

The 26th of August we traveled with [Ving](#) to [Balchik](#) in [Bulgaria](#). As usual, we parked the car at Dalen Parkering. We stayed at the [Hotel Selena](#), located on the seafront. We were there a week and returned home on the 2nd of September. The airport we landed on was [Varna Airport](#).



Bulgarian flag



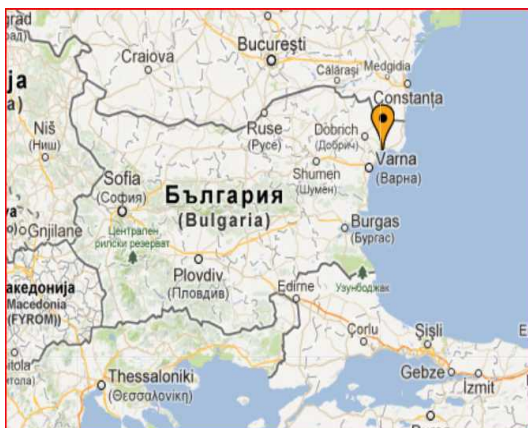
Bulgarian coat of arms



Map showing where Bulgaria is.



Bulgaria during its greatest extent.



The position of Balchik

Short history taken from Wikipedia:

In the late 7th century an immigrant group [proto-bulgarians](#) led by Khan Asparuh to the northern [Balkans](#), where they mingled with the local [Slavic](#) and [Thracian](#) population, and formed the First Bulgarian Empire. Bulgaria was an important European state in the 9th and 10th century.

The Bulgarian state was defeated by the [Kievan Rus](#) in 969, and was completely crushed and oppressed as a result of a [Byzantine](#) attack under Basil II in 1018.

Bulgaria was restored in 1185, and continued to be an important country in Southeast Europe for over two centuries.

Later Bulgaria came under Turkish control when the country became part of [the Ottoman Empire](#).

As a result of [the Treaty of Berlin](#), Bulgaria got its independence again in 1878 as an autonomous principality, and was proclaimed as a fully sovereign kingdom in 1908.

During [the First Balkan War](#), the Bulgarians were fighting alongside with Greece and Serbia to throw the Ottomans out of the Balkans. Large areas were conquered, but because of disagreements about the division of these areas, there was war again. This war, [the Second Balkan War](#), led to a discouraging Bulgarian defeat.

This led to that Bulgaria joined the Axis powers again during World War II, in exchange for a new and larger corridor out to the Mediterranean, as well as Macedonia. At the end of the war Bulgaria was invaded and occupied by the communist [Soviet Union](#) and was proclaimed the people's republic in 1946.

In 1990, the communist power was abolished. Bulgaria joined NATO on the 29th of March 2004 and the EU on the 1st of January 2007.



The coat of arms of Balchik

Balchik is a small town on the Black Sea, about 40 km north of Varna. It has approx. 25,000 inhabitants, has a popular marina and a beach promenade. The place is surrounded by white cliffs of limestone. The biggest tourist attraction is the Botanical Gardens at Queen Mary's Summer Palace.

The salt level in the Black Sea is 1.8%. Compared to the Mediterranean level of approx. 3.8%.

The city was the capital for a short period in the 14th century.



Photo from the beach promenade. Hotel Selena is here.



Aerial view of Balchik.



Varna airport.



Here we exited the plane.



Outside the room at the hotel it looked like this.



There is parking lot outside and the main street.



The terrace furnishings were not anything to brag about.



We thought this was so sad that we complained to both the hotel and Ving. The result was that we could move to another room where we were given a sea view. The hotelier and Ving were very nice and were able to arrange it in a straightforward manner.



Here we have walked towards the city center and look back towards the hotel where we were staying.



There are plenty of fish here, and these boats were in use every day. In the background the port crane that was working most of the day to unload and load boats.



Here we are out on the pier and looking inward.



Located at the pier are many people out fishing. They are here every day and they also get a good number of fish.



View from the edge of the pier and back to the hotel.



Here is a big industrial building.



This is in the center of Balchik.



One day we took a taxi up to the botanical gardens. It was nice landscaped with lots of different plants. Below are some pictures from there.



It has the second largest cactus collection in Europe. Only the collection in Monaco is bigger.





Nice wall.



At the upper entrance to the garden is a long shopping street.



It was hot to walk in the sun, so when we finished and went back out the same way we came in, I had to have a cold beer. The local beer is called Kamenitza. Afterwards we took a taxi back to town.



There is a restaurant in the hotel where we stayed and we often ate there, they had great food. This is one of the dishes that Anne Berit had.



I also tried the fish, and it was actually pretty good.



Another day we walked along the seafront and along the beach. There are some nice houses here.



Another nice house.



This is a small waterfall coming from the creek that flows through the botanical gardens.



There were a lot of people on the small beach.



This is Queen Maria of Romania's summer house. It was built in the period 1926-1937.



The entrance to the summer house. There is also a small restaurant here.



The restaurant.



A water wheel for the mill that once stood here before the summer house was built.



It is walled and landscaped stone paths set up the slope.



This is inside the summer house, in the bath room.





The bath tub.



The fireplace living room.



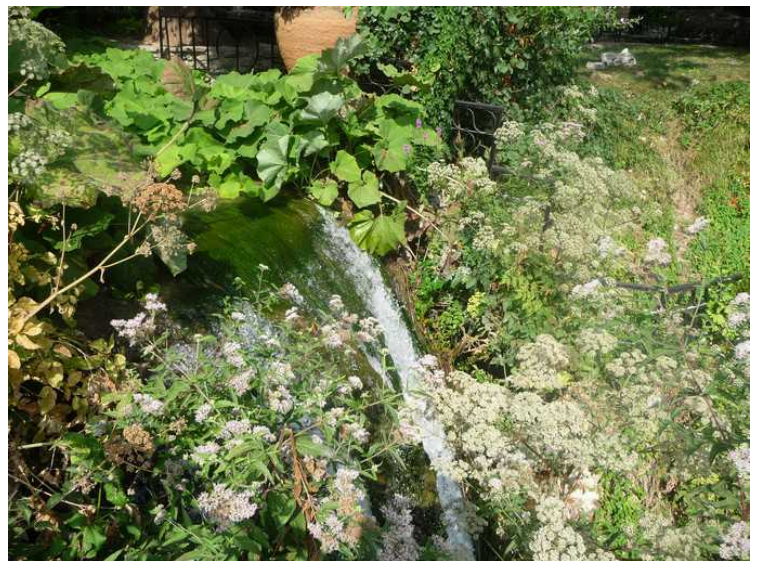
The bedroom.



It's nice planted here too. The beach below.



The summer House seen from the back.



The little waterfall that we saw from below when we came.



The summer house and the botanical gardens belong together, and after we had looked at the summer house, we went up to the Botanical Gardens where we had been before. The botanical garden was begun in 1940.



The chimney sweep takes a walk through the park.

Here we come to a tree that has a pretty thick trunk.



The view from the restaurant at the hotel.

They thought the tree was impressive.



This is how it looks like on the seafront. Our hotel is on the right.



One of the side streets off the city. Limestone cliffs in the background.



We are heading towards one of the other hotels that Ving use in Balchik. Here we look back towards the center.



The hotel is called Helios, and lies just above the beach. We liked our hotel better.



The beach that lies just below.



Looking the other way, it looks like this.



Another day we went up the hill above the city. There were a lot of houses up here.



Here we are quite high up.



Living conditions up here was fairly simple, but there was no shortage of satellite dishes,



Here we come to the local bread and cake outlet.



On the way down again.



This is almost back to the center.



Here we arrived at the local restaurant.



We were hot and sweaty after going on the slopes, so it did well with something cold to drink under the trees at the restaurant.



Back at the hotel, we can confirm that the port cranes still are working to unload the ship at the dockside.



We had to try the food at other restaurants too. Here we are at El Simpatico, farther along the seafont.



Further inside the restaurant pavilion.



View along the promenade.

Good wine and good food.



This day there were tourist buses visiting.

Party with music and dancing.





They were very eager.



Here is the bag pipe.

A restaurant with the Norwegian flag.
We had to have a picture of it.



One evening we joined a Bulgarian evening. Here we are entering the gate.

Here is a large hall open out to one side.



Flags from many nationalities.



There are tables and benches along one wall.



Next to the stage is lit a fire.



This is the stage where the performance will take place.



Here we found a table. There were two couples who had already sat down at the table.





There is service self of appetizers and wine.



The show has started.



The performance consisted of Bulgarian music and dance at first, then it became a magician show and after that a more cancan-inspired music and dance. Finally, it was disco music there all who wanted could dance. It was not exactly what we had been expecting on a Bulgarian evening.



On the way back to Norway again.
A pigeon sits on a display in the cafe at the airport.



We had some coffee while we waited.
The airport had opened a new departure terminal a few days before. It was pretty good with plenty of space.



Then we could board the plane.