

PHOTO WORKSHOP/SAFARI- “THE BEST OF BULGARIA” - 20 SEPTEMBER /26 SEPTEMBER 2010

THE PHOTO WORKSHOP/SAFARI ” THE BEST OF BULGARIA” is organized by the NGO “NetHarvest” (registration August 2004; No 131072130), the licensed tour agency for adventure travels - BALKANTREK - VGAIDAROV and Pavel Gospodinov (www.pavelgospodinov.com)

DURATION: 20 September - 26 September 2010

PRICE: 850 EUR (7 participants); 900 EUR (5 participants)

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 5 - 7



Bulgaria has plenty of exceptional sights, which offer you beneficial conditions for landscape/ seascape, ethno/people and street photography. Bulgaria offers as well opportunities for shooting remains of the communist regime in Bulgaria, stressing on their integration and relation with the modern urban landscape of Bulgarian towns and villages, including socialist industrial landscapes, Socialist collective housing construction and objects representing Socialist realism. In most of the cases, these are objects, which might be seen and shot solely in Bulgaria, which turns this photo workshop/safari unique.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE ITINERARY AND THE PROGRAM: Sofia - Svishtov (Danube River) - Northern Black Sea Coast (Shabla, Kamen Bryag, Tulenovo, Kaliakra) - Varna - Veliko Tarnovo - Dimitrovgrad - Eastern Rhodopes (Madzharovo, Ivaylovgrad, the villages of Mandritsa, Dolno Lukovo, Gorno Lukovo, Stden Kladenets) - Plovdiv - Sofia.

PLACES TO BE VISITED (GOOGLE MAP): <http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=115210881103524403963.000489f0abc13d4a1f4e7&z=8>

We will depart from Sofia on September 20th, 8.00am from the parking area in front of the national Stadium "Vasil Levski". The first place we will visit is the city of Svishtov, Northern Bulgaria, located on the Danube River bank. In the afternoon we will have a short boat trip photographing the Danube river islands around Svishtov, their wildlife (birds) and beautiful landscapes. On the next day we will depart towards the Northern Black Sea coast (Shabla, Kamen Bryag, Tulenovo, Kaliakra), where we will continue with photographing stunning seascapes of the rocky Black sea coast, will visit fisher villages, the majestic lighthouse near Shabla. Will also try the traditional Bulgarian fish kitchen. Then we will continue southwards to the largest city on the Bulgarian Black sea coast - Varna - the pearl of the sea. The next stop will be at the old and very picturesque city of Veliko Tarnovo. The street photography in this city will take you back to the past. The next destination is Dimitrovgrad - a paradise for photographers looking to photograph abandoned plants and factories, unfinished buildings, industrial sites and the typical communist era architecture. Further we will continue to the region of Eastern Rhodopes - a remote and still preserved area, maybe one of the last of its kind remained in the EU. The first place here is the village of Madzharovo - famous with the largest vulture colony in Bulgaria as well as with the stunning mountain landscapes and the beautiful meanders of Arda River. On the next day we will continue to the architectural reserves of the villages of Mandritsa, Dolno Lukovo, Gorno Lukovo - unique semi- or completely abandoned villages. We will also visit this day the beautiful meanders of the Byala reka (White River), where we will have the opportunity to photograph one of the most beautiful landscapes in this region. The last day of our photo journey will be dedicated to the area around Studen Kladenec in the Eastern Rhodopes, the second largest city in Bulgaria - Plovdiv with its wonderful old city and will finish in Sofia on September 26th (Sunday).

THE PHOTO WORKSHOP

During the journey we will have two photo discussions, when the participants will have the chance to show and discuss their work. Depending on the interest the photo guide will offer presentations/lectures on the following topics: Digital workflow/darkroom for photographers shooting with digital equipment; Digital story-telling; Internet for photographers, web design for photographers, as well as basic techniques for use of the social networks in the field of photography.



ITINERARY

19 September (Sunday)

Arriving in Sofia.

20 September (Monday)

Early in the morning - street photography in Sofia. Departure for Svishtov (on Danube river) at 9.00 am from the park place in front of the national Stadium "Vasil Levski" in Sofia.

We will arrive in Svishtov at about 13.30 pm. Svishtov is a town in northern Bulgaria, located on the right bank of Danube River.

After checking in the hotel we will spend the afternoon enjoying a short boat trip on the Danube River near Svishtov - the so called small Danube river delta. We will have the chance to photograph the river and the unique islands, their wildlife (birds) and stunning landscapes.
Evening street photography in the city of Svishtov.

Overnight in Svishtov in a hotel with a stunning view over the river.

The town of Svishtov: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/svishtov-bulgaria/>

Danube River: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/danube-river-romania-and-bulgaria-early-in-the-morning/>

Danube River - high water: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/danube-river-spring-season-high-water/>

Danube River Island: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/danube-river-no-name-island-birds-colony/>

21 September (Tuesday)

Early in the morning - street photography in Svishtov. At 9.00 am we will departure for the Northern Black Sea coast. Here we will visit cape Kaliakra, renowned for its dramatic history and archeological remains, as well as for its extremely impressive rock coasts and cliffs with staggering height. More northward are the villages of Kamen bryag and Tyulenovo, where from the high plateau you can shoot superb seascapes. We will also visit the fishing village in Shabla with its impressive Lighthouse and semi-destroyed bridge - very impressive photographic object.

We will finish the day with evening street photography session in the city of Kavarna on the Black Sea coast.

Kavarna is a Black Sea coastal town and seaside resort in the Dobrudja region of northeastern Bulgaria. It lies 64 km northeast of Varna and 49 km from Dobrich on the international road E87. A little yacht port, a fishing base, a spacious beach and a resort complex exist in the town.

Overnight in Kavarna.

Northern Bulgarian Black Sea Coast: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/bulgarian-northern-black-sea-coast/>

22 September (Wednesday)

Early in the morning we will departure for Varna, the biggest and most beautiful city on the Bulgarian Black sea coast. We will spend about 2 hours walking around the city for a morning photography session.

Varna beach; <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/04/the-beach-and-port-in-varna-20092010/>

Then we will head to the city of Veliko Tarnovo, the old capital of Bulgaria and one of the most photogenic places, where we will arrive at about 14.00 pm. After checking in the hotel we will go immediately for afternoon and evening photo session in this amazing old city.

This is one of the most ancient towns in Bulgaria. Its history starts about 5 thousand years ago, while the first evidences for life on its territories are dated the third millennium B.C and were found on the hill Trapezitsa. The ancient part of Veliko Tarnovo is situated on 3 hills – Tsarevets, Trapezitsa and Sveta Gora.

We won't miss here the architectural and historical reserve Tsarevets, the unique churches and unique cityscapes with the Yantra river beautiful meanders.

Overnight stop in Veliko Tarnovo.

23 September (Thursday)

Early morning session in Veliko Tarnovo. At about 9.00 am we will departure southwards via the Balkan Mountains to the city of Dimitrovgrad (arriving at about 13.00 pm)

We will spend here about 5 hours shooting of remains of the communist regime in Bulgaria. Socialist industrial landscape – old active and non-active factories and plants and their surroundings. Some of these buildings and complexes are remarkable photographic objects, placed in the context of the modern urban landscape.

We will also have the opportunity to shoot the typical socialist collective housing construction – half–destroyed and fully destroyed old homes and the Socialist realism – huge public buildings. This Stalin style of architecture is not typical for Bulgaria only, but here some of the most impressive examples could be taken.

Although not exactly from this region the following image gallery will give you an idea of what type of architecture and urban landscape are we going to shoot in the region of Dimitrovgrad:

Industrial landscape: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/05/industrial-triangle-radomir-pernik-kustendil-near-sofia-bulgaria/>

In most of the cases, these are objects, which might be seen and shot solely in Bulgaria.

At about 19.00 pm we will arrive at the village of Madzarovo, the unofficial center of Eastern Rhodopes.

Unlike western and central parts, the eastern part of the mountain has mainly low mountain and hilly relief (suitable for landscape photography). Through the mountain flows Arda river, which forms marvelous rock meanders and canyons. The population of Eastern Rhodopes is mixed and consists of Bulgarians, ethnic Turks, gypsies, Armenians and Bulgaro-mahometans. The region is renowned for the perfect tolerance between the different ethnicities (suitable for cultural and ethnographic photography).

Madzharovo is situated in the Eastern Rhodopes and possesses extremely beautiful natural resources, interesting rock formations along the Arda River Valley. Here is located the biggest vulture colony in Bulgaria.

Overnight stop in Madzarovo.

The town of Madzharovo: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/eastern-rhodopes-bulgaria-2/>

24 September (Friday)

Early in the morning we will departure south-wards, passing through the city of Ivaylovgrad for a short street photography session. The first longer stop will be at the area of 3 villages, with the qualities of real architectural reserves - Mandritsa, Dolno Lukovo and Gorno Lukovo. In the villages you will get in touch with charm of the sericulture two-three -story houses, with spacious saloons for breeding silkworms. These villages are like open-air museums but absolutely natural, maybe one of the last remaining untouched by the civilization places in Europe. Most of the houses are semi-destroyed and/or completely abandoned. Walking around the empty small squares and streets surrounded by these extraordinary houses will take you far back in the past giving you an unforgettable photo experience.

The village of Mandritsa: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/eastern-rhodopes-bulgaria-mandritsa/>

Gorno Lukovo: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/eastern-rhodopes-bulgaria-gorno-lukovo/>

Dolno Lukovo: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/eastern-rhodopes-bulgaria-dolno-lukovo/>

At the afternoon we will visit the valley of Byala reka (White River), where the river meanders between forests and hills, forming wonderful meanders. Here is located the second in scale protected territory of the Eastern Rhodopes, rich with various rare protected species of plants and animals. The landscape here is stunning, so you will be able to practice landscape photography on this unique place.

At late afternoon we will arrive at the Arda hotel, located in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by unique rocky landscape of the Eastern Rhodopes. After checking in the hotel we will continue with the evening photo sessions around - the meanders of the Arda River

Eastern Rhodopes landscapes: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/eastern-rhodopes-bulgaria-summer-landscapes/>

25 September (Saturday)

Early in the morning we will pass through Studen Kladenec for a short photo landscape photography session. Then we will continue to the village of Janka - unique and completely abandoned and destroyed ghost -village - a real paradise for photographers.

Studen Kladenec: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/eastern-rhodopes-bulgaria-studen-kladenec/>

Ghost village near Dzhanka: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/06/eastern-rhodopes-bulgaria-near-dzhanka/>

At about noon we will arrive in the city of Plovdiv, situated in the central part of Upper Thracian Plain on the two banks of the Maritsa river. In the city, plenty of antic monuments have been preserved among which the Ancient Amphitheater, the Roman Odeon, the Agora (Roman Forum), the Roman Stadium the late ancient building Eyerne and others.

The city has very well preserved old part, superb for street photo sessions.

Overnight in Plovdiv.

Plovdiv: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/04/plovdiv-street-photography-bulgaria/>

26 September (Sunday)

Morning street photography session in the old town of Plovdiv. Then we will head to Sofia, where our photo safari will end at about 18.00 pm. Street Photography in Sofia. For those who would like to spend one more night in Sofia, we will arrange a hotel.

Sofia: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/04/sofia-street-photography-bulgaria-part-i/>

Sofia: <http://pavelgospodinov.com/2010/04/sofia-street-photography-bulgaria-part-ii/>



THE LAND COST INCLUDES:

- Accommodations with breakfast based on two people sharing a room, singles are assigned on a first come-first served basis and are not guaranteed; group transportation by air-conditioned minibus; Services of driver, English speaking photographic leader - Pavel Gospodinov (www.pavelgospodinov.com); extensive pre-departure information and services; the boat trip on River Danube, travel insurance for your stay in Bulgaria and participating in the photo workshop/safari.

THE LAND COST DOES NOT INCLUDE:

International airfare to and from Sofia (we can give detailed information about the flights to/from Sofia, including low cost carriers); airport departure tax; airport transfers; additional transfers or accommodations that might be required by those not traveling with the group; excess baggage charges; activities listed as optional, or those taken on your own; passport/visa expenses; personal medical or travel insurance; any expenses of a personal nature, such as room service, laundry, medical expenses, film or processing, any activities not specified in tour itinerary or listed as optional, lunches and dinners during the whole trip (September 20th - September 26th 2010).

NOTE: The accommodation in Sofia for September 19th (the day of arrival) and for September 26th (the last day of the workshop/safari) are NOT included. Upon request we can help with arranging accommodation for these two nights in Sofia.

TERMS & CONDITIONS AND PAYMENT DETAILS

The workshop/safari fee is payable in United States Dollars USD or EUR. Deposits and final workshop/safari payment is to be made via international bank transfer. All bank transfer fees are the responsibility of the client.

Final payment is due 20 days before departure. If we do not receive final payment at this time we reserve the right to regard your booking as cancelled. Our cancellation fees will then apply.

BANK DETAILS:

NGO "NetHarvest"

PRO CREDIT BANK:

IBAN: BG27 PRCB9230 1002 5624 20

BIC: PRCBBSF

BRANCH RAKOVSKI SOFIA

DEPOSITS

A deposit of EUR 300 per person is required to secure a place. Full payment of the tour fee is due 20 days prior to the departure date.

CANCELLATION FEES AND REFUND POLICY

We must receive a formal written notification of your cancellation. Deposits are non-refundable.

- up to 40 days before departure: 100 % of workshop/safari fee;
- up to 20 days before departure: 60% of workshop/safari fee;
- a week before departure: no fee will be returned.

If for any reason a participant ends the workshop/safari early or does not make use of a service that has been included in the price, no refund for this unused portion or service will be made.



LOGISTIC AND OTHER INFORMATION

Group's size

The group for this photo workshop/safari will not exceed 9 persons (7 participants + guide and driver). This approach is adopted to ensure that special attention could be given to every participant. Our experience has proved that with this optimum number of participants a sufficient comfort and pleasure of the travel could be ensured. The small group gives us the advantage of making impromptu stops along the way and enjoying quality time with local people, which would be difficult with 12 people or more. Another reason is our hotel accommodations. We don't book big chain hotels, but stay in small, quaint, historical establishments which don't have that many rooms.

Accommodation and meal

Generally, we prefer to use middle class hotels, tourist hostels. This photo workshop/safari also offers culinary challenges, though it is not in its main focus. The time for meal is in accordance with the time for taking of pictures, and the aim is to obtain maximum balance and convenience.

Health

This photo workshop/safari is not strenuous and anyone who is reasonably fit should be able to take part in it. You will need to be sufficiently agile to climb in and out of the tour van and should be able to carry and manage your own equipment.

You should also be aware that medical services or facilities might not be readily available during all or part of your trip. This could include emergency medical care, presence of physicians, or adequate medication.

Subject to Change

This workshop/safari has been carefully constructed to ensure to participants the best this destination has to offer; however, should events arise that are beyond our control, activities and hotel arrangements are subject to change without notice.

Airfare

If you would like us to assist you with your airfare needs, please contact Pavel Gospodinov (pavel.gospodinov@me.com). If making your own arrangements, it is important to discuss flight details with us before booking any airplane tickets. This will prevent you from having to pay eventual ticket cancellation penalties.



THE PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM

The main goal of this photo workshop/safari is to offer you the opportunity to exercise and improve your practical photographic skills, to take photographs of unique places and recesses, of people of different ethnicities and cultures, to look at the world and the surroundings at different angle, to explore, taste and re-discover in yourself new passions and skills the existence of which you don't even suppose for; to play with the light with your cameras and... mainly to have fun.

Level of expertise

This photo workshop/safari is open to all levels, from beginners to advanced. It is not technically oriented, however you do need to know how to operate your camera and the basics about lenses. This trip is aimed at practicing the skills of seeing, of developing one's vision, of being patient to get the right moment, of getting the right composition - things one does not have the liberty to do when on regular tourist tours. With the millions of digital cameras sold today, every subject in the world has been covered, mostly in a boring way. So we'll develop a new way of looking at things while having fun traveling and discovering new destinations.

Benefiting from the expedition leader's experience

The photo workshop/safari will be guided by Pavel Gospodinov (English speaking). He is internationally-travelled and published photographer. He has visited and photographed all the places

offered in this workshop/safari. You can get to know his work and explore the destinations he has visited on his web site: www.pavelgospodinov.com

Pavel will share his expertise with you and give you advice in the field to improve your photography - should you want it. Some advanced participants join us to enjoy the company of fellow photographers, but don't need advice and prefer to shoot on their own, and that's perfectly alright.

As a part of workshop Pavel will offer short lectures (during the transfers for example or at the evenings) on subjects like: Digital workflow/darkroom; Digital story-telling; Internet for photographers; web design basics for photographers and social networking for photographers.

During the tour

During the photo workshop/safari you will improve your photography, develop your personal vision and technique, make new friends, discover new worlds and cultures, experience adventure and deepen or rekindle your passion for photography. There will be organized at least two session/discussion during which every participant will present their best shots, which might be discussed by the group. If desired, additional discussions and lectures could be organized, comprising, beside the photography, also topics like: Digital workflow/darkroom; Digital story-telling; Internet for photographers; web design basics for photographers and social networking for photographers.

However, the stress of this photo workshop/safari is not on the theory of photography. It is designed to help you improve your photographic skills while on the field, and learn how to see and capture the spirit of place through composition, light and choice of subjects. We put the emphasis on photographing during the best times of day, the so called "golden hours" as well as on the travel experience and cultural exchange. That means we'll usually be out before dawn or in the early morning, spend time exploring a location, have our meals, and return after sunset.

After the end of the tour

Each participant chooses 20 of his best photographs to be uploaded on the special web site of the photo workshop/safari - <http://netharvest.org/bulgaria>, where every visitor could add comments about them.

This workshop/safari is unique with the fact that we don't stop with our commitment right after arrival back in Sofia, but we create an entire environment with specific atmosphere and spirit for improving of skills and obtaining of new knowledge, both during the tour and after its end, using the modern options of Internet.

Expectations

Ask yourself why you would go to this photo workshop/safari. Are you expecting technical lessons? Do you want plenty of free time to explore on your own? Are you prepared to spend hours indoors in critiques of your work, or you would rather develop your film at home?

CONTACT INFORMATION

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