a massive 11 hectares and would have featured shops and public buildings. The forum would have been the focal point of city life even before the Romans annexed the city: evidence suggests that the original forum was built in the Greek fashion at the beginning of the 1st century A.D., when the city was still Philipoppolis.

Currently not accessible to the public as it undergoes full reconstruction. ▶ D-2, ul. Gen. Gurko. Currently open around the clock. Currently no entry fee.



ANCIENT STADIUM (ANTICHEN STADION)

The stadium runs under the main shopping street, Knyaz Alexander 1, from ulitsa Dr. G. Valkovich to the part of the northern curve that we can visit today. Built during the rule of Hadrian in the 2nd century, fourteen teirs of marble blocks provided seating for up to 30 000 spectators. One of the tunnels through which the competitors entered the stadium is visible today. The stadium would have held Pythian games, featuring chariot races, athletic events and poetry contests. Contestants would have competed in two categories: men and boys. Coins were minted in

Sightseeing

Philipoppolis showing the ruling Roman emperor and athletic events from the games. Some historians believe it was also used for gladiator battles, though there is no proof that they took place here. An 'advertising stone' has been found announcing a gladiator battle in the city but with no information about the location. The modern visitor centre features an information centre and a 3D cinema where you can see a reconstruction of the stadium. A new lift allows access for the disabled and modern glass railings mean that the view can be fully enjoyed. Check out the website, which has a wealth of useful info. There's a cafe on the terrace looking straight at the steps of the stadium. ▶pl. Rimski Stadion, www.ancient-stadium-plovdiv. eu. Open 09:30 - 18:00, Screenings every 40 minutes from 10:00-17:00. You can get down to the cafe for free or you can pay to watch the 3D reconstruction: 7.20 leva for adults, 3.60 for children, under 7s go free.



ANCIENT THEATRE (ANTICHEN TEATAR)

Plovdiv's ancient theatre is a sight to behold. Approaching it from one of the narrow cobbled streets of the Old Town, what strikes you first as you step onto TaksimTepe (hill) is the uninterrupted view of the city below you and the Rhodope mountains in the distance, What strikes you second is the stunningly intact theatre falling away in front of you, its rows of seats staggering down the hillside and pieces of the far wall broken off, as if the columns had just fallen backwards off the hill. You can go inside and walk around for a modest fee, though beware that the steps are steep, many of them are worn away and there are very few handrails. It is possible, though, to pick out the new steps among them and carefully work your way down to the stage - now wooden - which hosts concerts and opera performances in the summer months. The silence is astounding, giving you every opportunity to dwell on what this place must have meant to the ancient peoples who came to watch theatrical performances here. Built in 1st century AD, the theatre can seat 7000, Damaged during an invasion by Attila the Hun, and covered by centuries of buildings, it was only rediscovered and excavated in 1972. A recently found and deciphered inscription on a monumental pedestal reveals that the theatre was constructed at the end of the 1st century A.D., when Philippololis was under the rule of Titus Flavius Cotis - an heir of a Thracian Royal Dynasty, the high priest of the Thracian province, representative of the Metropolitan Court of Justice. An outdoor cafe has tables running along the fence on the street above, giving you a great excuse to have a break and gaze upon the magnificent view. ▶ C-2, ul. Tsar Ivaylo. Open 09:00 - 18:00. Adults 5 leva.

ROMAN AQUEDUCT

Little is left of the city's Roman aqueduct, which was almost totally destroyed under Ottoman rule. The small part that is left shows what a beautiful and imposing feat of engineering this must have been, using red brick and local white stone

WINE TOURISM

BULGARIA WINE TOURS

Bulgaria Wine Tours is based in Plovdiv and offers wine tours to different wine regions within Bulgaria. There are more than 20 boutique wineries in an 80 km radius from Plovdiv alone making day trips very easy. A minimum of 2 people are required for a standard day trip featuring tastings at 3 wineries, beautiful local scenery and visiting a local heritage site along the way. Custom tours can of course also be arranged. ▶ bul. 6 Septemvri 117, tel. (+359) 888 487 113, www.bulgariawinetours.com/. Day trips usually last from 10:00 -19:30. One day trip from Plovdiv - up to 3 people - price per person Euro 125 for over 3 people Euro 100, includes wine tastings at 3 wineries, appetizers, visit and entrance fee to cultural heritage site, lunch, transportation with a car/minivan and tour leader.

VILLA YUSTINA WINERY

Villa Yustina Winery is situated in the outskirts of Rhodope mountains in the picturesque village Ustina, alongside the motorway between Pazardjik and Plovdiv. The region is well known for its beautiful nature and ancient wine history. Established in 2006, Villa Yustina is a prime example of modern wine production in Bulgaria with quality wines, winning awards at international wine competitions. Visit them for a day trip from Plovdiv or stay overnight in their charming guesthouse to follow the wine trail and sample as many of their wines as possible. ▶ Rhodopi Municipality, village Ustina, ul. Nikola Petkov 51, tel. (+359) 882 626 668, www.villayustina.com. Open 10:00 - 16:00.





It's always a blessing when the main shopping area is pedestrianised and in Plovdiv's case this means the whole of ul. Knvaz Alexander I starting from the Trimontium Hotel/Central Square and reaching the far bank of the Maritsa river via the pedestrian footbridge. The wide street is lined with cafes. bars and restaurants, all with outside tables and canopies.

There are few international brands, but that makes it all the more interesting to shop here, with the offering consisting primarily of shoe shops and men's, women's and children's fashion.

If you are looking for arts and crafts or anything alternative then try the street that runs parallel to Knyaz Alexander -Otets Paisiy or head for Kapana district which you can access from the main shopping street, turning right into the little alleys at some point after Dzhumaya mosque. Here you will find craft shops, unique fashion and jewellery by local designers and natural beauty products. We have named a few that took our fancy but the real pleasure is in wandering around to see what you can find.

Antique shops are to be found primarily in the Old Town and they too hide all manner of paintings, furniture (particularly old chests), books, weapons, and Socialist memorabilia. Don't be afraid to haggle.

ANTIQUES AND RETRO

SOUL SEARCHING

The home of vinyl in Plovdiv, an emporium of singles and LPs ▶ ul. Konstantin Stoilov 27.

TOY GALLERY

Unique shop/gallery that is definitely worth popping into

just for curiosity's sake. The collection of old toys from around the world includes original pieces from the socialist era. Not everything is for sale but you never know what vou might find! ▶ ul.Otets Paisiv 34.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

GG SISTERS

Two sisters from Plovdiv who are passionate about reusing the piles of useless paper which overwhelm the modern person. Turning old magazines and leaflets into beautiful and practical objects, they have established a place where they can create and also organise various workshops to promote this green initiative. The wonderful creations make the perfect eco-friendly gift to take home from Plovdiv ▶ul. Benkovski 25

KALA ART WORKSHOP

Beautiful leather bags, belts, wallets and accessories as well as some textile patchwork bags in original designs, made on the premises. ▶ ul. Otets Paisiy 39, tel. (+359) 888 428 672.

RAKODELNITSATA

Lovely, colourful gift shop in the Kapana district selling handmade local goods such as handmade cups and mugs, knitted toys, jewellery, small paintings and drawings and more. ▶ul. Georgi Benkovski 19, tel. +359 88 787 1423. Open Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri 10:00 -19:00, Sat 10:00 - 17:00. Closed Sun.

The new inyourpocket.com puts you in control.





On any device.

inyour pocket

inyourpocket.com

STRINA PEPINA

Strina Pepina is the lady who makes all the felt goods in the store herself. Hidden behind the colourful felt hats, mats, rugs and toys, is her table of wool and sketches of what she is going to produce next. Well worth a visit. ▶ ul. Kiril Popov 2. Open 10:00 - 19:00.

GIFTS AND SOUVENIRS

MAGAZIN 123

Delightful shop not far from the Mosque, full of great little gifts all hand-made by local artists. Choose from hair bows, costume jewellery, art-prints and lots more to find your unique little gift from Bulgaria. ▶ul. Otets Paisiy 3, tel. (+359) 876 241 054. Open 11:00 - 19:00.

STUDIO 24 PLOVEDIV

Very cool and arty selection of gifts and souvenirs with the slogan "All we need is Plovediv". Notebooks, mugs, magnets, t-shirts and some wonderfully original works of art with a Socialist theme. ▶ul.Zlatarska 24, /(+359)877 434 013, www.plovediv.net/. Open 11:00 - 19:00.

HEALTH. BEAUTY & FASHION

ДРЕШНИКА / DRESHNIKA

At the start of the Kapana district, the intriguing shop front invites you discover beautiful ladies fashion, creative yet wearable by most age groups - made in Bulgaria! ▶ ul. Abadiivska 8, tel. (+359) 885 256 364. Open 10:00 - 13:00. 14:00 - 19:00. Closed Mon, Tue.

REFAN PARFUMERIE & COSMETICS

This local manufacturer makes quality cosmetics and soaps based on Bulgarian rose and lavender oils. What better souvenir could you choose? Various shops are dotted around the city, with at least two on the main street. ▶ ul. Kniaz Alexander I, 28 & 16, Grand Commercial center -ul. Kapitan Raicho & ul. Kapitan Raicho 35; Hali comercial center ul. Raicho Daskalov 8, www.refan.com.

SHOPPING CENTRES

COVERED BRIDGE (PESHEHODEN MOST)

A continuation of the main street, following ul. Raiko Daskalov you will eventually reach the covered footbridge across the Maritsa river. The range of shops inside is really nothing to get excited about - a variety of clothes and shoe shops but it is the most convenient way to cross the river on foot!

MALL OF PLOVDIV

So far off the beaten track you're hardly likely to go out of your way to visit the mall unless you need something specific that you can't find on the main shopping street. There are less international brands than the malls in Sofia, but there is a choice of sports shops, fashion and shoe shops. Cinema City, with its 11 screens, is perhaps the greatest reason to visit. ▶ ul. Perushtitsa 8, www.mallplovdiv.bg.

CONFERENCES

INTERNATIONAL FAIR PLOVDIV

One of the largest exhibition venues in Southeast Europe, Plovdiv Fair is best known for its biannual fairs in March and September, though it holds thematic fairs all through the year. Seventeen mulitfunctional pavilions cover an area of 325 000 m². A separate congress centre boasts 8 halls in addition to the 12 that are situated inside the pavilions. The annual Vinaria exhibition of wines has become a regular event.

Alongside the Maritsa river, the Fair is only a walk or taxi ride away from the town centre. ▶ bul. Tsar Boris III Obedenitel 37, www.fair.bg/en/.

MAIL & PHONES

Most cafes in the city centre and most hotels have Wi-fi these days and you can buy prepaid SIM cards for your mobile phone from any of the operators whose shops are strategically places around town.

CENTRAL POST OFFICE

The monolithic building on the central square is the city's central post office. Telephone booths are available for national and international calls. ▶ pl. Tsentralen 1. Open 07:00 - 19:00, Sun 07:00 - 11:00, The phone booths work from 7:00-18:00 and are closed on Sundays.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

ARMENIAN CHURCH SURP KEVORK

Purchased from the Patriarchate of Constantinople by Plovdiv's Armenian community, the church was restored to its present form in the mid-1700s and is an active place of worship to this day. ▶ ul. Turist 2. Open 09:00 - 17:00.

EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Large church at the foot of Sahat Tepe dating from the end of the 19th century. > ul. Lady Strangford 21. Services are held from 10:00 on Sunday and from 17:00 on Wednesday and Saturday.

IMARET MOSQUE (IMARET DZHAMIYA)

Dating from the mid-15th century this mosque is open for worship or visiting but please observe the dress code and remove your shoes. ▶ ul. Visla 2. Open 09:00 - 23:00.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL SAINT LUDWIG

Largest Catholic place of worship in Bulgaria holding up to 600 worshippers. The cathedral is a beautiful piece of architecture - pale grey with white ornaments - and despite being called Sveti Ludwig in Bulgarian it does actually mean St. Louis to us. ▶ bul. Knyaginia Maria Luiza 3. Open 08:30 - 12:00; 15:00 - 19:00.

SYNAGOGUE

Services are held on Fridays only, otherwise the Synagogue is not open for visitors. ▶ ul. Tsar Kaloyan 13A. Open Fri 17:00 - 19:00.

HEALTH

Your biggest hindrance in seeking medical help is going to be the language. Older people often know a bit of French or German so you could try that if you get nowhere with English. In any case go straight to the reception and try to explain what kind of a doctor you need. Once you reach a doctor you are more likely to find that he or she will speak English or another foreign language. In case of emergency call 112.

MBAL SVETA MINA

Large hospital close to the central train station that accepts outpatients from 07:00 - 19:00 every day. Room number 11 is for emergencies. 24 Hour emergency telephone line 032 654826. ▶ E-1, ul. Ivan Vazov 59, www.lechebnizavedenia.com/mbal/gradove/recl/ SvetiMina/index.html.

THE CLINIC 'DOCTOR KOSTOV'

The Clinic 'Doctor Kostov' is one of the best clinics for aesthetic dermatology in Bulgaria. Dr. Boyan Kostov is a dermatologist with nineteen years experience working with a team of trained doctors and specialists and quality equipment; high-spec medical class lasers manufactured in USA by SYNERON CANDELA and CUTERA. They specialise in the treatment of skin diseases as well as creative solutions for aesthetic problems. Modern therapy of rosacea and acne, scar removal, moles, papillomas. Fillers and Botox, capillary removal, permanent laser epilation, etc. Appointments usually available within 48 hours ▶ bul. Maritza 57, tel. (+359) 887 726 426, www.doctorkostov.com, Open 13:00 - 19:00. Closed Sat, Sun, Sat or Sun: For emergencies or with an appointment.

UMBAL SVETI GEORGI

The main hospital in Plovdiv is also a university teaching hospital. Modern and covering all areas, this is the best place to come for if you need a doctor. > www.unihosp.com.



Doctor Kostov Clinic is one of the best clinics for aesthetic dermatology

ad in USA by SYNERON CANDELA



odern therapy of rosacea and acne, scar removal, moles, papillomas.

Doctor Kostov Clinic

Plovdiv, No57 Maritza Blvd phone: +359 887 726 426 e mail: contact@doctorkostov.com www.doctorkostov.com
Doctor Kostov Clinic

Dr. Boyan Kostov is a dermatologist with nineteen years experience working with a team of trained doctors and specialists.



Leisure

Ploydiv has a lot of parks, with the one in the city centre having just undergone a major 'beautification'. With so many hills, cycling could be something of a challenge but you could certainly cycle around one of the larger parks. Mercifully there are several outdoor pools and water parks which are a lifesaver in the hot summer months.

Most locals, it has to be said, would go out of town for their leisure time, to the wonderful Rhodope mountains.

CINEMAS

CINEMA CITY

11 modern halls, 8 of them are 3D, ▶ Mall of Plovdiv, ul, Perushtitsa 8, www.cinemacity.bg/. Open 10:00 -24:00.

FLAMINGO CINEMA

▶ bul. Shesti Septemyri 128.

LUCKY DOM NA KINOTO

The home of independent cinema in Ploydiy. > ul. Gladston 1, Open 16:30 - 21:00, Sat 10:30 - 21:00, Sun 10:30 - 21:0.

SUMMER CINEMA ORPHEUS

Outdoor cinema in the park, where various movie nights and other events are held, including concerts. There's also a bar here, serving fries and barbecued meats. ▶ ul.Todor Kableshkov. Open 11:30 - 23:30.

FOR THE KIDS

CHILDREN'S RAILWAY (DETSKA ZHELEZNITSA)

A quaint purpose-built railway line for children is to be found in the Mladezhki Halm (Youth Hill) Park. Since 1979 the colourful 4 wagon train has been taking children on a 25-minute ride along a real railway line that goes through a tunnel, over a bridge, past houses and to the top of the hill, providing a fantastic view of the city.

Tickets are bought from the conductor and children must be accompanied by an adult.

The park itself is an attractive place for a walk or picnic. ▶ Mladezhki Halm. Open 09:30 - 13:15; 14:00 - 18:15. Closed Mon, Tue, From April 1st to October 15th, Tick-



GO KARTING

Large go karting complex in the Lauta Park, some way out of the city centre but in a lovely setting. Frequently hosts international competitions. > bul. Sankt Peterburg (near Lokomotiv Stadium), www.kartinglauta.com. Open 10:00 – 00:00. 1.50 to 2.50 leva per lap.

ICE RINK

Situated on the central square, admission is 6 leva and includes skate rental. ▶ Central Square. Open 10:00 - 21:30.

PUPPET THEATRE

Performances every Saturday and Sunday at 10.30 and 11.45. Puppets are used as are actors in costume. Although performances are in Bulgarian they are also enjoyable for younger non-Bulgarian speakers who go along with the laughter and general happy mood. ▶ ul. Hristo G. Danov 14, tel. (+359) 32623275, www.pptheatre.com.

ROPE PARK

Outdoor climbing wall and rope park in the Otdih i Kultura Park close to the rowing channel. ▶ Open March-November, 09:00-21:00.



PARKS IN PLOVDIV

GRADSKA GRADINA (CITY GARDEN)

The small city park has several children's play areas, perhaps the best being the one attached to the Rozenhof pub. > Between bul Shesti Septemvri and ul. Hristo G. Danov.

LAUTA PARK

Large park for walks, cycling or go karting to the southeast of the city. Plovdiv's Lokomotiv football team has its stadium here. > bul. Sankt Peterburg.

OTDIH I KULTURA PARK (RECREATION PARK)

Large park in the western part of Plovdiv and featuring a rowing lake. ▶ Along the side of the Maritsa River, at the end of bul. Shesti Septemyri.

PLOVDIV VELODROME (KOLODRUM)

The largest velodrome in Southeast Europe was unveiled in 2015. If you want to cycle here you will probably need to get in touch with the Tsar Simeon cycling club, otherwise various cultural, musical and sporting events are also held here. > ul. Navcho Tsanov.

ROWING CHANNEL (GREBEN KANAL)

The 2200 metre long and 120 metre wide rowing canal on the banks of the Maritsa river makes a pleasant outing for a stroll or bike ride and a meal or snack in one of the restaurants around it. The rowing canal itself hosts national and international rowing events and is not open to the public. ▶ Otdih i Kultura Park.

TSAR SIMEON GARDEN

Situated close to the central square, this lovely small park with its 'singing' fountain marks the end of the pedestrianised promenade. Come here to seek welcome shade in the heat of the summer.

Having undergone a massive facelift, the park boasts new children's play areas, fountains, well kept flowerbeds and a music and light display once per week.

SWIMMING POOLS AND WATER PARKS

What better way to cool off in this hot, hot. city than with a dip in one of the many outdoor pools.

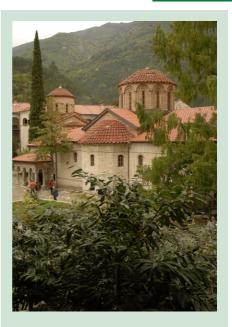
AOUALAND

The only aquapark outside of the major Black Sea resorts is in Plovdiv. In the easterly residential district of 'Trakia' you will have to take public transport or a taxi to get there.

Besides 16 slides and 7 pools there's also a bowling alley, gym, hotel and casino. > Trakia district, www. agualand.bg. Open 09:00 - 19:00. 12 leva on weekdays, 15 leva at weekends for anyone above 110 cm height. Children below this height get in free with an accompanying adult.

SANKT PETERBURG AQUAPARK

Large water park in one of the 4-star hotels. Five different pools with water bars, a replica of a Spanish galleon and various slides. Serious swimming is also possible in the Olympic-size pool. ▶ bul. Bulgaria 97, tel. (+359) 32 9103, www.sphotel.net. Open 09:00 - 19:00. Mon-Thurs adults 6 leva, children 3 leva; Fri-Sun adults 7 leva, children 3 leva.



BACHKOVO MONASTERY

A trip to Bachkovo Monastery, 11 km south of Assenovarad, is a must. The monastery is a leisurely walk from the car park where you can shop for honey and iams at the many stalls that line the path up to the monastery. It's the second largest after Rila Monastery, and does resemble that at Rila, with its cobbled courtyard, frescoes and central church. The church was painted by Zahari Zograf and his pupils in 1840. People queue up to pay homage to the miracle icon of Virgin Mary inside the Holy Virgin church, which was brought from Georgia in 1310. The monastery itself was founded in 1083 by a Georgian. One of the frescoes outside the church is usually surrounded by people sticking coins onto it. Apparently if you can get your coin to stick to the wall it means you are free of sin, though most cheat by sticking their coin on with bits of wax!



facebook.com/plovdivinyourpocket



twitter.com/BulgarialYP



instagram.com/bulgariainyourpocket

Hotels



Overall there is a good selection of hotels in all price ranges in Plovdiv but watch out if you are coming in September when the main event is on at the Ploydiv Fair. Hotel accommodation becomes scarce and prices rise accordingly which means you may end up overpaying for what you get.

UPMARKET

GRAND HOTEL PLOVDIV

On the banks of the Maritsa river, this hotel boasts all mod cons plus indoor and outdoor swimming pools, wellness centre and outdoor tennis courts. ▶ ul. Zlatyu Boyadzhiev 2, tel. (+359) 32 934959, www.icep.bg. 🕸 🎯 📆 🚾

HEBROS

Occupying a house in the Old Town that once belonged to a rich trader, each of this boutique hotel's eight rooms is decorated in a different style: the Italian room on the first floor is particularly lovely. Traditional food is served in the garden under the large fig tree. > ul.Dr. Konstantin Stoilov 51, tel. (+359) 32 260180/(+359) 32 625 929, www.hebros-hotel.

HOLIDAY INN PLOVDIV

This brand new 4 star hotel is easily accessible, just 3km from the Trakia motorway, and within walking distance to the Plovdiv International Fairgrounds, the Old town and the city's central pedestrian street and shopping district. 67 stylish, comfortable air-conditioned rooms with excellent sound insulation and large beds (with a choice of pillow types) promise a good night's sleep. Free wireless Internet access ▶ ul. Vassil Levski 109, tel. (+359) 32 203 333, fax (+359) 32 203 334, www.hiplovdivhotel.com.

MARITSA

Right opposite the Plovdiv Fair, the Maritsa lends itself both to business and leisure travel, as it is just over the river from all the sights. Services include a fitness centre,

restaurant, nightclub, casino and lobby bar. The modern interior with Oriental influences features a lobby area with enormous potted plants and leopard-skin sofas. ▶ bul. Tsar Boris III Obedenitel, tel. (+359) 32 952735, www. victoria-group.net/hotelmaritza/en/welcome.htm.

PARK HOTEL PLOVDIV

Situated somewhat off the beaten track at the edge of the Lauta park, this new hotel with its classically designed interior aims to attract a corporate event/conference crowd. ▶ bul. Sankt Peterburg 38, tel. (+ 359) 32 811856, www. parkhotelplovdiv.com. இ 🖫 🚾 ★★★

RAMADA PLOVDIV TRIMONTIUM

A landmark building on the main thoroughfare running through the city, the plush Trimontium hotel marks the beginning of the pedestrianised zone and park areas. Indoor pool, casino, doormen and all the finery one would expect. ▶ul. Kapitan Raycho 2, tel. (+359) 32 605000, www.plovdiv.bgprincess.com.

SANKT PETERBURG

Luxury accommodation in a park setting on the north side of the river. ▶ bul. Bulgaria 97, tel. (+359) 32 9103/(+359) 32 951830, www.sphotel.net. 198 rooms (40 singles, 143 doubles, 15 suites). 🕸 🔘 📆 🚾 P 🛇 🗇 🚻 🕒 **≥ □** ★★★★

MID-RANGE

ALAFRANGITE

Located in a lovely old restored house in the Old Town, Alafrangite is known for its excellent restaurant. The rooms themselves are simply furnished and nondescript but the location is second to none. ▶ ul. Kiril Nektariev 13. tel. (+359) 32 269595, www.alafrangite.eu. 🕸 📵 🖼

ALLIANCE

Business hotel close to the central station. ▶ bul. Vassil Aprilov 7, tel. (+359) 32 646333, www.alliancehotel.

ART HOUSE BORIS PALACE

In the heart of the Old Town, this smart new hotel has an unbelievable 9 storeys, most of which are below street level. A restaurant on the lower floor leads out onto a quaint garden terrrace overlooking the city. Upcoming improvements include an indoor pool and extended outdoor seating. ▶ ul. Saborna 49, tel. (+359) 32 266379, www. borispalace.com. இ @ 🖎 🗇 🖑 🖳 🚥 ★★★

EVMOLPIA

This relatively new boutique hotel at the foot of the Old Town and just a stone's throw from Kapana, has taken Bulgarian hospitality to a whole new level and is definitely very popular with travellers. A friendly personal welcome and unique charming rooms that evoke an aura of 19th century Bulgaria with all the mod-cons of the 21st century. ▶ ul.Pernik 4, tel. +(359) 32 95 77 95, www. hotelevmolpia.com. ※ ◎ ※

EXPO

Modern business hotel ▶ bul. Ruski 38, tel. (+359) 32 631133, www.expo-hotel.com. ❷ ◎ 預 ❷ ⑦

FAMOUS HOUSE

Small and smart hotel looking onto the Gradska Gradina park. ▶ ul. Beethoven 4, tel. (+359) 32 279800, www. famoushouse.eu. ۚ ◎ ᢔ ★★★

IMPERIAL PLOVDIV HOTEL & SPA

KENDROS

LEIPZIG

Don't be put off by the high rise hotel from Communist times with a rather gaudy interior. The reception staff make you feel welcome from the moment you arrive, the rooms are clean and compact, the lively decor making a change from the usual bog standard hotels! The buffet breakfast offers plenty of variety, catering to most tastes. Car access is relatively easy, with some on site parking and additional street parking. from here most of Plovdiv's attractions are just a short taxi ride away. bul. Ruski 70, tel. (+359) 32 654000, www.leipziq.bq.

ODEON

Small hotel in the city centre overlooking the ruins of the Roman Odeon. Oriental-style decor. ▶ ul. Otets Paisii 40, tel. (+359) 32 622065, www.hotelodeon.net. ❷ ◎ ◎ ◎ ◎ ↑ ↑ ○ ◎ ◎

OLD PLOVDIV HOUSE (IN KAPANA)

REAL

STAR HOTEL

Hard to beat location in the city centre with easy access to all the tourist attractions plus business services such as banks and shops as well as municipal offices. 24 hour front desk service plus free wifi throughout. The rooms are relatively compact, but extra features like a kettle are a helpful extra. • C-2, ul. Patriarh Evtimiy 13, tel. (+359 32) 633 599, fax (+359) 32 633 403, www.starhotel.bg.

BUDGET

GUEST ROOMS

In the centre of town in a late Revival-style house that keeps cool even in the hottest summer. Guests can make use of the kitchenette with fridge and microwave, outdoor BBQ, washing and ironing facilities and free hot drinks. Owner speaks Spanish, English, Russian and German. ▶ ul. Ivan Vazov 29, tel. (+359) 896567475. ◎ ↑

▼ ■ ★

HIKERS HOSTEL

Right at the heart of the Old Town, laid-back Hikers hostel boasts a large shady garden, kitchen, common room and bar. Gets so full in the summer that people camp in the garden. ▶ul Saborna 53, tel. (+359) 885194553, www. hikers-hostel.org/pd/. ◎ ② ↑

APARTMENT HOTELS

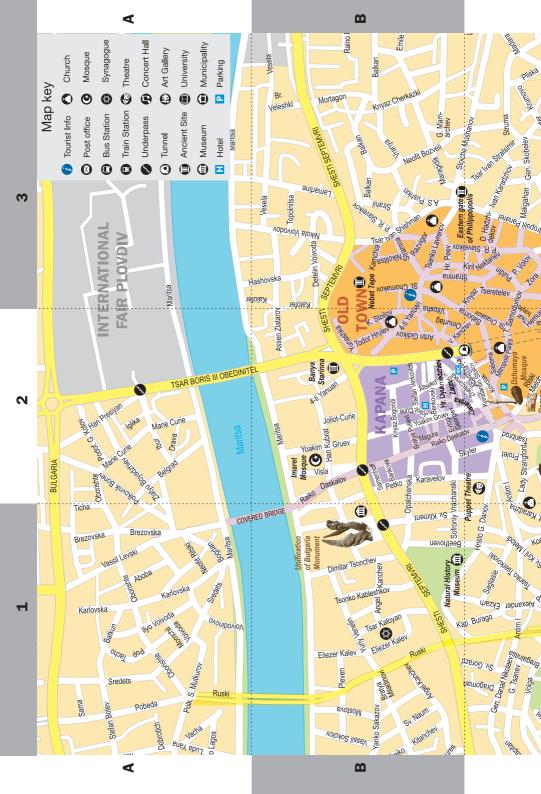
BRIGHT HOUSE

New, tastefully furnished apartments with modern fitted kitchens in the trendy part of town - Kapana. Six of the apartments have one bedroom and one has two bedrooms. ▶ ul. Georgi Benkovski 21, tel. (+359) 32 650800, www.brighthouse-pl.com. 42.50 EUR for one bedroom apartment, 55 EUR for two bedroom apartment. ৷ ☑ ☑ □ ★★

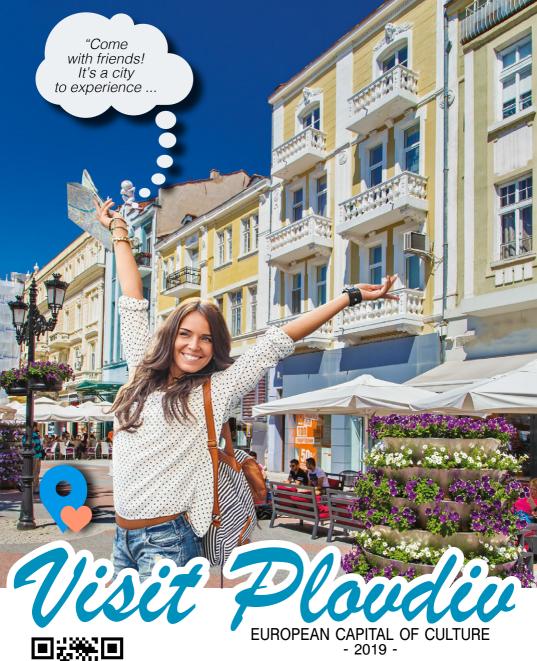
ROSSINA APARTMENTS

Offering short-term apartment and room rentals in Plovdiv in the vicinity of the Plovdiv Fair. All apartments are fully furnished with fully equipped kitchens while the rooms have wifi, TV, a/c and mini bar. All properties are new or refurbished with modern furnishings. ▶tel. +359 889483917/+359 896806087, www.apartment-hotels.net. Prices from 40 leva for single room to 55 leva per person for an apartment.

③ ② ② □ □ □ □ □









TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

1, Rayko Daskalov Str. /Roman stadium/; tel.: +359 32 620 229

1, Dr. Stoyan Chomakov Str. /The old town/; tel.: +359 32 620 453 tourism@plovdiv.bg, www.visitplovdiv.com







