



Balkan Holidays

Product training manual.



Welcome to the Balkan Holidays product training manual.

Balkan Holidays are the UK's leading touring operator to Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Romania, we offer the widest choice of holidays at great value for money prices. We have designed this product training manual as an aid for when travel agents are selling our holidays as it provides essential information on our winter ski and summer sun products. Our two main destinations are Bulgaria and Croatia, so the vast majority of the information will be relevant to these two destinations.



Summer sun - Bulgaria

As we have said, Balkan Holidays are the UK's leading tour operator to Bulgaria. No other operator offers the choice of hotels and departures we do. Here are the key selling points of our summer sun holidays to Bulgaria...

- We offer the widest choice of great value holidays to over 120 hotels and apartments in 11 resorts from 17 UK departure airports including Gatwick, Stansted, Cardiff, Bristol, Birmingham, East Midlands, Leeds Bradford, Humberside, Durham Tees Valley, Doncaster Sheffield, Manchester, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Belfast and Exeter to Varna and Bourgas.
- The lowest prices
- FREE child places
- LOW flight supplements
- The widest range of self catering holidays in Bulgaria
- Most hotels in our brochure are brand new or have been recently refurbished
- Early booking and special discounts for most hotels
- NO single supplements on selected departure dates and hotels
- Child discounts up to aged 16
- Nearly all self catering holidays offer child discounts up to the age of 16 years old.

High quality holidays at great value for money prices

There has been a massive investment in tourism in Bulgaria resulting in the construction of many new hotels, mostly of a four and five star rating. This means the quality of our holidays is now very high, while at the same time we have kept our reputation of offering great value for money. The cost of a holiday for a family of four is considerably less with Balkan Holidays in Bulgaria than in other European beach resorts.

So what is Bulgaria like?

The weather is great.....

Bulgaria has a perfect climate. During the summer it is hot and sunny (Bulgaria does border Greece and Turkey) with approximate average daily temperatures as follows :

May – 20 degrees Celsius

June – 25 degrees Celsius

July – 30 degrees Celsius

August – 28 degrees Celsius

September – 24 degrees Celsius

The beaches are beautiful...

To go with the great weather Bulgaria has some of the best beaches in Europe. All of them are sandy and have been awarded the EU Blue Flag for the cleanliness of the water and the beach itself. Sunny Beach is perfect as it gently shelves into the sea, making it safe for children.



Low cost of living – Bulgaria is a euro free zone

Bulgaria does not have the Euro as it's currency. This means that the cost of living is still great value. A three course meal costs under £10 per person with a large beer costing £1.30p, compare that to the Canary or Balearic Islands where a bottle of beer can cost as much as five Euros and an evening meal 20 Euros!

What is there to do in the resorts?

Plenty! There are numerous water sports activities including banana boats, jet ski's and scuba diving. There are also a number of water parks that are great fun and great value. We also operate kiddie clubs in Sunny Beach, Golden Sands and Albena. Here the children are supervised by NNEB qualified British staff, they participate in many different activities including playing games, drawing, painting, face painting and go on adventures such as treasure hunts. Of course, there are the soft sandy beaches to play on or the warm sea to swim in (children do not go swimming when they are in the kiddie club). There are also plenty of excursions to choose from, including jeep safari's, shopping trips to Varna and Bourgas, a three day trip to Istanbul plus visits to local Bulgaria town and beauty spots.

Evening entertainment

The variety of evening entertainment depends on which resort you are in. For example, Golden Sands and Sunny Beach, the two largest resorts, have plenty of restaurants, bars and nightclubs. Sunny Beach is definitely the liveliest with several excellent nightclubs including Club Orange, Dance Mania, Iceberg and Club Lazur. However, it does have many types of restaurants to choose from including traditional Bulgarian tavernas to pizza and steak restaurants. Other resorts like Nessebur and Sozopol don't have many bars and no nightclubs, but they do offer a taste of the real Bulgaria with relaxed cafes and restaurants on the shoreline.

If you send your clients to Sunny Beach we do recommend a night at Khans Tent. There are organised excursions for our customers to visit this huge restaurant overlooking the bay of Sunny Beach. For £29 per adult and £17 for children our customers enjoy a four course dinner with wine and enjoy a fantastic cabaret show.

Useful information

Where is Bulgaria?

Bulgaria is in South East Europe, it is bordered by Romania to the north, Greece and Turkey to the south, Serbia and Macedonia to the west and the Black Sea coast to the East. Sofia is the capital city.

What is the currency of Bulgaria?

The currency in Bulgaria is the Lev, there are approximately 2.5 Levs to the pound. Sterling or sterling travellers cheques can be exchanged in the resorts, always change them in a hotel or a bank. There are ATM's in all resorts offering a favourable exchange rate.

How are family rooms laid out?

There are two types of family rooms, one type consists of two rooms and a bathroom, sleeping two adults and two children. One room is used as a sitting room with two pull out beds for children, the other room is a bedroom for the adults. The other type of family room is open plan with a screen or curtain as a divide. Some hotels have large family rooms that can sleep five people (full details of these hotels can be found in our brochure). Family rooms make a family holiday great value as the adults pay the brochure price and the children qualify for the low child prices. There are also a number of hotels that have a bunk-bed in the twin rooms. These are even better value as one family can sleep in one room and not pay a family room supplement. Hotels with these rooms include the Hotel Korona in Sunny Beach and the Hotel Odessos in Golden Sands.

Are the resorts suitable for people with walking difficulties?

Sunny Beach is a big resort, very flat and so is suitable for people with walking difficulties. Golden Sands is hilly in parts, and so is not! Albena is flat in the centre of the resort but it does have hilly areas further away from the beach, approximately one kilometre. If your client does have walking or breathing difficulties then it is advisable to book them a hotel in Sunny Beach or on a beach front hotel in Golden Sands or Albena.

What's the food like?

The food served in hotels caters for an international pallet and is very tasty. This means that you have a choice of meats, salads and vegetables. Guests are not served steak and chips or an English cooked breakfast! The food served in local restaurants is excellent, with a choice to suit all tastes and budgets.

A guide to the main Black Sea resorts of Bulgaria.

Sunny Beach

The biggest Black Sea resort, Sunny Beach caters for every holiday need. Bordering a spectacular, Blue Flag, 8 kilometre-long sandy beach, it comprises of a string of beachside hotels and complexes linked by a buzzing promenade of shops, stalls, restaurants and bars where you can enjoy food and drinks at extremely low prices. Family attractions are available in the resort with playgrounds, mini golf and an exciting aqua park. On the beach, a variety of sports include paragliding, volleyball and waterskiing await the energetic.

At dusk, there is more entertainment on hand in the shape of nightclubs, bars, hotel floorshows and folk nights.

If you feel like a day out, the nearby UNESCO-protected town of Nessebar, offers quaint cobbled streets, traditional architecture and fine fish restaurants.

Arrival airport : Bourgas Transfer time : 40 minutes



Golden Sands

Golden Sands is a truly modern beach resort. It's beach is approximately 5kms of beautiful golden sand. There is also a wide variety of hotels including the sumptuous five star Melia Grand Hotel Hermitage. There is a wealth of water sports including windsurfing, jet skis, banana boat rides and scuba diving with PADI qualified instructors. Golden Sands also has numerous restaurants, bars and clubs that make it come alive in the evening.

Arrival airport : Varna Transfer time : 40 minutes

Albena

The setting is excellent, between lush, wooded hillsides and a magnificent clean sandy beach. There is plenty going on, with daytime sports, evening entertainment, discos and taverns, plus two bazaar-style shopping centres. Albena is excellent for families as the bathing is relatively safe and there is little or no traffic in the resort. There's a regular bus service to Golden Sands and Varna and the mini-trains which run round the resort all day cost only one pound a ride.

Arrival Airport : Varna Transfer time : 45 minutes

St Konstantin

Quiet, relaxing and affordable for those clients looking for quality and service all set in pleasant surroundings. Most of the hotels in this area have been re-built to a very high standard.

Arrival airport : Varna Transfer time : 30 minutes

Nessebur

With a history dating back some 2,500 years, Nessebur has been linked with many ancient civilisations including Thracian, Greek, Roman and Byzantine. The old quarter is under a preservation order as a living museum town, housing the remains of some 40 churches from different periods of history. The narrow cobbled streets and gabled houses make Nessebur an ideal place for guests looking for a seaside holiday in a typical Bulgarian town. There's no "museum" feeling here though both the old and the new town are full of life with music and entertainment, sometimes late into the night.

Arrival airport : Bourgas Transfer time : 40 minutes



Sozopol

Situated on a small rocky peninsula on the southern Black Sea coast, south east of the bustling port of Bourgas, today Sozopol is a beautiful old seaside town. Proud of its past and keeping its old traditions very much alive - its fishing methods have not changed in centuries.

Artists and photographers love its narrow cobbled streets, historic churches, weather blackened eaves, bay windows and wooden houses - many dating from the 18th and 19th century. Nowadays however, Sozopol has a busy, thriving modern quarter with many restaurants, cafés and bars which stay open late into the night. Very popular amongst the young Bulgarian visitors, it is interesting to compare and contrast the two areas of Sozopol, and their reflection of Bulgaria past and present.

Arrival airport : Bourgas Transfer time : 1 hour

Elenite

Elenite is an "All Inclusive" resort. The resort has two main hotels plus a collection of villas, all of which are clustered around all the amenities you'd expect in a holiday village. In the centre of it all is a large inviting swimming pool with plenty of space for sunbathing. The whole village is built along a beautiful stretch of clean, mixed shingle beach and the sparkling blue waters of the Black Sea. The attractive beach and excellent range of sports facilities make Elenite especially popular with families.

Arrival airport : Bourgas Transfer time : 1 hour



Pomorie

Situated on a rocky peninsula the resort of Pomorie is set in beautiful natural surroundings making it an attractive place for year round recreation and various health treatments. The town was founded in the fourth century B.C. near a salt lake considered sacred by the ancient thracians because of its healing powers.

Pomorie once rivalled Nessebar in antiquity and architecture but was mostly destroyed by fire in 1906. There are still interesting things to see in the town with its cobblestone streets and traditional wooden houses. There is recently completed five star Sunset Resort, a magnificent complex offering a combination of first class facilities and luxurious accommodation and it's just 20 metres from the beach.

Arrival airport : Bourgas Transfer time : 20 minutes

Duni

The resort of Duni is situated 7km south of Sozopol. It is at the end of a large bay and has a 4.5km sandy beach that reaches 100 metres wide in places with natural sand dunes. The resort itself is a collection of high quality hotels and holiday cottages offering a great selection of facilities including many water sports. In addition there are a variety of restaurants, bars and shops in nearby Sozopol.

Arrival airport : Bourgas Transfer time : 1.5 to 2 hours

Other types of summer holidays in Bulgaria.....

Spice of Life

This is the programme which aims to "spice up" the holiday experience of our "mature travellers" to make a Spice of Life holiday as relaxing or as invigorating as you want it. There is no age limit on these holidays but don't forget these great packages with their super low prices are aimed at the more mature guest. (Generally over 55 years of age)

Self Drive

For those who wish to see more of Bulgaria than just the beach and enjoy the freedom of travelling at their own pace, then tempt them with our self drive holiday option.

Bulgarian History Trail

This gives clients an opportunity to discover Bulgaria. The tour takes in the stunning scenery and ancient towns, it also gives an insight into the food, wines, culture and history of Bulgaria.



Mountain holidays

There are many people who like to spend their holiday 'in-touch' with nature, by walking and hiking across the mountains and then enjoying an evening in one of the local taverns or bars. We offer this type of holiday in Borovets, Pamporovo and Bansko.

Two centre holidays

Bulgaria has so much to offer, some of our clients like to experience two different types of holidays at once! They can have a week in the mountains and then a week on the Black Sea coast. Customers can choose between any of the three mountain resorts and Sunny Beach or Borovets or Bansko and Golden Sands, Albena or St Konstantin. A two centre holiday is a perfect way to see two completely different regions of Bulgaria.

Two country holidays

We offer our clients the chance to visit two countries during their holiday, Croatia and Slovenia or Croatia and Montenegro. Our clients can combine the beauty of the Slovenian mountains with the equally beautiful Croatia coastline. These holidays are very popular as they offer a variation on the normal beach holiday.

Spa holidays

Many of the hotels we offer in Bulgaria have a Spa where you can have all sorts of treatments, all carried out by trained health and beauty technicians. There are full details of these treatments in our brochure.

Black Sea cruises

A Black Sea cruise offers an opportunity to visit wonderful places along the Bulgarian coast in just a week? The cruise visits some of the most beautiful ancient cities in Bulgaria, known as the "Five Pearls of the Bulgarian Seacoast". Clients can also fish in the sea for their evening meal, jump overboard for a swim or simply relax on deck catching some of that warm Bulgarian sunshine. Facilities include Barbeque, Radio, CD-players and a motor boat at tourists disposal plus a shower offering sea and fresh water.

Active holidays

An activity holiday in Bansko, the setting for our activity holidays in Bulgaria, is an experience packed with activities for those who are adrenaline addicted and love outdoor sports. Your customers will have the chance to combine the relaxation of the resort and explore the beauties of the Rodopi Mountains and the Pirin Mountain National Park plus participate in the activities such as river rafting, mountain biking, kayaking, trekking and rock climbing....after all that a week on the beach is definitely needed!



CROATIA

Croatia offers probably one of the most sophisticated beach holidays in Europe. Known as the 'Land of a thousand Islands', Croatia has a varied coastline of sandy and pebbly beaches that are gently lapped by the crystal clear Adriatic Sea. Dubrovnik is the 'Pearl of the Adriatic', it is a walled medieval town with entire streets and buildings preserved to create the original 7th century feel. You can enjoy lunch in one of the many cafes or restaurants on its cobbled streets that wind through the town. Croatia has a number of regions and Islands that have resorts within them. The regions we feature are the Dubrovnik Riviera, Central Dalmatia, Kvarner and Istria, plus the beautiful islands of Mljet, Bol, Hvar and Korcula. Here is a brief description of the main regions we feature.

Dubrovnik and the Dubrovnik Riviera

Resorts on the Dubrovnik Riviera include :

Dubrovnik, Mlini, Cavtat, Plat, and Orebic plus the Islands of Korcula and Mljet.

Fly to Dubrovnik from Gatwick, Manchester, Birmingham and Exeter.

Dubrovnik

The beautiful city of Dubrovnik is often described as a museum town, with entire streets and buildings perfectly planned and preserved to create the original atmosphere of the 7th century. You can ramble through the cobbled streets and narrow alleyways and admire the ancient architecture, take a walk along the stone ramparts of the city walls for the best view of this magnificent town, or simply relax in the sun soaked cafes and watch the world go by. Dubrovnik offers a selection of hotels either within walking distance of the old city or in locations spread along the coast, but with easy access to the city.

Transfer time to Resort: 30 - 40 minutes



Mlini

Protected by high mountains, this charming fishing village nestles amongst pine trees, cypresses, olive, orange groves and oleander, with a small cold stream running through its centre. Along with the beautiful stone houses, lovely waterfront promenade and remarkable views over the Adriatic, Mlini is an ideal location for tourists wishing to sample the tranquil atmosphere of a traditional village and yet have the convenience of being only 10 km from the city of Dubrovnik.

Location : 10km south of Dubrovnik

Transfer Time to Resort: 20 minutes

Cavtat

A particular favourite of British tourists for many years, this delightful resort has a beautiful palm-lined promenade with a charming cluster of pavement cafes, traditional restaurants and lively bars. With its mixture of remarkable cultural treasures, modern hotels, beautiful beaches and crystal clear waters Cavtat offers its visitors both character and charm.

Location: Situated approx. 20 km south of Dubrovnik, close to Dubrovnik Airport.

Transfer time to Resort: 15 minutes

Plat

Hidden next to the resort of Cavtat, Plat is a tiny oasis of peace and tranquillity. With beautiful pine and cypress trees hugging the shoreline, providing a welcome relief from the hot summer rays. With its many enchanting bays and lovely beaches, Plat is ideal for those who want to escape the rush of daily life and yet have the convenience of being just close to Dubrovnik.

Location : 10km south of Dubrovnik

Transfer Time to Resort: 30 minutes



Orebic

In the south western part of the Peljesac Peninsula lies the idyllic fishing village of Orebic. Boasting some of the finest beaches in the region, lined with beautiful pine and olive trees, Orebic offers spectacular views of the Adriatic sea and the coastline of southern Dalmatia. There are some exciting hiking and walking opportunities up Mt. Ilija and regular excursions to the nearby island of Korcula.

Transfer Time to Resort: Approx. 2 hours and 30 minutes from Dubrovnik Airport

Korcula

Korcula boasts numerous unspoilt coves and beaches, azure blue sea, an abundance of lush, aromatic Mediterranean plants and an average of 3,000 hours of sunshine per year. Contained within old fortified walls, with its Renaissance palaces and mediaeval fortresses, many have compared the town of Korcula with Dubrovnik. There are plenty of sports facilities on offer and a good selection of cosy cafes and restaurants, serving delicious local cuisine.

Transfer Time to Resort: Approx. 3 hours from Dubrovnik Airport by bus and local ferry.

Mljet

Believed to be the most beautiful island on the Dalmatian coast, the lovely island of Mljet is a summer paradise with its delightful beaches, dense woods and rich and varied flora and fauna. There is a stunning national park which covers approximately 11 square miles and boasts two saltwater lakes - Malo and Veliko.

Perched on a small island in the middle of one of them is the 12th-century Bene-dic-tine monastery of St. Mary, which can be reached by a small taxi boat. The island is criss-crossed with many paths, winding through the pine and oak trees and taking you over the green hills and down to the beautiful beaches and clear blue seas.

Transfer time to Resort: 3 hours

Central Dalmatia

Resorts in central Dalmatia include : Trogir, Makarska, Baska Voda, Podgora, Bol, Hvar, Stari Grad, Brela and Split. Fly to Split from Gatwick, Heathrow, Manchester and Birmingham.

Trogir

A beautiful bridge links the mediaeval city of Trogir to the mainland. Known as the cultural centre of Dalmatia, this spectacular town was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1989. With its exciting cultural treasures, comfortable hotels and lovely restaurants and cafes, Trogir is a first class summer destination.

Location: Situated in the northern part of Central Dalmatia, about 20km from Split.

Transfer time to Resort: Approx. 15 minutes

Makarska

With its perfect semi-circular small harbour Makarska certainly lives up to its too-good-to-be-true appearance. The wide promenade, bursting with fashionable cafes, restaurants and boutiques, is backed by an old town of narrow, stone-paved streets. The modern hotels are built just outside the bay with their own curving, pine protected beaches. An excellent mixture of old and new - fun, sports, relaxation, culture, sightseeing, shopping and eating out.

Location: On the Makarska Riviera, 85km from Split.

Transfer time to Resort: Approx. 2 hrs

Bol

Hosting the most famous beach in Croatia, the stunning White Horn, Bol is a well known mediaeval seaport with an abundance of cultural sights and peculiar places for you to explore. Plenty of cafes, bars and restaurants line the busy harbour promenade and guest can rely on the mini-train to travel to and from the hotels.

Location: Situated on the southern shores of the island of Brac under the steep heights of Mt. Vidova Gora.

Transfer time to Resort: Approx. 2 hrs and 30 minutes by coach and boat/hydrofoil



Baska Voda

Baska Voda, once a small fishing town, is now a thriving tourist resort. Its warm, crystal clear sea, golden beaches and excellent sunshine record made Baska Voda the perfect choice for a family holiday. Numerous souvenir shops, friendly cafes and cosy restaurants line the beautiful promenade, filled with the sound of music and laughter. For the more energetic holidaymakers there is a large choice of sports activities.

Location: Beneath the spectacular Biokovo Mountains in heart of Dalmatia.

Transfer time to Resort: Approx. 2hrs from Split Airport.

Podgora

Situated 70 km southeast of Split and is 160 km northwest of Dubrovnik, Podgora sits on the slopes of the Biokovo Mountain is embedded in a landscape interspersed with olive-trees, pine woods and other Mediterranean vegetation. Apart from enjoying the traditional local hospitality every day, you should make sure you taste some of the local specialities while sitting in the shade. It is also worth paying a visit to the local wine shops and fish restaurants.

Transfer time to Resort: Approx. 1 hour and 15 minutes

Hvar

Known as the "Madeira of the Adriatic" the island is the sunniest spot in Croatia. There is a remarkable, white polished stone square in front of the impressive Cathedral, with fantastic views of the harbour and the backdrop of islands. The town has a beautiful waterfront promenade, lined with palm trees and housing a great selection of gift shops, seafood restaurants, cosy cafes and bars.

Transfer time to Resort: Approx. 2 hours and 30 minutes from Split Airport by coach and boat/hydrofoil.



Stari Grad

A charming resort on this beautiful island, Stari Grad is home to one of the oldest archaeological treasures in Croatia. Its elegant hotels, inviting restaurants, cosy cafes and beautiful beaches make this resort an ideal location for a relaxing holiday.

Location: In the north-western part of the island, about 20km from Hvar town.

Transfer time to Resort: Approx. 2hrs and 30 minutes by coach and boat/hydrofoil.

Brela

If relaxing on the beach is your idea of a perfect holiday, then Brela is the resort for you! The white pebble beach, blue sea, and green pine and olive tree fringing the shore makes it ideal for sun worshippers and for people who like to relax in the shade. Brela is a fishing village with numerous cafes, bars and restaurants combining with colourful street markets to make this an idyllic hideaway.

Transfer time to resort: Approx 1 hours and 45 minutes from Split airport.

Split

Split is not only the main city in Dalmatia it is also a main tourist attraction. It has 1700 years of history, a variety of archaeological, historical and cultural monuments, the best known being the Palace of Diocletian, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Transfer time to resort : 40 minutes from Split airport.

Istria and Kvarner

Resorts in Istria and Kvarner include : Opatija, Lovran, Pula, Porec and Rovinj

Fly to Pula from Gatwick and Manchester or Rijeka from Heathrow

Opatija

Opatija used to be the resort of choice for the Austro-Hungarian and Italian aristocracy, who would flock here to enjoy its clear blue waters, long beaches and sub-tropical plants. Today Opatija is a bustling, modern resort with a fine range of shops, boutiques, cafes, discos and even a casino. For the more active the beautiful Ulca hills provide the perfect spot for walking and mountain hiking.

Transfer time to Resort: Approx. 40 minutes from Rijeka Airport and 60 minutes from Pula airport

Lovran

Lovran is loved for its meticulously cared for parks, gardens and woods, beautiful golden beaches and a spectacular selection of seafood restaurants and patisseries, serving the famous chestnut cake. Exuberant festivals, a regular occurrence in the long summer months, bring an additional vitality to this lovely resort.

Transfer time to Resort: Approx. 1 hr from Rijeka Airport and 90 mins from Pula airport

Pula

The famous port of Pula is a fascinating mixture of roman history and contemporary surroundings in a perfect summer setting. Situated in the southern tip of the Istrian Peninsula, this excellent tourist resort is also the most important commercial and cultural centre of the region. It is studded with landmarks, of which the Roman amphitheatre is certainly the most impressive. The sea is beautifully clear and the fishing superb and there is good shopping, excellent museums and art galleries and the friendly warm welcome for all those lucky enough to visit this delightful seaside town.

Transfer time to Resort: 15 minutes

Porec

Porec combines the beauty of an ancient Roman and mediaeval town with some highly developed tourist complexes. In the town, be sure to see the famous mosaic frescoes, the 6th century Basilica of Euphrasis with its adjoining bell tower (well worth the climb for the panoramic views it offers from the top). Stroll through the small stone streets or relax at one of the many restaurants beside the busy quay.

Location: Situated on the Istrian Peninsula, this attractive resort combines the beauty of an ancient Roman town with the comfort and convenience of a highly developed tourist complex.

Transfer time to Resort: Approx. 1 hr and 15 minutes from Pula Airport

Rovinj

The streets and squares of the Venetian Quarter are a delightful location to lose yourself in or you can take a lazy stroll along the boat thronged harbour. The stone houses rise in steep terraces to be crowned by the pencil thin campanile of St. Euphemia. The busy market also offers a good selection of locally grown fresh produce as well as interesting souvenirs.

Location: Originally an island itself, Rovinj is now surrounded by 14 little wooded island and is situated on the Istrian Peninsula, 40 km from Pula Airport.

Useful information on Croatia

- Croatia was part of Yugoslavia, one of the most popular holiday destinations from the UK during the 1970's and 1980's
- 500,000 British tourists visited Yugoslavia every year during this period
- You can visit Venice on a days excursion from Pula, northern Croatia. It is just the other side of the Adriatic and takes approx 3 hours
- Croatia has 5,835 kilometres of coastline and 1,185 Islands
- Zagreb is the Capital city of Croatia
- The currency in Croatia is the Kuna. There are approx 11.75 Kunas to the pound. Foreign currency can be exchanged at the airports, banks, exchange bureaux and larger hotels within the resorts.

Slovenia

Slovenia is situated in Central Europe, bordering Austria and Italy, on the 'Sunny side of the Alps'. It is a country offering a variety of Summer and Winter holidays. City breaks in the Capital City, Ljubljana, Lakes and Mountain Holidays in Bled, two centre holidays in the mountains and on the coast, or a holiday on the Adriatic in Portoroz.

Portoroz

Arrival airports: Ljubljana

Distance to resort from airport: Approximately 2 hours and fifteen minutes

Portoroz is a very sophisticated resort on the Adriatic coast of Slovenia. It has a wonderful mild climate with modern hotels clustered around the harbour. There is a wide range of leisure activities including two casinos, a marina and a beach. Portoroz means 'Port of Roses' and you can see why as there are many rose beds and wonderful parks nearby.

Lake Bled

Arrival airport: Ljubljana

Distance to resort from airport: 30 minutes

Lake Bled is without doubt, one of the most beautiful lakes in Europe, and probably the world. The lake has a church in the middle. You can easily reach it by boat, and once you are there the beauty of the building and it's surroundings are breathtaking. Built into the cliff is a castle, from the top you can see across the Alps to Austria or just gaze across the lake in wonder. The modern and traditional hotels line the bank of the lake. Anyone who enjoys lakes and mountain holidays must visit Slovenia and Lake Bled.



Lake Bohinj

Arrival airport : Ljubljana

Distance to resort from airport: 1 hour

Lake Bohinj is not as famous as Lake Bled but just as beautiful. It has more of Alpine feel to it with huge mountains accompanying the lake that make the mountain walking excursions very popular.

Kranjska Gora

Arrival airport : Ljubljana

Distance to resort from airport: 1 hour

Kranjska Gora again has a real alpine feel to it. An excellent network of lifts to get you up the mountain for those long embracing walks. Like all of Slovenia the hotels are of a very high standard with very good service levels.

Romania

Romania is a Latin country, as the Romans settled there, as opposed to a Slav country, such as Bulgaria. It has a stunning Black Sea Coast, not far from the Bulgarian resorts of Golden Sands, Albena, St Konstantin and Suny Day. New for summer 2006 we offer dedicated beach holidays to Romania. Our clients arrive in Varna, Bulgaria and are transferred by coach to their chosen resort. We do offer two country holidays featuring Romania and Bulgaria. The Mountain resort of Poiana Brasov, in Transylvania offers stunning views, invigorating trekking holidays and quality hotels.

Neptune and Olymp

Arrival airport : Varna (Bulgaria) as this resort is part of a two country holiday. Neptune is situated on the Black Sea coast of Romania. It is an attractive resort among a lush wooded area with fresh water lakes and a beach that slopes gently into the sea. The resort has a wide selection of hotels with excellent facilities. There are numerous bars, nightclubs, a theatre and a disco. Olymp is built on the sea wall with it's hotels situated on the beach. The resort has a wide range of facilities.

Mamaia

Mamaia lies between the Black Sea and lake Siutghiol. It has an 8km long beach where the sand is 3 meters in depth! As it is the longest beach resort in Romania it has a wide choice of activities.

Poiana Brasov

Arrival airport : Bucharest

Distance to resort from airport: 3 hours

A large percentage of Romania is covered in Forests, and Transylvania, where Poiana Brasov is situated, is the most densely wooded region. It really is a beautiful part of Europe, completely unspoilt by commerce and de-forestation. Brasov is the main town and Poiana sits further up the mountain, making it a perfect destination for a lakes and mountain holiday. Wildlife is abundant, with bears and wolves living in the forests.

The choice of hotels are wide and great value. The hotel Sport and Poiana are very popular. There are a number of excursions available, the most popular is the trip to Dracula's home, Bran castle, a day out to get your teeth into!

Winter ski



Balkan Holidays offers great value skiing holidays to Bulgaria, Slovenia, Serbia and Romania. Our most popular skiing destination by far is Bulgaria, here a skiing holiday provides your customers with unbeatable value for money in terms of the price of the holiday and the ski facilities, a very high standard of hotels and a very low cost of the après ski!

The basics...

There are generally three grades of skiers, beginners, intermediate and advanced.

Beginners

We would class a beginner as someone who is either taking their first steps on the slopes, or someone who has only skied once or twice before. There is a great temptation amongst a lot of beginners to try to move on as quickly as possible, but it's worth remembering that those who learn all the basics properly obtain far more enjoyment out of their skiing by the end of their holiday.

Intermediates

No two "Intermediates" will be the same as the term covers a vast range of skiing ability. All intermediates however should be at home on a blue (easy) run and confident enough on a red (medium) run. They will have had at least a couple of weeks in Ski School, and will be able to perform reasonable parallel turn. We would strongly recommend some additional lessons because there is still a lot to learn. Wrong techniques and bad habits picked up at this stage are very hard to get rid of. All our resorts have excellent grading for Intermediates skiing and proud of their teaching records.

Advanced

An advanced skier will be at home on any snow, be it on or off piste, and will always stay in complete control. It is true to say that whilst none of the ski resorts we feature offer particularly extensive skiing, there is plenty to keep even an expert happy. Some of the most challenging ski runs you will find in Bansko and Borovets, as well as some extreme ski and snowboard shows and attractive facilities.



Ski runs

There are four main types of ski runs...

Green

These are very easy and also known as nursery slopes. They are generally at the bottom of the mountain, very gentle in gradient (almost flat!) and perfect for learning to ski on.

Blue

Blue runs have a gentle gradient so the skier can build up some momentum as they move. A beginner will use a blue run to practise their 'snow plough', this is one method a skiers uses to stop. This involves pointing the ski's inwards to slow down, eventually stop and, hopefully, remain standing!

Red

This is a medium difficulty ski run or piste. An intermediate skier would ski a red run the most. These are generally in the middle of the mountain.

Black

A Black run is the most difficult ski run you can ski. Quite often they appear to be a sheer drop! They should only be skied by advanced skiers who have total confidence on skis.

On each resort introduction page in our brochure we show how suitable that resort is for each grade of skier by the difficulty of the ski runs, the number of runs and their variety.

What happens when skiers arrive at their resort?

When skiers arrive in resort, what they do and where they go will depend on their ability. An advanced skier probably has their own skis and only needs to collect their lift pass before they start skiing. A beginner or an intermediate will go to the ski school where they will be fitted for their boots, ski and poles. They will then be put into groups with other skiers of a similar ability. They are then issued with their lift pass and then go to the ski slopes with their ski instructor.

Ski resorts in Bulgaria

Bulgaria has three main ski resorts, Bansko, Borovets and Pamporovo. Each resort is suitable for beginner and intermediate skiers, Bansko and Borovets also have Black runs for advanced skiers.

Bansko

Bansko is set at the foot of the beautiful Pirin mountain range, it is a genuine Bulgarian town which is also a fantastic ski resort. The resort is 936 metres high, with the highest ski run starting at 2600metres. There are 70kms of marked runs with the longest run being 7kms. There is an extensive lift system, including an eight skier gondola lift. There are currently snow cannons covering 70% of the ski area with more being installed.

Bansko is suitable for all types of skiers, from beginner to advanced, but it is especially good for beginner and intermediate skiers as there are a number of nursery slopes for beginners plus the ski instructors speak excellent English and are used to teaching people to Ski. There are also a number of blue and red runs that will keep an intermediate skier busy all week. Bansko is also popular with families as there is a Junior Ski club which has it's own ski run and learning facilities.

There has been \$30 million invested in Bansko in the last 4 years which has resulted in this excellent ski infrastructure but has also seen a number of high quality hotels built. There is the five star hotel Kempinski plus a number of 4 star hotels, all offering modern and comfortable rooms and facilities.

The cost of apres ski is the lowest in Europe, lunch on the slopes costs only about £2 and a bottle of beer costs about 50p. Skiers can also dine out in one of the many 'Mahernas' in Bansko, a traditional local restaurant with Bulgarian cuisine.

Borovets

Borovets is Bulgaria's largest ski resort. Set in the Rila mountains, it was originally the hunting base for the Bulgarian Royalty. It is now a modern ski resort with a 4 man Gondola lift, taking skiers up to the top of the mountain. The skiing in Borovets is suitable for advanced skiers with an Olympic downhill run, there are numerous Blue runs for intermediate skiers and Green runs, or nursery slopes for beginners. There are nursery slopes situated at the bottom of the mountain, right outside the front door of the Hotel Rila!

Pamporovo

Situated in the Rhodope mountain range, Pamporovo is the sunniest ski resort in Europe. Balkan Holidays are the only tour operator to feature this resort with the arrival airport of Plovdiv, which is a much shorter transfer compared to arriving at Sofia. Again it is excellent for beginners and intermediates but this resort is not so good for advanced skiers.



Resort facts	Bansko	Borovets	Pamporovo
Resort height in metres	936	1323	1620
Altitude of highest run	2600	2560	1937
Total no. of lifts	25	8	9
Total km of marked pistes	70km	40km	25km
Total km of cross-country	9km	-	38km
Snowboard hire	yes	yes	yes
Ski guide	yes	no	yes
Ski school hrs/week (downhill)	24	24	24
Ski school min age	7	7	8
Snowboard tuition hrs per wk	6	6	6
Nursery	n/a	yes (1-4yrs)	n/a
Snow Flake ski club	4-7 yrs	3 – 8 yrs	5-8 yrs

Comprehensive information on all our ski resorts in Bulgaria can be found in our brochure and on our website – www.balkanholidays.co.uk/ski

Jargon busters...

If you haven't been skiing before you will probably be baffled by all the jargon and this can make agents nervous about selling a skiing holiday they know nothing about. Well, don't worry as below are simple explanations of all that jargon!

Lifts

To ski down a mountain or even one ski slope you have to get to the top first! To get to the top or halfway up a mountain you would use a Gondola lift (explained below), to reach the top of a long ski run you would use a chair lift (see page 19) or to reach the beginning of a short ski slope you would a drag lift (see page 19).

Gondola

These are the big lifts that can carry up to approximately 20 skiers at once. The Gondola lifts in Bulgaria carry a maximum of eight skiers. You may know Gondola lifts by another name, cable cars.

Chair lift

These are as they sound, they look like a moving bench, skiers just sit on them and get off when they reach the top.

Drag lift

This type of lift has cable dropping down with a seat or a steel tube you put between your legs and it then drags you up the slope! Sounds painful but don't worry, it isn't!

Ski Packs

This is what you need to buy if you are not taking your own skis with you. A ski pack consists of a pair of ski's, boots, sticks, a lift pass and ski lessons.

Snow Plough

This is one of the first things you learn, it is a technique used when stopping, it involves turning your skis inwards and then turning gently to one side.

Parallel stop

This is a more advanced way of stopping. Using this method you can stop very quickly by turning your ski's across the slope and parallel to each other.

Parallel turn

This is a method of changing direct while keeping your ski parallel with each other.

Lift pass

To ride on a resorts lift system a skiers needs a lift pass. Skiers should book these in the UK through Balkan Holidays as this is much cheaper than buying it in the resort.

Cross county skiing

You don't have to bomb down a ski slope at 100mph to enjoy skiing! Some people like to ski across country, through forests or open terrain, this is called cross country skiing.

Off Piste

This is when advanced skiers ski away from the official marked runs. This can be dangerous and must only be done with the permission of the ski resort management once they are aware where the skier will be skiing, this is because if there has been heavy snowfall skiing can cause an avalanche in certain areas.

The height of a resort.

Bansko is 936 metres high - This means Bansko is 936 metres above sea level. Normally, the higher a resort is the more chance it has of snowing.

Snow cannons

Some, not all, resorts have snow cannons. These are machines that make snow and then fire it out across the ski runs, hence the name. These are used when there has not been much natural snowfall. Please note that the temperature has to be a certain temperature for these to be effective.

Half pipe

A half pipe is used by snowboarders. It is shaped like a pipe that has been cut in half and the boarders use the sides to gain speed and height as they come off the pipe.

Apres ski

Apres is French for 'after', so this term refers to all the things people do after they have skied...ie sampling all the bars, clubs and restaurants in a resort. The après ski in Bulgaria is two things...very cheap and very lively!

The key selling points of a Balkan Holidays skiing holiday in Bulgaria

- Great skiing – perfect for beginner and intermediate skiers
- Low cost ski packs and lift passes compared to other European ski resorts
- 3 great resorts, Bankso, Borovets and Pamporovo
- Best value Apres ski in Europe – 75p for a bottle of beer £2 for lunch and £5 for dinner.
- A wide range of quality hotels from 2 to 5 star
- FREE child places (subject to availability)
- Departures from Gatwick, Bristol, East Midlands, Humberside, Manchester, Newcastle, Cardiff, Birmingham, Belfast and Edinburgh.
- A FREE lift pass in every learn to ski and full ski pack
- Snow flake kids ski club in all three resorts – Run by fully qualified British staff in a convenient location
- Bansko and Borovets - FREE ski school for children if adults book a pre-booked full or a learn to ski pack
- Bansko and Borovets – FREE ski kindergarten for children if adults book a pre-booked full or a learn to ski pack
- Pamporovo – Free childrens lift pass for children if adults book a pre-booked full or learn to skipack
- Group discounts
- No single supplements on specific departure dates
- FREE children's insurance – As long as the parents or guardians book 2 adult insurance policies, their dependent children's insurance is free.

Most of our charter flights are now to Sofia, this means a shorter transfer time to Bansko and Borovets, our two most popular ski resorts. The three letter code for Sofia is SOF and for Plovdiv it is PDV.

Other Destinations

We also offer skiing holidays in Slovenia, Serbia and Romania, details of which are available in our latest brochure and our website.

Thank you for reading our Product Training Manual.

How to book with Balkan Holidays

Via our website www.balkanholidays.co.uk/agents

Viewdata ISTEEL 311# & Fastrak BLK

Or call us on 0845 130 1114

Brochure supplies from www.trade-gate.co.uk

Agency sales & travel agent concessions call 020 7543 5591



Sofia House, 19 Conduit Street, London, W1S 2BH
0845 130 1114 www.balkanholidays.co.uk/agents