



Bulletin

European Destinations of Excellence

ONLINE BULLETIN ON BULGARIAN EDEN DESTINATIONS, CREATED UNDER THE PROJECT ENTITLED "COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE EDEN DESTINATIONS IN BULGARIA– SECOND EDITION", AS IMPLEMENTED BY THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM UNDER A GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION NO 699265 OF JAN 18, 2016

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NEWS, RELATED TO THE PROJECT

Ministry of Tourism conducted familiarization trips on the way to the Bulgarian EDEN destinations

Under the project "Communication campaign to promote EDEN destinations in Bulgaria – Second edition", Ministry of Tourism organized and conducted 3 familiarization trips for participants from Bulgaria, Romania and Germany, as identified and proposed by the project analyses. Each trip included 2 participants from each target market.



During the period, 27.03–30.03.2017 and 03-06.04.2017 familiarization trips for 2 Bulgarian and 2 Romanian key marketing travel enablers on the itinerary Sofia - Kyustendil - Melnik - Sandanski - Belitsa - Sapareva Banya - Sofia was held. Tours have started with visiting EDEN Destination Kyustendil. Participants

have visited the Hisarlaka fortress; St. George Church; St. Nikola stone church, situated near the village of Slocoshnitsa, and the Kadin Bridge.

After Kyustendil, the participants went to EDEN destination Sandanski. They visited Episcopal complex with a basilica, situated in the centre of the town Sandanski; Rozhen Monastery, Melnik, Rupite - St. Petka of Bulgaria church and the springs. The participants also have had the chance to explore the ancient city of Heraclea Sintica, which is 2 km away from Rupite.

Belitsa was the third EDEN destination with which the trip continued. Within the program, participants visited the Historical Museum in the town, as well as Belish Rocks, part of the waterfalls cascade "Belishka Pastrina", „Kazanite waterfall, the rock statue "Bela Iza" and the famous

Dancing bears park.

The journey of the participants in the tour finished with visit of some interesting places near EDEN destination Sapareva banya and National Park "Rila". They visited the geyser fountain – emblem of the city and the medieval church "St. Nicholas". Afterwards, the participants have looked at the Assumption of Virgin Mary Medieval Church, situated in the village of Saparevo, as well as to enjoy the magnificent view of the Ovcharchenski waterfall, near village of Ovchartsi and finally to visit the Resilovski monastery.

During the period, 10-13.04.2017 familiarization trip for 2 German bloggers on the itinerary Sofia – Belogradchik – Vratsa – Lukovit – Sofia was held.



The tour has started with visiting the central part of Sofia. Then bloggers went to the first EDEN destination - Vratsa. They had the chance to visit the Regional Historical Museum - Vratsa, the Ethnography and Renaissance complex "St. Sofronii Vrachanski" and the Ledenika Cave.

Belogradchik Rocks and Magura Cave were also included in the program of tours for the German participants. In the municipality of Belogradchik was organized a special tasting of high quality Bulgarian wines in a wine cellar.

The bloggers' tour continued to Lukovit and ended with visit of Geological Park Iskar – Panega and Prohodna Cave.

Belogradchik Rocks and Magura Cave were also included in the program of tours for the German participants. In the municipality of Belogradchik was organized a special tasting of high quality Bulgarian wines in a wine cellar. The bloggers' tour continued to Lukovit and ended with visit of Geological Park Iskar – Panega and Prohodna Cave.

Guests from Germany said that Bulgaria has amazing nature and wonderful landscapes. Belogradchik Rocks impressed them with its magic.

The participants had the opportunity to get to know more about the local community, to feel the local spirit and traditions, the local food and to enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of the Bulgarian EDEN destinations.

Bulgarian EDEN destinations were presented at the International Tourism Fair "Cultural Tourism", Veliko Tarnovo

Ministry of Tourism presented Bulgarian EDEN destinations at the 14th International Tourism Exhibition "Cultural Tourism", during the period 6-9 April 2017 in Veliko Tarnovo, Exhibition halls Rafael Mihaylov. The International Cultural Tourism Fair is the first specialized forum for cultural tourism promotion, as well as for promotion of Bulgaria as a tourist destination.

It was attended by 70 Bulgarian and foreign exhibitors - municipalities, embassies of Azerbaijan, Brazil, Vietnam, Palestine, South Africa, partner cities of Veliko Tarnovo-Braga (Portugal), Bursa (Turkey), Ohrid (Macedonia), Serres (Greece), Jaen (Spain), museums, NGOs, tour op-

erators, tour agents that presented their offers for new and popular destinations for cultural tourism.

During the exhibition, tourism stakeholders (municipalities, museums, tour operators, specialized media, etc.) were familiarized with EDEN destinations in Bulgaria as well as the objectives and activities of the project "Communication campaign to promote EDEN destinations in Bulgaria – II". This presentation is a successful advertising platform contributing to the promotion of Bulgarian EDEN destinations and the EDEN initiative as a whole.

Ministry of Tourism launched the project "Cultural and Tourist EDEN destinations in Bulgaria"



Ministry of Tourism launched the implementation of the project "Cultural and Tourist EDEN destinations in Bulgaria". EDEN is a network of excellent European destinations that promotes sustainable tourism development models across the European Union. The project was approved for funding under the call for proposals "Best EDEN Destinations – Selection 2016" under the Programme for the Competitiveness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (2014-2020) – COSME. A contracting authority is the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

to the European Commission. The total value of the project proposal is EUR 46,890.00 (BGN 91,709.00) and the funds are equally split between the European Commission and the Ministry of Tourism – EUR 23,445.00 (BGN 45,854.00) each. The duration of the project is 10 months – by the end of 2017.

It aims to draw the attention and promote rarely visited/newly emerging Bulgarian tourist destinations on the subject of "cultural tourism". This involves destinations offering a specific form of tourism based on their local tangible cultural assets (i.e. cultural and historical heritage or contemporary culture such as traditional historical or archaeological monuments/sites, industrial sites, museums, theatres, galleries, modern archaeological sites, modern city districts, "ethnic pockets" of cities).

In pursuance of the project in 2017 new, rarely visited five EDEN destinations in the field of cultural tourism in Bulgaria will be selected. To this aim, an Application package will be developed, including requirements and criteria to potential candidates for selection of excellent rarely visited EDEN destinations in the country for cultural tourism, a guidebook to complete the set of documents, an application form and other required documents for participation in the competition.

Further information about the procedure will be published in the period April-May 2017 on the website of the Ministry of Tourism and on the website of EDEN network in Bulgaria - <http://www.edenbulgaria.eu/>.

Based on assessment of the submitted proposals the five new EDEN destinations in the field of cultural tourism will be determined – one winner and four runners-up destinations. Professional pictures of the five selected destinations will be taken and they will be promoted in special brochures.

At the end of 2017, an official ceremony will be held for presentation of awards to the se-

lected destinations. They will be included in the national EDEN network in Bulgaria and will become part of the European network. Further information about EDEN initiative is available on the website of the network in Bulgaria - <http://www.edenbulgaria.eu/>, as well as on the website of DG Internal Market, Industry and Entrepreneurship of the EC: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/eden/about_bg_.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS FROM THE EDEN DESTINATIONS

National tourist march in the footsteps of Botev revolutionary band from Kozloduy to Okolchitsa (27 May – 2 June 2017)

The march is held every year from May 27 to June 2 in a hiking column along the 120 km Botev's Route from Kozloduy to Okolchitsa in Vratsa Balkan according to a preliminary program. In 2017, march will be held for the 71st time. It is the third category of difficulty and the itinerary includes objects from the National campaigns "Get to know Bulgaria - 100 national tourist sites" and "Get to know the homeland".

The main organizer and coordinator of the event is the Regional Administration - Vratsa. The march is held under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Regional Education Directorates, the Ministry of Tourism, the Bulgarian Tourist Union, Sporting club of orientation "Ledenika" Vratsa, Tourist Association - Vratsa, Botev Committee at the Municipality of Vratsa and the Municipality of Kozloduy and with the cooperation of the municipalities whose territories the march passes.

Until 05.09.2017 / Tuesday / all wishing to participate in the march can send completed application on the following address: 3000 Vratsa, bul. "Democracy" №1, Regional Administration - Vratsa or scanned and signed application form to e-mail: obl-vr@oavratsa.egov.bg

More information about the event can be find on the following website: <http://vratsa.bg/bg/pages/nacionalen-turisticheski-pohod-po-patya-na-botevata-cheta.html>

Rose Festival (2, 3, 4 June 2017), Kazanlak



Rose Festival is the area's business card, both in the country and worldwide, and has an important role in the history and life of the Kazanlak area. Its beginnings are traced back to the XIII century when the city became famous as a rose production center. Rose picking takes place in May.

In times past rose picking was associated with the onset of unusual agitation and songs resounding in the early hours of the day in the valley's villages and fields. In time, rose picking became a tradition attended by a rose festival. It was first celebrated in 1903 and was initially dedicated to beauty, manual la-



labour, and charity. Because of the beautiful outlook and the aroma from rose gardens, the festival gained popularity and attracted a significant number of visitors. The Rose Festival has established itself as a special event for the city, as well as a means of publicity on both national and international level. In time, it acquired a significant role for the promotion of the destination as the Rose Valley and became a crucial factor for the marketing communication in tourism. Nowadays, the Rose Festival is an international festival

traditionally held during the first weekend of June. On the first Friday is the official celebration of the city - the Day of Kazanlak, when crowning the newly elected Queen Rose and begin the culminating three days celebrations. Both Saturday and Sunday are inundated with celebratory events. The traditional highlights are the official rituals of Rose Picking and Rose Distillation on Sunday morning, and the Carnival procession of Kazanlak on Sunday noon which is the biggest street carnival in Bulgaria.

In the annual and decade-long events in The Rose Festival in Kazanlak have become more established the International Folklore Festival, Mini Rose Queen and Miss Valley Rose Competitions, the Photo Exhibition of famous photographers from Bulgaria and abroad, The Street of crafts, Children's Song Competitions, the National Zumba marathon and many others.

Therefore over the past few decades the traditional three-day **Rose Festival** has become a festival of talent, art and beauty with a variety of cultural program for the tourists, guests and residents of Kazanlak, which already has its name in Bulgaria and worldwide.

More information on the following websites: <https://www.kazanlak.bg/cat-470.html> and <https://www.kazanlak.com/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0> .

Cherry festival (24-25 June 2017), Kyustendil



During the period 24-27 June 2017, the tenth edition of "The Cherry festival" will be held. It is organized by Municipality of Kyustendil and the Institute of Agriculture in Kyustendil

Two days of the month of June are devoted to the celebration of cherries which are associated with Kyustendil's reputation as the Fruit Garden of Bulgaria. Celebrating the fruit orchards started in the town of Kyustendil in 1896 when the first national fruit growing exhibition was founded and

and the city proudly received the title "Mother of the Bulgarian Fruit Gardens".

The celebration includes exhibitions of various sorts of cherries, which were produced in the Institute of Agriculture in Kyustendil and by the cultivation of agriculture growers in the region.

Cherries, chosen by God, loved by the forest fairies, and marked with the sign of sanctity, are a symbol of good. They are the harbingers of summer, the door which leads to a rich harvest and much success for Kyustendil fruit gardens. Here cherries are planted according to the customs and culture of the population. The cherries have been preserved and cared for with love, with hope for prosperity, surrounded by rituals and native poetic spirit. For the people of Kyustendil a single cherry gives birth too many families and generations of cherries according to the text of a famous Bulgarian folk song "Chereshchitsa rod rodila"...

At the "Cherry Festival", life simply turns into a bowl of cherries. The first stage goes by the title – "The Cherry Crafts". Dozens of tradesmen from the whole country arrange their products in the City Garden. They exhibit their products as art, devoted to the cherry.

Parallel to this is the folklore holiday "A little cherry gives birth too many families of cherries" ("Chereshchitsa rod rodila"). A rich artistic program made up of groups, dance ensembles and individual singers presents the magic of the cherry and its influence on Bulgarian folklore.

The focus of the festival is a competitive exhibition, which involves community centers, NGOs, associations, schools and kindergartens from Kyustendil region. Display tables are arranged and covered with this bright and tasty fruit - arranged and skilfully knitted veshala.

The Cherry Festival ends with a rich artistic program. The winners of the best and most attractive exhibitions are chosen and the cherries are distributed and eaten.

More information on the following website: <http://www.kultura-kn.info/celebration/2/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%88%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-cherry-festival>

INTERESTING TOURIST ROUTES IN THE BULGARIAN EDEN DESTINATIONS

Interesting tourist itineraries in the EDEN destinations Belitsa

Given the incredible nature, which is abundant on the territory of Belitsa Municipality, and the infrastructure, all visitors have the opportunity to touch their creations. Throughout the municipality there are marked and unmarked tourist itineraries connecting mountain resort Semkovo, the Dancing Bears Park and Belitsa with the landmarks around them.

Pedestrian eco-trails have been marked and built in Rila Mountain. Two of the eco-trails run through the "Suhoto Ezero" and the "Vapskite" lakes, which are located on the territory of the National Park Rila. Each of the eco-paths is dedicated to a separate leading topic. On each of the tourist itineraries, there are wildlife feeders, shelters, safety hearths and water fountains. There are towers for observation and photographing the behaviour of animals in their natural environment.

The eco-trail "The Temple of Eternity" starts from the mountain resort "Semkovo" and reaches the "Kriva ella" area. "The mystery of the Peat Ground" eco-trail starts for Semkovo resort and reaches the Dry Lake. "Along the Glaciers trail", also start from the Semkovo resort and have endpoint Vapski lakes. "Lord of the mountains" starts from Semkovo and reaches the Dancing Bears Park. "The guardian of life" starts at the Dancing Bears Park and reaches the Toritsi ar-

area. "The Flying flowers" eco-trail originates from the Tsarski Kladenets area and reaches the Dancing Bears Park. The eco-path "Earth Paradise" is newly built. It originates from Sinevo, and the final point is again the Bear Park.

To provide the necessary information services to all visitors and ecotourism lovers in the center of Belitsa is built Tourist Information Center where you can find any information related to eco-trails and ecotourism in Municipality of Belitsa.

In addition to the six eco-tourism trail, you can reach close and distant sites by tourist itineraries with a starting point city Belitsa. These are:

- Belitsa - Belishka Chuka (0.5h);
- Belitsa - Chapels (10min-0.5h);
- Belitsa - Bobot rock (0.5h);
- Belitsa - Kazanite waterfalls and "Stenitsi" area (1.5h);
- Belitsa - Arbour and barbecue "Muscovy Ramp" (2.5h);
- Belitsa - Bella Iza (1.5h);
- Belitsa - Raven (1h);
- Belitsa - Draglishko Lake (1h);
- Belitsa - Fishpond (15min.);
- Belitsa - fields of herbs and berries.

Using Semkovo resort or Semkovo hut as a starting point you can reach many sites on the Territory of Rila Mountain.

The Dancing Bears Park is located only 12 km away from Belitsa. This allows visitors to use the park as a starting point for various tourist itineraries.

More information on the following website: <http://www.belitsa.com/bg/ekoturizam-v-belitsa/peshehoden-turizam-v-belitsa/marshruti-v-belitsa>,
<http://www.belitsa.com/bg/ekoturizam-v-belitsa/ekopateki-v-belitsa>,
http://www.semkovo.com/sum_paths.php



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