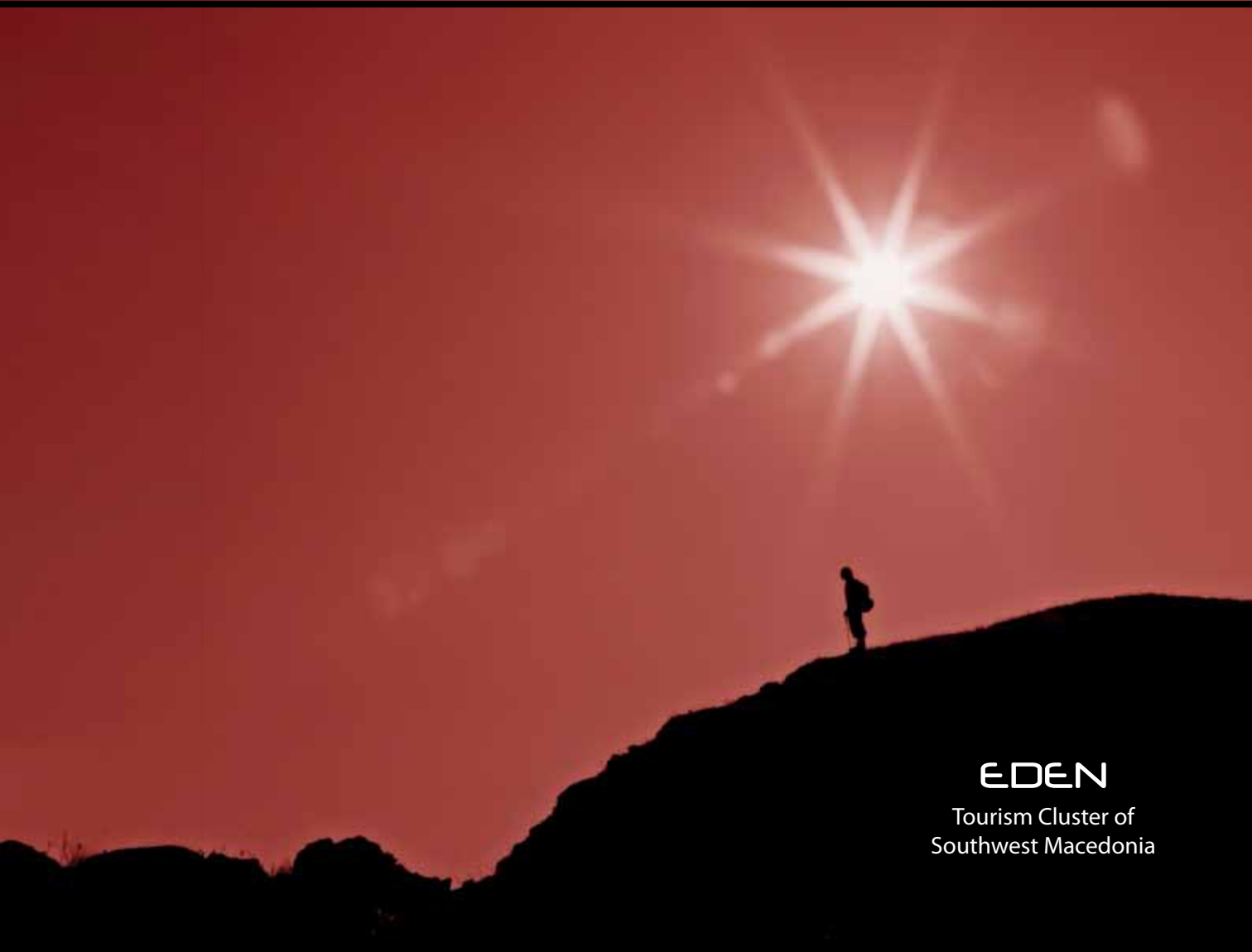


Active Holidays

in Southwest Macedonia



EDEN

Tourism Cluster of
Southwest Macedonia



Active Holidays

in Southwest Macedonia

Discovering Nature, Experiencing Tradition!

March, 2012

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About Eden the Tourism Cluster of Southwest Macedonia

EDEN - The Tourism Cluster (TC) of Southwest Macedonia is an independent, non-political and non-profit association, which brings together representatives from the private, public and civil sectors from Southwest Macedonia in the idea of a successful development and management of sustainable tourism.

Established in 2011, EDEN strives to unite tourist offerings from the region, to develop and promote new products on the basis of the region's rich natural, cultural heritage, authentic and traditional hospitality, and raise the quality of offered tourist services through the close cooperation of different service providers.

In our work we follow principles of eco tourism such as: Minimizing negative impacts, building environmental, cultural awareness and respect, providing positive experiences for both visitors and hosts, and providing financial benefits and empowerment for local people.

The brochure in your hands is a product of our enthusiasm and devotion to tourism as a leading green industry in the region. The name comes from Eden (our region as "paradise on Earth") and Eden (the Macedonian word for "one" and "unique") symbolizing the distinction of the region on the one hand and the integrative action of the Cluster members on the other.

Get out and about and experience Southwest Macedonia through the four elements: Earth, Air, Fire and Water. Experience freedom... excitement... enlightenment... while paragliding in the sky, walking and cycling through the mountains in the region, sailing, swimming and diving in fresh lake waters, kayaking or fishing in the rivers... Discover the secrets of the caves and the miracles of mother nature. And then, the fire in your heart from your day's adventure with a glass of wine and a delicious meal.

We are looking forward to welcoming you in the region,
EDEN is the way!

Project Coordinator
Aleksandar Jovanoski



Macedonia Cradle of Culture

Macedonia is a small but wonderful country which will captivate you with its pristine nature, preserved heritage, authenticity and traditional hospitality.

"Mother of the World" or "Mother Earth", this is the true meaning of the word Macedonia. It is a place that will bring you back 10 000 years, to the dawn of civilization, a place mentioned in the Bible, a place where you will discover everything you wanted to know about the beginnings of human culture.

An old traditional song says "Where the sun eternally shines, there is Macedonia", which sheds light on why the sun is a symbol of modern Macedonia, as it was in the Macedonian Kingdom of 700 BC. The sun, as a symbol, is deeply engraved in every Macedonian's soul and is still represented on the flag.

Although small in size, Macedonia has a wealth of history and an abundance of registered archaeological sites from various historical periods.

The Macedonian heart beats in 7/8 time, the rhythm of the local folk music. Once you listen to it you will be moved to your feet because it will make you dance, even if you are listening to it for the first time. This Land of the Sun is also a land of aromas and flavors which are passed from generation to generation. The traditional Macedonian cuisine is a combination of the diverse Balkan cuisine, with hints of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern influences.

Thanks to clean unpolluted soil, which has captured the bright sun and clear water, you have a rare opportunity to smell and taste nature, ranging from cereals, vegetables, fruits, milk and dairy products, as well as delicious meat and meat products.

Taste Macedonia a glass of wine, an inseparable element of how the population lives. Historians have written that wine was always a part of everyday life in this areas and that cultivating grapes was to be found in the Balkans as early as 2000 BC. Homer wrote that wine is the drink of Gods and the intense aroma of charming fruit flavors with natural freshness in Macedonian vintages will make you believe it.

We invite you into a world of ancient stories, the place where for a moment, you will feel the past but also the beauty of the present moment.

Mystical and timeless... Macedonia.



Photo: B. Kiosev



Southwest Macedonia Eden on Earth

If you ask where heaven on Earth is, our local people will point out to their native region, the Southwest Macedonia. With an area of only 3,340 km² the region features natural perfection, ranging from fertile fields and valleys up to 400 - 700 m, mountain ranges with dense forests, vast pastures and peaks higher than 2000 m which are carved with streams and rivers that penetrate deep into the earth shaping beautiful canyons, long and deep caves, and numerous artificial and spring-fed lakes. Due to its natural characteristics, the region has always attracted various civilizations, which have left their traces behind in a rich cultural heritage.

Over 220 000 inhabitants live here in thirteen municipalities: Struga, Vevcani, Centar Zupa, Debar, Zajas, Oslomej, Makedonski Brod, Plasnica, Vranestica, Kichevo, Drugovo, Debarca and Ohrid.

STRUGA

"There is no other place like Struga", it is often said about Struga, the city of poetry which has been hosting an International Poetry Festival since 1966. The long-term success of the festival is confirmed by the participation of over 4000 poets from 95 countries so far.

The city is situated in the Struga valley, at the foothill of mountain Jablanica. The Black Drim River divides the city into two banks that are interconnected with 7 bridges. The river represents the end of the lake and the beginning of the river Drim basin, shaping the two artificial lakes of Globocica and Debar lake whose water is used to produce electricity in two hydro-electric plants. On the Western (left) side of the river rises the Jablanica mountain ridge, which is a natural border with the Republic of Albania. The mountain is known as a place where the famous Roman caravan road Via Egnatia once existed. When the weather conditions allow, from the summit of the mountain you can see as far as the Adriatic Sea. On the right side of the canyon stretches the Karaorman mountain, with a dense forest perfect for hunting, and its towering peaks are a paradise for alpinists and mountain climbers.

VEVCANI

Vevcani is a small village community hidden high up on the slopes of Jablanica mountain. The village itself is an open air museum, with its traditional architecture and long history. The masonry skills are carried here from generation to generation and are still the basic occupation of the population. The renowned Vevcani springs flow at 1500 liters per second in the wet periods of the year. The rumbling water flowing from the Earth's crust is shaping pools of different sizes, full of clear drinking water. Vevcani is also well known for its traditional carnival, which is as old as the village itself i.e. 1 400 years. The carnival is held each year on January 13-14 in honor of the Orthodox New Year. Since 1993 Vevcani with its carnival is a member of the World's Association of Carnivals.

CENTAR ZUPA

The municipality of Centar Zupa is located in the mountainous area rising above the Black Drim River and the artificial lake of Debar. The average altitude of its settlements is 866m above sea level. The population's main activity is breeding livestock on the high pastures of Mt Stogovo, often termed "the alpine pastures in Macedonia". From these pastures comes the tastiest white cheese in Macedonia.

DEBAR

The municipality of Debar is located in the southwestern part of the Debar area surrounded by the mountains Deshat, Stogovo and Jablanica. The area is known for its numerous hot springs rich in sulfur. The water quality is highly ranked in both Europe and the world. Through millions of years these sources of water accumulated crystals of calcium and sulfur, thus creating large reserves of the most popular construction material in use, calcium sulfate – gypsum (gyprock). You can see a wealth of crystals in some of the mine-caves in Debar region, which are opened for tourist visits. A long tradition of woodcarving has its roots in this region and is known as





Debar Woodcarving School. The woodcarving masters have an ongoing tradition in making sculptures, statues, interiors and furniture that is alive today. Some of this artwork can be found in world renowned museums and galleries. Debar is also widely known for a number of crafts including carpet weaving and production of traditional folk instruments.

ZAJAS

Municipality of Zajas, is a small municipality but big from the archaeologist's point of view since some of the earliest iron mines were discovered in this region dating back to the early iron age (1000 BC). Those iron mines were discovered at the slopes of Mt Bistra, and some of the abandoned shafts are now used for growing mushrooms. The district is also known for the cultivation of bees. The population in the lowlands of the area mainly engages in agriculture where mainly cereal crops and livestock are cultivated. This municipality is categorized as a manufacturer of organic healthy food.

OSLOMEJ

Oslomej municipality is known for the several Neolithic settlements that were found here, as well as numerous iron age settlements in the same area. Throughout the survey a number of different kinds of earthen vessels – ceramics from various periods were found here, suggesting that ceramic trade has been the basis for Oslomej's existence for a long time. Today the population mostly works in the Oslomej thermal power plant, where electricity is generated to power the Kichevo area.

MAKEDONSKI BROD

The Municipality of Makedonski Brod is a forest haven in our region, represented by mountainous terrain overgrown with dense oak, beech and pine forests, and abundance of fresh water. The river Treska divides the territory into two and forms the largest artificial lake in Macedonia with a length of 32 km. The untouched nature and deep forests hide caves, which make this an attractive destination for many tourists. The New York Times describes the Peshna cave identical to the

cave from the movie Lord of the Rings. The largest Macedonian cave is the cave Slatinski izvor, located near the village of Slatina. An underground river 557 m long flows through the cave. The dense forests are ideal for the possibility of hunting, as well as river and lake fishing that opens the opportunity for various adventures through untouched nature.

PLASNICA and VRANESTICA

The Municipalities of Plasnica and Vranestica are the smallest two municipalities in our region. They are located in the Southern region of Kicevo valley at the foot of Mount Baba along the River Treska. The abundance of water from numerous springs, the mountains with beautiful pastures and various plants, have been the base for existence of old civilizations. Archaeological surveys have revealed settlements from the Neolithic period, Iron Age, Roman and late Antique times. Today, the fertile soil along the river allows the cultivation of crops, such as organic potato, carrot and cabbage. The most common fruits are plums, pears and apples. Vranestica is especially renowned with its pottery community. Over 30 craftsmen from here, produce 80% of the clay pots in the country.

KICHEVO

The city of Kichevo is first mentioned in history at the beginning of the 11th century, however its origins can be linked to the old settlement from the Bronze age, excavated on the high hill called Kitino Kale (Kitino Fortress) and the mystical city of Uskana, mentioned in the wars between the Macedonian king Perseus and the Romans in 170–169 B.C. On the Western side of the valley rises a dense pine forests making it a special place for rest and recreation. The House of Art is located in this natural environment, where an annual international art colony takes place. The beautiful setting provides inspiration for artists to create excellent pieces of work. Since 1980 the Museum of Western Macedonia has been operating, promoting and protecting the cultural heritage of these areas. The museum possesses the largest ethnological collection of costumes, items of furniture, traditional fabrics and old crafts.

DRUGOVO

Municipality of Drugovo is located at the Southern slopes of Mt Bistra, between the Eastern slopes of Mt Stogovo and Ilinska mountain. A large number of archaeological sites from the Bronze Age onwards were found here thanks to... Of a particular interest is the statue of Mercury, considered as the most valuable bronze statue of the god Mercury in Roman mythology ever found. Mercury was the protector of flocks and shepherds, naturally connecting him to the people in this region and the region itself. Scattered villages on the slopes still live in the same manner as they did hundreds of years ago. The abundance of streams and waterfalls flow into artificial ponds for farming trout. The population is mainly engaged in manufacturing and growing healthy organic food. Beekeeping has a stake, and mountain honey is of high quality and distinctive taste. In the forests various forest fruits and medicinal plants naturally grow and are increasingly used in natural herbal medicine. The lowland area is mostly used for growing wheat.

DEBARCA

Adjacent to Ohrid and Stuga, the municipality of Debarca encompasses a large rural area along the Sateska river and its valley, between the Karaorman mountain on the west and Ilinska Mountain on the East. Additionally to the natural beauties and rarities such as lake Slatino, the canyon of the river Pesocanska, the Velmej springs and the wetland Sini Viroj this region abounds with cultural and historical monuments, mainly archeological sites from the iron age and churches dating back to the 13th century. Most attractive in the region are the old and picturesque villages and the untouched nature.



Photo: B. Kiosev



Photo: B. Taneski







Photo: K. Ginoski

OHRID

All visits in the region usually start with Ohrid. According to the historians, Lychnidion i.e. Lychnidos (the ancient name of Ohrid) was built in the 4th century B.C., but again, myths and legends tell us that it was built during the times of the legendary classical civilizations such as Phoenicia and Troy in the 2nd millennium B.C. Whatever the actuality is, Ohrid was and will eternally stay a mystical and sacred place. A town irresistible for great ancient rulers and kings, such as the legendary Phoenician prince Cadmus who built it, Phillip II of Macedon who once conquered it, Alexander the Great who enjoyed it, Czar Samuil who ruled from it...

It is a town where mysterious royal golden masks have been discovered, where the Goddess of destiny Isis, through her cult, ruled for centuries, where grandiose basilicas were built as Christianity evolved. A place where the Ohrid Archbishopric was founded... where the Cyrillic Alphabet, education and Macedonian culture spread from. It is a town which with its legacy endowed not only Macedonia, but also the entire human civilization.

Ohrid is built at the shores of one of the oldest fresh water lakes in the world, understandably it has been affected from its longevity. They together make the unbeatable combination of "the Lake and the Town", a combination which in this case created a bond which lasts for millennia.

Ohrid is one of those places where eternity and continuity coexists and the past and the present join together as time passes forward. A place that radiates with spirituality accumulated for centuries. It is also a place where life is slow and people are passionate, a place which magnetizes every one who comes here... forever.

In 1979, the Committee of UNESCO decided to inscribe Lake Ohrid on the World Heritage List of outstanding universal value, under natural criteria. In 1980, this property was extended to include the cultural and historical area of Ohrid, and cultural criteria were added. It's worth mentioning that from 810 places in 138 States of the UNESCO list, only 24 places are designated as both, natural and cultural heritage sites.

Galicica National Park

The Mountain range of Galicica was created by tectonic shifts in the Paleozoic period (cca 300 millions years ago) and is rising up right between Lake Ohrid and Lake Prespa. The geological substrate of metamorphic silicates covered with massive spongy limestone characterize the geology of the Mountain. Relatively low mountain ranges to Southwest Albania and the communication of air masses from North to South allow penetration of warm sea currents allowing the influence of the Mediterranean climate. The large amount of water in both Lakes naturally store the heat of the day and lower the temperature difference between day and night, thus creating a moderate – continental climate. This unique interaction of geology, morphology and climatic conditions resulted in establishing an ecosystem with high biological diversity. Over a thousand plant species can be found in this unique climate, 14 of which are endemic only to this mountain. Four floral endemic species are relicts from the Pliocene epoch (cca 5 millions years ago): *Morina persica*, *Stipa mayeri*, *Ramonda nathaliae*, *Phelipaea boissieri*.

There is an abundance of life on the mountain. During the spring and the summer season over 160 species of butterflies flutter around the mountain. The total population of vertebrates numbers 171 species and are fully recorded and studied. The Mountain is also a sanctuary for 124 species of birds, 19 mammals, 18 reptiles and 10 amphibians. But yet, the true trademark and the spirit of the mountain is the Lynx (*Lynx martini*) – Balkan Lynx. This magnificent and elusive animal is indigenous to Macedonia and its population varies between 30 to 35 individuals. Since their number is quite small, mainly resulting from activities of man, a special program to protect and recover the population of the Balkan Lynx has been implemented since 2006.

Photo: K. Ginoski









Photo: B. Kjosev

The park covers an area of 25 000 ha, of which 985 ha are strictly protected zones, making it a place of universal and national significance. The island of Golem Grad, at Lake Prespa has great zoological significance since it is a sanctuary and a nesting place for a huge amount of endangered birds such as the White Heron, cormorant, pelican and the Alpine Swift. The highest peaks of the mountain like Magaro summit, are sanctuaries for the Golden Eagle, the white headed vulture and the grey falcon while the marshes near the village of Ste-nye (Lake Prespa) is an ecosystem which holds prehistoric life dating back to the tertiary period.

Galicica National Park is a natural treasure of inestimable value. The park is a haven for naturalists and zoologists from all over the world, but also for all lovers of nature and its wonders. Worth mentioning are the 400 km of well marked hiking and biking trails, as well as places for takeoff and landing for lovers of paragliding. The mountain offers excellent conditions for Nordic skiing in winter and a place where speleologists can explore the largest cave on the Mountain, Samatska Dupka.

Remember, if you find yourself passing by it, do not miss visiting it!



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Paragliding



Paragliding is a different way of experiencing the space around us, and maybe a flight under the sky is just what the doctor ordered for your vacation. The magnificent mountain ranges and ridges around the vast valleys and lakes, especially with highly active thermal air currents allow around 30km of flight and several hours hovering in the air, not to mention the fantastic scenery of the lakes and the beautiful green and dense forests. This is a country that lives with the narcotic scent of pure and untouched nature present in all its corners. Let's conquer the sky together and land safely on the banks of the Lake. Let it be our goal!

Paragliding in Macedonia is promoted and regulated by the air Federation of Macedonia, a member of the International Federation of Air Sports.

Licensed instructors will help you master the techniques of flying in tandem, which is the quickest and safest way to experience paragliding for the first time. Open yourself to new friendships and memorable entertainment. With us the adventure never stops, join us and start your adventure today.



Photo: A. Dodevski







Photo: Z. Spirkoski

Photo: S. Smilevski



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Paragliding Club Delta – Prilep
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Climbing, Hiking & Trekking



To discover the secrets of our beautiful region and to feel the traditions of our people, you will need to travel into the heart of untouched nature, to climb steep rocky verticals, to explore the dense forests, endless plains and sharp mountain ridges, to climb high peaks, to ski steep slopes and long snowy valleys, be reflected in clear glacial lakes, to get drunk from the smell of countless mountain flowers, to sleep covered with starry skies and warm rays of the morning sun...

And when you feel the warmth of the snow then the night light will reveal the secret called Macedonian adventure...

Our region offers hidden treasures for all seekers of real adventure, for those with recreational appetites, easy and memorable walks through the magic of mountain ridges and peaks, surrounded by endless valleys, river canyons and lakes, and for those with extreme wishes there are countless of rocky still unexplored vertical frozen waterfalls and kilometers of long mountain trails ideal for trekking and tour skiing.

Our care will turn your dreams into an unforgettable mountain adventures. For this purpose we organize: Trekking tours from all categories (One or more); Camping – educational and for fun; Summer and winter alpine ascents; Climbing on artificial cliff halls; Turney tours; Team building activities adapted to the needs and desires of your employees.

Our office has two categories of professional leaders: International leaders in the mountain, trained under the highest standard IML, members of the International UIMLA and Alpine national leaders trained under the regulations and program of the Macedonian climbing Federation.

Do not hesitate, feel the challenge!



Photo: D. Dimitrov







Photo: D. Naumoski

Photo: K. Sisloski



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speleology



When the English writer John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was writing his complex fantasy story "Lord of the Rings" in the remote 1937, he couldn't imagine that the system of caves behind Deeping Wall in the Helm's Deep valley really existed somewhere on the Earth. Cave Pesna with its system of 10 km long corridors where the reflection of light, when illuminated, and colors exploding in front of your eyes bring a total new dimension of existence, an existence which can be only paralleled by the magic world of the "Lord of the Rings". You will be fascinated by the cave's 30 meters high entrance, considered to be Europe's largest, and furthermore by the clear white waters of the subterranean River Pesna. The explorations have shown that River Pesna is in fact River Krapska which sinks in forming several small lakes and waterfalls in the largest, but insufficiently explored, cave system in Macedonia. There are numerous caves in the region, but so far, only a few of them meet the standards of safe speleology but still the ones which are active will give you the miracle of feeling the womb of Mother Earth. Among all the caves, one particular cave attracts a special attention, the Gypsum mine-cave, near the city of Debar. The glittering scenery of giant crystals enchants everyone's heart and can be seen in no other place on the continent. The cave-mine is located in the arms of the mountain Deshad and knows all its secrets. The mine itself dates back to the Roman period. These days it is not used to exploit gypsum anymore, but its future is to be used as a tourist attraction. The "Wizards Wall" cave-mine, as we like to call it is five hundred and twenty meters long and at times up to thirty meters wide. Its dept varies between ninety and two hundred meters under the ground. It has three forms of crystallized gypsum, alabaster and selenite crystal and anhibrit or Marienglass – Virgin glass. The purity of the gypsum crystals, according to the crystal purity scale is four nines (99,99). Thermal waters which are present in the cave contribute to the purity of the crystals, and the only cave which can be compared, concerning the quality and translucency of the crys-

Photo: B. Petkovski









tals is to be found in Mexico's Chihuahuan Desert. There are number of caves, trapped under the ground for hundreds of thousands of years, waiting to be "discovered" in their mystical, extraordinary beauty and authenticity is declared a monument of nature. The state makes all the efforts to declare it a world natural heritage site, under the protection of UNESCO.

Photo: B. Petkovski



Exploring Society Ursus Speleos – Skopje
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Biking



Be prepared to raise the adrenaline in your veins. Ride through unforgettable picturesque landscapes that can be found from many view points, all of which are over two thousand meters above sea level. Fall in love with nature, see the blue sky mirrored in the lakes crystal clean waters, smell the freshness of the vegetation, ride through dense forests and the golden wheat grain in the valleys, glance at the rosed-red sunsets, all from which one becomes totally breathless. Enjoy moderate climbs and slopes and get dirty through muddy paths that might make you feel both excited and slightly bowelled. How many places in the world can you experience this all in one place!

Skilled and professional riders will provide you with the security and care needed, with licensed guides, certified for assistance from the Red Cross and International Organization Florian. Our services are: strong bicycles, protective helmets and backpacks provided with nutritional meals, keeping hydrated, and most importantly making sure you have fun in the process. Simply use a daily tour or explore the vicinity at your own pace.

Explore the mountains around our lakes, and learn to feel nature...

Photo: I. Cekic









Photo: J. Jovanoski



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Photo: A. Jovanoski

Hunting



Hunting represents one of the earliest practices for survival in prehistory. Hunters first used the stone as a weapon, than followed spears, bow and arrow up to firearms. The drive and passion of the prehistoric hunter remains ingrained in us today, in a constructive way, in the form of sports, hobbies, recreation of the modern man, in today's civilization which is alienated from nature, but still encourage the instincts and feelings to return to nature, to return to himself. Hunting allows temporarily distance from everyday life, forgetting work and responsibilities. Resting and enjoying the beauty of nature and wild life, and being in companionship with other enthusiasts as yourself. Recognizing the beauty of flora and fauna, hunters enrich their feelings and relationship to nature, an attitude which at the same time is a commitment to nature and wild life.

Planned and rational utilization of game through hunting is an integral part of modern hunting management. Under optimal conditions he multiplies, grows, protects and hunts various games such as: ordinary deer, fallow deer, roe deer, goats and wild pigs. Descending in the lowland, the downstream rivers region abounds with rabbits and various species of feathered game, partridges, turtledoves, quail and pheasant .

In catchment areas one can use more types of services such as off-road vehicle, horses, dogs, hire guns and ammunition or just observe the sport by visiting hunting points.

Photo: Nanostock









Photo: B. Kjosev



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Photo: V. Konjushenko

Fishing



Humanity has been involved in the practice of fishing for at least 40 000 years (early Paleolithic age). Fly fishing is probably the most widespread applied technique of fishing in the world and Macedonia has a very special role in it... In the entire world encyclopedia, at the chapter of fly-fishing, it is clearly mentioned that the first record of artificial fly-fishing originates in Macedonia. This has definitely something to do with the abundance of streams, rivers and lakes in this, "Fairy Tale like country". This ancient technique of fishing is especially used in the region of Ohrid and is called "blinker". The Technique is unique because the trout is caught at great depths and is applicable only in Lake Ohrid, which differs from the so called "trolling". It is also said that the trout is like a golden fish, and it fulfills all the wishes once it is consumed with abundance of delicious Macedonian red wine.

Yield yourselves to the challenge. You are welcomed to catch the golden fish and enjoy its taste with a glass of wine by the lakeside...









Photo: R. Dimitrievski



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sailing



If you got tired of resting on land and wish to feel the lake's breeze on your skin and possibly wish to get wet, then prepare yourself for some fun on the waves at Lake Ohrid. Ohrid and Struga are the only places where you can enjoy sailing in the region. Enjoy the moving panorama of the old town, the blue sky and the crystal clear fresh waters that are drinkable at spots. You will bask in the unforgettable view of the settlements that look like a necklace of beautiful pearls that are linked next to each other, as well as the changes of the lakes color from shallow blue to deep turquoise and green hues. See the sun set over the mountain, romance in the moonlight and feel the wind play with your sail.







Ε458
6243



Photo: S. Stavrev

Let us introduce you to the Ohrid Lake from a different view with licensed and experienced skippers by international maritime standards to guide you.

It is known that water heals and rests the soul. With favorable wind behind you and full sails, up the adrenaline pleasure...



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Photo: B. Kiosev

Kayaking & Rafting



Kayaking at some parts of river Drim is a real challenge for lovers of extreme water sports, and a real opportunity to define the position of man in relation to the dimension of nature. Summer is an ideal time for rafting especially if you're a beginner, then rivers and accumulations are at lower water levels, which reduces the dangers that are possible in this extreme sport. River Drim basin, begins at Lake Ohrid and continues as far as the Adriatic Sea, making it a wonder of nature, providing ideal conditions for rafting. For those more experienced the best time to feel the real challenge of the river is spring and autumn, when the river streams show all their power, recommended only for adrenalin addicts. Information's about historical sites and description of the strems, as well as weather conditions of the certain area are displaced all over the river basin, to prevent the best protection against the elements.



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Photo: Maxolka





Diving



Adventure in the underwater world of million years old tectonic lake hides thousands of secrets within. Pure as a tear, water absorbs the sun's rays violating the depths and creating the spectrum of colors which gives you a sense of being surrounded by pearls all around you, Lake Ohrid is the largest reservoir of drinking water in the world with translucency of water over 20m. There isn't a man who has approached its sandy shores which are part of the picturesque landscape, who doesn't wish for a moment to dive into the depths in a new adventure, an adventure that will take you back three thousand years back in history. Bay of bones – Mico city is a prehistoric Bronze Age settlement. It was the habitat of our ancestors who built over the water – pile dwellings, and underwater surveys revealed about 6000 piles which are based on the great platform on which the houses were built.

The age of the lake dates also to the age of the flora and fauna that are found in the pearly waters. The lake abounds with relict and endemic species of organisms. From the presence of flora and fauna even 146 species are endemic making it the most populous lake in the world, which is the reason for acquiring the name "museum of living fossils", and declaring the lake by UNESCO in 1979 as a the world natural heritage site.

Imagine, all this natural and cultural heritage at the reach of your hands, and that you become part of it in the depths of pearls. Under the standards of Scuba School International in the Bay of bones, running is the diving center where you can take the advantage and the opportunities to learn to dive. To learn to dive is easy when training is provided by a professional team of international instructors.



Photo: M. Sekuloski







Photo: W. Kolvoort

Dive with us, live the most exciting moments in your life, the challenge is before you, accept it...

Photo: M. Sekuloski



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 www.amfora.com.mk

Riding Donkeys and Horses



For sure you haven't seen a donkey and a horse, once most important means of transportation, in live recently. They are used as such in the high mountainous villages even today, but in our region, mostly as a tourist attraction. Beyond any doubt, this will be a different way for you to experience nature's wilderness. You can enjoy the beautiful scenery of our lakes from the heights of the surrounding area. You will feel the Lakes as if it is at the palm of your hand, feel the bubbling mountain streams and the silence of the old beech forest, the purity of the mountain sun and the sound of mountain wind. Of course the taste of home-prepared food produced in environmentally clean natural conditions will stay in your memory for a long, long time... To overnight in a "Hotel with a Million Stars" under the open sky, besides Camp Fire, with a song and homemade grape brandy, that's what we call an experience...

Worth mentioning is that tourists can participate with the everyday life of the villagers, like gathering wood for fire, grill potatoes on open fire... you will be able to hear the sounds of traditional Macedonian instruments: bagpipes and kaval (Macedonian fife), and even learn how to play on them. In this kind of environment you will forget the stress of everyday life and discover the values which have almost disappeared under the conquest of "civilization" of our time. Who still remembers the sound of a water mill and the site of a woman, spinning wool on a handmade loom?

Well, in Southwest Macedonia you can!



Risto's Guest House – Ohrid
ristoguesthouse@t-home.mk
www.ristoguesthouse.4t.com



M&P – Ohrid
miohrid1@t-home.mk
www.kuratika.eu



Photo: R. Stojoski



Sports Center

The main sports center "JP Biljanini Izvori" is located at the edge of Ohrid's borderline. Overlooking the magnificent mountain Galicica this sports and recreation center stretches at XXXXX square meters of land both offering use of outdoor facilities as well as indoors.

As a basis the sports center "JP Biljanini Izvori" provides excellent services in organizing professional sport events such as soccer, sport trainings, both indoor and outdoor events such as concerts, cultural, musical and other events. Such events have made Ohrid a land mark for popular international concerts where stars like Lenny Kravitz, David Guetta... just to name a few, have all performed here attracting thousands of locals and tourists from all around.



Sport Center Biljanini Izvori – Ohrid
biljaniniizvori@gmail.com
www.biljaniniizvori.mk



Photo: I. Cvetkoski



2008 WOMEN'S EUROPEAN
HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIP
MACEDONIA



2008 WOMEN'S EUROPEAN
HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIP
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GAPRO

NONICA AIRBELL

EUROPEAN
HANDBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP

MACEDONIA

Medicinal Baths

Debar valley and its wider area, which houses and Debar Spa Capa, is characterized by the existence of numerous minerals and mineral waters, which again, are of special interest for the development of this region. Besides the picturesque river Radica and Lake Debar, Kosovrasti spring is located at the close proximity, while at the foot of Mount Krcin, 4km North-West of Debar, is the spring of Banjishte. Archaeological studies show that the thermo-mineral waters of this region were used since the Roman Empire. The Ottomans built the first pools in 1797 which still exist today and can be visited by guests. Nature has given to this region sources of natural thermal waters which continuously run throughout the year with a constant temperature of 38°C. According to the examination of the water and the certificate issued by a renowned institute AKAO from Switzerland, the springs are hyper-thermal, rich in various minerals and are radioactive. This characteristics of the physical and chemical composition allows the curative effect of the human body, thus the springs are ranked among the first in Europe and third in the world for their healing properties. Today there are two spa centers built at the site, with modern accommodation facilities and specialized medical and professional staff. The facilities are used for health services, as well as an open type centers for recreational purposes, sports preparation and tourism.

Hot springs with an ideal temperature, a gift of nature to regenerate your body...



Banji Debar - Capa – Debar
info@bdcapa.com
www.bdcapa.com



Photo: T. Qemali



Carnivals



Vevcani Carnival is quite a well-known event that happens only once a year and celebrates the arrival of the New Year following the Julian (old) calendar. The carnival itself is a blend of pagan and modern celebrations. Due to the characteristics of Vevchani's archaic and unique masks, this Carnival differs from the rest of its kind. The trademarks of the carnival are the three traditional masks: The Bride, The Groom and Dumb August. People of Vevcani prepare their masks in great secrecy and nobody is spared from criticism: politicians, public figures, or actual events from Macedonia or the rest of the World are all ripe topics for ridicule through elaborate masks and floats. The Carnival attracts thousands of visitors each year and is enriched with cultural content, and of course with a large quantity of rakiya (grape brandy) and wine. The Carnival has a spectacular end, when all the masks are burned in a gigantic open fire at the center of the village... During the carnival, Vevcani people from all around the world travel back to their village, because it is said "wherever you are – be back home for Christmas... and the Carnival!"

Interestingly enough, even though it is so close to the village of Vevcani the carnival in the village of Kuratica creates a completely different atmosphere from the one in Vevchani. "One mountain away, but one universe as well," as it is said. Here you are offered a mask and you can be part of the carnival, which makes all the difference. A great opportunity to feel the past of the traditions of the village, and for once at least, try to cast the evil spirits which, according to belief, are present in the unbaptized days, between when Jesus was born, and when was baptized (according to the Julian calendar the 7th of January is Orthodox Christmas, and the 19th is Epiphany, or the baptism.) This carnival has a growing number of attendees, but will hopefully stay small and secret feeling.



Photo: A. Cuskoski



Let's go for a swim... in January?

Every year on the 19th of January thousands of men and women, young and old have been turning up early in the morning to witness this unique even where around a hundred participants or so are brave enough to brace themselves for a short swim in the almost freezing waters early in the morning to take the challenge of catching the holy cross. It is believed that whoever catches the cross will be blessed and good luck and fortune will follow.

This Christian holiday known as Bogojavlenie – Vodici is if not one of the most significant events in the Orthodox calendar. This is practiced throughout all Macedonian cities. The main event is held in Ohrid. This spectacular site attracts thousands of tourists every year from all over the world. As a tradition, all over the city warm sweetened rakiya is served for free as a sign of gratitude and for good health. Everyone is welcomed to participate, although locals are to be known to master the technique of catching the cross undoubtedly.

The following day, known as "Tatil" is celebrated by all fishermen to honor the end of the spawning season of the local Ohrid trout. Respecting this tradition, fishing is not allowed between December and January 20th. As a gesture to prove their strength and bravery, all fishermen organize an event where 9 barrels are thrown in the lake where 8 are filled with red wine and 1 with white. The lucky fisherman is the one that will find the one barrel with white wine. To celebrate this, it is tradition to drink pre-heated wine and rakiya as well as fish stew prepared by the fishermen. This year for the first time, this group of fishermen managed to cook two tons of fish stew in one enormous pot. Their aim is to continue this annual event and hopefully one day enter the Guinness book of records.



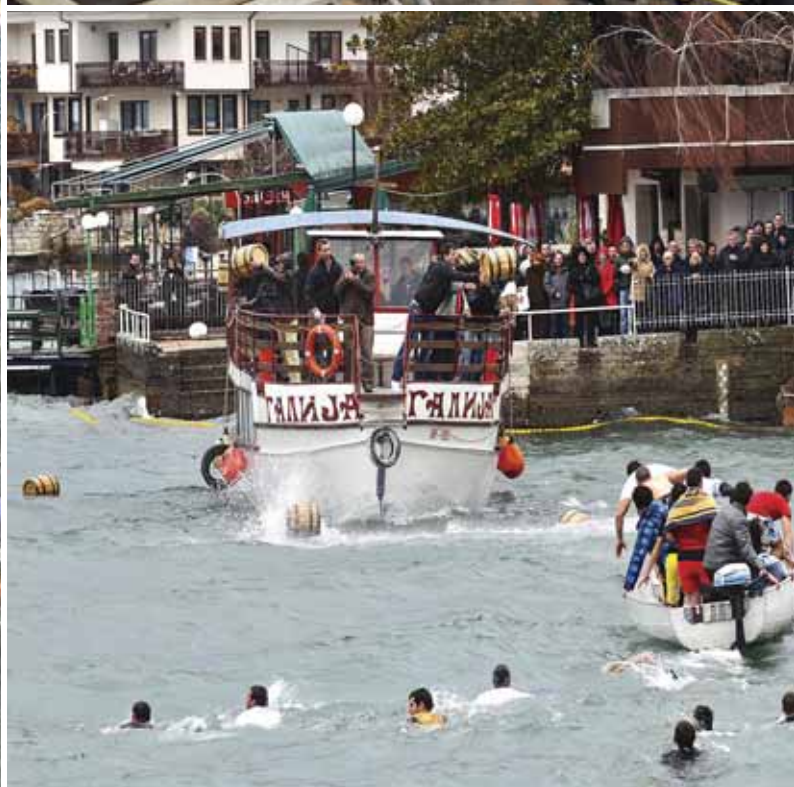
Association Bogojavlenie Vodici – Ohrid
contact@vodici.com.mk
www.vodici.com.mk



Association Adriatic Basin – Ohrid
ribarskavistina@hotmail.com
www.ribari.mk



Photo: A. Kovaceski



Useful Information?

HOW TO GET IN OUR REGION

FIRST OF ALL

Check whether your visa is needed for entry into Macedonia

www.mfa.gov.mk/viz-bil.php

or maybe you need a visa for the countries through which you can spend to get to us.

BY PLANE

There are two airports in Macedonia, Alexander the Great Airport – Skopje and St. Paul the Apostle Airport – Ohrid, www.airports.com.mk There are regular and charter flights from every major European city: Amsterdam, Brussel, Dusseldorf, Hamburg, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Zurich, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Budapest, Belgrade, Rome, Podgorica, Sofia and Istanbul, you can select any of the following air companies to fly in our region:

www.croatiaairlines.hr ; www.adria.si ; www.austrian.com ; www.jat.com ; www.malev.hu ; www.thy.com ; www.delfino.com.mk ; www.edelweissair.ch ; www.belleaireurope.com ; www.airberlin.com ; www.blue-panorama.com ; www.flypgs.com ; www.hello.ch ; www.wizzair.com

You can also use other airports in our neighborhood:

Serbia – Belgrade

www.beg.aero which is 640 km from Ohrid

Montenegro – Podgorica

www.montenegroairports.com which is 300 km from Ohrid.

Bulgaria - Sofia

www.sofia-airport.bg , which is 420 km away from Ohrid.

Greece – Thessaloniki

www.thessalonikiairport.gr , which is 320 km away from Ohrid.

There are regular bus connections from these airports to Ohrid: Serbia www.bas.rs Belgrade – Ohrid every day, throughout the year at 21:30

Bulgaria www.centralnaavtogara.bg Sofia – Ohrid

– every day throughout the year at 19:00

Greece www.sas.com.mk Thessaloniki – Skopje

– Mon. Wen. Fri. All year at 16:00

BY BUS

If you choose to travel by bus, connections are available from all biggest cities in Europe, two – three times in week to Skopje and Tetovo. From Skopje and Tetovo to Ohrid you may catch the bus

on every two hours. For more credible information please contact your nearest bus station or visit:

www.sas.com.mk & www.avtobuskastanicaetetovo.com.mk

BY TRAIN

You can use the connections from Vienna, Budapest, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade, Thessaloniki or Athens. They arrive at Central Railway Station in Skopje. For credible information visit:

www.bahn.de

MONEY & PAYMENT

Macedonian Denar is the official currency in Macedonia.

Money can be exchanged in all banks and specialized exchange offices. ID must be provided. Legally you can not pay in euros, though it is possible to pay with small losses on the course and involves a certain risk.

A lot of cash machines are located in all City areas, hotels, shopping centres.

Credit cards: American Express, Visa, Diners Club, Master Card, and Eurocard are accepted. Traveller's cheques can be exchanged in any major bank office.

BANKS

Open time:

7 AM – 7 PM during the week

7 AM – 1 PM Saturdays

Closed on Sundays

Banks: www.nbrm.gov.mk ; www.ob.com.mk ; www.sparkasse.mk ;

www.eurostandard.com.mk ; www.unibanka.com.mk ;

www.alphabank.com.mk ; www.kb.com.mk ;

www.halkbank.com.m ; www.stb.com.mk

POST OFFICES

Open time:

7 AM – 6 PM during the week

7 AM – 1 PM Saturdays

Closed on Sundays

PHONE NETWORKS

There are 3 mobile phone operators in Macedonia, T-Mobile, ONE and also VIP network is available. There are a lots of mobile phone stores in down town area where mobile phone can be bought. There is the possibility to buy prepaid packages for all mobile networks. Forrecharging the bill voucher can be found in almost every newspaper story.

INTERNET

According to law in Macedonia, every hotel, cafe bar and restaurant offers Wi-Fi free of charge. Ask for a password! A lot of Internet cafes are available in cities, for a price of 1 euro per hour.

FOOD AND DRINKS

Eating time in our region is the same with the rest of Europe. Meals tend to be long, drawn-out affairs where food and drinks are usually secondary to conversation and company. There are a lot of places where people can enjoy local food and traditional specialties, Meana – Buffet, Taverna, etc... There are also a lot of traditional Western bars, restaurants and fast food restaurants. Traditional Irish Pubs, Branded Cuban, Italian, Chinese restaurants, McDonald etc.

Macedonia is a known for quality wines. You cannot imagine how many different types of wine we have. There are several types of beer what we produce as well, but also a variety of imported beers are available.

Most of the bars and restaurants are closed after 12:00 P.M. but there are specialized bars, discotheques and casinos that run until morning. Free wireless Internet is also available in some of the bars. Almost every waiter speaks English!

Prices !?! very cheap in bars & restaurants:

Water – 0,25l / 0,70 euro cents

Coffe – one euro or less

Non-alcoholic drinks – 0,80 -1,50 euro cents

Beer 0,33l – 1, 5 and 3 euro

Wine 0,75l – starting from 7 euro

Other prices:

Baked goods – 0,25 euro cents

Sandwich – 1-2 euros

Pizza – 3-5 euros

Fish 250g – 5 euro

Meet 100g – 1,50-3 euros

Lunch meal – starting from 5 euro per person, without drinks

Other must try meals:

We recommend for breakfast:

Burek Layered pastry inherited from Ottoman times and popular for breakfast. Choose with meat, white cheese, spinach and white cheese or pizza burek and take a cup of traditional Macedonian yogurt.

We recommend for lunch:

Start with traditional Macedonian alcoholic beverages, rakija or mastika. Macedonian salad: fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, roasted paprika and white cheese cubes. Ribna corba – traditional fish soup served in most restaurants. Makalo – strained garlic and vinegar. Gjomleze – traditional specialty of mushy layers like pancakes, but ready to fire under primitive oven.

TAXI

The taxi service has been regulated by the City to provide fair service and equal fares. Start price is 1 euro with 0,5 euro for 1 km. Note: Ask for fiscal bill in all restaurants, taxi & shops.

RENT A CAR

All major and popular Rent a Car agency are present in Skopje and Ohrid. You can rent a car for a period of time during your stay in Macedonia.

www.macedonia.rentalcargroup.com/index.htm

www.sixt.com/car-rental/macedonia

www.hertz.mk

www.ohrid.com/rent-a-car.html

MORE INFORMATION

for all Municipalities in the region on the official websites:

STRUGA – www.struga.gov.mk

VEVCANI – www.vevcani.gov.mk

CENTAR ZUPA – website under construction

DEBAR – www.dibra.gov.mk

ZAJAS – website under construction

OSLOMEJ – website under construction

MAKEDONSKI BROD – www.mbrod.gov.mk

PLASNICA – website under construction

VRANESTICA – www.vranestica.gov.mk

KICEVO – www.kicevo.gov.mk

DRUGOVO – www.drugovo.gov.mk

DEBARCA – website under construction

OHRID – www.ohrid.gov.mk

TRAVEL AGENCIES

LET'S TRAVEL – www.letstravel.com.mk

GEMA TRAVEL – www.gematravel.com

DEAT TOURS – www.deatours.com.mk

LALE TOURS – www.laletours.com

HAJBA TOURS – www.hajbatours.com

ACCOMODATION

ROYAL VIEW – www.royalview.com.mk

HOTEL DRIM – www.drim.com.mk

VILLA DEA – www.deatours.com.mk

LALE ACCOMODATION – www.laletours.com

GEMA ACCOMODATION – www.gematravel.com

RISTO'S GUEST HOUSE – www.ristosguesthouse.4t.com

KUTMICEVICA – www.gastronomskivodic.com.mk/kutmicevica.html

VILLA CANEO & DUDAN – www.ohridaccommodation.com.mk

BANJI DEBAR CAPA – www.bdcapa.com

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

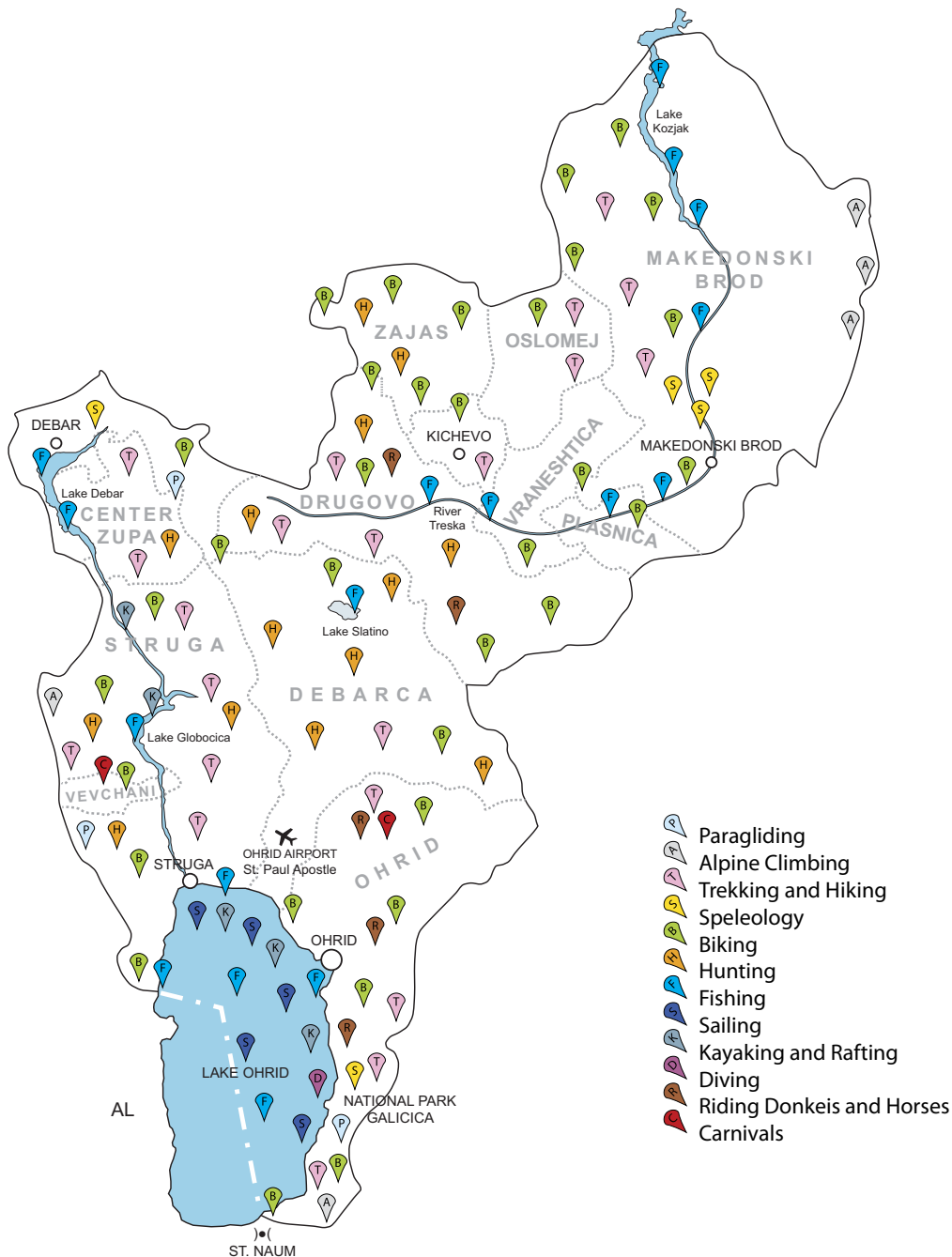
www.macedonia-timeless.com ; www.macedonialovesyou.com

www.travel2macedonia.com.mk ; www.exploringmacedonia.com

www.vodic.strugaportal.com ; www.ohridtravel.com

www.ohrid.com.mk ; www.ohrid.com ; www.ohridmacedonia.mk







DELTA
PARAGLIDING CLUB



ASSOCIATION OF
ECOLOGY, FISHING AND HUNTING
MALESIA



Biking & Cycling Club - Ohrid, Makedonia



Organized Cycling Excursions in Makedonia



Village of Zbazdi - Struga



YC SIRMA
Yachting Club Sirma - Struga



ASSOCIATION OF HUNTERS
"ELEN"
KICEVO





VILLA CANEO

VILLA DUDAN





Active Holidays

in Southwest Macedonia

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Design & Prepress:

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Press:



Copies:

3000

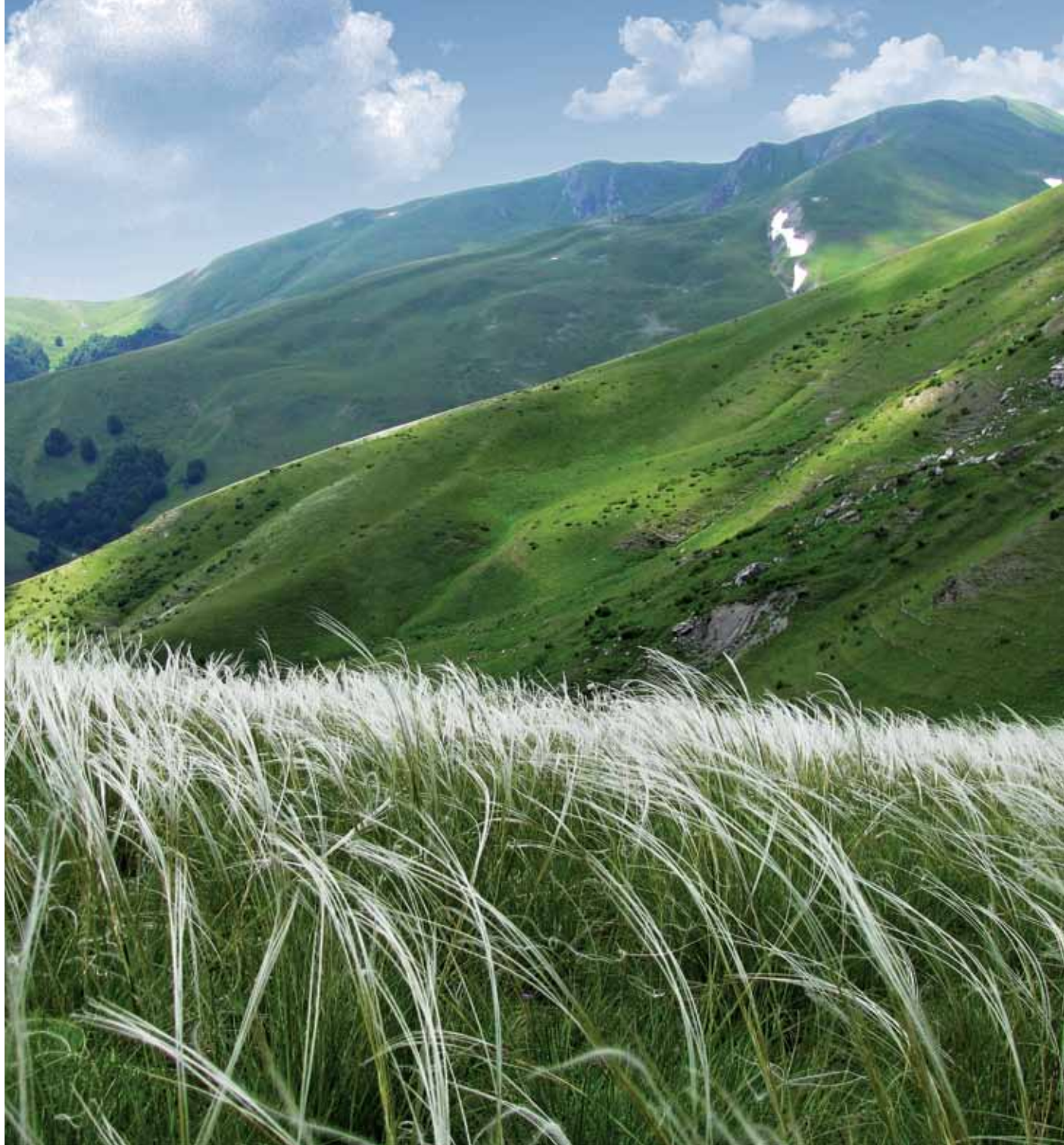


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Supported by the GIZ RED Programme for Regional Economic Development in Macedonia
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Welcome to the land of music and emotions, we invite you to the world of ancient stories, the place where for a moment you will hear the silence of the spirits of our ancestors. Here, from the depths of the water through the mountain heights you can touch the sky and fascinating places of cultural heritage and untouched nature. Let us help you live your fantasy adventures and serve you unforgettable feasts...

*Discovering Nature,
Experiencing Tradition!*



EDEN - Tourism Cluster of Southwest Macedonia

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6000 Ohrid, Macedonia

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www.eden.mk



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