

Bulgarian *Rhapsody*

Eastern Europe has a lot to offer from beaches, mountains, and medieval towns to the cityscape, discovers **Veathika Jain**



Veathika Jain is a potter, Kathak dancer, reader, traveller and a media professional based in Dubai. Her aim is to visit at least 180 countries as she believes travel is the best education one can get

The more I travel, the more I think that, "Anyone can travel, all you need is an inquisitive mind and an adventurous streak." It's usually fun to travel with a group of people or with your partner but I took the plunge and travelled solo when I went to Bulgaria. The experience was new, unique, fun and liberating, all at the same time. I met many new people of which some have become good friends.

Bulgaria in Eastern Europe has a lot to offer from beaches, mountains, and medieval towns to the cityscape. I flew in to Sofia – Bulgaria's capital, and from the airport took the subway to the city center, for a cost of only 1 Lev. The subway system is great and whatever be the destination or however many stops you take, the cost remains the same, just 1 Lev!

After I checked in at my hotel which also had a casino, I did a quick Google search on the free walking tour of Sofia and found that I could catch the 6PM one. Grabbing my jacket and umbrella, I headed off to the nearest subway station, preferring it over the trams and buses, which are also convenient options. Once I reached

the designated stop, I needed to ask for directions to the meeting point. The people seemed friendly and the youngsters, especially, know English.

The free tour was absolutely fantastic, and saw us walking through the country's history and the main monuments. While we sauntered through the roads of Sofia, and saw the bath houses, President's residence and architectural marvels, what struck me was that they even enacted a small play to make us really understand the history of the nation! There are many churches and cathedrals in Sofia, the most magnificent one being Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. You must put this one on your itinerary!

