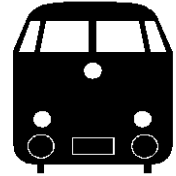


THE BULGARIAN RAILTOUR

(A NINE DAY, TOUR BY RAIL)

Saturday 30th June to Sunday 8th July, 2012



ALL INCLUSIVE FARE – Only £457.50

(this Tour includes your rail travel)

Hotel Single Room Supplement - £120.00 (Optional)

Upgrade to First Class Rail Travel - £60.00 (Optional)

Please book by 20 April, with a Minimum Deposit of £115

The balance must be paid by 18 May

We are delighted to be able to offer this tour at just £6.65 more than the 2010 running, considering this year there is an additional day, and two extra days of rail travel.

This will be STARS second expedition to Bulgaria and having learned much from our first foray we now bring you an exceptional tour. This year we cover all the major locations in the west of the country basing ourselves at Sofia, Stara Zagora and Gorna Oryahovitsa, in order to get to some of those destinations we failed to reach in 2010. The Bulgarian rail timetable is sparse to say the least, the distances we will travel seem longer due to the slower journey times, but by moving across the country we will be able to maximise the locations visited and locomotive sightings. This will however mean some early starts and late finishes. In particular we aim to visit Ruse, which houses part of the national collection and some of the locations where locomotives are understood to be stored including Kalojanovetz and Asenovo, together with the southern border locations of Kulata and Svilengrad. But beware; Bulgaria in the summer is very hot and quite often very wet, typical of central European countries. You will need to travel as lightly as possible but prepared for all eventualities. One thing is guaranteed you won't be disappointed if you join STARS on this tour.

We are offering an all-inclusive fare for this tour which **includes eight days Standard Class Rail travel** (with an option to upgrade to First) but, as always, we are unable to arrange your flights - that is something you must do for yourselves. The Hungarian low-cost airline, Wizz, fly to and from Luton, to Sofia.

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Day One - Saturday 30th June

At the time of writing there are also morning flights available from Gatwick and Heathrow which should ensure an early afternoon arrival. Once checked into the hotel we shall make our way to the Central station and make a late afternoon visit to **Vasil Markov Depot**. Thereafter the remainder of the time will be free to observe the comings and goings at the station.

Day Two - Sunday 1st July

An early start today as we head south to the Border with Greece at Kulata. As you would expect at a border yard locomotives exchange so don't be surprised if we see the odd Greek locomotive. On route we break our journey to visit **Pernik Depot** before continuing to **Kulata Depot** located in a triangle of lines south of the station. With a few hours to while away we then return north but stop off at **Dupnista Depot** before a late evening arrival back in Sofia

Day Three - Monday 2nd July

Time to change locations and we travel to Stara Zagora where we will stay for the next three nights. Our lunchtime arrival will enable us to store our suitcases in the hotel and then visit **Stara Zagora Depot**. We then travel to the first of the storage locations and one that we could only glimpse through the overgrowth on the last visit. **Kalojanovets depot** will be our late afternoon visit which will no greatly doubt please the steam fans.

Day Four - Tuesday 3rd July

The start of a very long and interesting day but you do have the chance of a lie in! We begin with the short run north to **Tulovo Depot** before returning to Stara Zagora for our train to Dimtrovgrad. If however you wish to opt out of the first depot visit we will be passing the depot as we transfer to Gorna Orjahovica in two days time. We will visit **Dimtrovgrad Depot** at lunch time and then make the long journey south to **Svilengrad Depot**. Svilengrad is on the border of Greece and Turkey and the amount of time we will spend there (due to the timetable) makes it possible that we shall see locomotives from both neighbouring countries. We will arrive back late and so you will need to take plenty of provisions to last the day!

Day Five - Wednesday 4th July

A much shorter day as we begin with a visit to **Septemvri Depot**. The narrow gauge line to Dobrinishte is due for closure, but at the time of writing negotiations are taking place with potential operators. If the line is open and you wish to travel on it then the choice is yours but the journey time is an eight hour round trip so you would forgo our next visit to **Plovdiv Depot**. Here you may choose to spend some time on the station and return a little later if the exertions of the previous day are not demanding an early night.

Day Six - Thursday 5th July

Time to move on again and the cross country journey to Gorna Oryahovica. On arrival we will once again book into the hotel and then visit **Gorna Oryahovica Depot**. If we have time and trains are running to time we will visit the small **Levski Depot**. However we must be back in time for our train to **Asenovo Depot** where we find the next of the reserves. Our return to Gorna Oryahovica is delayed by the timetable but hopefully there will be enough passing traffic to entertain us until our evening return.

Day Seven - Friday 6th July

Our final day and the one that has been greatly anticipated. We begin early as we head north to the Danube and Ruse. We stop just south of our destination to visit **Dolapite Depot** before continuing to the border town. In **Ruse** we will visit the **Depot** and **Workshops** and also the **National Transport Museum** on the Danube. We will spend most of the day here to ensure we cover all possible locations. Bulmarket operate predominantly around Ruse with a fleet of Bulgarian, Danish and Romanian locomotives servicing the local industrial facilities and if we can find any local stabling points we'll visit those too. Our return to Gorna Oryahovica is late evening.

Day Eight - Saturday 7th July

The time has come to return to Sofia. On the way we will stop off at **Mezdra depot** and thence to the Hotel. Here we will conclude our visits with the **Electric Depot at Podujane**.

Day Nine - Sunday 8th July

The final day and hopefully the end of an excellent tour. If you have an afternoon flight you may consider a journey out to **Pirdop** to see the class 87's in action. If you are also thinking of spending a few more days in Sofia then we will gladly arrange accommodation for you.

**Remember - Do Not Book Your Flight
Until We have Confirmed The Tour As Running**