



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

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We will present to you one Bulgarian EDEN destination in each bulleting issue

Kazanlak

Kazanlak, which is located in the Valley of Roses and Thracian Kings, has abundant resources for the development of culture-, event-, eco-, and rural tourism – celebrations of the rose and Thracian rulers, preserved traditions, unique archeological monuments, and a heritage stretching from the Neolith to the Bulgarian Revival. More than 100 Thracian burial mounds have been investigated in the Kazanlak area, nine of these being open to visitors. Kazanlak is located in the vicinity of Stara Planina's biggest and very picturesque reserve called Dzhendema. A further reserve and 5 protected areas are located in the immediate vicinity of the city.



Unique finds related to the history of the Thracian Odrysian kingdom have been discovered near. A magnificent golden laurel of the Thracian king Seuthes III and a ritually buried bronze head of his statue have been discovered in the Golyama Kosmatka burial mound. A golden mask with personalized features and a signet ring have been discovered in the royal tomb in the Svetitsa mound – some of the most valuable finds not only in the Valley of Thracian Kings but in Bulgaria overall.



The Thracian tomb at Kazanlak /IV – III cc. BC/ is the first Bulgarian monument to have been included in UNESCO's list of world heritage sites. It is famous for its murals – some of the best preserved examples of ancient visual art, reflecting



events associated with the buried Thracian ruler's life.

Kazanlak is the birthplace of numerous well-known Bulgarian painters, it is by no accident that the city hosts one of the oldest and most extensive art galleries in the country. Some of the gallery's art stock is on display at its subsidiaries – homes of the painters Dechko Uzunov and Nenko Balkanski.

Nowadays, some of the attractions that tourists can observe at the Kulata history-ethnography complex include luthiery and primitive rose distillation, they can also taste products from the oil-bearing rose – rose

jam, liqueur, rose brandy – crafts and productions traditional for the area.

A visitor can observe from each point in the valley the golden domes of the Nativity of Christ church-monument in the town of Shipka, which was built in memory of the Russian soldiers and Bulgarian volunteers, who died for Bulgaria's liberation from Ottoman yoke. Its original architecture is styled in the XVII century Russian church architecture with its characteristic arches, pediments, and gold-plated details and has enjoyed unabated tourist interest.

Northwest of Kazanlak, in the midst of a succession of Stara Planina peaks, rises the legendary Shipka peak, which is perceived by Bulgarians as a sacred place and a symbol of Bulgarian national independence and pride. In 1877 Bulgarian volunteers in Russian service fought epic battles with hugely outnumbering Ottoman forces, predetermining the victorious conclusion of the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878). Their feat has been immortalized with a huge monument erected atop the peak itself.



<http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/42/Kazanlyk>

<http://www.kazanlak.bg/index.php?p=c&r=205>

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Events:

The Kazanlak festivals are notes for their extensive culture agenda and represent a contemporary expression of traditional culture celebrations. They adapt well-known traditions, customs, and popu-

lar celebrations, as well as authentic cultural-historical events. Some of them, including the Rose Festival, have become regional and national symbols.

The city has a rich and colorful culture-festival agenda. Most symbolic of and economically important for the city and the municipality are the festivals Rose Festival, In the Valley of Thracian Kings, Chudomir celebrations, and the Petko Staynov music celebrations.

Rose Festival (June 3-5, 2016)



The 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 labor, and charity. Because of the beautiful outlook and the aroma from rose gardens the festival gained popularity and attracted a significant number of visitors. Its culture agenda was expanded and includes the traditional rituals of rose picking and distillation, as well as the crowning of the most skillful female picker as the Queen Rose. Young girls and boys dressed in national attire welcome guests to the valley's rose fields and put rose petals on their clothes, treat them with rose liqueur, and dance lively Bulgarian ring-dances. This creates an emotional atmosphere full of much joy, singing, dancing, and Kukeri dances.



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. 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 motley Carnival Procession of Kazanlak on Sunday noon, which is the largest street carnival in Bulgaria. More than 3 000 participants march in the procession, which is led by the Queen Rose and her runners-up. It presents attractively the kindergartens, schools, reading halls, sports clubs, folk groups, and other organizations, which, along with visiting groups from the country and from Kazanlak's twin cities, contribute to a medley and colorful atmosphere.



In the Valley of Thracian Kings celebrations

Traces of several historical ages interweave in Kazanlak. The longest-lasting and impressive are the ones left behind by the Thracians – a people of exceptionally diverse and distinctive culture. Interest in the Thracian lifestyle brought about the idea to establish Thracian celebrations, which would solidify the area's identity and promote the Antiquity heritage via contemporary artistic forms.

The celebrations are an assortment of performances interpreting the topic of Thracian lifestyle, belief, and traditions. They are held annually at various locations in Kazanlak – in the central square, in the neighborhoods, on the city streets and parks, the highlights being the Fair of Thracian Crafts and Art, Thracian Camp, and the New Thracians performance.

The Fair of Thracian Crafts is an art fest where Kazanlak representatives from the Guild of Masters of Art Crafts and other applied craftsmen display old techniques and contemporary skills. Art workrooms are located along the Iskra street. Visitors may take active part in the workshops being offered, learn more about Thracian crafts, and create their own items. The Thracian Camp platform also triggers interest. Within a specially fenced space professionals from the Bagatur school demonstrate horseback riding, archery and javelin throwing, as well as other ancient Thracian rituals and rites. If interested, visitors can try to master some of the subtleties of training. The festival highlight is the New Thracians performance, which is a lights-and-sound show fusing theatre, music, and dance, and reenacting martial and ritual practices on stage.

Interesting cultural events also enriching the Thracian festival are the Thracian attire competition, the Street Parade, and the exhibition entitled Thracian Whisper. The exhibition constitutes a platform for the concepts of contemporary artists regarding culture heritage, history, and myths and stimulates creative thinking both in the people of art and the audience.

The Festival provides an excellent appearance opportunity also for reading hall groups with performances of rites and rituals in the Bulgarian folk tradition, which have been inherited from the Thracian lifestyle.

Although not as popular, the In the Valley of Thracian Kings festival is important for generational continuity in terms of historical-cultural practices and traditions and promotion of Thracian heritage. Contemporary art form reach younger audience more easily and are significant in the development of the destination's competitiveness.

Chudomir celebrations

The Chudomir celebrations are an important cultural event of local nature. They are dedicated to one of the most significant Bulgarian culture figures, Dimitar Chorbadjiiski - Chudomir. The celebrations have a 20-year tradition and are organized annually during the period March 25 – April 1. The agenda includes events from the entire culture spectrum. The festival highlights are the Chudomir national literary contest, the Slovo to Balgarsko (the Bulgarian Word) national bazaar of books written by Bulgarian authors, and the Comedy Hit of the Season national theatre festival. The literary contest is an initiative designed to draw public attention to the works of Chudomir and realize the role of books and the written role in human life. Promotion of reading is also the purpose of the Slovo to Balgarsko national bazaar of books. At the exhibition visitors may attend presentations of Bulgarian books and meet popular authors on stage and at the exhibitors' book-stalls. Dedicated literature spaces are made in the Infocenter and the Iskra library, where readings and discussions take place. Some of the meetings with visiting authors, publishers and organizers of the literary festival are also held there.

The agenda of the Comedy Hit of the Season is also of interest. The main objective of the theatre festival is to present Bulgarian comedy and satire theatre works to the spectators. The festival features leading authors in this genre and focuses on innovative achievements during the current season. The festival is hosted by the Lyubomir Kabakchiev municipal theatre hall.

Another tradition within the festival's framework is the annual national contest under the Little Countrymen moto, where children get the opportunity to recreate Chudomir's characters in various comical everyday life situations. The contest concludes with the selection and award-giving to three child works.

The festival is also attended by an extensive culture program, which includes concerts, exhibitions, discussion, and first-nights of books.

Petko Staynov music celebrations

The Petko Staynov music celebrations are an important culture events for connoisseurs of classical music in the area. They were established in 1994 at the initiative of the noted Bulgarian choir-master Petia Pavlovich. The music celebrations are held annually in early December near the birthdate (1.12.1896) of the composer and originator of national symphony music and choir ballad – the academic Petko Staynov. The point of this significant culture event is to promote classical music works among the young audience and maintain continuity in the public. The festival is open to participant from the entire country, without restriction. Eligible to participate are chamber and large groups, various choir formations, symphony orchestras, and chamber/large instrumental classical ensembles. The music celebrations are also open to independent performers diverse in nature and specifics – pianists, violinists, cellists, and opera singers, who join efforts in

various music forms. The festival's idea is to attract the young people to the so-called "high art" via interpretation of a number of classical works. The purpose is to build a bridge between the mature and growing generations via transfer of music culture.

When you visit Kazanlak, we recommend that you see:



The Rose Museum

The only museum dedicated to the oil-bearing rose traces the 350-year history of Bulgarian rose production. In the exhibition rooms you can view the interesting display of archive documents, agricultural tools for rose growing and processing, storage and shipment vessels for rose oil, old rose distilleries, and the biggest Bulgarian rose oil storage vessel with capacity of 200 liters – Konkum.

http://www.muzei-kazanlak.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=62&Itemid=83&lang=bg



The Kazanlak Thracian tomb

The Thracian tomb near Kazanlak / IV cc. – early III cc. BC/ is the first of Bulgarian monuments to be included in the UNESCO list. It owes its worldwide renown to the unique murals – some of the best preserved examples of ancient visual art. Scenes depicted in the tomb reflect events associated with the buried Thracian ruler's life. It is located 1 200 meters northeast of Kazanlak city center, on the Tyulbeto hill.

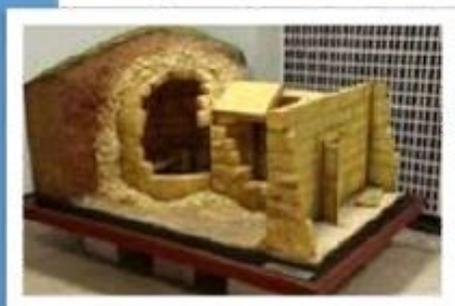
<http://www.kazanlak.bg/index.php?p=c&r=155>



Tomb in the Golyama Kosmatka mound

The tomb dates back to the latter half of V cc. BC. The preserved colored ornaments on the wings of the marble chamber door symbolize the world's directions and the cycle of time. The ruler's magnificent golden laurel was discovered in the tomb as the Thracian king Seuthes III was symbolically buried there. It is located 12 km north of Kazanlak.

http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/52/Grobnica_Golyamata_Kosmatka



Temple in the Golyama Arsenalka mound

The temple was built during the V cc. BC. The floor in the second room represents the main Thracian symbol and god – the sun. The Thracians believed that the Universe's vertical structure was constructed of three worlds – a subterranean one, a terrestrial one, and a celestial one. It is located 20 km northwest of Kazanlak.

http://www.muzei-kazanlak.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=131&Itemid=138&lang=bg



The Goddess' Door megalith complex

This unique monument dates back to circa 1600's BC and is located above the village of Buzovgrad, some 6 km south of Kazanlak. The complex also served as an ancient astronomical observatory. It is the earliest cult monument for rites devoted to the Sun-God and the Mother-Goddess, which has been discovered within the area of the Valley of Thracian Kings.

<http://rosevalley.bg/bg/zabelejitelnosti-v-kazanlak/135-megalit-vratatana-boginyata-buzovgrad>



Kulata ethnography museum

The complex reenacts the Bulgarian revival atmosphere from the 19th century. The beautiful white church and the house and workshops stylishly arranged around the little square impart old-times coziness to this part of the city. The Hadji Enyu house, which once belonged to affluent rose growers has now been turned into a museum, with an old nearby workshop selling products from oil-bearing roses and draftsman works. One can also observe celebratory rituals, if previously ordered, at the ethnography museum.

<http://www.kazanlak.bg/index.php?p=c&r=157>



Temple in the Ostrusha mound

The temple is located 10 km north of Kazanlak and dates back to the IV cc. BC. The central chamber was chiseled out in a single granite rock weighing some 60 tons. The tomb ceiling impresses with its cassette-like structure and the single preserved depiction of an elegant female head. Somewhere in IV cc. AD the tomb-cult complex was plundered by early Christians and the murals were destroyed for being pagan.

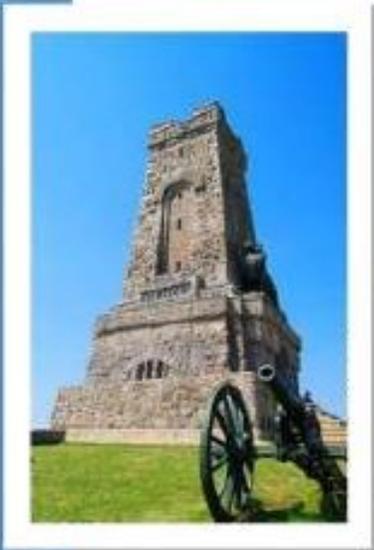
http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/189/Grobnica_Ostrusha_gr_Shipka



History museum

The Iskra history museum in Kazanlak is among the oldest and richest regional museums in Bulgaria. It stores more than 50 000 original exhibits. In 2005 a vault room was opened, exhibiting the newest gold, silver, and bronze finds from Thracian tombs in the area and the finds discovered in the Thracian city of Seuthopolis.

http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/104/Istoricheski_muzej_Kazanlyk



Shipka-Buzludja national park-museum

The park encompasses the historical sites associated with the defense of the Shipka Pass during the Russian-Turkish Liberation War (1877-1878 r.) – a complex of monuments, reenactments of positions, batteries, and dugouts. The freedom monument resembles a medieval Bulgarian fortress tower 31.5 meters high, with 890 steps leading up to it.

http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/36/vryh_Shipka



Nativity of Christ church-monument – town of Shipka

The Nativity of Christ orthodox church was built in the Moscow baroque style during the period 1886-1902 in memory of those fallen in defense of the Shipka Pass during the Russian-Turkish war. For 57 years Bulgarian and Russian icon painters and fine artists painted the temple interior and apart from the mandatory Biblical scenes, the interior also features historical persons and events. The church is located in the town of Shipka, northeast of Kazanlak.

http://bulgariatravel.org/bg/object/327/Shipchenski_manastir



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