

# WILD BULGARIA with Hanny Allston

A point-to-point, exploratory tour of the mountains of Bulgaria

## QUICK FACTS

**Tour Duration:** 7 nights & 8 days

**Departs:** Sofia Airport @ on Tuesday 7th July 2020

**Returns:** Sofia Airport @ on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020

**Maximum Group Size:** 14 guests

**Accommodation:** Small hotels, family-run Bulgarian guesthouses & mountain lodgings

**Meals:** All breakfasts & dinners included

**Transport:** All on-ground transport, luggage transfers and support vehicle

## RUN DETAILS

**Minimum Run Duration:** 21km/4-5hrs. NB. The tour includes 1 rest day.

**Maximum Run Duration:** 28km/6-7hrs

**Technical Difficulty:** Moderate - trail & mountain experience required. Trails vary from smooth to steep & rocky alpine terrain. NB. There is a support vehicle if required.

**Steepness:** Flat to very steep mountain slopes.

*\* This tour is an exploratory, educational holiday involving trail running. Whilst this itinerary has been carefully crafted to deliver the finest trail running experiences in Bulgaria and we ask our guests to prepare for the physical demands of this trip, this tour is accompanied by a support vehicle and guides experienced in assisting guests of a wide range of abilities. Furthermore, we have all day to enjoy ourselves and we craft each days' runs to suit your individual needs, stopping frequently en route for photos and to soak up the ambience of the regions. Your guides will be able to differentiate between guest abilities, allowing you to move at your pace and enjoy your Bulgarian trail running experience.*

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore 5 of the best Bulgarian mountains, including the Rila, Pirin & Vitosha mountains
- Begin in the heart of Sofia, renowned for its historical center
- Rest in various Bulgarian accommodations, including family-run Bulgarian guesthouses and small hotels not far from the mountain landscapes
- Enjoy running with only a small vestpack whilst your luggage is transferred to our next accommodation
- Enjoy fresh Bulgarian cuisine in the company of your new trail running friends, including Bulgarian Taverns and home-cooked meals
- Return home ready to perform wilder after learning the art of being wilder and playing wilder from Hanny Allston

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1 – Arrive in Bulgaria & transport from airport to hotel in the heart of Sofia

Arrive at Sofia airport ready to meet your trail running peers & your guides. On this tour you will be accompanied by your Find Your Feet guides, as well as two expert local Bulgarian guides who are avid about trail running and the mountains of Bulgaria. On arrival there will be a short transfer to the city and our evening's accommodation, a centrally located 3- star hotel in the heart of Sofia. Our guides will brief us about the tour and provide a day-by-day explanation of the upcoming trails. Overnight. Enjoy a good rest as tomorrow we start running wilder!

### DAY 2 - Vitosha mountain - 24km, 1400m D+, 1000m D-

After breakfast we will take a short 15-minute transfer to our starting point for today's run – the district of Dragalevtsi, just in the vicinity of the capital city. The route follows a weaving trail through mixed forest before reaching the wide, open plateaus where we will be rewarded with fascinating views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. After climbing to the Black Peak (2290m), the highest point of Vitosha mountains, we will enjoy running across the gentle, grassy top plateau before descending to the southern side of the range. Here we will be met by our support vehicle and transported to our accommodation (40 min) – a comfortable, small hotel in the forests of the Rila mountains. Dinner and overnight.

Altitude: Lowest 850m, highest 2290m

Estimated time to complete the route: approx. 4:30-6h

### DAY 3 - Rila mountain - 28km; 1850m D+, 1550m D-

After breakfast at the hotel and short 20-minute transfer to our starting point for today, we will begin our run in the Rila mountains. The route starts from Borovets – the oldest ski resort in Bulgaria - and with a long and rather gentle 1600m ascent we will climb Mt. Musala at 2925m, the highest summit of the Balkan Peninsula. Following the main ridge south from the peak, we will continue on a non-technical mountain trail, climbing several summits higher than 2700m. Next is our descent towards “Treshtenik” vacation resort, via mountain huts and with breathtaking views. On today's route there is plenty of fresh water, except on the ridge. Our supporting vehicle will take us to the town of Bansko (45 min. transfer), where we will be accommodated in a family-owned hotel. Dinner and overnight.

Altitude: Lowest 1300m, highest 2925m

Estimated time to complete the route: approx. 5-7:30h

### DAY 4 - Pirin mountain – 21km; 1600m D+, 2100m D-

After breakfast at the hotel and a short 20-minute transfer to our starting point we begin the steep alpine climb to North Pirin - the true beauty of our tour. Starting high at 1950m, we will climb directly to Mt. Vihren (2914m) – the highest mountain in the Pirin

range and second highest in Bulgaria. A lot of technical terrain follows after the summit - mainly narrow, rocky ridges. This remarkable marble ridgeline runs for 4km and remains at over 2700m in elevation! Due to the karst character of the rocks, drinking water is scarce along the route, making it even more challenging. After the spectacular ridge we will descend through a beautiful valley and lush forests to our support vehicle where we will have a short 10-minute transfer back to Bansko and the same accommodation as the previous night. Dinner will be held at a traditional Bulgarian tavern. Overnight.

Altitude: Lowest 1100m, highest 2914m

Estimated time to complete the route: approx. 6-8h

## **DAY 5 – Rest Day**

Today is a day for well-earned rest and relaxation. After a late breakfast we will have a one-hour transfer to the village of Ognyanovo, where we will visit hot mineral pools – the best way to relax the muscles after three long days in the mountains! Afterwards we will enjoy lunch at a traditional restaurant before travelling another 40-minutes to reach the village of Leshten – an open-air, architectural museum where we can enjoy the culture and folklore of Bulgaria. Tonight's accommodation will be in a small hotel in the village of Leshten. Dinner and overnight.

## **DAY 6 – Slavyanka mountain – 23km, 1600m D+, 1900m D-**

After breakfast at our hotel we head back onto the trails after a 50-minute transfer to our starting point for the day which is at an altitude of 1000m. Amongst beautiful, old forests our route ascends quickly and steeply to an exposed mountain ridge, which goes south to the very border with Greece, providing us with fascinating views in all directions. The highest peak in the mountain – Gotsev (2214m) - is located only 70km from the Mediterranean sea and we will be able to see and feel the warmer weather and the Mediterranean vegetation. Next is a rather steep descent back into the forests and our support vehicle. In the afternoon we will have a 2-hour transfer to Kyustendil, the town closest to our last goal – the Osogovo mountain. Accommodation will be in another Bulgarian-styled hotel. Dinner and overnight. Altitude: lowest 750m, highest 2214m

Estimated time to complete the route: approx. 5-7h

## **Day 7 – Osogovo mountain - 26km, 700m D+, 700m D-**

After breakfast at our hotel and a short 25-minute transfer to our starting point we will begin our last mountain trail run in Bulgaria. The last mountain we are going to conquer is located on the border with Macedonia and the trail will take us to this highest peak of the range - Ruen Peak at 2251m. From there we will be able to see all the mountains we have climbed in the previous days! We will take our time soaking in the sights as the Osogovo mountain is so panoramic! At the end of our trail we will be met by our support vehicle which will take us back to the capital city of Sofia (approx. transfer time is 90-minutes). Here our accommodation will be in the same hotel as that in which we started on Day 1. Overnight.

Altitude: lowest 1550m, highest 2251m  
Estimated time to complete the route: 4-6h

## **DAY 8 – Morning explore in Sofia before saying our farewells!**

Following breakfast at our hotel we will embark on a morning tour of the historic center of Sofia: Alexander Nevski Cathedral, the Parliament, Banya Bashi Mosque, The Synagogue, the National Theater, the Kings' Palace. Then we will take a short transfer back to the airport to say our farewells. Onward or departures home can be made from late afternoon.

## **COST: \$3495 (incl. GST)**

**Tour inclusions:** 7 nights in traditional Bulgarian accommodation including hotel in the heart of Sofia on arrival; all on-ground transport & support vehicle; luggage transfer by vehicle; expert coaching, guiding and mentoring by Hanny Allston, Graham Hammond & two Bulgarian trail gurus; all breakfasts & dinners; discounts to premium brands at Find Your Feet.

**Tour exclusions:** Airfares; travel insurance; lunches, snacks and beverages.

Please note, this trip is strictly limited to 14 guests and will book quickly.