This multimedia brochure is created within the framework of the project “Multimedia Catalogue of the Tourist Sites and Electronic Marketing of Destination Bulgaria”, Contract No BG161PO001/3.3-01/2008/001-5, which is performed with the financial support of Operative Program “Regional Development” 2007 – 2013, co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund. The entire responsibility for the contents of this multimedia brochure is brought by the beneficiary – The Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, and under no circumstances it can be considered that this multimedia brochure presents the official position of the European Union and the Managing Body.
The Bulgarian calendar is filled with various Christian and national holidays. On those days our nation worships the saints, heroes and memorable events of the country’s history. The Bulgarian history is marked by great victories and gloomy defeats, and their celebration has preserved those people’s memory and the nation’s respect to the past.

Some of the greatest Bulgarian holidays, which are days off in Bulgaria, are 3 March - the Liberation Day, 1 May - Labor Day, May 6 - Bulgarian Army Day, 24 May - Day of the Bulgarian Enlightenment and Culture and the Slav letters, 6 September - the Day of Bulgaria’s Unification, 22 September - Independence Day, 1 November - Day of the Enlighteners. Along with these memorable dates, Bulgarians celebrate the major Christian holidays Christmas and Easter.
Day of the Liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman Dominion

(3 March)

After nearly five centuries of Ottoman Dominion, in 1878 Bulgaria gained its freedom. The Russian army, assisted by Bulgarian volunteers, won numerous battles in the war between Russia and Turkey in 1877-1878, and on 3 March 1878 in the small fisherman village of San Stefano in the Ottoman Empire was signed the Peace Treaty of San Stefano, which was later invalidated and replaced by the Berlin Treaty. In accordance with the treaty, today’s Bulgarian lands were divided into two parts - the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia. Bulgaria had the status of a vassal principality of the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Rumelia was an autonomous province within the empire.

3 March is a national holiday. All Bulgarians celebrate this day, and it is marked by various official events across the country.
Day of Labor
(1 May)

1 May is celebrated as International Day of Labor. It is associated with the conduction of the first nationwide workers strike in Chicago in 1886, the purpose of which was to legitimate the 8-hour work day. Suppression of the strike led to casualties.

In the following years on this day people worshipped the dead strikers and the day has gradually become an international holiday.

During the socialist regime in Bulgaria, 1 May was marked with large-scale marches and demonstrations that engaged the whole population.

Nowadays this holiday is not marked with official events.
Day of the Bulgarian Army
(6 May)

May 6 (the day of St. George) is a Christian holiday, which honors St. George. In the folk concepts, St George is the patron of soldiers in Bulgaria. This is the reason for this day to be officially celebrated as the day of braveness and the Bulgarian Army. On 6 May the national army celebrates the holiday with military parades and other events.
Day of the Bulgarian Enlightenment and Culture and day of the Slavonic Alphabet
(24 May)

On 24 May Bulgaria celebrates two holidays - the Day of Saints Cyril and Methodius (who created the Cyrillic alphabet in the 9th century) and the Day of Bulgarian Enlightenment and Culture and the day of the Slavonic alphabet. This holiday is most solemnly celebrated by students and their teachers. All schools across the country organize a variety of festive events.
Day of Bulgaria’s Unification
(6 September)

On 6 September 1885 the two parts of Bulgaria separated by the San Stefano Treaty - the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia - were united. Only 7 years separate the liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman dominion and the unification. However the Bulgarians did not put up with this unfair division of their territory and on 6 September the Unity was announced. Nowadays 6 September is a national holiday.

Independence Day
(22 September)

On 22 September 1908 in Veliko Tarnovo was conducted a special manifesto, where Prince Ferdinand declared Bulgaria an independent state and himself a tsar.
From the Liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman dominion (1878) and the Unification with Eastern Rumelia (1885) to that day the Bulgarian principality was a vassal of Turkey, which was hindering in political, as well as in economic terms the country. The Bulgarian diplomacy took the advantage of a special moment of the international relations and declared Bulgaria’s independence. Nowadays 22 September is celebrated as a national holiday.
Besides their official national holidays, the Bulgarian people celebrate Christmas (24, 25 and 26 December), New Year (31 December and 1 January) and Easter (from Good Friday to the second day of Easter). Bulgarian students and teachers celebrate 1 November - the Day of the National Leaders and Enlighteners - educators, writers and revolutionaries.
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