



MUNICIPALITY OF PLOVDIV



DISCOVER **PLOVDIV**



The Bishop's Basilica of Philippopolis (4th - 6th)C



TRIMONTIVM

EVMOLPIA

TRIMONTIVM

PALDIN

PHILIPPOPOLIS

FILIBE

TRIMONTIVM

FILIBE

PLOVDIV

PLOVDIV

*Dear guests,
Welcome to the oldest continuously
inhabited city in Europe and one of the most
ancient cities in the world!*

*The city with the hills and with its smiling
people!*

*This is the city which can offer you a unique
panoramic view from the hill Nebet and can
take you to a figurative journey in the times of
the Thracians.*

*This is the city that can get you on a time
travel machine and take you back to the
Roman times displaying in front of you the
Ancient Theatre, the Odeon and the impressive
Ancient Forum.*

*This is the city whose pulse beats in step
with the spirit of the Revival period and
whose magical old Town houses, perching in
the hillsides, hide beautiful courtyards and
intriguing stories.*

*This is the city where you can come close to
unique ancient mosaics and then some hours
later you can enjoy delectable cuisine in the
most versatile and busy district Kapana.*

*Again in that city you can ride in the bike
lanes to its Rowing Canal or you can just take a
walk along the river Maritsa*

*That city is ancient and eternal, diverse and
alive, hospitable and frolicky.*

*This is how the city of Plovdiv is - a place for
every traveler to explore and fill the missing
element in his heart's puzzle of unforgettable
moments!*

This is one of the most beautiful natural sites of a city that one can imagine; the mountain forms a horn with two summits, both equally crowned with houses and gardens, and the streets descend in circular windings...

The aspect of the bridges, the gardens, the houses, the large trees which rise from the banks of the river...turn the garden of Mr Maurides into one of the most admirable points for observing the world!

ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE, 1833

In the distance I saw Trimontium - magnificent and brilliant...

LOHIY, 2ND CENTURY



A CITY AS OLD AS TROY AND MYCENAE

Eight thousand years ago, during the neolithic age, here, in the rich lands of Thrace, lived the ancestors of a city chosen to write golden pages in the history of human civilization.

The seal of the Creator blessed the beautiful position of Plovdiv on seven syenite hills along the river Maritsa. Today the hills are six, as at the beginning of the 20th century the seventh hill (Kamenitza) was destroyed.

In the 12th century BC, the ancient Thracian city of Eumolpia was founded, bearing the name of the mythical ruler, singer and priest Eumolpus, son of Poseidon and Chione.

The discovered ancient remains on the hill make Eumolpia peer to Troy and Mycenae, much older than Athens, Rome and Constantinople.



PHILIPPOLIS

MAIN CITY OF THE PROVINCE OF THRACE

During the Roman rule (2 - 4th c.) Philippopolis became the main city of the province of Thrace and received the Latin name Trimontium.

This period in a way was a **GOLDEN AGE** in the development of the ancient city.

That period saw the construction of: a theatre for 7 000 spectators, a vast forum with an Odeon, a building for musical performances and poetry competitions, also used for , a covered theatre the sittings of the City Council (Bouleuterion), a grand stadium for 30 000 spectators; anaqueduct, supplying the city with spring waters from the slopes of the Rhodope mountain, 30 km long.

The archaeological excavations uncovered impressive remains of these remarkable structures.

Ancient theater, 1nd C



*It is the largest and most beautiful of all cities.
Its beauty shines in the distance and a very large
river flows close to it.*

LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA, 2ND CENTURY

THE MAGNIFICENCE OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN BASILICS

Christianity came to Philippopolis during the apostolic 1st century. The early church sources indicate that the first bishop of the city in the year 34 was the holy Apostle Hermas, one of the 70 apostles.

Some remarkable buildings were built in the ancient city during the Late Antiquity (4th – 6th c.): the largest Christian church found in the Bulgarian lands - **THE BISHOP'S BASILICA OF PHILIPPOLIS**, and the **SMALL BASILICA** - a complex with a baptistery. The Bishop's Basilica was linked to an important historical event - in 343 A.D. the Eastern (Arian) Church Council was held in it.

During this period the floors of the temples and of were adorned with richly ornamented mosaics.

The mosaic floors of the Bishop's Basilica - about 2 000 m² - display a remarkable picture of ornaments, geometric compositions, symbols and birds.



From the Early Byzantine era - the time of Emperor Justinian the Great, impressive alterations of the FORTRESS WALLS of the three of Plovdiv's hillshave been preserved, built in 540-550 in the picturesque style of opus mixtum, characterized by alternating stones and bricks.

The Ancient-Renaissance ensemble on Vitosha Street in the Old Town exhibits part of the fortress wall, which can be traced in the foundations of a series of buildings.

After the brief conquest of the city by Khan Krum, the permanent inclusion of the ancient city in Bulgaria took place in 836 during the time of his grandson - Khan Malamir.

Philippopolis is a large and crowded city, located in a very convenient location, so it is mostly satisfied with the goods of all other cities on the continent.

JOHN CANTACUZINO
byzantine chronicler

Byzantine chroniclers of the same era call Plovdiv

"A very large city, a very remarkable city, situated on the Hebros River."

The troops of the First, Second and Third Crusades passed through the Bulgarian lands in the period from 1096 to 1189. They move along the diagonal Balkan road "Via Militaris", which passes through Sofia, Plovdiv and Edirne, reaching Constantinople.

The writer Nicetas Choniates describes the construction of a large new church here in 1189, dedicated to the Holy Mother of God, considered to be the patron saint of Philippopolis. The chronicler says that he is *amazed by the beauty of this temple*.

During the 13th and 14th centuries, Plovdiv repeatedly changed its rulers.

The Eastern Fortress Gate - the emblematic Hissar Kapia - has been preserved since that time.



Plovdiv was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1371 and remained within the borders of the Ottoman Empire until 1878 for 507 years, known as Filibe.

Then the two oldest Plovdiv mosques were built – **THE JUMAYA MOSQUE** and **THE IMARET MOSQUE**, the large choultry Kurshum Khan, the covered market - bedesten, and several large baths, of which Chifte hamam (or also called Banya Starinna) is preserved. In the 16th – 17th centuries the Uzun Bazaar trade zones and the Kapana craft and trade district were formed.

On the hill to the west of Roman Stadium Square rises the Clock Tower, probably built in the late 16th century, which is one of the oldest in Eastern Europe and the oldest in the Ottoman Empire.

***P**lovdiv is such a big city ... Out of the ten cities in European Turkey... Plovdiv is the most beautiful of all. Plovdiv is a big and rich city ... It is a trade center and day by day it gets richer. May it bloom forever!*

EVLIYA CELEBI, 1651

Jumaya Mosque



THE REVIVAL ECONOMICAL AND SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

The correct urban planning, the way of construction and the whole appearance of the city give reason to consider it one of the most beautiful cities in Bulgaria. And this is where the Bulgarian life gets felt. Its inhabitants are famous for being very hardworking, hospitable and sincere.

FRANÇOIS POUQUEVILLE, 1790

AN IMPORTANT CITY IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

With the advent of the 19th century the city ignited with real Renaissance processes in the spiritual and economic field.

Plovdiv producers and traders were exporting their products to Western Europe, Asia Minor and to the markets of Syria, Egypt, Arabia and India. Apart from land, goods from Plovdiv were loaded on rafts and sailed to the flooded Maritza River, reaching its mouth at the Aegean Sea. Information about its buoyancy dates back to the Antiquity. There used to be a river port, built on the right bank of the river, east of today's Fair Bridge. Sailing on the river continued until the beginning of the 20th century when the decrease of its high waters began.

Entrepreneurship and trade mediation were developed in Plovdiv. The city became one of the main strongholds of Bulgarian economic development during the Renaissance. The first textile factory in Thrace was found in the surroundings of Plovdiv in 1845 with machines imported from Vienna. For the further development of Plovdiv, as well as for the whole of Thrace region, the opening of a railway line in 1873 played an important role, in the development of Plovdiv, which started from Istanbul and passed through Plovdiv, built by the

Austrian company of Baron Hirsch.

CHURCH BUILDING

During these years an unprecedented church construction began. The destroyed and half-destroyed Plovdiv medieval temples have been completely renovated in the spirit of the Revival architecture and art.

Even today they impress with their structure and rich interior decorations –metropolitan church St. Marina, the Cathedral of the Holy Mother of God, the temples of Sts. Constantine and Helena, St. Dimitar, St. Nedelya and others.

STRUGGLE FOR CHURCH INDEPENDENCE

At the end of 1859 the first Slavic-Bulgarian ministration was held in the church of Holy Mother of God. Since then, the Bulgarians in Plovdiv and the diocese have been separated into an independent church community. In 1870 an independent Bulgarian church was established - the Bulgarian Exarchate.

ENLIGHTENED CENTER

In 1850 the first Bulgarian diocesan school St. Cyril and Methodius was found by the great Bulgarian educators and writers Naiden Gerov and Joakim Gruev appeared.

It was here that the Day of the Slavic first teachers - the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius - was celebrated for the first time in the Bulgarian lands. Subsequently, the holiday became all - Slavic.

In 1869 the Diocesan School grew into the First

THE REVIVAL ECONOMICAL AND SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

Bulgarian High School.

The publisher Hristo G. Danov, also called the Bulgarian Gutenberg, deserved special credit for the development of Bulgarian education.

PLOVDIV REVIVAL HOUSE

At the beginning of the 19th century in Plovdiv a remarkable architectural type of the Plovdiv Revival house was born. It represents a peak in the development of our national architecture over the centuries. It is here that a symmetrical type of house was created with marked baroque motifs.

Some of the most remarkable buildings of this type are the houses of Kuyumdzhioğlu, Georgiadi, Hindliyan, Nedkovich, Balabanov and others.

Hindliyan House, a typical representative of the symmetrical house in Plovdiv



LOVDIV PHILIPPOLIS FILIBE PLOVDIV
4th JANUARY, 1878

THE LIBERATION OF PLOVDIV



"Welcoming General Gurko in Plovdiv", artist Nyagul Stanchev

The Russo-Turkish War of Liberation began in 1877-1878. On January 4, 1878, Russian troops under the command of General Gurko liberated Plovdiv. On the following days, Suleiman Pasha's troops were finally defeated.

The war of liberation ended with the conclusion of the San Stefano Peace Treaty on March 3, 1878, according to which an entire Bulgarian state was established, called the Principality of Bulgaria. Plovdiv, the largest city in the newly liberated country, has been designated as the capital.

The European Great Powers convened a congress in Berlin in the summer of 1878, at which the Bulgarian lands were divided into three parts: the Principality of Bulgaria - between the Danube, the Balkan Mountains and the Sofia region; Autonomous Region of Eastern Rumelia - between the Balkans and the Rhodopes; and Macedonia and southern Thrace were returned to the Ottoman Empire.

Philippopolis is a very decent city... with many beautiful buildings, most of which are in the European style. Many of the residents are dressed in European clothes and speak French ...

N. GREDYAKIN, russian officer

Until the Union of the Principality of Bulgaria with Eastern Rumelia in 1885, Plovdiv was the capital of an autonomous state for seven years. It was the largest Bulgarian city at that time. Its population numbered 33 442 people, more than the one in the capital of the Principality - Sofia.

The city became an attractive center for a whole galaxy of Bulgarian and foreigner artists and intellectuals who came to the aid of the newly liberated Bulgarian people.

The great Bulgarian writers Ivan Vazov, Petko Slaveykov, Zakhari Stoyanov, the publishers Hristo G. Danov and Dragan Manchov also worked in the town.

The Czech engineer and architect Josef Schnitter, Swiss architect Pierre - Paul Montani, the great gardener and park builder - the Swiss Lucien Chevallaz, the creator of the Bulgarian shorthand - the Slovenian Anton Bezenšek settled in the city. With their remarkable work they left a deep mark in the rise of Plovdiv as a modern European city.

The building of the Regional Assembly of Eastern Rumelia - now the Regional History Museum - Plovdiv



On September 6, 1885, the unification of the two separate parts of the Bulgarian homeland took place. An impressive memorial has been erected on Saedinenie Square in memory of the historic event.

In 1892 the First Bulgarian Agricultural-Industrial Exhibition was held here, inaugurated with the international participation of Germany, Austria, Turkey and other countries. For the first time in Bulgaria, the French Eugene Godar demonstrates balloon flights. The pavilions of the exhibition are located in an area of 80 decares, and the spaces around them are shaped like a beautiful park by Lucien Chevallaz.

After the exhibition, the park was preserved and further developed, today known as Tsar - Simeon's Garden.

The beautiful fountain of Demetra by the great Italian sculptor Arnaldo Dzoki is preserved in Tsar Simeon's Garden in Plovdiv.



YEARS ON THE RISE

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT



The first Bulgarian exhibition lasts 75 days and is visited by nearly 168 000 people.

The continuator of the exhibition is the First International Sample Fair (1937), opened in Plovdiv with the participation of 1070 Bulgarian exhibitors and 385 companies from 8 Western European countries and the United States.

The Beaumont distillery and the Frick and Sulzer brewery were established in the 1880s. The first tobacco factories appeared: "Zlaten lev" by Tomasyan, the "Orel" by Stavridis and Mardas "Slunce" by Libenov and others. The first industrial company "Rodopska pchela" was established.

In 1895 the Plovdiv Chamber of Commerce and Industry, one of the largest in the country, was established.

For the modernization and improvement of Plovdiv, the architect Joseph Schneider deserved great merits. He is the author of the new welfare plan of the city from the end of the 19th century.

According to his project, the first church-monument of the Liberation of Bulgaria was built, dedicated to Sts. Cyril and Methodius and St. Alexander Nevsky (1884), the Plovdiv Girls' High School, the Oroz du Buck Trade House and others.

At that time the Main Street of Plovdiv was built, named after Knyaz Alexander I.

From the time after the Liberation until the middle of the 20th century Plovdiv gained positions as an important educational and cultural center. At that time, great artists such as the Czechs Ivan Mrkvička and Yaroslav Vesin worked here. Subsequently, Plovdiv became known as the city of artists.

With its 1750 m today the Main Street of Plovdiv is the longest pedestrian zone in Europe. The buildings are built entirely in the spirit of European architectural styles - neoclassicism, secession, neo-baroque, modern and others.



YEARS ON THE RISE

THE MODERNIZATION OF PLOVDIV

A new strong impetus in the development of the city took place in the 20s and 30s years of the 20th century. Tobacco production formed an entire industrial district near Central Station. Today it is a cultural and historical ensemble called Tobacco City.

The tobacco tycoon Dimitar Petrov Kudoglu became one of the greatest benefactors and donors in Bulgarian history with more than 40 million leva.

Wealth earned through honest work should serve man to do good and for useful deeds, he says.

Mayor Bozhidar Zdravkov has special merits for the improvement of Plovdiv in the 1930s. He managed to implement a large-scale public works program which imposed the new look of Plovdiv.

The warehouses of Kudoglu, Plovdiv, the Tobacco City, 1927



During World War II, the authorities were asked to deport Bulgarian Jews to Germany. The first votes in the defense of the Jews as an integral part of the Bulgarian nation first rose from Plovdiv. The city's community, led by Metropolitan Kiril Plovdivski, launched the fight. His words are memorable: *Return to your homes, none of you will be taken from Plovdiv. If necessary, I will lie on the railway line in front of the train carrying Jews!*

Plovdiv is known as a city of tolerance. Different religious communities have co - existed here for centuries. Today, in addition to Bulgarians, some Armenians, Jews, Turks, Roma, a few Czechs, Russians, Italians, Greeks and so on live in the city.



Monument dedicated to the rescue of the Jews of Plovdiv in the Dondukov Garden in Plovdiv



In the 1980s, the restoration process began in the old craft and trade district of Kapana. Since 2012, Kapana has become a center of the creative industries, where galleries, ateliers, studios, cozy restaurants and shops are gathered.

Some remarkable landscapes and monuments remain from the socialistic period in Plovdiv. A Fair Town was built on a new land, which now houses the International Sample Fair in an area of 360 decares. In 1960 the construction of the emblematic for the new city tunnel under the Three Hills was completed.

An impressive monument of the Soviet Army, known as Alyosha, was unveiled on top of Bunardzhik Hill in 1957 and the imposing Trimontium Hotel was built on Central Square.

In 1974, Ivan Vazov National Library, the second-largest and one of the oldest in the country, was situated in a new representative building. Its fund exceeds 1 900 000 library units.

WHAT TO VISIT?

PLOVDIV TOP 10

1 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESERVE - ANCIENT PLOVDIV

The historic Three Hills in Plovdiv were declared a protected area with the status of a reserve in 1956 and were named Ancient Plovdiv. Numerous monuments are preserved on the Three Hills, which allow the trace of the entire past of the city - from Prehistoric times to Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The most remarkable architectural and archeological monuments have been restored and are available for visiting. Today, Ancient Plovdiv, or the Old Town is a huge and rich museum. Within the reserve there are emblematic unique monuments such as the Archaeological Complex of Nebet Tepe and the Ancient Theater. Here are the oldest Plovdiv Orthodox churches, the Revival houses - remarkable architectural monuments, the architectural and historical ensemble Hisar Kapia, a series of street ensembles with fully preserved ancient architecture. The Old Town holds expositions of the Ethnographic and History Museum and the Pharmacy Museum Hippocrates and the Art Gallery. The house-museums of Hristo G. Danov, Klianti, Hindliyan, Balabanov, Nedkovich and others are also here.



PLOVDIV TOP 10

2 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPLEX NEBET TEPE

The earliest traces of settlement at this site are from the middle of the Neolithic Age – 6th millennium BC. Later on, the ancient Thracian city of Evmolpia appeared here. Strong fortress walls surrounding a sanctuary and an aristocratic palace were discovered at this site. Strong fortress walls, which surrounded a sanctuary and an aristocratic palace, were discovered at this site. Especially interesting is the most ancient part of the fortress, built of roughly worked stone blocks without solder. There are buildings from the Hellenistic, Roman, early Byzantine eras and the Middle Ages.



3 THE ANCIENT THEATRE

The theater of ancient Philippopolis is located in the rocky depression between the two southern hills of the Three Hills - Dzhambaz and Taksim Tepe. It was unveiled in 1978. A recently discovered memorial inscription states that the theater was built in the year 90, during the reign of Emperor Domitian, by the great Thracian dynasty Titus Flavius Cotis. The theater accommodated up to 7 000 spectators. Today it is adapted as an open-air stage.



WHAT TO VISIT?

PLOVDIV TOP 10

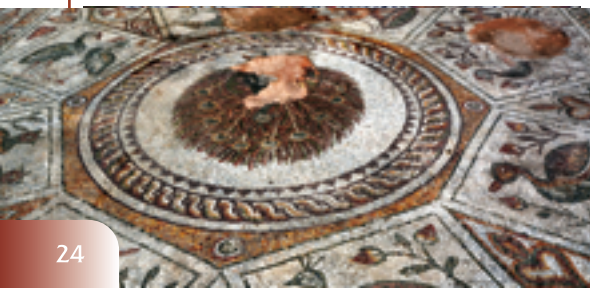
4 THE FORUM COMPLEX

At the end of the 1st century, Philippopolis got a central square - a Roman-style forum - the largest forum complex discovered in our lands. The administrative, cultural and religious life of the ancient city was concentrated here. It has an almost square plan measuring 143 by 136 meters. Shops are located on the three sides of the forum, and the public buildings rise on the north fourth wall. The Odeon - the covered theater in which the meetings of the City Council were held is restored here. A part of the western side of the forum with an entrance, a colonnade and an adjoining ancient street was recovered.



5 THE BISHOP'S BASILICA OF PHILIPPOPOLIS

It is the largest early Christian church found in the Bulgarian lands, and it is among the largest basilicas on the Balkan Peninsula. It is a temple with a three-nave plan and a large apse. The length of the temple is 83 m and its width is 36 m. It was built in the 4th century and during this period there were multi-colored mosaics, later damaged by a natural disaster. In the 5th century a new mosaic floor was made, about 2000 square meters, richly decorated with geometric and plant motifs and images of over 100 birds.



PLOVDIV TOP 10

6 THE SMALL BASILICA WITH A BAPTISTERY

The basilica is an early Christian church, built in the 5th - 6th century with a three-nave plan with one apse. The floor of the temple is completely covered with mosaics. In front of the altar there is a preserved donor inscription dedicated to Flavius Basiliscus, commander in chief of the troops in Thrace and in 475 he was promoted to emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire. The building has a baptistery with a pool for baptisms in the original cruciform shape. The floor next to it is decorated with mosaic images of deer and doves - typical symbols for the Christian era.



7 THE ROMAN STADIUM

The stadium was built in the early 2nd century, during the reign of Emperor Hadrian, in the saddle between Taksim and Sahat Tepe. It accommodated 30 000 spectators. Its length is 240 m and its width - 50 m. The northern arched part of the stadium has been restored, and under the seats of the spectators an entrance is connecting the track with the street. Part of the outer fortress wall of Philippopolis was also discovered. Athletes from all over the ancient world competed in the Pythian, Alexandrian and Kendrisian games here.



WHAT TO VISIT?

PLOVDIV TOP 10

8 THE REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

It is one of the oldest museums in the country, established soon after the Liberation in 1882. The museum has one of the richest collections of artifacts from Prehistory, Antiquity and the Middle Ages from Plovdiv and the region. The world-famous golden treasure of Panagyurishte, discovered in 1949 is exhibited here. In the exposition you can see the treasures of the early Thracian kings - rulers of the vast Odrysian Kingdom. The exposition of the museum showed 4500 exponents dating from the 6th millennium BC to the 14th century.



9 THE REGIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

The house was owned by the rich Plovdiv merchant Argir Kuyumdzhioğlu. It is located in one of the most picturesque corners of the Old Town, next to Hissar Kapia. It is a magnificent example of the Plovdiv symmetrical house with its precise proportions, characteristic silhouettes and brilliant adaptation to the terrain. It was built in 1847 by the master builder Hadzhi Georgi Hadzhiiski. Undoubtedly, this is the largest and most representative Revival house in the Bulgarian lands, called serai - a palace. Today the building houses the exposition of the Regional Ethnographic Museum - Plovdiv, with a rich collection of folk costumes, old crafts, household items, photos and paintings that give an idea of the traditions, life and culture of the Bulgarians during the Renaissance.



10 THE CHURCH OF STS. «CONSTANTINE AND HELENA»

This is the oldest functioning Christian church in Plovdiv. It rises on a high terrace next to the eastern gate of the Acropolis - Hissar Kapia. It was an early Christian sanctuary dedicated to the 38 Plovdiv martyrs killed here in 304. In the 19th century, the half-destroyed church was rebuilt as a three-nave basilica. The iconostasis, with its magnificent Baroque carvings, is in «Viennese-style». It is now one of a kind, as its prototype was destroyed in Vienna during World War II. The icons of the iconostasis were created by Zakhariy Zograf.



PLOVDIV



1 Plovdiv is the oldest living city in Europe and one of the oldest in the world.



2 Plovdiv is the first Bulgarian town to win the European Capital of Culture 2019 project



5 The first book publishing house in Bulgaria was established in Plovdiv and found by Hristo G. Danov in 1855.



6 The first celebration of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius – 11 May, 1856



9 The main street of Plovdiv is the longest pedestrian zone in Europe - 1750 m



10 Plovdiv is theater in the

BEST OF THE BEST
THE BEST IN THE WORLD
BULGARIA OR IN EUROPE
PLOVDIV
PLOVDIV



3 The Bishop's Basilica is the largest early Christian church in the Bulgarian lands.



4 The clock tower of Sahat Tepe is one of the oldest in Europe – the 16th century



7 The first Bulgarian high school, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, was established in Plovdiv in 1868.



8 Dondukov Garden (1878) is the oldest park in the Bulgarian lands.



the first Bulgarian city with a troupe and a building from 1881 - a panel by John Leviev theater.



11 The largest Rowing Canal in the Balkans is situated here- a favorite place for relaxation and sport

PLOVDIV

1

Plovdiv is the oldest living city in Europe

and among the oldest cities in the world.

The first traces of life under the hills are from the Neolithic Age – 6th millennium BC, and from this period several prehistoric settlements are known. The first urban settlement, from which the development of the ancient city of Eumolpia began in the 12th century BC, is located on Nebet Tepe.

2

Plovdiv is the first Bulgarian town elected for the European Capital of Culture 2019.

The largest stage discovered in the Balkans is the Ancient Theater of Philippopolis.

Twenty years after hosting the European Month of Culture, in 2019 Plovdiv celebrated the most prestigious cultural initiative of the European Union, together with the Italian city of Matera.

Plovdiv is a city with a rich cultural calendar with numerous events and festivals of national and international significance - such as Opera Open, the International Folklore Festival, the Autumn Salon of Arts, the Old Town Festival, the Stage at Crossroads Theater Festival and others.

3

Bishop's Basilica is the largest early Christian church in the Bulgarian lands

and one of the largest on the Balkan Peninsula.

The floors of this spectacular three-nave building are covered with mosaic compositions of geometric and floral ornaments and numerous images of birds. The original floor decoration from the 4th century was severely damaged by a natural disaster. In the 5th century a new mosaic floor covering was laid. After the restoration of a two-storey protective building, the two layers of the mosaic flooring are exposed.

4

The clock tower is the oldest building of this type built in the Ottoman Empire

and one of the oldest in Europe, dating back to late 16th century.

The earliest information about it is from the beginning of the 17th century. The first tower of wooden construction was erected on the hill in the period 1578 - 1611. The clock mechanism was made by the Italian designer Antonio Barbagelata. It was rebuilt in 1812 by Bratsigovo master builders. It has a unique architecture for Bulgaria. The top floor has a mechanical clock with a bell, which still works. The name of Sahat Tepe derives from the tower of the hill, located west of the three of Plovdiv's hills, and means «The hill of the clock», today known as Danov's hill.

5

In 1855 the first book publishing house in Bulgaria was founded in Plovdiv by Hristo G. Danov

and is also called the «Bulgarian Gutenberg».

The first book he published was Stara Planina. A Calendar for the 1856 leap year. Danov Publishing House was a leading cultural institution until the Liberation, and its bookstore became a spiritual center for Bulgarian students and the Bulgarian Intellectuals in general. It is no coincidence that it was called the Unspoken Ministry of Public Education.

Hristo G. Danov dedicates 65 years of his life and more than 1000 editions to the Bulgarian book, to education and culture.

6

The first celebration of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius

took place in Plovdiv on 11 May 1856

It was first celebrated in the Bulgarian Diocesan School, which bears the names of the Slavic educators. The initiator of this memorable event is the Revival writer Naiden Gerov. 11th of May soon became an all Bulgarian holiday, and today it is a memorable day celebrated by all Slavs. During the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, with a special encyclical, St. Cyril and St. Methodius were declared co-patrons of Europe, along with St. Benedict of Nursia.

PLOVDIV

7

The first Bulgarian high school Sts. Cyril and Methodius in 1868 was established in a specially-built building called the Yellow School.

This is the first newly built building in our country, adapted to the educational requirements, and the only old public building, which is still used for its intended purpose. Today the yellow school is part of the building stock of the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. The building was built by master Todor Damov, completely massive, sparingly decorated but with impressive facades.

8

Dondukov Garden (1878) is the oldest park in the Bulgarian lands.

It was established in 1878 based on the idea of Knyaz Alexander Dondukov - Korsakov.

This is the time when Plovdiv was chosen as the capital of San Stefano Bulgaria. Its first park builder was the Swiss Lucien Chevallaz, who settled in Plovdiv. He was the personal gardener of Sultan Abdulaziz.

Also Chevallaz created a greenhouse for growing southern flowers, ficus, cacti, pinnate palms and other exotic plants here. The grateful citizens of Plovdiv call him the Minister of Flowers and Fruits, Flora and Fruit Growing.

9

The main street of Plovdiv is the longest pedestrian zone in Europe - 1750 m.

It starts from Central Square and reaches Maritsa River.

The beginning of its construction as a major commercial and public area began after the Liberation. The first residential and commercial buildings built here were realized in the spirit of Neoclassicism - a style typical of the 19th century. From the beginning to the middle of

the 20th century there was a mass construction of this area with new buildings, whose architecture bears the hallmarks of the secession style, also called modern style. Here we can enjoy the charming mix of ornamental styles and elements of classicism, baroque, rococo, secession and modernism.

10

Plovdiv is the first Bulgarian city with a troupe and a theater building from 1881.

The inspirer of the Bulgarian professional theater is Ivan Vazov.

On December 8, 1881, the Society of Workers of Danov Printing House, with the participation and under the direction of Stefan Petkov Popov, presented at the Luxembourg Theater the plays Stoyan Voivoda by Dobri Voynikov and The Jealousy of Barbuye by Moliere. Two days later after an emotional debate at the historic thirteen session of the District Assembly, 75 000 pennies were voted for the composition of a moving theater troupe. On this occasion, the next day (December 11), the Narodniy Glas newspaper concluded with Vazov's pen: «So a solid foundation has already been laid for the Bulgarian National Theater.»

11

The largest Rowing Canal in the Balkans is situated here - a favorite place for relaxation and sport.

It is located near Maritsa River.

On the south side it is surrounded by a wooded, pleasant for recreation Hunting Park. The Rowing Canal hosts a number of major international sporting events, such as the World Canoeing Championship, the European Canoeing Championship and others. The area around the Rowing Canal is a favorite place for training, fitness, sports games, fishing and relaxation for thousands of Plovdiv residents and guests.

1 VISIT THE MUSEUMS IN PLOVDIV

Plovdiv is a city with many and various museums. The most famous are the Archaeological, the Ethnographic and the History Museum, with original renovated exhibits and rich funds. The City Art Gallery has a total of 6 permanent exhibitions and 5 exhibition halls. The Museum of Natural History is also of great interest. A total of 14 exhibitions are located in the Old Town.

2 TAKE A WALKING TOUR ALONG THE MAIN STREET

The main street in Plovdiv is part of the central city core with diverse life. The majority of the buildings here are multi-storey, with shops and restaurants. Along the main street there are many cultural sites and square spaces at the City Municipality and the Dzhumaya Mosque. They represent places with a special charm, radiating coziness and serenity.

3 TAKE A WALK IN THE KAPANA DISTRICT

Originating as a trade and craft district, today Kapana fascinates with its tangle of narrow streets and the original architecture of the buildings. The neighborhood is an attractive place with its numerous festivals, holidays, exhibitions and concerts. In the small cafes, pastry shops and restaurants the visitor can take a rest and try different drinks and dishes, traditional for the country and for the city.

4 VISIT THE STREET OF CRAFTS

It is located in the Old Town on Strumna Street, which descends from the Hisar Kapia gate on the northern slope of Nebet Tepe. Several Revival houses are located along the narrow cobbled street in which prominent masters of traditional Bulgarian crafts such as weavers, potters and woodcarvers work. Here you can get unique souvenirs typical of the city and the old folk art.

5 CLIMB UP THE BUNARDZHIC HILL

Bunardzhik Hill, the second-highest of the seven hills and 234 m above sea level, today is a beautiful park. Picturesque alleys lead to its top. In its highest part rises the marble pyramid of the Russian monument, raised in 1881 in memory of the Russian soldiers who died near Plovdiv. At the very top there is the statue of the Soviet warrior known as «Alyosha». Many captivating views of all parts of the town can be seen from here.

6

VISIT THE TSAR SIMEON'S GARDEN

It is located next to the Central Square and Main Street. It was created by the great park builder Lucien Chevallaz as a park area at the First Plovdiv Exhibition in 1892. After the exhibition, the city Municipality preserved and developed it as a main city park. Here we can walk along the alleys with fountains and flowers under the centuries-old shade of exotic tree species.

The park holds the monuments of prominent Bulgarian Revivalists and supporters. The former lake of the exhibition is preserved at the southern end of the garden, now completed with singing fountains, accompanied with an original evening program - a combination of music, colorful lights and beautiful water jets make them unique in the country.

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER

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