The Tour of Macedonia Historical Places

28 May 2016

09:00 Departure from the Conference Center

Professional and experienced licensed guide during the tours. Transportation by a comfortable AC non smoking Luxurious car / Van with professional driver.

17:00 Returning to the Conference Center

The Tour of Macedonia Historical Places

Macedonia Square
Stone Bridge
Skopje Fortress
Saint Panteleimon Ohrid
Old Bazaar Skopje
Ishak Bey Mosque
Museum of The Macedonian Struggle (Skopje)
Macedonia Square

It is located in the central part of the city, and it crosses the Vardar River. The Christmas festivals are always held there and it commonly serves as the site of cultural, political and other events. The independence of Macedonia from Yugoslavia was declared here by the country's first president, Kiro Gligorov. The square is currently under re-development and there are many new buildings around the square being constructed. The three main streets that merge onto the square are Maksim Gorki, Dimitar Vlahov and Street Macedonia. Dimitar Vlahov Street was converted into a pedestrian street in 2011. Maksim Gorki, while not a pedestrian zone, is lined with Japanese Cherry trees, whose blossoms in spring mark a week-long series of Asian cultural events. Finally, Macedonia Street, the main pedestrian street, connects Macedonia Square to the Old Railway Station (destroyed by the 1963 earthquake), which houses the City of Skopje Museum. Along Macedonia Street is the Mother Teresa Memorial House, which features an exhibit of art facts from Mother Teresa's life. Mother Teresa's original family home was located near Macedonia Square, and a plaque marking the location can be found today. A feudal tower from the Middle Ages next to the Mother Teresa House still stands today, surprisingly withstanding the devastating 1963 earthquake. The most popular tourist walk starts from the Old Railway Station down Macedonia Street, past the Mother Teresa Memorial House and Feudal Tower, past Mother Teresa's birth house location, down Macedonia Square, across the Stone Bridge, past the Holocaust Museum, Museum of Macedonian Independence, towards the Turkish Bazaar and ending at the Kale Fortress. The reconstructed Old Theater and the new Archaeological Museum, expected to be complete in the 2012-2013 timeframe, will add additional cultural landmarks along the main tourist vertical.
Stone Bridge

The Stone Bridge is a bridge across the Vardar River in Skopje, the capital of the Republic of Macedonia. The bridge is considered a symbol of Skopje and is the main element of the coat of arms of the city, which in turn is incorporated in the city's flag. The Stone Bridge connects Macedonia Square, in the center of Skopje, to the Old Bazaar. The bridge is also less frequently known as the Dušan Bridge after Stephen Uroš IV Dušan of Serbia. The Stone Bridge is built of solid stone blocks and is supported by firm columns that are connected with 12 semicircular arcs. The bridge is 214 m (702 ft) long and 6 m (20 ft) wide. The guardhouse has recently been reconstructed. The current Stone Bridge was built on Roman foundations under the patronage of Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror between 1451 and 1469. Throughout the centuries, the Stone Bridge was often damaged and then repaired. There is historical evidence that it once suffered during the great earthquake of 1555 which heavily damaged or destroyed four pillars. Renovations were carried out the same year. In 1944, explosives were placed on the bridge by Nazis. When Skopje was liberated, the activation of the explosives was prevented and the bridge was saved from destruction. The last reconstruction of the bridge began in 1994. The watchtower shaped like a mihrab was reconstructed in 2008. Some executions have also taken place on this bridge, such as the execution of Karposh in 1689.
The Skopje Fortress commonly referred to as Kale Fortress, or simply Kale (from kale, the Turkish word for ‘fortress’), is a historic fortress located in the old town of Skopje, the capital of the Republic of Macedonia. It is situated on the highest point in the city overlooking the Vardar River. The fortress is depicted on the coat of arms of Skopje, which in turn is incorporated in the city’s flag. The first fortress was built in 6th century AD on a land that was inhabited during the Neolithic and Bronze ages (roughly 4000 BC onwards). It was constructed with yellow limestone and travertine, along with fragments of Latin inscriptions. Material for the fortress originated from the Roman city of Skupi, which was completely destroyed by an earthquake in 518.

The fortress is thought to have been built during the rule of emperor Justinian I and constructed further during the 10th and 11th centuries over the remains of emperor Justinian’s Byzantine fortress which may have been destroyed due to a number of wars and battles in the region, such as that of the uprising of the Bulgarian Empire against the Byzantine Empire under the rule of Peter Delyan. Not much is known about the Medieval fortress apart from a few documents which outline minor characteristics in the fortress’ appearance. In 1660, Evliya Çelebi, a chronicler of the Ottoman Empire, wrote an in-depth account on the appearance of the fortress while traveling through the territories of the Empire.
Saint Panteleimon is a monastery in Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia situated on Plaošnik. It is attributed to Clement of Ohrid, a disciple of Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius. Archaeologists have come to believe that the monastery was the site where the first students of the Glagolitic alphabet (used to translate the Bible into Old Church Slavonic) were taught. Many archaeologists believe that Clement himself designed and constructed the monastery. Clement, along with Naum of Preslav would use the monastery as a basis for teaching the Glagolitic and Cyrillic alphabets to Christianised Slavs thus making it a university. The monastery stands on a hill which is now known as Plaošnik overlooking Lake Ohrid. Clement built his monastery on a restored church and a Roman basilica of five parts (the remains of the basilicas can still be seen outside the monastery). Judging by the architectural style and design of the monastery, researchers say that Saint Clement intended for his building to be a literary school for his disciple, thus it is believed to be the first and oldest discontinued university in Europe. The exterior of the monastery contains a large number of finely detailed mosaics not far from a stone Baptismal font used to baptise his disciples.
The Old Bazaar in Skopje is situated on the eastern bank of the Vardar River, stretching from the Stone Bridge to the Bit-Pazar and from the Skopje Fortress to the Serava river. The Old Bazaar falls primarily within the borders of Čair Municipality and is a protected national landmark. The earliest known sources that describe the existence of a merchant quarter on the bazaar’s territory date back to the 12th century. During Ottoman rule of Skopje, the Old Bazaar developed rapidly to become city's main centre of commerce. The Ottoman history of the bazaar is evidenced by roughly thirty mosques, numerous caravanserais and hans, among other buildings and monuments. The bazaar was heavily damaged by earthquakes that occurred in 1555 and 1963, as well as during the First and the Second World Wars and faced various rebuildings following these events. Ottoman architecture is predominant in the Old Bazaar, although remains of Byzantine architecture are evident as well, while recent reconstructions have led to the application of elements specific to modern architecture. Many of the historic buildings of the bazaar have been transformed into museums and galleries. It is, however, still home to several active mosques, türbes, two churches and a clocktower, that, together with the buildings of the Museum of Macedonia and the Museum of Modern Art, form the core of the modern bazaar.
Ishak Bey Mosque

Ishak Bey, the conqueror of Macedonia who settled in Skopje after retiring had this small, pretty mosque built just north of the Bit Pazaar in 1439, and it is still used by the merchants manning the stalls there. Also known as the Decorated (Aladja) Mosque, it’s one of the oldest in Skopje and was famous for its floral decorations, inscriptions and coloured tiles that unfortunately didn’t survive the big fire and earthquake. The mosque’s slender 30-metre-high minaret leans a metre to the side. Behind the mosque is a small graveyard including a lovely blue-tiled turbe (mausoleum) that seems to be used as a garden shed nowadays.
Museum of The Macedonian Struggle (Skopje)

The Museum of the Macedonian Struggle for Sovereignty and Independence - Museum of VMRO - Museum of the Victims of the Communist Regime is a national museum of the Republic of Macedonia located in the capital city of Skopje. Construction of the museum began on 11 June 2008 and it was opened to the public on the 20th anniversary of the declaration of independence on September 8th, 2011. The building is located between the Museum of Archaeology (under construction), the Holocaust Museum of Macedonia, the Stone Bridge and the Vardar River. The exhibit covers the period from the beginning of the resistance movement against the Ottoman rule, until the declaration of independence from Yugoslavia on 8 September 1991. The guided tours take visitors through 13 exhibits ending in front of the original copy of the 1991 Declaration of Independence.

Note: Only, the museums entrance fee and lunch will be paid by the participants.