



PTO

The Anglo-American School of Sofia



Your friendly guide to school and beyond



# WELCOME BOOKLET

2011-2012

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# Welcome to Bulgaria and to the Anglo-American School of Sofia!

**D**ear parents and teachers,

*On behalf of the Parent Teacher Organization, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the Anglo-American School of Sofia. If you are new to AAS, we hope you enjoy your experiences. If you have been here a while, we are delighted to welcome you back!*

*I hope that this Welcome Booklet will help you become better acquainted with Sofia and to locate the resources you may need or want to know about, to make your life here easier. The guide should help ensure that you are aware of the many events that we will share together throughout the school year.*

*Updated annually, the booklet has information on special events at AAS as well as recommendations for family activities, shopping, and restaurants, medical and veterinary contacts, including contacts for hospitals and what to do in case of an emergency.*

*We've prepared the booklet in a pocket format so that it's easy to take with you when you're out and about. The PTO hopes you will find it useful as you adjust to life in Sofia or simply to expand your information resources.*

*I wish you a wonderful AAS experience!*

*Diane Tromans-Berg*

*2011-2012 PTO President*



## WHAT WE DO

The PTO strives to enhance positive communication between the school and parents, for the ultimate benefit of our children. We organize events, which bring the AAS community together and keep the lines of communication open between families and school. We support the school in maintaining a first rate educational environment for our children. We help the Student Council, and coordinate parent volunteers when needed. We raise funds for student activities by organizing and hosting special events.

PTO General Meetings enable parents and teachers to discuss subjects about the school and its community. All parents of AAS students are members of the PTO, and are invited and encouraged to attend our PTO meetings. Everyone is invited to submit ideas for the agenda by sending an email to any active PTO member. The meetings are held monthly and announced in the AAS Newsletter, which you will receive at the end of every week, either electronically, or if you wish in hard copy.

## WHO WE ARE

The PTO has both members at large and an elected Executive Board, which for the school year 2011-2012 is as follows:

President:	Diane Tromans-Berg
Vice President:	Lynne Godding
Secretary:	Lisa O'Shaughnessy
Treasurer:	Alisa Shiratori
Room Parent Coordinator:	Julia Karvouni
Teacher Representative:	To be determined

The PTO would like to emphasize that ALL parents of AAS students are PTO members, and as such, have a right to be active in the organization. If you wish to volunteer, you are welcome to attend any PTO meeting, contact any active PTO member for more information, or to complete a PTO Volunteer Form available on Orientation Day, and in the Registrar's office thereafter.

## HOW WE OPERATE

The PTO exists because of parent volunteers. At our core is a group of volunteers known as Room Parents. Every class from pre-school to Grade 12 will have one or more parents filling this role. The Room Parents help during the year to organize special activities for the classes, such as holiday parties and field trips, and working with teachers at their request. They will also help parents to get to know each other by organizing social gatherings for parents and/or families, and they will represent your class to the PTO.

### How to contact the PTO:

Email: [pto@aas-sofia.org](mailto:pto@aas-sofia.org)

Facebook: Anglo-American School of Sofia PTO Events Page

## PTO MAIN EVENTS

*The PTO helps AAS organize many events throughout the year. Some of the main events held annually are described below.*

### **PTO ORIENTATION and WELCOME BACK BARBEQUE for ALL FAMILIES**

*Saturday, August 27th 2011*

This is a great opportunity to visit AAS and get acquainted with the AAS campus, the Teachers, the other children in your child's class, other parents, and the PTO. Your children will have the opportunity to meet their teachers in the classroom setting and learn about the curriculum for the year ahead. Afterwards your family is invited outside for a barbeque lunch and informal socializing.

### **HALLOWEEN**


*Saturday, October 29th 2011*

This is a family event of dress-up, games and lots of treats. Families are invited to attend in Halloween costumes.

### **CRAFT FAIR & BAZAAR**

*Saturday, November 19th 2011*

This is a fun day for all the family. Local vendors will be available selling handmade Bulgarian items and crafts workshops for children will be held.



Perfectly timed for picking out or making gifts to send home for the Christmas season.

### **SPRING FAIR**

*Saturday, 9th June 2012*

This is our main fund-raiser of the year, and without this source of income the PTO would not be able to finance many events. This is a festive, fun-filled day for the entire family, where we raffle fantastic prizes, offer many fun games and activities for the kids, and you'll find culinary specialties for sale from the many countries that make up our international school. This is a day not to be missed!

### **STAFF APPRECIATION DAY**

*Wednesday, 13 June 2012*

We like to show our teachers and all AAS staff how much we appreciate them. Each year we try to come up with different ideas to show how much we appreciate them.

### **PTO STORE**

We will open the PTO store several times throughout the year. At the school store we sell AAS sweatshirts, polo shirts, house color shirts, canvas/eco grocery bags, water bottles and occasionally Scholastic books.

## SHOPPING & SERVICES

**J**ust a few short years ago, grocery shopping in Sofia was an all-day affair of search and find, driving from mini-market to bakery, to butcher, to marketplace. Now a wide variety of choices make our shopping task easier. The following supermarkets are all self-serve and stock a good selection of local as well as western brand name products.

### SUPERMARKETS


**BILLA** - Austrian chain. Appreciated for its fresh bread selections baked in-house. Open 7 days a week. Here you can also find fruits and vegetables, party supplies, kitchenware, and an assortment of magazines, DVDs, toys, etc. Nearest location to school is in Mladost. Also a store on Blvd. Bulgaria, near Boyana, and a new store on Blvd. Cherni Vruh. Large parking lots at both. Cash machines located on outside of storefront. Note: You need a 20 or 50 ct. coin for a cart, no hand-baskets available. Take your own shopping bags or purchase there. Handbags, etc. must be left in a locker.

**BONJOUR** - Smaller sized supermarket has been around many years, with many imported goods from food to children's toys, cosmetics etc. Located downtown on Slaveikov Square and Tsar Kaloyan Street.

**CARREFOUR** - The Mall, 115 Tsarigradsko Shosse. Part of the French International hypermarket chain which sells food and non-food items, including DVD's, camera equipment, garden furniture, cushions, towels, clothes and shoes. Opening Hours 09:00-22:00.

**ELEMAG** - Located in Lozenetz on Zlatovruh Street and in Iztok. This supermarket stocks luxury goods and gourmet items, such as marinated prawns in the deli section. For more information see [www.elemag.bg](http://www.elemag.bg)

**EUROPA** - A local grocery chain. The one nearest to school is off Boulevard Andrei Saharov in Mladost 1, on the way to the covered marketplace. Cash machine outside next to parking lot.




**FANTASTICO** – Various locations in Sofia, the one nearest school is in Mladost IV, next to block #405. There are also 2 newer ones in Dragalevtzi, just off the Ring Road and on Simeonovo Shosse near the Maxi Hotel. Good range of food and non-food items, good meat and cheese counters.

**HIT** – Located on Alexander Malinov street in Mladost 4. German chain is one of Sofia’s most modern supermarkets. There is a large assortment of food and non-food items including a nice variety of Italian, Mexican and Japanese ingredients, such as Camolino rice, tortillas and udon noodles. There is an organic section near the fruit and vegetable section. Open 7 days a week. Inside you will also find a Technomarket, pharmacy, opticians, dry cleaner, bakery, pet shop, toy shop, Jyzk (JYSK is a leader on the European market in all articles for the bedroom, the bathroom, the living room and the patio) and several other shops. There are Cash machines inside. Note: You will need a 20 or 50 ct. coin for a cart, but hand-baskets available. Take your own shopping bags or purchase plastic bags at checkout.

**KAUFLAND** - A German grocery chain in Mladost 3, between Billa and HIT Supermarket. Their motto: Guaranteed good grocery shopping and cheap. **MAKS** - It’s the largest supermarket in the “suburbs”, located in Dragalevtzi on Zahari Zograf, the “upper ring road.” They carry some fresh produce and a modest selection of household articles. Open 24 hours. There is a cafe upstairs with a play area for kids. Plenty of parking.

**METRO CASH AND CARRY** – Head Office, 7th–11th km, Tsarigradsko chausse Blvd. 1784 Sofia, Customer’s Call Center - 0700 100 71. German chain bulk-shopping store. The cheapest place to buy in bulk. Children under 7 are not allowed in (for safety reasons - forklift trucks roam the store stacking shelves). Open seven days a week. You need a membership card which you’ll show the cashier at check-out. You can get a membership through your company or embassy, or just stop in at the desk when you enter the store for a temporary number. The fresh food section is usually well stocked and sometimes you can find fresh herbs (coriander if you’re lucky!). You can buy office supplies, electronics, hardware, appliances, kitchenware, cleaning supplies, toiletries, houseplants, clothing, linens, toys and gardening equipment. They have a fresh fish section and a decent meat locker with Argentinian beef. Good pharmacy and coffee shop (Onda) outside. Cash machine at entrance. Ample and guarded parking. Note: Carts are inside the store and to the right. Bring your own bags or purchase at checkout.



**PICCADILLY** - Varna based supermarket chain with outlets in the basement of City Center Sofia, the Mall of Sofia, Serdika Centre, and on Kozyak Street on the way to the U.S. Embassy. Good fresh vegetables/fruit selection and excellent fish counter.

## **MARKETPLACES**

*Note that markets in Sofia open after 10am, but stay open late in the evening.*

**The Hali** - Located on Maria Luisa Blvd., opposite the Mosque. Beautifully restored and modernized, this is the oldest covered market in Sofia. There's a bit of everything inside. If the pay parking lot is full, an option would be to park across the street at the TZUM pay lot and use the pedestrian underpass to cross the street. (There are some fun jewelry stalls under there!)

**“Rimska Stena”** (Roman Wall) Market - Located on Hristo Smirnenski Street, across from the Architecture School. A charming, smaller sized market, offering a variety of good fruits and vegetables, flowers and knick-knacks. There really are Roman ruins along the back side of the market. Park where you can along the street, and watch out for the trams.

**Sitniyakovo Market** - Located next to the Romanian Embassy on the Shipchenski Prohod Blvd. This open-air market caters to the international crowd and offers the best variety of fruits and vegetables anywhere in Sofia, including radicchio, endive, Napa cabbage, and many exotic fruits. It's also considered the most expensive. Open year round, there are many areas to this market: the newer, covered, produce market, where some of the shopkeepers speak some English; the older, smaller, produce open-air market; and a small shopping area for hard-to-find alcoholic beverages, house wares, flowers, plants and typical pottery.

**“Zhenski Pazar”** (Women's Market) - Located behind Maria Luisa Blvd. across from the Mosque. Sofia's largest and most culturally interesting market, offering mostly local fruits and vegetables. You can find dairy products, ethnic food shops, butchers, bakeries, herbs, flowers, plants, shoes and clothing, hand-made tools, woolen blankets and sweaters and locally made pottery. It is a very busy open-air market, especially crowded on weekends. Parking on the tiny side streets is a challenge, and we would suggest using the pay lots either at the TZUM or the Hali and walking a block.



Other Markets Relatively Near School - In Mladost I, past Europa Supermarket, and in Mladost III, behind Fantastico Supermarket.

## **MALLS AND SHOPPING AREAS**

*Sofia has had 3 new shopping malls open at the start of 2010 alone. Shopping has never been easier in Sofia!*

**City Center Sofia** - Near the Hilton Hotel just off Cherni Vruh Boulevard. Underground parking lots and cash machine. On the ground floor is Piccadilly supermarket. Several good gift shops and fashion shops inside. Also houses a cinema with a good selection of English movies.


**Mall of Sofia** - On the corner of Stamboliiski Boulevard and Opalchenska Street, located over three floors. Mostly clothing and shoes shops (Marlboro, Benneton, Lacoste and Clarks), but also has gift shops, Happy Bar and Grill, a McDonalds and Pizza Hut, and a Picadilly grocery store. This is also where the IMAX theater is located.

**Serdika Centre** - Serdika Center is located on the Sitnyakovo Blvd. It has 210 stores with a commercial space of over 51,000 square meters on three levels. The mall has a golden exterior, something unprecedented for Bulgaria. Significantly, it will not be marketed as a recreation centre, hence the lack of cinemas. There are restaurants, but the main attraction of the mall will be thematic presentations to be conducted at specified intervals. Several brands, including Zara, Peek & Cloppenburg, and Humanic.

**Sofia Outlet Centre** - ([sofiaoutletcenter.bg](http://sofiaoutletcenter.bg)) is located between the city center and the Ring Road on Tsaregradsko Shosse. The Centre is located on an established retail development, next to Technomarket and METRO and opposite the EXPO Center and just 15 min driving distance from the heart of the city. Over 70 worldwide brands including Diesel, Converse, Tommy Hilfiger, Max Mara, Sisley, Triumph and Rollmann are available at large discounts. Opening hours Mon-Sun: 10:00-21:00

**Sky City Mall** - 52 Kosta Lulchev St., Kvartal Suburb, Geo Milev. Over 100 shops, Fantastico supermarket, non-stop entertainment zone.

**The Mall** - The newest and biggest Mall in Sofia on 115 Tsarigradsko Shosse with a total build-up areas of 65000 sq m, with 185 stores, restaurants, recreation centers, bars, cafeterias and parking capacity for more than 2800 vehicles. This is a true shopping experience covering



sporting goods, health and beauty, optics, children's wear, toys, home wares and furniture, electronics and communications, accessories, jewelry, gifts, book, footwear, leatherwear, women's fashion and lingerie, menswear. Stores include Carrefour, Zara, Next, Gap, Peek and Cloppenburg, Benetton, Nike, Mac, Swarovski, Furla, Marks & Spencer clothing, Pre-Natal, Orange. On the top level there is a food court including Nordsee, Happy Sushi, Fancy, Flocafe, Burger King, and Subway. There are also a bowling alley and an Arena Cinema. Opening hours 09:00-22:00. Find out more at [www.themall.bg](http://www.themall.bg).

## **RELATIVELY NEAR SCHOOL**

**Business Park Sofia** - Includes several physician's offices, a dry-cleaner, some nice cafes, hairdresser, florist, an Arena movie theater, small supermarket, Pizza Hut and a Mexican restaurant where you can buy soft tortillas to go. The Holiday Inn hotel is also located here. Please note that shops are only open during the week until 6pm.

**GM City Shopping Center** - Just across the street from Billa in Mladost. Mostly women and children's clothing and shoes, but also gift shops, flower and watch shops. Cash machine on the premises at the Hebros bank outlet.


**Interior City** – Interior City is located at boulevard Cherni Vruh 47 and has two levels – ground floor and basement floor. Interior City is a 'one stop shop' for products relating to interior design. There are about 70 shops inside. The center provides a constant showroom and offers a wide variety of furniture, materials and accessories. There is a supervised play area for children as well as a small coffee shop.

**Princess Outlet Center** – Located on Alexander Malinov street in Mladost 4 behind Hit Supermarket. Clothing, shoes, toys, restaurant, café, bowling alley and arcade.

## **CITY CENTER**

**Alabin Street and around** - Hugo Boss, Estee Lauder, Betty Barclay, quality shops for men's clothes, shoes, Bonjour Supermarket, etc.

**Graf Ignatiev Street** - For sheer variety and quantity of shops. Many good clothing and shoe stores for men, women and kids.



**NDK** - is the National Palace of Culture: concert and exposition hall at the end of Vassil Levski Boulevard, in a park next to Vitosha Boulevard. Under NDK (take one of the stairs in from one of the buildings at the side of Vitosha Boulevard a nice fountain is hidden, but also a small shopping mall with dozens of shops: small boutiques carrying some original (and less original) items. If you descend the stairs that lead you even further under the ground you end up in a kind of clothing market with small booths. The neon lights and the absolute lack of any form of decoration give you the feeling of walking around in another era.

**Pirotska Street** - Pedestrian street across from TZUM where you'll find small shops for clothes, shoes, jewelry, Indian imported goods, books, electronics, household, fabrics, etc. The nicest thing about this street is the absence of cars!

**Sala Universiada** - In Geo Milev district, on the corner of Blvd. Shipchenski Prohod and Alexander Zhendov, just up the road from Sitniyakovo Market-lots of small shops for clothes, shoes etc. are situated around an interior exposition hall.

**Shishman Street** - Behind the Radisson Hotel, many small, unique gift shops.

**Sveta Petka Underpass** - An assortment of shops located in the pedestrian underground walk between the Sheraton and TZUM. You can visit the ancient ruins of the Sveta Petka church, or hop on the metro from down here.

**TZUM** - (Tzentralen Universalen Magazin) Sofia's first shopping mall, located beside the Sheraton Hotel, with exclusive stores for clothes, shoes, toys, sports equipment, electronics, jewelry, furniture, kitchenware, gifts and souvenirs. Home to a very nice cafe on the second floor and one of the locations of The Spaghetti Company. Convenient guarded pay parking lot in front of building. With the recent addition of the The Mall and the Serdika Centre some of the shops are now empty.

**Vitosha Blvd** - Sofia's main shopping street, with exclusive and designer shops for clothes, shoes, jewelry, cosmetics (including Clinique) and just about anything else. Also check out all the small side streets where you can find good shops.

## LOOKING FOR SOMETHING SPECIFIC?

*The availability of goods improves dramatically all the time in Sofia. We include a few items below, which might be less easy to find at first. We do welcome your feedback: what can't you find here? Have you made a great discovery you'd like to share or have you any tips to pass on to newcomers?*

### ART SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

**The Union of Bulgarian Artists Building** - 6 Shipka Street. On the ground floor of this building is a mall, with shops offering a good selection of high quality, professional artist supplies, framing services and galleries.

**Office One Superstore** - Several locations relatively near the school including one on Tsarigradsko Shosse with a focus on office furniture, a smaller outlet in Mladost just past Patilantsi, a small store in Dragalevci and a larger outlet in Lozenetz on James Boucher Street. Here they have a nice selection of luxury pens and watches.

**Interior Design and Consulting Services** - Furniture placement and art arrangement, color advice, assistance with remodels or new plans, call Mariangela for references and rates at 0899 101 970 or email: amariange@yahoo.fr

### BAKERY

JoVan The Dutch Baker


Address: 37 Angel Kunchev Str, Sofia

Tel: 985 30 65

Opening Hours: Mon-Sat 07.30-20.00, Sun 07.30-15.00

### BICYCLES

**Bikes Center** – Mladost 1 Block 1a, Tel: 028 878119. Selling good quality and affordable bikes. The proprietor speaks English and is very helpful. This is the nearest shop to the school. Other locations are at Givko Nikolov str. 41 (02 944 1558), Raiko Alexiev Str. 3 (02 871 8077), and Bogatitza Str. 20 (087 906 2660), which is a quick walk from the U. S. Embassy in Lozenetz.



**Velomania** - Dimitar Nestorov Street, block 120, entr.V, apt.74. 812-7060. Very helpful personnel, good attitude. Bikes of all sizes and price ranges. They do repairs also. New shop is on 10 Ekzarh Joseph Str.  
Email: [info@velomania-bg.com](mailto:info@velomania-bg.com) for more information.

## **BOOKS**

*You can find a small selection of foreign language books in Sofia, mainly English but some French, German and Spanish, for example at the following bookstores. Also the British Council library (at 7 Krakra St, tel 942 43 44, [www.britishcouncil.org/Bulgaria](http://www.britishcouncil.org/Bulgaria)) is well stocked and for a 40 leva yearly subscription, you can borrow books, magazines, CDs and videos. Their magazine and periodical section is good and there is a small range of kids' books. The PTO sells books several times a year as well.*

**Allianz Bookshop** - 6 Shipka Street. Entering the cafe area of the Union of Bulgarian Artists, this shop on your left offers a good selection of books, novels, travel guides, and gift books in English.

**Book Centre** - 67 Patriarch Evtimii Blvd., near the British Residence, carries a large selection of books in English and German.

**Booktrading Ltd.** - 15a Graf Ignatiev (near Slaveikov Square). Adult and children's fiction and non-fiction in English, plus some children's craft kits and jigsaws, birthday cards and stationery. Tel: 981 04 48

**Knigomania** – 28 Vassil Levski Blvd., (just up toward NDK from the British Residence), has English fiction and kids' books, plus Lonely Planet and Rough Guides and other travel guides. Also, 17 Praga Boulevard, City Center Sofia, Serdika Mall, 22 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd, the Mall of Sofia.  
[www.knigomania.bg](http://www.knigomania.bg)

**Orange** - 18 Graf Ignatiev. (Sofia's answer to a Virgin Megastore) On 4 floors, with stationery, a range of books in English, toys, music and a cafe. There is also a store located in The Mall and in Business Park Sofia.

**Publik** – In the Mall, large selection of English titles.

**Sofia Book Market** - On Slaveikov Square, outdoor tables selling all types of books and software.

## CURTAIN SHOP

**Mari and Stefany Textile Design Ltd** - Lozenets, ul. Galichitsa "37, Tel: 02 868 4328, ([www.maristefany.com](http://www.maristefany.com)).

## ELECTRONICS, AUDIO/VIDEO, HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

**Metro** – Relatively near school on km 7-11 Tsarigradsko Shosse, or on the other side of town, on 182 Evropa Blvd.

**Technopolis** - In the Business Park Sofia, relatively near AAS, also in the malls around Sofia.

**Techno Market** - A new, multi-level superstore with two locations: One on Evropa Blvd, near Metro on the west side of town, and one next to Metro just off Tsarigradsko Shosse, on the east side.

## FABRICS

*Shops are numerous and tend to change location frequently, but they're usually concentrated on the following streets:*

**Alabin Street** - near Vitosha Blvd. crossing.

**Coats Bulgaria** – 1784 Sofia, Tsarigradsko Shosse Blvd, 7th km ([www.coatsbulgaria.bg](http://www.coatsbulgaria.bg)). Cotton fabric and a wide assortment of knitting yarns and embroidery thread. Ph: 02 976 7772

**Ekzarh Josif and Pirotska Streets** - on either side of the Synagogue.

## FLOWERS

**Flora Comers** - imports synthetic flowers, dry flowers, glass, ceramic souvenirs, accessories for weddings, candles, gifts. The firm has its own studio for decorating hotels, restaurants, offices, private homes and parties. Contact them at the following numbers: 951-6963 (store) 953-1682, 953-2623 (office), 0889-524-534, e-mail: [floracom@mbox.contact.bg](mailto:floracom@mbox.contact.bg).

## FURNITURE

**AIKO** – On the Ring Road just before the Cherni Vrah roundabout, between Cherni Vrah and Simeonovsko Shosse. Very similar to IKEA, full of goods and decor for every area of the house. Facade of the building is deceptively small! Go inside to find 3 floors of furniture, linens, dishes, baskets, pots & pans, toys, infant furniture, and probably everything you're looking for. [www.aiko-bg.com](http://www.aiko-bg.com)

**Stil Décor** - The furniture available through Stil Décor/Mebex (18 Simeonovsko Chaussee, Sofia) is on an eight-week lead time but is well worth the wait. Made in Bulgaria, from solid wood, mainly for export to countries such as the UK, prices are reasonable and the Sofia showroom is like a treasure trove of accessories and decorative objects. Great for the retro or oriental look. ([www.furnishing.mebex.bg](http://www.furnishing.mebex.bg))

## GOURMET PRODUCTS / IMPORTED FOODS

**Andy's Foods** - Created by Andrew Sowray, a Brit who has been living and working in Bulgaria for 10 years or so. He provides some of those comfort foods that are hard to find living in Bulgaria. The address is 30A Galichitsa Street in the Lozenetz district. Check out the website [www.banskoo.co.uk/vendors/andys-foods](http://www.banskoo.co.uk/vendors/andys-foods).

**Don Des Dieux (also known as The President Shop)** - 17 Cherni Vruh Blvd and larger store on Bulgaria Boulevard heading towards Boyana on the right hand side just past Billa and the intersection. Offers a wide selection of imported cheese, fresh baguettes and cut meats. They will make you a tasty baguette sandwich to take away. Tel: 866 2004 or fax 963 2026.

**Real Food** – Ararat Street 4, entrance 2, apartment 4. Tel: +359 884 69 3638, ([www.realfood.bg](http://www.realfood.bg)). A new company on the Bulgarian market producing the finest cheese made by original Italian recipes. Their dairy factory located in Karnobat has long traditions in manufacturing cheese. They import their veal meat from Italy and sell and supply their products to restaurants and costumers.

## HARDWARE AND HOUSEWARE

**Como** - Sofia, Mladost IV Q. 267, Okolovrasten pat Str, Tel: 02 976 7070, ([www.como.bg](http://www.como.bg)). Furniture is on the upper floor and household goods, lighting, bed linen, office furniture and selection of rugs is on the ground floor. Jysk – In Hit shopping center, Mladost, Tel: 02 886 9705, ([www.jysk.bg](http://www.jysk.bg)). Garden furniture, office furniture, as well as practical furniture for the living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom. In JYSK you will also find various textile products to add emphasis in your home as well as a good range of towels and bed linen. This is also one of the only places in Sofia from which to purchase a trampoline.


**METRO CASH AND CARRY** – Head Office, 7th–11th km, Tsarigradsko chausse Blvd. 1784 Sofia, Customer’s Call Center - 0700 100 71. You can buy office supplies, electronics, hardware, appliances, kitchenware, cleaning supplies, toiletries, houseplants, clothing, linens, toys and gardening equipment.

**Mr. Bricolage** - Tsarigradsko Shosse on school side of town, or Evropa Blvd. on the Lyulin side. Follow the signs on the motorway. The first chain to open in Bulgaria for do-it-yourself home repair. Also offers some art supplies, plants, garden furniture, lighting, quality house paint, and playground sand. Ample parking and cash machine outside store. Use a coin to unlock the carts parked outside, or hand baskets available inside. They accept credit cards.

**Praktiker** – Tsarigradsko Shosse on the left side as you head out of town, past Metro. The largest and newest do-it-yourself mega store, well-stocked with everything you would expect to find in this type of store. Easy off and on the highway with large parking lot. ([www.praktiker.bg](http://www.praktiker.bg))

## HEALTH FOOD STORES

**Balev Bio Market** – Directly across from Carrefour inside The Mall. Small but well stocked health food store with fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, breads, jams, vitamins, and interestingly, sushi ingredients. Worth exploring. [www.balevbiomarket.bg](http://www.balevbiomarket.bg), Tel. 02 439 5470.



**Biomag** – Square Journalist № 1, Lozenets, Sofia, Tel: 088 6601152, Skype: bio.mag, ([www.biomag.bg](http://www.biomag.bg)). In Biomagia you will find almost all organic products which are available in Bulgaria, plus many exclusive organic products that are purchased for their stores. (Food section of stores covering all major categories. Already very few products that do not offer an organic version).

**Sluntse Luna (Sun and Moon)** – 48 Parchevich St. (corner with Hristo Belchev), Tel: 0878 878 342 ([www.bioslunceluna.com](http://www.bioslunceluna.com)). Bio and vegetarian shop. Open daily till 9pm. You can order products from the website.

## MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

**Kamerton** - 3 Rusalka Street, Tel: 946 1725. For purchase or rental, a wide price range, starting at 500 leva upward. Piano Tuner - Mr. Zlatin Georgiev works all day at the academy of music, but can be reached in the evenings after 9:00pm. Ph: 856 7664. Speaks English. Can also help you choose a piano to buy or rent.

**Musical Store** - “Faktor” Ph: 946-30-57

## SOUVENIRS AND GIFTS

**Fanita Gallery** – 3. August 11th Str Tel: 0888 821599  
Painting, icons, antique pottery, replicas, hand-made unique jewelry.


**Flea Market at Alexander Nevski Cathedral** - Icons, antiques, jewelry, Russian hand-painted boxes, and lots of cool junk too. Very fun outdoor browsing!

**Museum Shop at the Ethnographic Museum** - Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd., located in the former Royal Palace. Great place for silver filigree work.

**National Gallery for Foreign Art** - Next to Alexander Nevski Cathedral.

## SPICES

**The Spice Shop** - 9 Tzar Ivan Assen II Street, the entrance is on Victor Hugo street, it's the one with the flowery yellow front. This small shop



stocks a limited selection of spices, wine and other gourmet products. Opening Hours Mon-Sat, 10:00-20:00 Tel: 0899 996 685.

## **SPORTS EQUIPMENT**

**Miras** - 47 Cherni Vruh. Stocks the following brands: Head, Tyrolia, Penn, Arena, Speedo, Converse and Trespass. Tel:962 71 98, [www.miras-sport.com](http://www.miras-sport.com)

**Rossignol** - 66 Cherni Vruh and in TZUM. Stocks brands such as Dunlop, Slazenger, O'Brien water-ski, Diana adults' swimsuits and lecoq sportif sportswear, cebe sun and ski goggles. Useful for kids' swim hats! [www.rossignol.com](http://www.rossignol.com)

**Speedo** - On Cherni Vruh. Offers a fairly wide selection of swim suits for adults and children, swim gear and sport clothes. Expensive, but top quality. [www.speedoswimming.com](http://www.speedoswimming.com)

**Viva Sport** - Located on the corner of 121 Evlogi Georgiev. 02 846-5439. [www.viva-sport.com](http://www.viva-sport.com). Tennis equipment, including kids' racquets and sports clothing by Arena and Wilson.


## **TAILOR**

General Parensov 21. The shop is located in the alley (side street) next to the pink house, No. 21. As you enter the alley it is on the right-hand side with a green door.

## **TOYS**

*You can find toys all over, but these are some of our favorite shops:*

**Jumbo** - 51 Boulevard Bulgaria, Sofia. On the ground floor you will find everything from stuffed toys and dolls to construction sets, puzzles, purses, make-up cases, hair-pins, bags, scarves, flip-flops and umbrellas. The lower floor is much bigger. Here you'll find everything from cosmetics to bathroom items to baby care items from clothing to strollers. You'll also find household items - towels, tubs, candles, photo frames as well as bikes, swimwear and kids clothing and footwear. There is also plenty of stationery, notebooks, pens, pencils, bags, and backpacks on offer. Opening Hours: Mon-Sat 10:00-21:00, Sun 10:00-20:00.



**Komset** -76 Todor Kableshev, off Bulgaria Blvd, just past the entrance to Billa on the right hand side of the street. Tel.: 958 9917. Large assortment of children's toys for all ages and all different price ranges. There is also a newer store in The Mall.

**Simba Warehouse** - Akad. Boris Stefanov, opposite the Winter Palace skating rink in Studentski Grad. (Look for the elephant sign - there's a parking lot off the road.) German brand, cheapest prices for Simba toys in Sofia. Open 11-4, Mon-Fri. Good for Barbie-lookalike and other dolls, wooden toys.

**Hippoland** – Inside the shopping center where HIT and JYSK are in Mladost. Very well stocked with toys, arts & crafts supplies, baby needs (including shoes), and strollers and car seats.

## WINE

**Casavino** – 91 Alexander Malinov Blvd, Mladost 4 District, 1715 Sofia, Phone: 02-9755046, order directly with FREE delivery. Opening Hours – Mon-Sun 09:0-22:00 ([www.casavino.bg](http://www.casavino.bg)) Free customer parking at the front of the store. There is also a new location on Kozyak Str. next to Piccadilly grocery market, just down from the U.S. Embassy.

**Eddardo Miroglio Winery** – [www.emiroglio-wine.com](http://www.emiroglio-wine.com) Ph: 02 969 3110

**La Cave** – Lozenetz, 59 Dimitar Hadjikitzev, Mobile: 0888 356 213  
e-mail: [lacave\\_bg@yahoo.fr](mailto:lacave_bg@yahoo.fr). Offering wine imported directly from France.

**Vinopolis** – 8 Bacho Kiro Str. Te: 02 987 7796 One of Sofia's premier wine and spirit shops. Priding themselves on the widest variety of wines from all over the world (more than 1200 choices).

## SERVICES

*The following are some of the services you may find useful.*

### AUTO SERVICE AND REPAIR

*Keep in mind that most new car dealerships in Sofia have service centers. For instance, Generous Auto on Bulgaria Blvd. services Opels; there is a Nissan dealership on Vaptsarov Blvd.; and a Ford Dealership on Mladost on Alexander Malinov Blvd.*

**AUTO FORMULA AUTO SERVICE CENTER** - Mechanic Georgi Vasilev may not be proficient in English, but he is worth the effort of finding someone to translate. Business Center Vasilev (former Refrigerator Factory); #11 Industrialna Str. Cell: 0888 702 434 or 0886 125 310. Email is [gogi\\_vektra.bg@abv.bg](mailto:gogi_vektra.bg@abv.bg).

**Dibora Car Service** – 429 Philip Coutev, next to the new Billa on Cherni Vrah.

**DN Auto Service** - Great place to go for your car service needs. Kaloyan speaks excellent English and offers fantastic customer service. DN is located on the same street as the Arena Theater in Mladost, just a block past it to the left. Their phone number is 02 80 99 717 and web address is [www.dn-bg.com](http://www.dn-bg.com).

## **CARWASH**

**Fresh** – Local chain of car washes. There are several around town, but one is located on Blvd. Cherni Vrah just across from Billa; another is on the lowest level of the parking garage at The Mall (Carrefour). They will wash while you shop and they do a great job!

**Frukt Mashin** - Simeonovsko shose Blvd 7, Tel: 02 962 1983

**Veselie** - Cherni vrah Blvd 59, Tel: 02 962 7135


**Enigma** - Ovcha Kupel, ul. Dragoman 1, Tel: 089 790 3535

## **DRY CLEANERS**

**5aSec** - This French dry cleaning chain is the world's leading retailer in textile care and treatment and is based at the following locations: Mladost 4 District, supermarket Fantastiko, bl. 405; and 63 Sevastokrator Kaloyan str., Boyana District, next to the supermarket Nova Familia.

## **IMMIGRATION SERVICES**

Pirgroup Bulgaria, Partners in Relocation Group – 30 Boris Rangelov Street, 1000 Sofia, Tel: +359 885 619 990, [info@pirgroup.com](mailto:info@pirgroup.com) ([www.pirgroup.bg](http://www.pirgroup.bg) / [www.pirgroup.com](http://www.pirgroup.com)). Can organize business visas, work



permits, resident permits, local registration, renewal permits, and legalization of documents. For full range of services check out the website.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Multimaistor.BG** – The MALL, Tsarigradsko Shosse 115, across from the main entrance of Carrefore. Telephone: 889 942 577.

E-mail: [office@multimaistor.bg](mailto:office@multimaistor.bg). For shoe repair, key cutting, watch repairs and battery replacement, tailoring, and engraving services.

## NANNY SERVICE

**Bavachka112** - 112, Oborishte Str. Sofia , Tel: 088 503 3116 / 088 888 8112 ([www.bavachka112.bg](http://www.bavachka112.bg) / [www.nanny112.bg](http://www.nanny112.bg)). A team of professional nannies, Bavachka112 is the team of TinaYou - Desk nannies and maids who help families to meet the right person with whom to entrust the care of their children. Perfect for when you need a part-time babysitter to go to the movies, dinner, meet friends, or for those days when you have unexpected delays in the office.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

**Blaga Dimitrova, Freelance Photographer** - Sofia, 257 Tzar Boriss III, Ent B, App 4, floor 1, Tel: +359 889 033039, [info@lushlife.eu](mailto:info@lushlife.eu), [www.lushlife.eu](http://www.lushlife.eu). Private Photography lessons, fluent English.

**IONU Photos** - Andy Lang has had a close working relationship with the Anglo-American School for the past 8 years. He has a traveling photo studio that can come to your home for family portraits, or he can capture unique environmental images by taking the family outside to interesting locations. He has covered weddings and special events with both still images and video and he looks forward to assisting you with your photography needs. His contact information is: Website: [www.ionuphotos.com](http://www.ionuphotos.com) Email: [andy@ionuphotos.com](mailto:andy@ionuphotos.com) Mobile: 0887 852 679

**Yassen Nemsky Professional Photography** – Tel: 089 822 4942 ([www.artvision-studio.com](http://www.artvision-studio.com)). Production of videos and photographs for a variety of events.

## POSTAL SERVICES

Post Offices (poshta) are open 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm on Saturday. Post offices have separate counters for buying stamps (marki), sending letters (pisma) and dispatching parcels (koleti), so check that you are in the correct queue. Post boxes are bright yellow in color and hard to miss. Postage stamps can also be bought at most shops that sell postcards. By standard post, letters and postcards sent to destinations in Europe take about seven days to arrive. Post to North America takes about two weeks. For quicker delivery used the express service of airmail.

## RELOCATION SERVICES

**Allied Pickfords** - Building 12, Business Park Sofia, Sofia 1766, Bulgaria  
Tel: +359 2 807 6688; Fax: +359 2 807 6689, [movers@allied.bg](mailto:movers@allied.bg);  
[www.allied.bg](http://www.allied.bg)

**Corstjens Movers Group** – 59 Kostenski vodopad, apt. 15A, Sofia 1404,  
Tel: +359 2 958 9721; Fax: +359 2 858 48 29; [info.sofia@corstjens.com](mailto:info.sofia@corstjens.com);  
[www.corstjens.com](http://www.corstjens.com)

## RESTAURANTS

**T**he restaurants listed below have a good reputation among our community for being friendly. The majority of restaurants in Sofia are suitable for children. This list needs constant updating; therefore we welcome your comments and suggestions.


### RESTAURANTS & CAFES

**2030 Brasserie** - 25 Vaptsarov Boulevard, Lozenets, Sofia 1407  
Tel: 02 868 3491, ([www.2030brasserie.com](http://www.2030brasserie.com)). There is a wide selection of dishes on the menu that cater for all tastes. Events and meetings may be catered for and takeaways may be arranged. The regularly updated wine list includes the best from the old world, the new world and many fine Bulgarian wines. Bread and cakes are baked daily and the recently redecorated downstairs private room is an ideal venue for meetings or dinners. For those of you in the US Embassy community, this restaurant is a quick 10-minute walk from the Chancery.

**Annette** - 27 Angel Kunchev Street, Tel: 02 980 4098, ([www.annette.bg](http://www.annette.bg))  
Here you can relax on the soft pillows, and savour masterfully prepared authentic Moroccan cuisine. Try the specialties of a mysterious land in the company of select wines from around the world.

**Captain Cook** -100 James Bouchier Blvd, Kempinski Hotel. Tel: 02 961 5886 ([www.captaincook.bg](http://www.captaincook.bg)). In Captain Cook you will enjoy the best seafood specialties that can be found in Bulgaria. The seafood restaurant offers more than 50 types of fish. The friendly staff will welcome you with a smile and will provide highly professional service for you. Sushi has recently been added to the menu.

**Chepishhev Hotel-Restaurant** - 27 Ivanitza Danchev Sr Boyana quarter, Sofia 1616, Tel: 02 959 1010 ([www.chepishev.com](http://www.chepishev.com)). Served up by attentive staff, the Bulgarian and modern European dishes are prepared to high standards. There is an impressive list of international wines, although it is the huge selection of whiskies that really make this place famous.



**Chef's** - Passarelsko Ezero, Chaussée Samokovsko, Tel:+359 896 723222 ([www.chefs-bg.com](http://www.chefs-bg.com)). 17km away from Sofia in the heart of the Plan Mountain you can find Chef's. On the road to Borovetz overlooking the Pasarel Lake, Chef's is the perfect place to escape from the city and chill out. International cuisine.

**Flocafe Lounge Bar & Restaurant** – 3 Sveta Nedelya Sq, Tel 02 950 6645 ([www.flocafe.com](http://www.flocafe.com)). Lively and trendy with a café at the front and a restaurant at the back. The restaurant gets busy at lunchtime. Nice variety on menu at reasonable prices. There is also Flocafe at The Mall.

**Holy Land** - The recently re-opened restaurant on Vitosha Street offers an Israeli cuisine, and in its earlier version was a Lebanese restaurant.

**Jasmin Hotel and Restaurant** - 126 Simeonovsko Shosse. Tel: 02 969 8555, ([www.jasminhotel.com](http://www.jasminhotel.com)). Extensive menu, fresh ingredients, friendly service, elegant but relaxed, lovely poolside seating during warmer months.


**K.E.B.A.** - 114 G.S. Rakovski, 1000 Sofia +359 877 31 32 33 Sofia's new social spot, with a mix of food, drinks, art, theatre and music. Simple but delicious Bulgarian dishes on the menu, regularly changing exhibitions and events, and a lovely courtyard terrace just off busy Rakovski Street.

**Kumbare** – 14 Saborna Street, Tel: 02 981 1794, ([www.kumbare.com](http://www.kumbare.com)). The restaurant has ample seating and a summer garden. If you like sea food, Greek meals and Greek music, you should definitely try Kumbare.

**La Maison du Gourmet** - 3A Matochina St. Dragalevci, Tel: 02 976 3247 (0885 004849 - daytime number for reservations) [www.restaurant-mg.com](http://www.restaurant-mg.com) Work time: evening: 18.30-22.30h from Tuesday to Saturday. Authentic French cuisine in an intimate setting. The fois gras is excellent, as is the service and attention to detail.

**La Pastaria** - Lozenets, Bigla Str. 56, Tel: 02 962 327 5089 / 550 0606 ([www.lapastaria.net](http://www.lapastaria.net)). Italian restaurant La Pastaria has the atmosphere and comfort of a typical trattoria. The restaurant has a garden area where you can escape from the noisy urban environment. In La Pastaria you can enjoy delicious food, good Italian music, as well as excellent service.

**Lebed** - 83 Samokovsko Shosse, in Pancharevo. Tel: 02 992-3045, ([www.restaurantlebed.com](http://www.restaurantlebed.com)). Situated on the shore of the Pancherevo lake, just a few minutes past the turn-off to AAS. The attractive restaurant has



two halls and a garden. The view to the lake makes the garden a great place for relaxation in the summer season.

**L'Etranger** – Tsar Simeon 78, Tel: 02 983 1417. Located in an anonymous side street just off bustling boulevard Maria Luiza, this intimate, family-run French bistro is worth seeking out. Whether you're here for a quick lunch or a multi-course meal, the food is excellent, authentic and not so expensive. Delicious desserts and a carefully chosen list of French wines add to the experience.

**Memento** - 32 Bul. Vitosha, 1000 Sofia, +359 2 980 06 05; 106 G.S. Rakovski, 1000 Sofia, +359 882 422 928. Open all day, Memento is the perfect place for your early morning coffee and paper, afternoon tea with friends, or a glass of wine after work. Memento serves the finest selection of coffees and teas, as well as wines, aperitivo and cocktails, in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

**Olives** - 75 Vasil Levski Blvd, Tel: +359 885 654 837 / 0885olivesSofia, 12, Graf Ignatiev Sreet, Tel: +359 2 986 09 02 / 0894 Olives American-style restaurant offering Bulgarian, American and Italian cuisine.


**Pacific** – Nikola Vaptzarov Blvd, across the highway from the Maleeva Tennis Club and the old amusement park. Authentic, delicious Asian cuisine from China, Japan, Korea, India, Indonesia, and Thailand.

**Perla** – On the “upper ring road” between Dragalevtsi and Simeonovo. Tel: 02 967 4010, ([www.hotel-restaurant-perla.com](http://www.hotel-restaurant-perla.com)). Kid friendly with a small playground, good food, large portions, guarded parking, outdoor eating area that is used even during the cooler months by means of large outdoor gas heaters.

**Pod Lipite** - 1 Elin Pelin str., Tel: 02 866 5053, ([www.podlipitebg.com](http://www.podlipitebg.com)). Traditional Bulgarian menu in a beautiful setting ‘Under the Lime-trees’.

**Sage Bistro** – 63 Stefan Stambolov, Bistritsa, Tel: 02 992 7140, ([www.sage.bg](http://www.sage.bg)). The combination of great food and vibrant atmosphere makes Sage Bistro a very popular venue. The menu features traditional and Italian favorites combined with the freshest available products.

**Sasa** – 31 Cherni Vrah Blvd, Tel: 02/ 963 5414 ([www.sasa-bg.com](http://www.sasa-bg.com)). Located on the 18th floor of the Hemus Hotel, Sasa is part of the Captain Cook's Group restaurant chain. Here you can try one-of-a-kind meals, each with unique and memorable taste. Miso-Carrot Bavarios, Moriawase



Tempura, Honetsuki Buta, Lobster Pirikara-Yaki and Kamo Goma Yaki are only part of the treats included in the rich menu of this restaurant. The fish and sushi specialties typical for the Japanese cuisine are well represented on SASA menu list.

**Seasons - Hilton Hotel** - 1 Bulgaria Blvd, Tel: 02 933 5062, ([www.hilton.bg](http://www.hilton.bg)). A lovely place for an elegant Sunday brunch. Kids run upstairs for supervised crafts, games and their own kid's buffet while parents luxuriate in the peaceful dining room. Live, but quiet music.

**Taj Mahal** - 11, 11th of August Street, Tel: 02 987 3632. ([www.tajmahal.bg](http://www.tajmahal.bg)) This 3 floor restaurant near the National Opera offers flavorful and aromatic meals typical of traditional Indian cuisine. Home delivery available.


**Tazka Restaurant** - 48 Makedonia Blvd, Ruski Pametnik, Tel: 02 951 5429 / 088 930 1691. Arabic/Lebanese cuisine. Live music and belly dancing pulls in the crowds at weekends, so be sure to book ahead. Sundays are child-friendly.

**The Olive Garden** - 18 Angel Kunchev Street, Sofia, Tel: 02 4811214  
Open: Mon-Sun 11am to midnight. Opened in April 2010, the menu is best described as Mediterranean-fusion. Great location and great service. Outdoor dining during summer months.

**The Red House Center for Culture and Debate** – 15 Ljuben Karavelov Str., Sofia. Telephone: 02 988 8188. Center for culture, bed & breakfast, and restaurant. E-mail: [info@redhouse-sofia.org](mailto:info@redhouse-sofia.org); [www.redhouse-sofia.org](http://www.redhouse-sofia.org).

**Uno Enoteca** – 45 Bul Vasil Levski, Tel: 02 981 4372 ([www.uno-sofia.com](http://www.uno-sofia.com)) Modern European cuisine with a strong Mediterranean flavor, backed up by a wide-ranging list of wines from both Bulgaria and abroad. Combining exceptional standards of service with old-fashioned elegance, this is one of the best places in the city for formal, special-occasion dining. Outdoor garden area under canopy during the summer months.

**Vodenitsata** – Dragalevtzi, next to ski lift station. Tel: 02 967 1058. ([www.vodenitzata.com](http://www.vodenitzata.com)). Good to visit with kids, as you can walk in the woods nearby or take the chairlift up Vitosha or visit the nearby Dragalevtzi Monastery. Big on traditional décor with stuffed animals, a working watermill and fish swimming in the watercourse. The dancing is top-notch, and the summer folk program includes dancing on coals, after dark!



**Yamas Greek Restaurant** – Sofia, 15 Doiran Str, Tel: 0898 228980 ([www.yamas.bg](http://www.yamas.bg)). Greek music and Mediterranean cuisine. The variety of starters, salads and dishes on the menu will live up to the expectations of even the most demanding of customers.

## PUB GRUB

**Bitburger Club** – 20 Stefan Karadja St, Tel: 02 981 9665, ([www.bitburgerclub.com](http://www.bitburgerclub.com)). Renovated in summer 2009, Bitburger Club is the only place where beer fans can enjoy the great taste of Germany’s finest beers. Interior design is inspired by combining the best of classic and modern German beer-houses. Offering fine dining, fun-filled atmosphere of live music and dancing, one of a kind cocktail and beer bar, and exceptional service.

**Flannagans** – Radisson SAS Hotel, 4 Narodno Sabranie Sq, Tel: 02 933 4334. Popular meeting point for locals and ex-pats throughout the week and for Sunday brunch.

**J.J.Murphy’s** – 7 Karnigradska Street, Tel: 02 980 2870, ([www.jjmurphys.com](http://www.jjmurphys.com)). One of the city’s leading Irish pubs has live music at weekends and real imported Irish food items. It’s a popular meeting point for sporting occasions. They have a nice beer garden at the back.

**Riverside Brewery** – Vitosha, Sofia (just above Dragalevtzi village), Tel: 02 9671001, ([www.riversidebg.com](http://www.riversidebg.com)). With a traditional Bulgarian menu and reasonable prices, this eatery offers both indoor and outdoor dining.

**Rosie O’Gradys Bar** – 26 Angel Kunchev St. Recently opened in 2010. Traditional Irish pub grub including Irish stew and Shepherds Pie and what has been billed as ‘the best burgers in Sofia’.

## FOOD ‘ON THE GO’

**BG Menu** – ([www.bgmenu.com](http://www.bgmenu.com)). Tel: 0700 10 400, Skype: BGMENU, email: [bgmenu@rrdelivery.info](mailto:bgmenu@rrdelivery.info). Food and Beverage delivery service direct to your home or office. Traditional, exotic and healthy cuisine from over 40 top restaurants in Sofia.



**Burger King** – CCS Mall, The Mall, Arena Complex Mladost.

**Dunkin' Donuts** - 25 Vitosha Blvd. / 45 Maria Luiza Blvd. / 2A Patriarch Evtimii Blvd. / Across from the Kempinski Hotel / Next to Metro on Evropa Blvd., and inside the Mladost Arena Theater.

**Happy Bar and Grill** - Opposite the Sheraton Hotel, and in Mladost III relatively near the school, opposite McDonald's. Also one in the Mall of Sofia and on Kozyak Street just down from the U. S. Embassy.

**Kentucky Fried Chicken** - 2A Angel Kunchev Street / 28 Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd. / 172 Slivnitsa Blvd., among others. The nearest one to the school is in the Arena Cinema Complex, Mladost. If you work downtown you can have a bucket delivered to your office right before you head home, just call: 933-9999, Mon. - Sat. 10am - 1:30am, Sundays 11am - 1:30am. Delivery arrives within 30 minutes and costs 2.20 leva.

**McDonald's** – Many locations in Sofia, such as 69 William Gladstone Street / Bulgaria Blvd.; behind NDK; Tsarigradsko Shosse (1 on either side of the road from each other; 1 Evropa Blvd.; 23 Maria Luisa Blvd., among others. There is also a city map available that shows where all the locations are, which is actually an excellent navigation tool.


**OMV Restaurants** - At every OMV filling station you'll find a restaurant offering quick lunches; fresh baked savory pastries, chicken skewers, french fries, etc. Plus a playground for little kids.

**Onda Coffee** - Onda Coffee Break prides themselves with being the first coffee shop chain in Bulgaria. They started business in the early 1990's and today you find about 11 cafes in Sofia. They offer a wide variety of snacks, cakes and muffins at reasonable prices. Everything has to be ordered and paid at the counter.

**O'Nice Bagel & Juice Bar** – Sportrax, Andrey Sakharov Blvd 20A, Mladost 1, 1784 Sofia, Tel: 02 976 8407 ([www.onice.bg](http://www.onice.bg)). Enjoy bagels, freshly squeezed juice, colorful smoothies, 20 types of tea and much more.

**Pizza Hut** – Located in Sofia Business Park (near the school) and also at the Mall of Sofia on Stamboliski Boulevard.

**Pizza Victoria** - Many locations: 4 Hristina Morfova Street, Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd. at the Military Club (24 hrs) 986-32-00/ Mladost



IV in the Arena Complex. Cheap, fast, friendly and pretty good pizza too. They deliver! Delivery tel: 911-00 ([www.pizza-victoria.com](http://www.pizza-victoria.com))

**Spaghetti Company** – Italian/International. Located inside TZUM at ground level and also at the Boulevard Mall Shopping Centre in Mladost on the top level. Ph: 02 926 0427 ([www.spaghetti-company.com](http://www.spaghetti-company.com))

**Starbucks** – First couple opened 2009 in the very centre of Sofia, at 62 General Yossif Gurko Street, right on the corner with Vassil Levski Boulevard. You can also now enjoy the unique Starbucks experience in the Mall on Tsaregradso Shosse.

**Subway** – American sandwich chain offering a variety of sandwiches and baguettes. Several locations around Sofia, mainly inside the new malls.

## HEALTH FOOD

**Cru** – 45 Tsar Assen St, Tel: 088 920 0948, ([www.crugreenfood.com](http://www.crugreenfood.com)). The focus is fresh and healthy but not necessarily vegetarian. The small restaurant has a down to earth chicness about it. Adventurous cuisine and a completely smoke free atmosphere.

**Kibea Health Food Restaurant** – 2A Dr. Valkovich Str., Tel: 02 980 30677, ([www.kibea.net](http://www.kibea.net)). Kibea offers a refreshingly different menu of mostly vegetarian and vegan dishes such as barley risotto with squash, although a limited choice of chicken and fish dishes are sometimes available, too. There is a bookshop downstairs.

**Kring Vegetarian Health Food Restaurant** – 72 Tzar Simeon Str. Tel: 02 983 43333 / 0878 577, ([www.kring.bg](http://www.kring.bg)). Health food restaurant with carefully selected recipes from all over the world. The restaurant operates a policy of no smoking and serves alcohol free drinks only.

**Sun Moon** - W. Gladston st. 18b (corner of Kniaz Boris), Tel: 0895 64 8477 ([www.sunmoon.bg](http://www.sunmoon.bg)). Vegetarian restaurant & bakery.

**B**elow we list locations and activities we have tried with our families and return to again and again.

### PLACES TO GO WITH CHILDREN


**Borisova Gradina** - Sofia's largest natural park. A great place for riding bikes, roller-blading or riding scooters. There are also some lovely playgrounds. Within the park is Kokolandia, an obstacle course laid out between the branches of large leafy trees. Great for kids over 10, or younger (height restrictions apply) if they have long arms and legs! Safe bungee jumping for toddlers, and they've recently added mini-golf. Limited concession stand. You may want to think about packing a little picnic lunch or snack, porta-loo toilet facilities available near the bungee trampolines. For more information: [www.kokolandia.com](http://www.kokolandia.com).

**Botanical Garden** – Ul. Moskovska 49, Tel: 02 988 1797. Tucked away in a side street behind the Aleksander Nevski Memorial Church, Sofia University's Botanical Garden has a small but inviting collection of Mediterranean flora, and a fragrant rose garden. There is also a glasshouse where a humid atmosphere has been created for the cultivation of such exotic species as palms, banana trees and coffee bushes. The garden's shop has a range of seedlings for sale.

**Earth and Man Museum** - 4 Cherni Vruh Blvd. 865-66-39. Open 10-6. Admission: 2 lev for adults. Kids like the giant crystals, precious jewels and gold.

**Fun City Bowling Bar** – 77 Alexander Malinov Blvd, Mladost 4, Sofia Tel: +359 2/ 885 7081. Bowling fun for all the family. Bowling shoes provided for size 30 upwards only. There is also an entertainment zone with air hockey machines and slot machines and rides for smaller children next to the Bowling Bar.

**Mount Vitosha** – Rising above Sofia's southern suburbs, the granite massif of Mount Vitosha provides Sofia with an easily accessible recreation area.



The top of the mountain is relatively smooth, making it the ideal terrain for easy hikes. Acres of beech forest cover Vitosha's lower slopes, while spruce and pine predominate further up. The mountain's higher point, Cherni Vruh (Black Peak), is surrounded by a plateau covered in grassland, juniper bushes and bogs. Protected as a nature park since 1934, Vitosha is a natural habitat for martens, deer, wild boar and, occasionally, brown bears. The cable car runs from the pleasant suburb of Simeonovo to Aleko and provides excellent views over the city. The Aleko hut is a popular starting point for hikers in summer. In winter, Aleko becomes the center of Mount Vitosha's busy ski scene.

**National Art Gallery** – pl. Knyaz Aleksandur Batenberg 1, Tel: 02 980 3325. The National Art Gallery occupies the west wing of the former royal palace. On display here are works by the greatest of all Bulgarian religious artists, Zahari Zograf. Highlights include a room devoted to the work of local Impressionists.

**National History Museum** - Vitoshko Lale Street off the Ring Road in Boyana. Tel: 02 955 4280. Open 9:30-5:30. Admission: 10 leva. Bulgaria's largest collection of historic artifacts. The 4th-century BC Thracian gold treasures from Panagyurishte are the highlight but there is plenty more to see in this slightly eclectic collection: icons, frescoes, military uniforms and theatrical memorabilia.

**Natural History Museum** - 1 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd. Tel: 02 987 4195. Open 10-6. Admission: 2 leva. An enjoyable, if rather old fashioned museum, strong on geology and European fauna. Beginning with rows of rocks and crystals on the ground floor, stuffed birds and mammals on the first and second floors and glass cabinets filled with butterflies and insects on the third.

**Opera and Ballet** - On the corner of Vrabcha Street and Rakovski. Tel: 02 988 5869 / 02 987 1366. You can find their program at ([www.programata.bg](http://www.programata.bg)).

**Patilantsi** - In Mladost II, Tel: 02 974 4839 / 02 974 4963. Relatively near the school, just around the corner from McDonald's. Caters to the under-10 crowd, with supervised play jungles and a variety of rides and games, indoor and out. A popular place for birthday parties and after-school play dates. Expect to spend around 10 leva per child for an hour or two of rides and activities. Tokens are purchased beforehand at the little store, and extra tokens can be brought back for use next time.

**Puppet Theater** - 14 Gurko Street, and Yanko Sakasov.  
Performances are in Bulgarian, but are very well done and entertaining.

**Sofia Zoopark** - On Simeonovsko Shosse, turn left at Sveti Lazarov maternity hospital. Tel: 962 04 49. Admission is very low, (1 lev for adults) so take some coins with you. Large park area is safe but could use some loving care. The animals include tigers, lions, bears and elephants, among many others. It's never crowded and makes a good place to practice tricycle riding. Open year-round.

**South Park (Yuzhen Park)** - Contains several playgrounds, merry-go-rounds, and bouncy castles, etc. Another low-traffic park good for riding bikes.

## **PARTY IDEAS/PLAY AREAS FOR KIDS**

**Arena Play Area** – Housed in the Arena Multiplex in Mladost, this play area is a great place for kids to let off some steam while you sit and enjoy a coffee and a donut or watch a movie. The playground is fully supervised and has very reasonable hourly rates for babysitting. They host birthday parties here also.

**Candyland** – 28 Kukuryak Street in Ovcha Kupel. Tel: 02 986 8580 ([www.candyland.bg](http://www.candyland.bg)). Candyland was established in late 2009. Their two main areas of expertise are selling their candy merchandise and organizing sweet workshops for children. The final products from all workshops are 100% edible as well as visually appealing. In workshops the kids can either create sugar mass shapes, paint cookies, or create beautiful bouquets from lollies (they arrange them on special sticks in little pots) under the supervision of qualified staff.

**Do You Dare** – Climbing Wall – 2 Arsenalski Blvd, Tel: 088 503 0128 ([www.stiskaliti.com](http://www.stiskaliti.com)) Working time: 15:00–21:00. Climbing lessons; contests; birthday parties; teambuilding.

**Gymboree** – Bulgaria Boulevard 98, Tel: 0885 068108 ([www.gymboree\\_classesbulgaria.com](http://www.gymboree_classesbulgaria.com)). Gymboree Play & Music has been fostering creativity and confidence in children ages 0-5 for over 30 years. The programs are recognized for their unique approach to parent involvement which encourages participation in and understanding of each child's development. Some of the classes offered are Art Classes, Family Fun Classes, School Skills Classes. Gymboree will also organize birthday parties for children aged 0-5.

**Impresia Art and Hobby Club** - 22 Tsar Samuil Str., Tel: 0898 419 775 / 0898 432 032 (Globul) / 0898 599 304 (royana-bg.com)

Art and Hobby Club Impresia was established in 2008 with the purpose of providing fun arts and crafts activities for both kids and adults. From painting, ceramic arts and applied art classes, family fun sessions, art party entertainment, their aim is to nurture your imagination and keep things relaxed and stress free for you. They are available for birthday parties, art classes and they also run a Summer Camp.

**Lion King Play Area** – Monastery Meadows, Street RIA Lion 14, Tel: 0885 324212 / 0889 216060, ([www.lionking-bg.com](http://www.lionking-bg.com)). Children's party and play area. Themed parties available and cake provided.

**Marietta and Marionetta Birthday Club** – Luylin; Tel: 8274228; 827 2382. ([www.marioneta.org](http://www.marioneta.org)). A theater and cafe for children. They'll organize birthday parties, carnivals and masked parties.

**Mega Extreme Bowling** - Studentski grad, 12 Akad. Boris Stefanov Str., Fantastico complex, Tel: 02 969 2600, 02 969 2601, 02 969 2604 Working time: 10:00–04:00, email: [bowling\\_mega@yahoo.com](mailto:bowling_mega@yahoo.com)

- 18 lanes of AMF – American bowling equipment
- X-treme bowling – playing under unique light effects and ultraviolet lighting
- 6 pool tables
- 5 electronic darts
- Simulators and many other games
- Organization of parties, events, birthdays and bowling.

**Morsko Konche** – 3 Tsarnook Str., Lozenets, 1421 Sofia, Tel: 02 866 4062, ([www.morskokon4e.net](http://www.morskokon4e.net)). Party area for children. Themed parties available.

**Partyhouse** – Ground Floor, 30 Tzar Samuil Street, 1000 Sofia, Tel: 02 981 6250 / 02 980 4212. ([www.partyhouse-bg.com](http://www.partyhouse-bg.com)). Partyhouse is an event management company offering a wide range of activities for both adults and children. They can provide a whole package for whatever event you wish to organize, birthdays, parties, including decoration. Check out their website to explore the many options available to you.

**Pateta** – 13 Russaliyski Prohod Str., Lozenets, 1407 Sofia, Tel: 0889 606611, ([www.pateta-bg.com](http://www.pateta-bg.com)). Children's party club.

**Sparkle Club** – Sofia, South Park square, 9 Forest Street Almond  
Tel: 02 / 958 92 19 or 0887 98 30 21 ([www.sparkle-baby.com](http://www.sparkle-baby.com)). Caters for parties for every occasion including birthdays and christenings. More appropriate for children aged up to age 8.

**The Jungle** – 34 Petko Karavelov Str., 1408 Sofia, Tel: 02 483 1007 ([www.thejungle-bg.com](http://www.thejungle-bg.com)). Children's party club.

## CINEMAS AND MOVIES

Movies are left in their original language with Bulgarian subtitles, but children's cartoon movies are dubbed into Bulgarian. Ticket prices are usually very reasonable.

**Arena Multiscreen** - 8 Tsaritsa Ioanna Blvd. Sofia's largest and most modern movie theatre. They have complexes located in the Business Park on the Ring Road next to Technopolis and their newest one is at the Mall on Tsarigradsko. <http://www.kinoarena.com/home.html>

**Multiplex Cinemas** - In City Center Sofia and in Mall of Sofia are several movie theaters with Dolby surround system.

**Multiplex Cinema** - NDK subway. Listings at [www.uncinema.com](http://www.uncinema.com). Large underground complex with 8 halls.

**Movie Rental Shops** - The main chains are Alexandra Video and Video Elite. You'll need a membership card or member number. DVD's are usually 3 leva per night and videocassettes are 1-2 leva. Remember, most children's movies are dubbed into Bulgarian.

## MUSIC VENUES

**Swingin' Hall** – Dragan Tzankov #8, Tel: 089 6840180 / 089 6840161, ([www.swinginghall.com](http://www.swinginghall.com)). Currently the best place in town to catch local rock, blues, jazz and world-music acts, with a six-day-a-week program of live music. It's a great place for a night out whoever is on the bill. Friendly party-inclined atmosphere.

**Social Jazz Club** - pl. Slaveykov 4, Tel. 088 462 2220. Beneath Sofia City Library is one of Sofia's coolest music venues, offering a regular menu of live jazz. There is standing space in front of the stage but it's best to reserve a table if you want to watch the gig in comfort. Imported drinks only and prices are on the high side.

## DAY-TRIPS

**Bansko** - Is a three-hour drive from Sofia, the most modern ski resort in Bulgaria. Nice and well maintained ski slopes. Beautiful village, if you can see past all the new hotel and apartment construction. Go to [www.bansko.bg](http://www.bansko.bg) for more information.


**Belogradchik** – The small hillside town of Belogradchik is surrounded by some of the most dramatic rock formations in Bulgaria. The hill above the town is crowned by a particularly dramatic circle of rocky pinnacles. The inner stronghold commands stunning views of the surrounding landscape.

**Borovets** - This ski resort is only an hour or so out of town. It is crowded with not-so-charming hotels, and restaurants tend to be smoky and expensive, but you can take the gondola up the mountain and then hike to the “hidja” (hut) and the lake for spectacular views, fresh mountain air and a picnic.

**Boyana Church** - Just outside of Sofia, in the suburb of Boyana, is a tiny, well-hidden church containing outstanding frescoes dating from the 11th century. The site is on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. It’s well worth booking a personal guided tour by calling: 68-53-04, or online at [www.boyanachurch.org](http://www.boyanachurch.org).

**Koprivshitsa** - One and half hours drive from Sofia, off the Bourgas highway, this town is of special interest for it’s well-preserved National Revival Style architecture, ornate and decorative. Some it’s houses are museums, which depict life as it was during the 1800’s. Lots of walking up and down cobbled streets. There is a nice restaurant called the brothers Mehada with a wonderful courtyard.

**Melnik** - The approximately 3 hour drive to Melnik follows the Struma River Valley with views across to the Pirin Mountains. The landscape then changes drastically as you near the town, and you find yourself surrounded by white, sandy cliffs. You may like to try the red wine, reputed to be the best in Bulgaria, from the unique Melnik grape. Melnik is just off the highway to Kulata, so it makes an ideal place to visit on the way to or from Greece.



**Plovdiv** - Located about 1.5 hr. drive from Sofia, Plovdiv's old town attracts many visitors with its cobblestone streets and wonderful architecture and its numerous antique shops. The Roman amphitheater dates from the 2nd century and is incredibly restored. Music festivals are held here during the summer.

**Rila Monastery** - The beautiful road to the monastery runs beside the River Rilska and through wooded mountain slopes. The drive will take you about an hour and a half or two from Sofia. The monastery itself is breathtaking and it's not hard to understand its place on the UNESCO World Heritage List. If you get a chance, pay the entrance fee to the museum, just to marvel at the miniature cross sculpted by a monk with a needle. He finished it after 12 years, but by the end had lost his sight. No wonder; the work contains 1,500 tiny human figures depicting 140 biblical scenes! Rila National Park – Bulgaria's largest national park. A network of hiking paths crisscrossed the park, reaching the imposing peaks of Musala and Malyovitsa and the Seven Lakes. The lakes, formed by melted glaciers, are set at ascending levels.

**Veliko Turnovo** – With a picturesque hillside setting, fine architecture and a wealth of historic sights, Veliko Turnovo is one of Bulgaria's most beautiful cities. Tall, narrow houses teeter on sheer cliffs that rise high above the meandering Yantra River. To the east are the ruins of the majestic fortress of Tsarevets where a fantastic light show with a rousing sound track, takes place almost every night in summer.


**Western Rhodopes Caves** – The area is excellent for hiking, mountain biking and bird watching, and pony-trekking tours can also be arranged from Trigrad. Although they are accessible by limited public transport, it is far easier to reach the villages and caves by car.

## **SPORTS / SOCIAL CLUBS**

*Here is a list of some recommended places where you and your family can enjoy the following sports:*

### **ADVENTURE TOURISM / EXTREME SPORTS / HIKING**

**Adrenalin Extreme Sports Club** – Tel: 02 943 4730 or 089 685 6343 ([www.clubadrenalin.com](http://www.clubadrenalin.com)) Bungee jumping; Parachute jumping; Climbing; Off-Road; Paintball.



**BikeArea** – [www.bikearea.org](http://www.bikearea.org), mountain biking in Bulgaria.

**Krasna Poliana Carting Speedway** - 3A Wardar Blvd., Septemvri Stadium Tel: 02 920 1447, ([www.karting-bg.com](http://www.karting-bg.com)). Working time: 09:00–21:00. Opened only when the weather conditions are good and the speedway is dry. Ages 8+. The whole karting track may be rented under separate agreement for one hour or one day in case of promotions, amateur racing, celebrations, games, entertainment, etc.

**Mountain Tracks** – Ul Pirin, Bansko, Tel: 0888 788859.

**Odysseia-In** – Tel: 02 989 0538. Hiking and tourism company. Email: [odysseia@omega.bg](mailto:odysseia@omega.bg), ([www.odysseia-in.com](http://www.odysseia-in.com)).

**Super Sky Paragliding** – ([www.supersky.hit.bg](http://www.supersky.hit.bg)) Sofia-based outfit that can organize lessons and tours in any of the main venues such as the southeastern shoulder of Mount Vitoshka, near Bistritsa.

**Walking Bulgaria** – ([www.walkingbulgaria.com](http://www.walkingbulgaria.com)). Guided and self-guided walking tours in Bulgaria. Scheduled and anytime departures.

**Zig Zag Holidays** – Tel: 02 980 5102. ([www.zigzagbg.com](http://www.zigzagbg.com)) Zig Zag Holidays is a specialist in tailor-made trips for individual tourists and small groups. You can choose from a big variety of outdoor activities, adventure and eco-tourism, cultural and rural life tours.

## **BOWLING**

**Fun City Bowling Bar** – 77 Alexander Malinov Blvd, Mladost 4, (top floor of the Princess Outlet Center). Tel: +359 2/ 885 7081. Bowling fun for all the family. Bowling shoes provided for size 30 upwards only. Also has a large children's game arcade and is a popular place for birthday parties.

**Galaxy Bowling** - 1 Bulgaria Blvd.

**Mega Extreme Bowling** – ([www.mega-xtreme.atia.com](http://www.mega-xtreme.atia.com)) 12 Akademik Boris Stefanov St., Sofia 1606, Studentski grad (next to Fantastico store), tel. 969-2601.

## EXPAT SOCIAL CLUBS

**Hash House Harriers** - This is a world-wide organization where different nationalities get together, have a run, a few beers and a meal afterwards. ([www.sofiahash.org](http://www.sofiahash.org) for more information)

**International Women's Club of Sofia** - The club is a valuable support group of women who come here as non-working spouses offering support groups, activities, excursions and charity projects. ([www.iwc-sofia.com](http://www.iwc-sofia.com))

**Toddler and Baby Group** - The baby group meets every Thursday morning at Pateta 2, 33B Galichitsa, around 10 am until 12pm. Age range is from birth to around 4 years. Interested families should contact Helen Sloan, Tel: 088 4299 442 ([hen@pb5.co.uk](mailto:hen@pb5.co.uk)).

## FITNESS CENTRES

**Atama Sports Club** - Kempinski Hotel Zografski, 100 James Bouchier Blvd. Tel: 962-0999. Located on the ground floor, access from the back side of the hotel, next to the pool. State-of-the-art facilities.

**Holiday Inn Sofia** – 111 Alexander Malinov Blvd., (near Sofia Business Park) Tel: 807 0707 ([www.hisofiahotel.com](http://www.hisofiahotel.com)). English speaking staff and swimming instructors, fitness center with aerobics, gym equipment, sauna. Variety of memberships available. This is where students from 3rd Grade and above have their swimming lessons.

**Maleeva Tennis Club** – Nikola Vaptzarov Blvd, near the Tokuda Hospital. Outdoor courts and fitness center. Owned by the famous Maleeva sisters. ([www.maleevaclub.com](http://www.maleevaclub.com)).

**Sparta Fitness and Spinning Club** – 4 Arsenalski Blvd, Tel: 865 6471 ([www.spartabg.com](http://www.spartabg.com)). A modern sport and relaxation facility offering a spinning complex, multifunctional gym, spa center, meticulously maintained tennis courts, pools and cozy restaurant with healthy menu suiting your choice.

## GOLF

**Air Sofia Golf and Country Club** - 2050 Ihtiman (60 km outside Sofia, just off the Plovdiv motorway). 07243530. Driving range, 18-hole golf course, outdoor pool, tennis courts and riding facilities.



**Pravetz Golf Resort and Spa** – A nice day trip or weekend away. Beautiful resort with pool and spa complex. [www.pravets-golf.com](http://www.pravets-golf.com)

**St Sofia Golf Club and SPA** - Elin Pelin, Village of Ravno Pole  
Driving range, 9-hole golf course. ([www.stsofiagolf.com](http://www.stsofiagolf.com)).

## HORSE RIDING

**Adgor Stable** – Western riding and natural horsemanship. English speaking contact: Alex Penev Tel: 089 9014423 ([www.adgor.bg](http://www.adgor.bg)). It is 25km from Sofia, but worthwhile going to. Very nice horses and riding through the country. From Sofia drive to Bistritsa and follow the road to Zheleznitsa. Keep driving on the road (about 8km) until you see a yellow sign with KOHE (means horses in Bulgarian).

**Han Asparouh Riding Centre** – 258 Hajdushko Izvorche, Ovcha Kupel. By the Slavia soccer/ice skating complex. Large facility consisting of many riding clubs and independent instructors. Indoor and outdoor arenas, restaurants and tack shops on premises.

**Kremikovtzi Riding Club** – Outdoor arena only, trail riding available. Located outside Sofia. For information call Yanislav Nikolov. Tel: 0898 514031 (speaks English).

**Sportna-Sofia Horse Club** – 1 Dragan Tzankov Blvd, Borisova Gradina, Tel: 865 7156. The manager, Hristo Marangozov, can be reached at 0886 216669. Pony rides are also available. There is only an outdoor arena.

**Sveti Georgi Riding Club** – Tel: 0888 921268, run by Yuri Valev.

## ICE SKATING

**Slavia Stadium** - Ovcha Kupel district.

**Winter Palace** - Studentski Grad. Nickolay Simeonov Tel: 0888 505 923

**The Mall** – The parking lot at the main entrance on Tsaregradso Shosse is transformed into a public skating rink during the winter months. Skate rentals are available.

## WELLNESS

**YOGA and Wellness Center Ayodya** - Excellent and professional English-speaking husband and wife team run this center in Studenskigrad. Kalin is a yoga instructor and Elena is a US-trained Physical Therapist who specializes in therapeutic massage, pre-natal massage, body treatments and office massage. Visit their website: [www.nonstopyoga.com](http://www.nonstopyoga.com). Contact information: Kalin 0989 723 8167, [davidov.kalin@gmail.com](mailto:davidov.kalin@gmail.com), and Elena 0898 874 889, [pashalise@yahoo.com](mailto:pashalise@yahoo.com).

## SQUASH

**Easy Club** – 6 Stoyan Edrev Street, Studentski Grad. Tel: 02 962 2223. ([www.easy-club.eu](http://www.easy-club.eu))

**Maleeva Tennis Club** – Nikola Vaptzarov Blvd, near the Tokuda Hospital. One squash court. Owned by the famous Maleeva sisters. ([www.maleeva-club.com](http://www.maleeva-club.com)).

## SWIMMING


**Ambassador Hotel** - 110A Simeonovsko Shosse Blvd. 962-5602. Indoor pool open to non-guests for small fee. No shallow end for kids.

**Atama Sports Club** - Kempinski Hotel Zografski Tel: 962 0999. Can organize lessons for beginners, intermediate and advanced swimmers. They are consistent with ASCTA (Australian) standards and techniques.

**Boyana Diplomatic Club** - Boyana, Membership required. Instructors available.

**Bulgarian Sports Federation** - 75 Vassil Levski Blvd. Tel: 930 0502.

**Holiday Inn Sofia** – 111 Alexander Malinov Blvd., (near Sofia Business Park) Tel: 807 0707 ([www.hisofiahotel.com](http://www.hisofiahotel.com)). English speaking staff and swimming instructors, fitness center with Aerobics, gym equipment, sauna. Variety of memberships available. This is where students from 3rd Grade and above have their swimming lessons.



**Korali Mineral Pool** - Pancharevo district, off Samokovsko Shosse. Beautiful setting, on the banks of the Pancharevo Dam. Children's pool available. Tel: 0885 685 354. Hours: 9am- 7pm.

**Maria Louisa Swimming Pool** - in Borisova Gradina. Public, outdoor swimming pool.

**Maxi Water World** - 110 Simeonovsko Shosse. Tel: 02 892 0000 ([www.maxisofia.com](http://www.maxisofia.com)). For information and reservations please call: 02 892 0033 - SPA Reception. Great pool for younger children. This is the pool where Kindergarten through Grade 2 have their swimming lessons.

**Princess Hotel** - 131 Maria Luisa Blvd. Indoor pool, open to non-guests for small fee. Good for little kids. Tel: 933 8888.

**Spartak** - 4 Arsenalski Blvd, Tel: 865 6471. ([www.spartabg.com](http://www.spartabg.com)). A modern sport and relaxation facility with a spinning complex, multifunctional gym, spa center, meticulously maintained tennis courts, pools and cozy restaurant with healthy menu suiting your choice.

## TENNIS

**Boyana Diplomatic Club** - Indoor/outdoor courts. Membership is expensive and required. Instructors available.


**Cherry Tennis Courts** – Very close to our school in Pancharevo on Samokovsko Shosse. From Monday to Friday until 17:00. Tel: 087 8868811. Outdoor swimming pool.

**Club Academic - Borisova Gradina Park**, Tel: 872 2163. Indoor/outdoor courts.

**Dema** - Near to Billa (same side) on Mladost. Indoor and outdoor courts. Contact Mariana on 0887 671922 or the club on 02 976 8585.

**Gorna Banya Diplomatic Club** - Outdoor courts. Membership. Peace and Friendship Courts - Studentski Grad. Indoor/outdoor courts.

**Kempinski Hotel Zografski** – Tel: 02 962 0999/ 625 1370. Indoor/outdoor courts.



**Maxi Sports Center** - 110 Simeonovsko Shosse. Tel: 02 892 0000 ([www.maxisofia.com](http://www.maxisofia.com)) Tennis club MAXI is a host of prestigious tournaments. With its 3 open-air courts, the club is an appropriate location for training.

**Maleeva Tennis Club** – Nikola Vaptzarov Blvd, near the Tokuda Hospital. Outdoor courts and fitness center. Owned by the famous Maleeva sisters. ([www.maleevaclub.com](http://www.maleevaclub.com))

**Tennis Club Pro Sport** – National Sports Academy. Studentski grad. Please contact Stefan Yordanov – Manager / 0887 500 543 for individual or group lessons. They have long experience of teaching children and they have great summer camps for children from beginner to advanced. Online court booking at [www.tcprosport.bg](http://www.tcprosport.bg)

**New Generation Tennis Academy** – 1606, blvd Gen. M. Skobelev, Tel. 0893 516 270 Daniel Stoyanov ([www.ngta.bg](http://www.ngta.bg)). Two tennis courts, swimming pool, hot tub, sauna, football field and restaurant. Group and individual tennis lessons for children and adults. Football and swimming lessons can be organized also. The on-site restaurant is the perfect place for a party.

**Sparta Fitness and Spinning Club** – 4 Arsenalski Blvd, Tel: 865 6471 ([www.spartabg.com](http://www.spartabg.com)). A modern sport and relaxation facility with a spinning complex, multifunctional gym, spa center, meticulously maintained tennis courts, pools and cozy restaurant with healthy menu suiting your choice.

**Vasil Levski Stadium** - Several public outdoor courts.

**Vitosha Park Hotel** - Studentski grad, Contact Krasimir Lazarov (for tennis) Tel: 0888 427605 or hotel on 816 8888. Outdoor courts, expensive but good coach. Also hairdresser, beauty shop, indoor swimming pool and gym.

**I**n case of illness or accident, most expat families contact the physician they have come to know through a recommendation, whether from an employer, embassy or friend. If your need is specialized, the Sofia medical network is quite small and your physician can point you in the direction of a specialist clinic, lab or person who can treat you.

### CLINICS and GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

**Biocheck** - 31 Ekzarh Yossif Street. Tel: 91183. Monday through Friday, 7:30 am - 7:00 pm. Saturday 9:00 am-1:00 pm. Different specialists.

**Greenberg Medical Center** - 25 Polyclinic, 1st floor, wing C, Mladost III. Tel: 974 -4816, 974-4933. Twenty-four hour service and house calls. Very close to school. English speaking staff.

**International Medical Centre IMC** - 28 N.V.Gogol str., 1124 Sofia, Tel: +359 2/ 944 93 26, Fax: +359 2/ 944 93 17, Front desk mobile: +359 886 532 551 ([www.imc-sofia.com](http://www.imc-sofia.com)). Bulgarian, English, French and Russian speaking staff. Services offered include: GP consultations, house call visits and treatment. Specialized consultations in cardiology, physiotherapy, psychiatry and gynecology. Dental care.

**Medical Center “St Panteleimon”** - 21 Kniaz Boris I Street. 02 954-9588, 02 952-1841, 02 951-5162, ([www.medicinabg.com](http://www.medicinabg.com)). Twenty-four hour service and house calls. Different specialists. Some speak French or German.

**Thorax Clinic** - 57 Alexander Stamboliski Blvd. (Emergency: 91285) 988-5259, 885-259, Manager: 0888-557-655. Twenty-four hour service and house calls. Some doctors speak French or German. Clinic has different specialists including pediatricians.

**Thorax Clinic 2** - Fritof Nansen Blvd. 980-7886; 981 6095. For x-rays and outpatient surgery only.

**United Medical DCC** – Business Park Sofia in Mladost 4, building 2, floor 1, Tel: +359 2 489 95 24, ([www.umg.bg](http://www.umg.bg)) The medical center offers a wide variety of healthcare services in outpatient treatment and is equipped with the latest generation of medical equipment. The medical center specializes in conducting examinations in the following areas: Gynecology and obstetrics, Internal diseases, Endocrinology, Ophthalmology, Cardiology, Dermatology, Neurology, ENT diseases, Psychology / Psychotherapy, Occupational diseases.

**Vita Medical Centre** – 9 Dragovitsa St., Tel: 02 943 4398 ([www.vita.bg](http://www.vita.bg)). Twenty-four hour service and house calls. Different specialists including pediatricians. Some doctors speak French or German.

## HOSPITALS

*For a serious medical emergency, go directly to the emergency room at the Pirogov Hospital. If your Bulgarian is poor, take someone to translate. If you can't drive, dial 150 for an ambulance and be prepared to describe, in Bulgarian, the problem. You'll be asked to give the patient's age, address and phone number.*

**Military Medical Academy** – 3 St. Georgi Sofiyski Blvd, Tel: 922 6000  
Emergency: 9225 543. Monday-Friday 8:00am - 5:30pm. Different specialists. Some speak German. ([www.vma.bg](http://www.vma.bg))

**Pirogov National Institute for Emergency Medical Services** - 21 General Totleben Blvd. Tel: 915 4411. The entrance to the children's hospital is beside the main entrance. Modernized rooms are available for a price, should you need to stay. The medical staff are highly qualified but do tend to have an outdated approach toward patient bedside manner.

**Tokuda Hospital** – 51B Nikola Vaptsarov, Tel: 915 9402, 915 9417, 915 9401. ([www.tokudabolnica.bg](http://www.tokudabolnica.bg)). Emergency Tel: +359 2 403 4112 A comprehensive scope of medical departments covering the main medical disciplines with modernly equipped clinics and medical sectors in compliance with Japanese clinical and treatment standards.

## DENTISTS & ORTHODONTISTS

**Center for Advanced Dentistry** - 20 Tsvetna Gradina St, Lozenetz 1421 Sofia (after summer 2011); 02 401 7116; [www.dentistbulgaria.com](http://www.dentistbulgaria.com). Drs. Veselin Shumantov, Deyan Yordanov, and Pavel Todorov. Practice offers the latest in the field of invisible orthodontics, metal-free cosmetic, and implant dentistry. They enjoy providing creative solutions to simple and complex cases.

**Denise Lopez, RDH.** – Tel: 0886-381-095, RDH (American Registered Dental Hygienist), child and adult dental cleanings. Email for appointment – [DeniseLopezRDH@hotmail.com](mailto:DeniseLopezRDH@hotmail.com). Denise is a PTO mom who works out of Dr. Ivan Dimitrov's practice.

Dr. Garrow – Located next to Pliska Hotel. Telephone: 0888894096. Bulgarian dentist who speaks very good English.

**Dr Ivan Dimitrov Dental Practice** – Sofia, No. 5 Dragshan. Tel: 02 952 2328 ([www.drivandimitrov.com](http://www.drivandimitrov.com)). Everybody at the practice is extremely friendly and professional making you feel very relaxed and comfortable. This is the perfect place for anyone who hates going to the dentist.

**Dr. Tzvetan Ninov, Orthodontist** - 0888 343816; [ninov122@hotmail.com](mailto:ninov122@hotmail.com); [ninov.tzvetan@gmail.com](mailto:ninov.tzvetan@gmail.com).

**ProvyDent Dental Surgery** – Lozenetz, Wezhen Str 12A, Tel: +359 888 414121, ([www.provydent.com](http://www.provydent.com)) Dr. Victor Zhechkov, email: [zhechkov@provydent.com](mailto:zhechkov@provydent.com).

**Swedent** - 100 James Bouchier Blvd. Room 110 in the Kempinski Hotel. 02 969-2273. Dr. Dean Mihailoff is an EU licensed DDS from the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. He's wonderful with children, but has a very full patient list.

## OTHER SPECIALISTS

**Dr. Ivan Gerov** – Orthopedics & Traumatology. Tokuda Hospital, 51B Nikola Vaptsarov Blvd. Telephone: 02 403 4175; 02 403 2000; 0882 904 933; 0888 361 218. E-mail: [myprad@yahoo.com](mailto:myprad@yahoo.com). Speaks excellent English and has a wonderful manner with children and parents.

**Petar Ninov** - Chiropractor, 0888 577 380, 11 Bulgaria Blvd. Excellent English. [www.petarninov.com](http://www.petarninov.com).

## ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

**Christine Ashton** is an experienced Reiki Practitioner qualified at Master Level in Traditional Usui Reiki; a natural method of energy healing, which complements other therapies and conventional medicine. Clients are welcome at **Ashton Reiki Room** in Dragalevsti or may arrange for a home visit. Call/text 0888502513 or email [ashton.reiki.room@gmail.com](mailto:ashton.reiki.room@gmail.com) to book an appointment or visit <http://www.ashtonreikiroom.net> to find out more.

**Dr John Zhang** - Chinese medicine, does acupuncture and Chinese massage (Reflexology). He speaks English and Italian and comes to your home for treatment. Call 0886-278-230.

## 24-HR PHARMACIES

*You will notice many small pharmacies (apteka) everywhere, but the following are 24 hour:*


**Pharmatel (The Commercial League)** - 1 G.M. Dimitrov Blvd. (off Simeonovsko Shosse) 962-2222. Largest selection available. They offer home delivery. English-speaking operator.

**BD PHARM** - 10 Yanko Sakazov Blvd. 943-3972.

## VETERINARIANS

**Blue Cross Veterinary Clinic** – 1 Chereshova Gradina, Pancharevo. Conveniently located on the road to our school, 02 979-0935, [www.bluecrossbg.com](http://www.bluecrossbg.com). The first of its kind in Bulgaria, this clinic is clean, well-organized, staffed by a group of young, knowledgeable and caring staff. Prices are listed on their website. They also offer kenneling.

Call **Dr. Borislav Georgiev** - 0898-766-335. Speaks English.



**Dr. Damien Iliev** - 0888-95-0945; 0886 890 685. Speaks some English.

**Dr. Vencislav Stoev** - 0888-744-726. Speaks some English, makes house calls.

## **GENERAL HEALTH ISSUES**

*The school employs a full-time nurse, Didi. Her office is on the bottom floor near the gymnasium. Our nurse checks on students for general health issues, including head lice and communicable diseases. She also treats students who are injured. In cases of serious injury, students' parents are contacted and, if requested, our nurse will take the student to the Tokuda Hospital. The school does not administer medication unless authorized in writing by a parent. All medicines must be handed over to the nurse.*

## HAIR AND BEAUTY

**W**ith the busy lives we live today, we can never do enough to pamper ourselves. Everybody deserves to be pampered and preened, and not just on special occasions! Where do you go?

### HAIRDRESSING

**Gossip Hair & Nails** – First Floor, Mall of Sofia, Alexander Stambolyski Str, Tel: 02 981 7419. Good English.

**Puzzlekids** – Lozenets, Flower Garden Str. 39, Tel: 089 3446636 ([www.puzzlekids.biz](http://www.puzzlekids.biz)). Haircut, styling, braiding. Only bio products used.

**Rainin Hair Studio at Holiday Inn** – 111 Alexander Malinov Blvd, Sofia 1766. Tel: 02 807 0707, ([www.raininhair.com](http://www.raininhair.com)). European hair styling, treatments, coloring, and extensions. Opening Hours: 11:30-20:00. Contact: Mrs Albena Jones, Proprietor.

**Stylist Kapanov** - Bul. Hristo Botev 14, Tel: 02 951 6388.

### BEAUTY SALONS

**Antoanette Beauty Studio** – First Floor, Mall of Sofia, Alexander Stambolyski Str, Tel: 02 981 0973. Limited English.

**High Care Center** – 10 Bratya Chakrin Str, 17010 Sofia, Tel: 02 860 1466 / 088 528 2935, email: [tz.tzerovska@gmail.com](mailto:tz.tzerovska@gmail.com)

**Camelot Beauty Studio** – Hilton Hotel, 1 Bulgaria blvd., Sofia 1421, Tel: 02 933 5034, ([www.hilton.bg](http://www.hilton.bg)). Take a few moments off, forget about time and plunge into the relaxing world of Camelot Beauty Studio. Enjoy and experience personalized, custom-made treatments, such as: Guinot Facials, Lomi-Lomi Hot Stone Treatment, Aromatherapy for Face or Back, O.P.I. Spa Manicure & Pedicure, Anti-Cellulite Package.

**Charmant** - ul. Sveti Ivan Rilski 15, et. 2, Tel: 02 952 3430  
Open 09:00-20:00. Thalasso treatments, massage, manicure and more.

## SCHOOLS, TUTORS and CHURCHES

### ENGLISH-SPEAKING SCHOOLS

**American English Academy** - 4th Floor, 150 School, Deliyska Vodenitsa, Druzhba 2, Sofia 1582. Tel: +359 2 9731222, Mobile: +359 886 850 255. Fax: +359 2 9735564, E-mail: [aeaoffice@gmail.com](mailto:aeaoffice@gmail.com) ([www.aea-bg.com](http://www.aea-bg.com)). Kindergarten through 12th Grade.

**The American College of Sofia** - Sanders Hall, Floyd Black Lane, Mladost 2, Sofia 1799 Tel: ACS Reception Office (359-2) 434 1008, 434 1010, 434 1011, Mailing Address: P.O. Box 873, Sofia 1000, Bulgaria. ([www.acs.bg](http://www.acs.bg)) Accredited in Bulgaria by the Ministry of Education. Grade 9 through 12, Teaches an American curriculum to Bulgarian and International Students. The American University of Blagoevgrad (AUBG) - Located about 100 kilometers south of Sofia in the town of Blagoevgrad. It was founded in 1991 as a cooperative venture of the University of Maine and the governments of Bulgaria and the U.S. The University of Maine extends its accreditation to the academic programs of the AUBG. The University teaches a four-year liberal-arts curriculum. Admission is competitive and based on high school transcripts, SAT and TOEFL scores, a required essay and letters of recommendation. President: Julia M. Watkins (073) 88304, 88306. Email: [watkins@aubg.bg](mailto:watkins@aubg.bg). Registrar: (073) 88220, 88221.

**International Children's Creativity Centre** - 36 Vaklinets street, Dragalevtzi, Tel: (02) 9673112 ([www.iccf-bg.com](http://www.iccf-bg.com)). A preschool activity center for children aged 2-4 years, serving the international community. Children can attend for 3 or 5 mornings or 5 full days; hours 8:30am - 12:30 or 5:00pm. Transport available.

**ABC Kinder Care Centre** - 25 Kniaz Boris 1 Str., Sofia, Tel: 02 434 1082, email: [abckinder@carebg.org](mailto:abckinder@carebg.org), ([www.carebg.org](http://www.carebg.org)). Catering for children aged 2-5.

## TUTORS

One of the advantages to living in Bulgaria is not only the affordability of private lessons, but also the high level of professionalism of the instructors. Many of these instructors will come to your home or office, and are willing to tailor their lessons according to your needs.

### DANCE

**Dance teacher and choreographer** - Zhenya Zhivkova, GSM: 0886-817-479, tel. 958-2880, e-mail: [djenia@abv.bg](mailto:djenia@abv.bg). Private or group lessons can be arranged. Specializes in Dance Sport/Ballroom Dancing – both international and social style. Speaks English very well.

**Dance teacher – Sergio** – 088 897 7733. From September Sergio will begin teaching dance classes at AAS (Ages 4-9).

The Electra Dance Studio - Slavia Sports Complex, 1 Koloman Street, Champion Hotel, Floor 7. Telephone: 02 958-4402, 0888-308-401. Lessons for children in all genres of dance, including ballet.

### LANGUAGE

**Excellence Language Learning** - 36 Iskar St, floor 4, 1000 Sofia; 02 983 49 50 / +359 878 39 23 51; E-mail: [info@excellence.bg](mailto:info@excellence.bg). Excellence Language Learning is a new language training centre located in a beautifully restored building in the centre of Sofia. We offer high quality English, Bulgarian and Dutch language courses. Small groups, dynamic teachers and modern, well-equipped classrooms, located only 5 minutes from Alexander Nevski Cathedral. See our website for more details: [www.excellence.bg](http://www.excellence.bg).

**International Women's Club** - Offers its members conversation classes in French, German, Spanish, Italian and Bulgarian.



**The UK and US Embassies** - Contact the CLOs of these embassies for lists of recommended Bulgarian teachers.

### **MUSIC**

*The school provides a private instrumental program brochure (upon request), which lists music teachers.*

**Drums** - Dimitar Dimitrov: Tel: 088 8933 037, ([www.lushlife.eu](http://www.lushlife.eu)). Excellent private lessons. Will give lessons in your own home. Fluent English.

**Guitar** - Teodosii Tzinguilev: Tel: 089 846 9783,  
E-mail: [teamradio7@yahoo.com.br](mailto:teamradio7@yahoo.com.br), [tedogit@yahoo.com](mailto:tedogit@yahoo.com). Will give lessons in your home. Fluent English.

### **Piano** -


Dora Nikolova: Tel: 852-79-69 /0887295832. Mariana Teolofilova: Tel: 840 33 07 /0887 629 698 (music teacher at AAS). Siliana Shilianshka: Tel: 0885 518184, will give piano lessons in your home.

**Vocal** – Susan Brownfield is an experienced American trained voice coach. ([www.susanbrownfield.com](http://www.susanbrownfield.com)).

### **CHURCHES**

**Alexander Nevsky Memorial Church, Bulgarian Orthodox** - Telephone: 9802902, Daily Services: 8:00am and 5:00 pm. Closed on Monday. Saturday: 6:30pm / Sunday: 9:30am. During the winter months hours are 7:00am to 6:00pm. Summer hours are 7:00am to 7:00pm. Weekend services last about two hours. Go early to hear the bells ring before the service. The professional choir that sings the Bulgarian Orthodox liturgical music is famous in Bulgaria. People stand and walk in and out of the church during the services.

**Anglican Services at the British Embassy** - 6th September Street, side entrance to the British Residence (sign says: Commercial Section). Holy Communion service in English starting at 10:00am. Held on the third Sunday of every month. Includes Sunday school. For more information, contact British Embassy, tel: 933 9222.



**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** - 21 Marin Drinov Street. Telephone: 02 946 3329, 0888-639-275. Services held on Sunday at 10:00am. and 1:30pm. Thursday at 6:00pm. Saturday there is Free English at 10:30am. Bible classes, seminary and baptisms throughout the day.

**Ecumenical Service in German** - Christliche Kirche “Ökumenische Zuflucht”Deutschsprachige ökumenische Kirche. Office: Ul. Elemag 6F, 1113 Sofia, Tel: 02 963 2050 ([evkirchesofia@web.de](mailto:evkirchesofia@web.de))

**International Baptist Church of Sofia** - Telephone: 02 971-1750. Email: [ibcs@geobiz.net](mailto:ibcs@geobiz.net). Address: Interpreted World Trade Center, 31 Dragan Tsankov Blvd. Pastor: Scott Chadwick. Services are held in English every Sunday at 11:00am. There is also a Sunday school that starts at 10:00am. Bible study and prayer group meeting every Thursday on Elemag Street, Block 304, Floor 9, Apt. 31.

**Jewish Worship at the Sofia Synagogue** - 16 Exarch Yossif Street. Telephone: 983-1273. Services are held every day at 8:30am plus Fridays between 5:00-7:30 pm depending on the season and Saturdays at 9:45am. A small Sephardic community meets in a side room of the main synagogue located not far from the Mosque near TZUM.

**Mladost Baptist Church** - Prof. Dr. B Zlatarski Street, across from Block 219B, Mladost 2, Sofia. Pastor Steve Swann. Telephone: 088-865-6598. Services are in English and Bulgarian.

**St. Joseph’s Catholic Church** - 125 Knyaz Boris 1 Street, Tel: 981 5548. Mass is held every Sunday at the following times: 9:00am in Polish, 10:00am in Bulgarian; 11:30am in Latin and 5:30pm in Bulgarian. The Bulgarian Franciscan priests serve this church.

Sofia English Fellowship, Bulgaria-Free Church - Holy Trinity Church on Bulgaria Blvd next to Billa, Sofia. If you are interested, please contact Reverend Bob and Becky Faber. Telephone: 866-9409.

**The Bulgarian Lutheran Church** - 4 Kapitan Andreev Street, 2nd floor, Lozenetz, Tel: 963 4244. Email: [blcofc@bgcell.net](mailto:blcofc@bgcell.net). Pastor Strahil Naidenov.

## TRANSPORTATION and MONEY

### TAXI

Several private companies run fleets of taxis in Sofia. All licensed taxis are yellow, and have a sticker displayed in the windscreen or side window indicating their rates in Bulgarian leva (Lv). Check the rates carefully as some charge more than others (especially outside shopping malls). Normally, however, taxi fares are quite low by Western European standards. They range from 1Lv per km during the day to 2Lv at night. It is customary to either tip the driver 10% of the fare or to round up as you are paying.

There are taxi ranks at most major intersections in Sofia. Taxis can also be hailed on the street. A small green light inside the windscreen indicated that the taxi is available, and small red light indicates that it is taken.

Taxis can also be ordered by phone and it is usually easier to ask the reception staff at hotels/restaurants to call one for you.

Unlicensed taxis tend to congregate at locations such as airports and railway stations. Never be tempted to get into a 'taxi' that isn't yellow, no matter what the driver says.

OK Supertrans	-	Tel: 02 973 2121
Euro Taxi	-	Tel: 02 962 2226
Sofia Taxi	-	Tel: 02 974 4747
Radio CB Taxi	-	Tel: 02 91 263

**Drink and Drive Group** – Tel: 0886 980 660, ([www.dndgroup.org](http://www.dndgroup.org)). Don't want to be the designated driver again? Never miss a party, have fun and leave the driving to Drink and Drive services.

**You Drink and We Drive** – Tel: 0887 733 733 ([www.youdrink-wedrive.eu](http://www.youdrink-wedrive.eu)). In the comfort of your car with a guarantee for a quality service - to immediately respond to your call and send our driver, an experienced and professional driver with good manners, who will ensure smooth and safe ride in the comfort of your automobile.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Trams, buses and trolleybuses provide adequate, if at times, slow transport all over central Sofia and out to the suburbs. Services run from 5am to 11.30pm daily. A unified ticketing system applied to travel on trams, buses and trolleybuses (but not metro). Tickets (bileti) can be bought from kiosks near major bus and tram stops and newspaper kiosks. Remember to punch your ticket when you board.


The latest form of public transport is the “marcheroute” minibus. Express routes though the city are offered from 5am to 11.30pm daily. As well as stopping at bus stops, they can also be hailed along their routes. The fair is paid directly to the driver in exact change.

## DRIVING TIPS

As in any other new city, it will take time to get accustomed to the local driving style. A few of the situations you may encounter include speed traps when going through villages. The speed limit will suddenly drop from 90km/h to 20km/h. Please do watch out for the potholes, and especially for other drivers who are also dodging them!

To drive on public highways, but not on other roads, Bulgarian drivers must display a windscreen sticker, or vignette. These can be purchased at OMV or Shell petrol stations and can be bought for one week, one month or one year periods.

Driving with more than 0.5mg of alcohol in the bloodstream is strictly forbidden, and punishable by a heavy fine, suspension of driving license or even imprisonment. Use of mobile phones while driving is only permissible with a hands-free set. Driving without car documents (registration and insurance papers) and your license, also carries large fines and possible suspension of your driving rights. To cross the border, in addition to your passports and the usual documents you carry with you when driving, you'll need Green Card insurance, (third party international liability insurance) obtainable from Bulstrad, or at the border itself, if you choose to deal with it there. Here in Sofia, the nearest office to school is in the Business Park Sofia. The price varies according to the vehicle and to the validity period you purchase (from 2 weeks to a year).



For information on all aspects of driving in Bulgaria contact the Union of Bulgarian Motorists ([www.uab.org](http://www.uab.org)). They have 55 regional centers and has information on everything from caravanning to traffic regulations.

## CAR HIRE

Avis	-	Tel: 02 826 1100 ( <a href="http://www.avis.bg">www.avis.bg</a> )
Budget	-	Tel: 02 937 3388 ( <a href="http://www.budget.bg">www.budget.bg</a> )
Europcar	-	Tel: 02 931 6000 ( <a href="http://www.europcar.bg">www.europcar.bg</a> )

## CAR PARKING

Sofia city center (Centrum) is a designated blue parking zone. This means that vouchers must be validated and displayed in your car windscreen. Vouchers (1 BGN per hour) are available from attendants wearing fluorescent colored bibs. Vouchers can also be purchased at nearby shops. If you have a local account with a GSM provider you can also send an SMS with your registration number to 1302 and your phone account will be charged for one hour. A reminder will be sent 5 minutes before the hour is up and you will have the option to purchase another hours parking, if required. In the city center there are many guarded car parks, charging 2-3 BGN per hour.

Should you get clamped you will find a note in Bulgarian on your windscreen giving you a telephone number to call. There is also a reference number for which you will be asked and the operator may also want to know what street you are on and the make of car. In many areas 'spider' trucks will remove your car to a compound either near Yuzhen Park or Oborishte Park. To retrieve your car you will have to go to the compound. If you suspect your car may have been towed away, Tel: 02 983 6747 for information.

## IN CASE OF A CAR ACCIDENT

In the event of an accident the traffic police (KAT) must be called (Tel: 982 2723) and an accident report will be filed. This is essential for any insurance claims. If the damage is minor, the matter can now be settled between parties without the long wait for the traffic police.

## AIRPORTS

Sofia Airport has two terminals, the newer one being Terminal 2. Most of the low cost airlines fly from Terminal 1. Tel: 02 937 2211 ([www.sofia-airport.bg](http://www.sofia-airport.bg)). For arrivals, departures and delays check the website.

## RAILWAY

The country's rail network is operated by Bulgarian State Railways or BDZh. There are three categories of train: The Accelerated Fast Train or UBV, is the fastest option and runs between Sofia and major towns such as Plovdiv, Varna and Burgas. Inter-city routes are also served by Fast Trains (BV) which make more stops than UBVs. Slowest are the Passenger Trains or PV which stop at every station. Facilities and comfort are better on the UBVs. Train tickets can be purchased at station ticket offices. By Western European standards the price of tickets are not expensive.

Train Information: Bulgarian State Railways ([www.bdz.bg](http://www.bdz.bg)).

Domestic Rail Tickets: Transport Service Centre, NDK, Sofia, Tel: 02 865 7186.

International Rail Travel: The best source of information in English on train travel to Bulgaria is "The Man in Seat 61," ([www.seat61.com](http://www.seat61.com)), a website run by train travel enthusiasts.

## MONEY

The currency of Bulgaria is the lev (plural: leva), which is divided into 100 stotinki. Bulgaria aims to join the euro zone and has set itself a target date of 1 January 2013 though generally dates vary between 2013 and 2014. The euro coins have not been designed yet, but the motif for all coins has been chosen to be the Madara Rider.

You will quickly learn where the cash machines ("bankomats") are. They have instructions in English. There is one at school upstairs by the administration office and the one nearest our school is at the OMV service station on the corner of the Ring Road and Samokovsko Shosse. You may want to advise your visitors to bring their bankcard to Bulgaria and not Traveler's Checks, since these are very difficult to change in Sofia, and cash points are increasingly common.

Credit cards have become more widely accepted but there are still some places which will only accept payment in cash.

## BULGARIAN TRADITIONS

**B**ulgarians are a fusion of distinctly separate ancient peoples; the Slavs, Thracians and Protobulgars, each differing in race, religion and culture. Together, over a period of thousands of years, they contributed to the immense richness of Bulgarian folk customs and traditions. These vary from region to region, and are more closely followed in rural areas than in Sofia, but you'll probably come across these major ones during your time here. We've also included some tips on local social etiquette that may come in handy when you interact with people from your host country.

## ETIQUETTE

### BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH


It is customary for both women and men to remove their hats while in church, and not to put their hands in their pockets or cross their arms.

**BIRTHDAYS** - On their birthday, Bulgarians take a box of candy into work or school to share with friends and co-workers in celebration. When attending a birthday party, it is appropriate for guests to bring a gift and flowers.

**COCKTAIL PARTIES OR RECEPTIONS** - Usually begin in the early evening and last two hours or more. To arrive early would be discourteous. One should arrive at the time mentioned on the invitation. Up to 15 minutes late is permissible.

**DEATH NOTICE** - These formal announcements of a death in the family are usually sent by Bulgarians to all acquaintances. It is correct to respond with a note of condolence. If you attend a funeral, you should bring an even number of flowers.

**FLOWERS** - When invited to dinner either at a restaurant or to a home, particularly for the first time, you should take flowers to the hostess. Avoid chrysanthemums, a symbol of mourning. Also avoid giving an even number



of flowers (except for a funeral or memorial service). If the party is given in your honor, you should have the flowers sent with your personal card, either earlier in the day, following the dinner, or during the reception itself.

**GREETINGS** - The man generally offers his hand first. A Bulgarian person may be addressed as “Gospozhitce” (Ms.), “Gospozho” (Mrs.), “Gospodin” (Mr.) without the last name. A greeting or farewell is always accompanied by a handshake. When you become friends with a Bulgarian, you may kiss lightly on both cheeks upon meeting and parting.

**NEW BABY** - If you plan to take a gift to the new baby, be sure to call ahead and ask when it would be convenient. Usually a visit to a newborn should not take place earlier than the 40th day after delivery. Something like a baby shower, called the “Pogacha” (round bread), is held about a month or two after the baby is born, and is usually attended only by women. A round bread, “pogacha” or “pitka”, is one of the meals served. On that occasion it’s usual to bring a gift for the baby and flowers for the mother.

**NODDNG THE HEAD** - You will soon notice that many Bulgarians will confirm by moving the head from left to right and will reject by moving it up and down, which is the opposite from typical Western body language. If you have trouble adjusting to this standard, then try not to use your head at all when you say “da” or “ne.”

**TIPPING** - A service charge of 10-15% is sometimes included in a restaurant bill, in which case there is no need to leave anything more. The tip should be increased accordingly, however, if you have required a great deal of service. In a luxury restaurant one gives a 10% tip. At a bar or sidewalk cafe it is normal to leave a small tip, or simply round up the bill. This would hold true for tipping a taxi driver too. Don’t expect any small change back from the fare.

**WEDDING INVITATIONS** - You may receive a formal invitation to attend a wedding ceremony, reception or both. The later in the day, the dressier the occasion. If you are invited to the reception, you will probably be expected to reply to the invitation and you should probably bring a gift and flowers. Be sure to include your personal card in the gift which you take to the home of the reception. If you are invited to attend only the church ceremony, still send a greeting card or flowers to the married couple.

## CELEBRATIONS

**“KOLEDARI”** - On Christmas day, December 25th, young men and boys, called “koledari”, visit people’s houses singing special songs for every member of the family, wishing luck, health and success. People give them bread, candies and treats.

**MARCH 1ST and “MARTENITZAS”** - On this day Bulgarian’s greet each other by saying, “Chestita Baba Marta!”, and present each other red and white “martenitzas” which will be pinned to clothing or tied around a wrist for the entire month of March, or until the first stork is seen. They symbolize health and happiness. Your children will find out exactly who Baba Marta was in their Bulgarian Culture Studies class.

**MARCH 8<sup>th</sup>** - March 8th is International Women’s Day. Men are expected to give flowers to the women at their home and office. This is the closest thing to Mother’s Day, and is taken very seriously.

**NAME DAYS** - There are numerous religious or folk holidays called “name days.” All people named after a certain saint celebrate their name according to the religious calendar. Anyone celebrating their name day is expected to stay home so that friends and relatives may visit without a special invitation. The person celebrating their name day provides food and drinks, while guests are expected to bring flowers and good wishes. In Bulgaria the celebration of the name day is more important than the birthday and every month has more than 3-4 name days. ([www.abvg.net/Traditions/NameDays](http://www.abvg.net/Traditions/NameDays)).

**“SURVAKARI”** - On New Year’s Day, January 1st, young children tap grown-ups on the back with decorated cornel cherry tree branches for health and good luck, singing Christmas songs. The adults are then expected to give each child a bag with sweets and fruit, or some money.

**“VELIKDEN” OR EASTER** - The Thursday before Easter Sunday is used to paint and decorate boiled eggs. On Easter Sunday families get together, they give each other decorated eggs and “fight” with them, tapping each egg against their opponents’ until one cracks. It is believed that the person whose egg remains whole will be healthy and lucky throughout the year.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**W**e hope this booklet will be a useful resource during your early days here in Sofia, and later on when you're completely comfortable in your new home. As you will soon realize, this is an ever-changing environment, and to keep up with the pace we rely on each other for advice, local updates, and to share new discoveries, good and bad. We aim to produce a revised version of "Welcome!" every new school year, therefore, we greatly value your feedback. Please give us your comments for ways to improve, whether there's something missing, you found errors, or you'd like to make suggestions for additions. We want to hear from you! Write an email to any of our PTO members. Below we list a few additional resources that we can vouch for.

### BOOKS ABOUT BULGARIA

**Sofia Business & Travel Guide** - by Peter Carney and Meri Anastassova - Useful for getting around the city. Available from the American Chamber of Commerce, 19 Patriarch Evtimii Blvd., floor 5, apt. 10. Tel. 981 5950/981-4340. Also available from the AAS Library.

**Sofia, The Insider's Guide** - by Christine Milner and Paromita Sanatani. Published in 2005, this is the most thorough and interesting guide to the city. It's a beautiful book and makes a lovely gift for your visitors. Published quarterly, you can find free copies in just about every hotel lobby.

**Rough Guide to Bulgaria and Lonely Planet Guide to Bulgaria** - Both of these travel guide books can be found in many of the bookstores we've recommended in the Shopping section. In addition, Jamadvice Travel Centre on 10 Assen Zlatarov Street, Tel. 943 3011 stocks a selection of Lonely Planet Guides for sale.

**City Sofia** - The official guide of Sofia Municipality, this is a complimentary monthly guide and map available in most hotels.

**Vagabond** – 23 Budapest Str, 1000 Sofia, Tel: 02 983 1337 (old.vagabond.bg). This is Bulgaria's first and only high-end English monthly magazine. They tell you everything you wanted to know about Bulgaria. With articles on travel, fashion, sports, politics, real estate, arts and entertainment, plus interviews, listings, reviews and much more, they cater to all the needs of foreigners living in Bulgaria, as well as those living abroad with an interest in Bulgaria. Vagabond is written and edited by a multicultural team of highly qualified journalists based both in Bulgaria and abroad, with contributors in major European cities.

## **BOOKS ABOUT TRANSITION**

*The school counselor, Mrs. Laura Giosh-Markov, can offer you advice and material on coping with transition. The AAS library stocks quite a few books on this subject and our school librarian, Ms. Angela Browne, can also assist you in this area.*

## **USEFUL WEBSITES/EMAIL ADDRESSES**

### **Bulgarian News**

Sofia Echo	<a href="http://www.sofiaecho.com">www.sofiaecho.com</a>
BTA	<a href="http://www.bta.bg">www.bta.bg</a>
Capital	<a href="http://www.capital.bg">www.capital.bg</a>
Novinite	<a href="http://www.novinite.com">www.novinite.com</a>

### **Bulgarian Weather**

Local Forecast	<a href="http://english.wunderground.com">http://english.wunderground.com</a>
Ski Report	<a href="http://www.snow-forecast.com/resorts">www.snow-forecast.com/resorts</a>

### **Travel in Bulgaria**

Jamadvice Travel Centre	<a href="http://www.jamadvice.eu">www.jamadvice.eu</a>
OMDA	<a href="http://www.omda.bg">www.omda.bg</a>
Discover Bulgaria	<a href="http://www.discoverbulgaria.com">www.discoverbulgaria.com</a>
Bulgarian Tourism	<a href="http://www.bulgariantourism.okay">www.bulgariantourism.okay</a>
Bulgaria Travel	<a href="http://www.bulgariatravel.org">www.bulgariatravel.org</a>
Travel Lang	<a href="http://www.travlang.com">www.travlang.com</a>
Sofia Airport	<a href="http://www.sofia-airport.bg">www.sofia-airport.bg</a>
Travel Warnings	<a href="http://www.travel.state.gov">www.travel.state.gov</a>
Maps, Addresses	<a href="http://bgmaps.com">http://bgmaps.com</a>

## **Entertainment in Sofia**

Cultural Guide  
Cinema  
Sofia City Guide  
Tickets BG

[www.programata.bg](http://www.programata.bg)  
[www.uncinema.com](http://www.uncinema.com)  
[www.sofiacityguide.com](http://www.sofiacityguide.com)  
[www.ticketsbg.com](http://www.ticketsbg.com)

## **Relocation/Immigration Services**

Pirgroup Bulgaria

[www.pirgroup.bg](http://www.pirgroup.bg)

## **Bulgarian Arts and Crafts**

AumdaGallery  
DeltaKilims  
Tchushkarcheto Carpets/Kilims

[www.aumda.bizland.com](http://www.aumda.bizland.com)  
[www.geocities.com/kilimweaver](http://www.geocities.com/kilimweaver)  
<http://tchu.hit.bg>

## **Business in Bulgaria**

American Chamber Commerce  
International Women's Club  
Bulgarian Intl. Business Assoc.  
US Embassy

[www.amcham.bg](http://www.amcham.bg)  
[www.iwc-sofia.com](http://www.iwc-sofia.com)  
[www.biba.bg](http://www.biba.bg)  
[www.usembassy.bg](http://www.usembassy.bg)

## **Education**

Anglo American School  
International School Services  
European Council of Intl. Schools

[www.ecis.org/sofia](http://www.ecis.org/sofia)  
[www.iss.ed](http://www.iss.ed)  
[www.ecis.or](http://www.ecis.or)

## **Families in Transition**

Interaction  
TCK World  
Global Nomads Virtual Village  
Expat Exchange  
Berlitz International, Inc.  
BISIS

[www.tckinteract.net](http://www.tckinteract.net)  
[www.tckworld.com](http://www.tckworld.com)  
[www.gnvv.org](http://www.gnvv.org)  
[www.expatsexchange.com](http://www.expatsexchange.com)  
[www.berlitz.com](http://www.berlitz.com)  
[www.bisis.com](http://www.bisis.com)

## EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

### EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Ambulance	150
Fire	160
Police	166
Traffic Police	982-27-23
Pirogov Hospital	952-11-61

**D-r Ivan Dimitrov**



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[DeniseLopezRHD@hotmail.com](mailto:DeniseLopezRHD@hotmail.com)

[www.drivandimitrov.com](http://www.drivandimitrov.com) [www.dentalme.com](http://www.dentalme.com)



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**Dental practice**



## THANKS

The PTO wishes to thank the businesses and individuals who, by placing their advertisement in the following section, have helped to finance the professional printing job of our Welcome Booklet. If you also are interested in advertising this way, please contact PTO President, Diane Tromans-Berg, for more information. The Welcome Booklet is updated every year and thanks to these contributors is offered free of charge to all AAS staff and families, new and returning.

We wish also to thank everyone who has sent suggestions in for improving and updating this booklet. Please let us know if you have any updates for next year! Send them to our email: [pto@aas-sofia.org](mailto:pto@aas-sofia.org) or post on the facebook page: Anglo-American School of Sofia PTO Events page.

### **Patty DeRousse**

Editing Coordinator for Welcome Booklet 2011-2012