

The Valleys of the Thracian Kings and Roses

About

A sightseeing trip to the history-rich town of Kazanlak - a place where the Valley of the Roses and the Valley of the Thracian Kings overlap. We will visit its archeological landmarks, including the Golyama Kosmatka tomb and the Kazanlak tomb – a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and explore Kazanlak's Rose Museum where we'll learn about the history and traditions surrounding the Bulgarian oil-giving rose.

Just a short distance from there is the Shipka monastery, notable for its architectural style that is unlike any other monastery in Bulgaria. From there we'll visit the Shipka monument of the Liberation and move onto the Buzludzha monument.

Highlights

- Explore the Golyama Kosmatka tomb, circa 5th century BC – the resting place of King Seuthes III
- See the Kazanlak Tomb UNESCO World Heritage Site and its exceptional ceiling mural
- Delve into the world of Bulgarian rose oil production at Kazanlak's Rose Museum
- Visit the Shipka Monastery – a colorful work of art and architecture, unique in style in the territory of Bulgaria
- Learn about the Bulgarian rose at the stunning Damascena Ethnographic Complex

Description

This trip takes us to the city of Kazanlak – a place where the Valley of the Roses and the Valley of the Thracian Kings overlap. It is a historic center surrounded by several major archeological sites. Particularly important are the Thracian tombs in the area. There are around 60,000 burial mounds scattered across the territory of Bulgaria, only 1000 of which have been uncovered and studied. What is known as the “Valley of the Thracian Kings” is where the rulers of these ancient tribes were buried with their horse and items they might need in the afterlife.

The Golyama Kosmatka tomb near Kazanlak belonged to the Thracian Tsar Sevt III. The ruler's golden crown, a golden kilix (a wine glass), knee-pads and a helmet were discovered

there. We'll be able to explore the interior and see its architecture up close. The Golyama Kosmatka is a part of the Valley of the Thracian Kings, which also includes the Kazanlak tomb – our next stop once we drive to the city.

The Kazanlak Tomb (circa 4th-3rd century BC) is one of the most significant monuments of Thracian culture in the country, included in UNESCO's list of global cultural inheritance. The remains of a man and a woman were buried inside. This tomb is known for the remarkable wall paintings covering the walls of the corridor and the dome ceiling. The murals depict scenes from the life of the Thracian ruler buried inside the tomb.

The rich history of Kazanlak is not limited to ancient times. It has retained its significance throughout the centuries, and to this day it is an important cultural center. The Historical Museum of Kazanlak is one of the oldest museums in the country. The "Rose Museum" exposition, part of the Historical museum and held in a separate building in Rosarium Park, introduces the rich history of Bulgaria's rose oil production. It contains over 15,000 exhibits pertaining to rose oil. You can also visit an Ethnographic complex in a separate building which shows what rural life in the area looked like in the past and buy rose souvenirs from the gift shop.

The next stop lies a bit outside the borders of the city. Located to the north-west of Kazanlak is the Shipka monastery. The complex is notable for its main church, which is considered a cultural landmark of national importance. The Memorial Temple of the Birth of Christ is built in the style of 17th century Moscow churches, richly ornamented both on the outside and the inside. It is a memorial honoring the Bulgarian, Russian and Ukrainian soldiers that died in the Liberation War of 1878.

The Damascena Ethnographic Complex is located a few kilometers away from the town of Kazanlak and is the last stop of our tour for the day.

Damascena gives you the chance to experience the full range of rose products Bulgaria has to offer. You'll learn about the techniques used to create the Bulgarian rose products, historically and today. You'll have the chance to taste rose jam, rose honey, rose liquor and rose brandy. You can sample some of the variety of rose-derived essential oils. If you wish to take some of these exquisite products with you as a souvenir or as gifts, you can find all you need at the gift shop. The complex itself is part of that experience – the authentic traditional architecture and gorgeous garden, along with the delicious local cuisine served at its restaurant, make it a joy to visit and a great place to ease you into the world of Bulgarian rose oil.

Price per person

- For a group of 4 or more: 55 €
- For a group of 2-3: 75 €
- For a solo tourist: 85 €

The price includes

- Professional tour guide
- Car transfers

The price does not include

- Lunch
- Entrance fees

Notes

Visitors are advised to wear comfortable shoes.