



# **BULGARIA**

## *The Rose Valley*



## The Rose Valley

The Rose Valley is a narrow plateau of the central part of the country, ranging from Kazanlak to Karlovo. This territory covers about 2600 hectares (height varies from 300 to 700 m asl), here are almost all of the 36.000 manufacturers, producers of roses of Bulgaria.

In fact, the valley climate characterized by mild winters and long springs with low rainfall and high humidity in the morning dew, allows the rose to contain a high percentage of oil by fragrance unique and valuable.

Bulgarian tradition in the cultivation of roses dates back almost five centuries ago, when the Turks brought the first plants of the "rose oil" in the valley of Kazanlak. Some argue that their presence is actually due to the soldiers of Alexander the Great, who brought some roses from the Persian city of Kashan, but no evidence exist.



## The Rose Festival

From mid-May until the first week of June, the Rose Valley hosts tourists from around the world, attracted by the numerous festivals organized in the villages over the weekend.

The events which surely attract the most visitors, are the Feast of the Rose of Karlovo and the International Folklore Festival of Kazanlak.

These days, in the early morning, in the roses fields the visitors can see boys and girls dressed in traditional costumes to pick up rose petals. On the central square, the central part of the festival is a parade of colorful floats followed by people wearing traditional costumes, dancing to the rhythm of the Bulgarian folklore music.



### The Rose

The rose Damascena or rose of Damascus has a high branching, curved spines and small flowers in thick groups. Flower color ranges from pink to light red.

The bush can reach 2 m in height, but for industrial use it does not exceed one meter. There is a summer-flowering species, used in Bulgaria, and the autumn-flowering species.

### Oil of roses

On European markets, the Bulgarian rose oil appeared in the late XVII century to meet the needs of manufacturers of perfumes. Initially, the oil was produced in small workshops, which use copper vessels with pipes cooled with water through which slowly drops the oil condensed. It was only in XIX century that, thanks to rising global demand for Bulgarian rose oil, this family-business became one of the main sectors of the country.

Currently in Bulgaria about 3.000 tons of rose oil are produced every year, corresponding to 70% of rose essence used in cosmetics in the world (as it seems, however, this percentage gradually decreases). The main markets for Bulgarian rose oil are France, USA, Germany and Japan.

During the flowering period of the roses, in the morning each petal is pulled by hand and carefully deposited in baskets to avoid to lose its characteristics: for twenty days, almost 2.000 bins are engaged in this delicate operation. To produce one liter of oil are needed more than 4 tons of petals. For one drop oil about 200 roses should be used ! In 2008 the price of one liter of oil was about 5.000 euros.



***These priceless cultural and natural treasures are still little known to most tourists,  
but just this will be the exact key to a really successful business idea!***

***We will be with you as reliable and loyal partners!***

**GoBalkans L.t.d.**

*Tour Operator Licence: RK – 01 – 6687 / Member of ABTTA - Association of Bulgarian Tour operators and Travel Agents*

**Head office 1000 Sofia (Bulgaria) Str. "Ekzarh Yossif" 99 tel: +359 2 4627020 fax: +359 2 4627021 e-mail: [office@gobalkans.net](mailto:office@gobalkans.net)**

**Branch office for Macedonia and West Balkan 1000 Skopje (Macedonia) Str. Emil Zola 7/40 tel: +389 2 5298474 mob: +389 784 49998**

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