

Bulgaria

RHODOPE MOUNTAINS & BLACK SEA

LIMOSA HOLIDAYS | TOUR INFO PACK



Male Pied Wheatears establish territories each spring along the limestone 'steppe' of the Black Sea coast © Brian Small, Limosa

2019 **Sunday 12th - Tuesday 21st May (10 days)**
2020 **Sunday 10th - Tuesday 19th May (10 days)**
Small group tour with Richard Thaxton & local guide

Bulgaria is one of Europe's loveliest and least spoiled countries - and its birdlife is prolific. So much so that our bird list for this extraordinary tour typically runs out at 200 or more species! Our spring circuit will take you from the scenic Rhodope Mountains, east to the Black Sea coastal wetlands and the River Danube - all areas that are outstanding for birds. Regular tour highlights include Dalmatian Pelican, Levant Sparrowhawk, Pied and Isabelline Wheatears, Paddyfield and Olive-tree Warblers, Western Rock Nuthatch, Sombre Tit, Semi-collared Flycatcher and Rosy Starling among a long list of specialities!

- Brilliant birding in one of Europe's least spoiled countries
- 'Timeless' countryside that's amazingly rich in birds, butterflies and wildflowers
- Lesser Spotted Eagle, Levant Sparrowhawk and Lesser Kestrel among numerous birds of prey
- Long list of Balkans specialities, from White and Dalmatian Pelicans to Semi-collared Flycatcher
- Olive-tree and Paddyfield Warblers, Sombre Tit, Rosy Starling, Black-headed Bunting
- Small group tour - maximum 10 participants
- Expertly led by Limosa's Richard Thaxton and an English-speaking Bulgarian bird tour guide

What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader
- English-speaking Bulgarian ornithologist guide
- Flights - outbound London-Sofia, returning Bucharest-London, nonstop with British Airways
- 9 nights hotel accommodation in Bulgaria
- All main meals - with drinking water provided during the day
- Minibus transport
- All excursions, entry fees, local guides, tour based tips and taxes

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Outline Itinerary

- Day 1:** Fly London Heathrow-Sofia. Afternoon transfer south to our first hotel. Night Satovcha
- Days 2-3:** Trigrad Gorge and the Rhodope Mountains. Krumovgrad (2 nts)
- Days 4-5:** We head east to explore the bird-rich wetlands of Black Sea coast. Pomorie (2 nts)
- Days 6-7:** Birding the Black Sea coast, north to Lake Durankulak. Kavarna (2 nts)
- Days 8-9:** Cape Kaliakra, River Danube & Lake Srebarna. Vetren (2 nts)
- Day 10:** Nova Cherna marshes and cross the Danube into Romania. Fly Bucharest-London Heathrow

Tour Overview

Although now a fully-fledged member of the EU, Bulgaria remains one of the least visited corners of Europe. Birds are abundant, the countryside is unspoilt and this beautiful country is rightly recognised as one of the continent's most exciting birding venues - we regularly see 200 or more species on this extraordinary tour! Flanked by the Black Sea to the east and the broad sweep of the mighty River Danube in the north, not only do huge numbers of migrants funnel through Bulgaria each spring but its amazing birdlife has a definite 'eastern' flavour.

From Sofia, our spring birdwatching tour to Bulgaria travels first to the picturesque eastern Rhodope Mountains, close to the Greek frontier. Griffon Vulture, Long-legged Buzzard and Western Rock Nuthatch await our discovery here. Black Storks and locally rare Egyptian Vultures also nest on the cliffs, Chukars chuckle as they forage amongst the crags and Eastern Subalpine Warblers sing from scrubby slopes. With luck, we may find Wallcreeper in the region's limestone gorges, where Alpine Swifts nest. Aside from the birds, these lovely hills are simply brimming with plants and butterflies.

Leaving the mountains behind, we continue east towards Bulgaria's Black Sea coast, pausing as we go to search for tricky Balkans specialities such as Masked Shrike, Eastern Orphean

Warbler and Eastern Olivaceous Warbler. Eastern Imperial Eagles nest in poplars close to open Souslik fields, White Storks share their nests with gangs of noisy Spanish Sparrows and roadside wires can be peppered with Black-headed Buntings, Bee-eaters and Lesser Grey Shrikes. Another special highlight on all our recent tours here has been our visit to the Lesser Kestrel breeding colony project near Levka.

Of international standing, wetlands fringing Bulgaria's Black Sea coast hold the promise of Great White Pelican, Little Bittern, Ferruginous Duck, Pygmy Cormorant and the sought-after Paddyfield Warbler. Inland, the thickly wooded valleys and rugged limestone hills are the haunt of Lesser Spotted Eagle, Levant Sparrowhawk and Semi-collared Flycatcher, while 'edge of range' Pied and Isabelline Wheatears, and Rosy Starling are to be looked for on jutting coastal headlands and Yelkouan Shearwater is possible offshore.

A May visit also offers exciting opportunities to find migrating waders at the coast before our route swings back inland, across the rolling steppe of Dobruja, to the fertile valley of the River Danube. Here, wonderful Lake Srebarna is a World Heritage Site, of prime importance for its breeding colony of rare Dalmatian Pelicans.

Our tour concludes with two nights at Pelican Lodge in Vetren, allowing us both the chance to explore the Srebarna and Nova Cherna wetlands in a more thorough and relaxed way, as well as dramatically reducing our return journey time as we loop north to Bucharest for our flight home (rather than making the long haul back to Sofia).

Full of eastern promise (and with some surprisingly good local wines!), our spring tour to Bulgaria is sure to surprise and delight for the timeless countryside of the Balkans is simply bursting with birds.

Our May 2019 and 2020 tours will be Limosa's 39th and 41st visits to Bulgaria, as well as guide Richard Thaxton's fourth and fifth trips there. We shall be accompanied throughout our stay by Professor Lyubomir Profirov, an experienced, English-speaking Bulgarian ornithologist and bird tour guide working for our specialist ground agents.

Daily Itinerary

Day 1

FLY SOFIA, TRANSFER TO SATOVCHA

Our spring birdwatching tour to Bulgaria begins with British Airways morning flight from London Heathrow to Sofia, the Bulgarian capital. Early afternoon arrival in Sofia, where we'll be welcomed by our local guide and set off east through a landscape of rolling farmland.

The journey to our first hotel takes 3-4 hours, but we will also make one important stop along the way for an excellent chance of hearing Corncrake - and maybe even seeing one, if we are lucky! The likes of Ortolan Bunting, Barred Warbler and Red-backed Shrike should ensure a fine introduction to Balkan birdlife.

Turning south into the picturesque Rhodope Mountains, close to the border with northern Greece, we pass through high forest to arrive at our first hotel in time for dinner this evening. The alpine resort of Satovcha will be our base for an overnight stay. *Night Satovcha*

Days 2 - 3

TRIGRAD GORGE & EASTERN RHODOPE MOUNTAINS

The conifer-clad slopes at Satovcha provide a scenic backdrop for a first pre-breakfast stroll. Serins may 'serenade' us outside our hotel, where Pallid Swift, Firecrest, Crested Tit, Black Redstart and Crossbill can also be found.

Leaving Satovcha, we head to Trigrad gorge - an area that right up until the early 1990s was out of bounds to both foreigners and Bulgarians alike. Following the course of the fast-flowing Trigrad River, this spectacular valley gradually narrows into a dramatic steep-walled chasm. Alpine Swifts and Crag Martins nest on the sheer cliff faces and Dippers bob beside the river far below.

We will no doubt be distracted by the plethora of interesting butterflies - Scarce Swallowtail, Berger's Clouded Yellow, Eastern Wood White and Black-veined White possible here in May. In the past, we have sometimes been lucky to find the elusive Wallcreeper too, flicking its wings like an outsize, crimson-winged butterfly.

Still with a reasonable distance to travel to reach our next hotel, we leave the Trigrad area and continue east, deeper into the Rhodope range - a rugged upland landscape dominated by the remnants of extinct volcanoes.

Our destination for these two nights is the town of Krumovgrad, on the banks of the beautiful Krumovitza River. From our hotel we have the opportunity to go out in the evening to look for Scops Owl, and also to enjoy a morning walk enriched by the songs of Turtle Doves, Cuckoos, Hoopoes, Eastern Olivaceous Warblers and fluting Golden Orioles. Hawfinch and Lesser Grey Shrikes often breed in the poplars.

The eastern Rhodope are well known as one of Europe's most important regions for birds of prey. There are Egyptian and Griffon Vultures to watch for here, and we sometimes spot a lone Black Vulture, too. Black Storks nest on the cliff faces above the Krumovitza River, and Western Rock Nuthatches also breed nearby. Chukars chuckle as they forage amongst the crags, with handsome Black-eared Wheatears for company.

In the valley bottoms, exotic Bee-eaters and Rollers, Lesser Grey and Red-backed Shrikes, and Black-headed and Cirl Buntings add more than a splash of Mediterranean colour to our birding, as two of Europe's loveliest songsters - Nightingale and Woodlark - provide the soundtrack. There are also plenty of birds of more subtle attraction, including Eastern Orphean, Eastern Olivaceous and Barred Warblers, and the elusive Sombre Tit.

Aside from the birds, these lovely mountains are rich in wildflowers and butterflies, including the localised and beautiful Eastern Festoon. *Two nights Krumovgrad*

Days 4 - 5

EAST TO THE BLACK SEA COAST

Leaving Krumovgrad, we have a quite bit of ground to cover today as we complete the journey east from the mountains to Bulgaria's Black Sea coast. But there will be plenty to watch for along the way! One special bird to keep a keen eye open for as we push on east is Rosy Starling, an irruptive Asian species that reaches Bulgaria in small numbers most years.

The open cornfields may produce a pair or two of Montagu's Harriers and the roadside wires may be peppered with Black-headed and Corn Buntings, and Lesser Grey Shrikes. The main highway is remarkably traffic-free and passes through some surprisingly extensive stretches of oak woodland - a habitat favoured by a number of sought-after localised specialities including Levant Sparrowhawk, Eastern Orphee and Eastern Bonelli's Warblers and Ortolan Bunting.

Our picnic today may be taken at a newly established breeding colony of Lesser Kestrels, where a mix of wild and hand-reared birds fly about the building affording excellent views. Our visit here has been a highlight on all our recent tours. After lunch, we'll have a try for Olive-tree Warbler and Masked Shrike - both can be elusive and the shrike can mimic the warbler! This promises to be a memorable day for raptors: the European Souselik - a burrowing ground squirrel found in open grassland here - is high on the menu for a number of birds of prey including Lesser Spotted and Eastern Imperial Eagles. With any luck we might also pick up our first Red-footed Falcons on the approach to Burgas and our hotel for two nights in the nearby coastal resort of Pomorie.

Burgas may be a major port on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast, but its wetlands support a variety of birdlife matched by few other areas in Europe - as we'll soon discover next day! Little Bittern, Squacco Heron, Glossy Ibis and Spoonbill are among a host of breeding reedbed birds, with Common and Ruddy Shelducks, Garganey and Black-winged Stilt on the lagoons and Great White Pelicans coasting overhead. Yellow-legged Gulls are much in evidence, and as we sift through them in search of the less common Slender-billed and Mediterranean Gulls, we might also see a lumbering White-tailed Eagle flapping heavily across the lake, putting white-winged Ferruginous Ducks to flight. *Two nights Pomorie*

Days 6 - 7

KAVARNA & THE BLACK SEA COAST

We will spend the first part of day six exploring the salt pans at Pomorie. Flocks of migrating waders pause here on the journey north to their Arctic breeding grounds, with the likes of Little Stint, Ruff and Curlew Sandpiper looking

particularly attractive in full breeding plumage. By searching carefully we might be lucky to locate something rarer in their midst: perhaps a twirling Red-necked Phalarope or Broad-billed Sandpiper - and we have seen Terek Sandpiper!

Leaving Pomorie, we follow the Black Sea coast north towards Bulgaria's border with Romania. A hinterland of thickly wooded valleys is the haunt of Lesser Spotted Eagle, European Honey Buzzard, Levant Sparrowhawk, Icterine Warbler and other 'eastern' delights. The forest at Goritsa has a healthy population of woodpeckers, with Grey-headed and Middle Spotted among species we could see. We will also be making a special effort to find the localised Semi-collared Flycatcher, small numbers of which breed in nestboxes in the forest - and there are Short-toed Treecreepers and Hawfinches to look for here too, adding challenge to what promises to be another exciting day.

Our accommodation for these two nights is a small but comfortable hotel in the seaside resort of Kavarna; newly built and only recently opened, it makes an ideal base from which to explore the northernmost shores of Bulgaria's Black Sea coastal region. The small valley by the hotel is well worth checking for migrant birds feeding up in the morning - and Levant Sparrowhawks sometimes nest here!

Lake Durankulak is a mainly brackish lake which lies just to the south of the Romanian border. Smart Spanish Sparrows breed in the foundations of the immense nests of White Storks and the fringing reedbeds are home to a small population of Paddyfield Warblers, a primarily Asiatic species nesting here at the westernmost limit of its range. Pygmy Cormorants add further to the distinctly 'eastern' flavour as we walk beside the lake, where we may also see a migrating Red-footed Falcon.

Not far from Kavarna, the dramatic limestone cliffs of Cape Kaliakra are home to dashing Alpine Swifts and the smart Pied Wheatear, the latter yet another species occurring here at the westernmost edge of its range. We might be lucky to see a party of Yelkouan Shearwaters passing by offshore or even to spot a fiery-eyed Eurasian Eagle Owl staring back at us from its home on the cliffs.

Inland of the Cape, the sky above the rolling steppe is full of glorious lark song in spring, mostly exalted by slow flapping Calandra Larks in their curiously bat-like display. This habitat is also attractive to dry country specialists such as Stone-curlew, Short-toed Lark and the 'edge of range' Isabelline Wheatear. *Two nights Kavarna*

Days 8 - 9

DOBRUJA STEPPE, LAKE SREBARNA AND DANUBE LOWLANDS

Heading inland, we cross the rolling cultivated steppe of the Dobruja region today to reach the extraordinarily rich valley of the River Danube. Here lies wonderful Lake Srebarna, hemmed by a mosaic of forests, vineyards and steppe, and designated a World Heritage Site of special importance for its colony of Dalmatian Pelicans - largest and rarest of the world's seven species of pelican. Srebarna's reedbeds also harbour a rich variety of other wetland birds.

Handsome Black-necked and Red-necked Grebes attend their floating nests, spear-billed Purple Herons hunt for fish and frogs in the shallows and bandit-masked Penduline Tits wheeze asthmatically from the willows against a cacophony of warbler song that features Savi's, Marsh and the raucous Great Reed. As graceful Whiskered Terns and the occasional Black Tern drift back and forth over the open water, the sight of the gorgeous and localised Large Copper will be an added delight for those who also have an appreciation of butterflies.

After a morning walk during which we will listen out for Thrush Nightingale, we have a more leisurely second day exploring the lake at Srebarna, hoping for good views of Penduline Tit and Grey-headed Woodpecker in the trees around its edge. We may also visit a good area for butterflies, one where we've seen Freyer's Purple Emperor and Map in the past.

The lush Danube lowlands close to the border with Romania can also be good for migrants. Walking beside the great river we'll be looking especially for nesting Black and Middle Spotted Woodpeckers, Kingfisher and Redstart; we'll pause to admire a colony of colourful Bee-eaters and Silver-studded Blue butterflies, while amidst the mosaic of reedbeds and oxbow lakes we can listen for the Bittern's 'boom' and search the

willows for the diminutive Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. On our previous visits here, non-avian highlights in this wildlife-rich area have included Eastern Clouded Yellow, Common Glider, Norfolk Hawker and Downy Emerald.

Our hotel for these two nights is Pelican Lodge, a small and friendly village hotel close by the River Danube and Srebarna Lake. *Two nights Pelican Lodge, Vetren*

Day 10

NOVA CHERNA WETLANDS TO BUCHAREST, FLY LONDON

After some (optional) early morning birding today, we leave Vetren after breakfast and head west, stopping along the way at another great wetland site close to the town of Nova Cherna. This area of old fishponds is home to a wealth of birds and wildlife, with Savi's and Great Reed Warblers, Red-backed Shrikes and sometimes Hobbies and Red-footed Falcons in the area, the latter two feasting on the numerous dragonflies.

Leaving Bulgaria, we then catch a ferry across the Danube and arrive on the Romanian shore.

Driving north, we will relatively quickly find ourselves at Bucharest Airport. Bidding farewell to our local guide and driver here, we catch the British Airways afternoon flight to London Heathrow, where our spring birdwatching tour to Bulgaria concludes at around teatime.

Trip Information

Group Size Max 10 participants & 2 leaders

Birds 180-220 species

If the weather is good, this can also be a good trip for butterflies (30-50 species possible) and dragonflies (up to 20 species), too.

Accommodation 9 nights accommodation in Bulgaria. Hotel standards are generally good, and improving throughout the country. Away from the popular seaside resorts of the Black Sea coast, hotels inland are still largely off the beaten tourist track and tend to be a little more

basic, but all are clean and comfortable. All rooms have private facilities.

Meals All main meals are included in the tour price, commencing with dinner on Day 1 and concluding with a packed lunch on Day 10. Breakfasts and dinners will usually be taken at the hotels. Lunches will be picnics along the way. Meals are fairly simple but food - and some local wine! - is generally good.

Walking Easy. Short walks up to about 2 miles or so, on mainly good trails over easy-moderate terrain. Sturdy walking shoes or lightweight boots with corrugated soles for grip are recommended for this tour.

Weather Spring weather in Bulgaria typically brings a mix of warm sunshine and showers, with daytime temperatures in the range of 9-20C (48-68F). In May, the average daily temperature in Sofia is 15C (58F), and a tad warmer than this at Burgas and Kavarna on the Black Sea coast.

Flights We fly with British Airways, out from London Heathrow to Sofia (Bulgaria) and return from Bucharest (Romania) to London Heathrow.

Travel Flights to Bulgaria arrive into Sofia, which lies in the west of the country, and from where we work our way east to the Black Sea coast. This means that on a couple of days early in the trip we travel a fair distance as we head across country from the mountains towards the coast. Roads can be quite slow at times – and we will obviously want to stop and look for birds, which are amazingly abundant in Bulgaria! Accordingly, on a couple of evenings we may arrive at the hotel a little later than usual, but still in reasonable time for dinner.

Ground Transport By small coach or minibus with local driver (according to final group size).

Photos Good incidental photo opportunities - birds and other wildlife, plus some very scenic countryside.

Tour Cost ^{*1}

2019 (10 days):
£1695 (inc flights from London)
Land only cost: £1495
Deposit: £300
Single Supp: £145

Cost includes

- Limosa Tour Leader
- English-speaking Bulgarian bird guide
- Flights London Heathrow-Sofia, returning Bucharest-London with British Airways
- 9 nights accommodation in Bulgaria
- All main meals (with drinking water provided)
- Local travel by coach or minibus
- All excursions, entry fees, tour based tips and taxes
- Map & Limosa checklist of birds

Cost excludes

Insurance, drinks, airport/in-flight meals and snacks & other items of a personal nature.

***1 2019 tour costs shown. Please note costs for our 2020 tour TBA (available summer 2019)**

About Your Guides

Richard Thaxton Richard is a principal Limosa guide who joined us in the early 'noughties' at the urging of our American friends Field Guides - who clearly know a good thing when they see one! He has recently retired as warden at the RSPB's Loch Garten reserve, where he worked for 30 years and was charged with the welfare of some of Speyside's rarest inhabitants - including Capercaillies and the world famous Ospreys. Richard is a first-rate bird tour guide with exceptional people skills and regularly leads our trips across Europe as well as those to SE Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. Our May 2019 and 2020 tours to Bulgaria will be Richard's fourth and fifth trips there with Limosa groups.

Local Guide Our tour will be accompanied throughout by Professor Lyubomir Profirov, an experienced, English-speaking Bulgarian ornithologist and bird tour guide supplied by our specialist local agent.

Financial Security

Limosa Holidays is a fully bonded Tour Operator and a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO). We hold an ATOL (Air Tour Operators Licence) granted by the CAA, providing for your protection in the event of Limosa Holidays' insolvency. Our ATOL licence number is ATOL 2950.

For tours not including the cost of a flight from the UK or for holidays booked by you as 'Land Only', all payments made to us are fully bonded through the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT). Our ABTOT membership number is 5230. For details please see our brochure or website: <http://www.limosaholidays.co.uk/financial-protection>

Limosa Loyalty Discount

We are proud of the number of loyal customers who travel regularly with us. As our way of saying 'thank you', we offer a **Frequent Travel Discount**. Under the scheme, everyone who takes four trips with us is entitled to claim a 5% discount on their 5th trip. ^{*1}

^{*1} **Conditions:** *This offer applies to the basic tour cost only and excludes certain commission-based trips, extra costs such as additional flights or accommodation, private extensions and cancellations.* • *Discounts cannot be given in lieu of tour deposits or off the cost of single room supplements.* • **Please note discount must be requested at time of booking!**

How To Book

Check availability on our website or with our office. We are happy to hold Provisional Reservations for up to 7 days. After this, we do require a Booking Form and deposit to confirm your place on tour. Any unconfirmed space will be released.

Book Online, by Phone or by Post

You can book and pay the deposit simply and securely **Online** via our website, using the '**Book This Tour**' button on the relevant tour page or the **Booking** tab at the top of the page.

Telephone bookings must be confirmed in writing by completion of a Booking Form (there's one tucked inside every brochure or as a PDF download from our website), which can be mailed to us in the time honoured way.

Please be sure to read our Booking Conditions and General Information prior to booking. These can be found in full in the footer on every page on our website (or available from our office on request); also in an abridged form at the back of our brochure.

When to Book

Early booking is advised since flights and accommodation are much more easily secured well in advance. To encourage early booking, we are pleased to offer an **Early Bird Discount** - see our current brochure or website for details.

All our tours are limited to small group sizes. So they can fill up quickly - sometimes even before our new brochure comes out! Single rooms in particular can often be in short supply and among the first to go, so do try to plan well ahead if you definitely require one of these.

Last-minute Bookings: We inevitably receive a few unexpected cancellations over the course of a season so it is always worth enquiring about vacancies on any tour - even for those departing in just a few weeks!

Payments

Deposit: The amount of **booking deposit** per person is shown alongside every tour. We accept deposit payments by **electronic bank transfer** (please ask for our bank details), **UK debit card** and **cheque** (made payable to *Limosa Holidays* and drawn on a UK bank in GB Pounds Sterling).

We also accept Visa and MasterCard credit cards for payment of Booking Deposits only.

Balance: Full payment of the **tour balance** is due not later than 12 weeks prior to departure (20 weeks in the case of certain tours such as cruises or those involving rail travel). We will send you an invoice before the balance is due.

We accept balance payments and any additional payments (e.g. interim flight deposits, flight upgrades, extra hotels etc) by **electronic bank transfer (BACS), UK debit card or cheque.**

Payment by overseas customers

These must be in GB Pounds Sterling and may be made by electronic transfer direct to our bank (*please ask for our bank details*).

We do **not** accept cheques on US Banks in US Dollars, or cheques in Euros or Eurocheques.

Credit cards - please note:

(i) **We do NOT accept credit cards or overseas debit cards for balance payments (including any additional or interim payments) from customers living within the UK or European Economic Area (the EEA is the EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).**

(ii) **For customers living in North America, Australia and all other areas outside of the UK and the European Economic Area we are able to accept payment by Visa and MasterCard credit cards or overseas debit card but with a charge of 2.5% of the transaction amount to help offset card company charges.**

Late Booking Payments: In order for us to guarantee your airline seats, hotels etc., full payment is required at time of booking for all late bookings (*i.e. bookings made within 12 weeks of departure*).

Other Things You Need To Know

Passports & Visas

For UK passport holders, for stays of up to three months in Bulgaria, your **passport must be valid for the proposed duration of your stay.**

Although no additional period of validity beyond this is required, **when travelling anywhere overseas we always recommend your passport has a minimum of 6 months left to run after your intended date of return home**, in case of unforeseen delay.

Brexit - Important Note!

The rules for travel to most countries in Europe will change **IF** the UK leaves the European Union (EU) with **no deal**.

After 29 March 2019:

1. You should have at least 6 months left on your passport from your date of arrival.
2. If you renewed a 10 year adult passport before it expired, extra months may have been added to your new passport's expiry date, making it valid for more than 10 years. Any extra months on your passport over 10 years may not count towards the 6 months that should be remaining for travel to most countries in Europe.

The new rules will apply to passports issued by the UK, Gibraltar, Guernsey, the Isle of Man and Jersey.

• **VISA NOT REQUIRED by British citizens** to enter Bulgaria or Romania. [Note: If you have a different type of British nationality, please check the entry requirements with the Bulgarian and Romanian Embassies in London before you travel to see if you need a visa.]

Holders of non-UK passports - including 'British subjects' as noted above - should contact the nearest Bulgarian AND Romanian embassies or consulates to enquire whether or not they require a visa. If a visa is required, you will need to apply locally. If the embassy or consulate requires you to provide a letter confirming that you are booked on an all-inclusive tour, please contact our office and we will be happy to provide one.

Border Crossing: British citizens entering Romania via the ferry crossing near Ruse simply need to show their passport to the border control guard that enters the bus after we have crossed the Danube River.

IMPORTANT! *If your passport is NOT that of a British citizen, you must check with the nearest Romanian embassy or consulate before travelling on the tour. If you require a visa, you must apply locally for this before you travel.*

Note: The UK and EU have agreed the full legal text of the draft Withdrawal Agreement in principle. This sets out that there will be no change to entry requirements for British Citizens travelling to the EU or for EU citizens travelling to the UK during the Implementation Period (30 March 2019 to 31 December 2020).

In the event of changes to entry requirements after the UK leaves the EU on 29 March 2019, this page will be updated as soon as information is available.

Health & Vaccinations

Compulsory vaccinations: None.

Recommended vaccinations: For travel everywhere (even within the UK) we recommend you check you are up-to-date with protection against tetanus, polio and hepatitis A. Check with your doctor for current advice as regards the need for protection against typhoid, diphtheria, hepatitis B, which may sometimes be recommended for Eastern Europe.

Ticks occur in grassy, forested and wetland areas below 1400m during the summer months across most of continental Europe, including Bulgaria. If you are at all concerned by this, you may wish to seek advice about inoculations and other measures to prevent tick-related problems (such as tick-borne encephalitis) prior to travel.

The above information, together with that contained within our Travel Information sheets (sent to everyone who books), outlines health requirements for this tour. **Please note that these details are given for guidance only - and are only for certain diseases - and you must consult your doctor in good time prior to travel as to what immunisations (if any) are needed for your chosen holiday.**

For full and up-to-date health information we **urge everyone to consult The National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) website www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations prior to booking any overseas holiday.**

NaTHNaC is funded by the UK Government's Health Protection Agency and provides health information for both health professionals and travellers, with information compiled by its own clinical and scientific team.

Your Safety & Travel Advice

An unavoidable aspect of travelling abroad nowadays is the risk it may pose to your safety and security. The best advice on current risks is provided by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO). In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination we **strongly recommended** that you refer to the relevant FCO Travel Advice - both prior to booking and regularly before you travel. See www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

It is standard Limosa policy for our office to send a copy of the relevant FCO Travel Advice about the tour to all participants along with their Final Letter (ca. 2-3 weeks prior to the trip).

'Travel Aware' - staying safe and healthy abroad - is a travel safety campaign run by the FCO, and another useful resource. Go to: <https://www.gov.uk/travelaware>

Travel Insurance

Good travel insurance is **essential** before setting off on any overseas trip. In common with all responsible tour operators, **it is a condition of booking** that all clients are fully and adequately insured before travelling overseas with us.

Be aware that some destinations may require you to produce proof of comprehensive travel insurance (e.g. valid insurance certificate) at immigration on arrival in the country, so you should carry your documentation with you.

Your travel insurance should cover against cancellation, curtailment, missed departure, delay, personal accident, death, loss of baggage and valuables (see note below), personal liability and legal expenses. Most importantly, your insurance must cover you fully in respect of medical care and repatriation should you become too ill to continue with the tour, including the cost of emergency evacuation by helicopter or air ambulance should this be necessary. Note that passenger liability insurance covering the transportation that we hire may be inadequate; it is therefore important that your insurance cover includes sufficient provision for your dependents in the event of an accident.

We recommend that you obtain travel insurance as soon as possible after booking your holiday to ensure you are protected right from the word go in the event of unexpected cancellation prior to departure due to accident or illness. You must inform your insurers of any pre-existing medical conditions (including those of persons not necessarily travelling but upon whom your holiday may depend) that may require treatment during a period of overseas travel or might cause you to cancel the trip.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please be sure to send us the following essential details: name and contact details of your insurance provider, your policy number, expiry date and your insurers 24hr Emergency Assistance number.

Important Things to Note about Insurance

- Travel Insurance does **not** normally provide sufficient cover for valuable optical equipment, which is often best protected under your own household insurance policy. If in doubt ask your insurers for advice prior to travel.
- Most travel insurance policies limit the amount of cover, typically up to a maximum tour cost of £5000 per person. If the tour you are booking exceeds this amount, additional cover can usually be provided upon payment of additional premium. **We recommend all travellers** check their individual policy limit to ensure the full cost of their holiday is covered.

Arranging Your Insurance: due to UK Government legislation, under Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulations, we are not allowed to offer or recommend travel related insurance to customers. Premiums can vary widely according to your age, needs, health, choice of destination and other factors, while many people nowadays have Annual Travel Insurance cover. For these reasons, we leave you free to shop around and pick your own policy, one best suited to your own individual needs.

General Information

www.limosaholidays.co.uk

Our website gives easy access to detailed tour itineraries (Tour Info Packs), trip reports, trip photos and the latest Limosa News.

Special Diets & Other Requests

We pass on all such requests to the airlines, hotels and other suppliers, and do our best to ensure (but of course cannot guarantee) that your needs will be met. Please be sure to tell us about these (in as much detail as possible) at the time of booking, to allow good time to make the necessary arrangements.

Smoking

Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. For the enjoyment and comfort of all, we ask that smokers refrain from smoking in proximity to the group and respect our NO SMOKING policy in the vehicle, at meal times and when watching wildlife.

Any Questions?

If you have any questions at any time, you'll find our office staff friendly, efficient, approachable - and just a phone call away, eager to assist you in every way.

Our office is open 09.00-17.00 hrs Mon-Fri, and can also be reached by email. In the event we are unable to take your call, please leave a message on our answerphone (24 hrs) and our office will contact you as soon as we can.

*Thank you for your interest in our tours.
We do hope that you will be able to join us
- and we look forward to hearing from you
again!*

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