

Riding in The Kingdom of Orpheus (Western Rhodopes Mountain)



5 days, 4 nights, 3 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 – Vodnepad

Ride 2 hours

Accommodation: Hotel

After breakfast you mount your horse and head to the village of Vodnepad. Ride along the winding gorge of the Vodnipadska River full of cascades. You reach the ancient Rhodopean village of Vodnepad, located on the border with Greece. Returning back to the village of Trigrad using the same route.

Day 3: 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 4: 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 5: 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.

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.

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 – 3 days

Riding hours a day – 2-6 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.

Price includes:

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:

- 4 nights in double rooms in two-star hotel
- Food:
- Full board from day 1 - dinner to day 5 - 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
- Day1 and Day 5 lunch
- Airplane tickets and taxes
- Entry fee for Yagodinska cave and the eneolith dwelling museum by the cave 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:

7A Lerin Str.
4002 Plovdiv
Bulgaria
Phone: +359-32-64-02-05
e-mail: office@arkantours.com
web: www.arkantours.com