



We help you get there

Candidate Information Pack

Sofia, Bulgaria  
София, България



**Contents**

- 1. Sofia, Bulgaria ..... 3
  - 1.1 Overview..... 3
  - 1.2 Things to do in Sofia ..... 4
- 2. Cost of Living ..... 8
- 3. Transport..... 10
- 4. Accommodation..... 12



# 1. Sofia, Bulgaria

## 1.1 Overview

Sofia is Bulgaria's three thousand year old magnificent capital city. In 2007, Bulgaria became a member of the European Union and there has been an influx of expatriates in Bulgaria especially from Britain, Germany and France.

Sofia is the destination for many high skilled workers specifically in the IT industry. The reasons are very simple: Low Costs of Living, Low Taxes (10% taxes), and Modern Standard of Life.

The IT industry in Bulgaria is highly appreciated by all governmental, medical and banking institutions and usually all employed in that industry get easy access to different loans and mortgage schemes with lower rates, receive one of the best medical service available not only for the titled person but to additional members of the family.



**Population: 1 491 583**

Sofia is the capital and largest city of Bulgaria and the 12th largest city by population in the European Union, with 1.4 million people living in the Capital Municipality. It is located in western Bulgaria, at the foot of Mount Vitoshka, and is the administrative, cultural, economic, and educational centre of the country.

Sofia is so strategically located that you can go skiing in the morning and drink coffee in the afternoon in a sunny Greek Cafe soaking up the sun (Thessaloniki, Greece is 4 hours South from Sofia).

The city is filled with entertainment and lots of shopping centers located in a short proximity from every point regardless of where you live

The Airport has 2 major Terminals operating flights to almost every European destination and the entire world.

## 1.2 Things to do in Sofia

You can go to the movies, have a lovely dinner and go partying all in a close proximity to your apartment without even setting foot in the City Centre.

### *Free Sofia Tour*

This free walking tour led by a local tourism volunteer NGO sets off twice daily from in front of the Palace of Justice (diagonally across the road from McDonalds). Led by friendly, English-speaking volunteers, the two-hour brings you by the city's main sites, with lots of interesting background presented in a fun and engaging way. The tour is a hit with travellers from backpackers to businesspeople, serves as a great introduction to Sofia and often makes new friends among other travellers and locals in the process.

### *Borisova Gradina*

Sofia's most attractive expanse of greenery is home to the Vasil Levski Stadium, CSKA Stadium and Maria Luisa Pool, as well as bike tracks and tennis courts. It's laid out with countless statues and flowerbeds, and is a relaxing place to take a leisurely stroll on a sunny Sunday afternoon.

The eastern end of the park is dominated by a gigantic communist monument built in 1956 and known as the Mound of Brotherhood, featuring a 42m-high obelisk and socialist-realist icons including a pair of partisan fighters, dramatically gesturing comrades clutching Kalashnikovs, and smiling, stoic workers. It has long been neglected by the authorities, and several of the socialist heroes...



### *Banya Bashi Mosque*

Sofia's only working mosque was built in 1576 by the celebrated Ottoman architect Kodja Mimar Sinan, who also designed the Selim II Mosque in Edirne, Turkey. It's certainly an eye-catching edifice and the red brick minaret makes a convenient landmark. At the rear of the building is a small,

recently excavated section of the bathhouse that once joined onto the mosque and a hot-water drinking fountain. Visitors are welcome outside prayer times if modestly dressed.



### ***National Museum of Military History***

Don't be put off by the rusting army trucks in the overgrown front yard – this **museum** is among the most interesting and best presented in Sofia. Displays over three floors tell the story of warfare in Bulgaria from the time of the Thracians onwards, with extensive labelling and information boards in English. Most space goes to the period from the 1876 April Uprising through to WWI, with cases filled with weaponry, rebel flags and a seemingly endless parade of uniforms and personal belongings of soldiers. Among the more striking are the shaggy-fur flying costume, resembling a traditional Kuker outfit, worn by a Lt Simeon Petrov during the First Balkan War, and the pint...

### ***National Art Gallery***

Occupying the east wing of the royal palace, the **National Art Gallery** holds one of the country's most comprehensive collections of Bulgarian art, with several galleries full of mainly 19th and 20th century paintings and sculptures. All the big names are represented, including the ubiquitous Vladimir Dimitrov, whose orange, Madonna-like *Harvester* hangs in the former royal music room. Other standouts include Goshka Datsov's *The Dream of Mary Magdalene* and Georgi Mashev's creepy *Outcast*. Anton Mitov's paintings of early-20th-century Sofia, such as *Vegetable Market at Sofia*, offer a fascinating insight into local history.



### **Mineral Baths**

The **Mineral Baths** – also known as the Turkish Baths – was built between 1911 and 1913. With its elegant striped façade and ceramic decorations recalling the designs of Nesebâr’s medieval churches, it’s one of Sofia’s architectural gems, but it fell into dereliction in the 1990s and has been undergoing sporadic restoration for over a decade. When restoration is finally complete, it will house a new civic museum, although no date has been set for this. The centrepiece of the little square between the baths and the Banya Bashi Mosque, known as pl Banski, is a modern fountain, while a smart **drinking-fountain complex** has been constructed just behind the baths



### **Church of the Seven Saints**

Set in a leafy garden just off the main road, the **Church of the Seven Saints**, as it’s known in its more tongue-friendly translation, is dedicated to Sts Cyril and Methodius and their five disciples. Originally built as a mosque in 1528, it had already fallen into disuse by the time the Russians came along in 1878 and turned it into an arms depot. After a brief spell as a prison, the structure was

restored and remodelled in a style termed Bulgarian National Romanticism, and consecrated as a church in 1903. Inside, the walls are covered in traditional murals of saints, while an image of the Trinity decorates the huge central dome. The gilded iconostasis includes icons paint...

### **Royal Palace**

Originally built as the headquarters of the Ottoman police force, it was at the Royal Palace that Bulgaria's national hero, Vasil Levski, was tried and tortured before his public execution in 1873. After the Liberation, the building was remodelled in Viennese style and in 1887, apparently undeterred by its grisly recent past, Prince Alexander Battenberg moved in and it became the official residence of Bulgaria's royal family until the communist takeover.

These days it houses the National Art Gallery and the Ethnographical Museum, while the shaded park at the rear contains an odd assemblage of statues.

## 2. Cost of Living

<b>Restaurants</b>	Avg.	Range
Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant	4.01 €	3.07 - 5.11
Meal for 2, Mid-range Restaurant, Three-course	21.12 €	15.34 - 30.00
Combo Meal at McDonalds or Similar	3.51 €	3.00 - 4.09
Domestic Beer (0.5 liter draught)	1.09 €	0.90 - 1.28
Imported Beer (0.33 liter bottle)	1.61 €	1.02 - 2.20
Cappuccino (regular)	1.01 €	0.51 - 1.53
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 liter bottle)	0.78 €	0.51 - 1.02
Water (0.33 liter bottle)	0.52 €	0.36 - 0.77

<b>Markets</b>	Avg.	
Milk (regular), 1 liter	0.90 €	0.77 - 1.02
Loaf of Fresh White Bread (500g)	0.47 €	0.32 - 0.61
Eggs (12)	1.55 €	1.28 - 1.84
Fresh Cheese (1kg)	4.62 €	3.58 - 6.14
Chicken Breasts (Boneless, Skinless), (1kg)	4.61 €	3.07 - 5.81
Apples (1kg)	1.09 €	0.82 - 1.53

Oranges (1kg)	1.13 €	0.66 - 1.53
Potato (1kg)	0.46 €	0.36 - 0.66
Lettuce (1 head)	0.37 €	0.26 - 0.51
Water (1.5 liter bottle)	0.44 €	0.33 - 0.51
Bottle of Wine (Mid-Range)	3.59 €	3.07 - 5.06
Domestic Beer (0.5 liter bottle)	0.53 €	0.41 - 0.61
Imported Beer (0.33 liter bottle)	1.03 €	0.76 - 1.53
Pack of Cigarettes (Marlboro)	2.57 €	2.50 - 2.66

### 3. Transport

Transportation	Avg.	
One-way Ticket (local transport)	0.51 €	0.51 - 0.51
Monthly Pass	24.37 €	15.00 - 25.56
Taxi Start (Normal Tariff)	0.32 €	0.26 - 0.36
Taxi 1km (Normal Tariff)	0.32 €	0.28 - 0.36
Taxi 1hour Waiting (Normal Tariff)	5.68 €	5.52 - 6.14
Gasoline (1 liter)	1.28 €	1.23 - 1.35



The various forms of public transport – **trams, buses, minibuses and trolleybuses**, as well as the **underground metro** – run from 5am to 11.30pm every day.

A ticket on any bus, tram or trolleybus within Sofia costs 0.70 lv, or 0.80 lv from the driver. Most drivers on public transport sell tickets – make sure you have the right change –but it’s far easier and quicker, especially during peak times, to buy tickets from kiosks at stops along the route before boarding.

If you plan to use public transport frequently, buy a strip of 10 tickets (6 lv) or a pass for one day (3 lv) or one month (37 lv), which are valid for all trams, buses and trolleybuses (but not the metro). All tickets must be validated by inserting them in the small machine on board; once punched, tickets are nontransferable. Inspectors will issue on-the-spot fines (7.50 lv) if you don’t have a ticket; unwary

foreigners are a favourite target. Don't forget to buy an extra ticket for each piece of oversized luggage, too – officially, this means anything exceeding 60cm x 40cm x 40cm.

Probably the most useful trams for visitors are 1 and 7, which link the central train station with bul Vitosha, via pl Sveta Nedelya. Public transport routes for buses, trams and trolleybuses are indicated on Domino's *Sofia City Map*, and tram routes are marked on the excellent (free) map inside the *Sofia City Info Guide*.

Buses for Boyana, Zlatni Mostove and Aleko depart from the Hladilnika bus terminal. It is near the southern terminus of Trams 2, 4, 9 and 12 from pl Sveta Nedelya. (From the final tram stop, walk through the tiny park to the bus stop on the main road.)

### **Car & motorcycle**

Frequent public transport, cheap taxis and horrendous traffic all provide little or no incentive to drive a private or rented car around Sofia. If you wish to explore further afield, though, a car would certainly come in handy. Rental outlets include:

**Avis** (945 9224; [www.avis.bg](http://www.avis.bg); Sofia airport)

**Eurodollar** (875 779; bul Vitosha 25)

**Hertz Central** (980 2467; ul Rakovski 135a); Sofia airport (945 9217)

**Sixt** (945 9276; Sofia airport)

**Tourist Service** (981 7253; [www.tourist-service.com](http://www.tourist-service.com); ul Klokochnitsa 1)

### **Taxi**

Taxis are an affordable and easier alternative to public transport. By law, taxis must use meters, but those that wait around the airport, luxury hotels and within 100m of pl Sveta Nedelya will often try to negotiate an unmetered fare – which, of course, will be considerably more than the metered fare. All official taxis are yellow, have fares per kilometre displayed in the window, and have obvious taxi signs (in English or Bulgarian) on top. Never accept a lift in a private, unlicensed vehicle, because you will (at best) pay too much or (at worst) be robbed.

The rates per kilometre may range enormously from one taxi company to another, but the standard rate is 0.59 lv per minute in the daytime, 0.70 lv per minute at night.

## 4. Accommodation

Links for long and short term accommodations

<http://bulgaria-property.imoti.net/>

<http://www.imotibg.com/en/>

It is very easy to find accommodation in Sofia. There are lots of agencies and owners that speak English and will be helpful with your successful search. Bear in mind that you would need to put a 1 month rent deposit and pay 1/2 of one month's rent as an agency fee (if you use the service of a real-estate company)

<b>Utilities (Monthly)</b>	<b>Avg.</b>	
Basic (Electricity, Gas, Water, Garbage) for 85m2 Apartment	77.66 €	51.13 - 102.26
1 min. of Prepaid Mobile Tariff Local (No Discounts or Plans)	0.17 €	0.10 - 0.20
Internet (6 Mbps, Unlimited Data, Cable/ADSL)	9.25 €	6.65 - 12.78

### Rent Per Month

Apartment (1 bedroom) in City Centre	287.22 €	220.00- 350.00
Apartment (1 bedroom) Outside of Centre	195.73 €	153.39 - 255.65
Apartment (3 bedrooms) in City Centre	537.51 €	357.91 - 766.95
Apartment (3 bedrooms) Outside of Centre	344.91 €	255.65 - 460.17