

## Riding in The Kingdom of Orpheus (Western Rhodopes Mountain)



**4 days, 3 nights, 2 days riding**

The mythical Rhodopes mountain will let you be absorbed in the enchanting world of Orpheus, where you will discover the dramatic and majestic beauty of nature. You will travel back in time to the ancient Bulgarian roots revealing impressive towering Thracian sacred places. In this adventure you will be accompanied by our ancestors' sacred animals – horses. You will have the rare chance to feel the spirit of Bulgarian tradition, customs and culture while visiting authentic villages, nestling churches and mosques, becoming a part of this cosmopolitan world in an attempt to reveal the secrets of the mystical Rhodopes mountain.

### **Itinerary highlights:**

- Visiting natural phenomena
- Contact with local people and culture
- A wide range of scenery
- Becoming familiar with Bulgarian tradition and spirit

### **About the horses:**

Our horses are an excellent and extremely well selected group of breeds perfectly suitable for the riding terrain. Breeds include Shagya, Arabian and Eastern Bulgarian horses. They are friendly and well trained. Height varies between 1,50 and 1,60 metres. The saddles are Cavalry and Western type. The weight limit for the riders is 100kg.

## **Itinerary description Day-By-Day:**

### **Day 1: Sofia - Trigrad**

**Accommodation: Hotel**

Arrival in the village of Trigrad. On the way to the village you will ride through the famous Trigrad gorge long 7km and 250m of cliffs. Accommodation in a two-star hotel located in a walking distance from our stables. Meeting your guides and the horses.

### **Day 2: Trigrad – Popini Luki**

**Ride 6 hours**

**Accommodation: Hotel**

After breakfast you mount your horse and head to the Yagodinska Cave. Optional visit of the cave, which is one of the most beautiful underground phenomenon in Europe, with amazing formations of stalactites, stalagmites, and stalactones. Later you will continue this adventure, riding to the local area Popini Luki, where you will enjoy a plentiful lunch and a well-deserved rest in a cozy restaurant. The ride in the afternoon continues through a wide range of terrains back to Trigrad.

### **Day 3: Trigrad – Kesten**

**Ride 4 hours**

**Accommodation: Hotel**

Today's adventure will start with a ride through picturesque natural scenes. The road will take you to the village of Kesten. After a series of trots and gallops you will rest for a picnic lunch. The afternoon ride will fully reveal the magic of the Rhodopes mountain. Charged with emotions and energy you will return back to the village of Trigrad.

### **Day 4: Trigrad – Sofia (Airport)**

After breakfast – say goodbye to the guides and the horses. Departure from Trigrad to Sofia Airport.

If your departure flight is scheduled around or later than 17.00h on the departure day, we offer a visit to the Bachkovo Monastery „Uspenye Bogorodychno“ - the second biggest monastery in Bulgaria. It is rising like an impressive Medieval castle in the picturesque valley of the Chaya River surrounded by high rocky and wooded mountains. There is also an optional visit and lunch at the Old Town of Plovdiv.

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**Note** – ArkanTours reserves the right to change the day's itinerary due to circumstances beyond our control such as fallen trees, landslides or landslips caused by torrential rains, newly fenced off areas, and acts of God creating unexpected obstacles on the road.

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## **Required Riding Levels and Skills**

**Required experience** – It is necessary that the rider feels comfortable on the horse at the three basic paces (Walk, Trot, Canter/Gallop) and not to lose control riding thru rigid terrain.

**Horses** are good-tempered and suited for the mountain terrain, they are brave and easily get over natural obstacles on the way (rivers, small gullies, fallen trees). They are not afraid of cars and ride with ease on busy roads and urban areas.

**Rider's involvement** – Riders are expected to groom and tack up their own horse each day in preparation for rides, untack during the breaks and at the end of the day. Off course, this will be performed under the kind supervision and help from our guides.

**Riding days** – 2 days

**Riding hours a day** – 4-6 hours

**Paces:** Daily combination of the three basic paces, depending on the terrain – Trot (35% of the ride). Canter/gallop (15% of the ride), and Walk (50% of the ride).

### **Itinerary characteristics**

**Terrain** – Mellow to rough mountain terrain with climbs and descents. There are level sections as well, with smooth road allowing a faster pace. Terrain offers natural obstacles: rivers, gullies, dips, fallen trees, etc.

**Climate** – Temperate continental, cool nights at higher regions, warm summer days. There is possibility of frequent and occasional rains in the spring-summer period.

**Accommodation** – Two-star hotel

**Distance from urban areas** – During the ride the furthest point is 10-15km away from urban areas. There are scattered small mountain villages and hamlets and more rarely bigger towns.

**Cross-cultural awareness** - The regions that we pass have mixed population with Christian and Islamic religion, living peacefully with each other. Let us show respect and tolerance for different cultures ways of life and traditions.

### **Prices include:**

#### Guides

- 1 English/French speaking professional guide for groups up to 5 riders
- 2 English/French speaking professional guides for groups over 5 riders

#### Transportation:

- Transfer in Bulgaria (from Sofia airport to the starting point of the tour and back)
- Minivan for 5 people, support vehicle with a radio connection

#### Accommodation:

- 3 nights in double rooms in two-star hotel, Villa

#### Food:

- Full board from day 1 - dinner to day 4 - breakfast (lunch during the ride is a picnic style, including seasonal vegetables, soups, barbeque, fruits); Beverages – mineral water

#### Equipment:

- Group first-aid kit
- Horse saddlebags.

**Optional places to visit:**

- Yagodinska cave
- A museum of an eneolith dwelling
- Devil's Throat (Dyavolsko Garlo) cave

**Price doesn't include:**

- Alcoholic beverages
- Day - 1 and Day - 4 lunch
- Airplane tickets and taxes
- Entry fee for Yagodinska cave and the eneolithic dwelling museum by the cave's entrance
- Entry fee for Devil's Throat (Dyavolsko Garlo) cave
- Entry fee for museums and other ethnographic, historical or natural places of interest
- Tips

**Reservations:**

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