



Travel Plan

Roots & Rise: Hiking & Yoga Journey through the Bulgarian Mountains

5 Nights/6 Days + Extension

Group experience - min 4 to max 10 people

SomaWander
Yoga and Mindful travel

NAMASTE,

This journey is designed to offer you a deep breath of mountain air, a fresh perspective as an observer, and a window into the unique historical and cultural landscape of my country.

We'll be guided by the philosophy of Yoga—to connect, to appreciate, and to move beyond judgment, seeking the beauty that exists in every place and every person.

As we walk slowly through the mountains, our steps will sync with the rhythm of our breath. During our breaks, we'll often close our eyes to tune into sensations and thoughts, practicing meditation and pranayama—ancient breathing techniques that restore and center.

Each morning will begin early, with a gentle and energizing asana practice to awaken body and mind. At times, we'll walk and eat in silence—a practice known as Mauna in Sanskrit—creating space for reflection, presence, and deeper listening.

Throughout the retreat, you'll be invited to keep a personal journal. These quiet moments of writing can help you process your experience, record insights, or simply hold onto the feeling of stillness.

Evenings will be soft and slow—sometimes shared in conversation, storytelling, or group reflections. Other nights might end with guided meditation or a simple moment of silence beneath the stars.

Beyond the practices, this retreat is also a journey into the cultural and historical layers of my homeland. We'll visit places that still bear the imprint of the communist era, and explore abandoned, yet hauntingly beautiful sites that speak of Bulgaria's complex past.

It would mean so much to me to share the places where I grew up, and through them, offer you a glimpse into the story of Bulgaria—told through its mountains, its people, its forgotten corners, and the quiet breath of yoga.

This retreat is a shared path, but also a personal one. Whether you're seeking connection, clarity, or just a pause from the noise, you'll find space here to be exactly where you are.

What We Will Do?



YOGA - DAILY PRACTICES

EVERY DAY WE'LL PRACTICE YOGA GUIDED BY ME. THERE WILL BE HATHA, PRANAYAMA AND MEDITATION PRACTICE



HIKING

WE WILL BE GUIDED BY AN EXPERT LOCAL GUIDE FOR THE TREKKING BETWEEN THE TWO REFUGES



TIME TO RELAX

ON THE LAST DAY WE WILL STOP AT A SPA WHERE YOU CAN CHOOSE FROM A VARIETY OF SPA TREATMENTS AS WELL AS ENJOY THE THERMAL WATER POOL.

Itinerary Day by Day

DAY 1

Departure from Sofia

You will be picked up from your accommodation or another agreed-upon location. From Sofia, we'll take a one-hour drive to the village of Dolna Banya, located 80 km away. This is where our first trek to the Venetitsa refuge will begin. We plan to arrive in time for lunch, where delicious, traditional Bulgarian meals—prepared by the refuge's caretakers—will be waiting for us. After some time to rest, we'll gather in the afternoon for our first yoga session and a warm welcome circle.



Accommodation Venetian refuge - Dormitory

Itinerary Day by Day

DAY 2

Trek to Belmeken Hut (2,224 m) – approx. 6 hours

- We'll begin the day with a gentle morning yoga session to stretch, breathe, and prepare for the day ahead. After breakfast, we'll set off on our trek toward Hut Belmeken, situated at 2,224 meters above sea level. The hike takes about 6 hours at a relaxed pace, with plenty of time to enjoy the scenery and take breaks along the way.
- A packed lunch will be provided, and we'll stop to enjoy it surrounded by nature—perfect for refueling and soaking in the views.
- Once we arrive at the hut, we'll have time to rest and enjoy a warm, hearty dinner in the cozy mountain setting. The evening is yours to relax however you like—whether it's chatting with fellow travelers or simply enjoying the quiet of the mountains.

Accommodation Belmeken Hut - Dormitory

Itinerary Day by Day

DAY 3

Restorative Day in Nature

Morning Yoga • Journaling • Breathwork • Optional Hike to Belmeken Peak (2,628 m – approx. 4 hours round trip)

Today is all about slowing down and reconnecting—with yourself and with nature. We'll start with a restorative morning yoga session, followed by some quiet journaling time and a gentle breathwork practice to center and ground ourselves.

In the late morning or early afternoon, those who feel up for it can join an optional hike to Belmeken Peak, which rises to 2,628 meters. The hike takes about 2 hours each way, offering wide open views and a true sense of being above it all.

The rest of the day is yours to unwind, nap, read, or simply enjoy the peaceful rhythm of the mountains.



Accommodation Belmeken hut - Dormitory

Itinerary Day by Day

DAY 4

Hike to the Village of Kostenets (approx. 5 hours)

Morning Yoga • Scenic Descent • Overnight at Hotel Kostandia

We'll begin the day with a morning yoga session to gently wake up and prepare our bodies for the hike ahead. After breakfast, we'll start our descent toward the village of Kostenets, a scenic 5-hour trek through forests, meadows, and peaceful mountain paths.

We'll take our time, enjoying the changing landscapes and stopping along the way for breaks and photos.

By late afternoon, we'll arrive in Kostenets, where we'll settle in at Hotel Kostandia—a cozy and comfortable spot to rest and recharge. The evening is free to relax, enjoy a warm meal, and soak in the slower village pace.



Accommodation KONSTANTSIA BALNEOLOGICAL HOTEL - double rooms

Itinerary Day by Day

DAY 5

Restorative Day in Village Kostenets

Morning Yoga • Optional Spa Treatments & Massages • Local Discovery

We'll start the day with a gentle morning yoga session, helping us ease into a slower, more restful rhythm. The rest of the day is all about relaxation and self-care.

You'll have the option to enjoy spa treatments, massages, or simply unwind at your own pace. For those curious to explore, there's time to discover the local charm of Kostenets—whether it's a quiet walk, a visit to nearby springs, or a bit of cultural wandering.

Take this day to fully recharge and soak in the peaceful atmosphere.



Accommodation KONSTANTSIA BALNEOLOGICAL HOTEL - double rooms

Itinerary Day by Day

DAY 6

Farewell & Departure

Morning Yoga • Travel Back to Sofia

We'll begin our final day together with a morning yoga session, grounding ourselves and taking a moment to reflect on the journey. After breakfast, we'll depart for Sofia, carrying with us full hearts, calm minds, and the fresh energy of the mountains.

It's not goodbye—just a gentle transition back, with the memories and connections made here continuing to ripple through daily life.



Optional Day - Discover Sofia's Charm

Sofia City Stroll • Bulgarian Dance Workshop • Traditional Dinner with Dancing

Transfer to Sofia • Hotel Check-in • City Walk • Bulgarian Dance Workshop (led by me) • Traditional Dinner with Dancing

- For those staying an extra day, we'll transfer to Sofia and check into a comfortable hotel where you'll have time to rest and settle in. In the late afternoon, we'll enjoy a relaxed passeggiata through the city center, including a visit to one of Sofia's lovely parks—perfect for soaking up the atmosphere and doing a bit of people-watching.
- As the sun begins to set, I will lead a short workshop on traditional Bulgarian dances - light-hearted, fun, and a great way to connect with local culture.
- The day ends with dinner at a typical Bulgarian restaurant, complete with music, dancing, and joyful vibes to celebrate the journey.

Accommodation Stay in a centrally located 3-star hotel



Retreat Route Overview



Sofia → Dolna Banya

- Distance: Approximately 79 km
- Travel Time: About 1 hour and 10 minutes by car
- Begin your journey from Bulgaria's capital, heading southeast to the tranquil town of Dolna Banya, known for its thermal springs and scenic surroundings.



Dolna Banya → Venetitsa Hut

- Elevation gain: approximately 500-600 meters uphill
- Time: About 2.30 hour



Venetitsa Hut → Belmeken Hut

- Hiking time: 4-5 hours at a regular hiking pace
- Elevation gain:**
- Ascent: approx 600-700 meters
 - Descent: approx 200-300 meters



Belmeken Hut → Kostenets Village

- Hiking time: 4.5 - 5.5 hours, at a leisurely pace
- Elevation gain:
- Main descent: 1,100 meters downhill
- Type of trail: Mostly downhill, on mountain trails and forest sections. The trail descends from the slopes of the Rila Mountains towards the Maritsa River valley, passing through forests and clearings.

Travel Tips and Essentials



- **Arrival & Departure**
- The retreat begins and ends in Sofia, Bulgaria. Plan to arrive at least one day before the retreat starts, if possible.
- Departure can be planned for the day after the retreat ends, or late evening on the last day if needed.
- **Transportation**
- Group transfers will be organized between major points (Sofia – Dolna Banya – Kostenets – Sofia). If you're arriving independently, please let me know in advance.
- **Travel Documents**
- **Valid passport or EU ID**
- **Visa** (if required – check your country's entry requirements for Bulgaria)
- **Travel insurance** (mandatory, including mountain rescue coverage)
- **Connectivity**
- Expect limited to no phone signal or internet at the mountain huts. It's the perfect time to unplug!
- **Currency**
- Local currency is Bulgarian Lev (BGN). Some rural areas don't accept cards, so bring a small amount of cash.

Travel Tips and Essentials

PACKING LIST



- **Pack light & smart:** You'll carry everything in one backpack during the entire retreat. Choose items that are lightweight, versatile, and quick-drying.
- **Footwear matters:** Broken-in, comfortable hiking boots or trail shoes are essential. Blisters = bad vibes.
- **Weather** in the mountains can change fast—sun, wind, rain, chill... sometimes all in one day. Morning and evening temperatures drop. Layering is your best friend.
- **Prepare for shared spaces:** Mountain huts are cozy but simple. You'll sleep in shared rooms (up to 10 beds), so bring lightweight sleeping bag, earplugs and an open heart.
- **Water & snacks:** Always keep your water bottle full and a few trail snacks on hand.
- **Leave space for silence:** Some meals and walks will be in silence. It's part of the practice. Bring a journal to capture your inner voice.
- **Cash:** Some small mountain places might not accept cards—bring a bit of Bulgarian lev (BGN) just in case.

Packing List

Essentials:

- Comfortable hiking backpack (30–40L)
- Small daypack for shorter hikes
- Yoga mat (lightweight or foldable)
- Refillable water bottle (1–2L)



Clothing:

- Comfortable hiking boots (broken in!)
- Waterproof jacket / windbreaker
- Fleece or warm layer for mornings/evenings
- Quick-dry t-shirts and base layers
- Hiking pants / leggings
- Light sweater or hoodie
- Sleepwear
- Swimsuit (optional – spa stop or river dip)
- Sun hat / cap
- Sunglasses

Toiletries & Health:

- Basic toiletries (eco-friendly, if possible)
- Sunscreen + lip balm with SPF
- Insect repellent
- Any personal medication
- Small first aid kit (plasters, blister care)
- Towel (quick-dry travel towel recommended)

Optional:

- Earplugs (for shared rooms)
- Headlamp or flashlight
- Snacks or energy bars
- Lightweight book or reading material

Packages Overview

€540,00

PER PERSON

YOGA/HIKING

6 DAYS / 5 NIGHTS

- Hut and hotel
- 3 Daily vegetarian meals
- All yoga practices and guided tours
- Transfers from and to Sofia

€650,00

PER PERSON

YOGA/HIKING/SOFIA

7 DAYS / 6 NIGHTS

- Hut and hotel
- 3 Daily vegetarian meals
- 1 Dinner Extra
- All yoga practices and guided tours
- Transfers from and to Sofia



Contact Me

BOOKING PROCESS

Pick the package that suits you best, get in touch to check availability, and confirm your spot with a deposit.

EMAIL

somawander@gmail.com

WHATS'APP

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I can't wait to welcome
you and share this
special experience
together.