



Erasmus+


MACEDONIA TRAVEL GUIDE

10 Must-See Places You Should Add to Your Erasmus Trip Itinerary



Located in the center of the Balkan Peninsula, and seemingly hidden away from the rest of the world, the small country of Macedonia is a paradise forgotten. With welcoming people, affordable prices, and cultural heritage aplenty, it will delight newbie and veteran travelers alike.

This Macedonia travel guide below covers a lot of ground, giving this small country the extended treatment it deserves. Walking you through a garden variety of outdoor adventures, it will familiarize you with the colorful Macedonian landscape, delicious cuisine. It won't take you much to appreciate this Balkan gem, as you will fall in love right away.

A photograph of a bicycle parked on the side of a paved road. The road stretches into the distance, flanked by green and yellow vegetation. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a clear blue sky. The bicycle is a mountain bike with a green frame and black handlebars.

This country never ceases to amaze us. So let's start from the beginning, giving you a firsthand impression of a seemingly small but otherwise unforgettable destination.

When to visit Macedonia

Enjoying the changed Mediterranean, mountainous and mildly continental climate, Macedonia's heavenly nature is bathing in sunshine throughout the entire year. Expect, therefore, hot and dry summer months, followed by a very contrasting winter.

The best time to arrive, if you would like to enjoy the full scope of the Macedonian experience, would be between early June and mid-September.

What's Macedonia famous for

The focal point of Macedonia is breathtaking nature that bears little resemblance to other parts of the world. If you are an outdoor aficionado, this is definitely a bucket-list destination.

Nature, however, is often supplemented with religious heritage aplenty. Churches and monasteries are dotting the map and this archetype of natural and spiritual repeats throughout the entire country.

There are a lot of events to attend, many places to go, and a long menu of recipes to taste... So let's start the tour guide, beginning with Skopje, the capital of Macedonia.

Top 10 Must-See Places in Macedonia

1. Skopje

Functioning as the business, administrative and educational hub of the country, Skopje is a proper metropolis. The infrastructural network is catching up with European standards, and there are plenty of things to see, all fitting tightly into a small radius.

The Old Bazar, dating back from the Ottoman period, is a place worth visiting, and you will definitely enjoy the artisan charm keeping this place alive. In close proximity, you will find the Kale Fortress, which was a medieval prison overlooking the city. Today, it is one of the most picturesque landmarks around.

Skopje will give you access to the best of Macedonian^(FYROM) cuisine, as many traditional restaurants are dotting the map. The price is affordable, and the taste is a mix of Ottoman and Slavic – but we will discuss food in a minute.

Taxis are crowding the streets, so transportation is never a problem, but you'd like to learn a bit about the bus network and purchase a prepaid card. When added to your card in bulk, the price of a single ticket goes down to about half a dollar for a single ride.

But that's enough of the city, time to hit the paved road!

2. Vodno

Located conveniently south of the city, Vodno is where you start your off-road adventure. It still amazes me to this day that only a 15-minute walk is separating you from the urban jungle to the foothills of this scenic mountain forest.



The trails cut left and right, providing a number of hiking and biking opportunities, and there is a cable car that goes to the very summit. There, you can enjoy a surprising lack of noise, appreciating the breathtaking view of the city.

The price of a two-way ticket is only two dollars, and you have a cumulative drive of 14 minutes total. Enjoy!

3. Canyon Matka

Whereas Vodno is an ample prelude to the Macedonian outdoor experience, Canyon Matka is a monumental attraction. Stretching for miles on end, it features tall and lush cliffs, with calm and crystal green water in between.

You can visit the monasteries around, or rent a kayak and see the beautiful terrain from below. To illustrate how affordable the Macedonian vacation is, note that a two-person kayak, for one hour of fun, will cost you exactly 10 dollars. A boat ride to the cave complex nearby will cost twice as less.



Being in close proximity to Skopje, the canyon Matka adventure would take only half of your day. You will get there, spend an hour kayaking, visit the caves nearby and marvel at the religious heritage, all before noon. The restaurant terrace, right around lunch, can provide unprecedented comfort, while you eat Macedonian specialties and enjoy the panoramic view of the canyon entrance.

4. The natural observatory of Kokino

Unique to this part of the world, the stone observatory of Kokino is only half an hour away from Skopje. Parking on the side of the motorway and climbing up is an adventure you'll definitely remember.



Once there, you'll want to stay a while longer, and perhaps camp overnight in order to observe the collage of stars covering the sky. If you plan to return back before sunset, the nearby complex of Ethno Village can provide a gastronomic experience as well as accommodation.

5. Macedonian vineyards

Resembling the Old Italian vineyard, these wine production facilities are not only open to the public, but they are a tourist attraction on their own. The wine, as rumors have it, is often bought by Italian companies, repacked, and sold in the west.

Affordable as everything else in this country, it is impossible to resist. Visit, therefore, the vineries of Stobi, Popova Kula (highly recommended), Tikvesh, and Kamnik...



6. Mavrovo

Located in the western part of the country, and high in the mountainous belt, Mavrovo is Macedonia's weekend gateway. It will take you an hour and a half to get there by car, but there are small buses frequenting the route as well.



The village is located on the shore of Lake Mavrovo, which is a magnificent sight to behold. An asphalt road circles the entire coast of the lake, providing you with the ultimate cycling adventure, plus dozens of panoramic lookouts.

The road is less frequented by vehicles, and it is as scenic as you might imagine. Stretching for 33 kilometers, I call it a day well spent.

At the very beginning of the road, you can take a postcard-worthy picture next to the submerged church. It is as eerie as it is beautiful.

7. The Mavrovo – Galicnik road

If you observe the map, you'll notice that I'm walking you towards the south, following the western mountainous belt. And it is exactly here where you see the most scenic safari road.

Connecting the villages of Mavrovo and Galicnik, on a respectably high altitude, it is the perfect off-road setting.



Taking this road, you can enjoy hiking, riding your bike, or driving along the paved trail. The most recommended method though is booking a spot on one of the horseback riding tours. It takes you through nearby cheese farms, tasting fine Macedonian Cotija and Ricotta along the road. I have yet to convince my wife and book a tour for two.

8. Pelister

Southern still, you will see the mountain Baba towering ahead. Known for its dense and immersive forest, it is home to one of the highest peaks in Macedonia, Pelister.



Hiking towards the summit is a day-long adventure, and it provides a sensory overload of another kind. You will cut through scenic roads, steep hills, and one of the most captivating sights around – the twin lakes of Pelister, called Pelister eyes.

Down the mountain, a small town named Bitola awaits, where you can find affordable accommodation and listen to traditional Macedonian music. It is the perfect stop before heading southwest to Ohrid.



9. Ohrid



Finally, the frosting on the cake! Located near the Albanian border, the town of Ohrid is perhaps the most renowned spiritual center of the region. Once home to over 300 churches and monasteries, it still holds the largest part of the rich Macedonian cultural heritage.

Conveniently located on the shore of Lake Ohrid, it commands attention right away. With crystal blue water as far as your eyes can see, and dozens of lookouts providing panoramic views of the lake, Ohrid is one of Europe's finest.



The monastery complexes blend perfectly into this heavenly collage, bearing witness to the historical importance of this region. Do not leave without visiting the

Church of Kaneo, Plaoshnik, and the monastery of Saint Naum.



Other important landmarks are the Samoil Fortress overlooking the city, the Ohrid Bazar where artisan workshops are still producing traditional Macedonian jewelry, and the beautiful sandy beaches you will discover along the road.

Take also a trip to the Bay of Bones, which is a recently constructed settlement cataloging life as it was before the settlement of Ohrid even existed.

As far as events go, see if you can plan your trip around the beginning of August, and enjoy the Ohrid Summer Festival. A spectacle of classical music, it is held around prominent cultural landmarks such as the Ohrid amphitheater. Also make sure to organize a trip to the nearby town of Struga (11 kilometers away), where one of the most important international literary events –

Struga Evenings of Poetry – is being held around the end of the same month.



10. Kavadarci

Kavadarci is a town in the Tikveš region of the Republic of Macedonia. In the heart of Macedonia's wine country, it is home to the largest winery in southeastern Europe, named after the Tikveš plain



Кавадарци

The Municipality of Kavadarci is in the southern part of the republic, with 1132 square-km of area.

The municipality borders with Greece in the south, the municipality of Negotino in the East, the municipality of Prilep to the west, and the Municipality of Veles to the North. In the municipality, there are 55 populated places of which there is one city with four small boroughs. The city itself, Kavadarci, has an elevation of 230-270 meters above sea-level. Geographically, the area of the municipality is characterized with diverse relief and nature.



Some of the bigger rivers in the municipality are: Crna Reka, Boshavica, Doshnica and Luda Mara, which also passes through the town of Kavadarci. There are two reservoirs within the municipality: The Tikves Lake - which is the

largest man- made water reservoir in Macedonia and The Moklishte Lake - a small lake located in the Moclishte area. The Municipality of Kavadarci is distinctive for its specific kind of Mediterranean microclimate. The average annual temperature is 13 Celsius degrees, with maximum summer temperature of 42 degrees Celsius, and minimal winter temperature of -20 Degrees Celsius.

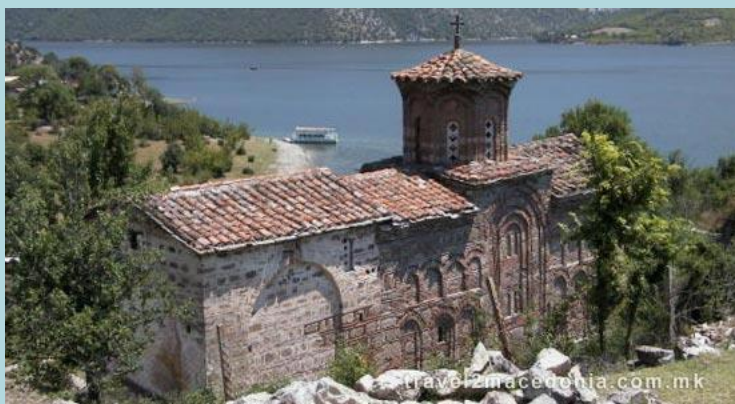
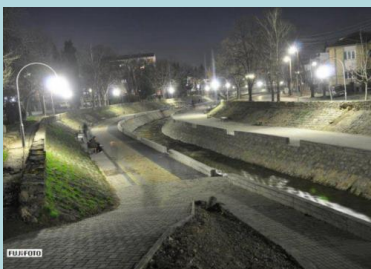


The average annual rainfall is 500 mm distributed throughout the year. According to the 2002 Census, the Municipality of Kavadarci has 38,391

inhabitants, and 11,848 households.

This municipality has a motorway connection with other regions and municipalities via the E-75 (Skopje - Gevgelija) motorway which

is situated 14 km away from the town of Kavadarci, or 11km via the regional Skopje-Veles - Prilep - Bitola motorway. The closest airports to the Municipality are the Petrovec Airport near Skopje, 90km away from Kavadarci, and the Thessalonica Airport, in the Republic of Greece, 150 km away from the town.



Primary School Goce Delcev – Kavadarci



One of the newest and biggest school in our municipality established in 1972, It is located in the new centre in Kavadarci 600 pupils enrolled every year. About sixty teachers employed in the school It has two floors and one attached part for pupils who stay in the day care centre, classrooms and the offices are on both floors and the computer lab and the library are on the second floor, gym hall which is separated from the building and two football and basketball fields which are next to the gym in an open air.

Staff

- The staff includes the Headmistress***
- the Deputy***
- one secretary***
- one solicitor***
- one Economist***
- one librarian***
- one pedagogical worker and***
- one psychologist***
- 37 teachers, most of them female teachers.***

Subjects taught in school

- **Macedonian - obligatory, English- starting in the first grade with two classes a week and when they come to the sixth grade they have three classes per week. In sixth grade they choose a second language (German or Italian).**
- **obligatory subjects are Mathematics, Biology, Art, Music, Sport, Geography, Civil society and they start with Chemistry and Physics in the seventh grade.**
- **optional subjects such as Religion, Our country and Myths and legends**

Additional school activities

- **One hour per week is also dedicated to projects, according to the school curriculum and designed by pupils and a teacher.**
- **Pupils may also choose to attend extra activities held after class once a week, such as the school's choir, Drama team and Environmental team**



Erasmus plus projects – benefits for the children

Many of the children come from families with a very low income, many of them lack motivation to learn, most of them have never been abroad - great opportunity if we, as a school, take part in Erasmus plus in order to overstep our borders and give an improved, European dimension to the educational process



„Puppet’s mission”

„Innovative Technologies for Active Language Class”



„Eat well, grow better”

„Thinking, coding”



Macedonian cuisine



As far as Macedonian cuisine goes, Skopje is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. In Kavadarci, for instance, you can taste every traditional Macedonian dish,

prepared from fresh organic produce, and served in a unique way.

Make sure to order Macedonian delicacies as Ajvar, which is a delicious red pepper mash, Makalo, TavceGravce, Turlitava, Sarmi, Stuffed peppers, Pastrmajlija, and SelskoMeso.

The list goes on and on, and when accompanied by Macedonian wine and the strong alcoholic beverage called Rakija, it will please your sensory apparatus like rarely before.



Wrapping up this guide, I truly hope that you can one day enjoy the full scope of the Macedonian experience. Discovering this country for the first time is a traveler's blessing, as it truly dwarfs many other locations in significance. If the road takes you to Europe and near the Balkan Peninsula, make sure to

head south for at least one or two weeks before moving on. You won't regret it!

