



EUROPEAN UNION
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INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE!



GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA



GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA

Route 2 "Tourism and Culture for Little Travelers"

Learning History While Having Fun! Let's find, learn and play!

SOUTH OF DANUBE - WHAT WOULD THE VRATSA REGION TELL US

1. **Community centre "Razvitie" (Development), Vratsa** (Vratsa town centre; GPS: 43°12'09.90"N 23°32'56.89"E, tel.: +359 92/ 62-47-40; +359 92/62-15-73)

Community centre "Razvitie" is one of the oldest of its kind in the country. It was founded in 1869 at the discretion of the teacher Simeon Podbalkansky. Originally called "Bulgarian Cultural Centre squib in Vratsa", it went through different names over the years, when in 1884 the name "Razvitie" appeared. The community centre has gradually expanded its activities and from a place for learning and literacy, it has become a cultural centre, where a theatre, cinema, music society, archaeological society, museum collection, children's art school, etc. have been functioning. The building, which houses the organization today is a monument of culture and was built between 1939 and 1941 with donations of patriotic citizens. Elena and Todor Balabanovi donated the courtyard in the centre of the town, in which the building was constructed.

2. **Ethnographic-Revival Complex "St. Sofronii Vrachanski ", Vratsa**

(GPS: 43°12'05.40"N 23°33'02.95"E; tel.: +359 92 627 097; www.vratsamuseum.com; vratsamuseum@mail.bg)

Working hours: Monday-Friday 9.00 ч. – 17.30 ч.; weekend and holidays 9.00 ч. – 12.00 ч.; 13.00 ч. – 17.30 ч.; with prior request between 12.00 и 13.00; Free day: Monday

„The World of the Child from the End of the 19th Century and the Beginning of the 20th Century”. This is one of the expositions presented in the ethnographic complex in the house "Grigori Naydenov". It "tells" a lot about the family environment in which village and town children grew up and were educated and it covers a period of infancy to teenage years. The abundance of natural materials - wood, textiles, grain stalks, noise, etc. in making toys and household goods for children living in a village makes a nice impression. A lot of factory toys, accessories, school supplies and



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original children's wagon from the end of the 19th century can be found in the possessions of the children, living in the town.

The ethnographic complex includes also the house of the Hadjitoshevi family, the house of Ivan Zambin, the church "St. Ascension "and Ascension School.

THE SYMPHONY OF NATURE

3. Fun park „Ledenika” (17 km from Vratsa, through the Vratsata pass, tel: +359 92 623553 – cashier; +359 877 419 253; GPS: 43°12‘16“N; 23°29‘25“E)

Working hours: summer season: 01 June - 30 August: 9.00 – 19.00 /last entrance 18:00/; winter season: 01 September - 01 June: 9.00 – 17.00 / last entrance 16:00/

One of the most picturesque and visited caves in Bulgaria is on our way. On a picturesque asphalt road, which passes through the Vratsata pass and winds through the Vratsa Balkan, we reach the Ledenika cave, named after the icy stalactites and stalagmites, which form around the entrance of the cave in the winter. Among the most beautiful formations are the "Plazniata" passage, the small hall with almost round shape, The Little and Big Gap, The Lake of Desires, The Pass of Sinners, etc. There is incredible acoustics in one of the halls - "Concert Hall", and symphonic concerts are organized there. There is a scheduled show "Sound and Light" in one of the halls. The entrance of the cave is a starting point for an attractive tourist route from/to Vratsa. A fun park named Ledenika is located close to the cave. It offers the following services:

- "Mom, Dad and Us" includes rope structures, wooden constructions and Via Feratta attractions, children's playground;
- "Ledenice" is a model of the most interesting cave organism in Ledenika - Svetlomzrazec;
- "The bat" is a contemporary projection hall;
- "The fairy-tale alley" is a promenade with dolls - familiar fairy-tale characters and an open-air theatre;
- Attraction trains on different routes.

4. Regional History Museum - Vratsa (2 "Hristo Botev" sq., Vratsa, tel.: +359 92 620220; www.vratsamuseum.com)



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Working hours: Monday-Friday 9.00 ч. – 17.30 ч.; weekend and holidays 9.00 ч. – 12.00 ч.; 13.00 ч. – 17.30 ч.; with prior request between 12.00 и 13.00; Free day: Monday

The Regional Museum, which is part of the Palace of Culture in Vratsa, is one of the few buildings in the country that is specifically designed and constructed for the needs of a museum. Regional Museum Vratsa has many expositions among which Archaeology and Thracian Treasures, including a separate hall for the Rogozen Treasure, which is the largest Thracian treasure found in Bulgaria. Separate exhibitions present important samples and exhibits from “Bulgarian history in the 15th-19th century period” and “New History”. An interesting part is the "Zn Art - Museum of Paper" exhibition, which shows multi-layered reconstructions of selected exhibits from Bulgarian museums, artefacts from the prehistoric and antique epochs, contemporary monuments of culture and author's works. The visitors can also learn about key moments from the history of the Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant. "First Atomic" hall recreates the atmosphere of one of the power plant's commands rooms. Two monitors show unique archive power plant's footage.

WATER – THE FORCE OF NATURE

5. Skaklya waterfall (GPS: 43°11'10.96"N, 23°33'07.69"E)

The waterfall is the highest, non-constantly flowing waterfall in Bulgaria and on the Balkan Peninsula. It is situated 1.5 km away from Vratsa and is a crossing point of several tourist routes. From the top of the waterfall, you can see unforgettable views of Vratsa and the Vratsa field.

6. The Fairytale Park (GPS: 43°10'17"N; 23°35'43"E, at the exit of Vratsa, on the way to Pavolche village) **Working hours** – Saturday and Sunday 10.00 – 19.00; upon request during the weekdays.

The park is located in a natural forest and natural elements are creatively incorporated into all of the attractions. There is a children's playground for the youngest and the older ones can play paintball, archery, bowling, mini-golf, race with ATVs, ride ponies, climb, walk on ropes, dive in caves, etc. The park also has a summer cinema and a stage where cultural and entertainment events are organized.



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7. Nature Conservation Centre "Natura" (in the building of Eski Mosque in Vratsa, which is an architectural and art monument of culture; GPS: 43°11'54"N; 23°32'47"E).

Very attractive for young visitors is the three-dimensional digital model of Vrachanski Balkan Nature Park. It is an interactive map, which shows all the huts and shelters in the park. There are also interactive playgrounds and education exposures for biodiversity and karst formation. Educators present educational programs for children, work with children and youth on nature conservation topics, organize excursions and mountain guides.

NORTH OF DANUBE - WHAT WOULD PIATRA-OLT REGION TELL US

ROMANIAN CUSTOMS AND CULTURE IN THE AGE

1. **The Olt County Museum** (Slatina, Olt County, 1 Ana Iaptesku str., tel: +40 249 415 279)

With its four expositions and more than 25,000 artefacts, the museum reveals the customs, culture and civilization that developed in the county. The famous sheepskin of Vadastra, Olt carpets, a collection of ceramics from Boga, Corbeni and Roman and a collection of written eggs from Oboga are shown. There is a collection of over 260 covers - carpets, tablecloths, quilts, decorated in a variety of colours. Guests can see more objects from the time of Ghetto-Dacia, the Roman Empire, and those showing a connection with the Byzantine Empire, as well as tracing the life of the rulers of Olt County during the Middle Ages. An interesting fact is that the museum operates a restoration laboratory where ceramic and metal objects are handled.

2. **Neamtu Manor** (Olari, Olt County, Romania)

If you want to see an example of urban architecture, you should visit Neamtu Manor. His latest owner, Constantine Neamtu, restored the mansion by adding interesting arches and balconies in a style strongly influenced by Art Nouveau. Currently, the building is not accessible for daily



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tourist visits. Regularly cultural and social events are organized to raise funds for its maintenance. Children workshops are also organised.

3. **Princely church** (3 Mihai Viteazul str, Caracal, Olt County, Romania)

The Princely Church is the oldest temple in Caracal. It was built on the hill of Protos by stone blocks and bricks brought from the ruins of the ancient Roman city of Romula. The church has undergone many reconstructions since its foundation. A very detailed study was conducted in 1975 in order to restore the church in its original form as far as possible. There are preserved icons around the altar probably from the 1890s.

4. **Romanati Museum** (26 Iancu Jianu str., Caracal, Olt County, Romania)

Working time: Monday-Thursday: 8:00-16:00; weekend: 09:00 – 13:00; Friday – closed

The museum has four expositions - Archaeology and History, Iancu Jianu Memorial, Fine Arts and Ethnology. There is a Lapidarium at the entrance of the museum, where visitors can see sarcophagi, tombs and vessels. The most remarkable exhibit is Julius Julian's sarcophagus, covered with beautiful ornaments. The special collection of precious stones is especially attractive to visitors. The Roman bronze statues also deserve attention, including those of the goddesses Diana and Fortuna, god Jupiter and others.

5. **National Theatre in Caracal** (10 Piața Victoriei str., Caracal, Olt County, Romania, tel: +40 249 511 384)

Working hours: Monday-Sunday: 10:00-21:00

The theatre impresses with its eclectic-style architecture, bearing a Neo-Baroque and Neo-Renaissance print that impresses with its richness and beauty.

DANCE, THEATRE, MUSIC - WHEN SHOULD YOU VISIT THE REGION

Ethnographic-Revival Complex "St. Sofronii Vrachanski " in Vratsa regularly organizes different workshops - in **February** “Martenitsa Workshop” and in **December** “Workshop for Survachki”. Children can take part in the workshops and make their traditional martenitsi and survachki. All the crafts are sold in charity bazaars and the funds are used for noble causes.



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National Folklore Council is held in **June** in the Ledenika Cave. It includes dance and singing groups for authentic and stylized folklore and individual performers. Craftsmen from all over the country present their hand-crafted works.

International Youth Theatre Festival "Vreme" is held in **June** in the Youth Centre of Vratsa for all the lovers of theatrical art. The festival provides the opportunity for the debut of young artists. Guests can choose between classic and contemporary titles, dramatic and puppet theatre for children and adults, contemporary and traditional dances. The Youth Centre in the town of Vratsa celebrates International Youth Day on **August 12** by organizing concerts, sports events, creative workshops, dance lessons. "Hristo Botev" Regional Library organizes quizzes for the youngest readers.

For the young food connoisseurs, community centre "Probuda-1907" annually organizes a children's culinary show in **August** in three categories: a competition for sandwiches; salad contest; confectionery for sweets. Young children take part in the race, all receiving diplomas, and awards for the best.

Community centre "Razvitie" in Vratsa organizes the Youth Music Forum in **October - November**. The guests have the opportunity to hear classic and popular works performed by young talents and emerging stars from Vratsa and foreign countries.

"Lica Militaru" Folklore Festival is held in **May**, in Drăgănești-Olt, in order to discover young talents. Traditional Romanian and wedding songs are presented. Music festivals can also be visited in **September** - the Golden Ship Music Festival at Corabia and the Music Festival "Radu Sherban" in Caracal.

If you visit Piatra-Olt in **January**, you will witness the Slatina Day Celebrations accompanied by an exhibition and a variety of cultural and artistic events. The Day of the Piatra-Olt is celebrated on **May 21**, where many local artists, singers and music groups take part.

One of the biggest and most anticipated events in the region is the festival of humour - "Oltenia and the rest of the world", held in Slatina in **September**. You can see musical performances, traditional crafts fair and traditional craft stands.

Scornicești Day is also known as the Feast of Bread when in **September** residents and guests of the city receive a bit of spiritual charge while returning to the roots of kneading bread and having



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fun with the artistic program proposed by the organizers. A special moment is the awarding of couples celebrating a golden wedding in that year. In Șerbănești a Feast of Harvest is held in **July** on the day of St. Elijah. Each year there is a magnificent exhibition of baked goods, which is devoted to rituals, customs, various holidays - bread for the bride, bread for the mother-in-law, kolaci, kozunaci, etc.

WHERE TO STAY:

Vratsa region

Hemus hotel (centre of Vratsa); Olympic hopes (next to Hristo Botev sports centre in Vratsa); Tourist complex Ledenika – next to Ledenika cave; family hotel Kiparis (Teacher’s colonies 14 km away from Vratsa); hotel complex Hashove (in a picturesque country next to Boteva alley); family hotel Flamingo (750 m away from Vratsa centre); family art-hotel Zora (next to Vratsa centre); family hotel Momina salsa (Zgorigrad village, 4 km away from Ledenika cave and 20 km away from Vratsa); hotel Chaika (on the way to Vratsata pass, 500m away from the town centre); Hotel Leva (5 min away from the town centre).

Piatra-Olt region

Boulevard Prestige 3* - Slatina centre; Parc hotel 3* (500 m away from Slatina centre, 50 m away from the town park); Zytto hotel 3* (1 km away from the centre of Slatina and 200 m from the railway station); Senator hotel 3* (1 km away from the centre of Slatina); City hotel 4* (500 m away from the centre of Slatina); Horse farm Epona, Bobicești.

ADDITIONAL PLACES

Bridge of God, also known as Jabocrek, is a very beautiful, natural rock bridge in the Chirensko-Lilyache karst region, about 15 km north of Vratsa. It rises above the Lileshka Bara River, its main axis is about 100 m long and its height reaches 20 m. During the summer months of the year, the river is drying up and there are a few ponds full with frogs, from where comes the other name of the rock phenomenon.



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