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BULGARIA DISCOVERED GUIDE

On the cover:

Lazarka, 46/55 Oils Cardboard, Nencho D. Bakalski

Lazarka, this name is given to little girls, participating in the rituals on "Lazarovden" – a celebration dedicated to nature and life's rebirth. The name Lazar is a symbol of health and long life. On the last Saturday before Easter all Lazarki go around the village, enter in every house and sing songs to each family member. There is a different song for the lass, the lad, the girl, the child, the host, the shepherd, the ploughman. This tradition can be seen only in Bulgaria.

Nencho D. BAKALSKI is a Bulgarian artist, born in September 1963 in Stara Zagora. He works in the field of painting, portraits, iconography, designing and vanguard. He is a member of the Bulgarian Union of Artists, the branch of Stara Zagora.





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2010

Human Resource Development Centre

Rachenitsa!

The sound of bagpipe filled the air. The crowd stood still in expectation. Posing for a while against each other, the dancers jumped simultaneously.

Dabaka moved with dexterity to Christina. She gently ran on her toes passing by him. Both looked at each other from head to toe as if wanting to show their superiority and continued their dance. Christina waved her white handkerchief, swayed her white neck like a swan and gently floated in the vortex of sound, created by the merry bagpipe. Her face turned hot...

Dabaka was in complete trance. With hands freely crossed on his back he moved like a deer performing wondrous jumps in front of her ... Then, shaking his head to let the heavy sweat drops fall from his face, he made a movement as if retreating. Stalking his every step, Christina flew gently towards him, finding herself very close to him, feeling his breath and the warmth of his hot face. Little by little he moved away and unconsciously attracted her with his dance.

Superiority spayed from every step he made and Christina started to fall under his power. Enchanted she tried to "fight back", but after one hour she stopped and whispered panting with last efforts: "I can't any longer... He overplayed me!"

From the Windmill,
written by one of the most famous
Bulgarian classic writers Elin Pelin in 1902.

If you want to learn more about the country of Rachenitsa (traditional Bulgarian folk dance) and people that prefer to dance instead of observing, read forward.

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Bulgaria is like a miniature of all natural beauties.

On a territory of nearly 111 000 square kilometers you can see and enjoy magnificent mountain ridges, cozy sand and stone beaches, scenic tectonic and glacial lakes, patchwork plains, green pastures and deep caves.

In the North is the Danube plain, bordering with the Balkan Ridge Mountain. In the South is the Thracian Lowland, bordering with the Rila, Pirin and the Rhodopes Mountains. To the East is the 354 km Black sea coastline.

SPRING IN NORTH - EASTERN BULGARIA





SUMMER FLOWERS IN CENTRAL BULGARIA

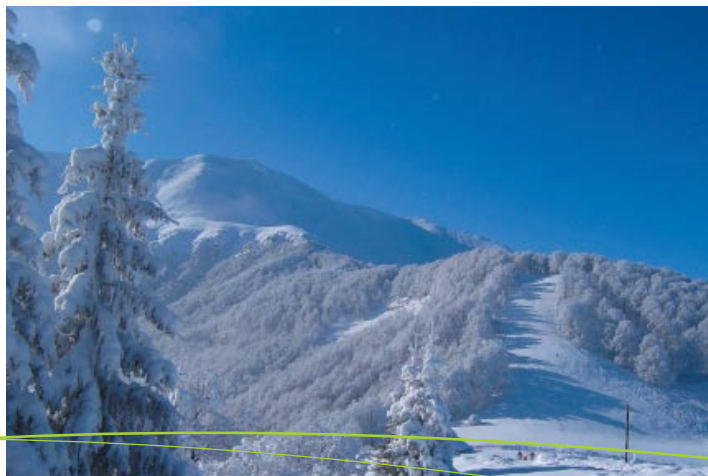
Some of the main rivers running through the territory of the country are: Danube, Maritza, Mesta, Struma, Iskar and Yantra.

There are 3 national parks, 9 nature parks and 55 nature reserves.

The climate is continental with a Mediterranean influence from the South. The average temperature in January is around -5°C , and in July – around 30°C .

If you chose for a stay in Bulgaria you will be lucky to enjoy the beauties and aromas of all four distinct seasons

AUTUMN IN SOUTHERN BULGARIA



WINTER IN WESTERN BULGARIA

Mountains

Snow-capped peaks and soft green slopes, cool forests carrying the aroma of herbs and wild fruit, fast rivers and crystal-clear blue lakes, mineral springs and bio-reserves, rich plant and animal life, modern ski resorts and small picturesque villages with living traditions and folklore - each Bulgarian mountain has its own original trademark, fascination and name.

There are five main mountain wonders: Rila, Pirin, Rhodope, Stara Planina and Vitosha. The Rila Mountain prides to have the highest peak on the Balkan Peninsula – Musala (2925 m), over 219 lakes, 2000 plant varieties and 500 animal species. The jewels in the mountain's crown are the Seven Rila Glacial Lakes.

MUSALA (2925 m)



Belogradchik Rocks



These rocks resemble fantastic human figures up to 200 meters high and form a strip of land that is 30 km long and 3 km wide. The central group of rocks is situated to the South of Belogradchik town in North- Western Bulgaria. Here are the most interesting and impressive formations - Adam and Eve, The Schoolgirl, The Bear, The Shepherd boy, The Dervish, The First slabstone, The Camel, The Mushrooms, The Cuckoo, The Red Wall, The Madonna, The Horseman, The Monks, The Mental Stone, Rebel Velko and The Pine Stones. They are declared as natural landmarks.

Amongst these rocks is situated the Belogradchik Castle – built in the 1st and 2nd century.

“... The Alps, the Pyrenees, the most breathtaking of Tyrolean mountains and Switzerland, cannot offer such a sight. The giant red pillars rising on both sides of a carved roadway under which a bubbly stream leaps in tiny waterfalls, the trees hanging at great height as if ready to fall at any moment, the endless seclusion only broken by the flight of eagles and vultures: all this would impress even the most hardened of souls ...”, wrote about Belogradchik rocks the French traveller Adolph Blanqui in 1841.



The Melnik Rock pyramids

The Rock pyramids in the region of Melnik in Southern Bulgaria rank among the most remarkable natural phenomena in Bulgaria. Over an area of about 17 sq. km. millennia-long erosion has created a truly un-earthly world. It is up to the visitor's imagination to distinguish obelisks, ancient towers, pyramids and giant mushrooms among the various forms of erosion.





Raiskoto praskalo

Raiskoto praskalo ("Heaven's Sprinkle") is the highest waterfall in Bulgaria (125m). It is situated into the Dzhendem reserve in the middle of Stara Planina (Balkan mountain). It collects its water from the snowdrift located on the highest peak in Stara planina - Botev (2376m).

The Sea

The Bulgarian Black Sea coast was inhabited centuries ago – the earliest records date from 5th century BC. The Bulgarian Black Sea Coast, stretching for 236 miles (380 km), marvelous stretch of beaches, calm and safe sea, clear water and healthy air. Nowadays it is a magnet for hundreds of thousands of Bulgarians and foreign visitors every year. The welcoming climate from late May to late September with average sea temperatures of 25C, the beaches with fine golden sands, and the modern resorts not surprisingly attract more and more tourists. The Black Sea coast is also one of the best spa areas in the country where the combination of sea climate, mineral baths, hot springs and curative mud adds to the possibilities of holiday enjoyment. The two international airports of Varna and Burgas connect the Bulgarian Riviera to the world.



Kaliakra cape

Kaliakra is the most beautiful and the strangest place in the Bulgarian northern Black Sea. The narrow rocky peninsula is cutting 2 km into the sea as a wedge and this promontory ends with 70 m high vertical rocks. They are conglomerates, formed in the previous shallow Sarmatian sea.



Ferrous oxides give to the cape a crimson color. It is compared to a blazing sward, cutting the greenish-blue waters of the sea and the vertical sides make it impressive and inapproachable. Its name Kaliakra means "a beautiful cape".

Many legends are related to the cape's name. The most popular story relates of how 40 girls with hairs and arms entwined jumped into the sea to evade falling into Ottoman hands. Today an obelisk called "The gate of the 40 maidens" is erected in the entrance of the Kaliakra Cape. The discovered remains of the antiquity are exhibited in a small archaeological museum.

Ancient City of Nesebar

Burgas region

The town of Nessebar is under the aegis of UNESCO. It is one of the oldest towns in Europe.

Situated on a rocky peninsula on the Black Sea, more than 3,000-year-old site of Nessebar was originally a Thracian settlement (Mesembria). At the beginning of the 6th century, the city became a Greek colony.

The city's remains, which date mostly from the Hellenistic period, include an acropolis, a temple of Apollo, an agora and a wall left from the Thracian fortifications. Among other monuments, the Stara Mitropolia Basilica and the fortress date from the Middle Ages, when Nessebar was one of the most important Byzantine towns on the west coast of the Black Sea.





Sozopol

Burgas region

Sozopol is located 36 km south of Burgas city on a slender rocky peninsula, Sozopol is one of the oldest Bulgarian coastal towns and today it is a world heritage site protected by UNESCO.

This charming place is a popular beach resort best known for its majestic beauty and magnificent beaches. While Sozopol is very busy during July and August, in the off-season it reverts back to a sleepy fishing village. The town also hosts an International music and art festival every September for ten days. There is an excellent choice of restaurants and bars spread throughout the old town's cobblestone streets serving a variety of high quality local cuisine and wines.

Bulgaria is a cradle and crossroad of ancient civilizations like Thracians, Romans, Slavs and Bulgarians. Bulgaria is the birthplace of the Cyrillic alphabet, which was developed in Preslav and Ohrid Literary Schools during the 10th century. Today, more than 200 million people from different countries use the developed version of the Cyrillic alphabet. Bulgaria has nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 5 of which are with historical cultural origin.

Boyana Church

Boyana district, Sofia region

Located in the outskirts of Sofia, Boyana Church consists of three buildings. The Eastern Church was built in the 10th century, then enlarged at the beginning of the 13th century by Sebastocrator, the whole building being finished with a further expansion to the west in the middle of the 19th century. The church owes its world fame mainly to its frescoes from 1259. They form a second layer over the paintings from earlier centuries and represent one of the most complete and well-preserved monuments of Eastern European medieval art. A total of 89 scenes with 240 human images are depicted on the walls of the church.





Rila monastery

Rila mountain, Kyustendil region

Rila Monastery was founded in the 10th century by St. Ivan Rilski. He was revered as a saint when he was still alive and the legend says that wild animals were coming to him, and birds were landing on his hands. Today St. Ivan Rilski is honoured one of the most important saints of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. His ascetic dwelling and tomb became a holy site and were transformed into a monastic complex which played an important role in the spiritual and social life of medieval Bulgaria. Destroyed by fire at the beginning of the 19th century, the complex was rebuilt between 1834 and 1862.

Rock-Hewn Churches of Ivanovo

Village of Ivanovo, Ruse region

In the valley of the Rusenski Lom River, in North-Eastern Bulgaria, a complex of rock-hewn churches, chapels, monasteries and cells developed in the vicinity of the village of Ivanovo. This is where the first hermits had dug out their cells and churches during the 12th century.

The 14th century murals testify to the exceptional skill of the artists belonging to the Tarnovo Painting School.





Madara Rider

Village of Madara, Shumen region

The Madara Rider, representing the figure of a horseman, is carved into a 100-metre-high cliff near the village of Madara in North-Eastern Bulgaria. The horseman, facing right, is thrusting a spear into a lion lying at his horse's feet. An eagle is flying in front of the horseman and a dog is running after him. Madara was the primary sacred place of the Bulgarian state before Bulgaria's conversion to Christianity in the 9th century. It is believed that the inscription depicts the Bulgarian ruler – Khan Tervel who is famous for saving Europe from the invasion of the Arabs in 718.



Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak

Kazanlak, Stara Zagora region

Discovered in 1944, this tomb dates from the Hellenistic period, around the end of the 4th century BC. It is located near Seutopolis, the capital city of the Thracian king Seutes III, and is part of a large Thracian necropolis. The tholos (ceremonial room) has a narrow corridor and a round burial chamber, both decorated with murals representing Thracian burial rituals and culture. These paintworks are Bulgaria's best-preserved artistic masterpieces from the Hellenistic period.

Perperikon

Kardzhali region

In recent years Bulgaria has attracted world attention with numerous discoveries of ancient cultural monuments. In 2000 excavations unearthed what is now known as the European Machu Picchu – the sanctuary of Perperikon. The ancient Thracian city of Perperikon is located in the Eastern Rhodope, 15 km northeast of the present-day town of Kardzhali, Bulgaria, on a 470-metre-high rocky hill. The village of Gorna Krepost ("Upper Castle") is located at the foot of the hill and the gold-bearing Perpereshka River flows near it. Perperikon is the largest archeological megalith (large stone) ensemble in the Balkans. Legends and historical sources read that the Perperikon complex harboured sanctuary and oracular shrine dedicated to the Greek God Dionysius.



Etar

Gabrovo region

Architectural ethnographic complex "Etar" is the first one of this type in Bulgaria. The museum is situated 8 km South of Gabrovo. Inside Etar is the only one and unique collection of old-times water-driven machinery in Bulgaria.

It consists 10 objects and its one of the most richest and well preserved active technical collection around the European museums in the open air.



Cities Architectural Reserves

Melnik

Blagoevgrad region

The town of Melnik is the smallest town in Bulgaria. It lies in the south-western slopes of the Pirin mountain. The breath-taking Melnik pyramids rank among the most remarkable natural phenomena in Bulgaria. It is up to the visitor's imagination to distinguish obelisks, ancient towers, pyramids, and giant mushrooms among the various forms of erosion. What is even more intriguing is the practical use of a number of these pyramids around for nothing else but wine cellars! Apart from the unique natural surroundings, the town also boasts for the fascinating architecture of its old Melnik houses, most of which were built during the Bulgarian Renaissance. In the southwest town of Melnik is situated the biggest Renaissance house in Bulgaria – Kordopulovata, built in 1754. In this four-storey building, cut into the rocks, there are incomparable Venitian frescoes, woodcut, and as well as big casks for keeping of wine, wich can be tasted on the very spot. On 7 km away from the town, up in the Pirin mountain lies one of the largest and most beautiful monasteries in Bulgaria - the Rozhen monastery.



Koprivshtitsa

Panaguirishte region

The town of Koprivshtitsa is situated in the heart of Sredna Gora Mountain, at 1050 meters above the sea level, at the distance of 110 km south-east of Sofia and 80 km north-west of Plovdiv.

The town's greatest wealth are the preserved houses from 19th century with colorful courtyards, surrounded with high stone walls and gates and the curved and narrow cobblestone streets.





Arbanasi

Veliko Turnovo region

Located four kilometers northeast of Veliko Turnovo, the village of Arbanasi has a splendid view over the medieval castles of Trapezitsa and Tsarevets. The village has its specific style in house-building. In 17-18th centuries the village reaches its "Golden age" and richly ornamented monumental houses and churches are built during this period.

The Arbanasi house has no equivalent in building and style in other parts of the country. Another architectural treasure of the village is the existence of five churches and two monasteries. The oldest and the most interesting one is "Rojdestvo Christovo" /"Nativity"/ church.



Plovdiv

Plovdiv (in ancient times known as Philippopolis and Trimontium) is the second largest city in Bulgaria, situated on the two banks of Maritsa River. Its unique location on these ancient crossroads has stimulated strong cultural and political influences from East and West civilizations, and yet maintained its unique cultural identity. One of Europe's oldest cities, it was originally a Thracian settlement before becoming a major city ruled by Greeks and Romans in Antiquity. In the Middle Ages, it retained its strategic regional importance within the Byzantine and Bulgarian Empires.

Being older than most of the oldest towns like Rome, Athens, Carthage or Constantinople, an almost contemporary of the ancient city of Troy,

Plovdiv is a town built upon layers of towns and a culture developed upon layers of cultures. The city has historically developed on seven syenite hills, some of which are 250 metres high. Because of these seven hills, Plovdiv is often referred to in Bulgaria as "The City of the Seven Hills".

Plovdiv is a picturesque town, with many parks and gardens, museums and archaeological monuments. Its old part, called the Old Town, with houses from the National Revival period (18th-19th century), is an imposing open-air museum situated on the three hills of the ancient Trimontium. One of the most remarkable sights of the town, the Ancient Theatre (a well-preserved Roman theatre), is located there and is still used for open-air performances.

Plovdiv hosts various economic and cultural events such as the Plovdiv International Fair, the international theatrical festival "A scene on a cross-road" and the TV festival "The golden chest".



Golden treasures of Bulgaria

In Antiquity Bulgarian lands were inhabited by Thracians. They have left us amazing artifacts-unique stone tombs with murals and precious golden and silver treasures.

The golden treasure of PANAGYURISHTE

It is a Thracian treasure excavated in 1949 near the town of Panagyurishte. The famous Panagyurishte Golden Treasure is a Thracian treasure made of 23-karat, pure solid gold with total weight of 6,164 kg. It comprises of a royal feast dinner set of 9 vessels with original shape and decoration. There are rhytons with the shape of animal heads and heads of goddesses. The jugs, amphoras and phials are decorated with scenes from the "Iliad", faces and animals.



THE GOLDEN TREASURE OF PANAGYURISHTE

The golden treasure of VALCHITRAN

The Valchitran golden treasure was unearthed in 1925 in the village of



THE GOLDEN TREASURE OF VALCHITRAN

Valchitran, Pleven. The biggest golden treasure known to the Bulgarian archaeology – 12,5 kg of pure gold with natural alloys of silver, copper and iron was found by chance while digging up a vineyard.

A very interesting fact regarding the small cups is that the master goldsmiths made them in such a way that they would stand in upright position only when filled with liquid. Probably we will never find out the right answers to our questions but the Valchitran gold treasure gives us the opportunity to touch on antiquity in a unique and mysterious way. The treasure dates back to the end of the Bronze Age, i.e. to the 16th – 12th century BC.

The Golden Mask of tsar Teres

Archeologists have discovered a 2,400-year-old golden mask that was likely made for a Thracian monarch's funeral. The mask depicts a full face with moustache and beard. The rare artifact is made of 600 grams of solid gold and "is without paragon in archeology," according to Georgi Kitov and his



team that unearthed the artifact in the summer of 2004 near the village of Shipka, in the so-called Valley of Thracian Kings. Besides the mask, archeologists also found a golden ring showing a rower, and many bronze and silver vessels. No remains have been found but archeologists continue to excavate the tomb.

Historical figures

Bulgaria's contribution to the world cultural and historic heritage goes beyond ancient treasures. A constellation of prominent Bulgarians has worked and are working for enriching the intellectual and spiritual treasures of country. Among them are:

St. Cyril and St. Methodius -

creators of the Slavic alphabet and the first translators of liturgical books from Greek into Old-Bulgarian.



The contemporary Bulgarian (Cyrillic) alphabet:

А,а /A,a/	Б,б /B,b/	В,в /V,v/	Г,г /G,g/	Д,д /D,d/	Е,е /E,e/	Ж,ж /Zh,zh/	З,з /Z,z/	И,и /I,i/	Й,й /Y,y/
К,к /K,k/	Л,л /L,l/	М,м /M,m/	Н,н /N,n/	О,о /O,o/	П,п /P,p/	Р,р /R,r/	С,с /S,s/	Т,т /T,t/	У,у /U,u/
Ф,ф /F,f/	Х,х /H,h/	Ц,ц /Ts,ts/	Ч,ч /Ch,ch/	Ш,ш /Sh,sh/	Щ,щ /Sht,sht/	Ъ,ъ /A,a/	Ь,ь /Y,y/	Ю,ю /Yu,yu/	Я,я /Ya,ya/

Tsar Simeon I

(Simeon Veliki - Simeon The Great, 893-927) - the greatest ever ruler of Bulgaria, who was the driving force for The Golden Age of Bulgarian Medieval Civilization.

**Paisiy Hilendarski (1722 - 1773)**

- the father of the Bulgarian Renaissance and author of the first Bulgarian history.

Vasil Levski (1837-1873)

- theoretician and strategist of the struggle of Bulgarian people for liberation from Ottoman rule, called by Bulgarians "Apostle of Freedom".



Hristo Botev (1848-1876)

– genius of the Bulgarian literature. Brilliant Bulgarian poet and revolutionary. A verse of Hristo Botev is written in golden letters in the Sorbonne – Paris, as an example of his poetry masterpiece:

„Nastane vecher – mesets izgree,
zvezdi obsipiat svoda nebesen, gora
zashumi, viatar povee, Balkanat pee
haidushka pesen.”

English version:

“The moon comes out and day grows
dim,
on heaven’s vault the stars now throng,
the forest rustles, quiet stirs the wind,
the mountains sing song of fighters.”

**Ivan Vazov (1850-1921)**

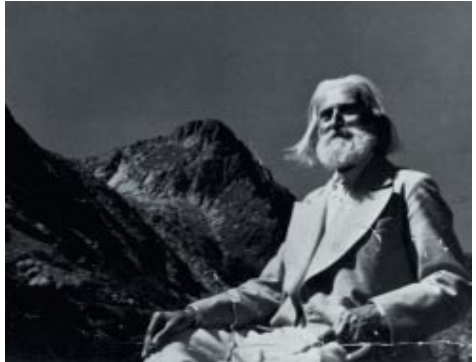
- for more than fifty years Ivan Vazov was the most prominent figure in Bulgarian literature after The Liberation.

Petar Danov (1864-1944)

– world spiritual leader

"The entire world renders homage to me and I render homage to the Master Petar Danov from Bulgaria."

Albert Einstein

**John Atanasoff (1903-1995)**

– creator of the world's first electronical digital computer between 1939 and 1942. Before him, a great number of mechanical calculating machines were built. However it was he who came to the idea of abandoning mechanics and designed electronic calculating circuits operating through a binary system of numbers. His invention opened the door to world information revolution.

**Vladimir Dimitrov – Maistora
(1888 - 1960)**

- one of the most talented 20th century Bulgarian painters and probably the most remarkable stylist in Bulgarian painting in the Post-Russo-Turkish War era.



Zlatyu Boyadzhiev (1903-1976)

is one of the most prominent Bulgarian painters.

He is especially noted for his village portraits.



Raina Kabaivanska - opera singer, one of the most renowned sopranos in the second half of the 20th century. *"Raina has the ability to focus on what is essential in a character. This is why her heroines are always stripped of any deceit. She possesses the honesty that allows her to reach down to the depth of her characters... When Raina appears, the stage becomes replete with her presence."*

Mauro Bolognini



Valya Balkanska - one of the most famous Bulgarian folklore singers, whose voice is traveling in deep space on NASA's "Voyager".

Mystery of Bulgarian Voices

(Le mystere des Voix Bulgares)

- *"These are the singers that won the Grammy Award and endorsement from such pop superstars as Paul Simon, Linda Ronstadt, George Harrison, Bobby McFerrin, Midori and many others all over the world. They create a crossover sensation everywhere they perform as listeners of all music faiths gather in the presence of sounds more strangely wonderful than almost any they have heard before... Everyone could consider himself richer in spirit for having heard Le Mystere des Voix Bulgares", Chicago Tribune*



Vasko Vasilev –

is world famous violist and Concertmaster & Creative Director of The Royal Opera House – London.

Teacher of Vanessa May.



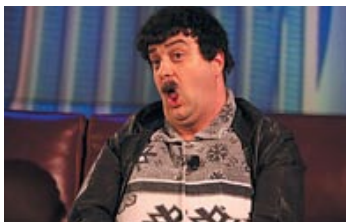
Teodosiy Spasov - owing to his career the Bulgarian word "kaval" (shepherd's flute) has penetrated the vocabulary of thousands of music fans in various points of the planet. He has worked with River Dance and Glen Moore and is 1994 Grammy holder jointly with the Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices Choir.



Kamen Donev - A celebrated Bulgarian actor, producer, dramatist and choreographer. He has more than 40 roles on the scene and over 30 dramatic works. He has won 16 national and international awards for his exquisite talent.



Lyubomir Neykov - A famous Bulgarian comedian. He became popular with his participation in "The Actor Trio", together with Krasimir Radkov and Viktor Klev in the Slavi's show on BTV. In 2007 he started his own show named "Komitsite" (The Comedians) together with other famous Bulgarian comedy actors.



Krasimir Radkov - A famous Bulgarian comedy actor. He is well known on television and at the theater. He has over 30 roles with two nominations for ASKEER (award for theater achievements). Since 2004 he has worked in the most popular Bulgarian Talk Show – "Slavi's show".

Stefan Komandarev – One of the most promising Bulgarian producers. Among his most prized movies is 'The world is big and salvation lurks around the corner'.



Ivan Minekov – One of the most appreciated contemporary Bulgarian sculptors. As a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts "Nicolae Grigorescu" in Romania, under Prof. Paul Vasilescu's beneficial guidance, Minekov's striking talent quickly attracted the attention of the Bulgarian artistic society.

Today Minekov's works are owned by private collectors in Europe, USA, Israel and Japan.



Kristalina Georgieva – A Bulgarian economist and politician, currently serving as European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response in the second college of the Barroso Commis-

sion. She was appointed as Vice President and Corporate Secretary of the World Bank Group in March 2008; in January 2010 she announced her intention to resign from this post in view of her nomination to the Commission of the European Union.

In 2010 Kristalina Georgieva was named European of the Year and EU Commissioner of the Year.

Bulgaria National Youth Mathematics Team

— on the 29th of July in Incheon, South Korea, the Bulgarian youth mathematics team participated in an International Mathematics Olympiad and won 10 medals, finishing 3rd in the final team ratings. Bulgaria is one of the best performers in international competitions and Olympiads together with China and the US.



Bulgarian Motocyclism –

The Bulgarian Motocyclism is gathering momentum as in 2010 Bulgaria won 38 medals – 14 gold, 11 silver and 13 bronze. Bulgaria also won 3 championship titles in the East European championships in the following disciplines - motocross, supermoto, grand prix. Bulgaria was awarded with the prestigious award – “Nation with the biggest contribution to the development of motorcyclism in 2010”



Bulgaria men's Volleyball Team –

one of the leading teams in Europe and the World. In 2009 the team won the bronze medals at the European volleyball championship in Izmir (Turkey).



Petar Stoychev – the most successful marathon swimmer of the last decade, winner of nine consecutive FINA Open Water Swimming World Cups with over 50 wins in individual races, holder of the world record for crossing the English Channel (La Manche).



Dimitar Berbatov - the most prolific Bulgarian striker, scoring 48 goals for 77 games for the National team, which is an all-time record. He is currently playing for Manchester United in the English Premier League, after a record breaking transfer of £30.75 million. He is one of the three strikers, who managed to score 5 goals in a single match in the Premier League. The fans use to call him "Berbo" or "Berba".



Veselin Topalov – a world famous Bulgarian chess grandmaster. Topalov became World Champion by winning the FIDE World Chess Championship 2005. He was awarded the 2005 Chess Oscar. In October 2006, Topalov had the second highest Elo rating of all time (2813).

Ivet Lalova - a Bulgarian athlete who specialises in the 100 metre and 200 metre sprint events. She is the ninth fastest woman in 100 metre history, and finished fourth in the 100 metre and fifth in the 200 metre event at the 2004 Summer Olympics. Her career was interrupted for two years between June 2005 and May 2007 due to a leg injury. Lalova returned to competitive racing on 29 May 2007, at



the Artur Takac Memorial in Belgrade, winning the 100m in a time of 11.26 seconds. In August 2007 she reached the quarterfinals of the women's 100 m sprint at the IAAF World Championship in Osaka but failed to progress, finishing in fifth place with a time of 11.33 seconds.

Mila Rodino ("Мила Родино", translated as "Dear Motherland" or "Dear Native Land") is the current national anthem of Bulgaria. It is based on the music and text of the song "Gorda Stara Planina" by Tsvetan Radoslavov, written and composed as he left to fight in the Serbo-Bulgarian War from 1885. It was adopted as anthem in 1964.



Мила Родино

(Bulgarian Cyrillic)

Първи куплет:

Горда Стара планина,
до ней Дунава синей,
слънце Тракия огрява,
над Пирина пламеней.

Прпев (2 пъти):

Мила Родино, ти си
земен рай, твойта
хубост, твойта прелест,
ах, те нямат край.

Втори куплет:

Паднаха борци безчет
за народа наш любим,
майко, дай ни мъжка сила
пътя им да продължим.

Mila Rodino

(Transliteration)

First couplet:

Gorda Stara planina,
do ney Dunava siney,
sluntse Trakiya ogryava,
nad Pirina plamenei.

Refrain (twice):

Mila Rodino, ti si
zemen ray, tvoita
hubost, tvoita prelest,
ah, te nyamat kray.

Second couplet:

Padnaha borts bezchet
za naroda nash lyubim,
mayko, day ni muzhka sila
patya im da prodalzhim.

The best way to feel Bulgarian spirit is through the songs.
Below you can enjoy fragments from famous songs.

Song "One Bulgarian Rose"

(Pasha Hristova)

In this wonderful day take this
Bulgarian rose from me.
Let it remind you with its fragrant voice
of the mountains, of the sea and all of us.

Song "My Country, my Bulgaria"

(Emil Dimitrov)

How many nights I didn't sleep,
How many roads I walked,
To come back.
How many songs I sang,
How much sorrow I felt,
To come back.
In my beautiful country, mother, father
and wife to embrace.

Song "If two people are walking"

(Maria Neikova)

If two people are walking on a long road,
and even if there is no road, they won't stop.
They will wander close to each other on this land,
oh, how much I long not to be alone.

The education in Bulgaria is opening to the world and the needs of the knowledge based economy. Most educational institutions have good computer facilities and broadband Internet connection. The teachers apply interactive methods in their class work. The teaching of foreign languages is introduced from an early age in kindergartens and schools. The Bulgarian universities are opening to foreign students. The academic



programmes are developed in line with European trends - the Bologna process. The academic staff is being enriched by young specialists educated abroad. English taught courses are introduced in many universities. People wishing to study in Bulgaria or to enroll their children should contact the relevant embassies or consulate office of their country of origin (Education Office), or the Bulgarian Ministry of education and science.

More info (in English) about the education system and learning opportunities in Bulgaria is available through the following sources:

- Portal on Learning Opportunities throughout the European Space (Ploteus) - <http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/>
- Study in Europe - <http://www.study-in-europe.org/>

FORMAL EDUCATION

LEVELS	STAGES	AGE OF LEARNERS	TYPE OF PROVIDERS
BASIC EDUCATION	Pre-school Education	6-7	School based in pre-primary groups Kindergarten based
	Primary Education	6/7 – 9/10	General schools
	(General Lower secondary)	10/11 – 14-15	General schools
Diploma for completed Basic Education			
SECONDARY EDUCATION	Upper Secondary education 1st stage Grades 8-10	14/15 – 18/19 Compulsory education age is 16	General schools Language schools Sport schools Art schools Vocational gymnasias
	2nd stage Grades 11-12		
Certificate for completed 1st stage of Secondary Education after 10th grade. Diploma for completed secondary education after second stage (12 grade) and possibility for continuing education in Colleges and Universities			
UPPER SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY	College Education	After completed Secondary Education 19-22	Vocational colleges Art colleges Medical Colleges
Diploma for completed education as Specialist			
HIGHER EDUCATION	Bachelor	After completed Secondary or College Education	Humanitarian Universities Technical Universities Art Universities Sport Universities Medical Universities
	Master	After completed Bachelor degree	
	Doctor	After completed Master degree	
Diploma for completed respective degree level of higher education (bachelor, master, doctor)			
CONTINUING TRAINING	NON-FORMAL	INFORMAL	
CVET in VET Centers for up-grade or acquisition of vocational qualification Continuing training in University's Departments for additional qualification	Non-formal learning for key competencies, languages, art, sport, out of class activities	Informal learning: in the family, at the workplace, through media, libraries, etc.	

Up on Entry

- All children entering Bulgaria will need to have their own passport. Children included in their parents' passports will only be allowed in if the passport also contains their photograph.
- Upon entry into Bulgaria, foreigners should declare in writing the purpose of their stay and the address at which they will reside. To this end they should fill in a registration form. Exempt of that are the citizens of the European Union member-states and the citizens of the countries in the European Economic Area.
- Foreigners entering Bulgarian territory on a motor vehicle have to present a document of ownership for that vehicle, if such ownership is not explicitly shown in the vehicle's registration documents.
- All foreign nationals who have entered the territory of Bulgaria are obliged to register within 48 hours after their entry into the country. They have to register their address in Bulgaria either at the services for administrative control of foreign nationals, or at the nearest district police station, depending on the address where they are staying. This registration includes: full name, date of birth, citizenship, as well as the number and series of their identity documents. Address changes also have to be reported within 48 hours.
- Natural persons or legal entities, which provide shelter to foreign nationals, are obliged to notify within 48 hours either the relevant service for administrative control of foreign nationals, or the nearest district police station. If a foreign national is staying in a hotel, the receptionists are obliged to perform this duty. If a foreign national is paying a private visit, the Bulgarian host is obliged to register the foreign guest.

- When you travel to any Bulgarian city, and you plan to stay for longer than 2 days, you should go to the local police station and fill in address registration.
- You can find contact details of Bulgarian embassies, consulates and missions on the website of the Ministry of Foreign affairs:
<http://www.mfa.government.bg/>



Residence and work permit

All foreigners are required to obtain a residence permit if they are to stay for a certain period of time, no matter the reasons for being in the country. In order to be an eligible applicant for a residence permit, you should obtain a Type D visa before you travel to Bulgaria. The national authority responsible for issuing the permit is National Service "Police" (under the Ministry of Interior, <http://www.mvr.bg/>), section "Traveling in Bulgaria".

- If you are a citizen / family member of a citizen of the EU, the European Economic Area Agreement, Confederation Switzerland, you might find it useful to consult the European Union Citizens and Members of Their Families Entry and Residence in and Departure from the Republic of Bulgaria Act: <http://www.mfa.bg/en/> > Consular Services > International Adoptions

- If you are not a citizen/member of family of a citizen of the EU, the European Economic Area Agreement, Confederation Switzerland, you might find it useful to consult the Law for Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria, which can be downloaded from the website of the Ministry of Interior: <http://www.mvr.bg/> > Legal Framework > Laws and Rules
- The law, regulating the issuance and using Bulgarian identification documents, Law for the Bulgarian Identification Documents, can be downloaded from the website of the Ministry of Interior: <http://www.mvr.bg/> > Legal Framework > Laws and Rules
- Under the Foreign Nationals Act, foreign nationals who have been allowed to reside permanently in Bulgaria are allowed to work under the same conditions, which are valid for Bulgarian nationals. Foreign nationals with short term or long term residence permits on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, may enter into labour contracts only with a work permit issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The National Employment Agency (NEA) is the authority responsible for issuing work permits.

You might visit the NEA website for more information:

<http://www.az.government.bg/>

Health Insurance

- If you are a citizen of an EU member state or of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, and you plan to stay tem-



porarily (usually up to 90 days) in Bulgaria, you might consider obtaining the European Health Insurance Card. Presentation of the European Health Insurance Card guarantees you reimbursement of the medical costs on the spot, or soon after your return home. For more information, see: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/healthcard/index_en.htm

- If you are not a citizen of any of these countries, you should check with your national authorities if you are entitled to free or subsidised health treatment in Bulgaria as part of a reciprocal health agreement between your home country and Bulgaria. If you are not, it might be a good idea to obtain health insurance for the period of your stay in Bulgaria.
- If you plan a longer stay in Bulgaria as a student/ researcher, you are entitled to the same health care rights as a Bulgarian citizen if you are part of an academic programme (usually leading to a degree) approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. You should check this information with the educational institution you are planning to attend.

Still public health care security does not cover all kinds of medical services, so you might consider supplementing it with private health insurance.

Driving license

Your home-country driving licence may be used for up to one year in Bulgaria, after which it has to either be replaced with a Bulgarian one or you have to re-take driving tests to get a Bulgarian licence while keeping your foreign one.

Currency & Exchange & Cards

The official currency is the Bulgarian Lev. It is fixed to the Euro. One Lev is worth around 0.50 euro. The Lev is divided into 100 stotinka. You could see banknotes and coins on the website of the Bulgarian National Bank: <http://www.bnb.bg/>

You can exchange money at banks and independent currency exchange bureaus. Avoid exchange offered by people in the street as they are usually not certified to perform this action. The usual banking hours are 09:00-16:00, while independent bureaus work until 18:00, some of them even 24 hours. There is an extensive ATM network, so you can obtain cash anytime almost anywhere. All major European and North American debit cards could be used to withdraw money. The number of retailers accepting card payment is growing. However, you still need to carry cash, especially in small towns and rural areas.

Communications

Phone Services & Internet

The landline phone service covers the whole country. The mobile phone network is operational except for high mountain regions. You can make cheap phone calls from Internet cafes and phone booths. There are a great number of Internet providers. However, quality and price vary, so you might wish to seek advice from local users, especially if you are to choose among local providers, operating in a limited area. In recent years the number of free wi-fi networks increases in big cities.

Postal and Courier Services

Postal and courier services in Bulgaria are provided by numerous national companies and branches of the most popular international companies. The biggest national company is the Bulgarian Posts (Български пощи).

For more info: <http://www.bgpost.bg/>.



Transport

City transport

In the capital city you can enjoy variety of public transport means from buses to trolleys, trams and metro. This type of transport is relatively fast and cheap option for short distances. In rush hours (8:00-09:00 in the morning and 17:30-19:00 in the evening) it is advisable to use the metro.

- *Taxi*

Ask your local friends about the cheapest and the most reliable companies in the region. Make sure you read the tariffs before you get into a car. They are posted on windscreens. Once you are in, make sure the driver has started the taximeter.

- *Metro*

The Sofia metro is constantly expanding. At the current stage it connects two major districts – Lyulin and Mladost — with the city centre.



Intercity transport

- *Train*

Bulgarian railway network covers the whole country and the Bulgarian State Railways Company offers a variety of ticket discounts. The company's website is convenient to use and provides you with thorough information:

<http://bdz.bg/>

- *Bus*

There are many private Companies providing bus transportation. Traveling between cities and Sofia is easy: <http://www.centralnaavtogara.bg/>. However, traveling between many towns and smaller places might need complex planning and allowing for change of vehicles.



Accommodation

It is easy to arrange a short stay in Bulgaria. You may search the Internet for hotel and hostel accommodation. Renting private accommodation is a good option for people who love peace and quiet. These might vary a lot in price and quality. Surfing the Internet for a private apartment to rent will probably return the most expensive options.

A lot of reasonable to rent property is usually advertised in newspapers.

Agencies will typically charge you half a month's rent. Bear in mind that most of the rented apartments are unfurnished. If you need to later provide official proof of your expenses, you should make sure your landlord is willing to provide you with the necessary papers.

Electricity

Household electricity is supplied at 220/240 volts (V) with a frequency of 50 Hertz (Hz). If you are moving from a country with a 110 V supply, your electrical equipment will require a converter or a transformer to convert it to 240 V.

Water

Tap water is safe to drink in most cities, while in many rural areas it is used only for washing. If you have some doubts, buy mineral water. Bulgaria is famous for its mineral water, which is not only of high quality but of reasonable price. Water shortages are rare in towns and cities, but they are common in some rural areas.



Musical Instruments & Food & Festivities

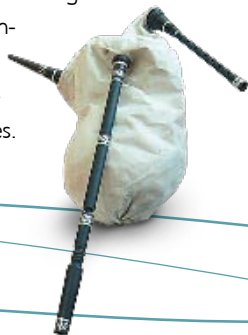
The caval

The caval is an ancient folk instrument carved in wood, sometimes dogwood, cherry, maple or plum but mainly of yew. You can see both small cavals (ordinary) and large cavals (up to one meter in length) in Bulgaria. The caval can be played as a solo or an accompanying instrument. It harmonizes well with the gadulka, gayda and tambura and performs a basic role in folk orchestras. In modern times, the caval has found a new significance. By improving their playing technique, some musicians have succeeded in using the caval to interpret jazz music and in creating duets with the human voice (see Teodosiy Spasov). Recently, composers have written new symphonic works for caval and orchestra.



The gayda

The gaida is a Bulgarian folk instrument that can be seen in two varieties: the large bagpipes, called the kaba with a low register; and the small one called the dzhura with a high-pitched register. The most famous is the so called Rhodope (mountain) gayda, which is used as a lyrical accompaniment of Rhodope songs and melodies.



The tapan

(bass drum)

The rhythmic deep sound of the tapan can be heard during weddings, village dances, the performances of kukeri (see Kukeri) and nestinari (see Nestinari). The tapan is primarily an accompanying instrument that marks the rhythm but it can also be played as a solo instrument. Well-tuned and with good acoustic construction, it has a beautiful tone. An accomplished musician can get sounds from it not only by hitting the different sections of the drum heads but also by hitting the hoops and the body or even by rubbing the skins (friction percussion).



The gadulka

The gadulka is a simply-made Bulgarian folk instrument of the chordophone family, known mainly in Thrace, the Balkans and central Bulgaria. Sound is produced by rubbing its strings with a bow. The Gadulka is an important instrument in the traditional Bulgarian horo round dances.



The horo

Horo is a traditional Bulgarian folklore round dance.

There is a plethora of horo varieties around the country depending on the regional specifics. The most popular type of horo dance is called "Pravo horo" and is performed by group of people (there is no limit to the number of people) holding each other to form a circle. The movement is 2 steps forward, 1 backward. Horo is played on weddings, local festivals and on New Year's Eve. It is mainly played on big holidays or family gatherings - such as weddings for example. On 2nd May 2005 the longest horo took place in Alexander Nevski Square in Sofia, involving more than 13 000 participants.



Nestinari – fire-dancers

This is a custom that can be seen only in some villages between Strandzha and the Black Sea, around Burgas. It is observed on the holiday of St. Konstantin and Elena (21st of May), and sometimes during some of the local village fairs and the church/patron saint's days. A basic element of the custom is the dance in fire (glowing embers). The whole village takes part in the celebration but it is only the fire-dancers that participate in the ritual dance. They are chosen by the saint who is patron of the holiday. The dancers are able to "see" his face, to "hear" his voice and his spirit is transferred in them and on his behalf they can interpret omens and give guidance to people.



Baba Marta – Aunt Marta – martenitsi

Martenitsa is a small piece of adornment, made of white and red yarn and worn from 1st of March until around the end of March (or the first time an individual sees a stork, swallow or budding tree).

The name of the holiday is Baba Marta. “Baba” is the Bulgarian word for “grandmother” and “Mart” is the Bulgarian word for the month of March. Baba Marta is a Bulgarian tradition related to welcoming the upcoming spring. The month of March, according to Bulgarian folklore, marks the beginning of springtime. Therefore, the first day of March is a traditional holiday associated with sending off winter and welcoming spring.



Kukeri - mummers

On New Year's Eve and Sirni Zagovezni (40 days before Easter) in Bulgaria special rituals called Mummer's games take place. The Mummer's games are performed by men only. They put on special masks.

Some of the masks have two faces. On one of the sides the nose is snub and the face is good-humored and on the other the nose is hooked and the face is ominous. Those masks symbolize the good and the bad which coexist in the world.

The mummer's games aim to scare off and sweep away forever the evil spirits, so that the crops for the next year are rich.



Bulgarian wine

Wine has been known in the land of Bulgaria since Ancient times. Archeology, folklore and literature provide ample evidence



that wine grapes have thrived in these lands ever since the late Stone Age: grape growing and wine making were vital to the way of life of the Thracians, Romans, Greeks, Slavs and Bulgarians. Unique Bulgarian wines are: Mavrud, Gamza and Melnik.



Rose oil

Bulgaria is one of the biggest producers of rose oil in the world. The reason for this is hidden in the high qualities of the Bulgarian



Kazanlak rose ("Kazanlashka roza"), a special type, that was cultivated in our country after many years of production and development. The Bulgarian roses are inheritors of the so called Damascena rose, that was brought here ages ago. Each year right before the rose harvesting season the town of Kazanlak hosts the Festival of Roses.





Kiselo mlyako – Bulgarian yoghurt

The Bulgarian yoghurt is famous for its bacterium, called *Lactobacillus Bulgaricum*. The bacteria is observed in natural state only in Bulgaria. Thanks to this bacterium the quality of yoghurt produced through natural fermentation is so good and so distinctive that the product is exported simply as Bulgarian Yoghurt. Licenses and know-how for its production are currently used by companies in Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Finland and South Korea.



Sirene – Bulgarian cheese

Bulgarian cheese is traditionally made of cow or sheep milk. It is a typical Bulgarian food that goes well both with fruits, vegetables and wine.



Bob v garne – Bean in a earth enwarepot

This is a traditional Bulgarian dish that can be tasted in every typical Bulgarian restaurant. It is prepared from beans, peppers, onion, tomatoes and savory and/or mint.

Banitsa - Baked cheese pastry

Banitsa is a traditional Bulgarian pastry made of eggs, flour and cheese. You can taste different variations of banitsa all around the country. It can be eaten for breakfast or as a dessert.



On New Year's Eve there is a tradition to serve banitsa with hidden fortune tickets inside. It is believed that the wishing, written on the ticket you find in your piece of banitsa (for example: "health", "love", "joy", "marriage", "child", etc.) will show your luck for the coming year.

Shopska salata – Shopska salad

The first thing you will notice in the salad menu of every Bulgarian restaurant will be Shopska salata. It is prepared from tomatoes, cucumbers, baked peppers and white Bulgarian Cheese and is perfect in the summertime, when all the ingredients are freshly picked from the garden.



Bulgarian honey

Honey is a traditional Bulgarian product. It has been produced in Bulgaria for more than 3000 years. Bulgaria has excellent conditions for the production of honey: a clean nature, a mild climate and a richly forested land.

Numerous types of blossoming plants and trees make for a variety of subtle honey flavors. A lot of the healing properties of the herbs and plants the nectar is gathered from, are present in the honey and propolis. Honey products are 100% absorbed by the human organism. For best results one must consume between 50 and 100 grams daily.

Bulgarian herbs

Herb gathering in Bulgaria has a long tradition, dating back to Ancient times. More than 3000 different types of plants grow on the sunny slopes



and in the shady forests of Bulgaria's four great mountains. Over 300 of these plants are used in the pharmaceutical industry, while 750 types are used in alternative medicine. Some of the most popular herbs are mint, chamomile, thyme, lavender, wild marjoram and St. John's wort.

Public Holidays

1st January – New Year's Day

3rd March – National Holiday (Bulgaria's Day of Liberation from the Ottoman Rule)

1st May – Labour Day

6th May – St. George's Day, Day of the Bulgarian Army

24th May – Day of Bulgarian Enlightenment and Culture and of the Slavonic Alphabet

6th September – Bulgaria's Unification Day

22nd September – Bulgaria's Independence Day

1st November – Enlightenment Leaders Day – holiday for education institutions

24th December – Christmas Eve

25th and 26th December – Christmas

Easter – two days (Sunday and Monday); moveable holiday



Bulgarian useful phrases (in Latin letters)

Hello	Zdraveyte
Good morning / afternoon	Dobro utro/Dobar den
Good evening	Dobar vecher
Goodnight	Leka nosht
Goodbye	Dovizhdane
How are you?	Kak si?
Fine	Dobre
Thank you / Thanks	Blagodaria
Please	Molya
Yes / No	Da/Ne
Nice to meet you	Priyatno mi e
What's your name?	Kak se kazvate?
My name is _____	Kazvam se _____
Excuse me	Izvinete
How to get to?	Kak da stigma do?
Where is _____?	Kade e _____?
Central train / bus station	Tsentralna gara/avtogara
To the Airport	Do letishteto
To the City centre	Do/za tsentara
The _____ hotel	Hotel _____
The _____ street	Ulitsa _____
Left	Lyavo
Right	Dyiasno
Straight ahead	Napravo
Where does this train/bus go?	Za kade e tozi vlak/avtobus?
One ticket, please.	Edin billet, molya
Food and Drinks	Hrana i Napitki
Bread, sugar, salt	Hlyab, zahar, sol
Meat: pork, chicken, veal	Meso: svinsko, pileskho, teleshko
Vegetables: tomato, cucumber	Zelenchuci: domat, krastavica
Fruits: apple, cherries, pears	Plodove: yabalki, chereshi, krushi
Water: warm, cold, mineral, sparkling	Voda: topla, studena, mineralna, gazirana
Coffee with milk	Kafe s mlyako
Tea with lemon	Chay s limon

“Some day man will land on the Moon, he will land on other planets as well. And than he will see how beautiful the Earth was and he will realize that he lived in Heaven, but he didn’t know and appreciate this.”

Atanas Dalchev, Bulgarian poet, 1956

Please! Don’t throw away! When you decide that you don’t need this guide any longer, think of somebody who can find it useful! Save paper to keep the nature green!





Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



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