



Mediterranean Macro

Photographic tour with tour leader Ellie Rothnie

20th - 28th June 2027

Trip Overview



Group size: The trip accommodates a maximum of 6 guests.

Cost includes:

All transport, accommodation meals and any park permits required throughout the trip.

Cost excludes:

International flights, sundry items, alcohol and personal travel insurance.

Accommodation:

We will be staying in comfortable small Balkan hotels typical of rural Bulgaria. Costs are based on a twin room sharing basis, but single room supplements are available on request.

Level of fitness:

There will be some walking involved to reach some of the more remote meadows we aim to photograph in, and this will be in hilly and uneven terrain. None of these walks represent major hikes though so are unlikely to be more than 15 minutes or so in duration. There will be regular early mornings throughout the trip in search of roosting butterflies before breakfast.

LEVEL 3

Trip Overview



Although not technically a Mediterranean country, Bulgaria is recognised as a concentrated hotspot for much of the insect and floral world in southern Europe as well as enjoying many of its own specialities given its diversity of habitats in a relatively small area. It's wonderful unspoilt meadows are exceptional as well and all of this makes it an ideal destination for this macro focussed trip with morning and evening trips to remote meadows in search of Apollo's alongside an array of Coppers, Blues, Skippers, and Fritillaries on the butterfly front interspersed with days searching for orchids and lilies, beetles and crickets, checking our overnight moth traps and scouring streams for terrapins, tortoise and toads and often a few colourful bird species to try our luck with as added bonuses. If you love the close-up photographic world, then this will be your ideal trip in a series of tranquil settings that haven't changed for decades and are alive with macro-opportunities as a result.

Itinerary

Day 1: We will look to arrive at Sofia Airport at roughly the same time where we will be met by our Bulgarian guides. We will then travel to our base in the small town of Bratsigovo where we will check in and enjoy dinner. Over the meal, we can discuss what to expect over the coming days and early hints and tips will be provided. (We will send out the flight recommendations nearer the time).

Day 2 – 3: Bratsigovo is a very small town located between the Rhodope mountains and a dry hilly area crossed with several rivers. This area offers many different habitats including some excellent meadows, which are home to a good selection of butterfly species, and we will look specifically for the very photogenic Spoonwing. It is also good for bird photography here, and we can offer hides for Bee-eaters and other birds if you would like to take this option to break the day up between butterflies and reptiles.

Day 4: After a final morning in the Bratsigovo area we will transfer further south to the village of Borovo where we will stay for two nights. The hotel is very close to our favourite meadow where we expect to find the very photogenic Apollo butterfly.

Day 5: Our morning and evening sessions will be focussed on the Apollo, but the area offers plenty of other butterfly species as well as some potential amphibian opportunities in the rivers here too.



Itinerary

Day 6: After a final early morning's photography, we will travel eastwards to the village of Jagodina near the Trigrad gorge in the Western Rhodope mountains where the plan is to base ourselves for the rest of the trip as there is so much variety here. On the way we will spend an afternoon in some beautiful mountain meadows full of wildflowers and butterflies. The area in and around the Trigrad Gorge has super meadows for butterflies, orchids, and other flora as well.

Days 7 – 8: During these last 2 days we will explore a variety of different meadow, river and gorge habitats with butterflies and orchids at the top of our agenda. This area is also home to the beautiful Wallcreeper, and we may be lucky with where they have nested this year to be able to work with them too. We won't be short of variety and options for our last few days though.

Day 9: We will travel back to Sofia airport to catch our return flights back home.

Please note that as ever with this trip we can change the running order and locations as we go to respond to opportunities so although this is our core plan it may be adjusted a little on the ground.



Things to bring

Our accommodation is clean and comfortable Balkan hotels throughout. In terms of any special dietary requirements, you may have – please let me know if there's anything we need to be aware of and plan for. In terms of clothing, it will be very warm during the day but can get a bit chilly during the early mornings and late evenings when we will be out mostly. Rain is possible however so you will need a waterproof coat, and some over trousers can be very helpful when photographing after such a shower or the occasionally very heavy overnight dews. Good sun block is essential so anything from factor 50 upwards, and sunglasses and a good sun hat are also valuable items too. Good solid walking shoes are also ideal: there is some walking in the mountain areas in search of subjects but nothing overly strenuous. It is also a good idea to bring a water bottle that we can top up to save using countless small plastic bottles of water.



Camera equipment



In terms of camera kit, the main thing you'll need is a macro lens; the best range is between a 100mm or 180mm (the longer the better) and then some supplementary lenses for other opportunities such as a 24-70mm for wide angle landscapes and then maybe an intermediate zoom (70-200mm or 100 400mm) so that you don't miss anything in terms of other opportunities: there are some great settings and landscape habitats that we will be in throughout the trip and you will need a 400/500mm for bird photography opportunities. You'll get the chance to decide what you want/ need for each session, so you won't be burdening yourself with it all of the time either. Tripods are essential for low light photography, which we will have in our early and late sessions. If you have a small reflector then they can be very helpful at bouncing light where you really need it to be. Also, an angle viewfinder can be helpful if you have one. Bring plenty of compact flash cards with you as well because if you get a good day, you will take a lot of images.

Useful Contact Information

My contact number for the build up to and for the duration of the trip is:

Ellie: +44 (0)7879 480143



Please don't hesitate to contact me even if you think it is a minor question, I am here to help.



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