



# Prehistory, Thracian megaliths and Sanctuaries in Thracian Tourist Region

A three-day itinerary suitable for Bulgarian and international tourists.

Day 1 **Stara Zagora** (first half of the day)

**Neolithic Dwellings Museum** – a unique archaeological monument, which transfer visitors more than 8,000 years back in time. Remains of a two-storey residential building from the beginning of the 6th millennium BC can be seen in it, the best preserved in Europe from this period. The entire inventory of the dwellings has been preserved - kilns, stone hand mills, ceramic vessels, cult altars. The museum exposition exhibits the best specimens found during archeological excavations in the area - ceramic vessels with rich decoration, jewelry, models of Neolithic houses, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic sculptures.

**Regional History Museum** - the exhibition is located on four levels, traces the millennial history of the city and the region. The first two of them feature exhibits from prehistory and Thracian heritage.

Departure to **Stara Zagora Baths, Virgin Mary's footprint** - the beautiful natural phenomenon is located 1,5 km away from Stara Zagora Baths. An old legend says that this place is a sanctuary associated with pagan religious rituals thousands of years ago. Myths about the area are born because of a bizarre hollow in the rocks, resembling a human footprint. The water collected in it never dries up.



## Departure to **Brezovo Municipality**

**Kutella**, near Rozovec village - this strange cup of giants is located a few kilometers from the village, on the way to Bratan Peak. Its scale is large – a person can safely enter it. Its shape is extremely precise, with very complex workmanship, and there are also handles on the sides.

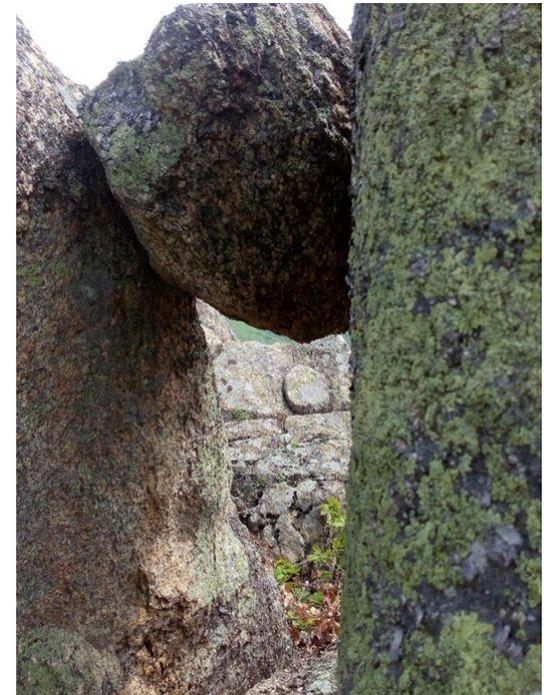
**Pravite kamani (Straight stones)** - the megalith is a pair of parallel vertical stone slabs. The passage formed between the two stone slabs is about 100 cm wide. The northern stone slab is 5 m high and the southern one is approximately 4 m high. Both slabs are about 4 m wide at the base and about 1 m thick.





**The Sun Gate** is associated with the cult of the ancient Thracians to the sun. Astronomically, The Sun Gate of Rozovets is oriented in the days of the equinox, as in these days, according to the ancient Thracians, when the sun beam passes through the door and the sun disc shines, a corridor connecting the world of the living opens.

**The Slab Dolmen** near Zlatosel is the largest megalithic facility of its kind. The monument is located on one of the southern peaks of Sredna Gora above the village of Zlatosel. The roof slab of the facility has an area of over 25 sq m. The dolmen is an evidence of advanced astronomical knowledge of the ancient inhabitants of the region. It is considered that it used to be a very early (at least from 2,000 BC) family tomb of a Thracian royal family or of a local paradinastic genus.



Departure to **Chirpan Municipality** (30 min)  
Lunchtime



**Gema-World Paleontological Museum** in Chirpan traces flora, fauna and human history of the lands of Chirpan as the earliest paleontological exhibits are dated back to 290 million years. It contains over 5000 exhibits collected for over 60 years, representing a variety of fossils from different eras. Here is the world-famous find of a tooth from a prehistoric man (hominid) from 7.2 million years ago, as well as the best preserved skull of a deinoterium in the world.

**Karasura** - archaeological site, near Rupkite village. This place holds unique historical evidence of life from the Neolithic (IV millennium BC) to the late Middle Ages (14th century). During the Roman era, there was a significant settlement life in the area where temples of the healer god Asklepius are found, of the God of Underground wealth - Pluto, and of Apollo, the chief god who according to one inscription, bears the Thracian nickname Dearrenus.



## Day 2 Departure to **Parvomay Municipality**

**The black rock (Kara kaya)**- carved with about twenty niches and tint with iron ore, sprouts off the rock in dark colors. This is the reason for its name. On top of it there are carved cult wells and interesting signs. These lands have been inhabited since ancient times. The sanctuary complex, located near the Bukovo village, includes several rock massifs with carved trapezoidal niches dating back to the late Bronze Age and the early Iron Age.

Departure to **Mineral Baths Municipality** (30 min.)

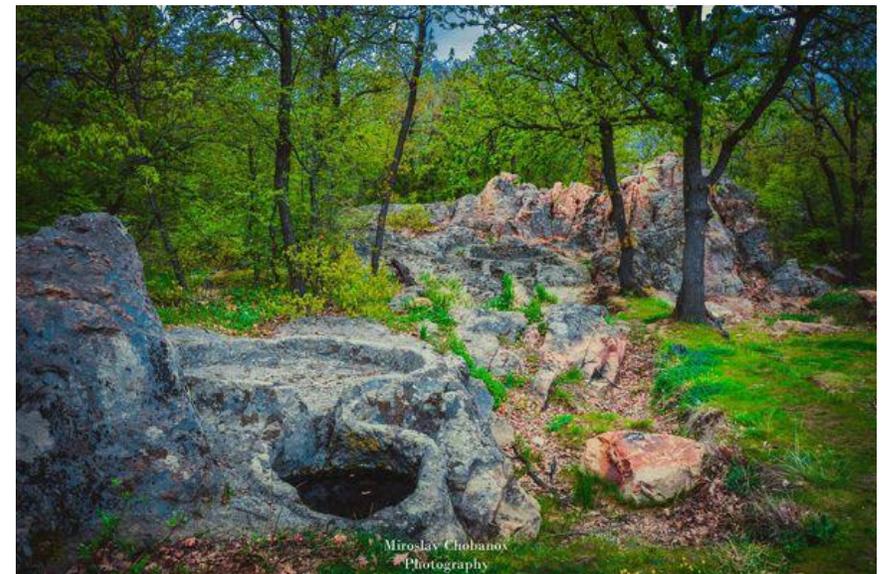
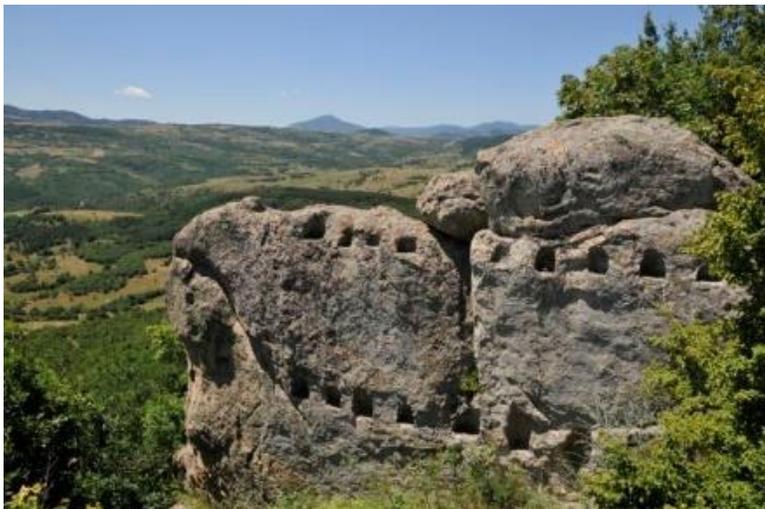




**Hasara Thracian cult complex** (The City of the Sun, near Angel Voyvoda village) - one of the largest in Bulgaria, located on a rocky peak - Asara. On its range there are traces of a powerful fortress wall and over 50 unique niches on the rocks. A rock pool was formed in the approach, the facility probably served as an altar. The Sharapans, both on Perperikon and elsewhere in the Eastern Rhodopes, are stone troughs that have been associated with Thracian rituals since the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages.

**Kaleto Sarnitsa** – ceramic fragments of 1,000 BC were found, both from the Roman era and the Middle Ages. Here a rare valuable document was also found - a military diploma from Emperor Elagabal from the 7th January 221, which is stored in the former Palace Museum in Vienna.

**Sharapans** – are rock hollows made by humans 2600-2800 years ago, dated around the 8th-6th century BC. Each one of them consists a small and large pool. The name sharapana comes from the Turkish word sharap and means wine – presumably they reworked grapes to wine in them. It is believed that the sharpan is associated with the cult of the god Dionysus.



## Departure to **Dimitrovgrad Municipality**



The archaeological site **Sanctuary of the Nymphs and Aphrodite** is near Kasnakovo village. It is the best preserved Thracian sanctuary in Bulgaria. It is erected on the ruins of an ancient cult center, which arose around karst mineral springs in the early Iron Age, impressive for its beautiful architectural layout and famous for its healing power. The ancient consecrated place, built in the 2nd – 4th century AD, is a small part of the large mansion of the Roman emperor of Thracian origin Titus Flavius.

On an area of about 15 acres a large architectural complex of buildings with different plans and functions is located. Besides the Nymphaeum there are 2 residential buildings and rich interior decoration with frescoes, marble finishes, architectural details and mosaics. In one of them parts of two marble statues were found - of Satyr and the priestess of Isis.

The site is considered one of the most famous monuments of Roman architecture – aristocratic villas for rest and entertainment.

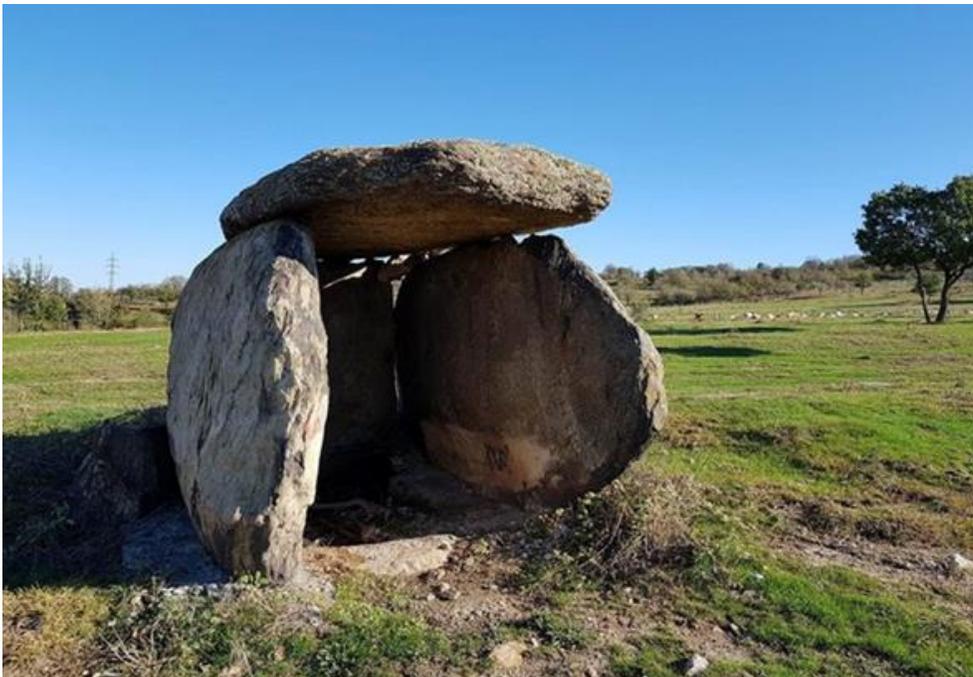


## Departure to **Harmanli Municipality**

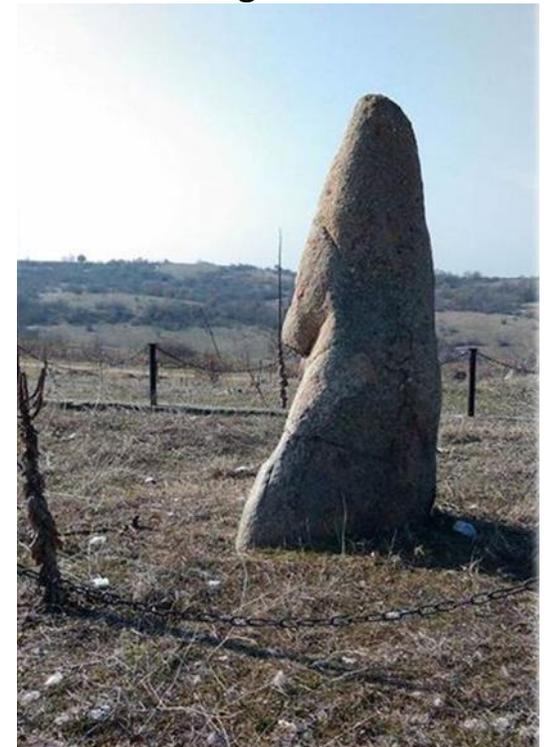
**Menhir Chuchul Stone**, near Ovcharovo village - the stone is 2.20 m high trachite column of irregular conical shape. It is a cult monument from the Early Iron Age (I thousand BC) associated with the Thracian religion.

**The Stone House Dolmen**, near Ostar Kamak town – it has only three of the walls preserved. The Dolmens are remarkable monuments of Thracian culture and are distributed only in Strandzha, Sakar and very little in the Eastern Rhodopes.

**Dolmen** near Izvorovo village – a single chamber is preserved, without front side, facade and mound, with a surviving lid.



Dinner and overnight in Harmanli  
Departure to **Topolovgrad Municipality**  
Day 3



**Nichevi Chairi Dolmen** - the facility was built at the beginning of the Iron Age and was used continuously until the 6th century BC. It is assumed that the dolmen played the role of primitive heroon (a shrine dedicated to an ancient Greek or Roman hero), a place where the cult of the divine deceased was confessed.

**Paleokastro Megalith** – Thracian fortress, built at the beginning of I millennium BC and supposedly Thracian Sunny Sanctuary.

**Rock sanctuary Kamenna Mogila (Stone Mound)** near Hlyabovo village - it is assumed that here an ancient Sanctuary was located. A large number of Thracian, Macedonian, Celtic and Roman coins and fragments of household ceramics are found. The top is a stone pile of incorrect messy bizarre granite blocks.

