

WELCOME TO RUSE

Ruse is one of the most elegant cities in Bulgaria, situated on the highest right bank of the Danube River. It is a city of imposing belle époque architecture and neatly trimmed leafy squares, as if a little chunk of Vienna had broken off and floated down the Danube. One of the city's symbols is the Monument of Liberty built in 1906 by the Italian sculptor Arnaldo Zocchi. Due to the beautiful architecture and the internal shaping of the buildings constructed by Italian, Austrian, German and Bulgarian architects, Ruse is also known as "The Small Vienna".

Ruse is the biggest Bulgarian city on the Danube and the most significant transport, logistics, business and cultural centre of North Bulgaria. The city is located at crossroads, approximately 320 km North-East of Sofia, 200 km North-West of Varna, 100 km North-East of Veliko Tarnovo and 70 km South of Bucharest. Ruse is the fifth largest city in Bulgaria with a population of about 160 000.

In its more than 20 centuries of history, a variety of ages have left an imprint on a variety of cultural strata. The spirit of the city, however, always remains unchanging, everlasting and free like the big European river - a river that generates influences, connects, inspires life and promises a future...

The beginning of the town was marked 23 centuries ago by an ancient Thracian port. In I c. CE, the Roman fortification Sexaginta Pristis (a port of sixty ships) was built at the present site of the city. Today, the ruins of Sexaginta Prista are an open-air museum exposition. Since the 16th century the city had been known under its Ottoman name - Ruschuk.

Ruse is a bridge that delineates and overcomes borders and a place where the first tokens of Modernity and the industrial age of Bulgaria got born. It is also the place that helped the ideas of humanism, technical and economic development to reach the South-East of Europe. In Ruse was published the first Bulgarian newspaper, printed in Bulgaria. In 1866 the first Bulgarian railway Ruse-Varna was opened, used for 12 years by the well-known Orient Express. The first navy school and the first weather service were also established here.

Over the course of centuries, Ruse has been a place of vibrant cultural development. The major local cultural destinations were established in the late 19th and the early 20th century - the Regional Library, the Ruse Art Gallery, the Regional Museum of History, the Theatre, the Philharmonic Orchestra, the Ruse State Opera and the Puppet Theatre. The most noteworthy event on the cultural calendar is the annual March Music Days International Festival which started in 1961.

Today Ruse is proud of its unique architectural heritage, marked by the European cosmopolitan spirit of the citizens of Ruse, thanks to which even in

the beginning of the 20th c., the achievements and masterpieces of modern European architecture become part of the glamour of Ruse. The rich cultural and historical heritage of the city is preserved today in the various collections of Ruse Historical Museum, the picturesque rooms of the Museum of Urban life, also known as "Kaliopa's House", and the only National Museum of Transport in Bulgaria, housed in the building of the first railway station in Bulgaria. Among the most interesting exponents of the museum are the coaches of the tsars Ferdinand (1887 - 1918) and Boris III (1918 - 1943), and also the saloon coach of Sultan Abdul Aziz (1830 - 1876).

There are also interesting and beautiful landmarks in the vicinity of the city of Ruse, such as the beautiful Natural Park Rusenski Lom, the remains of the medieval town of Cherven - one of the largest military, economic and cultural centers of the Second Bulgarian Empire (1185 - 1393), the Ivanovo Rock Churches - a site included in the UNESCO's World Heritage List. In close proximity to Ruse is the monastery St. Dimitar Basarbovski - the only active rock monastery in Bulgaria.

"Angel Kanchev" University of Ruse is a successor of the higher technical school, established in Ruse on 12.11.1945. There are around 10 000 students in about 50 Bachelor degree programmes, 80 Master degree courses and 43 PhD courses. In 2015 the University will celebrate its 70th anniversary.

Ruse has a continental climate with very hot summers and relatively cold winters. Usually October is picturesque and mild with daytime temperatures varying between 17 to 22 °C.

"All that I experienced afterwards had already happened in Ruschuk", said Elias Canetti, the Nobel Prize winner in literature for 1981, about his birthplace. If we refer to the spiritual message that the past bears influences and our present is unthinkable without the heritage we carry in us, Ruse today is a proof that tradition determines the contemporary spirit - dynamic, protean, attractive and exciting with the initiative and imagination of its citizens.