

## SAMPLE MOUNTAIN BIKE TOUR

**Duration:** 7 nights / 8 days

**Activity level:** MODERATE

Exploring Rhodope Mountain by bike, you can cover vast part of its territory while building at the same time a close relationship to the terrain, landscapes and the people living there. Rhodope is mostly a human mountain mild and inviting, enchanting with its flowing hills, gorges and caves. Its spirit is the one of communication and diversity. The mountain population is a mixture between Bulgarian Christians, Bulgarian Muslims - Pomaks and Turks. They have lived together peacefully for centuries. You can witness here still preserved folklore practices and it is very likely to enjoy a spontaneous good hearted invitation in a local's home. Countless legends connected to the ancient Thracians and the Myth of Orpheus and Eurydice are being told by the welcoming inhabitants. Rhodope is also the cradle of the Bulgarian bagpipe tradition, since its vast green landscape allows the sound to travel and spread its message.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 3 different Rhodopean dam lakes each of them with a distinctive beauty
- The Trigrad Gorge a canyon of 350 m (1,150 ft.) high marble rocks
- Several caves, among which the 530 meters (1,740 ft.) deep Devil Trout's cave, impressing with its huge underground waterfall
- Shiroka Luka and Gela architectural and folklore reserves with preserved national revival architecture and famous about the annual bagpipe festival
- Kayaking at "Studen Kladenets" Reservoir
- Caving in Trigrad
- Multicultural local communities and authentic enquiries
- Lush, rolling countryside and breathtaking views
- Nice hotels with a pool and/or a spa center for an optimal muscle relaxation
- Unbelievably delicious cuisine made from local, home-grown ingredients
- Local wellbeing herbal recipes and teas

## ITINERARY

### Day 1 Shiroka polyana water reservoir – 17 km

We will start from Sofia and head to Shiroka polyana water reservoir at 1500 m altitude. The area around the water reservoir offers a number of picturesque bays, sunny meadows and century-old forests, which have been the reason for the designation of several protected areas. The shape of the water reservoir looks like it comprises several small reservoirs with different walls. This illusion is caused by the rugged terrain Shiroka polyana's bed, comprising several mountain ravines. Once we arrive at Romantika Forest Holiday Village we will go for a round trip following the dam shores: <http://www.vsromantica.com>

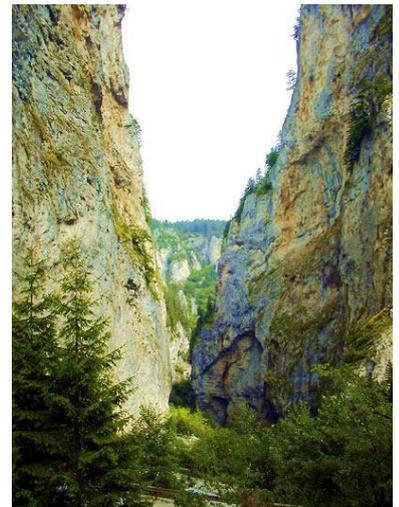


# adventure & GUSTO



## Day 2 Shiroka polyana water reservoir to Trigrad village – 47 km

Today we will follow picturesque path about 47 km which pass true magnificent old pine forest and head to lovely village of Trigrad. The village is famous for its natural landmarks and the hospitality of the local people. It has been preserved intact for centuries, left far from the busy and noisy modern world. Trigrad retreat and wellness hotel will make our stay with great hospitality and delicious Rhodope meals. <http://www.trigradhotel.com/>



## Day 3 Trigradsko Zhdrelo (Trigrad Gorge)

Today we will visit the famous Trigrad Gorge. It is a 7-kilometer defile, beneath towering marble cliffs cut over millions of years by the Trigrad River. The gorge is a protected area with numerous caves. The Devil's Throat Cave is one of one of the country's most impressive caves, in part because of its huge waterfall fed by the river – a 42-meter drop. Today you can combine biking with caving and horse riding

## Day 4 Trigrad to Gela village – 38 km

We start with a ride to the Chairski lakes, a protected area of seven glacial lakes, surrounded by lush meadows and century old spruce forests. A few more kilometers of climbing will take us to a beautiful spot with a great view of the highest part of the Rhodopes - Mt Perelik 2195 m. We pass through the picturesque village of Mugla. Once we arrive at gorgeous village of Gela we will be welcomed in Hotel Gela with a regional lamb dish: <http://hotelgela.com/>



## Day 5 Gela to Belintash

Our day starts in the village of Gela. We are surrounded by open meadows filled with wildflowers, grazing cows and century-old, untouched villages where life still follows the rhythm of the seasons. After a bagpipe concert, in the middle of a huge highland meadow a gently descending path winds us through all the way to the town of Shiroka Lûka, known across the country for its famous folklore music academy. After lunch we continue with transfer to the famous rock formation Belintash. We will stay in an old style guest house: <http://rodopskaprikazka.com/>



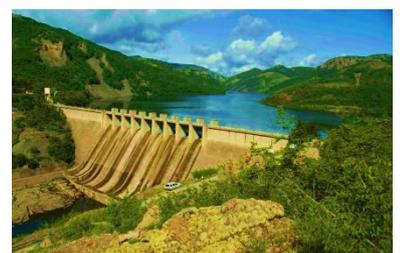
## Day 6 Heading south. Belintash to Kardzhali reservoir – 42 km

Today we jump on our mountain bikes and continue towards Kardzhali reservoir. The great bays, peninsulas and banks form a great place for multi-sport activities. The rock phenomenon The Loop has a huge gap in the middle and offers magnificent view to the lake and the nearby villages. There are numerous ruins of ancient fortresses spread around the reservoir. We will sleep and enjoy our stay at Rocca Resort Hotel & SPA: <http://www.roccaresort.com/>



## Day 7 – Day of kayak at “Studen Kladenets” Reservoir

The last day of our trip is dedicated to “Studen Kladenets” Reservoir. The rocky area around the reservoir attracts protected species such as: vulture, eagle and falcon. The reservoir is inhabited by many water birds such as: grebe, heron, seagull and others. The area is excellent for water sports and we will enjoy kayaking following the beautiful curves of the reservoir.



## Day 8 – Transfer to Sofia