

# **Climbing in Bulgaria**

**A English Companion for Climbers**

**By Millie Evans**

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## Disclaimer

Although this is not a guide or instructional book it is a book about going climbing so it seems worth placing a little disclaimer. I assume by the fact that you are reading this book you are already a climber and therefore you take on the responsibility and dangers that come with the sport. However life is such that I feel better by including an official disclaimer written by the British Mountaineering Council regarding climbing.

“The author recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions.”

[BMC website](#)

**The information in this book does not offer instruction or technique needed for climbing. The reader must accept full responsibility for their actions and not take information in this book as a guide for climbing or as a substitute for instruction.**

Please also note that all information contained within, was true and accurate to the best of my knowledge at the time of writing. If you find any inaccuracies or new information to add please let me know. All costings and prices are based on information during July and August 2010.

Contact us at: <http://www.climbers-companions.com/contact.html>

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# Contents

Disclaimer.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Getting There.....	5
By Air.....	5
By Train.....	5
By Car.....	5
Getting Around.....	6
By Car.....	6
By Taxi.....	6
By Bus.....	6
Arriving in Bulgaria.....	7
Where to Buy Stuff.....	7
What to expect – Grades and Bolting.....	7
Language.....	7
Cyrillic Alphabet.....	8
Guidebooks.....	9
Maps – Road and Walking.....	10
Online Map Resources.....	10
Climbing Areas in Bulgaria.....	11
Rila Mountains.....	11
Climb around the Malyovitsa Hut.....	12
Seven Rila Lakes Walk.....	15
Climb Borovets.....	16
Mussala Peak (2925m).....	16
Mountain Biking.....	16
Vratsa.....	17
Lakatnik.....	19
Veliko Tarnovo.....	21
Climbing at Holy Trinity (Trinity Rocks) .....	23
Climbing at Usteto East.....	25
Varna.....	27
Deep Water Soloing – Kamen Bryag (Stoney Beach).....	28
Sport Climbing – Chudnite Skali (Wonderful Rocks).....	28
Weather/Climate.....	29
Quick Reference Links.....	30
Guidebook and Maps.....	30
Travel Links.....	30
Accommodation Links.....	30

## Introduction

Bulgaria is a land of contrasts, both geographically and culturally. There are extensive mountain ranges, medieval cities and stunning coastlines. Bulgaria is well known for its Black Sea coastline and mountain ski resorts but for the climber it also holds many other hidden gems. The mountains obviously have many excellent routes but there are also amazing limestone outcrops that rise, seemingly, out of nowhere! Bulgaria is a destination that will excite almost any climber. Whether you are in search of long multi pitch alpine adventures, hard sport routes or a travelling climbing holiday, Bulgaria may just have the answer.

Whatever type of rock climbing you are seeking, finding the information to make it a stress free and an enjoyable trip is crucial. This ebook aims to provide you with invaluable in country knowledge but from a travellers perspective. It's often the little things that a local may take for granted that are the most valuable to a traveller. This year I spent the summer travelling and climbing in Bulgaria, so through research both online and through my experiences I hope to provide you with all the information you need to decide where to go, what to do and how to do it.

Finding information about climbing in Bulgaria is both easy and difficult. It is easy because there is a very comprehensive website for all climbing in the country. However, it is in Bulgarian, and although google translate can sort much of this problem, translations are not always accurate and the website is aimed at Bulgarians, so there is little information about travel, accommodation or other useful logistics. As ever, with 'Climbers Companions' ebooks, the aim is not to replace existing guidebooks or sources of information but to work alongside them. This ebook is a companion to the topos and route descriptors available online giving you up to date information about travel, accommodation, maps, routes and rest day options.

Bulgaria is a vast country and there are a surprisingly large amount of areas that have some kind of climbing development. This ebook will cover most of the key climbing spots and direct you to valuable sources that can give you information about other areas. Throughout the ebook you will find links to various websites. They are all hyperlinked so just click the links to be directed to the relevant web page. The links are also all presented on page 28 for your ease.

I hope you find the information in this ebook useful for planning and enjoying your trip.

Happy Climbing!

## Getting There

### By Air

There are several airlines that fly to various cities in Bulgaria. The cheapest and most useful place to fly to is Sofia, Bulgaria's capital city. Two budget airlines fly direct to Sofia, Easyjet and Wizzair. The later is a Hungarian carrier, the biggest benefit is you get a 32kg baggage allowance as standard. This makes it possible to take all your climbing and camping kit without panicking about being over the limit.

[Easyjet](#) fly from London Gatwick and Manchester to Sofia

[Wizzair](#) fly from London Luton to Sofia and Varna

The prices vary wildly depending on the time of year and you could pay as little as £50 return or up to £250 return in summer.

There are other airlines that will get you to Sofia but most require a stop somewhere, so take a lot longer and do not seem to be any cheaper.

If you want to do a more general search I always use [Travel Supermarket](#) and [Kayak](#) search engines. They seem to cover a large number of budget and non budget airlines to help you find the best flights at the best price.

### By Train

[Inter Rail](#) is an option but is quite pricey and Bulgaria is a long way from Britain. But if you live or are already somewhere in mainland Europe it might be a nice option to see some other countries along the way.

### By Car

Yes...you could drive from Britain. But as with the train it is a long way. It is about 1400miles from London to Sofia and could take nearly 24hrs solid driving according to [Via Michelin](#) route planner.

TOP TIP – you need a road tax vignette to drive in Bulgaria so make sure you pick one up at the border. At most crossings there will either be a special kiosk or it will be in the first petrol station over the border.

## Getting Around

### By Car

If you drive there you are sorted! If not you will need to hire. Although I will mention the other options, if you wish to visit more than one climbing area in Bulgaria and are camping, thus having lots of kit with you, hiring a car does make things so much easier.

I hired a car from [Motoroads](#). They are a company based in Sofia, the service was great and all the documentation was above board and organised. Inclusive in the price is full insurance, no excess, unlimited mileage and three drivers. It is also possible to arrange to drop off the car in a different city, even in a different country if you so desire.

If you want to use a more recognised company, [Auto Europe](#) seem to bring up some bargain prices and [Avis](#) are renowned for reliability but perhaps not the cheapest.

*TOP TIP* – if you are thinking about going across borders, i.e. heading into Romania or Serbia, make sure you get the appropriate paperwork from the car hire company. Border control has different regulations for hire cars.

### By Taxi

If you just want to get from Sofia airport to the city, the recommendation seems to be to go to the OK Taxis desk inside the airport and they will book you a reputable cab. The Bulgarian Tourist board seem to have instigated this because they are trying to stop travellers being ripped off.

The other option is to book an airport transfer before you go. You will pay more for this but for a twenty minute ride to the city centre it is only €16 for two and lots of luggage. I used [Bulgaria Transport](#) who met us at 2am and were very friendly and efficient. We simply filled out a reservation form online and paid in cash on the day. [Motoroads](#) also offer this service but take a small deposit.

The airport transfers are not limited to taking you into the city. They will take you pretty much anywhere in Bulgaria, which means if you are heading for a week or two to one destination hiring a private transfer is a very realistic option. The cost is for the car not per person, so if there is a few of you it can work out quite cheaply.

### By Bus

There are local buses going to and from many of the towns and villages but finding out about all the stops and schedules is the tricky part. I found one website with some information but it does not give prices and please do not hold me to the reliability of the information! [Avtogari](#) is the site – good luck!

## Arriving in Bulgaria

### Where to Buy Stuff

If you have flown into the country but are planning on camping, one of the first priorities will be to get some camping fuel. If you have an MSR then fine, but those of you looking for gas as I was, head to '[Chenata – The Outdoor Shop](#)' in the centre of Sofia.

They sold gas canisters for both screw fixtures and the more European puncher style in various sizes. You could also buy maps for the different mountain regions and they had a good selection of climbing gear. They spoke English and were very friendly.

**Finding it:** in the centre of town is the Tourist office which is next to a 'Happy Grill' and over the road from the Sheraton Hotel. We picked up a free map from here and they had a vague idea where it was. But it is easy from here. Head west from the Happy Grill along the main street (Alexander Stamboliyski). Take the fourth turning on your left onto Bratya Miladinovi. You will see it on the right.

### What to expect – Grades and Bolting

In Bulgaria they use the UIAA grading system on both trad and sport routes. However, there is a shift beginning towards the French grading system for sport routes. So what you will find on the guidebook website (mentioned later) is three grades for each route: UIAA, French and USA. It then says whether it is trad, sport or alpine and what it is equipped with. It is possible to only sport climb in Bulgaria but on several occasions we supplemented the equipped routes with the odd friend or wire. If you want to do some of the alpine routes in the mountain regions then a traditional rack is advisable.

The newer sport routes are bolted with either expansion or resin bolts and have good lower-offs. But some of the older routes describe themselves as sport routes but are actually only equipped with rusty pegs and pitons. In places, these also make up the lower-offs! In this ebook I will highlight areas where this seemed to be the case.

### Language

Bulgarian is a Slavic language and is written using the Cyrillic alphabet. Many people we met did speak some English but it was not with the regularity and perfection that you find elsewhere in Europe.

The beauty of Bulgarian is the pronunciation. If you have the name written in the Latin (English) alphabet it is completely phonetic. If you only have the Cyrillic version then you will need to get a bit of a grasp of that alphabet. Very handy when finding your way around so I have included a table with the Cyrillic alphabet and the corresponding sounds and letters in English.

Once you get your head around it, you will be surprised at how quickly you can pick out name places.

For example: SOFIA = СОФИЯ

*TOP TIP:* It seems to be the one country in the world where shaking ones head means YES and nodding means NO. Very confusing!! Even when you know this, it still messes with your head!

# Cyrillic Alphabet

Bulgarian alphabet	English translation
А а	A a
Б б	B b
В в	V v
Г г	G g
Д д	D d
Е е	E e
Ж ж	Zh zh
З з	Z z
И и	I i
Й й	Y y
К к	K k
Л л	L l
М м	M m
Н н	N n
О о	O o
П п	P p
Р р	R r
С с	S s
Т т	T t
У у	U u
Ф ф	F f
Х х	H h
Ц ц	Ts ts
Ч ч	Ch ch
Ш ш	Sh sh
Щ щ	Sht sht
Ъ ъ	A a
Ь ь	Y y
Ю ю	Yu yu
Я я	Ya ya

Most useful Bulgarian phrases to help you get by.

**In greeting (Good day)** – *Dober Dan*

**Thank you** – *Merci*

It gets you through most situations, a polite attempt to speak Bulgarian in greeting and then a polite attempt to thank them! Something is better than nothing!

## Guidebooks

Printed guidebooks in Bulgaria are pretty hard to get hold of and mostly outdated. The best and most up to date source of information is an online guidebook. It covers the whole of Bulgaria and is of course free. The downside is that you have to print out everything yourself and it is hard to decide how much or which bits. Since it covers so many areas across Bulgaria it will provide you with endless options. Some areas are bigger than others and better quality. This ebook will cover some of the more developed areas in detail and therefore help you effectively use and make the most of ClimbingGuideBg.

**[Climbing Guide BG](#)** – It covers nearly 30 different climbing areas across Bulgaria including Bouldering, Deep Water Soloing, Sport, Alpine and Ice Climbing. It is all in Bulgarian but has an English version if you click on the British flag which translates most (but not all) the text. There is also a map view which is quite helpful to pick nearby climbing if you are heading somewhere specific. One advantage of it being online is if you have access to the internet and find yourself somewhere you hadn't planned to go you can still look up the local climbing even if it is just to do a couple of routes.

One really great feature it has is a summary of routes by grade for each area. So if you want to climb routes up to F6a+ or only between 6c+ to 7b you can firstly see how many there are in the area and then click on that number and it will compile a list with route name and sector. This then highlights which sectors are going to be best to head to for your grade choice.

*TOP TIP – make sure you have [Google Toolbar](#) downloaded onto your computer. It has a translation tool that will translate whole web pages. With the Climbing Guide BG pages if you select their English version it only translates bits. If you instead choose the Bulgarian interface but get Google Toolbar to translate it, you get a much better deal.*

**Remember, this site is free, but you will see that years of work has gone into it, so if you wish to donate they have a page set up to donate through PayPal. [Donate Page](#)**

**South Eastern Europe Rock Climbing Atlas.** Huber, A & Simpson, R. (2006) *Rocks Unlimited Publications*.

This book covers Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania and Slovenia. Perhaps worth buying if you are thinking of travelling round several of these countries. However, having done this myself it became evident that lots of the information is already out of date and although they have an updates section on their website, there are none. It is however a nicely presented book which gives you a feel for the country you are about to visit. Price - £19.99 on [Climb Europe](#).

## Older Guidebooks - (but more up to date information is now online)

**Lakatnik – Visual Climbing Guide.** Borislav Dimitrov. *Publisher unknown.*

**Veliko Tarnovo Climbing Guide.** Author unknown

If you manage to buy one of these guidebooks you will be doing well. We did not find them in the main climbing shop in Sofia and even once in the towns could not get hold of them. We did get a look at a copy of the Veliko Tarnovo guide and it was the same hand drawn topos as are available online but with many of the more recent routes missing. Plus there was no 'Google Translate' button to press on the book!

The best advise I can give is to embrace the online guidebook but make sure you print a comprehensive amount of the areas you intend to go to, so that if plans change or the routes don't look so appealing face to face you still have other options.

## Maps – Road and Walking

If you are driving in Bulgaria you will want a map. There are lots of road maps on the market. [Amazon](#) and [Stanfords](#) have good selection. You may be given one free if you are hiring a car, so check first. Also most petrol stations in Bulgaria sold maps.

*TOP TIP* – Buy one that has the bigger towns and cities in both English and Cyrillic. We had only an English map, great for pronunciation but useless when all the road signs are in Cyrillic. We had to rapidly learn the new alphabet!

**Rila Mountains** – Domino Maps. 1:50 000. It is in both Cyrillic and English and has the walking trails marked on it. These are all colour coded and the ones we did matched with the coloured markers on the ground. Great for walking but could do with being a bit more detail for crag finding.

**North West Rila and Borovets Map** – Iskar Tour. 1:25 000. This map is better for finding some of the crags around the Malyovitsa Hut, but I could not and can not find it anywhere to buy. Perhaps out of print. It is the map that they have pinned on the wall in the hut and by the cable car in Borovets. I imagine Borovets is your best bet, but we did look and didn't find, so don't rely on this.

*TOP TIP* – you can view a section of this map that covers some of the main climbing in Rila on the [ClimbingGuideBg](#) site. Scroll to the bottom of the Rila page and click on the photo to enlarge.

**Pirin Mountains** - Domino Maps. 1:50 000. This has the same features as the Rila Map, both English and Cyrillic and colour coded walking routes.

## Online Map Resources

[Google maps](#) is of course brilliant but I found for accurate driving directions with details of tolls and even estimated fuel costs [Via Michelin](#) is more useful.

# Climbing Areas in Bulgaria

## Rila Mountains

The Rila Mountains are a beautiful range located a couple of hours south of Sofia. It includes Bulgaria's highest peak, Mussala (2925m) and many other worthy peaks. It is an area highly popular for walkers and has an extensive collection of marked walking routes. For the climber, you will immediately see the appeal, large granite towers, rocky outcrops and clean faces of surrounding peaks. The climbing potential is endless and there are many areas that have been developed. Much of the climbing in the mountains is traditional and they tend to be long routes with long walk-ins. But there are also sport routes that have been put up a little closer to paths or even roads that are worth a look and give you a more restful option.

### What to do here:

- Climb at Malyovitsa Hut
- Seven Rila Lakes Walk
- Climb Borovets
- Mussala walk
- Mountain Biking

### Where to stay:

You may choose to head straight up into the mountains but if you wish to spend a little more time in the area and need a base in the valley I would recommend Borovets. It is a ski village in the winter and accommodates summer tourists, walkers and mountain bikers. There is a small campsite, many hotels and on the outskirts, two Bulgarian style holiday parks.

- [Hotels in Borovets](#) – this page gives details of hotels ranging from 3\* to 5\* and has a booking system.
- Camping – located on the main road into Borovets. It looks like someone's back garden and has no obvious sign. But ask at HRIMA HOUSE which is a snack bar on the right hand side of the road as you enter Borovets from Beli Iskar. It is opposite Brexa 3\* Hotel. It is small, but is secure and has new and clean toilets and showers. Cost: 7 BGN (Bulgarian Leva) per person per night (pppn)
- Yagoda and Malina are marked on the map with a camping symbol. This is where there is a divide in the meaning camping. Bulgarian camping can mean small wooden chalets. There will often be no facilities for camping in a tent. Even the universal hand signal for tent gets misconstrued because this is the shape of the wooden chalets. If you want a miniature self contained chalet you are looking at 80 BGN in the summer.

### Local amenities:

- Supermarkets – there are a couple along the high street. Good to tide you over but limited and inflated prices. If you need to do a big shop try T Market in Samokov – on road heading towards Borovets.
- Cafés, Restaurants and Pizzerias – all in abundance. Café Elite next to the Gondola is a nice afternoon stop off. Two beers and cheesy chips = 7BGN
- Internet – there is an internet café on the high street and free wifi throughout town.

## Climb around the Malyovitsa Hut

### Overview

The [Malyovitsa hut](#) (1960m) is one of the central places to climb from. It is located only one hour walk from Malyovitsa Komplex which is a very small ski area in the winter and thus has two cafés and a couple of hotels. It is a stunning area with the Malyovitsa peak itself towering over the valley. It is predominately an alpine climbing area but some sport routes and shorter trad routes exist closer to the hut. It is made up of granite towers and outcrops with endless climbing potential.

### Valley Accommodation

- Malyovitsa Hotel – 35BGN for two with a balcony. There is a restaurant for dinner and breakfast. It is nothing fancy and there is a good chance your en-suite shower will leak into the room (Bulgarian plumbing is...well not quite up to standard!) but it is right at the beginning of the walk up to the hut.
- Allen Mac Hotel – another hotel a few minutes from the previous. But it is down a rough looking road. We did not stay there.
- Camping – sort of! The bar on the right as you walk through the meadow to the entrance to the National Park offers camping in the back garden. There is a toilet in the bar which has a shower head poking into it (another Bulgarian Plumbing curiosity). Cost: 14BGN for two. But I can vouch for their food – lovely. Avoid the other café (one nearest the Malyovitsa Hotel) at all cost, especially their toilets!

### Mountain Accommodation

- [Malyovitsa Hut](#) – it is in a beautiful location and has been recently developed but despite its easy access and new roof the state of the top floor bedrooms is something to be seen! It was a weekend when we went so was busy with mostly walkers and families. This meant the first floor was full and so we were directed to the top floor which had not been recently renovated. We chose not to stay and camped outside instead but still ate there.

Although this was the central base to stay if you wanted to climb in the area there was very little information at the hut and the warden was not forthcoming. This was partly a language barrier but we did not find it easy to gain much information from any of the climbers we met.

The food was basic and lacking in carbohydrates. The standard menu seemed to be Soup: cream or lentil, Meatball (sort of burger) with cabbage and carrot salad or sausages. Bread and cheese were only available once we begged for something more! It was a little like Oliver Twist, 'Please Sir...' Everything was paid for individually rather than the European hut style. It was hard to spend more than 20BGN between two, unless you have a particular appetite for shredded cabbage! You also need to take a sleeping bag. They do not provide sheets or blankets, although these can be hired.

- Camping – behind the hut is an beautiful meadow and you can camp anywhere you like. At weekends you won't be alone and its worth pitching your tent early to secure the flattest spot. If you are happy to lug camping and climbing stuff up to the hut, camping is by far the nicest option and free. The hut wardens are quite happy with it and most campers eat or at least by a beer from the hut from time to time. There is a drinking water tap on the outside of the hut which is there for everyone.

## Getting there

Before walking to the hut you must first have braved the roads leading to Malyovitsa Komplex. From Borovets via Beli Iskar it takes about an hour on mostly good road until you reach Govedartsi. Here on your must weave your way across both sides of the road to avoid car damaging potholes and tree roots that have lifted the tarmac up to create invisible chassis destroying speed bumps! But that said, it is more than passable, just take care, especially if it's your car!

Initially you will reach a massive gravel carpark with a barrier, drive past this and there is a free carpark just behind. We left our car here for three days, this seems to be the norm and it felt pretty safe. But exercise the usual cautions of not leaving valuables etc.

From the car park, head up through the meadow, pass under the wooden entrance sign to the Rila National Park and follow the track along the river all the way to the hut. It takes most people 45 minutes to an hour.

From the hut, access to routes ranges from 15minutes to 3hours.

## Crags – Route length, Quality and Aspect

- **Kuklata (The Doll – East Wall)** – ClimbingGuideBg Link: [M22](#)

This is an impressive piece of rock that is clearly visible from the hut and only takes 15 minutes from here. The routes range from 35 to 110 meters long with some being fully bolted while others are alpine style with some fixed protection in the form of pitons and pegs so it is also advised you take a rack. One thing these routes do have are abseil stations to get off safely. In the (online) guide there is an excellent photo topo of the routes as well as a photo of the abseil descent routes.

All descents are based on you having two 50 metre ropes. The rock is generally good quality. I can recommend Banyo (No. 13) F5c+. It's three pitches and well bolted. The other sport routes range from F6a+ to F7c.

Kuklata faces east and so gets the morning to midday sun and if there is no cloud cover can become quite hot. Therefore many people leave it to late afternoon or evening. Since it is so close to the hut this is not a problem. Despite good weather while we were there, we frequently had thick cloud blow up from the valley which at times immersed us. Our experience of this was non threatening and it did not bring with it any bad weather, it tending to blow out as quickly as it had come in.

From the Malyovitsa Hut go to the right of the small wooden chalets and find the path leading up marked with blue paint stripes. It goes up and right and then starts traversing back left to the crag. 10-15 minutes.

- **Kuklata (The Doll – Right Side)** – ClimbingGuideBg Link: [M23](#)

If you want some easy multi-pitch alpine routes to get a bit of a feel for the place the right side of the Doll might prove a good starting point. This section of rock does not look so impressive and has its fair share of vegetation but it hosts three trad routes that are three pitches long and all around F5.

The approach is the same as above.

- **Kalbura** – ClimbingGuideBg Link: [M24](#)

This crag lies to the right of the Doll and is just a small outcrop of rock, but it has been developed to host several short well bolted sport routes. There are 18 in total ranging from F3c to F6b+. Most are only 15 meters high but if you want a bit of a warm up before doing a route on the Kuklata or just fancy an easy afternoon while still moving on rock, you will no doubt be able to pick out a couple of routes you fancy doing.

The approach is the same as for Kuklata but you will arrive at this crag first.

- **Yellow Rocks (Kalbura)** – ClimbingGuideBg Link: [M25](#)

Here there are five sport routes, each 25m long. They range from F5a to F6b. The crag is located further right again than the previous crag. From Kalbura (M24) traverse rightwards across some scree and up towards the crag. The photo approach diagram makes this very clear.

- **Black Rock** – ClimbingGuideBg Link: [M13](#)

This is one of the crags visible behind the Malyovitsa Hut. The approach is steeper and much less accessible than the previously mentioned routes. However there are six traditional routes and they appear also to be winter routes judging from the photo topos. I did not climb here but have mentioned because they are among the closest routes to the hut. The grades are UIAA 4-6.

It faces West so gets the afternoon to evening sun.

- **Gray Rocks (Second Terrace – Small Malyovitsa)** – ClimbingGuideBg Link: [Gray Rocks](#)

This area is a little further away from the hut. It is on the side of what is known as the Little Malyovitsa Peak, on your map look for 'Малка Мальовица'. From the hut head south along the river following the blue trail. Watch out for the path crossing the river about 200-300m after the hut. It is not obvious, just a boulder hop, but if you miss it you will be in a boulder field. Once you reach the rock memorial to climbers you should be able to make out the crag up and on your right from the photo topo.

The routes are all describe as traditional because it is possible to place protection but there are also some bolts where deemed necessary. There are four routes, all 45m in length and range from UIAA -5 to -7.

Approach from the hut should take about an hour.

- **Red Plate (Second Terrace – Small Malyovitsa)** – ClimbingGuideBg Link: [Red Plate](#)

This is an imposing looking face of red rock clearly visible from the path. Approach as for Gray Rocks as far as the memorial and then once again use the photo topo as the most useful guide.

There are only three routes up the main face and another two that go up the side. Only one route, Mamba, is described as a sports route and goes at F6c+. The other two are trad, one which uses points of aid.

**Now we are getting to the much further away crags, which although accessible from the Malyovitsa Hut are a long walk and a bivvy closer to the routes is probably preferable.**

- **BAC Shelter (Breathtaking)** – ClimbingGuideBg Link: [Shelter BAC](#)

This is a vast and impressive looking area which can be seen from the south side of the national park but much of it can also be reached from the Malyovitsa Hut. There are several rock pinnacles called 'Needles' and sheer rock faces of varying lengths. The photo topo gives an amazing overview of thirteen different crags. They are all alpine routes and many are serious undertakings, but there are also amenable grades and if you are equipped with a full rack you should be able to find something suitable.

Due to weather I did not actually end up climbing anything here, although got close to doing a route on The Needle (Iglata – Q). We got as far as the col between Lopnitsa and Evil Tooth but unfortunately did not have topos printed for Evil Tooth and were out of time for our objective.

*TOP TIP* – print off more options than you think you might need!

Areas E-T include the Devil Needles, Two Headed Needles, The Needle, the Portals and Evil Needles can also be approached from Kirilova Meadow just along the road from the Rila Monastery. This is a steep walk-in but perhaps more direct if you are doing it in a day. This approach can take between 2 and 3hrs depending on which route you are heading for.

If you want to make a base up there the best option is the BAC Shelter itself. From the Malyovitsa Hut to the BAC Shelter it is about 2hr30. It is a very basic concrete shelter with four bunks. You may prefer to take a tent if you can face carrying it and want to bivvy up here for a couple of nights. The issue would be water sources. The last reliable source is the hut but you walk along the river most of the way and there were still snow patches around in July, so it is possible.

From the BAC Shelter it is probably still another hour to walk into the base of most of the routes, so bivvying at the shelter is a good idea, or be prepared for a very big day.

Orlovets (W) is another impressive face accessible from the Malyovitsa Hut via the BAC shelter. It has four routes on it, all trad ranging from UIAA 3-7. They are up to 180m long and on clean rock.

- **Elenina Lake and Malyovitsa Peak** – ClimbingGuideBg Link: [Malyovitsa and Elenina](#)

This encompasses several different areas near Malyovitsa Peak. Some are on the main faces of the peak itself, others are nearby outcrops of rock. All the routes are alpine and many are serious undertakings. Many routes are hard or are given an Aid grade as well as UIAA grade. The ethic seems to be that anything goes. Even though a route may have been climbed free, they still give it an aid grade for those who do not climb that hard.

All the areas will take between 2 and 3 hours to get to from the Malyovitsa Hut so early starts are essential.

Malyovitsa North Wall and Ears (Ushite) South West Wall Left have the highest concentration of routes ranging from UIAA +4 – 8.

## **Seven Rila Lakes Walk**

If you are keen to explore a bit of the Rila Mountains beyond the climbing, this is one of the classic walking routes of the area. It takes you up into a cirque where there are...yes...seven lakes! It is a beautiful area with dramatic cliffs and views back down to the valley. It is sometimes described as a two day walk from the Malyovitsa Komplex (not the hut) and is a 23km circuit staying in the Seven Rila Lakes Hut. It can also be done as a day walk though. We went from Vada and did a slightly smaller circuit (about 18km) in a day. Having stopped at the Seven Rila Lakes Hut for lunch I can tell you it has not been recently refurbished and some may once again prefer to camp nearby. I certainly would have!

For useful information about other walks in the area and details of the huts check out [BgHike](#).

## Climb Borovets

### Overview

If you have chosen to make Borovets a base or just fancy a nice day of well equipped sport routes it is worth checking out Borovets' one and only crag.

### Getting there

Head out of Borovets on the road to Beli Iskar. You will pass under the gondola and 100m after that park in a layby on the left which is the starting point for the main trail up Mussala (see walking map – red trail). Walk up track for approximately 10 minutes. At the two bridges, cross the left hand one and continue over the next bridge. Just after this, look out for a white sign on a tree (left hand side) marking the trail to the climbing. It is in Bulgarian but has climbing stickers on it (Beal..etc). Turn left at the sign and follow the track for a couple of minutes to the crag.

### Crags – Route length, Quality and Aspect

- **Borovets – Water Catchment.** ClimbingGuideBg Link: [Borovets](#)

There are nine routes on the topo but a few extras have been added since, mostly easier routes off to the right. The grades range from F5a to F6b+. We met the guy who developed the crag and he has done a good job. It is a proper sport crag with new expansion bolts nicely close together and two-bolt lower-offs on all the routes. He seems to climb and clean the routes regularly to hold off the natural lichen and mosses that would cover this crag otherwise.

I think the photo topo does not do it justice. If you want to climb some sport routes in this grade it is worth a look. We had a good day out of it.

## Mussala Peak (2925m)

### Overview

This is the highest peak in Bulgaria and is a relatively gentle walk, so if you are in Borovets, why not. Since Borovets is a ski resort the area has lots of chalets on the slopes and of course chair lifts. But this does not detract too much from the walk in the summer and the views from the top looking to the south of the Rila National Park are spectacular.

### Getting there

It is possible to walk from Borovets following the red trail. Park as for Borovets climbing. However, for those of you keener to just get the views you can get the Yastrebetz gondola which takes you to 2369m. From here it is an easy walk to the Mussala Hut (1<sup>st</sup> one) and then a steeper ridge to the top.

The Yastrebetz lift is only open on certain days in the summer. When I was there it was closed Monday and Tuesday.

## Mountain Biking

If you are into your mountain biking, Borovets has developed their ski resort into a bike park in the summer. There are lots of different routes and the price seems to be quite reasonable. 20BGN for a day pass (a bit less than £10).

Check out the website: [Borovets Bike Park](#). But remember to have google translate turned on because the site is only in Bulgarian.

# Vratsa

The Vratsa Pass is located a couple of kilometres southwest of Vratsa town. As you drive towards the pass you will be awestruck by the vastness of the limestone faces. It is an incredible place that seems to come out of nowhere. One minute you are driving along a pretty boring road, past a rather industrial town and suddenly you are confronted with 200 metre cliff faces that stretch for over a kilometre. As well as these enticing yet intimidating rock faces there are also smaller objectives for the low to mid grade sport climber and many targeting the super strong sport climber. It is a place for all, whether it is long alpine routes, hard sport routes, lovely slab climbs or just relaxing by the river and taking in the scenery, you will no doubt enjoy the Vratsa Passage. It is a destination in its own right.

The key is being there at the right time of year. July to September can be very hot, hovering around 40°C which means the most that is possible are a few of the shorter routes in the early morning and late evening which are in the shade.

Autumn and Spring are the best times to go. It starts to become milder in October and November before warming up again around April to June. Vratsa sees the extremes in temperature because in the winter it will mostly be covered in snow. In the past some winter routes have been done here.

## What to do

- Sport Climbing
- Alpine Climbing
- Relaxing by the river
- Ledenika Caves

## Where to Stay

- **Чайка Motel (Chaika Motel)** – 3\* with air conditioning and parking. This is ideally located if you want to make a base and walk in to climb. Cost: 40-50BGN for a double ensuite room. It is clean and relatively nice. Located on the left as you drive towards the Vratsa Passage next to an artificial lake. There is also a nice restaurant here.
- **Alpine House** – this is the next restaurant/motel along and is significantly cheaper for a reason. It is quite run down but has a nice terrace for drinks and food where you can look out at the rock. Cost to stay: 12BGN per person.
- **Camping** – wild camping is permitted. The designated spot is on the right hand side of the road that leads to Zgorigrad. It is a grassy area and by the river. There is a chemical toilet on the path between the Alpine House and Чайка Motel in the Vrattsata passage. There were people camping in vans when we were there and we were told that on weekends it is busier with climbers camping. Security may be an issue because it is right by the road, rather than a secluded camp spot.
- **Other options** – If you have transport you might not be so worried about staying right by the climbing, in which case Vratsa town has a lot more options.

## Local Amenities

- **Restaurants** – In the pass itself Чайка Motel and the Alpine House are the best situated and offer a variety of snacks and meals.
- **Shopping** – Vratsa town is only 2km away so if you want to buy food and have transport this is your best option for supermarkets.
- **Internet** – Чайка Motel has free wifi for guests and customers.

## Getting there

Vratsa is about 2hrs from Sofia and the roads are good once you are out of Sofia. When you get near Vratsa follow the brown tourist signs to Ledenika Caves. This will lead you straight to the Vratsatta Passage. Before the narrowing of the rocks you will see Чайка Motel on your left.

If you are thinking of just heading here for a cragging trip you may not need or want a car. So a realistic option is to get a taxi straight here from Sofia airport. A return private transfer with Motoroads would be about €112 for two people. The price is per car rather than per person, so if there is a group of you this could be cheaper than hiring a car.

## Crags – Route length, Quality and Aspect

There are over 380 routes in Vratsa, some alpine, some sport and all on good rock. The last printed guidebook, 'Vratsa Rocks – Alpine Routes' was in 1987 and is now considered to be too outdated. Therefore the newest and most up to date information is presented as an online guidebook on [ClimbingGuideBg](#). They literally have put all the information you would expect to find in the printed guidebook on the site. So there is information about the geology of the rocks, ethics on new routes, history etc. It then links to different pages with topos for different sectors of which there are ten. Five of these have well equipped sport routes and the other five are considered alpine.

Beyond what I have outlined here I think you will find everything you need to know from the online guidebook. Read through it, search through the different sectors which are easily identifiable with brilliant photo topos and print everything you think you will need and more! There are no internet cafés to print off further information once you are in the the pass and it can be very frustrating to not have enough to keep you going.

For the [Vratsa Online Guidebook](#) it is best to view through the English interface because they have done a good job at translation, rather than use google translate like with the Rila.

# Lakatnik

This is a popular climbing area for those living in Sofia because it is only an hour and a half away. It is located in the Iskar Gorge and hosts a wealth of sport climbs as well as bouldering. Although there is a guidebook for this area the best and most up to date information seems to be on [ClimbingGuideBg](#)

Lakatnik is considered an all year round climbing destination, with a micro climate of its own. Since Lakatnik comprises of several sectors it is possible to choose different areas to suit the weather. In general the rock dries quickly because it is limestone and some of the sectors have overhanging routes that can be attempted in the rain!

Although Lakatnik is said to have been the birthplace of Bulgarian climbing there is still plenty of untouched rock, so if you are that way inclined there is a lot to go at.

## What to do

- Climbing is the main reason to be here.
- Walking through the Iskar Gorge
- The train journey here is listed on a scenic railway website!
- For more rest day activities, head for Sofia.

## Where to stay

There is a crazy little shelter that you will see in all the photographs called Eagle Nests shelter. It is perched on the cliff top and only accessible via climbing. Built in the 1930's and still functioning, but maybe a long stay here would be hard work.

Accommodation is a little tricky in the area. If you want to stay in Lakatnik camping is possible around the base of the cliffs, but there are of course no amenities. Water can be filled up at the train station though.

If you want something with a roof there is of course Sofia at only 1hr30 away. There is also a quite interesting sounding hostel that is a bit closer, 40 minute drive, called Homemade Hostel Bulgaria. It is only small and is a working farm run by artists and musicians. It can be booked through [Hostel World](#).

## Local Amenities

Lakatnik really is a tiny village so although there is a general store it is limited in what it sells, so it is advisable to stock up in Sofia with your essentials before heading up here. There is however a small restaurant you can try.

## Getting there

It is quite easy to get here by train but with all your kit and needing to stock up on food you may want to hire a car. If you choose to go by train there are about 14 trains a day from Sofia to Lakatnik and the train station in Lakatnik is right at the beginning of the approach paths to the rock. Just turn

up at the Central Train Station in Sofia and there will be one not too far away. There is a website for [train times](#) but it is only in Bulgarian so you will have to recognise Sofia and Lakatnik in Cyrillic for the drop down boxes. СОФИЯ to ЛАКАТНИК

Driving is of course possible, refer to the carhire section at the beginning of this book for options and the best route planners.

### **Crags – Route length, Quality and Aspect**

There are six different climbing areas which are then broken down into different sectors. Although, sectors are along a band of rock so mostly one sector just becomes the next.

Alpine Meadow and Enemy Holes are the two biggest areas which have sport climbing, traditional climbing and bouldering.

Alpine Meadow is only a 20 minute walk-in from the train station and Enemy Holes about 30 minutes. The routes vary in length but most of the sport routes are between 20-30 metres, although one sector in Alpine Meadow has lots of 40 metre routes.

The ClimbingGuideBg section for [Lakatnik](#) is very comprehensive, providing good photos to find each sector and giving details on aspect and route lengths. The ethics for bolting new routes here specifies using expansion bolts and having two point lower-offs so certainly the newer routes should be well equipped.

## Veliko Tarnovo

Veliko Tarnovo is situated midway between Sofia and the east coast. It is about a 2hr30 drive west to Sofia and east to Varna. This makes it easily accessible from either airport, or you could choose to to a climbing tour across the country with Veliko as your middle point. It is a beautiful city, once the capital of Bulgaria but now more of a cultural and historical ambassador with a wonderful mix of the new that comes with a university town. There is a youthful, more vibrant scene in Veliko but it is encompassed in medieval streets and quirky houses balanced on limestone cliffs, giving it a unique atmosphere. Due to its cultural heritage it is a popular tourist destination and you will notice it is on the European backpacker circuit, but the beauty of this is that they have plenty of accommodation options to cater for tourists and most signs and menus are available in English.

As for the climbing, there are three crags surrounding the city, all limestone and the majority are well bolted. There are nearly 200 hundred routes in this area and climbing is possible most of the year as long as you choose your aspect wisely.

### What to do

- Climb Holy Trinity
- Climb Usteto East and West
- City sightseeing

### Where to Stay

- [Camping Veliko Tarnovo](#) – This campsite is located just 15minutes out of the city in the village of Dragizhevo. It is a newish campsite and has been completed to Western standards. The facilities are modern and clean with good sized pitches on grass. It is also very cheap, just 18BGN for 2 people and a car (approx £7.75). They also have a café bar and shop. The website gives loads of details and photos.
- [Trinity Rocks Campsite](#) – located just past the village of Samovodene about 15 minutes north of Veliko, a British guy, Cliff, has converted this farm into a campsite. It is much more rustic than Camping Veliko Tarnovo. The facilities are basic in old farm buildings. There is an indoor communal area (seemingly his kitchen) which you are free to use, but so are the cats and dogs. The main advantage is that Cliff knows where the crags are but with the map in this book you shouldn't have any problems. This is also the closest campsite to the Holy Trinity climbing area. A similar price to Camping Veliko Tarnovo at 10 Euros for 2 people but the facilities are not as good. The position is perhaps a little better. There is also a dorm option and you can hire a bungalow. See the website for more details. We camped here and Cliff is very friendly, but the plumbing and cleanliness was not up to much. Mosquito repellent is essential!
- Hotels/Hostels – Veliko Tarnovo has numerous options for hotels and hostels from about £20 upwards. For hostels which these days mostly offer private en-suite rooms try [Hostel.com](#). It has an excellent search engine and provides reviews.

## Local Amenities

- Large supermarkets on outskirts of town near the Usteto climbing area
- Town centre has a variety of shops, cafés, bars and restaurants. For a perfect view of the city over a cappuccino or a spot of lunch try the café off the main street. Signposted to 'Sammy's' then head for the yellow chairs on the balcony.

**GUIDEBOOKS** – There is a printed guidebook for this area, but it is all in Cyrillic and pretty old now, it is also hard to get hold of. Cliff from Trinity Rocks campsite had told us we could buy one from him but he did not have one to sell when we turned up, so do not rely on this. The best option is to print out everything before you go from [ClimbingGuideBg](#). It is translated into English and is the most up to date source of information with the most accurate grades. You may well come across information on UK Climbing.com, but be warned this only provides some of the routes and not always with accurate grades - the most reliable information is at -[ClimbingGuideBg](#).

*TOP TIP: Some routes are written on the rock which helps loads with identifying where you are as the topo is a hand drawn sketch. However, some of the writing uses Cyrillic so if you have translated the topo make sure you have your Cyrillic alphabet sussed so you can still make them out!*

## Climbing at Holy Trinity (Trinity Rocks)

### Overview

This is a long limestone cliff that runs parallel to the river Yantra and can be accessed from both ends. The north end is a considerably easier approach because it is mostly on a main road. The south entrance is from the Holy Trinity Monastery which has a long approach road that is quite steep and in places well worn. The Monastery is worth a look however, small and hidden with an almost secret garden feel to it behind a big wooden door. As long as your legs and arms are covered you are welcome in. A contribution is expected once inside the actually Monastery.

The cliff has been divided into seven sectors but in reality they all run into each other and it is possible to walk all the way from the north end to the south where the Monastery is.

**TOP TIP:** *take Mosquito repellent – they are pretty vicious, especially at the north end which is more enclosed by trees.*

### Getting there

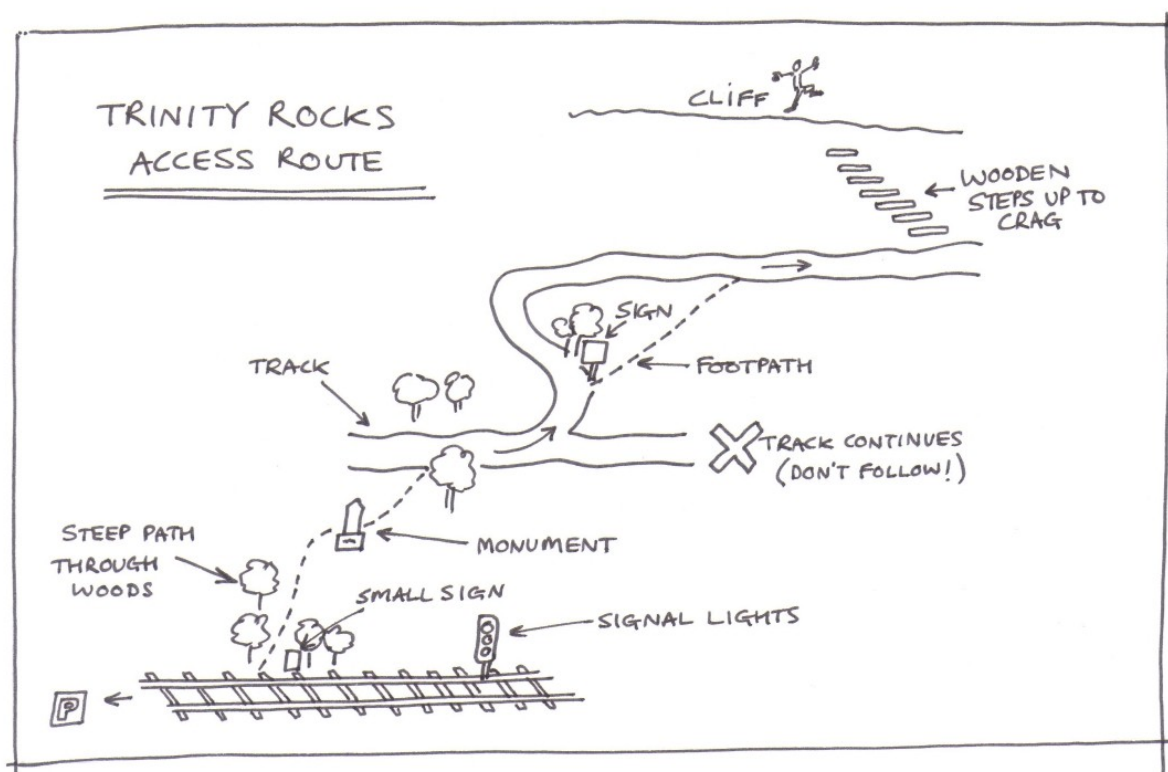
The easiest approach is from the north end. Leave Veliko heading north along the E85. After just under 10 minutes there is a right hand turn on the outskirts of Samovodene. Please see my [Google Map](#) for details (view as Satellite image). This leads over the river Yantra. Take the third turn on the right onto a track (drivable) which leads to a big opening (carpark) right next to the railway line.

The following description goes with the map on the next page:

From the car, cross the railway line (which is in use – so be careful!) and turn right. Walk just to the left of the track. There is a path but it has become very overgrown so you end up having to walk along the railway track. It is only for about 200m until you see a set of lights on the left. Just before the lights you will see a path leading up into the trees, marked by a white sign. Follow this past a monument until it opens onto a bigger track. Turn right and follow the track bending to the left. On the bend you will see another white walking sign marking the path up to the right. Take this, it cuts off the corner and is quicker to get to the rock. This path leads back to the track and shortly after on your left you will see steps made from railway sleepers. This leads you to sector A, B and C. For sector D and beyond stay on track which actually leads all the way to the south end and the Trinity Monastery.

*N.B – The railway track is in use but we were assured it was fine to walk along it, in fact we saw locals walking their dogs on it. When we were there we only saw one train per hour at ten past. But there are no guarantees so keep a watch out.*

## Map to show walking route to Holy Trinity Climbing.



### Crags- Route length, Quality and Aspect

The crag is divided into several sectors, A-G, running north to south. The cliff faces west to south west. So sector A keeps the shade the longest. In July it had the shade until about 2pm so it is definitely worth getting there early if you want to avoid the summer heat. Conversely if you are there in winter and want the sun, most the sectors will have the sun for the whole afternoon.

All the routes at Trinity Rocks are described as sport routes and mostly have good, new bolts. But there are a few that would be better described as adventure routes, where you get a mix of pitons and homemade bolts. We had gear with us so were able to supplement these routes and still enjoy them, but if you are purely sport climbing you might not fancy it.

The rock in general is good, but you will no doubt be as amazed as we were when you find some routes that have been cemented. They seem to have made them harder by filling in what would have been lovely holds with cement. Very upsetting when you think you are reaching up for a nice ledge or jug! But we only found this on a couple of routes.

There is a mix of both single pitch and multi pitch routes. I recommend making your judgement on the multi pitch routes after the first pitch. If the lower-off is in good condition and the pitch above looks like quality rock then fine, but we certainly came across a couple where we doubted the likelihood of a quality lower-off higher up and opted to stick to one pitch.

Grades wise there is a complete range. If you are looking for hard (F7a-8b) steep routes then sector C is for you. There are two prominent caves in the rock which provide some impressive looking routes. For those who enjoy a nice F6a – Comrade Stankov is also found in this sector, on lovely clean rock providing two pitches.

## Climbing at Usteto East

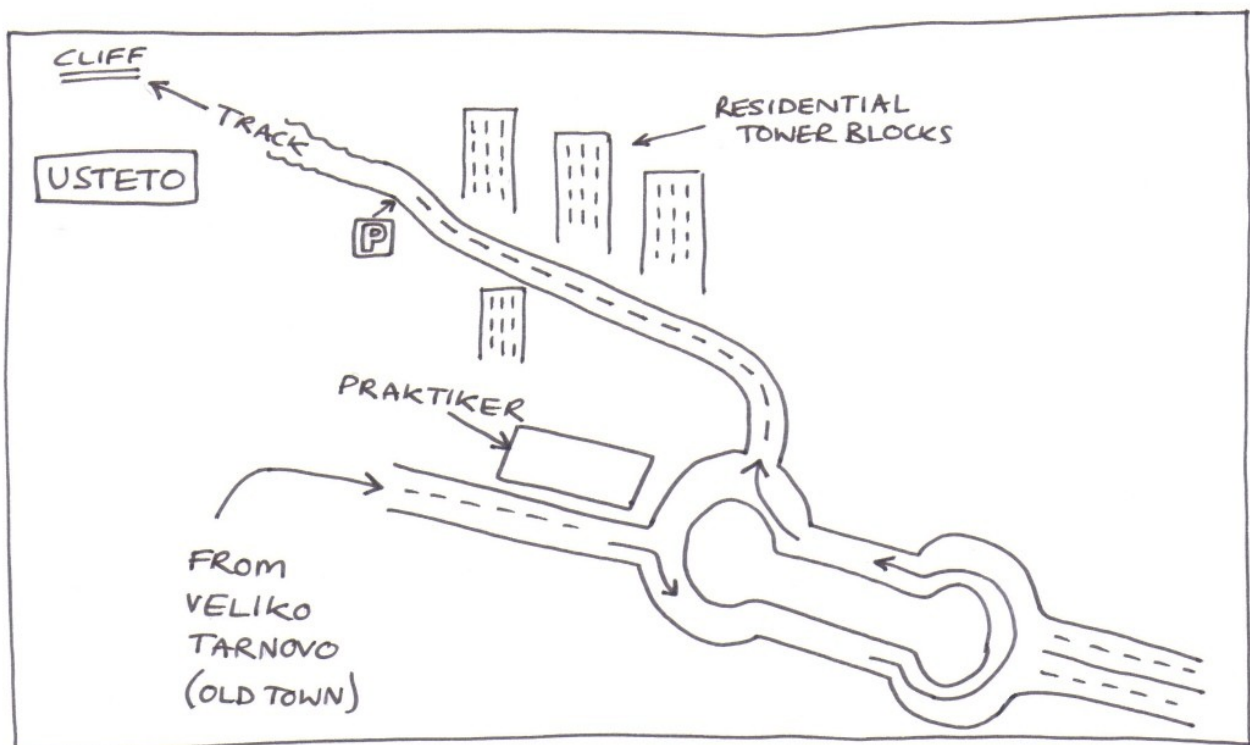
### Overview

Usteto East faces, as you would expect, east and thus gets the morning sun. So it is in perfect contrast to Trinity where you can climb in the shade until lunch and then find more shade here at Usteto. Usteto east is not as big as Trinity but still has just over 50 routes. The majority of them are in the F5-6 range with a few harder ones scattered around. It is a popular area for the local climbing club who meet there on Tuesday nights (weather permitting).

### Getting there

This sector is a tad hidden away and you need to follow the map below and directions carefully. Head west out of Veliko Tarnovo on the E772 signposted Sofia. This takes you past a large brewery on your right and then you will see out of town shops. Look out for Praktiker (large hardware/garden centre) on your left just before a roundabout. See map below. Go straight on at first roundabout and then come back on yourself at the second one. Take a sharp right hand turn as you join back onto the first roundabout. Follow this road through blocks of flats and a fairly run down estate. This road ends and a single lane track begins. You can drive it, but probably easiest to park here and walk the 500m to the top of the crag. You will reach an opening and a concrete shell of a building, walk past this and you can peer over the edge and see the climbs. There is a small path that leads down on the right.

### Map to show driving directions to Usteto East.



## **Crag- Route length, Quality and Aspect**

All the routes here are well equipped and mostly are single pitch. There are some two pitch routes but in total are no more than 40 metres. Most of the single pitch range from 10 – 25 metres.

The crag is divided into two sectors but only really for the purpose of the topo. Sector A is the left hand side of the crag as you look at the rock. This is where you first arrive on the approach. It is easily recognisable because there is a small shelter built into the rock. Sector B starts just to the right of the shelter.

The rock is limestone and good quality providing some great climbs at the easier end of the scale.

Since this crag faces east it gets the morning sun and therefore makes a perfect evening crag in the summer.

**N .B** – there is also climbing at Usteto West but we found no reliable information or directions to this crag. It is covered though in the [ClimbingGuideBg](#) and pinpoints it on the map. Knowing where to park and finding it is another matter. Good luck if you try. There are 24 routes there mostly in the F6's.

## Varna

Varna is a popular destination because it is the second biggest city in Bulgaria and located on the Black Sea coast. There is an airport here and all the usual amenities you would expect in a big city. For many climbers who want to combine a beach holiday with a spot of climbing this could be the perfect destination. But be warned, in the summer the Black Sea Coast can see temperatures hover around 40°C for several weeks. That said, the main attraction here is the Deep Water Soloing (DWS) and many climbers converge here in the summer because you can cool off mid climb!

Varna itself is a big city that has expanded to cater for the growing tourism, but not necessarily done in the most stylish way. There are a lot of large hotels and apartment blocks lining the coast, but like anywhere, once you get a little bit away from the city things calm down and you can appreciate the area more.

### What to do here

- Deep Water Soloing
- Sport Climbing
- Beach time

### Where to stay

- Hotels/Hostels – Varna is a big city so there are the usual options for hotels, hostels and apartments. If you want to be based where the DWS is then try [The Old Bakehouse](#) or [Yaila Worlds End Villa](#). For the sport climbing the best options are in the village of Asparuhovo. [Bulgaria Hotels](#) gives a list with links and telephone numbers.
- Camping – For a comprehensive and up to date list you must check out [Camping in Bulgaria](#). It is a Dutch website so you will need google translate if you don't speak Dutch or German. We met the guy who created it, a very helpful and dedicated fellow. He travels round in his camper every year!! to check and up date the list. For the DWS there are several options on the coast. For the sport climbing which is further inland the nearest campsite is still 40 minutes away ([Wilola Campsite](#)), but it is well set up and run by an English couple. For the DWS you have two options Sveti Georgi near Kavarna or Dobrudsha near Shabla. See Camping in Bulgaria for more details.

### Local Amenities

- Varna is a big city so has all the usual shops and big out of town supermarkets
- Cafés, bars, restaurants and nightclubs are in abundance along the coast.
- International airport
- Cathedral, Museums and Aquarium
- Two cinemas that show Hollywood movies

## **Deep Water Soloing – Kamen Bryag (Stoney Beach)**

ClimbingGuideBg link : [Kamen Bryag](#)

### **Overview**

This is the most famous destination for DWS on the Black Sea Coast and many Bulgarian climbers come here in the summer when it is too hot to climb inland. That's not to say its not hot on the coast, but there is at least the likelihood that you will be forced to cool down periodically. Kamen Bryag is about an hour north of Varna, so you are well away from the city hustle and bustle. This is a more tranquil spot where you can appreciate the beautiful coastline as well as get some routes in.

### **Getting there**

There are two sectors. [Yaylata](#) to the south of Kamen Bryag and [Tyulenovo](#) to the north. Both approaches are described on respective pages on ClimbingGuideBg.

### **Crags – Route length, Quality and Aspect**

Most of the routes are about 10 metres and the ClimbingGuideBg has good topo photos to help you identify the routes. The tricky bit is finding the right area from above.

The coastline faces east to south east so gets the afternoon shade. The summer is the best time of year mainly for the temperature of the water.

## **Sport Climbing – Chudnite Skali (Wonderful Rocks)**

ClimbGuideBg Link: [Chudnite Skali](#)

### **Overview**

This area is known as Wonderful Rocks or Chudnite Skali because of the amazing rock needle formations along the shores of lake Tsonevo. This is not what you actually climb on! The climbing is in an amphitheatre located a ten minute walk from these formations. It is an idyllic location that although close to a road feels remote and secluded.

### **Getting there**

The Wonderful Rocks are located in Komunari village which is 8km south of Asparuhovo. By car you can drive through the wonderful rocks and shortly after this you will see a layby on the left. Park here and walk into the climbing sector. See map on the [Chudnite Skali Climbing](#) site.

### **Crags – Route length, Quality and Aspect**

All the routes here are sport routes. Mostly they are single pitch and about 17m long. However some have a second pitch that goes up steeper through the roof. There are 18 routes in total, half of which are between F5 and F6a+. The crag is a semi circle which faces south to south west, so can get quite hot in the sun.

## Weather/Climate

It is possible to climb in Bulgaria almost all year round, but you must pick your destination.

**July to August** – Possible to climb everywhere if you seek the shade, but its hard work. The best option at this time of year is the Rila Mountains where the climate is much cooler and very pleasant to climb because even the hut it located at 1960m. Varna is also another great option because of the DWS.

**September to December** – The Rila Mountains will start to get very cold from October onwards and it is a recognised winter climbing and skiing destination, so don't expect any winter rock climbing here. Vratsa, Veliko Tarnovo and Varna could be perfect. Although December can see early snow in all these destinations.

**December to February** – it is very much winter in Bulgaria with snow in most places. You can however get sunny days which in places like Veliko you will be able to sneak in a route or two on warm rock.

**March to June** – Spring is a perfect time to visit Vratsa and Veliko Tarnovo but Rila will have snow cover right up to June. Varna would be a good option too in Spring but the water might not be quite so pleasant for DWS, but the inland crags would be perfect.

For comprehensive weather forecasts across Bulgaria [Weather Digsys Bg](#). It is a Bulgarian forecast site and gives a good overview map and lots of individual places.

A UK based site that is quite useful is [Weather Online](#). You can view the map and select specific cities on the left.

For current conditions in the Rila Mountains the hut website is excellent because it has a webcam and weather information. [Malyovitsa Hut Website](#).

## Quick Reference Links

### Guidebook and Maps

[ClimbingGuideBg](#) – the main online climbing guidebook for the whole of Bulgaria

[Vratsa Online Guidebook](#) – a detailed online guidebook specifically for Vratsa

[Chudnite Skali Climbing](#) – a site dedicated to climbing located near Varna

[Stanfords](#) – Good place to buy maps

[Amazon](#) – Good place to buy road maps

[Via Michelin](#) – very useful online route planner which covers Bulgaria

[Google maps](#) – useful route planner and brilliant in satellite mode to identify crags

[Chenata – The Outdoor Shop](#) – Outdoor shop in Sofia

[Bg Hike](#) – lots of information about walking and huts in the Rila Mountains and other areas.

### Travel Links

[Wizzair](#) – budget airline that flies between Britain and Europe

[Easyjet](#) – budget airline

[Travel Supermarket](#) – good comparison website for flights and car hire

[Kayak](#) – good comparison site for flights

[Inter Rail](#) – best option for booking cross Europe trains

[Motoroads](#) – Bulgarian Car hire – good rates and service

[Auto Europe](#) – Car hire Europe wide

[Avis](#) – Car hire Europe wide

[Bulgaria Transport](#) – Good airport shuttle service in Sofia and other major cities

[Avtogari](#) – Bulgarian train information

### Accommodation Links

[Hotels in Borovets](#) – an overview of hotel options in Borovets

[Malyovitsa hut](#) – Hut website in the Rila Mountains

[Hostel World](#) – Useful booking engine for hostels in Bulgaria

[Camping in Bulgaria](#) – a Dutch website with information about campsites in Bulgaria

[The Old Bakehouse](#) – accommodation near DWS in Varna

[Yaila Worlds End Villa](#) - accommodation near DWS in Varna

[Borovets Bike Park](#) – Borovets summer lift information