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# Eco, SPA, balneal and wellness tourism in Thracian Tourist Region

We present ideas for nature visits and balneal destinations to share with family and friends



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**Thracian Tourist Region** has an area of about 16,000 square kilometers. It possesses rich biodiversity, natural landmarks and evidence for the existence of ancient civilizations. Here eco, balneal, SPA and wellness tourism are successfully combined with the enjoyment of the taste of wine and the pleasure of travel. The healing power of mineral springs has been recognized since the time of the Thracians, who were renowned as healers. „The Holy Springs of Thrace” were famous throughout the Roman Empire.





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Natural resources of the **Municipality of Brezovo**, clean air and water, green forests and rich historical heritage develop different types of tourism. Here lovers of eco and hiking can enjoy picturesque routes, and beautiful mountain villages provide conditions for recreation and rural tourism.



- The Youth Tourist Team organizes various eco-campaigns, forums and actions to preserve the biodiversity and purity of the area. The two huts **Bratan** and **Svezhen** provide conditions for the development of horse-riding and hunting tourism, and the picturesque mountain and foothill villages - conditions for recreation and development of rural tourism.
- In the area of **Svezhen**, about an hour walk you can get to the north of the village to hut Svezhen. On the way to it there is a beautiful forest dam, south to the monastery **Dormition of the Mother of God**, you could pass several eco trails, ancient road, the Thracian sanctuary **The Snake's Egg**, as well as the **Sun Stele** on the west of the village.



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## **Brezovo Municipality**



- Above the village of **Babek**, to the right of the road to the village of **Svezhen**, rises **Gradishteto peak**. Before the saddle from which the ascent begins, a group of rocks rises in a lilac forest. Due to it, the rock sanctuary is called **Lilac**. On a path between the rocks, about 50 meters southeast of the sanctuary, on a slope facing south, is standing and skillfully fixed at the base with pieces of rock 2.5 meters high stone stela in the shape of a flame. It opens a horizon to the valley. A small platform is formed under the stela in the rock.
- **Snake Egg** is reached by an ancient road, in some places beautifully preserved. It is located on the left between the second and third kilometers of the road between the villages of **Babek** and **Svezhen**. The megalithic hill is 1 km away after the deviation.
- **Kutela** - this strange cup of giants is located a few kilometers from the village of **Rozovets** on the road to **Bratan Peak**.



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**Dimitrovgrad Municipality** is one of the greenest places in Bulgaria with three huge parks:

- **Nikola Vaptsarov** located on 821 acres of meadows and 40 years old oak forest - black pine, red American oak, silver spruce, silver fir, horse chestnut, various flowering shrubs and others.
- **Maritsa** is a magnificent terrace on the right bank of the river, on an area of 1,400 acres. There are a variety of ornamental trees, hedge plants and three centuries-old oaks. The Miner Sports Complex has 3 training grounds, an outdoor fitness area, outdoor stages, and an athletics track. It is accessible for people with disabilities. Opposite its entrance is the Lane of the Giants: The big bench (6 m wide and 2.40 m high), two benches - one medium and one miniature. The big table and the big chair are located in the neighborhood, also of impressive size.
- A large complex of buildings with different plans and functions is located on an area of about 15 acres next to the architectural site **Sanctuary of the Nymphs and Aphrodite**.





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## Dimitrovgrad Municipality

- **The Hasarya Fortress** is located near the village of Stalevo. Below the peak there is a large stone called **Kazancheto** (the Cauldron) or Krali Marko (King Mark's) Foot print. There is a hole in the stone where water does not dry. There is a huge foot print next to it – the one of Krali Marco.
- **Zlato Pole Protected Area** is the largest wetland of natural character along Maritsa River with an area of 84.79 hectares. It includes a complex of connected water pools and adjacent reed and bulrush massifs, islands and pastures. It preserves invaluable wealth of flora and fauna.
- **Protected area Fallen Swamp** near the village of Golyamo Asenovo - a wetland turned into a biotope, attracting numerous animal species and the presence of plant diversity.
- **Protected area Overnight of small cormorant** - habitat, place of rest and migration of small cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*) and other protected animal species, such as: eared diver, great water bull, short-toed hawk, falcon orco, otter, etc.
- **Caves:** Dyado Panyovata Dupka, Dimitrovgrad; Popovitsa, village of Krepost. Diaclose cave with a length of 36 m; Kirkovata Dupka, village of Kasnakovo; Gabera Abyss Cave. Diaclose cave with a length of 49 m and displacement 21 m.





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The natural resources of the **Municipality of Maritsa** include fertile soils, water resources and biological diversity. Forests and forest areas by purpose are: protective, recreational and for hunting. The area is a natural breeding ground for pheasants, partridges, woodpeckers, quail, doves, rabbits, deer, foxes, jackals and many more. etc., as well as a gathering place for the black stork.



- **Big mound**, archeological and natural landmark, Lakata area, the land of the village of Kostievo;
- **Big mound**, archeological and natural landmark, Ruskovi bresti area, the land of the village of Benkovski;
- **Maltepe Cultural Information Center** – here one can enjoy education, training, entertainment, art and pottery;
- **Eco trail Overnight** - nesting of a small Cormorant 6 km from the village of Kostievo;
- **Eco trail Swamp snowdrop** - swampy area Ribarnika Manole village - Stryama River;
- **The high mound** - a natural landmark, the village of Zhelyazno, Azmaka area.



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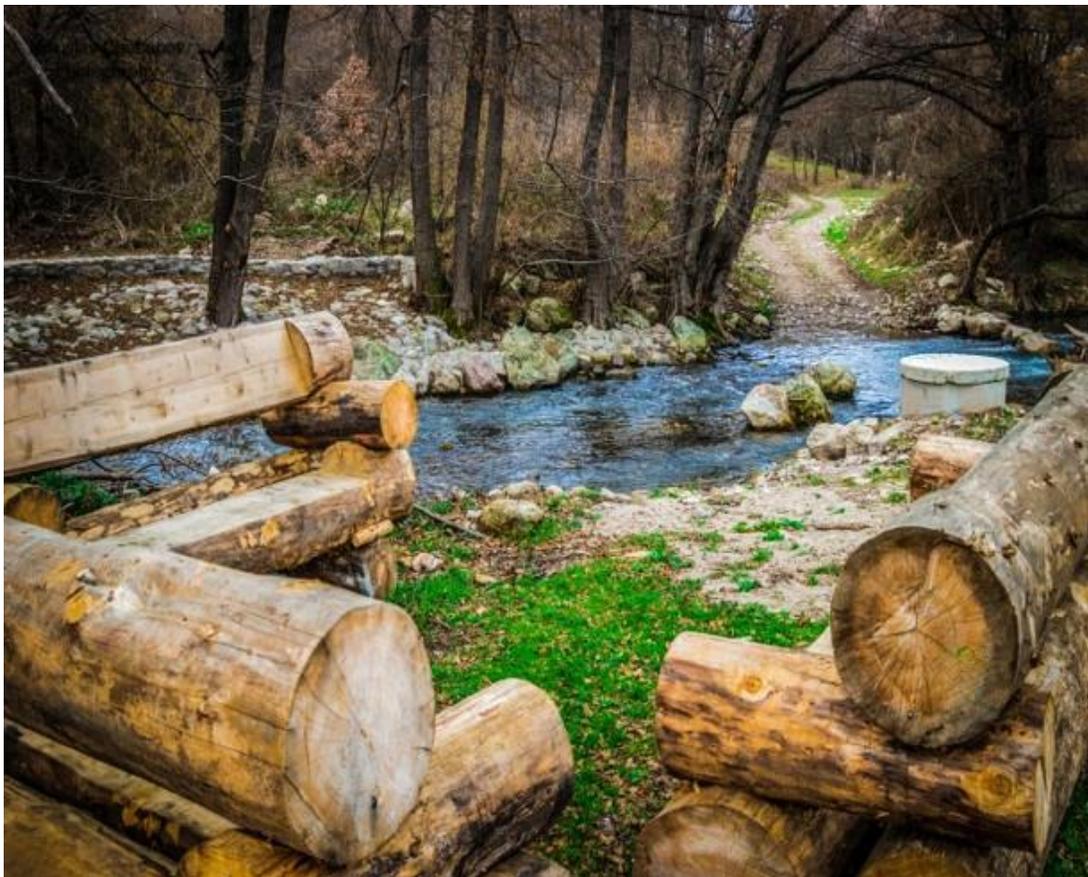
**Mineral Baths** is a national spa resort. The mineral water is hypothermal - 59 ° C and is unique with its chemical structure and healing feature. It treats diseases of the peripheral arteries of organic and functional type, diseases of the musculoskeletal system, peripheral nervous system, dermatological diseases, gynecological diseases and more.



- **Sights** - the **Holy Spirit Fortress**, the foot's print of the **Virgin Mary**, the cult complex **Eagle Rocks** with carved human profiles, the ancient **City of the Sun** near the village of Angel Voyvoda and **Snake City** near the village of Sarnitsa - approximately the same age as Stonehenge.
- **Eco trails** - six have been built, which include important natural and cultural landmarks. Some playgrounds have been built along them, equipped with benches, gazebos and barbecue areas. Most of these sites are located in places with panoramic views of the beautiful forests of the Eastern Rhodopes.
- **Aida Protected Area** - located on the land of the village of Spahievo and has an area of 3.5 hectares. The subject of protection is the remarkable landscape and habitats of rare and vulnerable plant and animal species.
- **Boraka Reserve** - located on the land of the village of Sarnitsa, the reserve has an area of 14.78 hectares. The average age of the trees is between 120 and 150 years.



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#### Natural landmarks **Mineralni Bani Municipality:**

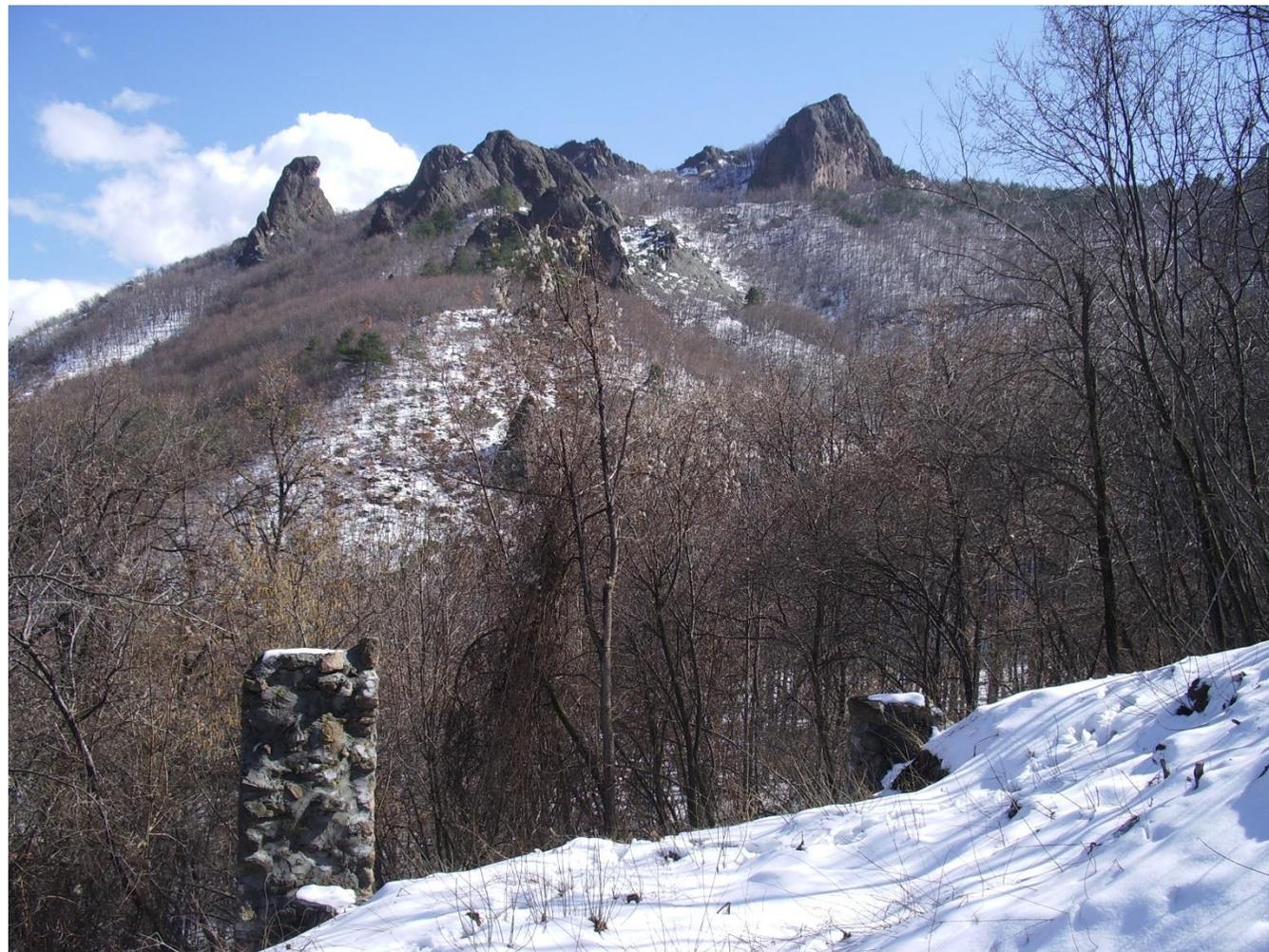
- **Dikilitash** - is located on the land of Sarnitsa village and has an area of 0.2 hectares.
- **Locality of lily of the valley and peony** - located in the Drenaka area on the land of the village of Spahievo with an area of 3 hectares.
- **The reflex rock** - in the land of the village of Bryastovo, occupies an area of 1.5 hectares, it is protected rock formations.
- **Eagle Rock** is in the land of the village of Sarnitsa and has an area of 1.5 hectares. It is a complex of interesting and majestic rocks, some of which reach 30-40 m in height.
- **Pierced stone** - located on the land of the village of Sarnitsa and occupies an area of 1 hectare.
- Niches on **Uludere** (along Harmanliyska River) - complete with a cave. There are dozens of observatories - special sites in hard-to-reach places, which offer a wide panorama. There are also many stairs that start out of nowhere and end nowhere again.



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**Perushtitsa Municipality** is located in a unique natural area. It combines the fertility of the field with the coolness of the mountain, a healthy temperate climate and a beautiful natural view. The region of Perushtitsa is rich in archeological finds.

- **Eco-trail of the Monastery** - a route approximately 16 km long and reaches the **monastery of St. Todor**, the meadows around it and next to an ancient stone fountain in the protected area Peristitsa. A stone **Roman road** leads to the **chapel of St. Petka**, from where he returns to the city. Characteristic of this area are the Black Stork, which nests, and the flora is represented by the unique endemic - Rhodope silivryak. The authentic ritual Bathing is performed around the chapel of St. Petka in the Perushtinska river.





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## Perushtitsa Municipality

- **Eco-trail On the Way of the Heroes** is approximately 16 km long, passes through the Historical Museum, Danovo School, Monument of the Three Generations and reaches **the Genishen area**. Then it goes to **Leshtenska Polyana**, the route goes downhill to **Baten Dam** and returns to Perushtitsa.
- **Young Scouts eco-trail** is approximately 8 km long. It passes through the Historical Museum, Danov School, reaches **the Baten Dam** and returns. The wide meadows around the micro-dam are suitable for sports tournaments, scout camps, monitoring of numerous birds. There is a specially built place for making the traditional for Perushtitsa "**rye**" - a unique dish with its taste.
- **Memorial Monument of The Three Generations**, built on the **historic peak Vlasevitsa** - the place of death of the three parliamentarians from Perushtitsa, who died during the April Uprising. A trestle of stairs leading to the complex starts from the Danovo school. This symbolism expresses the rise of Perushtitsa from the Renaissance to the present day.





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In the **Municipality of Parvomay** there are many good natural resources - diverse terrain, forests, beautiful landscapes, protected areas, preserved biological balance. Safe mountain routes combined with water areas suitable for camping, mountain biking, horseback riding, rural and eco-tourism.



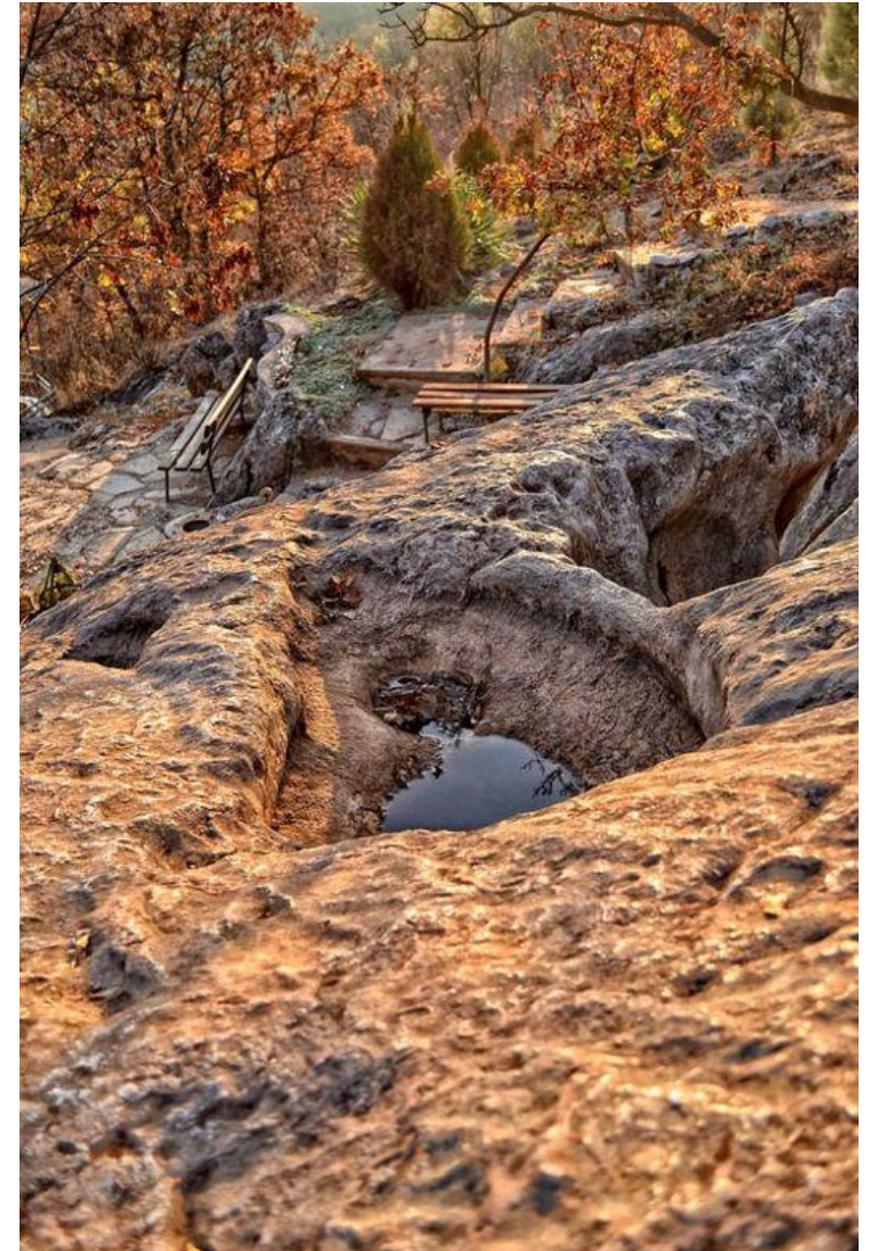
- **Dragoyna Peak** - there is an opportunity to connect this part of the municipality with the already built eco-trails in the municipality of Mineralni Bani.
- Eco-trails - from the village of Bukovo to the **Yellow Cave**.
- From the village of Bukovo to **The Lion** and the **Archaeological Excavations**.



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### **Stara Zagora Municipality:**

- **Stara Zagora Baths** is a spa resort of national importance. It is located 15 km northwest of Stara Zagora, on the southern slopes of Sarnena Sredna Gora. The water has healing properties for diseases of the musculoskeletal system, peripheral nervous system, kidney, urology, gastrointestinal and others. All accommodation here is located in a park environment.
- **Metropolitan Metodiy Kusev Park**, the largest park in Stara Zagora, also known as Ayazmoto. It is located on the southern slopes of Sarnena Sredna Gora. Part of its territory has been declared a monument of park and garden art of national importance. The entrance area of the park is formed around the monument of its creator - Metropolitan Methodius Kusev. Emblematic places here are the central alley with stone steps, the Frogs fountain, the small church of St. Theodore Tyron, the alleys with cypresses, cedars, the Summer Theater and the Alec Corner, the zoo near which are the demonstration center Aul Baga-Tour, a rope park and a hall of laughter.



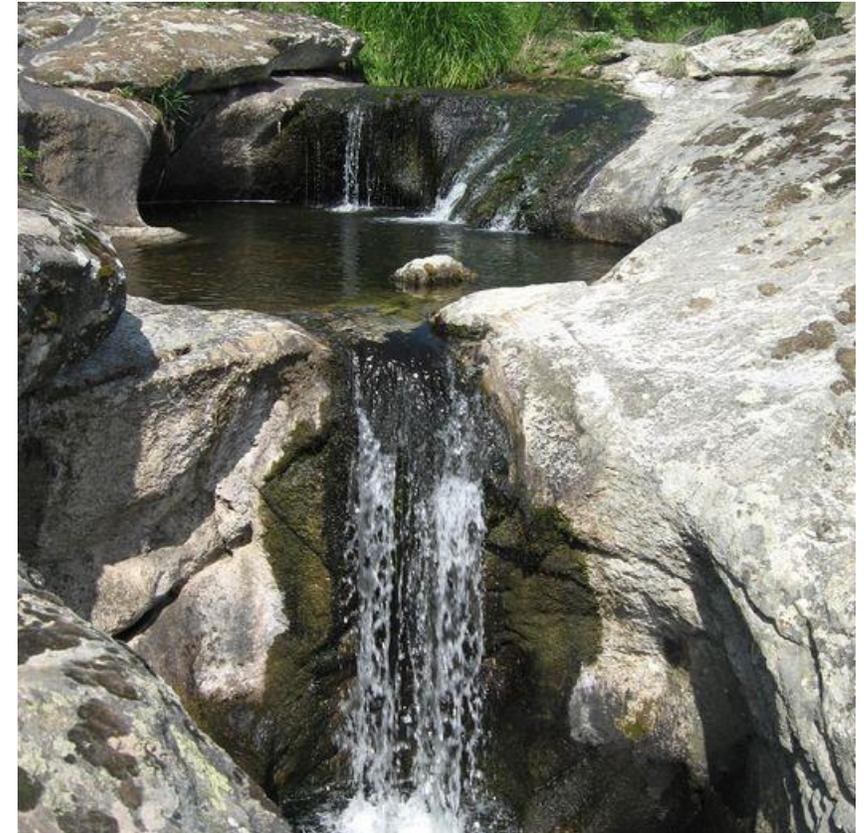


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There are many appropriate conditions in **Topolovgrad Municipality** for the development of rural, ecological and mountain tourism, as well as wonderful conditions for the development of hunting and alternative tourism. Here is a unique combination of centuries-old deciduous forests, meadows, rocks and architectural and natural monuments.

Itineraries:

- Cult Thracian complex **Paleokastro** 3 km west of Topolovgrad with over 150 relief disks on the fortress;
- **Temple of the Sun** - located above the hill between the village of Hlyabovo and the town of Topolovgrad;
- **Holy Trinity Monastery** - located about 6-7 km from Topolovgrad, at the foot of Sakar Mountain, one of the largest monasteries in southern Bulgaria;
- **Rock Christian temples - the Old Church** and the rock church near the village of Matochina;
- **Rock sanctuaries**, better known among which are those in the villages of Oreshnik and Hlyabovo;
- **Ancient and Medieval settlements and fortresses**, better known are those in the Ustrem village, Balgarska Polyana village, Orlov dol village, Svetlina village, Visegrad peak and the Vukelon fortress;





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The tourist resource in the **Harmanli Municipality** is related to the development and supply of cultural tourism, rural tourism, ecotourism, tourist routes and health trails and alternative tourism.

Itineraries:

- Roman road **Via Diagonalis** - one of the main roads that crosses the entire Roman Empire from west to east, connecting Rome with Byzantium.
- **Urban and nearby suburban** - including immovable cultural values in the town of Harmanli and near it: Historical Museum, Vaulted Bridge, Caravanserai, **Church of St. Athanasius** and **the Church of St. Ivan Rilski**, Cultural Center - Harmanli, City Garden Park, Izvora na belonogata, Gormanliyska River Gorge with its natural resources, Eco-trail to **Diado Todor fountain**, waterfall, **Trifoncheto** area with its natural panoramic site and chapel of **St. Tryphon**, Dolmen in the vicinity of Ostar Kamak village.





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## Harmanli Municipality

Itineraries:

- At the foot of **Sakar Mountain** - Thracian necropolis, prehistoric settlement - **Yorgovi Mogili** area, Dolmen - Izvorovo village, **Menhir - Chuchul stone** near Ovcharovo village; Thracian sanctuary **Semercheto**, Dositeevo village; Roman road - **Via Diagonalis, Castra Rubra Fortress**, Orthodox churches, wine cellars, culinary, hunting and cultural tourism in the area.
- Natural sights of **Kyumyurluka** and **Kuru Dere** - areas with natural waterfalls.
- Eco-trail in the protected area **The gorge** is a valley with exceptional natural beauty and a famous place for recreation.





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## Chirpan Municipality

- Tourist trail: Chirpan - Monastery of **St. Athanasius the Great** in the village of Zlatna Livada. The route is 14 km long and at least once a year there is an organized march by the Tourist Association Srednogorets Chirpan on the occasion of the temple holiday (May 2nd) of the monastery. Start: the city stadium on a forest road in the direction of the village of Zetyovo, it passes by lavender fields and pine forest, there are fountains, it is convenient for hiking (4.5 km) and cycling (lasting about an hour).
- Tourist trail: the village of Stoyan Zaimovo - the ruins of the medieval monastery of **St. Panteleimon**. The route is 2 km long, initially along the river, then along a dry ravine, after about 40 minutes of walking in a wooded area you reach the end - the ruins of the medieval monastery of St. Panteleimon.





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## Chirpan Municipality

- Hunting and shooting complex - the village of Zetyovo - trains students, hunters, as well as for sports purposes. It includes a study building and three modules: for discipline Skeet, shooting at "Running Silhouette" and a corridor of 100 meters for a carbine and a pistol. The shooting range is open to all, including Saturday and Sunday.
- Mogilovo Dam - offers excellent conditions for sport fishing. The picturesque nature predisposes to relaxing walks and rest among the wild areas of Sredna Gora. There is a barbecue area and many relaxation areas.





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### **Stara Zagora Municipality - walking routes :**

- Yagoda village - Stara Zagora -  
duration of the tourist transition: 5 hours
- Stara Zagora - Stara Zagora baths -  
duration of the transition: 4 hours and 30 minutes.
- Dalboki village - Morulei hut  
duration of the transition: 2 hours
- Morulei hut - the village of Kolena -  
duration of the transition: 3 hours and 30 minutes
- Stara Zagora baths - Bogorodichna Stepka area - Ostra Mogila  
village - duration of the transition: 2 hours
- Stara Zagora baths - the village of Sulitsa - Stara Zagora baths -  
duration of the transition: 2 hours





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**Plovdiv** - cycling itineraries for slow, green and healthy tourism, in an urban environment on bike lanes with minimal load, merging with the natural environment, positive emotions and relaxation. They are designed in modules, and they can be combined in different ways:

- Hill of the Liberators (Bunardjika) - 15 km, displacement-200m. The hill is a favorite place for excursions of Plovdiv residents, declared a natural landmark.
- Danov Hill (Sahat Tepe) - 10 km, displacement - 100 m. The birds are richly represented along the route.
- By bike and on foot to the Youth Hill - 16 km displacement - 200 m. It is characterized by a wealth of rare and protected plant species.
- Maritsa River - from sunrise to sunset. Natura 2000 - 20 km displacement - 50 m. The rowing canal is the largest sports facility on the Balkan peninsula, where rowing competitions are held.

