

## Rila Monastery

**Description:** Rila Monastery is situated at a height of 1150 meters a.s.l. in Rila Mountains. Behind the 20-metre high walls lie impressive monastery buildings, a church and a chapel with valuable murals. The most impressive monument from the Bulgarian National Revival period rises amidst the rugged beauty of the Rila Mountain, just 120 km southwards from Sofia. Having survived the times with the self-confidence of the most zealous guard of the Bulgarian spirit and language, it still fascinates present-day visitor with the pure and harmonious line of the buildings' exquisite colonnades, arches and vaults, spacious rooms richly decorated with murals and fretwork. The monastery's most treasured historic and artistic monuments include the 14th century Hrelyo Tower, the five-domed Birth of the Blessed Virgin Church and the original monastery kitchen from the 19th century.

The monastery also houses a rich museum collection of valuable old manuscripts and documents, charters and icons, an ethnographic exhibition of fabrics, jewelry, carpets and wrought iron objects, and a library containing more than 16,000 books. Destroyed by fire at the beginning of the 19th century, the complex was rebuilt between 1834 and 1862. Nowadays Rila Monastery is the biggest and most important symbol of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

In the morning we have a transfer of about 2 h to get to Rila Monastery. There we have guided walk among the monastery wall, visiting the museum and the other sites of interest.

**Trek duration (walking only):** 0,5 hours

**Best period:** all year

**Price is total for up to 8 ppl** and includes private transfer by bus to the monastery and guidance throughout the trip; the price excludes meals and drinks, things of personal use, museum tickets and other taxes for visitors.

