

The 2005 Summer Season

By the end of April over 7000 tourists are expected to arrive in Varna airport. Those coming out of the high season are mainly retired people who want to stay in quality accommodation and over 50% will have previously visited Bulgaria.

Sunny Beach resort starts the season with 10 new hotels, boosting the capacity there by 2,500 beds, and the first tourists to arrive are expected in May, most of these will come from the UK and Scandinavian countries. More than 30 British



There will be a rise of over 18% in the number of British tourists for the summer and over 8000 Australians are arriving. Bulgaria has also finally managed to enter the French tourist market, for the first time ever Bulgaria will be included in offerings from the major French tour operators. An article in the prestigious French tourism magazine L'Echo names Bulgaria as the "New Eldorado", as a place with an extremely diverse tourist product.

tour operators have Bulgaria in their 2005 portfolios and 14 Danish operators have included it in theirs.

EU experts reckon Bulgaria is able to accept 10 million tourists per year and Deputy Economy Minister Hadzhinikolov stated that tourism forms 12.5% of the domestic product, he underlined the fact that the Bulgarian tourist product is offered at a very attractive price and the country is promoted abroad as an all year round destination.

Bulgarian Yoghurt Fights Bad Breath

The Lactobacillus Bulgaricus - yoghurt vital ingredient - is a microorganism, which can grow in natural conditions only in Bulgaria due to the country's geographical & climatic features.

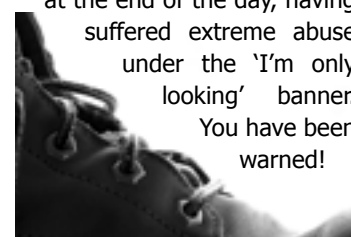
Scientists have proved that Bulgarian yoghurt can successfully beat bad breath, tooth decay & gum disease.

Tourist Flow to Bulgaria in 2004

A total of 4.01 million were the tourists in Bulgaria in 2004 representing a share of 1% of the tourists visiting Europe. Their number increased by approximately 14% compared to the number of tourists in 2003, the Economy Ministry informed. Most of them came from Greece (707 000), Macedonia (656 000), Serbia and Montenegro (577 000), Germany (565 000), the UK (259 000) and Russia (121 000). The data shows a 24% growth in the number of tourists from EU countries (no new member states are included). Holiday-makers to Bulgaria occupy nearly 450 000 beds annually according to Deputy Economy Minister Dimitar Hadzhinikolov. Revenues of Bulgarian tourism recorded EUR 1.7 B in 2004 with foreign tourism turnover amounting to EUR 2.4 B. Over the last three years the number of foreign tourists has increased by 50% and the foreign currency income has marked a leap of 70%. Over EUR 500 M have been invested in the tourism sector since 2000 and approximately 90% of private investments are of Bulgarian origin. In general nearly 7 million foreigners visited Bulgaria in 2004 as per the statistics and the number went up by 12% as compared to 2003. Over a million stays in hotels were registered in Sofia only in 2004 according to data released by the Bulgarian Hotel and Restaurant Association. In 2003 these were 970 000 and in 2002 - 640 000. The number of hotels in the Bulgarian capital was respectively 86 and 62.

A SHOE ADDICTS NIGHTMARE

How many of you gentlemen are married to a shoe addict? Or are you a lady shoe addict? If either of these sounds familiar there is one street in Varna, just to the left of the Cathedral in the centre, that has to be avoided at all costs, or if you should venture along there don't take any money with you! We call it Shoe Street for very good reasons, and it is almost impossible to walk along without being tempted by the styles and bargains on display. Whenever I have to go that way with my lady in tow I feel like getting out the blindfold, a five minute walk becomes an hour long excursion as every shop window has to be examined in minute detail, and should I dare suggest we move along the normal reply is 'I'm only looking', Oh gentlemen haven't we all found our wallets somewhat lighter and thinner, or the credit card at it's top limit at the end of the day, having suffered extreme abuse under the 'I'm only looking' banner. You have been warned!



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