

Zagora Golf™

Zagora Golf™ Regional Information



The Zagora Golf™ Development complex is being built in the well known natural spa area called the Stara Zagora Mineral Baths. The natural waters (both hot and temperate) are set in one of the most scenic areas in central Bulgaria with towering mountains and valleys.

It's about 3 hours drive to Istanbul, 2 hours to Greece and the Mediterranean, 1½ hours to the coastal Black Sea resorts and around 2 hours to the highest international Ski resorts.

Where is the Stara Zagora Region?

The Stara Zagora Region is located in the central part of Southern Bulgaria with an area of 5,147 square km and a population of 390,000 in eleven municipalities. The City of Stara Zagora is in the heart of the Region with a population of 180,000, the oldest city in Europe.



In the northern part of the Region stand the majestic Balkan Mountain Range - Stara Planina. Just below lay the Sredna Gora Mountains.

The Upper Thracian Plain occupies the central and southern parts of the Region. It's in the same latitude as the Spanish/French border.

The Region enjoys a year around temperate climate with mild, short winters. The Region is rich in thermal mineral springs with a large number of spas and health centers which facilitate the use of the healing waters.

Stara Zagora is a modern city with contemporary urban planning, developed economy and a rich cultural life.

The city has an extremely favourable geographical location, situated in the central part of South Bulgaria, and is the crossing point of Pan European Transport Corridors 4, 8 and 9.

The eastern part of the Region hosts the world famous Valley of the Roses. This rose growing area produces seventy percent of the world's attar - extract of roses. Considering that perfumers pay more than \$45 million dollars a year for attar, it is not surprising that the roses are known as "Bulgaria's Gold."

Transport & Infrastructure



Five of Europe's Pan-European Transport Corridors pass through Bulgaria. At the Stara Zagora intersection, one of two in the country, and alongside these corridors is active and strong manufacturing, logistics and services markets.

Local Airport

Bulgaria has launched concession tenders for the civil airport in Stara Zagora in 2008. The airport is expected to be ready for traffic at the beginning of 2010 and be fully operational in mid 2011.

The airport is approximately 20 minutes drive from the Zagora Golf™ development area.

Shopping

Stara Zagora offers a unique and diverse shopping experience with a wide range of fully equipped shops from designer labels to crafts, catering for the needs of both visitors and locals alike. Tzar Simeon Veliki, the main shopping street has a pedestrian walkway lined with sidewalk cafes and has a real Parisian feel.

The regions first western style shopping mall opened in October 2008. It is one of the largest in the Balkans with catchment areas from neighboring countries.

Sport

Besides a good football team, there are numerous sports facilities in the area. Rent a row boat on the

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beautiful Zagorka Lake or take delight in the paddle boats at Ezeroto Lake, a pleasant day of fishing at the Tunja River or the popular Coprinka Dam. There is tennis, horse riding, hunting, fitness centers, hiking is plentiful with countless trails in Ayazmo Park or, for the more adventurous, the magnificent Stara Planina.

What History surrounds the region?

The Stara Zagora region is at the center of 6,000 years of history. Recent studies by the National Geographic Society described the heritage here and in surrounding districts 'as important as the pyramids'.



The Stara Zagora Region is home to historic multiple civilizations, inhabited by Thracians, Ancient Greeks, Romans, Slavs, Ottomans, and Bulgarians, this antique land bears the immortal historical testimony of its past civilizations. Stara Zagora's Neolithic dwellings (the earliest traces of human activity in Europe from the 7th - 6th millennium BC); the Karasura archaeological excavations near Chirpan; the ruins of the ancient Roman Forum at the center of Stara Zagora, and the Thracian tomb in Kazanlak are among its countless historical treasures.



The town of Stara Zagora was almost destroyed by fire less than 150 years ago and it was resurrected from ruins and completely rebuilt. Today, it is an important cultural center with a vital thriving community, tree-lined streets, lively cafes and beautiful parks.

Stara Zagora Open air flower, fruit & vegetable market

This is a must for everyone. Bulgarians love to farm and here you can buy far better fruit and vegetables than in the supermarkets. The size and taste of the tomatoes, huge water melons (called dinya in Bulgarian), and wild strawberries are some of the delights on offer. The Central Market is quite simply one of those joyful life experiences.



As you walk between the stalls your senses will be awakened by the smells, tastes, sounds, vision and lively atmosphere created by the interaction between stall holders,

customers and browsers.

Locally grown fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs, locally produced honey, cheeses and breads made in village kitchens, and a myriad of locally grown flowers grace the tables. To cap it all, you'll struggle to spend more than £10.

What are the Cultural Activities?

The Stara Zagora Region has a cultural tradition with an impressive number of talented poets, writers, artists, musicians, and actors. Stara Zagora's National Opera Theater, founded in 1928, is the first provincial opera company in Bulgaria and continues to provide world class operas.

The Geo Milev Drama Theater presents outstanding classical theatrical productions. The State Puppet Theater has toured Europe and the Middle East. Numerous cultural events take place throughout the year - the Festivals of the Opera and Ballet Arts, of the Old City Song, of the Children's Song, Thrace Songs and Dance Festival; and the St. Lazar's Days rituals of folk song and dance and many others.

The city's life style offerings include museums, libraries, art galleries, a brass band, cinemas, sport stadiums, an equestrian training center, Roman ruins, and many established parks.



Eternally green, the large Ayazmoto Park dominates the northern section of the city with 939 acres of exotic trees, an astronomy observatory, a zoo, children's playgrounds, a sports complex and an open-air theater, where the National Festival of Gypsy Music and Songs is held each summer. It is a popular weekend gathering place.

The capital of the rose growing region is Kazanlak where rose picking rituals and folklore displays are presented. The Museum of the Rose Industry is also located in Kazanlak.

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The Valley of the Roses is magically transformed with breathtaking blooms in May and early June each year when "The Festival of Roses" is celebrated.

Bulgarian Wine Area in Stara Zagora



It's now an open secret that Bulgarian wines are among the best in the world. Bulgaria can be geographically divided into five wine producing regions. Each one of those has

its own distinct features and peculiarities.

"The success story of the Eastern Block" as called by R. Joseph, the editor of Wine magazine, Bulgaria is gaining reputation as a producer of high quality affordable wines.

Modern technology coupled with centuries old traditions and enormous natural potential bore fruit and Bulgarian wines are gaining popularity among consumers in Western Europe, United States, Canada, and even as far as China and Japan. The best wines are produced from the Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon varieties, high quality, rich, and Bordeaux-like. Local grapes include:

- Gamza - the most widespread sort produces earthy, light bodied red wine good for simple fare. In Romania and Hungary it is known as Kadarka.
- Mavrud - is a full bodied, spicy red that can age to more than 8 years
- Melnik - grown in the southernmost part of the country makes hefty red wines that age very well
- Pamid - rustic and hardly unforgettable but still good enough "commercial" for weekly drinking.

Whites are also produced from renowned varieties such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and Riesling as well as from the local vines. Whites are nearly as good as reds and rapidly improving.

The Sub Balkan Region contains the kettles at the Southern foot of the Balkan Mountain. These deep valleys produce unique micro climates. The famous in Bulgaria Sungurlare Misket comes from there as well as the excellent Sungurlare Eau de Vie. White wines from different grapes are local specialty.

Slavjantzi is a popular winery from this region. The Southern Region includes the Tracian Valley from the Balkan Range to the Greek border and boasts almost Mediterranean climatic conditions particularly good for Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot production. The best Bulgarian variety grape-Mavrud grows in the Tracian Valley. Reds coming from this region are superb. Jambol and Haskovo are fine appellations.

Art Galleries

The Regional Art Gallery, established in 1908, houses 4,600 works of art. Many art galleries showcase the talents of local artists offering traditional and

contemporary paintings, sculptures, ceramics, jewellery, leather goods and woven cloths.

A visit to the following galleries will demonstrate the exceptional talents of both local artists and the artists of Bulgaria: Bayer, Ritzar, Ednorog, Zodiak, and Radev.

Bereketska Mound

Just southwest of the city of Stara Zagora lies the ruins of the largest prehistoric settlement found in Bulgaria dating back to the early Neolithic age - from the 6th millennium BC to the 12th century AD.

Bereketska Mound is 17 meters high and has a diameter, at its foundation, of 250 meters. A necropolis (burial ground) dating from the early bronze epoch, 3rd millennium BC, is found east of the mound.

Neolithic Dwellings

Remains of two houses from a settlement of the Neolithic age, dating from the 6th millennium BC, in Stara Zagora are considered the best preserved from this early time uncovered, to date, on the European continent.

Witness the preserved ovens, grain storage pots, primitive mill for grinding grain, pottery, tools, etc. A museum exhibiting pottery, jewelry, tools, etc. from the numerous archeological excavations in the Stara Zagora region is located on the lower level.

Copper Mines

Located 8 kilometers northeast of Stara Zagora, in the Mechi Kladenetz area, are the oldest copper mines in Europe dating from the end of the 5th millennium BC.

Research of the 11 mines indicates that a huge quantity (for that time) of copper ore was extracted there. Semi finished objects made from copper, extracted from these mines, can be found in a large section Europe extending to the Volga river in Russia.

South gate of Augusta Triana

Exhibited in the lower level of an administrative building at 38 Ruskie Street, in a fortified section of the walls, are the remains of the entrance gate to the ancient town of Augusta Triana. This structure indicates that the gate was a square building measuring 64 square meters. Above the gate there was a two-story tower.

Forum of the Antique town of Augusta Triana II - V Century AD

This antique forum, a semi-circular gathering place, with the preserved pedestal for the statue of the Roman emperor Tryan, is one of the most monumental public facilities from the Roman town of Augusta Triana. An amphitheater and auditorium consisting of nine rows of descending stone seats is found in the northern portion of the area. The upper part of the amphitheater is crowned with an arched colonnade.

A facade of the town's thermal baths, built in the middle of the 2nd century AD, was discovered directly behind the auditorium on an area stretching for 1¼ acres. To the west of the forum one can observe the fortress-like

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walls of the ancient town. The inside wall was built at the end of the 2nd century and rebuilt, with increased thickness, in the 4th century. The outside wall was built at the end of the 5th century. An antique city-center east-west street, with ridges from chariot traffic, crosses the stone open space and ends at the western gate of the town. The gate is 4.2 meters wide and has three doors- two that raise up and down and one two-winged.

The Valley of Kings



Located in the area around the town of Kazanluk is the Valley of Kings where you will find the Kazanluk Tomb from 3rd century BC, the Thracian Mausoleum at Ostrysa Mound from 4th & 3rd Century BC and the Thracian Tomb of Helvacius, Kolons & Griffins from 4th & 3rd Century BC.

Parks

Lovely parks filled with greenery, flowers and children's playgrounds are plentiful in Stara Zagora. In the heart of town the City Garden is frequented by locals who revel in its shady nooks and paths.

Ayazmoto Park dominates the northern section of the city with 940 incredible acres of exotic trees, an open air theater, an astronomy observatory, a zoo, children's playgrounds, countless hiking trails, and a sports complex. It's a popular weekend gathering place for locals and tourists.

Opera/Theater/Night Life

Stara Zagora has a cultural tradition with an impressive number of talented poets, writers, artists, musicians and actors. The State Opera Theater, founded in 1928, is the first provincial opera theater in Bulgaria provides world class operas. The Geo Milev Drama Theater presents outstanding productions. The State Puppet Theater provides children of all ages creative fun-filled productions. Stara Zagora's diverse entertainment also offers the traditional array of nightlife including bowling, cinema, casino's and nightclubs.

Tours

Zagora Golf™ tour managers can arrange a traditional village 'experience' for you with accommodation in a Bulgarian farm house and you can enjoy the traditional activities that are everyday life in a small farm village just outside of Stara Zagora. Perhaps you would like to relax in the vine-arbor, stroll through the vegetable gardens or the fruit orchard. Visiting a small folk restaurant is quite an experience, meet locals, and hear

original folk music-performers dressed in traditional folk clothing. When walking through a village, you will be greeted by people working in their gardens so listen to experts speak of traditional village life; its an unforgettable and memorable experience.

Rose Festival



East of Stara Zagora is the "Valley of the Roses".

Every May and early June it is transformed into a sea of beauty with a glorious scent and fields of color as far as the eye can see. The festival lasts for three days with celebrations of the rose through street parades, exhibitions, crafts and shows.

Bulgarian Monasteries

The Rila Monastery



Recently, Bulgarian monasteries, which are closely connected to the historical fate of the Bulgarian state and nation, have witnessed increasing tourist interest.

From the very start, monasteries have gained great importance as centres of the Bulgarian literature and culture and have preserved the nation's values during difficult times.

Some of the monasteries, which date back to Byzantine times, have played a key role in keeping up the Bulgarians' spirit and self-consciousness during 5 centuries of Ottoman domination.

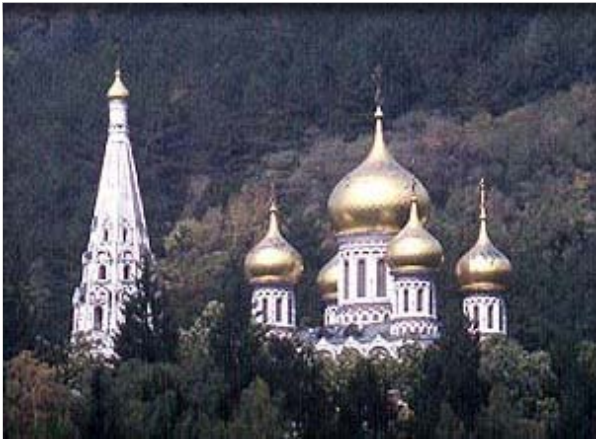
Others were built in the late 20th century in the place of destroyed cloisters in order to restore past glory and respond to the religious needs of local people.

Due to Ottoman invasions or merely to the course of time, only few of the still-functioning monasteries keep their original architecture and interior of the buildings. Nevertheless, the visit of each one of them leaves a lasting memory and a deep impression.

Some impose on the visitor with their unique design, others - with their valuable icons and masterly wall paintings, third - with their location in most beautiful and wild parts of the country.

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Shipka Monastery



About 25 minutes drive from Zagora Golf™ is the world famous Shipka Monastery. The monastery, together with an impressive memorial church, was erected near the town of Shipka, near Kazanluk, below the famous Shipka Pass in the Balkan Range, where in the summer of 1877 the Russian troops and Bulgarian volunteers achieved the break-through, which brought about the victorious outcome of the war. The Russian and the Bulgarian people provided the means for its construction, which began in 1896 and was completed six years later.

Bulgarian Foods – Natural Weight Loss



Bulgaria's cuisine is influenced by neighboring Balkan countries (Yugoslavia, Greece and northern Turkey). If you are familiar with the weight loss phenomenon, food combining, then you will appreciate and understand why Bulgarians tend to be thin, naturally.

Proteins and starches are rarely mixed in Bulgarian cuisine, salads are plentiful and most meals start with one of dozens of varieties. The shopska salad (in the above picture) is among the most popular, consisting of tomatoes, spring onions, cucumbers topped with goats cheese and usually an olive – ask for one with extra peppers for 'heat'. Traditional food includes bread, pickled vegetables, salads, soups, stews, casseroles,

stuffed vegetables, kebabs, spicy sausages and cheese dishes. Yoghurt is very popular and eaten most days. In fact, Bulgaria is said to be the home of yoghurt and Bulgarian yoghurt is thought to have curative properties. Meat (pork, chicken, lamb and beef), fish and vegetarian dishes are served with staple foods such as rice and bulgar wheat. Vegetables include aubergines, beans, cabbage, carrots, corn, courgettes, cucumbers, lettuce, mushrooms, onions, peppers, potatoes, tomatoes and olives.

Favourite desserts are pancakes, baklava, baked apples and fruit: apricots, blueberries, blackberries, cherries, grapes, melons, raspberries, strawberries, peaches, pears, plums and quinces. Traditional alcoholic drinks are "rakiya" (a fruit brandy, often plum) and local wines. Non-alcoholic drinks include coffee, tea, juices, buttermilk and mineral water. It is said that Bulgarians are natural slim. The reason why this is obviously true is the traditional foods.

Stara Zagora's Annual Festivals

March	March Theater Days
April	St. Lazar's Days (traditional folk) Easter Music Days
May	Festival of the Opera and Ballet Arts The Atanassov Ballroom Dance Competition Old City Songs Day Graduation Parades at the end of May
June	Children's Song Festival - Golden Rooster Folklore Ensembles - International Awards Nedjo Ranchev Judo Competition
July	Samarsko Zname Track & Field Event
August	National Festival of Roma (Gypsy) Music and Songs Beer Festival
September	Geo Milev Days (Festival of Literature/Arts) "Trakia Sings and Dances" Festival The International Puppet Theatre Festival for Adults "PIERROT"
October	National Festival of Young Trumpeters Stara Zagora Day (Cities Anniversary) The V. Hanchev National Poet Competition
December	Christmas Musical Evenings

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