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## PROMOTING HERITAGE - AND CULTURE - BASED EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM IN THE BLACK SEA BASIN

Project No BSB-1145



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**PROMOTING HERITAGE - AND CULTURE - BASED EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM IN  
THE BLACK SEA BASIN**

Project No BSB-1145

**Compendium of Culture and Heritage Activities and Events**

for experiential tourism in the Black Sea Basin

February 2022

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## FOREWORDS

Culture and heritage have long been integrated in special-interest tourism. Culture and heritage tourists usually visit cultural heritage attractions such as historic buildings and other historic attractions; archaeological sites; state, local, or national parks; art galleries or museums; concerts, plays or musicals; ethnic or ecological heritage sites; and suchlike attractions. Until recently, visits to culture and heritage sites have been most often offered as side activities for the tourists who come for recreation at the seaside resorts in the BSB. The participation in cultural and heritage-based activities is seldom the main reason for travelling to the Black Sea.

Experiential tourism is associated with an individualised approach to tourists (different people perceive differently the same place). Both travellers and service-providers need to invest time and resources in the pre-departure/pre-arrival trip planning and post-trip follow-up as relatively new phenomena in the tourism and travel industry, greatly enhanced by the Internet and advancing global telecommunications technology. As experiential services are usually provided by small undertakings (SMEs, NGOs, interest groups), which as a rule cannot allocate much resources for research and development of new activities, support measures are indispensable.

This Compendium of Heritage and Culture activities and Events in the BSB is a report that contains 40 region-representative heritage and culture activities and events from the BSB that have the potential to be used for creating authentic experiences for the tourists. Indicative tourist routes shall be outlined based on the activities and events.

Each of the countries, represented in PRO EXTOUR project, namely Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia and Greece, is represented with 10 exemplary activities and events that can be categorized as **(i) traditions and celebrations, (ii) historic sites and re-enactments, (iii) festivals, (iv) cultural events and (v) natural heritage**. Preference has been given to those activities that combine features of shared culture and heritage in the BSB area and can have integrated profiles that be representative for heritage, history and culture at the same time.

The detailed descriptions of the activities and events as pilot Inventories (dossiers) including details on the locations of implementation, time-schedules, video-materials and pictures materials are presented in an on-line repository at <https://repo.proextour.eu/>

The purpose of the Inventories is serve a tool for promoting the value-generation potential of experiential tourism for the BSB and to incite entrepreneurial cooperation for the valorisation of BSB heritage and culture as experience drivers.

This document is available in in English<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Cover image: Flat lay photo created by freepik - [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)



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## ARMENIA

### “Areni Wine” Festival

(Festival, Cultural Event, Natural Heritage)

**Location:** Vayots Dzor region, village Areni

**Schedule:** The festival is organized in the autumn, at the beginning of October.

**Organizer:** *Areni Festival Foundation*



### Description

Armenia is known not only as the first Christian state, but also as an ancient center of winemaking. The foundations of winemaking date back to the time of the biblical Noah . "And the ark came to rest on Mount Ararat on the 17th day of the 7th month of the year. “And Noah began to cultivate the land and plant a vineyard” . (Book of Genesis 8: 4, 9:20)

During the excavations carried out in the "Bird Cave" in the area of Areni village in 2010, archaeologists discovered clay vessels, cups and grape stones intended for fermentation, preservation of grapes, which proves that wine was made in Armenia more than 6100 years ago. This cave is the oldest wine factory known to mankind. The grape seeds found in the vessels were "Areni" type grapes. This proves that one of the oldest types of grapes is "Areni" grown in Vayots Dzor region.

The above is in fact a solid precondition for the development of tourism in Armenia, which began to be used with new approaches, became a complex festival, a cultural product based on natural heritage. The latter aims to present the rich history of Armenian wine, its culture, preservation and strengthening, to make the national peculiarities of Armenia invincible, to promote the development of tourism in Areni and in the surrounding villages, and to open new perspectives for development. It enables local producers to present their products in a different way, find new customers and partners and open development prospects. One of the goals of the festival is to present Armenia as one of the world cradles and important centers of winemaking. The key goal of the festival is to develop wine and related agricultural and ecological tourism in order to increase the level of well-being of the communities.

Areni Wine Festival provides a great opportunity to discover Armenia. One who has even visited the Areni Wine Festival in Armenia once will never forget the bright impressions received. At Areni Wine Festival you will be able to taste the best assortment of Armenian wines.

Areni Wine Festival is an annual pan-Armenian wine festival, which is traditionally held on the first Saturday of October in Areni village. The festival was held for the first time in 2009. It is organized by "Areni Wine Festival" foundation. At the roots of this festival is the initiator of the



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festival Nune Manukyan, through whose efforts it became a reality and an international tourism brand for Armenia.

### Partners and supporters

The festival was supported by the RA Ministry of Economy, the RA State Committee for Tourism, the RA Vayots Dzor Regional Administration, the Tourism Development Fund of Armenia, the Viticulture and Enology Fund, GIZ-Armenia,, the Communities Union of Armenia, Papparazzi Group, EVN Wine Academy, ACBA-CREDIT AGRICOLE Bank etc.

### Participants

The number of participants, both winemakers and tourists, has increased year by year. The number of winemakers participating in the festival has increased from a few to more than 20, with more than 100 pavilions. Not only winemakers but also various local drinks, food producers or small enterprises take part in the festival. This festival stands out with its international reputation, it is true that only 200 tourists took part in the first festival, but before the epidemic, the number of tourists, according to the organizers, had reached about 30,000.

### Innovations

The festival itself was an innovation for Armenia both in type and content. It was one of the first events that started to involve tourists in cultural activities, in particular in the process of squeezing grapes by feet.

### Key activities

Various events and competitions are held during the festival. In particular, the main activities of the festival are: wine producers' exhibition-fair, public-professional tasting, exhibition-sale of traditional dishes prepared by the best Armenian restaurants, business meetings, national music, dance, games, theatrical performances, art program, participation of amateur art groups. The action of squeezing the grapes with your feet. The following competitions are organized: "Armenia through your eyes" best wine label competition, "Golden Barrel" best wine competition among the best wine producers, wine tasting award among homemade wine makers, "The best souvenir of the holiday". Painting exhibitions and painting competitions are held as well.

### Marketing communications

The organizers of the festival carried out marketing steps, which helped raise people's awareness. A number of social platforms were used: Facebook, Instagram. Various videos have also been posted on YouTube. The availability of the festival was also announced on TV. You can get detailed information about the festival, both the organizing process and the event that has already taken place, from the following links:

<https://www.facebook.com/AreniFestivalFoundation>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QImC3q77bUA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKG-EteLcPU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRYTRttRq7s>



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### Accessibility

Areni settlement is 110.7 km away from Yerevan, 16.3 km from the regional center Yeghegnadzor. Areni village is located in Vayots Dzor region, on both sides of the lower Arpa river. More information on accessibility can be found at <https://t-armenia.com/en/app>.

Different tour-operators organize tours to Areni during a festival day.



Source of the images: Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/AreniFestivalFoundation>



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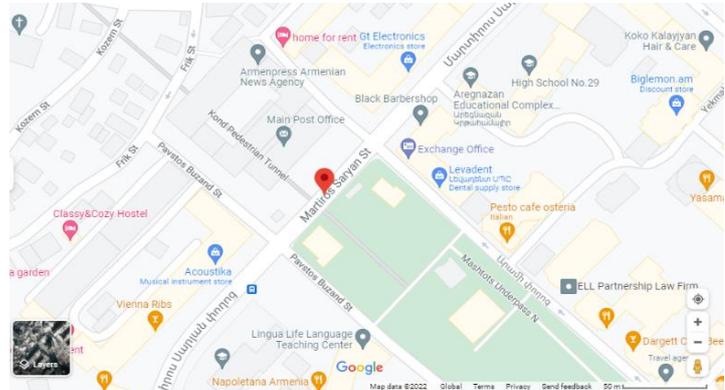
## “Yerevan Wine Days” Festival

(Festival, Cultural Event, Natural Heritage)

**Location:** Yerevan, Martiros Saryan Street

**Schedule:** The festival is organized in the spring (May) or in the summer (June).

**Organizer:** Eventtura



### Description

As it is said - "Where there is no wine, there is no love", so at "Yerevan Wine Days" everyone will have the opportunity to live in a wine and full of wine.

The aim of the event is to promote wine tourism in Armenia, to ensure the recognition of the country as one of the ancient cradles of wine. The festival is a wonderful opportunity for winemakers as well as restaurants and other companies who can present their products to a new audience. The event had a positive impact on raising the awareness of Armenian winemaking and wine tourism. This is evidenced by the growing indicators of wine production from vineyards in Armenia year by year. Thus, the event provides wide opportunities for the development of experiential tourism through wine in Armenia. In general, festivals, including the Happy Wine Days, solve a number of important issues of state policy in Armenia.

- Diversification of tourism products;
- Development of tourism in the communities, through which the economic activity of the community increases;
- Citizens are given the opportunity to present their production potential to both the domestic and international markets.
- The festival promotes balanced economic development, provides an opportunity to present our country with new tourism products, opportunities and features.

In this case, the Yerevan Wine Days are another additional opportunity to introduce Armenian wine and wine-making traditions and culture to the world market. During Yerevan Wine Days, wine lovers, locals and tourists, have a wide choice to try the best wines made from endemic grape varieties, to taste the full range of white, red and rosé wines, combining them with their favorite delicious Armenian dishes, a wide range of cheeses or the most delicious world cuisine. and thanks to that we can promote the development of experiential tourism in Armenia and ensure the recognition and popularization of our country as an ancient cradle of winemaking. Yerevan Wine Days attract thousands of visitors from around the world, including international food specialists and gastronomic tourists. This is a particularly good opportunity for vegetarian tourists, as not all festivals provide a special diet for them.



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The tradition of winemaking in Armenia dates back thousands of years. Because it is supposed that Noah planted a vine when he set foot on Armenian soil. The technique adopted during the reign of Urartu has hardly changed, preserving the true Armenian colors. The symbol (logo) of the Yerevan Wine Days event is a traditional Armenian wine jar with a cuneiform inscription left by King Argishti I of Urartu. The inscription is an archeological evidence that the Urartian military fortress of Erebuni was founded in BC. In 782 by the order of King Argishti I, in the place of modern Yerevan. Yerevan Wine Days is an annual festival that unites true wine lovers. It takes place on Saryan Street, full of wine and freshness.

In 2017, it was decided to hold the "Yerevan Wine Days" event in the capital for the first time, dedicated to the development and presentation of the best traditions of Armenian wine. The event was initiated by the Areni Festival Foundation with the support of the Yerevan Municipality.

### Partners and supporters

The partners of the festival are: Yerevan Municipality, RA Ministry of Economy, State Committee for Tourism, "GIZ Armenia", YerevanReso Projects company, Idram Payment System.

### Participants

Armenian and Artsakh winemakers take part in the festival, as well as a number of restaurants and cafes, which present Armenian, French, German, Japanese, Mexican, Italian dishes special to the cuisine. More than 80 winemakers have participated in the festival since the first year. The Hovhannes Tumanyan Museum, the House-Museum of Ara Sargsyan and Hakob Kojoyan and the House-Museum of Martiros Saryan in 2019 participated in the Yerevan Wine Days. The event also hosts Armenian musicians, artists and small groups. The visitors were mainly from Russia, USA, Germany, France and Australia.

### Innovations

There are a number of innovations in the festival. 5% discount is offered from the sponsors of the event with the support of Idram, if the participant buys the ticket for the event in advance, through the relevant application. This allows preventing queues and dealing with a lot of cash, thanks to more than 5,000 outlets and more than 650 online stores, where it is possible to pay with Idram. The latter is especially important given the pandemy.

In 2021 the following innovations were used during the festival:

- If the tourist did not know what wine could be combined with, then the best Armenian wine specialists with their master classes passed the secrets of drinking wine to tourists. In other words, master classes for tourists were organized by the organizers of the event.
- A master class-competition entitled "Wine and Art" took place in front of Saryan House-Museum. Swallowing the wine, the tourists tried to paint in Saryan colors. This is another innovative approach that combines art, culture and entertainment.
- In 2021, song and dance also differed, combining national and modern. This is also a step to bring the tourist closer to the Armenian culture.



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### Key activities

The two-day event includes a tasting of Armenian wine, as well as a large display of cheese and dishes from wineries and local restaurants. Visitors can enjoy a large selection of wines and dishes, enjoying Armenian jazz and performances by various DJs. Not only sound education but his alertness and dedication too are most required. You can enjoy Armenian barbecue, delicious Armenian cheeses and Artsakh “jingyalov” bread, which is a favorite dish of vegetarians. Thus, the event allows tourists to organize their active rest by participating in tastings and events of wine, cheese, barbecue and other dishes. In general, the key activities are the following: master class-competition, national dances and songs, taste of Armenian wine, taste of barbecue, taste of assorted cheese. Through these activities, the tourist gets the opportunity to get involved in tourism, to become a part of the given nation and culture, as well as to combine leisure with learning something new and getting new feelings.

### Marketing communications

The organizers used social platforms, particularly their Facebook page, as well as the RA Public Television and the YouTube platform. You can get detailed information about the festival, both the organizing process and the event that has already taken place, from the following links:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/491833142036954/>,

<https://www.facebook.com/Eventtura/>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=soLMvC4QEKE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOPH9yqFKvo>,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIUifglBPQ>

### Accessibility

The accessibility of the festival is provided both in terms of transport and the disabled people. Saryan Street is located in the central part of Yerevan, which makes the event accessible from the point of view of public transport. There are various forms of public transportation that can be used to get here. You can get information about the routes by using the following websites: <http://marshrut.info> , <https://www.yerevan.am/am> . People with different problems can also take part in the event. For example, this year there were participants who were in wheelchairs and did not have any problems.



Source of the images: : <https://infoport.am/> , <https://showbiz.am/>,  
<https://absolutearmenia.com/>



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## Gata” Festival

(Festival, Cultural Event)

**Location:** Vayots Dzor region, Khachik village

**Schedule:** The festival is organized in Autumn (September).

**Organizer:** Khachik Gata Fest Association



### Description

The festival is dedicated to one of the Armenian national confectioneries - Gata. Gata is one of the main decorations of Armenian holiday tables. It is traditionally baked in tonir, mainly followed by the baking of lavash. Gata is a sweet bread, the core of which is khoriz, a mixture of flour, butter and sugar. It is decorated with edible patterns and braids. The main goals of the festival are:

- raise the living standards of the population of the border village;
- create economic activity;
- develop the village as a tourist destination.

It is noteworthy that the results of the festival are also spread in the neighboring villages involved in the events.

The idea of the festival arose in 2014, when one of the young people of Khachik (Arus Nersisyan) participated in a youth exchange program in Moldova. And she made gata as a symbol of Armenian cuisine and culture. The hospitality aroused so much interest among the other participants of the program that when she returned to her native village, she offered the mayor to organize a gata festival together with the community day events. The festival is organized every year since 2014. Only the 2020 program was canceled due to the pandemic and the war.

### Partners and supporters

The main partners of the festival are Areni community municipality, "Areni" festival foundation.

### Participants

The main participants of the festival are the residents of Khachik and nearby villages. Most of the visitors are from the CIS countries, there are guests in large and small groups from different parts of the world. A large flow of visitors is provided by travel companies. This year, domestic tourists were more active due to the pandemic.

### Innovations

The innovation of the festival is the biggest gata in the world. Its size is increasing year by year and in 2021 the diameter was 4,35 m.

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### Key activities

The festival begins with the blessing of Gata. The most anticipated event is the cutting ceremony of the largest gata in the world, which is then served free of charge to those present. The program includes national songs and dances, national and military games, riding, master classes (noodles, gata, pottery), visit to the village small museum, tasting of delicious dishes and goods typical of the village, tasting and sale of ecologically clean agricultural products, exhibition-sale of handicrafts and works of art, performances by the staff of the Yerevan State Circus.

### Marketing communications

The organizers are cooperating with Armenia TV to raise awareness about the festival. The FB pages of the Areni Wine Festival Foundation

(<https://www.facebook.com/AreniFestivalFoundation>) and the Gata Festival

(<https://www.facebook.com/KhachikGataFest/>) are actively used to spread information. The platform of youtube is also used as a marketing tool:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T86V34FbtDA,](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T86V34FbtDA)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnlv9r5l99o,](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnlv9r5l99o)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejk4yEZQAok,](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejk4yEZQAok)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ENOm-8yiV0>

### Accessibility

Khachik is located 160 km from Yerevan, 40 km from the regional center. The route from Yerevan includes the following settlements: YEREVAN - Masis - Artashat - Surenavan - Armash - Yeraskh - Tigranashen - Zangakatun - Elpin - Chiva - Areni - KHACHIK. Hitchhiking is often used to reach a village. On the day of the festival, the municipality organizes Areni-Khachik passenger transportation.



Source of the images: <http://www.hayzinvor.am/66894.html> , <https://positiveday.am/> ,  
<https://www.facebook.com/KhachikGataFest/>



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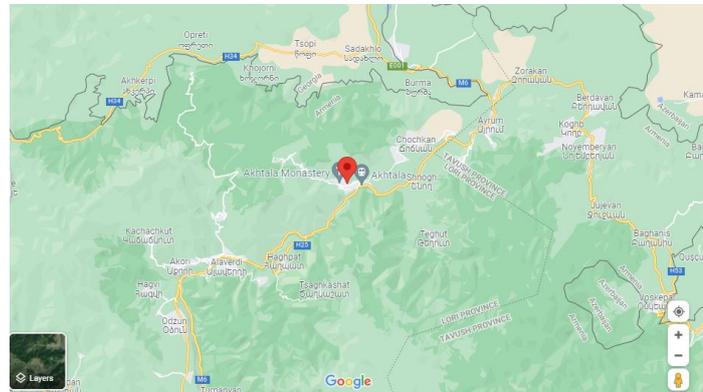
## “Barbecue” Festival

(Festival, Cultural Event)

**Location:** Lori region, town Akhtala

**Schedule:** The festival is organized in August or September

**Organizer:** Town Akhtala, Pan-Armenian Barbecue Festival



### Description

The annual pan-Armenian barbecue festival in Akhtala includes a number of cultural competitions-events dedicated to raising the popularity of Armenian cuisine and barbecue applications, as well as the complex development of gastro-tourism. The goals of the festival are deep and the organizers try to achieve the goals in a more targeted way every year and to convey the message of the festival to the public. The main messages of the festival are the followings: 1) To draw the public's attention to the fact that it is also interesting outside of Yerevan, 2) Contribute to the socio-economic development of the region, 3) Contribute to the promotion of the town brand, 4) Make the traditional methods of barbecue recognizable, 5) Create a festive mood, 6) Contribute to the balanced development of tourist areas, 7) Organizing entertainment for the festival participants, 8) Form participating teams, 9) Introduce ethnographic traditions.

The annual Pan-Armenian Barbecue Festival has been traditionally held in Akhtala since 2009 on the initiative and by the "Development and Preservation of Armenian Culinary Traditions" NGO once a year. The town is distinguished by the originality of historical and cultural resources, which does not imply diversity only in terms of tourism, and as a result, tourists visiting the region have a desire to diversify their tourism offer, Armenian culinary traditions, gastro-tourism and complex development of the area.

### Partners and supporters

The partners of the festival are Akhtala Municipality and Lori Marzpetaran, as well as "ECO.AM" LLC, Heinz, Dargett, Ijevan group companies.

### Participants

Participants are representatives of various Armenian companies and restaurants, as well as individual chefs from different parts of Armenia and abroad. They are the Hatis team, The Taste of Shamlugh House, Near David, Aromas of the Caucasus, Arsen's Cuisine and others.



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### Key activities

During the festival there are exhibitions-sales, culinary competitions in the categories of the best taste, the best idea and the best design, which are accompanied by national song and dance.

### Marketing communications

Aiming to raise the popularity of the national cuisine to a world level, various food bloggers and TV representatives (Public TV, News, Yerkir Media, News am, Armenia today, Taste flavor blog, etc.) are invited to open the Festival, provide coverage and sustainable tourist flows. Details about the festival can also be found on the Facebook page of the Pan-Armenian Barbecue Festival: <https://m.facebook.com/631009040253187/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8qJaM76Eu0>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suqRfrqKltA>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsyOsr9D9Vk>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9KcD9JTM5c>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFlwXHHDK1w>

### Accessibility

The town of Akhtala is 186 km away from Yerevan, and 62 km away from the regional center Vanadzor. It is located north of the regional center, close to the Armenian-Georgian border. More information on accessibility can be found at <https://t-armenia.com/en/app>.



Source of the images: <https://yerevancard.com/am/news/33>,  
<https://armenpress.am/arm/news/860124/> , <https://armeniasputnik.am/>



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## “Honey and Berries” Festival

(Festival, Cultural Event, Natural Heritage)

**Location:** Tavush region, town Berd

**Schedule:** The festival is organized in Summer (August).

**Organizer:** Tavus Foundation



### Description

The people living in this region for centuries and millennia have stood out with their harmonious way of life with nature and environment. The locals have managed to make the use of the goods of nature not only a part of their daily life and a way to take care of the problems of life, but also a culture and a lifestyle. This region is distinguished by lush forests, berries and delicious honey.

The festival is dedicated to the cultivation and presentation of honey and berries based on growing natural goods in the north-eastern regions of Armenia.

The main goal of the festival is not only to give the opportunity to the participants and guests to get acquainted with the amazing honey and berries of Tavush region, but also to promote the development of beekeeping products in this region and to increase the sales of local products. It also aims to present the region's resources and attract both local and international investors, activate local producers, and contribute to the balanced spatial development of the region with the help of tourism and tourism-related industries. With the help of the event it is also aimed to raise the culture in this region to a new level and, revealing the peculiarities of the local culture, to present them to the international community and tourists. The festival also aims to promote the preservation of local cultural values.

With the help of the festival, an attempt is also made to provide income to the residents of remote areas without leaving their homes, instead of looking for work in other places, by organizing their own business and with the help of tourism.

The festival has been held since 2012 on the initiative of the "Tavush Spiritual Revival Foundation" in the area called Soraner (dendropark) in the town of Berd, Tavush region. Since 2012, 8 festivals have been organized, which were identical in nature and content, differing mainly in the type and number of cultural events and guests.

### Partners and supporters

Berd Women's Resource Center Foundation, Berd Municipality, Tavush Marzpetaran, Tavush Marz Tourism Development Agency were partners of the festival in different years.



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## Participants

The key participants of the festival are local producers, who present different types of products based on local honey and berries. The festival is intended for a wide range of participants, especially those who like sweet food and ecologically clean products. The participants of different years were both domestic and international tourists. Ambassadors and heads of various international organizations have also participated in the festivals organized in recent years as guests.

## Key activities

Among the key activities of the festival are the exhibition-sale of Tavush goods, culinary master classes, the most delicious honey cake contest, tastings of berries and food made from them, national songs and dances and the involvement of the participants in them. And during the night separating the two days of the festival, there is a concert with the participation of the State Jazz Orchestra of Armenia, and then the performances of the representatives of the Armenian author's song, already around the bonfire.

## Marketing communications

The organizers used social platforms, in particular their Facebook page, as well as the RA Public Television and YouTube platform, the nationwide electronic ticket sales platform (<https://www.tomsarkgh.am/>) and various local mass media, such as before and after the festival.

<https://www.facebook.com/TavusiHogevorVeracnundHimnadram/>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d\\_ZISaNXr-8&t=88s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_ZISaNXr-8&t=88s)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8AD6CWqJLU>

## Accessibility

The town of Berd is 171.6 km away from the capital Yerevan, and 58.5 km away from the regional center Ijevan. More information on availability can be found at <https://t-armenia.com/en/app>. You can also reach Berd by going to Ijevan from the Northern Bus Station of Yerevan and continuing the way by minibuses or taxis. The organizers also carry out transportation in the direction of Yerevan-Berd-Yerevan during the festival.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/TavusiHogevorVeracnundHimnadram/>



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## Haybuys” Festival (Armenian Herb Festival)

(Festival, Cultural Event, Natural Heritage)

**Location:** Tavush region, village  
Yenokavan

**Schedule:** The festival is being held on  
the last Saturday of June.

**Organizer:** HayBuis Festival



### Description

The program of HayBuys Festival shares with the visitors the aesthetics of plantlife in Armenia, especially in the sense of "Plants as elements of ornament-decoration-beauty". In our culture, plants are widely used in all spheres: food, clothing, everyday life, decorative art, apartment decorations, dinnerware, furniture, monasteries and churches, as well as church utensils. For thousands of years Armenians have lived close to nature and in nature, with daily contact, conversation with plants, trees and flowers, as well as interesting stories. Plants have nourished, protected and healed people from various diseases, becoming an element of ornament on walls of churches and buildings, and in dozens of medieval manuscripts. The attitude towards plants has itself transformed into knowledge which has been passed down for generations. Due to this powerful knowledge, Armenians in Shirak, Syunik and Tavush can name all the plants and fruits growing in forests and fields as well as their ripening period at a glance, as well as determine the best time to enter the forest. With the density of high quality plants, Armenia occupies one of the leading places in the world, with about 107 species growing in every 1000 km<sup>2</sup>. For comparison, the species found in Armenia make up about half of those found in the Caucasus. Tavush region is no exception. Most of the RA forest areas are located here. "About 54% of the territory of Tavoush is comprised of mixed forests (113 566.7 acres) and specially protected areas (33 031.6 acres), such as Dilijan National Park, reserves, etc., which make up 38% of the Armenia’s forest areas and cover mainly the central and southern parts of the region."<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to find out the role of plants in different spheres at different times: plants as ornaments, decorations of human life, folk and modern ways of combining beauty and colors, their multifaceted beauty and flowers as the main plant ornament. In Armenian decorative art, plant motifs are very essential due to the huge role of flora in human life. The idea of the tree of life is essential in the "HayBuys" festival program, because it symbolizes the universe, eternity and continuity of life, which is particularly important this year due to the difficulties and challenges. The flower with its delicate and short life is the symbol of growth and the power of transformation. This main message will be the theme of the Festival program this year. The flower, which reflects and emphasizes the beauty of plants, is especially substantiated in "Plants as Ornaments" concept. Flowers are the most essential part of plants, because they guarantee the continuity, rebirth and growth of plants.

"HayBuys" festival is an annual event, which is being organized in the territory of "Apaga Resort" located in Yenokavan community of Tavush region. The HayBuis Festival, translated as

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“Armenian Herb,” celebrates the special ingredients and the traditional knowledge used to forage and prepare the herbs. The festival, which has been held since 2015, on the last Saturday of June. The area of Yenoqavan, where the festival is held, is a unique condensation of Tavush nature and culture, where you can see almost everything that is typical to the northeastern region of Armenia. The choice of the location is based on the opportunities and experience of the previous years of using the area, as well as the thematic approach: Plant - Ornament, Plant - Flower. During the festival, the territory is divided into 3 conditional areas: exhibition selling the works of artisans, cuisine, as well as songs and dances, games zones. The center of each of the zones is the traditional local tent, a temporary shelter made of branches and grass, called “dagya” in the local dialect, which was usually used as a shelter for herdsmen. These lodges are designed for participatory events or master classes, as well as a relaxing area for visitors. The organizers group the master artisans according to the fields in order to make the thematic series visible, to promote the network cooperation of the masters and to ensure the exchange of knowledge and skills. The main, symbolic part of the festival area is the Garden of the Tree of Life. The garden area has become a festival “home” for winemakers and participants associated with the toast tradition.

- “Burastan” site is for displaying the plants / flowers, floristic and design designs, and flora-related events.
- The kitchen is designed for events that involve a culinary component, such as cooking classes, testings, etc.
- The flower stage, which is the traditional stage area of the festival, will host singers, dancers, reciters and masters of speech.

Main sub-themes of the Festival programs and events were specified within the festival concept “Plants as Ornaments, Plants as Flowers”.

### Partners and supporters

The partners of the festival are: EU, UNDP, GIZ, APAGA Resort, Ijevan Wine Factory, Yell Extreme Park, Tavush Region Tourism Development Agency.

### Participants

Festivals are different from fairs because during festivals participants demonstrate, glorify and take pride in human creativity. From this point of view, the power of storytelling is key in selecting participants and shaping the festival concept. While selecting participants gender and age balance was taken into account by voting for women, young people as well as older people in order to encourage inter-generation solidarity and harmony. Festival participants were selected based on their skills and perceptions of plants as ornaments. Artisans, artists and cooks hold exhibitions and tell stories about how they got inspired by plant-ornaments and became creators, and why they are still motivated to create and be close to nature in the era of globalization. Participants have extensive experience and skills, they are ready and willing to share and teach their stories and experiences, they know what topics should be told to children or young people, they master the nuances of their occupation, cultural traditions, constantly follow the advances in their sphere and are not constrained by human communication and

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interaction. Festival organizers are guided by the principles of inclusion and participation, trying to involve the widest possible range of participants and different groups, as well as trying to make the festival accessible to everyone, such as children with special needs and initiatives.

The target audience of the festival is large and diverse. As the festival has a clearly defined educational goal, it can be interesting for Tavush residents because it gives an opportunity to rediscover their local nature. The people of Tavush region are "multi-layered" too: on one hand, there are people who still live in the region, and on the other hand, there are people who have left Tavush although they belong there by their origin, birthplace and roots, and have their own or transferred memories about the scent and colors of their local nature. Visitors of this group will be able to reconnect with their birthplace or the memory of the terroir during the festival by participating in different exhibitions, master classes and direct participation in events related to familiar plants, their forms, colors and manifestations. It has a stable group of visitors from Yerevan, who would like to participate due to the annual program change of the festival in order to gain new knowledge and experience.

### Key activities

Groups of people, who will participate in the festival as an entertainment event, will be indirectly involved in the festival's targeted educational and cognitive events such as master classes, cooking experiences and games and will interact with the festival program called Plants as Flower Ornaments. In case of extensive and targeted coverage, the festival can become an attractive place for families to visit, especially those with children who enjoy the beautiful nature of the Yenoqavan Resort. They will also have an opportunity to find activities for different age groups, learn new knowledge and experiences, such as building grass-tents, games, carpet weaving with flowers and plants, weaving flower wreaths, and other hobbies that are completely unfamiliar to children living in cities, and can revive fun memories in parents and create new learning platforms for children. For individual tourists or groups, participation in the festival can be an opportunity to discover the regional features of Armenia. At the same time, they can learn about the prolific and modernized culture, traditions and new practices of plants, get acquainted with artists, masters and visitors, as well as share space, environment and mood with them.

### Marketing and promotion

The organizers mainly used digital marketing tools, like - HayBuys official website (<http://haybuis.com/>), About Haybuis Armenian Herb Festival (<https://myarmenia.sj.edu/en/guide/experience/haybuis-festival/>), HayBuys official Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/HayBuis.festival/>), Apaga Resort official Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ApagaResort/>) The promotional video of the festival - (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8gzThFIGvY>)

## Accessibility

Yenokavan is 140 km away from the capital Yerevan, and 9,3 km away from the regional center Ijevan. More information on availability can be found at <https://t-armenia.com/en/app>. You can also reach Yeokavan by going to Ijevan from the Northern Bus Station of Yerevan and continuing the way by taxis.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/HayBuis.festival/>



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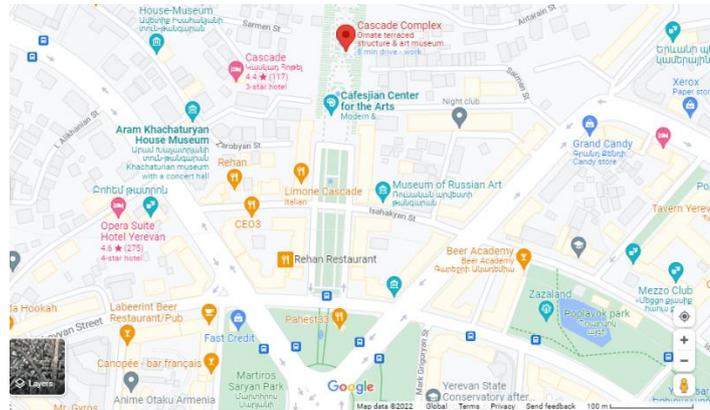
## “My Handmade Armenia” Festival

(Festival, Cultural Event)

**Location:** Yerevan

**Schedule:** The festival is organized in September (usually in Saturdays and Sundays)

**Organizer:** My Armenia Program



### Description

My Handmade Armenia is one of the major initiatives of the My Armenia program, supporting the growth, and, in some cases, revitalization of craft traditions in Armenia’s regional communities including wood and stone carving, textile art, embroidery, carpet weaving, pottery, and blacksmithing. Carpet weaving was a family craft that was mainly practiced by women, while passing on their skills to young girls. It can be said that it was exclusively a woman’s craft. The latter was considered a pious craft, especially in the villages, where each house had its own torch. Carpets and rugs require different weaving techniques, but can be woven on the same fabric. Handmade carpets and rugs were one of the most important elements of the interior decoration of a traditional apartment, they decorated the floor and walls, they were used as a curtain dividing the rooms, a cover, a rug, etc. The Armenian house of the nineteenth century was characterized by many fabrics, such as lace and embroidery, which were especially prominent during weddings and holidays, when families displayed their best possessions. Fabric creation was one of the few forms of expression for women in society, as they generally had no rights or influence. The fabric gave them a “voice”. The words were replaced by “knots”. These handicrafts also provided stability in difficult times, when women could sell their work, calling it “the bread of the day.” Khachkars are specific to Armenia. Here they are considered a national symbol. Khachkars are often erected to mark an important event or place as a tombstone. The motifs and patterns of sprouting and flowering give the khachkar special features, which turn it into a new version of the Tree of Life. Medieval khachkar makers usually followed the style of the local school, while modern masters made their khachkars by combining different school styles. Today, khachkar makers often use the language of engraving to express their artistic and philosophical ideas. The art of carpentry has greatly enlivened traditional Armenian houses, which contained many wooden components, such as domed ceilings and columns, as well as practical furniture, boxes, chests, cribs, buckets, and spoons. Carpenters used to decorate household items such as cereal jars or cribs, as the ornaments were not only aesthetic but also protected from the evil eye. For this purpose, carpenters have created special mills called daghdgan.

Pottery is one of the ancient Armenian traditions, which dates back to BC. In the 3rd millennium. During the excavations of ancient settlements, large vessels of water, food and wine were found, on which are often found ornaments of deer, fish, trees, mythical creatures, dragons and snakes. Housework was exclusively for women, and pottery was for men. This skill

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is also traditionally passed down within the family, from generation to generation. Textile is one of the traditional branches of the Armenian economy. In ancient times Armenia was famous for the production of its natural threads and fine fabrics. The fabrics were woven at home. One of the prominent directions in the use of these fabrics threads is the Armenian costume. According to the tradition, the hunters were mainly male masters. Depending on the geographical location and economic situation of the region, the costumes were sewn with pieces of different colors, textures and decorations. The costume was divided into royal, urban, peasant-church attire, depending on its wearer. Blacksmithing is considered a "mother craft" in Armenia, as the blacksmith also makes vital items and tools for other craftsmen. It is an inherited and exclusively male craft. The tradition of inherited handicrafts has been preserved today. From ancient times blacksmithing has occupied a large place in the Armenian ritual-customary system. According to the legend, when the chains of the dragon-shaped Artavazd imprisoned in the cave of Mount Masis were too thin, the blacksmiths, by striking the dungeon several times, strengthened them again. These other legends and myths about blacksmithing compare the blacksmith with the image of a mythological god, which resulted in the following expression: "The blacksmith is the only person the devil is afraid of."

The "My Handmade Armenia" festival is being organized to promote the restoration process of wood, stone carving, textiles, embroidery, carpet weaving, pottery, etc in the Republic of Armenia.

All workshops at the festival are tourist-friendly. Tourists can also enjoy artisan demonstration, especially at particular tents.

### Partners and supporters

My Handmade Armenia Crafts Festival is organized by the My Armenia Program, which is funded by USAID USAID/ and implemented by the Smithsonian Institution. The festival and program are supported by Teryan Cultural Center NGO.

### Participants

My Handmade Armenia presents a wide range of handmade goods crafted by artisans from across Armenia's regions. Visitors will have the opportunity to enjoy artisan demonstrations, participate in interactive craft workshops, and - of course - shop the wide range of beautiful artisan-made items.

### Key activities

The festival is accompanied by traditional Armenian following craft and different performances: Carpet making, Needlework, Cross-stone (Khachkars) making, Woodcarvers, Pottery, Ceramic work, Jewelry-making, Blacksmithing, Designs and embellishment Taraz (traditional dress).



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## Marketing Communications

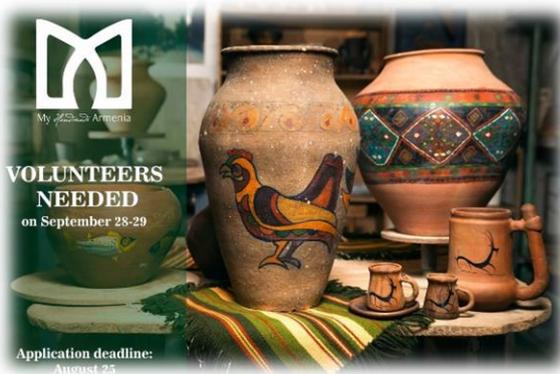
Many bloggers and channels representatives for instance Armenian Public TV, Armenia TV News, Free News TV, News, Armenia Today, NEWS AM spread the information about the festival. Also, many tourists from all around the world see the advertisements, announcements connected with the festival and take their tickets to Armenia. Organizers have used social platforms, particularly their Facebook page, as well as on public television and the Twitter platform. Also, in line with the nature of the festival, the organizers worked with cultural enterprises.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dd8Lz7db4ao>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyTPx-NVJYA>

## Access to the Festival

The festival is held in the center of Yerevan, next to the Cascade complex, which can be reached by almost all means of transport operating in Yerevan.



Source of the images: <https://russia-armenia.info/node/61965>, [shorturl.at/rDJMW](http://shorturl.at/rDJMW), [https://mobile.twitter.com/myarmenia\\_si](https://mobile.twitter.com/myarmenia_si)



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## "Cultural Renaissance" - a Traditional Festival of "Arts and Crafts"

(Festival, Cultural Event)

**Location:** Tavush region, town Dilijan

**Schedule:** The festival is organized in August or September

**Organizer:** "MEDIA ONIX" Culture and Tourism Development and Promotion Company



### Description

The festival is special in its involvement: all 10 regions of Armenia and the Diaspora with their communities are represented here, as well as delegations of embassies and consulates accredited in Armenia. This festival becomes unique and extremely effective in order to give a more balanced rhythm of development in the communities far and near the development of culture and tourism, cultural dialogue, exchange of experience, establishment of business contacts between the participants. The festival emphasizes and attaches importance to the involvement of not one or two communities of the region, but as different as possible, far from the urban cultural life. Within the framework of the festival, samples of carpet art, decorative and applied works of art, national costumes, fine arts, embroidery, national cuisine, etc. are displayed. The culture of the RA regions is presented: song, dance, national instruments, as well as the tourism potential of the region (hotels, guest houses, restaurants, etc.). One of the key goals of the festival is to enliven the daily life of the region's population with new, interesting events, as well as to make the visits of tourists more diverse and interesting, introducing foreign guests to the millennial cultural heritage of the Armenian people and the peculiarities of national cuisine. For the guests of the festival it is the best way to communicate with the whole national color of Armenia in one day and in one place, as Armenia is united here with its culture, craftsmen, variety of arts, traditions of hospitality, song and dance. It also provides a unique opportunity to communicate with the culture of the friendly countries of Armenia, the peculiarities of the national folklore and to take part in the colorful celebration. The idea that the pavilions should not be perceived as a fair, but should become a living platform for creative processes, working atmosphere and master classes is of key importance for the festival.

The festival has been held since 2013 on the initiative of "MEDIA ONIX" Culture and Tourism Development and Promotion Company in the town Dilijan, Tavush region. Since 2013 9 festivals have been organized, which were identical in nature and content, differing mainly in the type and number of cultural events and guests.



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## Partners and supporters

The partners and supporters of the festival were the RA Ministries of Economy, Territorial Development and Infrastructure, Foreign Affairs, regional administrations, communities of all regions of Armenia, MY ARMENIA, MY ARMENIA, Tavush Tourism Development Agency and other international and local organizations.

## Participants

The festival is attended not only by well-known and deserving masters, but also by young people working in the field of folk art, thus giving them the opportunity to exhibit their work, become recognizable, valued, have a new arena and environment to exchange experiences, sell their work. In 2018, the Cultural Revival Festival of Arts and Crafts hosted delegations from around the world, who presented folklore typical of their countries, exhibits of decorative applied arts, souvenirs, national cuisine, and local master classes. The participants of different years were both domestic and international tourists.

## Key activities

The festival exhibits unique carpet art, even museum pieces, decorative-applied works of art: pottery, blacksmithing, woodworking, puppetry, national costume, fine arts, embroidery, national cuisine, etc. The defile gives a special form and content to the festival - the display of outfits and accessories with new and modern solutions of national costumes. The festival also presents the traditional Armenian lavash bread baking ritual around the tonir prepared on the spot. Wine and beer tasting is also organized. The festival is unique not only with its handicraft gallery, master classes, multi-content pavilions, but also with concert programs featuring local colors, accompanied by individual performers and ensembles.

## Marketing communications

The organizers used social platforms, particularly their Facebook page, as well as the RA Public Television and YouTube platform, various local electronic media, both before and after the festival. Reports prepared by TV channels, various media outlets, and regular cooperation with travel agencies contribute to the growing interest in the festival, both among locals and tourists visiting Armenia.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/328352695710514/?ref=newsfeed>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3hU820fBzA>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H\\_MtsQVlzSk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_MtsQVlzSk)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBj-SDk0ZP4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZ1tEQMEAtc&t=4s>



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### Accessibility

The city of Dilijan is 95.9 km away from the capital Yerevan, and 34.8 km away from the regional center Ijevan. More information on availability can be found at <https://t-armenia.com/en/app>. The city of Dilijan can also be reached by minibuses from the Northern Bus Station of Yerevan. The organizers also carry out transportation in the direction of Yerevan-Dilijan-Yerevan during the festival.



Source of the images:

[https://www.facebook.com/artsandcraftsdilijan/photos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/artsandcraftsdilijan/photos/?ref=page_internal)



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## “Three Saints” Festival

(Festival, Cultural Event, Tradition and Celebration)

**Location:** Lori region, village  
Vardablur

**Schedule:** The festival is organized in  
the Autumn (October)

**Organizer:** Vardablur community



### Description

The "Three Saints" festival is dedicated to the three Greats of the Armenian nation: Komitas Vardapet, Hovhannes Tumanyan and Andranik Zoravar. During different years they visited the village of Vardablur, had close relations with the people of Vardablur and left a deep mark in the memory of them and their generations. A number of memorable works created by the Greats of Armenian origin have been created in the village of Vardablur, such as Komitas' "Lori Horovel".

The festival and its organizers have set themselves the task of achieving the following goals through the festival and sending a clear message to the public, in particular:

- Pass on the spirit and breath of the three Great Armenians to future generations;
- Live the stories through which Komitas, Tumanyan and Andranik are connected with the village of Vardablur in Lori;
- Recognize the lives of prominent locals who once had the opportunity to interact with the three Greats of our nation;
- Awareness of the fact that St. Astvatsatsin Church in Vardablur is one of the unique churches where the three Greats set foot and received a blessing;
- Meeting the cultural needs of the residents of Lori region, particularly Stepanavan region and Vardablur village;
- Promoting the recognition of Vardablur village, due not only to its rich nature, but also to its rich historical and cultural past;
- Strengthening Armenia-Diaspora cultural ties.

In the early 1980s, the stories of Komitas coming to Vardablur and writing the song "Horovel" were widely told in the village of Vardablur, with the written substantiation of which was written by Yerevan-based Vardablur scientist, writer Edward Sargsyan.



*Three Great Armenians  
(from left to right)  
Zoravar Andranik, Hovhannes Tumanyan,  
Komitas*

At the same time, the whole village was digging up their memories like one man, remembering the stories of Tumanyan coming to Vardablur village. In the village, very close to the church, there was a two-story house standing but half-ruined. It was Arakel Gyulzadyan's house. Arakel was Tumanyan's friend and father's close friend. There are many testimonies about the connection between Tumanyan and Vardablur, including Olga Tumanyan's memoirs.

In May 1918, after a two-day battle in Jalaloghli, on his way to Dsegh, General Andranik was hosted by Arakel Gyulzadyan and handed over to Israel and Ghukas, one of his rescued orphans.

Numerous stories related to these events could not leave the people of Vardablur indifferent, and finally, bringing together the stories of the three elders in the village of Vardablur, after a long work, the first festival "Three Saints" was organized in 1989 on the initiative of Norik Sargsyan, born in Vardablur.

Articles about the festival were published in "Avangard" and local "Paros" newspapers, and the Public Television broadcast an extensive report prepared by Arpen Movsesyan.

- "Three Saints-1990". Within the framework of the festival held in 1990, several families in Vardablur hosted artists for a week in their homes who were members of the Artists' Union, worked on themes related to the festival for a week, after which an exhibition took place.

In the following years, due to various difficulties and reasons, the festival did not take place.

- "Three Saints - 2019". In 2019, the 150th anniversary of Tumanyan and Komitas was a new impetus for the revival of the festival dedicated to our Greats in Vardablur.
- "Three Saints" festival - 2020. In the fall of 2020, the people of Vardablur were looking forward to it, but due to the spread of the pandemy, the festival administration organized the "Children of the Three Saints" online initiative with the slogan "Singing Komitas, reciting Tumanyan, living by Zoravar's messages." The aim of the non-competitive initiative was to pass on the spirit and breath of our Greats to the generations. The participants of the initiative, choosing any work related to our Greats, had to make videos in their preferred format (recitation, song, dance, instrument, drawing) and send them to the festival's Facebook page. About 140 participants from Armenia and the Diaspora took part in the initiative. Everyone was given certificates of participation.
- "Three Saints" festival - 2021. The "Children of the Three Saints" online festival took place, within the framework of which more than 190 participants from Armenia and abroad performed.



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## Partners and supporters

The supporters of the festival in different years were "Sermnabuyts" LLC, "Preston 3" LLC, Lori Marzpetaran, the office of the Administrative Head of Vardablur.

## Participants

The participants changed depending on the organization of the festival. In particular, before the pandemic, the main participants were the villagers and various invited individuals, and the festival organized during the pandemic had a unique format, during which, as mentioned in the history, the participants chose a work related to our Elders in their preferred format (recitation, song, dance, music, painting) had to make videos and post them on the festival's Facebook page.

## Innovation

The main innovation used by the festival organizers was to organize it online which was possible due to the ability to digitize the cultural values presented during the festival.

## Key activities

During the festivals organized before the pandemic, the program included concert events, cultural events dedicated to the three great Armenians, and a sacred sacrifice. The festival organized during the pandemic, as mentioned, gave the participants the opportunity to be included in the competition and to present themselves in the form of various digital-cultural products created by them.

## Marketing communications

The organizers used social platforms, particularly their Facebook page, as well as the RA Public Television and the YouTube platform. Also, due to the nature of the festival, the organizers worked with cultural enterprises representing three great Armenians. You can get detailed information about the festival, both the organizing process and the event that has already taken place, from the following links: [https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=2849924268558015&\\_rdr](https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=2849924268558015&_rdr), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyUJ5VFLHvE>

## Accessibility

Vardablur is 132 km away from the capital Yerevan, and 31.1 km away from the regional center Vanadzor. More detailed information on availability can be found here: <https://t-armenia.com/en/yerevan-to-vanadzor>.

It should be noted that for the festival organized during the pandemic, as such, there was no problem of accessibility and anyone, regardless of their location and physical condition, could participate in the festival online.



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## Vardavar

(Tradition and Celebration, Festival)

**Location:** Yerevan

**Schedule:** The event is organized in summer on the Sunday of the 14th week (usually in July) following Saint Easter

**Organizer:** Department of Culture and Tourism of Yerevan Municipality



## Description

"Vardavar" or the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ is one of the five "Tabernacle" feasts of the Armenian Church. It is a popular custom during the festival to sprinkle water on each other and release doves, which symbolize the flood, the salvation of Noah's family, Noah's dove. It is also customary to decorate with flowers, which is an expression of great joy at the sight of the glory of the Son of God ([www.qahana.am](http://www.qahana.am)).

The popular name "Vardavar" probably comes from the custom of pouring rose water.

St. Gregory of Tatev explains the name of the holiday "Vardavar" by comparing Jesus with a rose. Just as the rose is hidden in its shell before it is opened and is visible to all when it is opened, so Jesus, before the transfiguration, carried the divine essence in Himself and, being enlightened, revealed His divinity.

Vardavar is celebrated all over Armenia, in some regions the day of the holiday differs due to local folk traditions (in fact, because Vardavar is celebrated on different days in different parts of Armenia, usually after the first week of July, Vardavar celebrations take place on Sundays and Sundays. where they differ in their versatility). It is organized in Yerevan with a special splendor and aims to involve the guests of the city in an interesting and fun celebration. The annual event in the heart of Yerevan helps to preserve and revive the tradition and cultural celebrations of Vardavar, which have reached us since pre-Christian times, when the holiday was associated with the worship of the Goddesses Astghik and Anahit or Navasard (nav- new, sard - year; in Arm.,). The symbol of Vardavar was the worship of water, when the natural elements that sponsored fertility and fertility were honored. In earlier times, the celebration took place mainly in the mountains, near the water sources, which were considered unique sanctuaries and where donations were made, wine was poured in honor of the water element. Now it is more of a celebration of cooling off and having fun in the hot summer heat.

Vardavar is a national holiday, and as a rule it is organized by the people in their communities. The events dedicated to the holiday in Yerevan usually start on the eve of Vardavar with a festive procession starting from the Primate of the Ararat Patriarchal Diocese, St. Sargis Church, which has become a good tradition in recent years. The event is organized under the title "Let's restore our national holidays". The participants of the festive march organize a march with



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national song and dance to the Children's Park of the capital, where the main festive event takes place. Many passers-by from Yerevan and tourists also join them on the way.

### **Partners and supporters**

The key supporters of the event are the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports and the Ararat Patriarchal Diocese.

### **Participants**

Almost everyone participates in the festival, regardless of age, who wants to cool down and have fun. In particular, children and young people love Vardavar the most, thanks to whom the holiday has acquired a more popular name - "Tsrotsi".

### **Innovation**

The parade of water cannons through the streets of Yerevan has become one of the inseparable and favorite traditions of the celebration of the event in Yerevan.

### **Key activities**

During the event organized in the children's park, the games and rituals in line with the holiday's theme are presented, including the roasting of apples and the distribution of ears, which was directly attended by the residents of Yerevan and the guests of the capital. The next morning, the festivities begin with a Divine Liturgy dedicated to the Feast of the Transfiguration in the churches, during which a water blessing is performed. The events organized by the Yerevan Municipality dedicated to the Vardavar holiday, according to the tradition, start with a parade of watering cans in the early morning, when the cars also walk in the yards and streets of the administrative districts of the capital, supplying the necessary volume of water to Vardavar water games participants. The main and most crowded event dedicated to Vardavar, according to tradition, takes place in the Swan Lake of the capital. Yerevan Municipality provides all the conditions here for happy water games and unforgettable entertainment.

### **Marketing communications**

The organizers use both social platforms, particularly Facebook, as well as local media, which prepare photo reports from the celebration. You can find information about the celebrations organized in previous years at the following links:

<https://mediamax.am/am/news/yerevan/14803/>

<https://armeniasputnik.am/20210711/vardavary-sirumen-voch-miayn-hayery-28249210.html>

<https://factor.am/392465.html>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJQ\\_UWdJzew](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJQ_UWdJzew)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSgHWJxhMmY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZKbOprGXiY>



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## Accessibility

On Vardavar holiday you can take part in a beautiful tradition in almost all communities of Armenia. The festivities in Yerevan have two main "epicenters": Swan Lake and Republic Square where you can get by any type of transport mean existing in Yerevan.



Source of the images: <https://www.tert.am/>, <http://www.yerkirtsirani.am/>,  
<https://hraparak.am/> , <https://www.panarmenian.net/> , [www.yerevan.am](http://www.yerevan.am)



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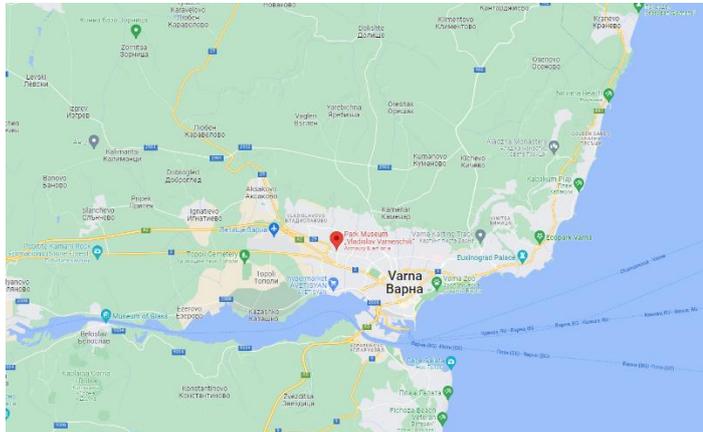
## BULGARIA

### *The Last Battle of the King*

(Historic Site and Reenactment)

**Location:** Varna.

Over the years, the historical reenactment has taken place in the Sports Complex "Asparuhovo" in the park "Asparuhovo", in the Park - Museum "Vladislav Varnenchik". In recent years, park "Asparuhovo" has been preferred as more easily accessible to more audiences.



**Schedule:** The historical reenactment takes place annually on November 10 or the closest holiday, usually on Sunday.

**Organizer:** Association for historical re-enactment "Chigot"

### Description

Historical re-enactments are one of the main activities of the Chigot Association. They are a re-enactment of a historical event, battle or simply an aspect of people's lives long ago. In Chigot Association the main focus of the reconstructions are the events from the Bulgarian lands and the Balkans during the period 12-15th century. The historical reconstructions of clothing, weapons and all other objects that Chigot using for this purpose are an integral part of the historical re-enactments. The most important thing is to follow the course of events as accurately as possible and to present them to the public in a way that best reflects the historical reality of the period. For this purpose, in-depth studies of historical sources, which can be written, illustrations from manuscripts, murals, and ideally - archaeological finds, which serve as a basis for reconstructions or precise replicas of objects. It is important for the historical restoration that the clothes are made of authentic materials and with adequate cuts, the weapons - with the behavior and dynamics of the originals. This is done so that the manufactured item or garment can function in the same way as the ones used by our ancestors. The equipment they use is not a theatrical or film prop, which only resembles the real one in vision, but is fully functional and that is why it gives us valuable information about its use in the context of the event.

On November 10, 1444, in the battle of Varna, the Christian Allied European Army, led by the Polish-Hungarian King Wladyslaw III Jagiello (Varnenczyk) and the Transylvanian Duke Janos Hunyadi, and the three times larger troops of the Ottoman Sultan Murad II, clashed. After this decisive battle, Southeast Europe came under Ottoman rule for centuries. Only the Vatican took part in the battle as a state, but many nations have their representatives - Bulgarians,



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Hungarians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Vlachs (now Romanians), Ruthenians (Old Russians), Croats, Saxons, Lithuanians.

The historical re-enactment "The Last Battle of the King" is the largest reconstruction of medieval battle, which is made on the territory of Bulgaria.

So far, the event has nine editions, but due to the pandemic situation and bans on holding mass events in the last two years did not take place.

The event represents a restoration of a historical moment, which is leading for the fate of Bulgaria and the town of Varna in this period. Tribute to the self-sacrifice of the Polish-Hungarian king Wladyslaw III Jagiello and his army in their desire to stop the impending expansion of the Ottomans in the Balkan peninsula and Europe.

### Key activities

- Preparation of the terrain.
- Connection with other clubs from Bulgaria and abroad: "Tarnovtsi" Association, MODUS VIVENDI, CRUX ALBA (Hungary), Golden Barrel Association (Serbia), SIVAS SPACHI (Turkey), OLGORI POGONI (Czech Republic) ... and free reactors
- Advertising and public relations
- Ensuring fire safety, medical team and securing the battlefield
- Providing and preparing the pyro-effects
- Presentation of the last battle of the Crusaders with the Ottomans through acting.
- Demonstration of medieval combat techniques with weapons that are an exact copy of those used during the actual event.
- Presentation of crafts related to the production of clothing and weapons of the medieval population - leather, metalworking, blacksmithing, knife making, pottery.
- Presentation of medieval recipes, as participants and spectators have the opportunity to participate in their preparation.

The participants and spectators of the event are directly involved in the study of various aspects of the life of medieval Bulgarians and try to recreate them in the most authentic way possible. This includes medieval fencing, warfare, a variety of crafts, cooking and customs.

The historical re-enactment also recreates moments from the everyday, civilian life of medieval people. The Chigot Association presents cooking, sewing, playing medieval musical instruments, cooking mead, various medieval games, practicing ancient crafts and more. We often present these activities at medieval camps and other similar events throughout the country.

### Partners and supporters

"Chigot" Association organizes the re-enactments under the auspices of Varna Municipality and Asparuhovo District Municipality. The event maintained by the voluntary work of the participants, as well as with their own funds. Support is also received from the Park - Museum "Vladislav Varnenchik", which is a branch of the National Museum of Military History.

## Participants

The main participants in the event are members of the Chigot Society, who are mostly young people with a special interests in archaeology and the historical past of medieval society.

Apart from “Chigot” Association from Varna and historical re-enactment companies such as the 18th Ether Infantry Regiment - Veliko Tarnovo, Medvs Vivendi Medieval Society - Sofia, Crux Alba - Hungary, Viteshka družhina “Zlatno Burence” - Serbia, Society of St. Teodor Stratilat - Serbia, many independent reactors from Bulgaria. have taken part in the historical reconstruction.

## Innovation

All clothes and equipment are made of natural materials. Using a drone for photos and camera operators. They are a part of an integrated experience based on the colorful recreation of living history; acquainting the spectators with moments from the everyday life of the medieval Bulgarians by presenting typical for the era crafts and activities.

## Marketing communications

The connection with the target groups and the audience is made through various local electronic media, as well as through social networks, in which the organizers of "Chigot" have their own pages. The event has been covered many times by various authoritative national television channels: Bulgarian National Television (BNT), Chernomore TV, SKAT TV, etc., as well as on social networks such as Facebook.

## Accessibility

The event is held in places that are easily accessible and communicative. Due to the fact that it is held within the city of Varna, public transport is well developed, regardless of where the historical reconstruction takes place in that year.

In connection with the development of green transport and the reduction of carbon emissions in the urban environment, bicycle lanes have been built, which can also be used to get to and from the event. In addition, there is no problem for people with physical disabilities to attend the event, as there are parking lots for cars and buses in the immediate vicinity.



Source of the images: “Chigot” Association



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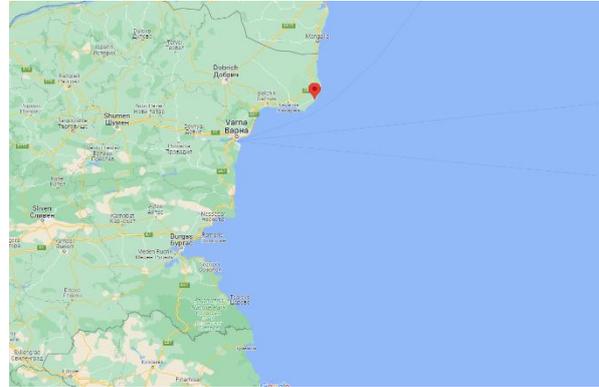


## July Morning

(Cultural Event)

**Location:** Black Sea coast in different places over the years - the breakwater in Varna, village of Varvara, Burgas region, Kamen Bryag, Dobrich region, Tyulenovo, Dobrich region, Tutrakan on the Danube River.

The meeting of the sunrise on July 1 is spreading to other places on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, moving away from the connection with the hippie movement. It is also noted in the inland of the country.



**Schedule:** The event is held every year on the evening of June 30 and on July 1.

**Organizer:** The cultural event has no traditional organizers due to the nature and origin of the event. In most cases, and even with the emergence of the festival, it is organized mainly by informal associations of fans of rock music. In recent years, some local authorities, such as the municipality of Kavarna or the municipality of Tutrakan, have been organizing the event, which in turn has led to the commercialization of the original ideas.

## Description

July Morning, is a tradition in Bulgaria, associated with the hippie movement, to meet the sunrise on July 1. Although the custom has been influenced by the world hippie movement since the 1960s, it continues to exist in Bulgaria. It originated as a hippie holiday in Varna in 1980, later, in the early 1990s, the celebration moved to the village of Varvara, Tsarevo municipality. Currently, it is most widely celebrated in the easternmost coast - the rocks near the village of Kamen Bryag, where the sun first shines on Bulgaria.

The first celebration took place in Varna at the breakwater, where about a dozen people gathered - friends from Varna and Veliko Tarnovo. Among them were those who were on leave from the army at the time, and another was even celebrating a birthday. At the time, they carried battery-powered cassette players and guitars to fill the night with music and, of course, beer. Although the first celebration was modest and in a small circle, it turned out that the news of the July Morning spread quickly, and the following year several times more people gathered to celebrate the holiday.

The name of the holiday is associated with the famous song “July Morning” of the English hardrock band "Uriah Heep" from 1971. Every June 30 against July 1, many people gather on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast to meet the sunrise together. So they think that they are purifying themselves before him, some make a connection with pagan or religious rites.

The places where it is celebrated are no longer only on the Black Sea coast, but also in most large settlements of the country. Especially popular are the banks of rivers and all kinds of

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water basins, hilly areas with the widest possible visibility of the terrain, as well as any hill around the big cities. In recent years, July Morning has celebrated with the participation of John Lawton (ex-vocalist of "Uriah Heep") in the town with the most beautiful sunset on the Danube - Tutrakan.

The symbolic welcome of the sunrise is conceived as a welcome of a new beginning and expectation of a better future from the participants. In a broader sense, this is just the beginning of summer.

Initially, it was formed as a protest against the communist government in Bulgaria, expressed in the meaning and suggestion of the song of the same name by "Uriah Heep". After the fall of the communist regime in the country, the holiday continued to exist, but the lack of a source of protest changed over time the basic idea of the first hippie movement in Bulgaria.

The idea of July Morning is preserved today. According to some, it makes sense to flee the city and civilization, to protest against one's own self and to completely free the individual from the shackles of the big city and digitalization and globalization.

### **Key activities**

In the beginning, the holiday is the personification of the forbidden - a protest against the government and a struggle for freedom. It is organized by a group of free-thinking young people who sang forbidden songs. Fires were lit on the beach, around which young people gathered to celebrate.

After the changes in 1989, rock concerts were organized regularly.

The main event during the holiday is the welcoming of the first July sun. In fact, the sunrise can be greeted anywhere with an east view, and for people who do not have the opportunity to spend the night outdoors, this is enough to feel empathy. At the meeting of the first July sun, a ritual bathing in the sea waters is traditionally performed, which has a purifying power for the participants.

The experience of meeting the first rays of the sun on the beach remains unforgettable memories among the participants.

### **Partners and supporters**

The participants gather at the places to meet the sun on their own. There are no official organizers, although in recent years some of the Black Sea and Danube municipalities have joined the organization.

### **Participants**

Over time, July Morning has become increasingly popular among young people. People who welcome the sun on the first day of July talk about a magical moment that makes it worth staying up all night. This is the moment of sunrise, when light overcomes darkness and drives it away. According to them, this view brings unique pleasure, hope and peace and cleanses the mind of bad thoughts. They want to abstract from everyday life, to feel nature closer to them and to take time to communicate with each other. Of course, all this is connected with



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celebration and merriment without worrying about disturbing someone. The solitude of the beaches on the sea shore gives them this opportunity.

### Innovation

The social distance measures and restrictions on public gatherings resulted in on-line broadcasting of some of the rock concerts and the event came to be performed in a hybrid mode.

### Marketing communications

As there is no official organization, communication between those wishing to participate is via live conversation or social media. In the last years before the event, there have been TV commercials for places where the sunrise will be celebrated, but as a rule, these are done for commercial purposes and distort the true feeling of the holiday.

### Accessibility

Once organized in places along the Black Sea coast, access is almost everywhere by car. In Varna, the breakwater wall is located in a communicative place and can be accessed even by public transport. It is best to travel along the northern coast by car, as village of Kamen Bryag is located on a second-class road, but close to the international road E 87.



Source of the images: <https://hora.today/v-tyrsene-na-proizhoda-na-july-morning-prez-2019/>, <https://pronewsdobrich.bg/2021/06/29/rok-i-nastroenie-na-dzhulay-morning-kray-shabla-i-kamen-bryag-i-na-plazh-ikantalaka/>



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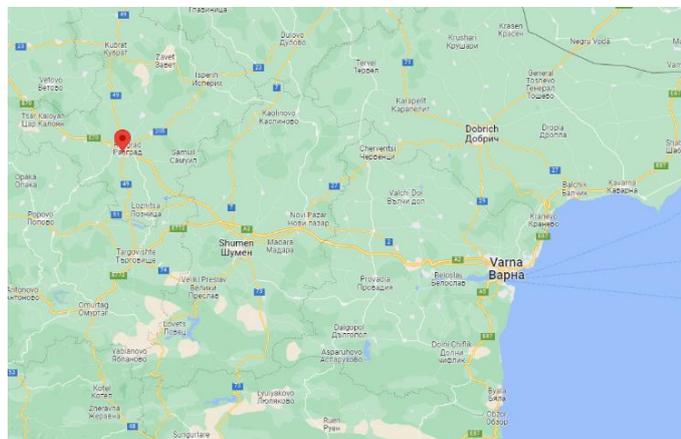


## Yogurt Fair

(Festival and Cultural Event)

### Location: Razgrad.

The festival is traditionally held in the center of town of Razgrad on the square in front of the 16th century Magbul Ibrahim Pasha Mosque. The parade accompanies all the festival days, starting every night along the traditional route in the central part of the city - from the Municipal Cultural Center to Momina Cheshma Square.



**Schedule:** The event is held every year at the end of July and usually lasts three days from Friday to Sunday.

**Organizer:** Razgrad Municipality, Department of Culture, Religious Activities and Youth Activities

### Description

The event is associated with a legend among the local ethnographic group Kapantsi, which covers the region north of Razgrad. The Kapantsi are one of the many ethnographic groups in Bulgaria, whose origins are still among the topics of discussion in the scientific community, dealing with history, ethnography and folklore. One of the hypotheses is that it comes from old Bulgarian families who refused to accept Christianity in the 9th century and for this reason they were deported to Ludogorie (area in Northeastern Bulgaria).

The ritual of making homemade yogurt is associated with a legend among the local population that a daughter-in-law is accepted into the new family and the new home only when she demonstrates to her new relatives quality fermented milk and kneading the famous kapanska banitsa (traditional Bulgarian pie crust dish). After passing this test, she became a full member of the family.

Homemade yogurt is also known as Kapan yogurt or Getsov yogurt (named after the village of Getsovo, located near the town of Razgrad), which has been produced for centuries according to an ancient family recipe.

The main message of the festival is to preserve and promote the traditional Bulgarian culture and the most ancient tradition of the local ethnographic group - Kapantsi, for making homemade yogurt with a unique and inimitable taste. This creates new perspectives for the local community, which by promoting the specific culture will contribute to economic development through tourism growth.



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## Key activities

The event is a culinary festival of local foods and drinks. It is accompanied by a parallel simultaneous festival of native traditions and arts and crafts, also. Every year, companies producing and distributing the traditional Bulgarian yoghurt meet at the event.

Before showing their art and skills, all participants parade along the main city boulevard.

There is an attractive competition for home-made yogurt/sour milk and dishes with it.

The fair days include an exhibition of artistic crafts - woodcarving, painting on glass, textiles and ceramics, souvenirs of Kapantsi, jewelry, knitting, wrought iron, fur, tailoring, icon painting, making dolls in traditional costumes and many other crafts of dozens of crafts from the region, the country and abroad.

The three-day event includes open-air concerts by art groups from various towns and villages in Bulgaria and abroad, as well as the Kapan Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances from Razgrad.

## Partners and supporters

Razgrad Municipality, as the organizer of the event, partners with local art groups, community centers, cultural associations, volunteer groups and individual volunteers, mostly students. The traditional partner is the Kapan Ensemble for folk songs and dances.

The local authorities in the person of the Municipality of Razgrad, in addition to being the organizer, are also the main sponsor of the event, as financial support is provided by local companies and individuals.

## Participants

The event is attended by representatives of the Razgrad twin cities of Calarasi and Slobozia from Romania and Avcilar, Turkey. Bands from other countries also take part in the festival. Dozens of masters are included in the traditional exhibition of arts and crafts.

## Innovation

In the production of Bulgarian yoghurt and home-made foods, all-natural local raw materials are used, which are obtained in ecologically clean areas. Ecologically clean and natural materials are used in the production of works of art by the masters.

Spectators could visit the Atritus Archaeological Reserve, which is a magnificently preserved ruins of a Roman city and a monument of cultural and historical heritage of national and European importance. It is within walking distance of the event location.

Magbul Ibrahim Pasha Mosque (16th century) is included in the UNESCO catalogue, as the third largest mosque in Bulgaria.

Near the festival are some of the monuments under the protection of UNESCO, such as Ivanovo rock monasteries and Sboryanovo Thracian mound. This can cause an increased flow of tourists

who can successfully combine the culinary festival with a visit to sites of cultural and historical heritage of Northeastern Bulgaria.

In the production of Bulgarian yoghurt and home-made foods, all-natural local raw materials are used, which are obtained in ecologically clean areas. Ecologically clean and natural materials are used in the production of works of art by the masters.

### Marketing communications

The communication is carried out through various electronic media, social networks and developed websites, which present all fairs, festivals and holidays on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria - [www.sabori.bg](http://www.sabori.bg)

### Accessibility

Razgrad is located on the main road Varna - Ruse E 70, which is part of an international road across the Danube bridge to Bucharest. The event is held in the center of Razgrad in the pedestrian zone. This implies extremely easy access for all who wish to attend the event. Razgrad, although a regional center, is not among the major cities in Bulgaria. This predetermines an underdeveloped urban transport and a small transport network. However, from Razgrad Railway Station, which is 3 km from the center, there is public transport to the venue.



Source of the images: Razgrad Municipality



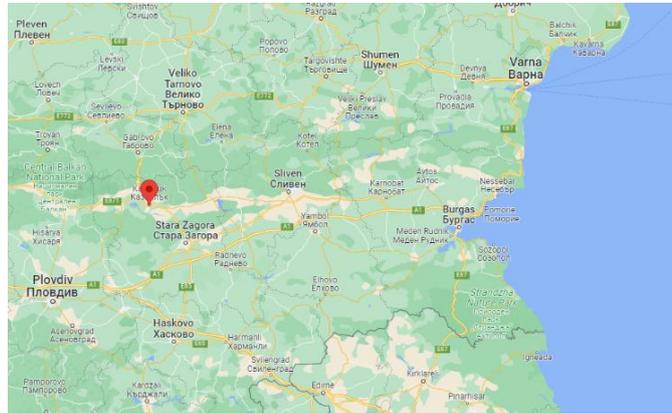
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## Rose Festival

(Festival and Cultural Event)

**Location:** The town of Kazanlak and the Valley of the Rose and the Thracian kings. Kazanlak Municipality is located in Central Bulgaria, in the famous Valley of Roses, also called the Valley of the Thracian Kings. The valley is picturesquely situated between two mountains (Stara Planina and Sredna Gora) and has preserved centuries-old traditions of rose production, authentic folklore, local crafts and Thracian culture.



**Schedule:** The festival is held annually for one month from mid-May to mid-June, with a focus on three-day celebrations organized in early June

**Organizer:** Kazanlak Municipality, Culture and Tourism Department

### Description

The beginning was set back in 1903, when the citizens of Kazanlak first organized the Rose Festival. It was dedicated not only to beauty and flowers, but also to charity. Rich exhibitions of roses and flowers were organized, trips to the Shipka Monastery, specially issued cards with views of the Rose Valley on the theme - rose picking, traditional production of rose oil and more. Funds were raised for poor families, the elderly, orphans and those with tuberculosis.

The Rose Festival in Kazanlak received a new development in the 1930s. With the launch of the sub-Balkan line during the Rose Festival, special trains were assembled to visit the Rose Valley. Special discounted tickets were issued, inviting citizens from different parts of Bulgaria to visit the Rose Valley during the rose picking to feel the unsurpassed aroma of roses. Charity was again the main goal of the organizers of the Rose Festival. Certain sums were provided for the maintenance of Kazanlak children in Sofia schools.

After 1944, the festival was banned, but not forgotten. The restoration of the Rose Festival in Kazanlak took place in 1966, and for this purpose a special organizing committee was elected, which included the head of the Culture and Arts Department, the director of the Oil Rose Experimental Station, the director of the Bulgarian Rose Factory. of the Iskra Museum and headed by the Deputy Mayor of Kazanlak. Commissions for landscaping, advertising, finance, trade and organization, cultural and sporting events were established.

In 1967 in Kazanlak was organized the first national rose festival in which rose growers from Stara Zagora and Plovdiv districts participated.

In 1969, the actor Joro Nikolov - head of the satirical theater at the community center "Iskra" - Kazanlak introduced in his script the carnival procession "Merry Kazanlak" led by the chariot of

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Seuthes III (Thracian king) and Queen Rosa. In 1971, by a decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rose Festival in Kazanlak was declared national.

In 2005 the town of Pavel Banya also organized a show - "Choice of Queen Rosa".

In the historical development of the Rose Festival - Kazanlak innovative moments during the year are: the award ceremony of the city of Kazanlak, a plein air of artists in the Valley of Roses - 1985.

At the Rose Festival in 1986, the new trolleybus line in Kazanlak was inaugurated. This year, for the fifth time, the Bulgarian Rose 86 Bulgarian Journalists' Award was presented.

In 1991, the Queen Rosa Ball was held at the Arsenal House of Culture. The queen's crown is made of silver and is made by the master goldsmith Lubo Dudev. The rituals of "rose picking" and "rose cooking" continue to be performed with great interest.

In 2000 the ritual "Rosavarene" was demonstrated in the rose gardens of Gorno Cherkovishte, and in 2011 in Rozovo, Kanchevo, Gorno Cherkovishte, Razhena, Gorno Izvorovo and the rose gardens near Kazanlak.

In order to preserve the uniqueness of the Rose Festival, the municipalities of Karlovo and Kazanlak jointly patented it. The registration number of the trademark is № 133543, and the term of the joint patent is August 5, 2024.

### **Key activities**

The festive program includes a demonstration of rose picking and roasting rituals in several Kazanlak villages - Rozovo, Yasenovo, Kanchevo, rose gardens near Kazanlak and elsewhere, festive Carnival procession, show-performance "Coronation of Queen Rose", International Folklore Festival, national festival "Tupan bie - horo se vie", Rose Wine Festival, etc.

Rose picking in the rose gardens in the villages near Kazanlak is among the most attractive activities during the festival. The picker starts at sunrise. The reason for this is that when the sun's rays touch the pink flowers, they begin to release their valuable aromatic oils into the air and they must be plucked as quickly as possible before they dry. Visits to distilleries and ethnographic complexes for cooking rose oil are also part of the programme.

### **Partners and supporters**

The main driver of the Rose Festival is the Municipality of Kazanlak, which also enjoys the support and assistance of a number of non-governmental organizations, community centers, etc.

### **Participants**

The event is watched live by more than 70,000 guests and tourists. The main target group of the event are all those who are interested in hiking and eco-tourism, authentic crafts.

### **Innovation**

The idea of creating and operating tourist attractions are completely subject to the requirements for sustainability in development. The whole activity during the picking of rose flowers and the distillation of rose oil is environmentally friendly and is done manually without



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the use of agricultural machinery. All activities during the festival are aimed at positive economic and social effects for the local population and economy.

### Marketing communications

The festival and tradition are already well known both in Bulgaria and abroad, and for this purpose there are websites where the activities during the festival days are written and advertised. Local TV channels are also used.

### Accessibility

Kazanlak is located in Central Bulgaria and an important transport hub. This is a prerequisite for the good connection of the city with the rest of the country.

The city has a railway station, which offers connections with Sofia and the Black Sea coast, as well as with Northern Bulgaria.

The access to Kazanlak by car is very convenient. The first-class road Sofia-Burgas passes through the city, and other first-class roads connect it with Veliko Tarnovo and Ruse and from there with Romania, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora and others. Kazanlak is located about 200 km east of the capital Sofia, 120 km from Plovdiv and 50 km from Gabrovo in northern Bulgaria.

The town has public transport, as well as bus transport to other villages in the municipality and to other settlements. From 2021, electric buses will run on the inner city lines, which helps to protect the environment and the air and for more comfortable transportation of residents and guests of the city.

The festival itself is held in the city center in the pedestrian zone, which is a prerequisite for easy access to the events.



Source of the images: Kazanlak Municipality



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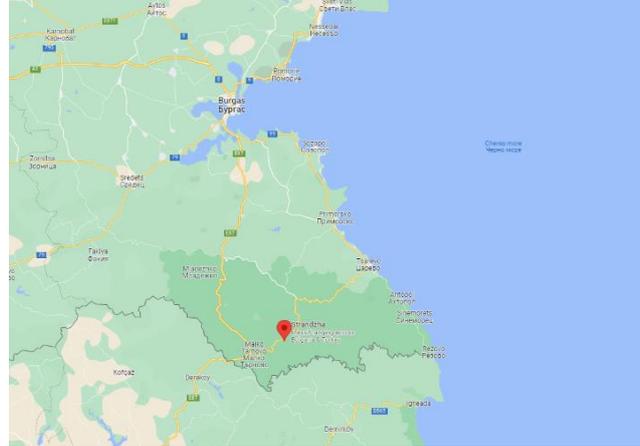


## Nestinarstvo (Fire Dancing)

(Tradition and Celebration)

**Location:** Strandzha Mountain, Burgas Region.

The Nestinar dances are held in several villages in the Strandzha mountain on the Bulgarian side of the border - the villages of Bulgari, Kosti and Brodilovo in the municipality of Tsarevo, Burgas region. In Bulgaria, the custom is preserved in its authentic form in only one village in Strandzha - Bulgari.



**Schedule:** Authentically the nestinar dances are performed on day of St. St. Constantine and Helena - the night of 3rd to 4th June as to the old church Julian calendar (May 21st, according to the new Gregorian calendar).

**Organizer:** Tsarevo Municipality, Bourgas region

### Description

The origin of fire dances lies in the most distant historical past of the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula. The Nestinarstvo (or fire-dancing) is a ritual from Eastern Thrace, associated with the cult of Saints Constantine and Helena, in which participants dance barefoot on embers. It is distributed in Strandzha mountain, Bulgaria and northern Greece.

In 2009 the ritual was included in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage and in the National Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage "Living Human Treasures - Bulgaria" at the suggestion of the Regional Historical Museum - Burgas.

The first written testimony about the custom of nestinarstvo was published in 1866 by the Bulgarian public figure Petko Slaveykov.

The first study of this practice was made in 1873 by the Greek theologian Anastasios Hurmuziadis at the request of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. He sees the custom as a superficially Christianized remnant of the ancient orgiastic cult of Dionysus. The hypothesis of the ancient Greek or Greco-Thracian origin of fire-dancing is widely used in Greek and Bulgarian ethnography. The name of this tradition is also shrouded in mystery, but in support of the above hypothesis there is a suggestion that it comes from the Greek word *Αναστένάρια*.

The custom spread in the early 20th century in several Bulgarian and Greek villages in Eastern Thrace, some of which in 1913 came to Bulgaria, and some remained in Turkey. Fire-dancing was practiced only by "fire-dancing" families, but there were cases when some of those present at the ceremony fell into a trance.



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Tsarevo Municipality has a Certificate for registration of the trademark "Nestinari" with registration number 89814 / 10.11.2014.

The Nestinarstvo is the spirit of Strandzha. This is a preserved centuries-old tradition and is unique for our country. There are pagan elements in it, but the essence of the ritual is respect for Saints Constantine and Helena as guardians of the Christian faith.

### Key activities

Nestinarstvo is a dance with bare feet on embers. According to tradition, the fire-dancers play in the evening on the day of St. St. Constantine and Helena (the night of June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>). Preparations for the event begin at dawn with the "dressing" of fire icons. A bright red cloth is placed, lined with old silver coins and decorated with flowers. A procession is held around the village, and the icons are carried to the holy spring of St. Constantine by three teenagers, followed by a ritual washing of their handles. In the evening, the epitrope (church trustee) and the fire-dancers go to the chapel of St. St. Constantine and Helena, then inhale the incense smoke and pray in front of the icons. Then the water from the spring is considered the most healing during the year. After dusk, all the people from the village come in front of the chapel, as well as the musicians - bagpiper and drummer. They perform three special melodies at a specific time. The first is performed during the movement from the chapel to the embers, the second during the walk on the fire, and the last is played at the end, bearing the name "Kostadinsko horo". After the icons are lit and the village is surrounded, the fire-dancers return to the chapel (called the konak). There are kept the icons of St. St. Constantine and Helena and spend time until the evening and listen to the constant beating of the drum, then fall into a trance. Reaching the embers with their dance, the fire-dancers enter the circle with shouts. They carry in their hands icons, towels, chandeliers. At the same time, a fire is lit in the square, which is maintained by the oldest fire-dancer (they are usually at an age when they no longer play).

By dusk, the fire was already beginning to spread over the embers. It is about two meters in diameter and five or six centimeters thick. The oldest practicing nestinarstvo are the first to enter it, who first go around the embers three times and then cross it. Only then does the real dance begin - the fire-dancers enter the circle of fire with a shrill cry. They cross the embers by pressing their feet into the coals and keep shouting. The dancers dance, holding the flower-decorated icon of Saints Constantine and Helena. Sometimes those in a trance make predictions. Gradually the dance becomes slower, the movements of the fire-dancers are calmer and finally the dance ends. When the ritual is over, everyone joins the Kostadin dance (Kostadinsko horo) for health.

In some villages the custom lasts for two days, and on the second day a ritual procession is performed again. The teenagers and the icon enter every home, and a dance is played on the village square. The fire-dancers perform their dance again against the background of ritual music. At the end of the dance, each of them crosses himself three times, kisses the icon and goes to the chapel.



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## Partners and supporters

The ritual is organized by the local population and community centers in the villages where it is celebrated. Mainly supported by Tsarevo municipality, which in order to preserve the traditional holiday holds a patent with the brand "Nestinarstvo".

## Participants

The main participants are local fire-dancing families from the mentioned Strandzha villages. The main participants are mostly representatives of the local population, as well as guests from other settlements.

## Innovation

In order to preserve the authenticity and originality of the custom of fire dances, it is not necessary to include modern technologies of broadcasting or transmission to a wider audience. Fire dances are included in the UNESCO list of world intangible cultural heritage of mankind. In its description it is explicitly stated that in its authentic form it is performed only in the village of Bulgari, Tsarevo municipality.

## Marketing communications

The ritual is relatively well known among the Bulgarian population, but still uses various channels for information and advertising, such as websites, social media pages.

## Accessibility

The settlements where the traditional holiday is held are located in areas away from the main roads in the Strandzha Mountains. The village of Bulgari, which is the main place of fire-dancing, is located 18 km from the municipal center of Tsarevo.



## Source of the images:

<https://trud.bg/%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D0%B8%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B8-%D0%BE%D0%B6%D0%B8%D0%B2%D1%8F%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%82-%D0%B2-%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%BE-%D0%B1%D1%8A%D0%BB%D0%B3%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B8/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/selobulgari/>



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## Petlyovden (Rooster Day)

(Tradition and Celebration)

### Location: Varna and Burgas Regions

The ritual is known and preserved in several villages in the Eastern Stara Planina mountain - the village of Golitsa, the village of Solnik, the village of Krivini, municipality Dolni Chiflik, Varna region and Kozichino, Burgas region.



**Schedule:** Every year on February 2, all day.

**Organizer:** Community center (Chitalishte) "Hristo Botev - 1928", Golitsa Village, Municipality Dolni Chiflik, Varna Region; Community center (Chitalishte) "Vasil Levski - 1939", Solnik Village, Municipality Dolni Chiflik, Varna Region; Community center (Chitalishte) "Svetlina - 1936 - Krivini", Krivini village, Municipality Dolni Chiflik, Varna Region

### Description

Petlyovden is a regional holiday celebrated in the eastern Bulgarian ethnic territory. The holiday is most common in villages with a population that belongs to the ethnographic group of vayatsi. The Vayatsi are an old local population from the villages of Kozichino (Erkech), Burgas and Golitsa, Solnik and Krivini, Varna region, and their settlements in Varna, Dobrich and Burgas region. It is associated with the sacrifice of a rooster, which is made by women mothers of male children. It was conceived as a holiday for the health and fertility of boys. Following the tradition and to this day the inhabitants of the above villages celebrate Petlyovden every year. The rituals of the holiday are preserved, but already in line with the new living conditions.

At the center of this traditional holiday is the ritual table of Petlyovden. In some cases, the holidays turn into real feasts, in which eating is not so much a meal as a sacrifice, a demonstration of prosperity, joy and generosity.

Traditionally, on Petlyovden, both the mothers of boys and the midwife who assisted them in birth prepare for the table in the midwife's house.

Every male mother cooks a rooster in her home. The rooster is boiled in salted water, less often cooked in a stew with bulgur. The mother also prepares fresh pie without yeast (pita in Bulgarian), steamed zelnik, mulled wine, sweetened and seasoned with black pepper. The food is placed in a new barrel, arranged in the following order: banitsa, pita, rooster, candle, incense, wool tow, a string of popcorn and peppers. The midwife who supported boys' birth is also preparing for the holiday. It is obligatory to cook three dishes: rooster with bulgur, plum stew, kavarma beans.

At home, the midwife them, sitting by the hearth or at the home iconostasis. After fumigating with incense, the women give the midwife a piece of the pie with a lighted candle, the middle of zelnik, a leg of rooster, and then serve each other food and drink. While they are eating,

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and then they play the bagpiper, whom they invited in advance. He is the only male during the feast. The festive table is accompanied by wild merriment. In the evening, the men join in the celebration. Thus the holiday ends late at night.

### Key activities

The main activities related to the holiday are:

- preparation for the holiday;
- the knees of the cock-sacrifice;
- preparation of ritual foods;
- celebration

The spectators watch the main activities related to the holiday, and the ritual food is distributed to the guests.

### Partners and supporters

The holiday is organized by the local population and the community centers in the villages where it is celebrated, which are supported by the local government in Dolni Chiflik municipality.

### Participants

Participants are mainly representatives of the local population and guests from other settlements.

### Marketing communications

The Community center in village of Golitsa has its own page on social networks:

<https://www.facebook.com/chitalishte.golica>

### Accessibility

The settlements where the traditional holiday is held are located in areas far from main roads. The villages of Solnik and Golitsa can be traveled by public or private transport, with the use of personal vehicles being preferable.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/chitalishte.golica>



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## Underwater Tourist Routes on the Western Black Sea

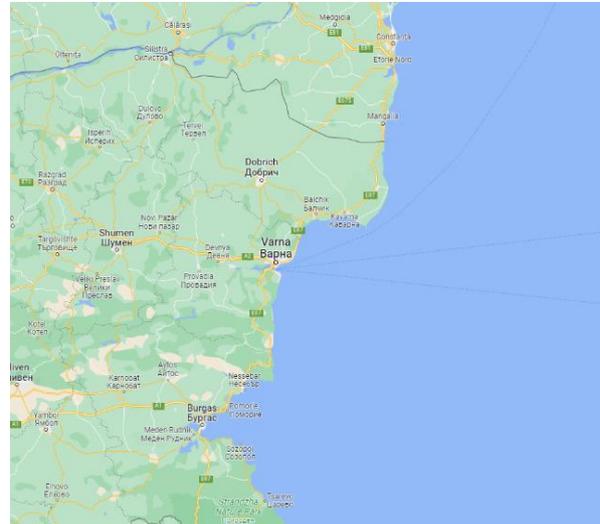
(Historic Site and Natural Heritage)

**Location:** Varna and Burgas Regions

Bulgarian Black Sea coast: Kavarna, Balchik, Varna, Byala, Nessebar, Burgas, Szopol, as well as some of the marine protected zones, such as the Stone forest in the Bay of Sozopol, Maslenos Cape.

**Schedule:** The route is suitable from April to October, depending on the hydrometeorological conditions.

**Organizer:** Institute of Oceanology - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences



### Description

Submarine archaeology represents, after submarine biology, geography and geology, the fourth new scientific branch determined by the research of the submarine environment. The uniqueness of maritime cultural landscape is due to the interaction between different, but close to each other spaces - land and sea. The maritime cultural landscape is a result of interaction between human processes on the coastal surface over time and the environment, which includes sea, coastal line and land. Part of the maritime cultural landscape is the coastal historical remains and these underwater along with their surroundings. It includes archaeological sites, historical settlements, fortresses, harbours, lighthouses as well as all of the geographical, archaeological and ethnological implications. Along the Western Black Sea, the underwater archaeological investigations have more than 60-years history beginning in Bulgaria in 1959. Among the main tasks of underwater archaeology is the study submerged prehistoric settlements, parts of neighbourhoods and harbour installations of Antique cities, as well as the most attractive part of maritime archaeology, namely searching of ancient shipwrecks.

As a result of the search campaigns, three routes of sunken ships in Bulgaria have been formed so far. Sites that are included in the visit by divers are located at accessible depths and are not sites that are protected by the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (UNESCO Convention 2001). This is done only in order to protect cultural monuments from harmful tourists. The remains are iron ships, the visit of which does not pose a threat to the health and lives of divers.

The route includes marine protected areas on the southern part of the Bulgarian coast, aiming to show the high ecotourism potential. As hotspots for biodiversity and beautiful underwater landscapes that host Europe's and nationally important habitats and species, achieving conservation and protection goals is paramount.



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The main task is to improve, preserve and promote the underwater cultural heritage of the Western Black Sea coast. The offered services aim to promote adventure and experiential diving tourism and to increase the tourist potential of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast by identifying and promoting the underwater cultural and historical heritage of the western Black Sea coast.

### **Key activities**

The entire tourist product is directly related to the Blue Economy and Blue Growth, which are aimed at providing more relevant information to stakeholders in order to improve the quality and diversification of tourism services offered.

This tourist product offers four key activities that can be combined depending on the wishes and capabilities of consumers. These include the following tourist routes:

- Sunken ships and artificial reefs
- Submerged ancient trade routes (underwater archeological sites and artifacts).
- Underwater natural heritage
- Finds on display in coastal museums.

### **Partners and supporters**

The key partners in the proposed activity are all diving clubs that operate on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, as well as some centers and NGOs from Romania. A number of travel agencies and operators are also involved in the presentation of the product.

### **Participants**

The proposed activities are aimed at tourists who are interested in underwater cultural and historical heritage, as well as adventure underwater sports on the Western Black Sea coast.

### **Innovation**

Some of the activities and especially those that are related to visits to underwater natural protected areas are entirely in the context of natural heritage protection. The opportunities for observing sunken ships and the underwater world of the Western Black Sea coast and the acquaintance with the discoveries in Bulgaria of one of the most attractive sciences, namely underwater archeology are unique.

### **Marketing communications**

An Internet site has been developed which provides complete information about the sites to be visited, the exact geographical coordinates, as well as the conditions for visits.

The promotion of the tourist product "Underwater tourist cultural routes in the Western Black Sea", which has the potential to attract many tourists and lead to the extension of the tourist



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season in Bulgarian resorts on the western Black Sea coast, is through the following communication channels:

- travel agencies;
- publishing the tourist offer on websites, on your own website or with the help of various search engines;
- through advertising tools: leaflets, brochures, tours;
- by other means: tourist fairs, banners, distribution of news, announcements and advertisements.

### Accessibility

The start to all points is designed to be easily accessible by car. Parking or convenient parking spaces are provided everywhere at the starting points. All sites at the destination are located along the international road E 87.



Source of the images: Institute of Oceanology - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences



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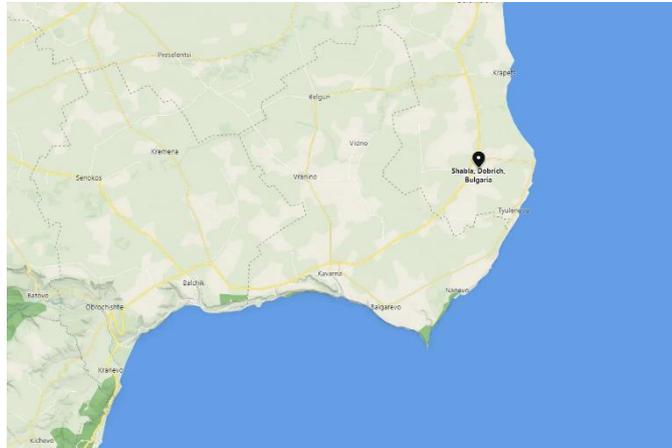
## *Dobrudzha Coast of the Village of Tyulenovo*

(Historic Site and Natural Heritage)

**Location:** The surroundings of the village of Tyulenovo, Shabla municipality, Varna Region

**Schedule:** The route is suitable for year-round visits depending on the hydrometeorological conditions in the area

**Organizer:** Poseidon Diving Center, Tyulenovo village, municipality of Shabla



### **Description**

The village of Tyulenovo is located in northern Bulgaria, near the town of Shabla. It is a rocky coast that does not offer a beach, but is a breathtaking place. Right where the earth touches the sea, rises the stone arch, which impresses every visitor. Next to it stoically stands another interesting rock called "The Lonely Man".

Among the most attractive sites to visit in the area are the underwater caves. The most famous of them are Tyulenova (Seal Cave) and Marina. Of particular interest is the Seal Cave, which has a completely submerged part and to reach the seal nest you have to swim a completely flooded tunnel. Passing through it, the tourist finds himself in a spacious hall with a salt lake.

An unusual and extreme maritime tradition has been formed in the picturesque village of Tyulenovo for the last three years. Young people with adventurous hearts and passion for strong experiences test the limits of their spirit by jumping from the rocks near Tyulenovo in the sea waves.

Cliff diving is not very common in Bulgaria, but fans know about the Ashalaka area in the village of Tyulenovo and have been raising their adrenaline for many years. The idea turned into an event when one of the regular jumpers in 2015 decided to make an event, announcing it on Facebook to invite his friends to join his venture. The event, called "The Great Jumping", is rapidly gaining popularity, motivating brave people from all over the country and thus marking the beginning of a new and, hopefully, long Black Sea tradition. The highest points are more than 10 meters high, which call those who want to challenge themselves and their fears.

### **Key activities**

SCUBA diving in underwater caves, jumping into sea water from sheer cliffs, the height of the rocks is from 1 to 17 meters, the depth of the places for diving is from 3 to 9 meters. Climbing on the vertical cliff shore is also organized in the area.



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Available and popular in the vicinity of Tyulenovo are sites located near the village of Kamen Bryag, such as the area "The Fire", where eternal fire burns, the archeological reserve with rock monasteries "Yaylata", the impressive cape Kaliakra and the famous mussel farm in the village of Balgarevo, Dalboka landscape.

All key activities are related to experiences and alternative forms of tourism - jumping from the high cliff shore, seabird watching, diving.

One can consider the creation of a visitor center in the village of Tyulenovo, where an interactive hall will be organized in which to display underwater footage for observation and study of underwater flora and fauna, a story about the missing Black Sea seals from these places. The center would be especially useful for students and tourists who do not have diving training, but are interested in the underwater world of the Black Sea.

### **Partners and supporters**

The route is managed by an independant divihn club (am NGO), but seveal projects in the area have been by the European Commission, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Programme and SME Diving Clubs on the Northern Bulgarian Black Sea Coast.

### **Participants**

Participants are tourists who have diving training, the local population with guest houses and family hotels. The offered services are aimed at tourists with preferences for alternative and experiential tourism.

### **Innovation**

The route combines alternative forms of tourism with visits to sites that are part of the cultural and historical heritage and natural protected areas.

### **Marketing communications**

Social media are the main marketing and dissemination channel. For the event "The Great Jumping", those interested usually organize themselves through social media forums, such as Facebook and others. There are a number of tourist portals where the natural and cultural landmarks of the northern Bulgarian Black Sea coast are advertised.

### **Accessibility**

Tyulenovo is located 535 km from Sofia, about 90 km north of Varna and is close to Shabla, where there is organized bus transport, as from most northeastern towns and villages (Varna, Dobrich, Kavarna, Krapets, Durankulak), and from Sofia. Unfortunately, there is still no organized intercity transport from Shabla to Tyulenovo and the village can be reached only by car or with enthusiasm (about 5 km from the lighthouse in Shabla). The proximity to the



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Bulgarian-Romanian border and the international road E 87 suggests interest from foreign tourists.



Source of the images: Poseidon Diving Center



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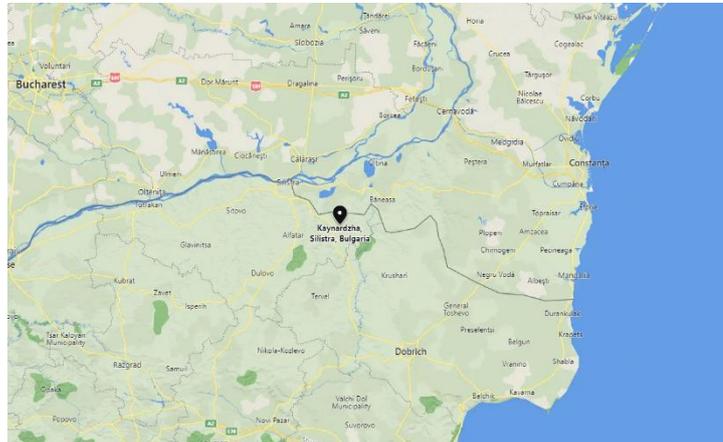
## “Kranovska Suha Reka” Tourist Route (Kranovski Rock Labyrinth)

(Natural and Historic Heritage)

**Location:** The sector of the canyon valley of the Suha Reka River, in which the tourist trail is built, falls entirely on the land of the village of Kranovo, municipality of Kaynardzha, Silistra region.

The route is located on the right bank of the famous dry river Suha Reka and a typical rocky limestone terrain.

**Schedule:** The route is suitable for year-round visits



**Organizer:** Bulgarian Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism (BASET)

### Description

The main idea, as the final goal, is to create a basis for the formation of a new regional tourist product to be offered on both the Bulgarian and international tourist markets. The proposed activity corresponds directly to the strategy for rural development in Bulgaria. This is largely true for the Kaynardzha municipality, which is a classic rural and at the same time border area.

From the point of view of not only the tourist attractiveness, Dobrudzha and Ludogorie drylands can be defined as "alpine and subalpine microlandscapes" against the background of markedly low and generally flat terrain - a kind of natural oasis among the predominant agricultural areas.

The tourist trail itself (width 0.80 m) has a total length of 3.3 km, located on two levels - upper and lower. It is located on the right, rocky shore (in places with detached bizarre rock groups, dominated by the well-known rock crowns).

The specific goal of the idea of organizing the activity is the involvement and use of little-known tourist resources for the development of ecological and in particular nature-cognitive tourism. Getting to know the natural beauties in a poorly visited and unknown to tourists area in Northeastern Bulgaria.

### Key activities

- Detailed field study;
- Preparation of the final route of the tourist trail;
- Designing the path;
- Securing the steep sections of the trail;
- Construction of observation decks in certain places with railings, stairs;
- Establishment of an appropriate information system on site.

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The tourist trail is entirely in the field of adventure and adventure tourism. Going along the entire route offers a feeling of closeness to natural phenomena, as well as to the medieval rock monasteries, where you can feel the spirit of past historical times combined with contemplation of wildlife.

### Partners and supporters

The main driver is the Bulgarian Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism. The project was implemented with the financial support of the America for Bulgaria Foundation, as well as with the support and assistance of Kaynardzha municipality, Silistra region.

### Participants

The main team works in partnership and close cooperation with the municipality. Kaynardzha and the town hall in the village of Kranovo. The main target group of the event is all those who are interested in hiking and eco-tourism.

### Innovation

The idea of creating and functioning of the tourist trail fully observes and is subject to the requirements for sustainability in development: environmental friendliness, economic and social effects. The planned main activities are in line with the preservation and protection of living and non-living nature - full compliance with relevant laws and regulations and regulations: for the protection of natural landmarks, for NATURA 2000, etc.

### Marketing communications

The advertising of the activity is done mainly through social media, as well as orally by people who have already visited the sights. A website for the entire project, as well as a Facebook page have been developed to promote the tourist trail.

### Accessibility

Access to the area is possible mainly by car (only until one point and then on foot), as the route is not suitable for people with mobility difficulties. Access by bus is not satisfactory.

The tourist trail starts 2-3 km southeast of the village of Kranovo, next to the road, where there are suitable conditions for parking cars.



Source of the images: Bulgarian Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism (BASET)



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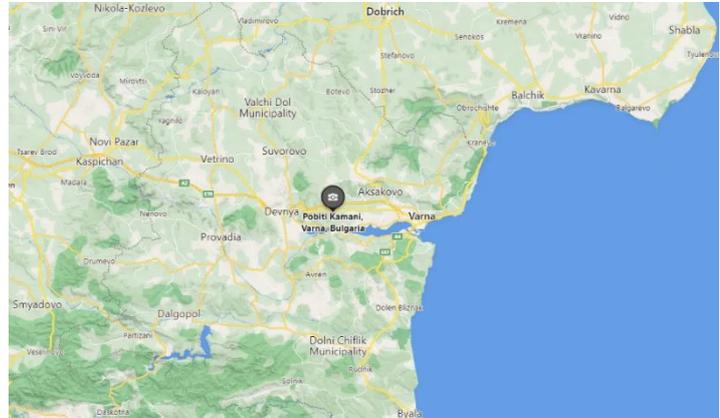
## Pobitite Kamani (Stone Forest)

(Historic Site and Natural Heritage)

**Location:** The site Pobitite kamani is located 18 km west of Varna on both sides of the first class road Varna - Sofia E 70. They consist of 18 stone groups, administratively belonging to the municipality of Aksakovo, Varna Region

**Schedule:** The site is open for visiting from May to Septemeber.

**Organizer:** Regional Historical Museum - Varna



## Description

The unique natural phenomenon "Pobiti kamani" has been the subject of observations, research and discussions for nearly 200 years, and there is still no analogue described in the world. The site is a rock formation, which are located in several groups in the Varna region. The area where the Pobiti kamani are located is the only naturally formed desert in Eastern Europe and the second one in Europe in general, the other being the Tabernas Desert in Spain.

The natural landmark "Pobiti kamani" is a discovery of Eocene sands, among which are upright stone columns resembling a stone forest. The impressive landscape of the stones is observed in seven large and several smaller discoveries. The most famous is the group "Center - South". There are about 300 large and small columns, up to 6 m high, rising mainly south of the old road Varna-Devnya. Many hypotheses have been proposed about the origin of the Pobiti kamani, which can be divided into two main groups, the first of which advocates the inorganic origin of the columns, and the second - their organic origin. In the first group, the claims suggest the mechanical formation of structures through erosion processes under the action of the atmosphere and water, the surf, weathering or infiltration of groundwater. According to proponents of organic origin, stone columns are remnants of coral reefs, petrified gas springs, biogenic algae clumps or petrified forest. According to one of the last biogenetic theories the columns are formed with the mass participation of foraminifers.

The only evidence of human presence in Bulgarian lands during the Mesolithic has been found in the area of the Pobiti kamani. On the territory of the Central group are discovered archaeological finds from the Palaeolithic. Two of the groups are found during the quarry activities (quarry West and quarry Drenaka (Kiomurluka). Four of the groups (Banovska, Slanchevo West, Slanchevo South-East and Central Groups) are shown as Corine sites.

## Key activities

The Pobiti kamani in connection with experiential tourism can be considered from several aspects. Undoubtedly, in the first place, this is the geological phenomenon. For the purposes of national and international tourism, the opportunities are greater for organized travel.

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There are naturally formed niches in the site in the limestones, which most probably served as shelters and dwellings for the Mesolithic man. To this day, the Mesolithic tools have been found among the sands - flint tools, flint knives and arrows, stone axes and hammers.

### **Partners and supporters**

The site is managed by the Regional Historical Museum in Varna. The main supporters are representatives of NGOs, and the tourist trails in the area are maintained by tourist societies at the Bulgarian Tourist Union.

### **Participants**

The site is visited mainly by individual tourists, although tour operators offer it in their packages. The proximity to a tourist center such as Varna, as well as the numerous resorts on the North Black Sea coast, further contributes to the promotion of Pobiti Kamani.

The site is of interest to all who want to get in touch with nature, it is of interest to biodiversity students, ornithologists, etc.

### **Innovation**

They are located in an extremely accessible place by car. You can reach Pobiti Kamani by car or by bus line № 43 to the “Razklon Banovo” bus stop in the village of Slanchevo. There is a large and convenient parking for cars and buses.

### **Marketing communications**

The site is relatively well known among the tourist agencies and operators, but still uses various channels for information and advertising, such as websites, social media pages.

The landmark Pobitite kamani is in the list of 100 national tourist sites in the Republic of Bulgaria.

### **Accessibility**

They are located in an extremely accessible place by car. You can reach Pobiti Kamani by car or by bus line № 43 to the “Razklon Banovo” bus stop in the village of Slanchevo. There is a large and convenient parking for cars and buses.



**Source of the images:** Regional Historical Museum - Varna



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## GEORGIA

### *Art Gene*

(Festival, Cultural Event)

**Location:** Tbilisi Museum of Ethnography and Regions of Georgia

**Schedule:** The event is held annually, in July

**Organizer:** "Art Gene" Association



### Description

The Georgian folklore consists of the customs, ritualistic or household activities, songs, dances, folk tales, jokes and myths preserved among residents of various villages, communities and conveyed to generations through verbal sources. The Georgian folklore is very rich - in particular, musical folklore, mythology, ritualistic dances, the Georgian crafts. Three main genres are identified in the Georgian musical folklore: labor (songs related to individual and collective labor), epic (songs about folk tale and myth heroes and their adventures) and household. 15 original musical dialects are identified in the Georgian musical folklore by regions of Georgia: Kartli-Kakheti, Khevi, Mtiuleti, Tusheti, Pshavi, Khevsureti, Racha, Svaneti etc.

"Art-Gene", the annual festival of the Georgian folklore and creativity has been holding in Tbilisi and various regions of Georgia since 2004. Basis for the festival was laid on the initiative of the rock musician, Zaza Korinteli ("Zumba"). The festival hosts music performers, as well as masters of the folk crafts and applied arts. Traditionally, the festival opens with a concert held in Tbilisi Museum of Ethnography and covers more and more areas over the time. For example, the closing ceremony was held in Pantiani in 2019.

### Key activities

Musicians, artists participate in the event and present their new works. Concerts with participation of musical performers invited from various parts of Georgia are held within the framework of the festival. Traditionally, the national choreographic ensemble "Sukhishvilebi", the group "Chveneburebi", "Niaz Diasamidze and 33a", "Prani" etc. participate in "Art-Gene" festival. However, this festival is not only a concert. Creative pieces of art of are exhibited and sold, Georgian wine and traditional dishes are tasted at "Art-Gene" festival.

### Partners and supporters

The festival is held with the support of the Georgian Ministry of Culture which actively cooperates with "Art-Gene". The festival is funded by the state, as well as various donor organizations.



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## Participants

The event is held with participation of the community which by its talent and creativity preserves the natural, authentic folklore - genetic art which is cared for by people. Musicians and other artists from various regions perform at the festival. However, the festival became more wide-scale and recently, farmers producing traditional products, dishes and wine, organizations supporting preservation and conservation of the Georgian intangible culture are presented at the event.

## Innovation

This festival is held on various locations and follows a preliminarily designed program. Experiential approaches are used and joint pieces of work are demonstrated onsite, according to the interest.

## Marketing communications

Information about the festival is disseminated via Internet and TV. It is broadcasted by the central TV channel and various broadcasting companies. The festival has been held for more than 15 years and is recognizable by residents of regions.

## Accessibility

Participant reach the festival site on their own. Sometimes, municipal transport is provided with the assistance of the local government.



Source of the images: [www.artgeni.ge](http://www.artgeni.ge)



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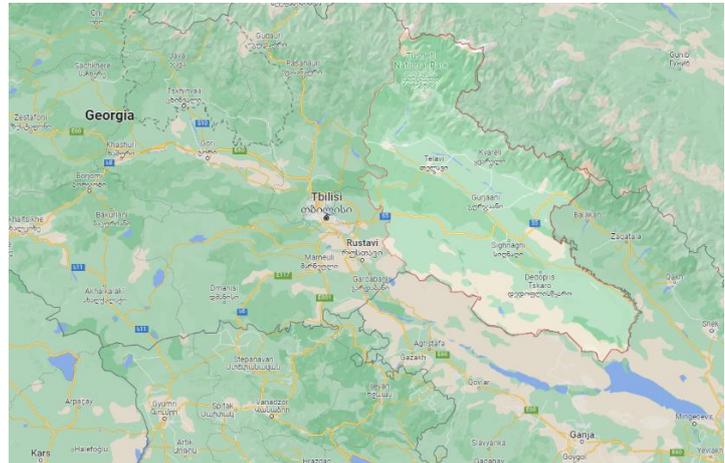


## Berikaoba

(Tradition and Celebration)

**Location:** Berikaoba is held in villages Didi and Patara Chailuri, Sagarejo Municipality, Kakheti region, East Georgia. The villages are located at the height of 700-750 meters above the sea level, at the distance of 64 km from Tbilisi. Earlier, Didi and Patara Chailuri were one village which was divided by River Chailuri into two parts

**Schedule:** Berikaoba is held annually in the Cheesefare Week (1 week before Easter)



**Organizer:** Village Chailuri Community

## Description

Berikaoba initially represented an agrarian festival dedicated to fertility and revival. It is also the ancient folk theatre and a carnival. A scenario of the event envisages that the entire population passively participates and is engaged in it, creating a feeling of certain unity.

Berikaoba-Keenoba is a festival which had been held in two forms over time, but this is an event of one origin and structure. It was held in the village and the city, in the highlands and the lowlands.

In terms of spectacle, Berikaoba has strong energy. The first theatre emerged here. Berikaoba-Keenoba is a combination of social, spiritual and public world visions. There is more sarcastic-saturnal in Berikaoba than in Keenoba, because here are more people with masks, while in Keenoba, grotesque is personified. Keenoba gained an urban nature and Berikaoba remained as the festival of the rural population, that's why it is more preserved in the village.

Over time, Berikaoba lost its religious function and became a reflection of the living aspiration of working people. Up to 100 scenes of Berikaoba have reached us. Most of them are comical and are mainly based on household topics.

By decision of the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation, the status of the monument of intangible cultural heritage was assigned to Berikaoba.

Berikaoba allows visitors to participate in the ancient theatrical performance and its main message is promising a high-yield year. This requires participation in the festival and certain masqueraded rituals.



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The main idea of Berikaoba is a popularization of traditional Georgian rituals, their preservation and raising awareness of the festival culture.

### Key activities

Preparation for the festival begins much earlier. Masks and costumes are sewn. Products are supplied. "Qada" are baked.

According to the tradition, on the day of the festival, an army of Berikas wearing costumes and masks will stop at all gates of the village. The host should give them gifts, mainly in the form of products in order to have a high yield that year. There are moments when the procession performs in one location during the festival - various comical scenes are played. Certain historic figures are mocked in the so-called folk theatrical performances.

The culmination of the festival - wrestling - is also held in the village square. A sheep is given to the winner. Swing, a so-called "kachaya" is installed on the village square. According to the tradition, a woman in love is placed on the swing and not allowed to go off the swing until she says yes to her beloved person. "Kachaya" should be dismantled within 10 days after Berikaoba. Otherwise, according to the legend, hail will destroy the crops.

At the same time, the wine festival "Mama-Papuri" is held where local peasant and factory wines are presented. Furthermore, the event support certificates are given to the participants. In addition, a concert of folk dances and songs is held and it is possible to taste local wine and dishes.

The festival ends with the "feast of Berikas"; the feast is organized using common expenses and the collected products. The "supper of Berikas" is followed by improvised verses, songs, dance, games and round dance.

### Partners and supporters

The main organizers of Berikaoba in village Didi Chailuri are the local community, the school and the schoolchildren.

A concert and a contest in Georgian wrestling are held in the open air in village Patara Chailuri for invited guests and the local population with the support of a non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) legal entity - Association of Cultural Sites of Sagarejo and Sagarejo Municipality City Hall.

The partners directly participating in the festival include the local community, schoolchildren, small peasant wine-cellars.

### Participants

The festival participants are residents of Didi and Patara Chailuri, their relatives and friends from the cities. Tourists arrive to Chailuri by recommendation of their friends who have already attended Berikaoba or read Internet articles about this festival.



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### **Innovation**

Berikaoba is held in a traditional format and artistic innovations are less presented there; however, the festival has a huge potential of using such approaches.

### **Marketing communications**

The primary source for dissemination of information about Berikaoba is the word-of-mouth recommendations (from friends and relatives). Information is also spread via the Internet, TV shows and various printed media. The so-called Berikaoba event is announced on Facebook and videos are uploaded on YouTube. The international online platform "Atlas Obscura" assisted the organizers of Berikaoba in attracting foreign tourists.

### **Accessibility**

The guests arrive in Chailuri mostly by their own vehicles; however, it is also possible to come there by minibus.



Source of the images: Village Chailuri Community



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## Birdwatching Festival

(Natural Heritage)

**Location:** The festival is held at the Black Sea Coast, in various places of Adjarian region, including village Sakhalvasho, village Chaisubani, Chorokhi Delta, Batumi Botanical Garden and the adjacent area of Mtirala Protected Territory. The most visited place is village Sakhalvasho which is located at the distance of 17 km from Batumi and 19 km from from Kobuleti.



**Schedule:** The event is held annually. Birdwatching takes place from August 16 to October 16. The festival is held in the first week of September (September 1<sup>st</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>)

**Organizer:** Tourism Product Development Agency, The Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara Autonomous Republic

### Description

This is one of the distinguished and remarkable festivals in Adjarian region when migratory birds inform us of coming of autumn by diversity.

Adjarian region is considered as one of the largest corridors for migration of birds of prey and thus, attracts more and more tourists and scientists interested in this event from various parts of the world on an annual basis. The festival has been held since 2012 and hosts many interested persons from Georgia, as well as from the countries of the Central and Western Europe.

The Black Sea Coast, in particular, surroundings of Batumi, is known with the name of the "Eastern Black Sea Migration Bottleneck", where more than 1 000 000 migratory birds of prey are observed annually. Birdwatching season in Adjara starts from August 16 and continues to October 16 and the International Birdwatching Festivals is held in the first week of September on Birdwatching locations - village Sakhalvasho and village Chaisubani, where special platforms are installed. Chorokhi Delta, Peatlands of Ispani, Mtirala and Kolkheti National Parts are also favorable for birdwatching.

### Key activities

The festival participants go out for birdwatching in various parts of the day. Every evening, local and foreign scientists hold presentations and lectures on Birdwatching and bird species.

### Partners and supporters

The festival is organized by Tourism Product Development Agency, The Department of to the international environmental organization - BRC (Batumi Raptor Count



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<https://www.batimiraptorcount.org> ) which actively cooperates with SaBuKo. The festival is funded by the state, on the basis of a tender. Also, there are co-founder donor organizations.

### Participants

Tourists and groups of scientists interested in this activity from various parts of the world, mainly from the countries of the Central and Western Europe.

Development of birdwatching tourism has already shown opportunities of development of rural tourism (demand on private houses and family hotels), particularly in the regions, where pristine nature is preserved. These are mainly the regions where the level of poverty and unemployment is high.

### Innovation

This festival is held on various locations and is mainly limited to walking tours in the nature. It is not distinguished in terms of innovations.

### Marketing communications

Information about the Birdwatching Festival in Adjara is disseminated via Internet. Participants receive information by recommendation of their friends and colleagues, using sources of the company BRC and blogs of visitor researchers: <https://www.facebook.com/visitbatumi>; <https://batumibirdfest.com/> <https://batumibirdfest.com/>

### Accessibility

Tourism Product Development Agency provided transportation to excursions and evening seminars in both directions within the framework of the festival (High mobility transport and minibuses serving persons interested in the festival are allocated within the framework of the festival). The access road to Sakhalvasho and Shuamta platforms is marked, tourist signs are placed there. An independently interested person will receive information about the accommodation and public catering facilities located there.



**Source of the images:** Tourism Product Development Agency, The Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara Autonomous Republic



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## Bread Festival

(Tradition and Celebration)

**Location:** Samtskhe-Javakheti region,  
Akhaltzikhe Municipality: Territory of  
Akhaltzikhe Fortress and village Tsnisi.

**Schedule:** The festival is held periodically,  
mainly in October.

**Organizer:** Biological Farming Association  
"Elkana"



## Description

Samtskhe-Javakheti has an extensive history of agriculture. It has a huge potential to use agricultural tourism for diversification of the list of products and services. The region was also called the "bread granary". Once, the entire country was supplied with wheat produced here. Local wheat species - Akhaktzikhe Tsiteli Doli and Javakheti Dika have been driven to the brink of extinction, however, the local population is interested in local wheat species, which is predetermined by its taste qualities and sustainability to the climate conditions. Bread dishes made of wheat in the region are also interesting: Lavash, Shoti (Meskhetian bread), Kakala, Somini baked in the Meskhetian bakery (Purne). Other dishes are also made from dough, for example: Tatarberagi, Bishi, Patirbishi, Lukhumi, Qatmari, Sironi, Erishta, Makarlama etc.

The festival is held on the territory of Akhaltsikhe, in Rabati, which overlooks the city. The territory is interesting by monuments of historic significance, including a fortress, old bath, church, history museum, mosque and ruins of the madrasa of the Muslim school. The territory of Rabati is surrounded by a stone defensive wall.

The Festival aims to revive and promote indigenous varieties of wheat by involving as many farmers as possible in this activity and fostering collaborative short agri-food chains.

The Festivals held in 2010 and 2011 helped to popularize the industrial significance of Akhaltsikhe (Meskhetian) Tsiteli Doli (Red Doli) bread and to create a supply chain. Today, Akhaltsikhe Tsiteli Doli (Red Doli) wheat is not endangered anymore as farmers cultivate it and the "Tsiteli Doli Bread" gained consumers' interest on the local market. Nonetheless, Georgia has much more to preserve - 5 ancient wheat species, endemic to Georgia:

- Chelta Zanduri - *Triticum timopheevii* Zhuk.
- Macha - *Triticum macha* Men.
- Dika - *Triticum carthlicum* Nevski.
- Hexaploid Zanduri - *Triticum zhukovskyi* Men.
- Kolkhuri Asli - *Triticum palaeocolchicum* Men.



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The Festival will present the cultural and ethnological heritage of the region to the general public. Tasting local bread and traditional cuisine, introducing with the attractions of the region and its agro-tourism potential will be an interesting experience both for locals and foreign guests.

### Key activities

The program of the festival envisages presentation of various events in five spaces of the territory: creative, exhibition, folk crafts, activities and traditional cuisine.

A separate space is dedicated to the Georgian wheat. Visitors show interest in endemic and indigenous wheat species, including several varieties of Akhaltsikhe Tsiteli Doli and Korbouli Doli, Javakheti and Kartli Dika, Chelta and Gvatsa Zanduri, Makha, Kolkhuri Asli ears and have an opportunity to receive information about advantages and peculiarities of cultivation and care of these species and varieties of wheat. Due to the festival thematics, the main activity of the event is baking bread in traditional bakeries (tone) and tasting various types of bread and local products baked onsite. In addition to bread baked onsite, the farmers presented Meskhetian Qada and bread - Shoti, Kakala, Somini etc. baked in the traditional Meskhetian bakery (Purne).

Exhibition and sales of ethnographic items, performances of folkloric ensembles and actors of Akhaltsikhe Theater are held at the festival. Costumes created from natural fabric are shown and yoga and modern dance masterclass(es) are given for people interested in healthy lifestyles. For the purpose of popularization of the agro-tourist potential of the region, a photo exhibition and a photo competition - Yourshot "Samtskhe-Javakheti - We have it in numerous colors" - is organized.

### Partners and supporters

The main sponsor is "Elkana" which periodically plans and holds the Bread Festival funded by various donors within the framework of its program.

This year, the region's DMO which was established with the assistance of the GNTA and USAID/Zrda Activity in Georgia by all six municipalities of the region two years ago and is actively engaged in promotion and protection of the region's attractions and living culture, joined the initiative of "Elkana".

Other partners include the administration of Akhaltsikhe Castle, Association of Museums, NGOs, suppliers of sound equipment for mini-attractions, social media influencers etc.

### Participants

The event participants are mostly producers of products and handmade items; local organizations - Youth Center, Culture Department of municipalities, Puppet Theater, House of Culture, folk ensembles, local artists, solo musicians, animators etc. The event has two hosts who announce information about the planned activities to visitors.



## Innovation

An alternative approach is accumulation of diverse offers and performances intended for various age groups on one location. A brand logo of the festival and a webpage is created where the guests are registered for various offered activities.

Innovation of the festival was integration of a new event, such as demonstration of costumes made of natural fabric by models, musical evening with DJ performance, yoga class, modern dance learning class etc. into the existing (traditional) practice.

## Marketing communications

Information about the festival is disseminated via Internet. Participants obtain information by recommendation of their friends and colleagues. Local mass media, central TV are interesting in covering the festival. Information is also disseminated via Facebook page of "Elkana" and the website: [www.breadfestival.ge](http://www.breadfestival.ge)

Separate events of the festival are covered by Samtskhe-Javakheti news portal "The Southern Gate", Akhaltsikhe TV Company "The Ninth Channel", Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Broadcaster TOK TV, Broadcasting Company "Rustavi2", "Business Media Georgia", "Formula", "EuroNews Georgia"

## Accessibility

The guests arrive mostly by their own vehicles. The partners organize rental of several vehicles from Tbilisi. Location of the festival is known and does not require to be informed additionally. Practical information is published on the festival website.

The festival continues all day long. The visitors who stay in the region for a long time within the framework of the festival can stay in comfortable family hotels.



Source of the images: Biological Farming Association "Elkana"



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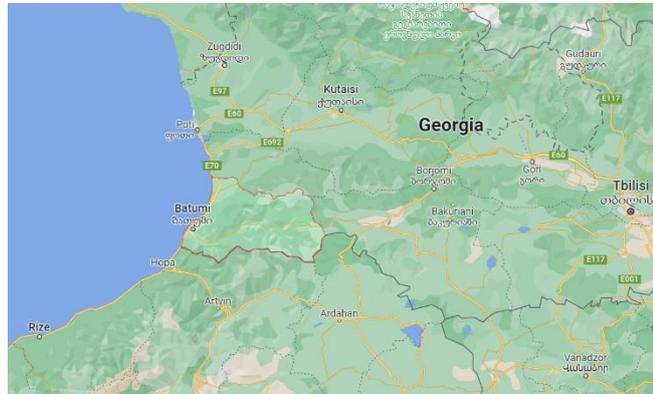
## Rural Festival "Gandagana"

(Festival, Cultural Event)

**Location:** Batumi, Adjara

**Schedule:** The event is held annually, in October.

**Organizer:** Tourism Product Development Agency, The Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara Autonomous Republic



### Description

Gandagana is an Adjarian love dance with sideway and specific movements. This is one of the rare creations of the Adjarian folklore which attracts spectators with the perfection of the form and content, artistic richness, meaning and idea. Its roots are lot in the remote past. In old times, the dance Gandagana was performed separately by a woman and a man during a family feast or folk festivals - Shuamtoba. In this dance, braveness, wisdom, high spirits of the man, the Georgian nature of respect and modesty towards a woman are easily demonstrated.

The dance Gandagana mainly consisted of two parts. In the first part, it was performed slowly and thereafter gained a fast form. Performance required flexibility, plasticity of dances. A flirt between a young woman and a young man which had a nature of a contest in smartness laid a basis for the dance. On the basis of study of identity of "Gandagana", peculiarities of its preceding dances, an opinion is expressed that it represented a choreographic work obtained as a result of merger of dance-games emerged in the religious rituals of the pagan period and sophisticated over the time, which was genetically related to the cult of fertility.

The name "Gandagana" emerged from the choreographic parts of the dance.

Since its origin, Gandagana has undergone significant changes which became particularly noticeable since 1950-1960s. On the initiative of workers of choreographic art and some professional performers, many best traditional elements were removed from the dance for the purpose of perfection and it was enriched by new stage elements. It is preserved only among the individual elderly performers of Adjarian mountainous zone.

The present rural tourism festival "Gandagana" in Adjarian region which is held on the main square of the city at the end of the touristic season serves the goal of preservation and demonstration of this tradition. Culture, traditions, cuisine and folklore of various parts of the region are presented at the festival.

The guests of the festival travel in all five municipalities of Adjara - Khelvachauri, Keda, Shuakhevi, Khulo, Kobuleti without leaving the city and taste Adjarian dishes, participate in their preparation, in various fun activities during two days. The festival is divided into thematic corners - wine, dairy products, fruit, vegetables, sweets and handmade items etc.



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### Key activities

The festival participants listen to songs performed by various bands and participate in funny contests, culinary master classes. Musicians, artists show up at the event and demonstrate their new works of art. Local choreographic ensembles traditionally participate in the festival.

### Partners and supporters

The Rural Festival "Gandagana" has been organized by Tourism Product Development Agency, The Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara Autonomous Republic since 2015. Its partners are local municipalities and Batumi City Hall. Similar to the Bird-watching Festival of Adjara, the event is funded from the state budget and is held on the basis of a tender.

### Participants

The main audience includes local and international visitors, representatives of communities of all five municipalities of Adjara.

### Innovation

This festival is presented in a traditional format. It will be good to use installations at the festival and tell the history of Adjarian people, including story-telling about the Adjarian love dance "Gandagana" and learning its elements.

### Marketing communications

Information about the festival in Adjara is disseminated via Internet. Participants receive information by recommendation of their friends and colleagues, using sources of the company BRC and blogs of visitor researchers:

<https://www.facebook.com/DepartmentofTourismandResortsofAjara>,

<https://gobatumi.com/en>, <https://visitajara.com/ka>, <https://batumievents.com/ka?>

### Accessibility

As the festival is held on the main square of the city, in this case, transportation of visitors is not required. As for the information about accessing the festival location, billboards and posters are placed in Batumi and at the entrance to the city several days earlier and provide information to people willing to attend the event.



**Source of the images:** Tourism Product Development Agency, The Department of Tourism and Resorts of Adjara Autonomous Republic

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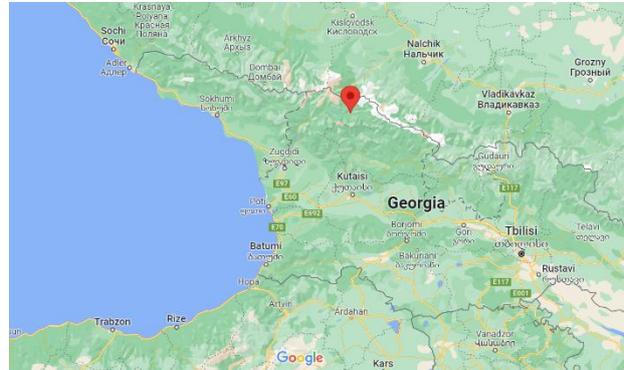
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## Hulish

(Tradition and Celebration)

**Location:** Hulish is celebrated in West Georgia, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Mestia Municipality, Becho Community. Becho Community is located at about 1660 meters above sea level, in river Dolra valley. From here, Ushba-Mazeri rocky massive looks to the north and snowy peaks of Svaneti range look to the south.



**Schedule:** Hulish is held in June (a week before the start of the Fast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, on the 60th day after Easter).

**Organizer:** Ushba Valley - Becho Community

## Description

Hulish is a folk festival and was established in ancient times. There are several legends about its origin. According to one legend, the ritual is related to the celebration of defeating and expulsion of the enemy attacking Svaneti; another legend associates the celebration with avoidance of natural disasters (for example, the ice ("Hol" in Svanetian) falling from the mountain filled Enguri river and destroyed Svaneti villages). According to a third legend, Hulish is dedicated to asking for calm and good weather. It is directed at the Prophet Elijah, who prayed for weather, promising a peaceful and high-yield year for Svaneti and avoiding unfavorable weather.

Lemi (Svan.) is the inflatable war banner of Svaneti. According to the legend, it led the Svanetian army during the battle. Lemi represents a zoomorphic image (Wolf//Lion) sewn from yellow silk. Its owner was the head of the ravine called Meleme. The banner used to be exposed before the public during Hulish when horse racing was held. A rider led the horse racing holding this flag in his hand. As the horse ran, the flag would unfold and the head of the lion (wolf) would appear. It should be mentioned that a wolf represented a totemic animal for Svans. All supernatural powers were assigned to it. Svans considered that wolves patronize and help people and killing them was taboo. Lemi was considered to be a holy flag. Therefore, it could be a zoomorphic symbol of St. Georgia. Similar flags were common among Scythians, Sarmatians and Parthians and then it was imitated by Romans and the Sasanian Iran, from there - by Byzantines and medieval Europeans. The banner Lemi sewn in the 19th century is kept at the National Museum of Georgia and the Mestia Museum of History and Ethnography. The silver handle of the flag is assumed to belong to the 11th century.

The festival venue is located between Shikhri and Skelshi St. George Churches. It is noteworthy that the ritual of Hulish is held in the vicinity of St. George Churches. According to the folk



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tradition, St. George was the first - the best warrior, rider, hero who always led the Georgian army riding on the horse and made it win.

### **Key activities**

Traditionally, when celebrating Hulish, the locals say a prayer and sacrifice calves (Lighuanvaari), bake large cheese-filled breads - khachapuri (Leskar), flatbreads (Lemzir). So-called women's prayers occur in Svaneti on the Saturday of Hulish: women go to the church extensions (Ladbashi) and pray for peace and abundance in their families.

One of the culminating moments of Hulish is an exposition of the flag - "Lemi" after which horse racing, competition in the lifting of heavy stones, shooting are held. Residents of various villages of Svaneti participate in the activities. In addition, competitions in football, long jump, discus throw, shot put and volleyball, wrestling, arm-wrestling, chess, etc., occur, children's, girl and boy ensembles sing and dance.

After the horse racing, people dance a round dance, a feast, drinks are drunk from silver cups. A table is laid in the church's yard and toasts are said. Then the feast continues in the family, which has to celebrate this festival that year.

### **Partners and supporters**

The festival is organized and facilitated by Becho Community. Nobody provides financial support except the community members. The leaders of Becho Community, representatives of all generations of the local community, are engaged in the celebration.

The partners directly participating in the festival include local folklore ensembles "Riho" and "Ushba". Sports teams arrive from various villages of Svaneti, as well as Kutaisi and Sachkhere.

### **Participants**

The population of all communities of Svaneti gather at the festival of Hulish. As the festival is held in June, the tourists visiting Svaneti are also attracted. However, this happens on a random basis and in an unorganized manner.

### **Innovation**

Hulish is held in a traditional format and artistic innovations are less presented onsite.

### **Marketing communications**

The main source of dissemination of information is social media. The organizers place announcements in crowded places. Guests are invited based on personal contacts.

Word-of-mouth recommendations from relatives and friends remain as the main source of dissemination of information. Also, video records of the event are posted on YouTube.



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### Accessibility

The length of the motoroad from Tbilisi to Mestia is 463 km. Depending on the transport type, travel time ranges between 6-8 hours. Air flights are performed from Natakhtari airport to Mestia every day, except Sunday. The flight duration is 1 hour. Flight from Kutaisi to Mestia are performed every Monday and Friday. The flight duration is 3 hours.

There is a 25 km asphalted, easily passable road from Mestia to the venue.



Source of the images: Ushba Valley - Becho Community



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## Leloburti

(Tradition and Celebration)

**Location:** Leloburti is held in village Shukhuti located in Lanchkhuti Municipality, Guria region, West Georgia

**Schedule:** Leloburti is held annually, on the day of Easter

**Organizer:** Service for Education, Culture, Sport and Youth Affairs, Lanchkhuti Municipality City Hall



## Description

Leloburti is the Georgian national sport - antecedent of rugby. According to the tradition, Leloburti has been played for almost three centuries and this game is an imitation of fighting the enemy.

The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia assigned the status of a monument of intangible cultural heritage to Leloburti. Lelo is the ancient Georgian word, literally meaning "field ball [playing]". Researchers assume that this old game comes from ball playing. Lelo used to be played during folk-religious festivals in other regions of Georgia too, but nowadays, it has been preserved in the form of a festival in Guria.

By the rules of Shukhuti Lelo, the ball can weigh 16-18 kg. It is made of cattle hide and then filled with Grigoleti sand and sawdust. Before stitching up, Aladasturi wine is poured into the ball and saved in Shukhuti church the night before the game. The area of playing Leloburti covers 400 meters to both sides of the centre of Shukhuti and is blocked by narrow ravines. Shukhuti Leloburti does not have any special prize for winners.

Leloburti has simple rules, but it required a solid physical activity. Shukhuti residents are divided into two groups and perform a scrum. The winning team has to bring the ball to the cemetery in respect of the deceased person's soul.

## Key activities

Many locals participate in the preparation of Leloburti. These include representatives of culture and sport. In addition to the contest, children's music bands, local entrepreneurs, including souvenir producers, are presented. Together with Lelo playing, wrestling, chess and backgammon competitions are held on Easter. In addition, the band "Mkhedrebi" from Lanchkhuti perform Gurian songs.

Locals meet each other for one day at the traditional Easter liturgy. The liturgy continues all night long and is the most important day for the Orthodox people. Residents of Shukhuti and Lanchkhuti agree on the final details related to the upcoming game during the meeting.



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The next day, the residents gather to play Leloburti. At the same time, sports or musical events, exhibitions and fairs of locally produced items are held.

In the evening, the priest of the local church tosses up the "Lelo" in the air, which is the sign of starting the game. The primary motivation of the players is that the winning team has to take the ball to the cemetery and place it on the grave of any recently deceased person permanently. The defeated team also goes to the cemetery together with the winners. The ball has never been lost from the grave. Lanchkhuti residents express respect for the past in such way.

### Partners and supporters

The main sponsor of the event is Lanchkhuti Municipality City Hall.

The partners directly participating in the event are the local ensemble "Mkhedrebi", the local church, various cultural and sport teams.

### Participants

Kvemo and Zemo Shukhuti residents compete with each other in Leloburti. The local population and Lanchkhutians arriving from various cities of Georgia for Easter to participate in the event. Their relatives gather to watch the game. Leloburti is a local event. There are fewer visitors from Tbilisi and Batumi.

### Innovation

Leloburti is held in a traditional format and artistic innovations are less presented on the spot.

### Marketing communications

The primary source of spreading information about Leloburti is a word of mouth recommendations (from relatives and friends). Information is also disseminated via Internet and T.V. shows.

### Accessibility

The guests arrive to Shukhuti mainly by their own vehicles. However, it is also possible to get there by public transport: bus, mini-bus and train.



**Source of the images:** Service for Education, Culture, Sport and Youth Affairs, Lanchkhuti Municipality City Hall



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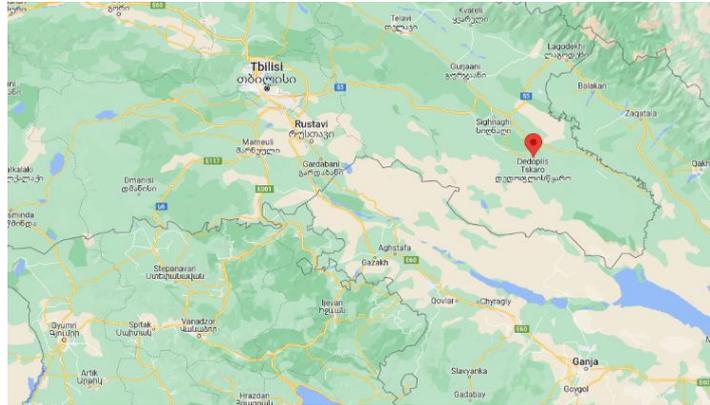


## Pirosmanoba

(Festival, Cultural Event)

**Location:** Pirosmanoba is held in village Mirzaani located in Dedoplistskaro Municipality, Kakheti, East Georgia. The village is situated on the south-east slope of Gombori Range, at the height of 770 meters above sea level, at 120 km from Tbilisi.

**Schedule:** Pirosmanoba is held annually, on the third Saturday of October.



**Organizer:** Dedoplistskaro Municipality City Hall

### Description

The festival Pirosmanoba is dedicated to the great Georgian artist Niko Pirosmanashvili. Pirosmani is the founder of a new artistic epoch in Georgia who depicted the Georgian life of the 19th century using his style but in a manner understandable by everybody. He had not received special education in painting. He is a self-taught primitivist, and animalism occupies an important place in his works (Niko Pirosmanashvili is the sole Georgian animalist yet).

Niko Pirosmanashvili was born in village Mirzaani and moved to Tbilisi after the death of his parents. Since childhood, he showed a great interest in painting and used to paint a lot. He opened a painting workshop with a self-taught painter G. Zaziashvili in the 1880s and made signboards. He worked as a conductor of the Transcaucasian Railway in 1890-1894 and later tried to engage in trade. At the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries, he was sheltered by shopkeepers and tavern-keepers, painted signboards, portraits, pictures. He could not overcome poverty till the end of life; Society of Georgian Painters tried to alleviate his plight from time to time, but Niko Pirosmanashvili died in solitude and his grave remained unknown. 146 works of Niko Pirosmani are saved in the National Museum of Georgia.

Pirosmanoba turns the village of Pirosmani into a "village of art" for one day. It attracts more and more painters and other persons interested in art from all over the world annually.

### Key activities

Exhibition and sales of works of local artists and folk crafts masters are arranged at the festival. In addition, the scenes depicted in Pirosmani's paintings are brought to life.

A contest in Georgian wrestling is held, folklore groups perform for spectators, churchkheles (candle-shaped candy) are made, khinkali(dumplings) is cooked, "Dedas Puri" (traditional Georgian bread) is baked in "tone" (tandoor oven), shashlik is grilled on skewers.



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The Georgian researchers and restorers of paintings of Pirosmeni and foreign experts who have made a certain contribution to the popularization of Pirosmeni are awarded at the event. The festival is attended by descendants of Pirosmeni too.

### **Partners and supporters**

The following organizations support the festival:

- Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation;
- Administration of Niko Pirosmenashvili State Museum in Mirzaani;
- Service of Culture, Monument Protection, Sport and Youth Affairs, Dedoplistskaro Municipality City Hall;
- Culture and Monument Protection Center, Dedoplistskaro City Hall;
- Sport and Youth Affairs Center, Dedoplistskaro City Hall;
- Dedoplistskaro Tourism Development Association;

Non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) legal entity "Culture and Monument Protection Center" operates under Dedoplistskaro Municipality City Hall and unites houses of culture. Almost all of these houses have creative groups which participate in the event. Furthermore, sports events are organized by a Non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) legal entity under the City Hall - "Dedoplistskaro Sport and Youth Center". Also, masters of the local folk crafts exhibit their works during the exhibition.

### **Participants**

The festival participants and attendants are mainly locals and invited guests arriving from other cities of Georgia. In addition, high-rank visitors from various governmental bodies are often approached. Pirosmenoba coincides with the active touristic seasons and foreign tourists also arrive from the nearest touristic centers of Georgia. However, this mostly happens randomly and in a non-organized manner.

### **Innovation**

Artistic innovations are less presented at the festival of Pirosmenoba. However, the museum has a considerable potential of using them.

### **Marketing communications**

The primary source of information about Pirosmenoba is Dedoplistskaro Municipality City Hall, which disseminates advertising banners and flyers in the Municipality and invites high-rank guests from various agencies of Georgia. Information is also disseminated via Internet and TV shows, newspaper articles.

### **Accessibility**

Visitors arrive in Mirzaani mainly by their own vehicles. Additional transport is provided for the festival from Tbilisi and Dedoplistskaro.



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Source of the images: Dedoplistskaro Municipality City Hall



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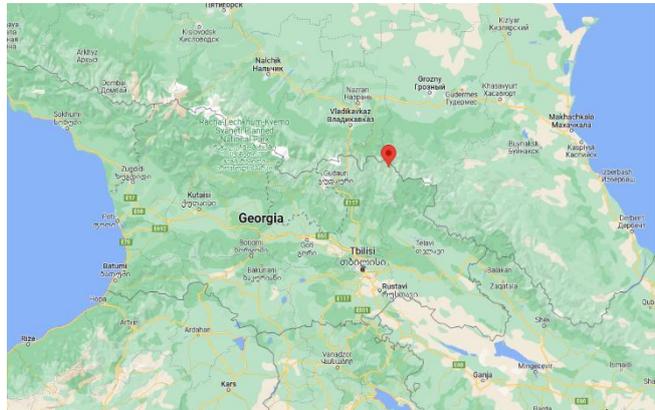
## Shatiloba

(Historic Site, Festival)

**Location:** Shatili Village, Mtskheta-Mtianeti Region, East Georgia.

**Schedule:** Folk festival Shatiloba is held annually, in August or September

**Organizer:** Dusheti Municipality City Hall



## Description

Shatili is a historic highland village in Dusheti Municipality, Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, East Georgia. Shatili is located 150 km away from Tbilisi, on the northern slope of the Greater Caucasus Range, in the Valley of Arguni River, at above 1400 meters above sea level. In fact, this is a mixture of fortresses and residential complexes of the early medieval period built with slates and lime, which controlled the northeast border of Georgia. The fortress consists of terrace structures dominated by flat-roof residential houses and 60 towers built over each other and create a chain of fortifications. Shatili has been inscribed on the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage since 2007.

Datvijvari Pass (2677 m above sea level) is located on the road heading to Shatili, which closes for 8 months and due to this fact, tourists visit the village only from June to September. In the remaining period, Shatili is isolated from the outer world. In 2014 the Pshav-Khevsureti Protected Areas were established to preserve unique local nature. The area is distinguished by its remarkable landscapes and biodiversity, rare and endemic species of flora and fauna included in the Red List of Georgia.

Mutso Museum-Reserve, located at a distance of 12 kilometres, should be mentioned when talking about village Shatili. The 10-18th century fortress village with several dozens of fortress houses and combat towers is located on three cliffy terraces. Mutso is the winner of the 2019 Europa Nostra Award in nominating the best rehabilitation project.

In the 1950s, the Soviet government resettled Khevsurians to the lowlands of Georgia. Simplifying labour and improvement of living conditions were named as the reasons for this. Since then, the villages of Khevsureti were emptied and some of them entirely disappeared.

The first Shatiloba was celebrated in 1983 with the motto "Return to the mountains, mountaineer" and served as the revival tool of Khevsureti and gathering the migrants. This event was held until 1989. Thereafter, it was resumed in the 2000s and attracted local and migrant populations as well as tourists.

Shatiloba is opened by Khevisberi (meaning the head, the eldest person in the village, community). The most senior person of this community was Khevisberi - head of the village.



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Khevisberi had to be an intelligent person with good knowledge of customs and traditions, educated, ensuring order and justice for the village, experienced in combat, leader during a war. Personal qualities and life experience were crucial. Khevisberi tradition still exist in Khevsureti.

The main purpose of Shatiloba is to popularize Pirikita Khevsureti, revive the village and return the migrated population to the village.

### **Key activities**

Shatiloba is opened by the beer blessing ritual performed by Khevisberi.

Thereafter, horse racing is held, various forms of Georgian martial arts (wrestling, Khridoli) are demonstrated. Finally, the Movement Theater performs a fire show on Shatili towers, theatrical performances and a concert are held with the participation of a folkloric ensemble, solo performers and young Khevsurian poets. A large gala concert with the participation of popular music performers is held at the end of the day.

Fair and exhibition of folk crafts and local products are held.

Visitors lay the table on the territory adjacent to Shatili Museum and feast. Folk songs are performed. During the event, the surroundings of Shatili are turned into the picnic area. Many tents are arranged for staying overnight and there are fireplaces near them.

### **Partners and supporters**

The most significant supporter of the event is Dusheti Municipality Governor's Office and the Assembly. It is the main organizer of the event. Also, in different years the event was supported by the Georgian National Tourism Administration.

The partners directly participating in the festival include local tourist facilities, municipal ensembles, folk craft facilities.

### **Participants**

The festival participants and the attendants are mainly Khevsurians. Also, Georgian tourists arrive from various regions. As August-September is an active tourist season in Khevsureti, many foreign tourists come. Residents of the adjacent villages and their guests - friends and relatives - arriving from various cities of Georgia also join the celebration.

Occupancy of the local tourist facilities increases during the Shatiloba festival. They are fully booked.

### **Innovation**

During Shatiloba festival, a fire show is performed on Shatili towers by the Movement Theater.

### **Marketing communications**

The primary source of dissemination of information is word-of-mouth recommendations (from relatives and friends). Information is also disseminated via Internet, TV shows and various printed media. In addition, Dusheti Municipality Governor's Office mobilizes visitors through announcements posted via Facebook.



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### Accessibility

Visitors arrive in Shatili mainly by their vehicles, however, it is also possible to come there by public transport. A minibus runs from Didube Bus Station (Tbilisi) twice a week to the village.



Source of the images: Dusheti Municipality City Hall



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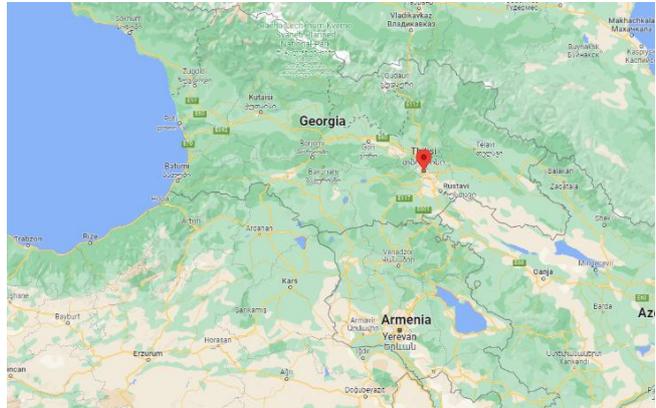
## New Wine Festival

(Tradition and Celebration, Cultural Event)

**Location:** Mtatsminda Park or Museum of Ethnography, Tbilisi

**Schedule:** May, held annually. In 2021, the event was held in November.

**Organizer:** Organization "Wine Club"



## Description

Grapevines have been cultivated on the territory of Georgia in the wild form since ancient times. More than 500 Georgian species of *Vitis vinifera* are described in Georgia and about 430 of them are saved in state and private collection vineyards.

Georgia's 8000-year-old close connection with viticulture and winemaking has been proved by various archeological discoveries. For instance, grape-seeds are discovered which date back to the 6th millennium B.C. The ancient Qvevri-like pot of the Neolith Era found at Shulaver is a clear proof of the long-existing wine-making traditions in the area.

Since the pagan times, wine had always been a ritual beverage for Georgians. Ancient Georgians believed that the productivity god Aguna was the patron saint of viticulture and Aguna rituals were always presented as theatrical performances. The importance of wine has even strengthened with the spread of Christianity as the communion rituals would never proceed without wine. Later a cross made out of vine branches became a symbol of Christianity in Georgia. Almost all local monasteries organized their own wine cellars and made wine based on the traditional method.

The 19th century was a significant period for the Georgian wine-making when Alexandre Chavchavadze for the first time made the Georgian wine in European style and popularized it in Europe. He is also known for promoting several local wines. In the same period, the German wine specialist Lenz researched wine in the Georgian village of Ruispiri. Scientific study of the Georgian grapevines began from the mid-19th century. From the same period, the Georgian wine produced by Ivane Mukhran-Batoni had already been exported to Europe. In the beginning of the 20th century, the Georgian winemaking occupied a significant place at wine festivals held in Europe. Today, the Georgian wine is becoming more and more recognizable. There is a particular interest in Qvevri-made wine.

It is noteworthy that UNESCO assigned the status of National Monument of Intangible Cultural Heritage to the ancient Georgian tradition of Qvevri winemaking.

The New Wine Festival is held in Tbilisi on an annual basis and its main goal is to popularize the Georgian wine, raise awareness about wine and increase the consumer culture in Georgia. Large wine companies, medium-sized and small wineries, family wine-cellars from various regions of



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Georgia are presented at the Festival and introduce the best wines produced from the last year grape yield to the Festival participants.

Since 2010, the Festival becomes more large-scale on an annual basis, new family wine cellars and wine companies appear and introduce their products.

Due to the situation created in the world, the 11th "Online New Wine Festival" was held in December 2020 under absolutely different conditions, in a different format and concept.

### **Key activities**

The main activity is to become familiarized with and taste new wine. Folk songs, dances, and traditional cuisine are presented. Gift barrels full of the best wine are raffled at the festival. The visitors can explore cultural and natural values - the exhibits presented in the Museum of Ethnography and/or the Botanical Garden. There is a lack of performances for children, which is uncomfortable for families visiting together with their children.

### **Partners and supporters**

Partner of the event is Tbilisi City Hall, Museum of Ethnography (Association of Museums), Mtatsminda Park, National Parliamentary Library of Georgia. Wine bar - g.vino, and wine shop chain - 8000 Vintages - also joined as partners.

### **Participants**

The event participants are large, medium and small wine-makers from various regions, associations and state organizations, product and souvenir producers from various regions, as well as bookstores where publications about wine are presented.

In addition to wine producers, the festival is attended by Georgian and foreign wine professionals, wine writers, wine bar-restaurants and amateurs. Traditionally, the well-known wine masters, sommeliers, importers and wine writers know the date of the New Wine Festival and prepare for meeting the Georgian wines.

### **Innovation**

The New Wine Festival is held in a traditional format and artistic innovations are less presented onsite.

### **Marketing communications**

Information about the festival is disseminated on TV and via Internet. Information support is provided by "Marani" (vinoge.com), Wine Information Center, Radio "Utsnobi".

### **Accessibility**

Location of the festival is known and does not require to be informed additionally in detail. Practical information is published on the festival website. Transport is provided for arriving at the festival. A large space is selected for the festival venue where it is possible to arrive by transport. Persons with disabilities can also move in this space.



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## GREECE

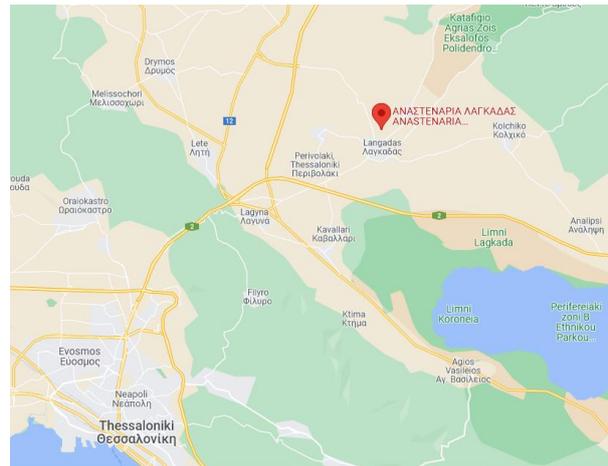
### *Anastenaria (Barefoot Fire-walking Ritual)*

(Tradition and Celebration)

**Location:** Lagadas (a village about half an hour outside Thessaloniki)

**Schedule:** The custom revives three (3) times a year: on January 17, 18 and 20 (the winter Anastenaria, in honor of the celebrating Saints), on July 27 (in honor of Saint Panteleimon) and on May 21, 22 and 23, the 21st being the celebration day of Saint Constantine and Saint Helen. The last one is the most widespread, the culmination of the custom.

**Organizer:** ‘Anastenaria Lagkada’ Association



### Description

The custom of Anastenaria is a special and distinct part of the Greek tradition and one of the most characteristic parts of our cultural heritage, brought by the refugees of Eastern Rumelia of Thrace (Eastern Roman Thrace). The custom is faithfully passed down from generation to generation. It is one of the most important customs that take place today in Greece and worldwide.

The origin of the custom lies in a fire which took place at Kosti (a Greek village with 3,000 inhabitants in Eastern Rumelia near the Black Sea that now belongs to Bulgaria). The church of St. Constantine and Helen in Kosti caught fire. As the temple was burning, the voices of the saints from the icons were heard through the flames, desperately calling out for help. Villagers entered the flaming building to rescue the saints' icons and when they came out neither them nor the icons were harmed. They believed they had been protected from the fire by the saints and since then the custom revives every year. In 1923, after the compulsory exchange of population between Greece and Turkey, the inhabitants of this region of Thrace settled in Macedonia, bringing with them their traditions, such as Anastenaria.

The Association ‘Anastenaria Lagkada’ started organizing this custom in 1994. Anastasios Gaintatzis is the ‘archianastenaris’ (i.e. chief anastenaris) in Lagkada and he is the only one who can ‘fire-standing’ (pirostasia), meaning he is standing on the coals while the others cross them, that is they are (‘fire-walking’) (pirovasia).

### Key activities

The custom is not performed in the same way in the three periods. Its full implementation is in May, which is the culmination of the custom. The essence of the custom is not the fire-walking.



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The fire-walking is what attracts people and constitutes the final stage of the custom and. The essence of the custom lies in the ritual and in faith.

The preparation of the ritual starts with vigilance at the 'konaki', a special shrine dedicated to the saints, where the icons are placed among the 'amanetia' (red handkerchiefs that are considered sacred by the fire walkers and they walk on the fire only when they wear or hold them), other tributes and the musical instruments. The next night, a procession starts from the 'konaki' to the area where the fire-walking will take place. Participants carrying the icons of the saints and wearing the 'amanetia', dance over the glowing coals, following the rhythm of the musical instruments (lyre, gaida and tambourine). The ceremony lasts until the fire is extinguished. After the celebration, the icons return with a procession to the 'konaki', where the members of the Association (fire walkers) gather. Throughout the custom (before the fire-walking, at the beginning and at the return from the fire-walking), the dance is also a key element of the custom.

The custom is distinctive and special, it includes mystery and divinity. Apparently, the fire-walking is the main attraction for the public.

### **Partners and supporters**

Unfortunately, there are no key partners or supporters and sponsors for the organization of this custom, which puts pressure and jeopardizes the implementation of the custom every year, due to the costs. The event takes place under the auspices of the Region of Central Macedonia and the Metropolitan Unit of Thessaloniki (the goal of the auspices is the formalization of the custom and the wider acquaintance of the public with the custom) but there is no other help.

### **Participants**

The custom attracts visitors to the village of Lagkada, both from Greece and from abroad. Apart from tourists/visitors, it also attracts historians, folklorists and academics. It also attracts media channels, newspapers and magazines. Students from France and Tokyo have also attended as the custom was part of their research.

### **Marketing communications**

Promotion of the custom is mainly made through social media, mostly through the pages maintained by the Association (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest and the blog: <https://anastenarialagkada.blogspot.com/>) and through oral communication by people who have attended. There is, also, coverage by various channels, local newspapers and radio stations. Recently there was an article in New York Times (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/01/travel/greece-firewalking-ritual.html>) about the custom, by a person who attended it in 2021. The Association is trying to promote the custom in various ways, such as through leaflets of airline companies.

### **Accessibility**

There is a good road connection and by city buses.



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Source of the images: 'Anastenaria Lagkada' Association



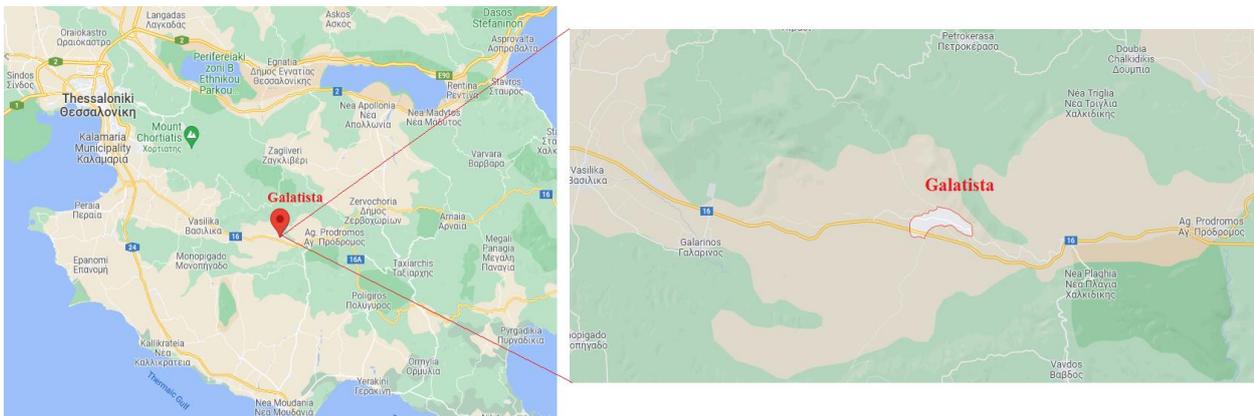
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## Custom of the Camel and the Wedding of Manio

(Historic Site and Re-enactment)

**Location:** The custom takes place in Galatista, a semi-mountainous historic traditional village located in the Municipal Unit of Anthemounta of the Municipality of Polygyros, in the Regional Unit of Chalkidiki. Specifically, the custom takes place in the village’s square (Episminagou I. Hatzoudi square) and then a procession takes place in the village accompanied by the camel, the bride, the groom and the orchestra.



**Schedule:** Every year on the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of January. On January 5 the procession of the bells and the decoration of the “Camel” take place, on January 6, the revival of the custom of “Camel” and on January 7, the “Wedding of Manio”.

**Organizer:** Municipality of Polygyros - Municipal Community of Galatista

### Description

The custom has its roots in the years of Ottoman rule. Based on the legend the custom reenacts a real event, regarding the abduction of a local girl called Manio by the local Turkish commissioner (Aga). The young men of the village led by her betrothed, in order to free her, came up with the trick of the Camel, similar to the Trojan Horse. They made a rudimentary camel so that some of them could hide under it and others followed it disguised. They set up a feast outside the Turkish camp. The Turks, seeing the joy of the young people, opened the camp gate and caroused with the Greeks until they all fell drunk in the morning. While everyone was asleep, her betrothed with his friend freed Manio and the next day they got married.

Since then and every year, the custom of the Camel is revived in remembrance of their reunion, accompanied by instruments (davuls and zurnas). The custom of the Camel takes place on the Epiphany Day and the next day, on St. John’s celebration day, the representation of Manio’s wedding takes place. Bride and best man are men dressed in women’s clothes.

### Key activities

The custom begins on January 5, the eve of Epiphany. The participants of that day, namely the dancers, the local musicians with davuls and zurnas and whoever wishes from the villagers, go



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to pick up the bells. The bells are usually in the house of a breeder who offers them for the custom. Then they go around the village dancing with the bells.

The next day, the Epiphany Day, the dancers, the local musicians, the “Camel”, the groom and the bride, a group of fustanella (a traditional pleated skirt-like garment) wearers, called “Tzamararides”, as well as football and basketball clubs, participate in the reenactment. The feast takes place in the village square, where with the participation of all the people, the reunion of the groom and the bride is celebrated. During the feast grilled local sausages, wine and other local delicacies are offered in the square. After the feast is over, those who have participated in the reenactment of the custom (local musicians, camel, groom, bride, dancer, Tzamararides and whoever else wants to accompany) make a procession in the village.

The next day continues with having fun in the square (without the camel) and another procession in the village.

### Partners and supporters

Municipality of Polygyros, Municipal Community of Galatista, local associations and sponsorship of citizens in order to support the custom.

### Participants

Citizens-sponsors of the community, associations especially for the reenactment of the custom, locals and visitors.

### Marketing communications

The custom is promoted Mainly through local channels and social media (facebook). Also, people can contact the Municipality and the sponsors.

### Accessibility

The custom takes place in the square of the village. There are parking places in the vicinity. Also the square can be approached on foot.



Source of the images: [https://www.kedenews.gr/eidiseis/1110\\_ethimo-tis-kamilas-kai-o-gamos-tis-manios-sti-galatista](https://www.kedenews.gr/eidiseis/1110_ethimo-tis-kamilas-kai-o-gamos-tis-manios-sti-galatista), <https://ipop.gr/themata/eimai/o-gamos-tis-manios-sti-galatista-chalkidikis/>



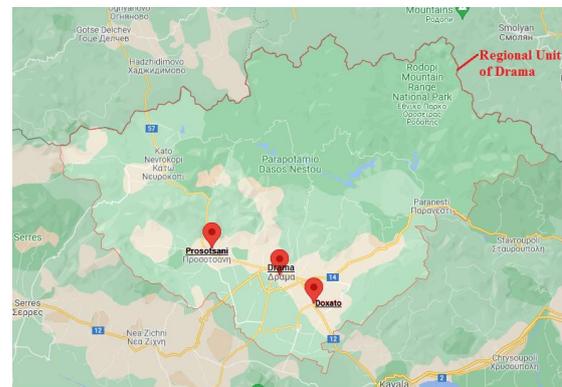
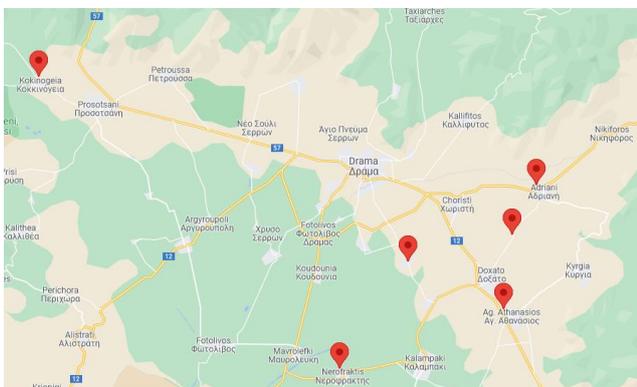
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## Dramainognosia (Drama's Wine Celebration)

(Cultural Events)

**Location:** The activities of the event take place in various locations, both indoor and outdoor, throughout the Regional Unit of Drama. Every year the locations and venues may vary. In the Municipality of Drama, the activities usually take place in squares, on the streets, in the archeological museum, in the Administration's building, in the Town Hall, in the railway station, etc. Events are held in other Municipalities too, such as the Municipality of Prosotsani and the Municipality of Doxato.



**Schedule:** The event takes place in May and usually lasts for one (1) week. In 2020 the event did not take place and in 2021 there was a seminar/meeting in December in relation to gastronomy and wine. The normal implementation of the event depends on the evolution of the pandemic.

**Organizer:** Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, together with the Regional Unit of Drama (Development Directorate) and the Municipalities of the RU

### Description

The idea for the organization of the event is based on both historical and traditional elements as well as modern conditions.

The wider area is closely associated with Dionysus, god of wine and viticulture. Archaeological findings, which link the area with Dionysus and wine, are on display at the Archaeological Museum of Drama (such as busts of Dionysus and a red-shaped crater). Archaeological excavations in two prehistoric settlements in the wider area, also support this connection. In the Neolithic settlement in Sitagroi (a village near Drama in the Municipality of Prosotsani, Regional Unit of Drama) grape remains have been found while in Dikili Tash (located in the south-eastern part of the plain of Drama, near the ancient city of Philippi, and administratively belonging to the Municipality of Kavala, Regional Unit of Kavala) probably the oldest, so far, indication of wine making in Europe has been found. Also, a temple dedicated to Dionysus has been found in Kali Vrysi, Protsotsani.



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Over the years, the traditional production of wine has been maintained in the area. In the last 30 years, some large wineries (with several distinctions) have been created in the area, which are located close to each other.

Moreover, some Dionysian events are organized in the area after Christmas.

The event was initiated by the employees of the Regional Unit of Drama (along with the contribution of winemakers) who wanted to highlight the historical, cultural and wine/culinary tradition of the area to enhance its attractiveness and tourism. The organization of the event was and continues to be a collective effort.

The event was organized for the first time in October 2014 and lasted four (4) days. The recent years, the event takes place in May (as in October in the wineries the production starts after the harvest).

The aim of the event is not only the promotion of wineries and wine but also of the traditional local products of Drama (e.g. cold cuts and cheese products), as the Regional Unit would like in the future to establish a local quality pact for these products.

The Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and the Regional Unit of Drama would want to include wineries from the wider area, such as Kavala, thus creating a route of wineries throughout the Region.

The name of the event summarizes the main message, i.e. Dramoinognosia = Drama (the name of the place) + oinos (wine) + geusignosia (tasting). Thus, the objective is people to discover Drama and the wider area, through wine, local flavors, history and culture.

### Key activities

Every year the activities of the event are different and are organized/ implemented by various stakeholders. Some typical examples of activities are: tastings where participants learn to recognize the flavors and aromas of each wine, local product exhibitions / presentation of local dishes, tasting of local products and dishes, food and wine pairing events, creation of traditional food and sweets, music/dance events and concerts, musical-theatrical performances, races, horse riding, cycling, photography exhibitions and seminars, lost treasure hunting, mushroom picking, book presentations, training seminars, workshops, presentations and lectures on viticulture and wine, presentations and speeches with an architectural theme, art exhibitions, screening of documentaries and films, poetry evenings, observation of planets with special telescopes, activities exclusively for children. During the last weekend of the event the wineries are open for visitors offering guided tours, concerts, exhibitions and wine at special prices (wine at special prices is also offered throughout the duration of the event in restaurants and bars).

### Partners and supporters

The event is based on synergies among different stakeholders:

- Wine production companies/wineries
- Food production companies of every sector and level
- Catering businesses of all kinds

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- Entertainment businesses
- Tourism companies of all sizes and objects
- Commercial enterprises of all kinds
- Food and beverage export companies
- Professionals directly or indirectly related to tourism
- Department of Agricultural Biotechnology and Oenology (at least 140 students-volunteers)
- Chamber
- Professional Bodies
- Cultural associations
- Volunteers and residents.

The event is funded by the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, the Municipalities and the wineries.

### **Participants**

The event is attended mainly by people from the local community and the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Region but also from other areas of Northern Greece. People from Bulgaria also attend the event. However there is no research and recording (e.g. with questionnaires in wineries) about the place of origin and the duration of the stay.

One problem is that the event takes place at the same time as the “Open Doors” event (wineries open for visitors) and thus many people choose to go to other wineries that are not located in the Regional Unit of Drama.

### **Innovation**

Products (paper or glasses) from recycled material during are used during the event. There is a possibility that this year’s seminar/meeting will be broadcast online.

### **Marketing communications**

Through social media (facebook, instagram). Press presentations are sometimes held in Athens, Thessaloniki and at tourism fairs. There is promotion via radio and TV spots in local stations of the Region. Also, posters are made and leaflets are distributed at the toll booths.

### **Accessibility**

All areas are accessible to people with disabilities. Also, every year on a particular day the “Market Celebration” takes place. During this activity the city center is pedestrianized for a few hours.

However, the Regional Unit of Drama faces accessibility problems as there is no direct connection with Egnatia Odos.

We are also examining the possibility to create a connection among the wineries, a winery route, e.g. by bike path.



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## EuroBirdwatch (BirdLife's Annual Bird-Watching Event)

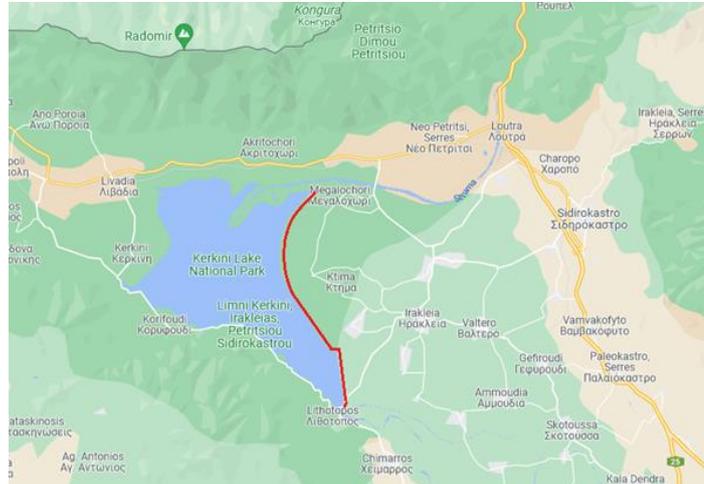
(Natural Heritage)

**Location:** The event takes place in the Eastern embankment of Lake Kerkini, which is located in the Regional Unit of Serres in the west part of the Region of Central Macedonia.

Lake Kerkini is one of the 10 Wetlands of International Importance in Greece (also known as Ramsar Wetlands).

**Schedule:** First Sunday of October (10:00-14:00 o'clock)

**Organizer:** Lake Kerkini Management Authority



### Description

EuroBirdwatch is an annual bird watching event organized throughout Europe every year on the first weekend of October at the initiative of the NGO Birdlife International. The action has been taking place since 1993. In Greece, the responsible environmental organization for the event is the Hellenic Ornithological Society (HOS), with which the Lake Kerkini Management Authority cooperates.

Lake Kerkini National Park was established for the protection of the area as a national natural heritage. The lake was created in 1932 with the construction of a dam on the Strymonas River near the village of Lithotopos and the construction of embankments to the east and west. The biodiversity of the area is very important and valuable. At least 300 species of birds have been observed and recorded in the Lake and the surrounding mountains, of which 50 are included in the Red List of Birds of Greece. The presence of other species is also important, such as amphibians (11 species), reptiles (26 species), mammals (> 58 species), fish (30 species), plants (> 800 species) and invertebrates (at least 4700 species of which 1396 new species for Greece and at least 46 new species for science). In the area of the Lake there is the largest number of buffaloes in Greece which are animals adapted to live in wetlands. Important is the presence of various plant species, too.

### Key activities

The main activities include Information and awareness activities, bird watching, activities for children.

### Partners and supporters

The event is held under the auspices of the Hellenic Ornithological Society and there are no sponsors.



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## Participants

The participants come from all over the world. People come from all over Greece and mainly families from the Regional Unit of Serres. The percentage of tourists from abroad is smaller. They come mainly from Bulgaria (large percentage), the Republic of North Macedonia, England, France, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Ireland, America, Canada, Israel and Australia.

## Marketing communications

Promotion of the event is mainly made through social media (facebook), and with oral communication.

The Lake Kerkini Management Authority also organizes environmental information and awareness activities, especially for the students at the primary schools of the municipalities adjacent to the National Park. The students are informed about the values of the wetlands in general and more specifically for the importance of Kerkini wetland. During the presentation there is a projection of photos from the National Park and in the end the students are free to express their opinion, thoughts or questions. A useful awareness tool is also the educational material distributed by the Lake Kerkini Management Authority to all schools. The material titled “Meet the Nature of Lake Kerkini Protected Area” was created by the Hellenic Ornithological Society in cooperation with the Lake Kerkini Management Authority and is licensed by the Greek Ministry of Education. The material is addressed to students of primary (age 11-12) and secondary (age 13-15) education. It involves a power-point presentation of the protected area, an instruction guide for the teachers and activity sheets. There are activities focused on field practice.

The Management Authority applies seminars and meetings about the National Park to the local professionals that are involved with ecotourism (especially to tour guides).

The Information Centre of Lake Kerkini functions continuously since 1998 at the service of the National Park’s visitors. The visitors can obtain information from the exhibition hall of the Centre. Also, there is a projection hall for those who are interested to learn more about the area. Apart from that, the personnel of the Management Authority can guide the visitors outdoors for bird watching.

## Accessibility

Access to the area is possible mainly by car (only until one point and then on foot). Access by bus is not satisfactory. From Serres there is a connection through Sidirokastro only in the morning, while from Thessaloniki there are 3-4 itineraries per day for the eastern part of the area (Heraklion and Sidirokastro).

The railway connection of the area is substandard. From Serres to Thessaloniki and vice versa there are two routes, one of which is an Intercity train that stops only in Rodopoli and Sidirokastro, while the other one stops at all stations serving the settlements of the area.



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## “Janissaries and Boules” of the Heroic City of Naoussa

(Historic sites and re-enactments)

**Location:** Naoussa, a mountain city that dates back to the 14th century, located in the Regional Unit of Imathia

**Schedule:** This is an annual event taking place in the period of carnival until the Sunday of Orthodoxy, culminating on the Sunday of Lent and Sunday of Carnival (Tyris).

**Organizer:** Municipality of the Heroic City of Naoussa, Association “Janissaries and Boules”



### Description

The custom “Janissaries and Boules” of the Heroic City of Naoussa is the heart and main feature of the city’s carnival event. It is considered to have its roots in antiquity and the worship of god Dionysus, but mainly in the years of the Ottoman rule as the first evidence of the ritual dates back to 1706, when it took place as a memorial for the child levy of the previous year. The people of Naoussa refused the child levy and killed the sultan’s envoy, so many of them were forced to become “thieves”, i.e. members of illegal mountain troops, resulting in their extermination by the Turks.

“Janissaries and Boules” is essentially a dance event, because the action of the people who participate is a dance action. Without this dance action the reenactment of the custom is not possible. The main elements of the custom are:

- the formation of the troupe, which presupposes the strict acceptance and observance of certain rules of the custom in order to participate in it,
- only young males can participate in the custom, and
- the female figure (bride-boula) is always played by a man.
- The custom remains unchanged to this day, incorporating the local tradition, the myths, the legends, the songs and the heroic struggles of Naoussa.

In 1955, due to the Holocaust of Naoussa, as it is known the bloody suppression of the revolution against the Ottomans in April 1822, the city was given the title of “Heroic City”. The river Arapitsa that crosses the city has gone down in history for the great sacrifice of the local women, who holding their children, preferred to fall into its waters rather than into the hands of the Turks. Despite its destruction, Naoussa managed to recover and grow in the late 19th century, in the context of the Ottoman Reforms (Tanzimat), with the development of a particularly flourishing textile industry, which continued after the integration of the city to Greece in 1912 to decline in the early 1990s.



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## Key activities

The clothing, the vesture/costumes and the behavior of the performers are characterized by discipline and standardized by traditional rules.

The traditional musical instruments, the dances and the itinerary are predetermined by the ritual, which is followed unchanged over the years.

The participation of relatives and family members of the dancers, during the process of gathering the troupe, in the ceremony of separation from the family and their integration into the herd is typical for the performance of the custom. The audience can follow the defined route of the troupe in the city, and after the “removal” of the face at the end of the route, the public can participate in the dances with the dancers of the troupe.

## Partners and supporters

The Municipality of the Heroic City of Naoussa is the main sponsor of the events during the Carnival, while from time to time public or private bodies may finance some of the events.

## Participants

Residents of the Municipality of Naoussa and visitors from Greece and abroad.

## Innovation

An application has been created for mobile devices so that the user can locate in real time the location of the troupes with the dancers and also read useful information about the custom.

## Marketing communications

Promotion of the events are made through an advertising campaign of the Municipality of Naoussa in print, radio and television media, social media, etc.

## Accessibility

Naoussa is accessible via the national road network. Within the urban fabric there are sidewalks, bike paths and parking spaces. Access to all activities is possible for all age groups and people with disabilities.





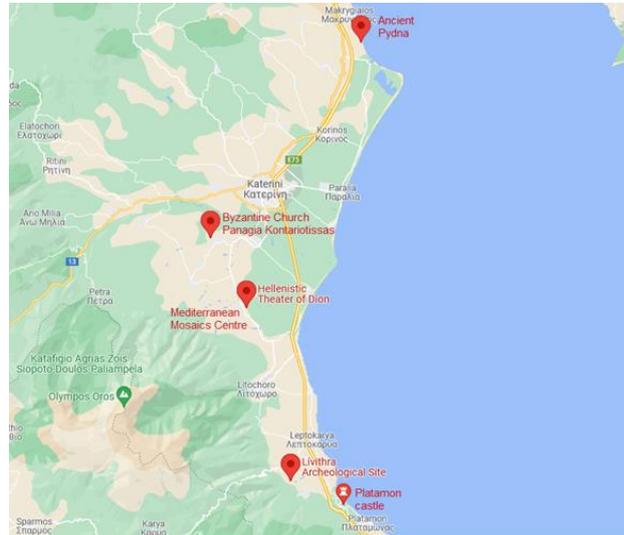
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## Olympus Festival

(Festival)

**Location:** Olympus Festival takes place in the Regional Unit of Pieria, located in the southwest part of the Region of Central Macedonia, in several sites at the foot of Mount Olympus, the mythical home of the Greek Gods, and the Olympus National Park. The various events and activities take place in important archeological sites dating from the Hellenistic and Byzantine eras, such as: the ancient theater and the Roman Odeion (Conservatory) in the archeological park of Dion, the Platamon Byzantine Castle, the Ancient Livithra, the Ancient Pydna, the Byzantine Church Panagia Kondariotissa in the northwest of Dion, and the Byzantine archeological site in Louloudies Kitrous. Also, several events and activities take place in modern premises in the area, such as: the Mediterranean Mosaic Center in Dion, the Park Theater of Katerini, the Municipal Theater of Kolindros, the Open Theater of Palios Panteleimonas, the Open Theater of Litochoro Park, the Museum of Natural History in Olympus National Park, and the Museum Warehouse of Makrigialos next to Ancient Pydna.



**Schedule:** July and August, annually

**Organizer:** Olympus Festival Organization (OR.FE.O)

### Description

Olympus Festival was established in 1972 - initially under the name “Feasts of the Muses” - and was transformed through time into a modern cultural institution. For more than five decades, Olympus Festival has been one of the leading cultural organizations for the Performing Arts in Greece, with international perspective. It brings (traditional) dance, theater, music and arts closer to modern reality, providing a unique experience. Taking place both in ancient sites and modern premises, the various events connect the past with the present. Olympus Festival remains a rare spectacle and at the same time a unique opportunity for the loyal fans of festivals who dream of mild weather, fresh air and a breathtaking landscape in combination with exciting performances. Since 2010, the establishment of the institution of the “honored country” turned the festival into an important agent of cultural diplomacy and led to cooperation with the largest cultural centers and museums of these countries (Louvre Museum, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation, Cervantes Institute, Russian Cultural Center etc.).



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## Key activities

Olympus Festival is a great celebration of the art and culture, of the past and present of the country. Every year, during the summer, for two consecutive months, the region experiences an explosion of creative energy from all over Greece and from different parts of the world, which is transmitted to the public in unusual outdoor spaces and areas in various locations. Recognized but also unknown artists, aiming at boosting their career, give their best. The festival caters for everyone and for every taste, promoting theater, ancient and modern, dance, children's performances, music, exhibitions and archeological events. Through a culture of live performing arts, the festival cultivates understanding, entertainment and education, an attitude of appreciation and respect for arts, as well as for local heritage and tradition.

## Partners and supporters

Olympus Festival Organization collaborates with two state theaters of Greece, that of Athens and Thessaloniki, and also with various regional theaters, with private artistic organizations and international cultural institutions.

Local art groups, music schools, cultural associations, volunteer groups and individual volunteers, mainly students, also participate in the activities.

The Olympus Festival Organization is a non-profit cultural entity. Without access to any state assistance and subsidy, the funding of the festival comes mainly from the tickets of each event and from sponsorships and donations of companies and individuals and occasionally from donation of the state. Local bodies, the Sub-regional Administration, Municipalities, and the Chamber of Pieria, also contribute financially.

## Participants

Local community, inhabitants from all over Central Macedonia, West Macedonia and Thessaly regions and especially the neighboring regional units of Larissa, Kozani, Imathia and Thessaloniki, as well as visitors coming from abroad.

## Innovation

Concerning artistic innovations, the last years, Olympus Festival has established the institution of Archaeological Walks, with the guided tour of visitors to one of the many archaeological sites of Pieria, during which there are many unexpected events that pleasantly surprise sightseers.

Recently, due to the pandemic, the use of digital systems for the broadcast of events has been introduced. Methods for measuring spectator impressions, profile and origin are also used by the International University of Greece, School of Management and Economics.

## Marketing communications

Distribution of printed program, promotion in the media, presentation of the program in various Greek cities, Athens, Thessaloniki, Larissa, Kozani, Veria, etc., internet, press conferences, posting of posters and announcements in allowed places.



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## Accessibility

Accessibility to the venues of the events is mainly made by car through the national and provincial network, as they are located near to the national road Athens - Thessaloniki (E75). The festival also provides city buses from Katerini especially for the activities. There is organized parking as well as parking for people with disabilities.



Source of the images: Olympus Festival Organization (OR.FE.O)



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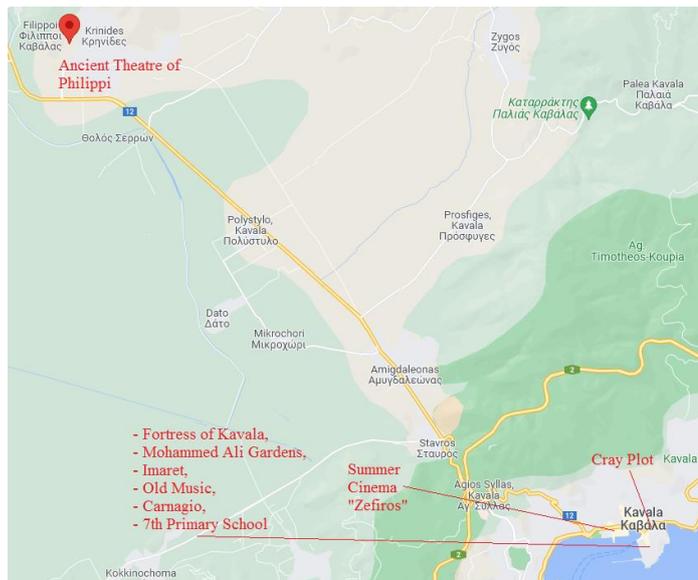
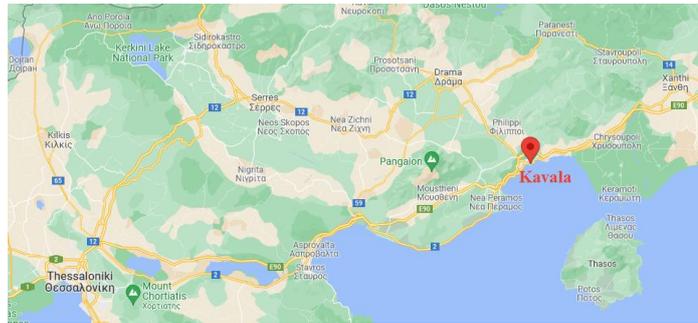
## Philippi Festival

(Festival)

### Location:

The events of the Festival take place in different locations in and around the city of Kavala, in the Regional Unit of Kavala, namely:

- the Ancient Theatre of Philippi, which is built in the mid-4th B.C. and is one of the earliest stone open air theaters in Greece;
- the Fortress of Kavala, that is the acropolis that dominates the old settlement of the city;
- the Mohammed Ali Family Gardens, that is the garden of a mansion, located in the traditional settlement of Kavala, which is one of the most brilliant surviving examples of Ottoman architecture of the late 18th century in Greece and currently operates as a museum;
- the Imaret, that is a 19th century Ottoman building complex offered by Mohammed Ali that currently now operates as a monument-hotel;
- the Halil Bey Mosque, which was probably built at the beginning of the 16th c. and after the integration of the area to Greece hosted a Girls' School and then the Municipal Philharmonic Orchestra thus acquiring the name "Mosque of Music", which explains the fact that is commonly known as the "Old Music";
- the Carnagio in the Port of Kavala;
- the Courtyard of the 7th Primary School of Kavala-Faros;
- the Cray Plot;
- and the open-air cinema "Zefiros".



**Schedule:** July and August for 40-60 days, annually

**Organizer:** Municipal and Regional Theatre (DIPETHE) of Kavala



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## Description

An important institution, the second major festival in the country after Epidaurus Festival, Philippi Festival makes its first appearance in 1957, at the Ancient Theater of Philippi.

In 1961, the newly founded State Theatre of Northern Greece, premiered with its inaugural performance at the ancient theater of Philippi, thus connecting its course with the festival and remaining its organizer until 1983. From 1984 onwards and for the next 25 years, the Municipality of Kavala and the Municipal Regional Theatre (DIPETHE) of Kavala held the organization of the festival. Performances of the National Theater, the State Theater of Northern Greece, Municipal Regional Theaters, as well as free theater productions are hosted.

In 2009 the Municipality of Kavala invited Thodoris Gonis to take over the artistic direction of the festival. Since then, it acquires a duration of two months (July and August) and apart from hosting performances/events the festival includes its own productions as well involving theater, music, modern dance and other performances. The festival has from now on its own character.

The Ancient Theatre of Philippi ceases to be the sole venue for the festival and other places in the city of Kavala start to host activities and events, such as the Fortress, the Imaret, the Old Music, the Mohammed Ali Family Gardens, schools, temples, cafes and also places around the archaeological site of Philippi as the mud baths of Krinides.

The stigma of this artistic proposal, which aims to upgrade the status of the festival to an institution of European level, is detected not only in the ruins of the ancient and byzantine city of Philippi, but also in the city of Kavala, which was a particularly robust city of tobacco trade and shipping in the past and still retain scattered memories of this vibrant culture nowadays.

## Key activities

Theatrical performances, children's plays, concerts, readings, photo and art exhibitions, dance performances, performances, lectures, screenings, books presentations, workshops.

## Partners and supporters

The main source of funding for the Philippi Festival is the Municipality of Kavala. The Ministry of Culture mainly finances the "Ancient Drama Workshop" which is one of the main activities of the Philippi Festival in recent years. In addition, hotels of Kavala and Krinides participate as sponsors of the events by offering either special prices to the host groups, or free facilities to partners of the festival. There are also a lot of media sponsors.

## Participants

The events of the Festival are attended every year by a wide range of spectators from the local community, theatrical audience from Kavala, Drama, Serres and Xanthi, but also tourists, Greeks and foreigners mainly the great performances held in the Ancient Theater of Philippi.

## Innovation

For several years now, Philippi Festival has emerged as one of the most productive festivals in the country, with its own "local culture", as every year it orders new texts from authors on a specific theme, thus highlighting the work of great Greek writers through a series of events by



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inviting actors, dancers, musicians, academics and artists to work on it. Thus, the Festival brings back into our lives poets who may not have found the place they deserve in Greek literature. Moreover, it helps and promotes young artists, without any restriction on what they will present. The culmination of the festival's innovative activities is the "Ancient Drama Workshop", a camp held in the area of Krinides (next to the Ancient Theater of Philippi), where groups of artists stay for a few weeks and work on ancient drama, presenting the result of their work at public either at the Ancient Theatre of Philippi, or at some other place of the wider archeological site. The groups draw their subject from works of their choice or themes of ancient drama that they compose themselves from the beginning, with complete freedom in approach and presentation and with rehearsals open to the local community. In many cases, productions of the Philippi Festival or texts written especially for the festival have been presented in other parts of Greece or abroad - which is one of the main goals of this activity.

### Marketing communications

The public can contact for any question or comment on the facebook page maintained by the Festival (<https://www.facebook.com/festivalphilippon/>) as well as on instagram (philippi festival), by e-mail through the official website ([www.philippi-festival.gr](http://www.philippi-festival.gr)) and by phone at 2510-620566, as well as the telephones of DIPETHE Kavala during office hours (2510-220876, 2510-220877). Moreover the Festival is promoted through national and local media.

### Accessibility

The access to the Ancient Theater of Philippi is made by car, for this reason there is a large parking space, so that all spectators are served. There is special care for the elderly or people with disabilities, as a ramp has been created for easier access from the entrance to the theater orchestra. Also, there are always volunteers in the area to facilitate and guide people with mobility problems.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/philippifestival/>



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## Silk Festivity

(Festival)

**Location:** The event takes place in the town of Soufli, a town in the Regional Unit of Evros with a long history in silk production and industry.

One of the main venues is the Industrial complex of Tzivre Silk Mill, located at the entrance of the town, which is the oldest and most important industrial complex of Soufli. It was built by the Italian house of Milan “Ceriano Fratelli” in 1910-11 and functioned successfully up to 1958. It consists of 13 buildings, of a total surface of 10,500sq.m, the most important of which is the three-storey cocoon warehouse. Moreover, it constitutes a unique preserved structure of silk-mills industrial architectural complex in the region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and one of the biggest and most representative industrial complexes of the beginnings of the 20th century in the wider Balkan area. The entire complex has been listed as historical monument and work of art, since 1988.



Activities also take place in four other venues:

- Museum of Silk Art, an eclectic rehabilitated building;
- Soufli Folk Art Museum “Gnafala”-Bourouliti’s Family Private Collection, which is the first folklore museum in the area, created in 1998 by the Bouroulitis family and houses its private folklore collection, started by George Bouroulitis around 1970;
- Silk Museum, which belongs to the Network of Thematic Technology Museums of the Piraeus Group Cultural Foundation and is a listed monument since 1994, and
- Brika Mansion - Municipal Folklore Museum of Soufli, which was built around 1890 especially for the needs of sericulture and the production of silk seed and is a listed monument since 1986.

**Schedule:** The event usually takes place in summer, June, July or September

**Organizer:** Crvssalida Association

### Description

The Silk Festivity started 15 years ago and has become an institution. It is organized by the Association Chrysallida and many other associations are participating, under the auspices of the Municipality of Soufli as well as the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace.



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## Key activities

The event includes a lot of different activities every year, such as competitions, photo exhibitions related to silk, exhibitions of silk clothes and items, cycling tours, road races, music events, dance and theatre performance, theatrical workshops, screening of documentaries and films, presentation of books, meeting and presentations related to silk, interactive reenactment of the past with the use of modern technological means and artistic installations, representation of the life cycle of the silkworm with the help of technological means, workshops for dyeing clothes using the method of tie dye, silk workshop for adults and children regarding cocoon creations, painting techniques on silk, spinning and dyeing silk fabrics, batik technique seminars, educational workshops for children and families (creations with threads using the quipu technique), interactive activities for children and reenactment of traditional wedding custom.

## Partners and supporters

Key partners and supporters / sponsors are private companies, the Municipality of Soufli and the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. Local media serve as communication sponsors. ERT (Hellenic Radio Television, the public broadcaster of Greece) has also been a communication sponsor. Also, several events are organized in collaboration with various local associations as well as the museums in which the activities take place (including the Piraeus Group Cultural Foundation).

## Participants

Participants are mainly residents of the town of Soufli and of the surrounding area. Efforts have been made to promote the events through travel agencies in a nationwide scope with the aim of attracting visitors from all over Greece. In recent years, there has been an influx of tourists, mainly Greeks, with great prospects to attract people from the surrounding countries.

## Innovation

Important activities, such as reenactments of the traditional works related to the breeding of silkworms and silk and representation of the life cycle of the silkworm with the help of technological means, have taken place with the use of modern electronic equipment of virtual reality as well as through interaction with image and sound.

## Marketing communications

The festival is promoted mainly through local media radio, television (including national television channels such as ERT), social networks, internet and travel agencies.

## Accessibility

The different venues are located in the town of Soufli. The organisers aim to connect the venues with other historic buildings and monuments of the town as well as with Associations and Museums.

The town of Soufli is accessible by bus and train. Unfortunately, there are not any bike paths but there are parking spaces.



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Source of the images: 'Cryssalida' Silk Friends Association



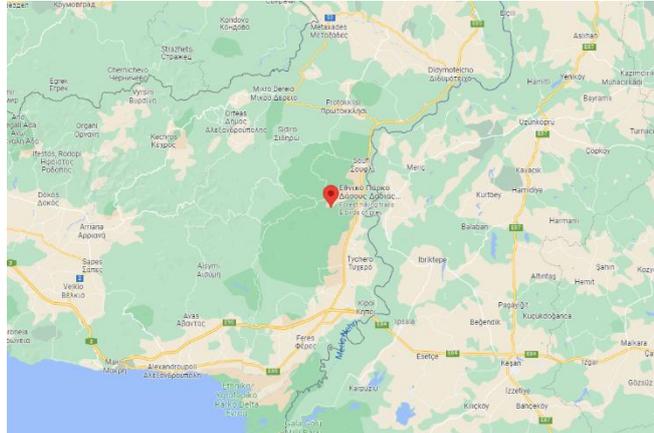
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## World Forestry Day at Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park

(Festival)

**Location:** The event is taking place at the Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufli Forest National Park Information Center. The Center is located in Dadia, about 800 meters from the main square of the village, at the heart of the protected area. It has been operating since August 1994, promoting the protection of nature in the area, providing information and raising public awareness on the ecological values of the National Park.



**Schedule:** 21st March every year

**Organizer:** Management Body of the National Park of Dadia -Lefkimi - Soufli Forest

### Description

World Forestry Day is celebrated around the world on the 21st March each year under the auspices of the UN. This day, which coincides with the vernal equinox, was declared World Forestry Day to bring people closer to forest that covers 25% of the Earth's surface, to stimulate their interest to learn more about its functions, but also about the need of protection, which is vital for human survival, and thus to raise their awareness and make them participate in the protection of the area.

### Key activities

- Presentation about the day, its values and its uniqueness.
- Environmental activities that aim to raise public awareness about the value of the forest and the need to protect it from natural and man-made threats.
- Hiking in the forest
- Bird watching

### Partners and supporters

The event is organized by the National Park's Management Body, so there aren't any partners and supporters / sponsors.

### Participants

The event is open to the public and everybody can participate in all activities. A special invitation is sent to primary and secondary schools in the area of Evros. Children can more easily comprehend the messages of the event and gain environmental knowledge and awareness.



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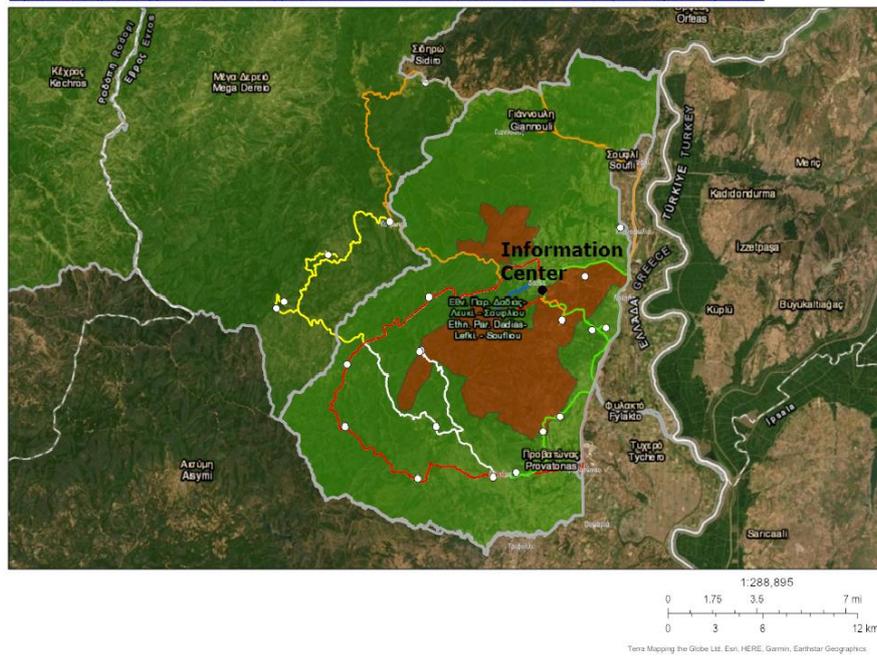
### Marketing communications

Promotion for the event is mainly made through social media and the website of the Management Body. A special invitation is sent to the primary and secondary education units as well as individual invitations to the pupils of the schools of the area

### Accessibility

The most direct way to access Dadia and the facilities of the Management Body is by private car. There are regular bus services from Soufli to Dadia with return. Also, TAXI can be rented from Soufli to Dadia.

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=a63f64446e2f41dfbc8cef9ea3fe8a44&extent=25.6205,40.8724,26.7741,41.3608>





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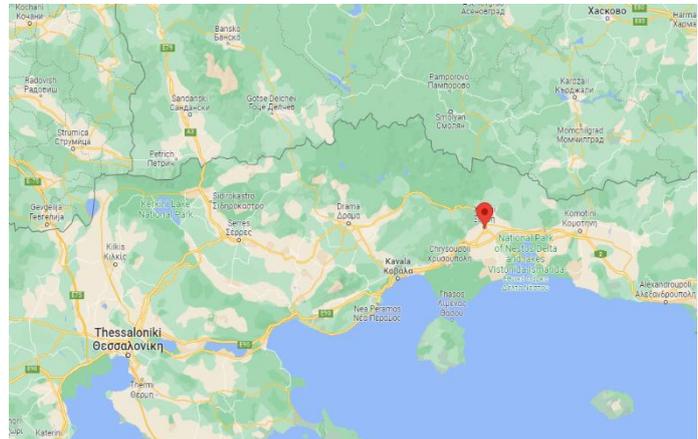
## Xanthi Old Town Festival

(Cultural Event)

**Location:** The activities take place in the historical settlement of the Old Town of Xanthi, which is located in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. The Old Town of Xanthi is one of the largest urban traditional settlements in Greece. It was officially characterized as a traditional protected settlement in 1978. In the Old Town there are 12.000 buildings listed as protected edifices.

**Schedule:** The event usually takes place in late August - early September

**Organizer:** Culture Center of Xanthi



### Description

The Old Town Festival, first organized in 1991, aims at the promotion and development of a residential area that has special characteristics and a rich historical and cultural heritage, so that everyone becomes aware of the responsibility we have to defend this cradle of cultural heritage and identity. During these celebrations, the city relives old memories while experiencing the present, through the rhythm of music.

### Key activities

Concerts, performances, exhibitions, guided tours (for example in the traditional settlement, in museums), hangouts (outdoor taverns) of associations, hangouts with traditional dishes, book and documentary presentations, summer cinema and trade fair.

Children's workshops, round tables, presentations of music workshops are experiential activities addressed to children to inform and educate them as well as make them practice skills that enhance their personal, learning and social development, discover the use of materials and sharpen their imagination and creativity. For example, the 2021 included workshops with activities like storytelling, games (theatrical, creative writing, etc.), art activities, etc. regarding the natural environment, animals and healthy diet. Another workshop organized for the parents aimed to help them encourage their children's reading interest. The workshop included suggested techniques, discussion and an experiential activity. Also, a group training was held for the visitors to exercise through a route in the alleys of the Old Town of Xanthi.

### Partners and supporters

Main sponsors/supporters are: Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Athenian Brewery SA, Cosmote, E-Value.



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Also, many associations, foundations/institutions, cooperative groups, etc. contribute to the event, through the organization, provision and supervision of various activities.

**Participants**

All age and social groups. Increasing tourist flows from neighboring Balkan countries, mainly Bulgaria and Turkey (before the outbreak of COVID19).

**Innovation**

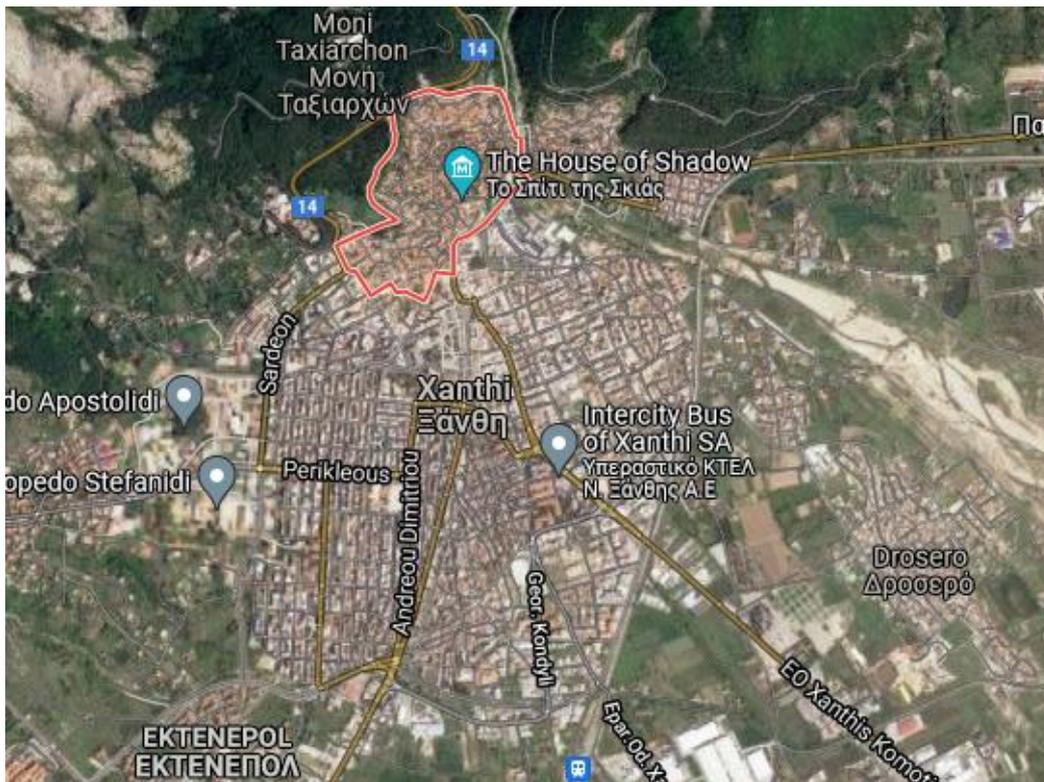
Only digital methods of communication and sale of services are used for the festival.

**Marketing communications**

The event is promoted via various communication channels..

**Accessibility**

The whole transitional settlement is pedestrianized during the event.



Source of the images: Google maps



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