

# VISIT Bulgaria

# PLOVDIV

with



See & SHARE



SEE FULL ITINERARY ON THE MAP



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



## CENTRAL POST OFFICE

Our walk begins at the Post Office. A typical building from the socialism, initially built in 1937 but renovated and expanded during the 70s. Its renovation is famous with the demolition of Kudoglu House and the opening of the Roman Forum which changed the initial plan in order to preserve the archeological site. The Kudoglu House of Charity and Public Health was a very beautiful building and the first social health facility in Bulgaria.

The new post office building bears the marks of the typical soviet architecture of the 70s. A facade with many decorative elements, such as the lines between the windows, a relief with a female figure in the southwest corner and the well-known clock above the northwestern entrance.

In the typical style for the epoch, the interior was designed as "synthesis of the arts" with woodcarvings, modern communication signs and a large mosaic in the foyer made by the legendary Plovdiv artist Georgi Bozhilov – Slona. But, if you are curious to enter inside, be prepared to be a bit disappointed - nowadays the building is not well preserved.



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT (CENTRAL POST OFFICE

The clock on the northwestern entrance of the Post Office was for years the favorite place for dating of the residents, before mobile phones changed our way of living completely.

### ADDRESS

pl. "Tsentralen" 1,  
4000 Tsentar, Plovdiv



SEE ON THE MAP



## TSAR SIMEON'S GARDEN

The main lung of Philippopolis is park monument and falls under the protection of the Ministry of Culture. The garden is not a natural green area, but an artificial oasis created by the landscaper Lucien Chevalas - a Swiss gardener known by his nickname the Minister of Flowers. He created his colorful masterpiece in 1892 for the First Bulgarian Exhibition - Fair Plovdiv.

Take your time to enjoy the garden and find inside the Viennese pavilion, beautiful places to relax, sculptures, little fountains and children's playgrounds. You will see for sure one of the most famous monuments - the Goddess of Fertility Demeter made by the Italian sculptor Arnaldo Dzacchi.

But if there is one thing that attracts both natives and foreigners, it's the famous Singing Fountains, built in the middle of the large garden lake. Stay and watch the beautiful dance of the fountain, flooded with fabulous colors, in harmony with gentle music. All year round, the garden hosts many cultural events as opera, theater, street artists, sport events, concerts of contemporary artists or symphony orchestra.



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT TSAR SIMEON'S GARDEN

Monday to Friday 10:30am you can join free gymnastics classes lead by two charming 80+ ladies. In the afternoons, meet the men playing chess and learn a lot of interesting local stories.

### ADDRESS

Tsar Simeon Garden  
4000 Tsentar, Plovdiv



SEE ON THE MAP



## BISHOP'S BASILICA OF PHILIPPOPOLIS

The specialists are dating the Bishop's Basilica in 313 as the first to be erected in the Roman Empire after Christianity was legalized. Its dimensions, its decoration and its central location near the ancient city's forum indicate the existence of a big and influential Christian community in Philippopolis.

It was discovered in the 80s during the construction of an underpass. In that moment, the team of the Plovdiv Regional Archaeological Museum researched just the half of the basilica and some of the mosaics were lifted for a museum storage. After that, the building was almost forgotten for many years, until 2016 when it was fully researched and finally socialized.

The basilica was 36 meters wide and over 90 meters long. Its interior was adorned by columns with Christian symbols on their capitals, by murals and lavish mosaic floors. The mosaics are the best-preserved elements of the building and a masterpiece of the late antiquity art. The church was the heart of the city's Christian life during 4th-6th centuries until it was demolished and abandoned, probably as a result of an earthquake.



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT **BISHOP'S BASILICA**

If you want to contribute to convert Bishop's Basilica in a modern cultural center, you can still adopt a bird (2 left). Inform you about the initiative of Friends of the Basilica Foundation in situ.

### ADDRESS

boulevard "Knyaginya Maria Luiza" 2, 4000 Tsentar,



[SEE ON THE MAP](#)



## DRAMA THEATER NIKOLAI MASSALITINOV

Walking on the main commercial street, between all the stores you will find on your left a beautiful white building with lanterns on the façade, this is Plovdiv's Drama Theater "Nikolai Massalitinov". It was the first professional drama theater in Bulgaria founded in 1881 and it was named after the great Russian actor and director Nikolai Massalitinov recognized as the founder of the modern Bulgarian theater. From here many of the very famous Bulgarian actors, theater directors and painters have gone up.

Drama Theater Plovdiv is host of the Autumn International Theater Festival "Scene at the Crossroads", which is held annually in September and it's a meeting point for many artists.



In 2013 the building suffered a fire but in 2016 it was restored and nowadays is one of the very modern theater building in whole Bulgaria. On the stairs inside, you can see a monumental painting by the famous Plovdiv artist Yoan Leviev.



photo dtp.bg

## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT DRAMA THEATER

Theater salon in Plovdiv was created by the Frenchmen Bossi and Brun, who made a special building for theater productions inside the old "Luxemburg" hotel. On the theater curtain are embroidered the words: THEATER IS OUR SALVATION!

### ADDRESS

ul. "Knyaz Alexander I" 38,  
4000 Tsentar, Plovdiv

SEE ON THE MAP



## MILYO'S STATUE AND TOGETHER SLOGAN

In the middle of the pedestrian street, you can't miss to take your photo with the statue of Milyo - a famous bohemian who everybody in Plovdiv knew.

Milyo was always hanging out on the main street or sitting in this place. Some legends claim that he was extremely intelligent and spoke several languages, and went crazy from reading too many books. Perhaps the other version is more credible, namely that he suffered from meningitis in childhood and this led to his retarded mental development. But he is remembered for his kind soul and his big smile, always neat, clean and polished, always wearing a cap. His people skills were spectacular, especially with women, which brought him some trouble and displeasure.

Kamenitza stairs behind Milyo's statue are one of the favorite places for meetings of young people. This is also one of the favorite locations for selfies with the letters "together", a slogan of the candidacy of Plovdiv for European capital of culture 2019. If you climb the stairs, just three more minutes up – you will find the Clock Tower on top of Danov's hill and a beautiful garden with a fountain.



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT **MILYO'S STATUE**

Remember: Milyo's statue is the point where the Roman Stadium ends. And a good luck advice: If you touch Milyo's knee you will have luck in love, and if you whisper a wish in his ear, it will come true. So, don't lose time, just do it!

### ADDRESS

ul. "Knyaz Alexander I" 30,  
4000 Tsentar, Plovdiv



SEE ON THE MAP



## THE (ITY OF THE 7 HILLS

Did you know that Plovdiv, as well as Rome, is built on seven hills? The city is known all over the world for its nickname, the City of the Hills. In the past, their number was greater, but currently they are 6, with 3 of them gathered in the Old Town, also called the Three Hills. These are Nebet Tepe, Taksim Tepe and Jambaz Tepe. Nebet Tepe is where the story of the city begins and from where a spectacular view of the entire city is revealed.

From the central pedestrian street, you can easily access Sahat Tepe (sahat means clock, tepe - hill in Turkish) where the Clock Tower measures time from XVI century. There is no clock face, but the time is measured every round hour, ringing around with its honeyed sound. Nowadays, the hill is one

of the preferred places for youth meetings with his garden and graffities of famous Bulgarian writers and intellectuals in the hill's rocks. Bunardjika Hill is famous by the Alyosha monument dedicated to all Russian soldiers, and the Youth Hill or Jendem tepe, is the highest tepe in Plovdiv and is known by the Children's Railroad. The 7th hill called Markovo Tepe was from where all the street stones of the city came, nowadays is a shopping Mall.



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT *YOUTH HILL*

Youth Hill or Jendem tepe, is also known as Hill of Spirits. Here, during his visit, the Dalai Lama had secluded himself for 2 hours, probably meditating and merging with nature.

### CLOCK TOWER

ul. "Bozhidar Zdravkov" 19,  
4000 Plovdiv



SEE ON THE MAP



## ROMAN STADIUM

At the end of the main street, you will find one of the most remarkable sites of ancient Philippopolis - the Roman Stadium. It was built at the beginning of the 2nd century under Emperor Hadrian. Its length is 240m, and only its northern end has been exposed, but the rest is located under the main street. You can see some parts of the stadium under "Excelsior" shopping center and under the H&M store on the main street.

In ancient times, the stadium accommodated up to 30,000 spectators, some of whom came specifically to attend the games in Philippopolis, gladiator fights or other sports competitions. The games were organised by the General Assembly of the province of Thrace. In their honour the city

mint coined money featuring the face of the ruling emperor or the athletic events held in the Ancient Stadium.

Feel the ancient city diving underground into the modern visitor's centre where a 3D cinema and a reconstruction of the entire stadium will help you to discover more.



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT **ROMAN STADIUM**

The Ancient Roman Stadium of Plovdiv is located at Dzhumaya Square and divides the main street of the city in two: The Big and The Small main street. Nowadays in the Small main street are organized several crafts, wine or local farmers dedicated markets.

### ADDRESS

ul. "Hristo G. Danov", 4000  
Staria grad, Plovdiv



SEE ON THE MAP



## DJUMAYA MOSQUE

Just in between the main street and the art district Kapana is located another of the most emblematic landmarks in Plovdiv – Djumaya Mosque – a kind of symbol of a city of many ethnicities and cultures.

Djumaya Mosque is the main Muslim temple in Plovdiv and also one of the oldest Ottoman cult buildings in the Balkans. The mosque was built on the site of the Plovdiv cathedral church "St. Petka Tarnovska" soon after the conquest of the city by the Ottoman army (1363 - 1364). Some years later, during the reign of Sultan Murad II, the old building was demolished and the current mosque, called Ulu Jumaya Mosque (main Friday mosque), was erected in its place. Its construction shows the influence of the Byzantine and Old Bulgarian



architectural techniques - two layers of bricks are built after each layer of cut stone.

The impressive frescoes inside probably date from the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. The mosque is an active temple, and you can enter inside, but please be respectful with Muslims rules and prayers you can find inside. No shoes inside the temple.



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT DJUMAYA MOSQUE

In the Turkish pastry outside you can enjoy a typical Turkish coffee or eat a piece of the very famous Turkish sweet: Baklava. In the Kapana district below you can also find some Turkish restaurants as the well known "Pasha".

### ADDRESS

ul. "Zhelezarska" 1, 4000  
Tsentar, Plovdiv

SEE ON THE MAP



## KAPANA (CREATIVE DISTRICT)

If you turn carelessly from the mosque to one of the streets below, you will immerse imperceptibly in Kapana - a unique place that you won't want to leave. In old times this zone was where all craftsmen workshops were located, but several years ago it was a neglected part of the city which the Municipality of Plovdiv and the "Plovdiv 2019" Foundation decided to transform into a real cultural center and district of creative industries. Now in Kapana, everything is colorful.

All the district is a pedestrian area, with modern graffiti in every corner and the small buildings, very similar to the narrow Dutch houses of Amsterdam, are full of new life. You will see gathered in one place galleries, workshops,

studios, cozy restaurants and shops, all kinds of other art spaces. Two of the most famous places are “The Tea House” and the local's favorite restaurant – “Pavage”. Day or night, there is so much going on in the new old artistic district of Plovdiv - concerts, exhibitions, festivals, theater performances, screenings, workshops...



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT **KAPANA**

Kapana means trap, and you will be trapped for sure by its atmosphere. But, have you ever heard of so-called "Aylyak" in Plovdiv? It means to enjoy and to celebrate every day life. And the perfect place for that for sure is Kapana. Take a beer or just have a walk on the colorful streets, enjoy life!

### ADDRESS

pl. "Kapana", 4000 Tsentar,  
Plovdiv

SEE ON THE MAP



## OLD TOWN OF PLOVDIV

How can we describe the old town of Plovdiv? A place full of history with charming streets and wonderful old houses from the Bulgarian Renaissance, churches and temples, a fortress wall... an architectural reserve that carries the ancient spirit of the past. You can spend one whole day inside and it will not be enough.

A must see in the old town is without any doubt the Ancient Theater, but there are also some other sites that deserve your attention. One of them is the **Hindliyan house**, built more than 180 years ago. It is an architectural masterpiece, typical of the Bulgarian Renaissance architectural style. The house belonged to the Armenian businessman Stephen Hindlian.

The building amazes everyone with its architecture, interior and exterior wall decoration, beautiful garden, richly carved wooden ceilings and a bathroom with hot running water, perhaps the only one in Plovdiv in the first half of the 19th century. And also with its constant fragrance of roses coming from the beautiful indoor fountain in the second floor where rose water is constantly circulating.



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT **HINDLIYAN HOUSE**

On the walls of the second floor you will see paintings with landscapes from Venice, Alexandria, Stockholm and other cities. This way the owner was showing his European belonging.

### HINDLIYAN HOUSE

ul. "Artin Gidikov" 4, 4000  
Tsentar, Plovdiv



SEE ON THE MAP



## ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Important part related to the Armenian population of Plovdiv is the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church "Surp Kevork" - a hub of the religious, educational and cultural life of the Armenians in Plovdiv both in the past and present. At first it was an Orthodox church with the temple of St. George the Victorious, but in 1767 it was ceded to the Armenian Diocese of Plovdiv.

The church has two side compartments, one for women and the other for men and is surrounded by a spacious courtyard that is shared with an Armenian school built in the early 20th century and a small museum. In the past, the yard was intended also as a cemetery for noble and wealthy Armenians from the community, priests and high-

ranking clergy who died here. Here is located also Krasirats Yehpayrutyun Community Centre ("Book-loving Brotherhood") founded in 1883

In the crypt of the church today there is a museum exposition with numerous reliquaries saved by the Armenian refugees victims of the genocide organized by the Turkish government in 1915 to which Plovdiv church offered shelter.



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT ARMENIAN CHURCH

You can discover many interesting things about the place, but if you decide to ask the priest something be prepared to use a translator as he only speaks armenian.

### ADDRESS

ul. "Turist" 2, 4000 Tsentar,  
Plovdiv

SEE ON THE MAP



## ANCIENT ROMAN THEATER

photo by Florin Petrescu

Certainly, the big bijou of the old town is the Ancient Roman Theater. One of the best-preserved ancient theaters in the world, built in the 1st century AD during the reign of Emperor Domitian. It has been discovered relatively late, by accident during the digging of the tunnel under Jambaz Tepe in 1967. That why it is so well preserved.

The theater was socialized and open for modern use in 1981 on the occasion of the 1300th anniversary of the founding of the Bulgarian state with a performance of the play "Medea". Nowadays it hosts a wide number of life performances for about 3,500 spectators. Groups and singers like Sting, Lord of the Dance, Apocalyptica, Nigel Kennedy, The Gipsy Kings or



Buena Vista Social Club were acting on its stage. From the seats of the theater an impressive view of the whole town and the Rhodope Mountains is revealed. Like the theaters throughout the Roman Empire, here there is also seats of honor inscribed: for the representatives of the city government, magistrates, friends of the emperor... These inscriptions show that the building was also used as the seat of the Thracian provincial assembly.



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT ROMAN THEATER

The theater was used, for sure, also for animal and gladiators fights, as there are specific features of its construction: safety equipment were found in front of the first row of seats.

### ADDRESS

ul. Tsar Ivaylo 4,  
4000 Tsentar, Plovdiv



SEE ON THE MAP



## "ST. ST. KONSTANTIN AND ELENA" (CHURCH)

One of the oldest and most beautiful churches in Plovdiv that everyone knows. According to archaeologists, the first temple located on the site was erected in the middle of the 4th century in honor of the martyrs Severian and Memnos and other 36 people who died there for preaching Christianity in 304 AD. But the name comes from the moment when Emperor Constantine began to be depicted as a saint on the parchment sheets. Then the believers decided to dedicate the temple to him and his mother Elena.

After Bulgaria fell under Ottoman rule, only a small wooden church remained on the site, without a dome and bell tower, because the construction of tall Christian spiritual and religious centers was prohibited. The church was repeatedly burned

down and rebuilt, but it did not stop functioning as a temple from the 4th century.

**Hisar gate** - Very near to the church you will see a stone gate which is one of the symbols of the city. The gate was built in the 11th century AD over the foundations of a gate from Roman times (probably from the 2nd century AD). Hisar Kapia is one of the three entrances to the acropolis of ancient Plovdiv.



photo by Klearchos Kapoutsis



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT HISAR KAPIA

Known by the locals with the legend of Philip of Macedon and his sister Khaisar. Philip said that whoever enter the city first he would name it after him, but he named just the gate after his sister.

### ADDRESS

ul. "Saborna" 24,  
4000 Tsentar, Plovdiv



SEE ON THE MAP



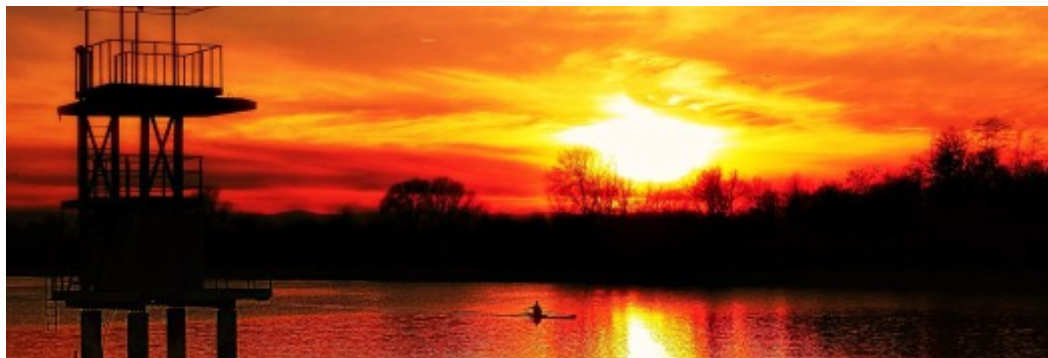
## ROWING CANAL

In addition to being a cultural and historical center, Plovdiv is also marked on the world sports map as one of the top ten destinations in the world for rowing sports. You'll understand why if you go to the Rowing Canal. The sports facility is one of the most modern, beautiful and comfortable for rowers in the Balkans. It is located in the western part of Plovdiv and extends between a park and the natural bed of the Maritsa River. Access to it is extremely easy and fast by public transport, taxi, bike rent or even a walk for around 30 minutes.

The rowing channel is 2200 meters long, 120 meters wide and 3 meters deep. In 2011, the Rowing Base hosted the European Rowing Championships for men and women.

A trail for jogging and walking, as well as a cycle path, surround the entire canal. An ideal place for a picnic, to visit one of the frequently organized concerts or festivals, or to have a delicious lunch in one of the cozy restaurants around.

And... last but not least, If you are in love, go to the middle of the rowing canal and testify your love with a padlock on the infamous Bridge of Lovers.



## SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT **SPORT**

Did you know that Plovdiv is the hometown of two Bulgarian sports legends - Stefka Kostadinova, who holds the world record for high jump, and the world famous football player Hristo Stoichkov?

### ADDRESS

bul. "6-ti septemvri", 4001  
Otdih I Kultura, Plovdiv



[SEE ON THE MAP](#)

# VISIT Bulgaria PLOVDIV



with



## See & SHARE



[facebook.com/seeandshareeu](https://facebook.com/seeandshareeu)



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.