

# **SKOPJE**

## **The Capital of Macedonia**

The 26th of July 1963 is one of the worst dates in the history of Skopje. An earthquake struck the city at 5:17am. 75% of the buildings in the city disappeared in just a few seconds. After that, the big rebuilding project began, trying to make Skopje the model city of the socialist world. The plan was drawn by the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange, who also designed the new railway station. The plan was never fully carried out, unfortunately. Lately many reconstruction projects have started. Some towers of Kale Fortress and an old cathedral are being reconstructed, and the old theater is also awaiting reconstruction. Skopje is an eclectic mix of Christian and Islamic culture, with both vying to make themselves visible. However, this cultural mix has also spawned a lively and varied society, you can see people playing chess in the morning in the numerous cafés and green spaces in the summer. In the evening, Skopje comes to life as the locals dine in the cafés before heading to the bars and live music clubs, most of which are open until 3am.

### **History**

Apart from being the capital of the modern Republic of Macedonia, Skopje has always been a center of power long coveted by various empires. The city founded by the Dardanians in the 3rd century B.C.E. under the name of 'Skupi' was prized for its strategic location, in a long valley between two hills, situated on the banks of the Vardar River, a vital trade route. Under the Romans, Skopje was made administrative center of the Dardanian Province. The city's prestige grew when the Orthodox Church made it an episcopal seat during the early Byzantine Empire. The arrival of migrating Slavic tribes from the Carpathians in the 6th century C.E. changed both the city's name and the composition of its people were assimilated by the Slavic newcomers. Throughout the remaining Byzantine centuries, Skopje continued to be an important mercantile center, situated as it was at the crossroads of Balkan trade and communications routes. It was celebrated for its urban life and fortress, and renowned for having the most beautiful church in the region. At the very end of the 14th century, Skopje and all of Macedonia fell under the rule of the Ottoman Turks. In the ensuing centuries, the look of the town changed with the construction of many mosques, Turkish baths, bridges, and other buildings attesting to the new Oriental influence. Today, the Ottoman legacy remains extremely visible in Skopje's architecture and small Islamic minority. After Macedonia was liberated from the Turks in the early 20th century, it became a republic of the Yugoslav Federation, with Skopje as the capital. At that time, the prosperous city boasted many ornate, Neo-classical buildings laid out harmoniously in a more or less Central European style. However, in 1963 a disastrous earthquake leveled much of the regal old city, and Skopje was reborn in the imaginative, futuristic style in vogue at the time. Today, Skopje is a modern city of almost one million, and Macedonia's major political, economical, educational, and cultural center.

## Visa

**International delegates who require an invitation in order to make visa arrangements and other travel requirements need to contact the Conference Secretary Jagoda Trajcova. [jagodatrajcova@yahoo.com](mailto:jagodatrajcova@yahoo.com)**

## Getting to Skopje

### By plane

Skopje Airport - Aleksandar Makedonski International Airport (Alexander the Great) (IATA: SKP), is 20 kilometres from Skopje. Cities that are connected to Skopje are: Ljubljana, Milan, Vienna, Sarajevo, Sofia, Split, Zagreb, Prague, Cologne, Bonn, Zurich, Belgrade, Ohrid, Dusseldorf, Budapest, Amsterdam, Berlin, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Istanbul, Paris, and Rome. Airlines that serve Skopje are: MAT(Macedonian Airlines), Adria Airways, MALEV, Austrian Airlines, Cirrus, Alitalia, B&H Airlines, Croatia Airlines, Czech Airlines, Helvetic Airways, Jat Airways, LTU International, and Turkish Airlines. The airport is accessed by the main highway Belgrade-Skopje-Thessaloniki which connects it directly with the city. Unfortunately there is no public transport that connects the airport with Skopje so you would have to take a taxi or arrange personal transportation.

**[www.airports.com.mk](http://www.airports.com.mk)**

### By train

To come to Skopje by train you could come either from Serbia or Greece. Skopje is connected on the main line Belgrade-Thessaloniki. From Belgrade it will take 9 hours by train. On the other hand from Thessaloniki it takes 5 hours by train. There are daily trains from both the directions. If you come from Greece, you have to give your passport to a policeman at the border (in the train). Then you have to get out of the train and go into a small house outside the train station, to get your passport back again. If you don't know what to do, ask other passengers and look at what they are doing. Usually they are very friendly and want to help you. The transport center includes the train and the bus station together. They are located in the center of the city near the National Central Bank.

**[www.mz.com.mk](http://www.mz.com.mk)**

### By bus

There are buses to Skopje from Sofia, Belgrade, Thessaloniki, Istanbul, Zagreb, Austria, Germany, Dubrovnik, and Podgorica. The buses arrive in the bus station which is below the train station. All the domestic and international buses arrive in the bus station. It is a new and very modern bus station.

**[www.sas.com.mk](http://www.sas.com.mk)**

## Sightseeing

Most people in Skopje just see the concrete buildings and run away, but if one looks deeper one will find some excellent examples of Ottoman architecture and much more. Most of the sights in Skopje are situated in and around the old bazaar. Some places to see are: Kale Fortress, the Stone Bridge, Old Bazaar, Suli An & Mustafa Pasha Mosque in the old bazaar Kapan An; Kurshumli An, Daut Pasha Hamam, Skopje's Old Bazaar & Double Hamam; Bezisten, Macedonian National Museum & Icon Gallery, Mustapha Pasha Mosque, St. Bogorodica Church; St. Saviour Church; Bit Pazar; Clock Tower, Sultan Murat Mosque, Isa beg Mosque, Jahja Pasha Mosque, Macedonia Square, Parliament Building, St. Kliment of Ohrid Cathedral; Feudal Tower, Old Railway Station, Skopje City Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art, Natural Science Museum, Macedonian National Theatre, The City Park, Aqueduct, Millennium Cross on Vodno Mountain.

## Shopping

**GTC** - this is the biggest shopping center in the city. It was made in the 1970s by Zivko Popovski. It includes cafes, restaurants, bars, banks, shops, and even has a bowling court.

**Ramstore Mall** - if you are looking for an American looking mall, this is where you'll want to go. It has shops, restaurants, cafes and cinema.

**Biser** - a new shopping center with very nice cafes, bars, and shops. Many young people from the city come to spend their extra time here.

**Bunjakovec** - this is one of the malls where everybody can find something to buy. It is located in one of the busiest thoroughfares in Skopje. It includes many shops and boutiques.

**City Gallery** - new shopping center in Skopje with lots of high quality fashion stores and very interesting structure, like a labyrinth

## Currency

The currency is "Macedonian Denar". You can get it from one of the many ATMs in the centre. 61.5 denars are approximately one euro, 39 denars are approximately 1 U.S. dollar, and 77 denars are approximately one British Pound. Make sure you don't take out too many at once, as when you leave the country you won't find many places that will exchange them for you !!!

## **Food and eating out**

Macedonia's capital offers something to satisfy all modern tastes and appetites. Make sure to try the famous Macedonian foods such as burek, Shopska salata, and others.

Skopje's restaurants are almost beyond number, and offer a diverse range of local and international flavors. International cuisine is well represented in Skopje with Chinese, Italian, Indian, Greek, Mexican, Middle Eastern and French restaurants all found within the city center. In addition, pizza and fast food places abound, as do small bakery cafes selling pastries such as the ubiquitous burek (a flaky filo pie stuffed with meat, cheese or spinach).

Some popular restaurants in Skopje include:

Uranija, Tel: 389-3118-030.

Tri Biseri, Tel: 389-2461-171.

Kamnik, Tel: 389-2523-522 Fax: 389-2580-540.

Gino Italian Restaurant, Tel: 389-3121-109.

Sofka, Tel: 389-3224-225.

Marakana, Tel: 389-3221-548.

Irski Pab(Irish Pub), Tel: 389-3220-431 Fax: 389-3128-289.

Enriko, Tel: 389-3061-273.

Ezerce, Tel: 389-3122-389.

Makedonska Kuka, Tel: 389-3296-415 Fax: 389-3296-416

Restaurant 14, Tel: 389-3076-411. Location: Taftalidze, near the green market, a few minutes drive away from the center of the city. Beside the traditional Macedonian food, macrobiotic and vegetarian dishes are available for the guests.

## **Drinks**

While most cafes and bars will have foreign beers, the local ones are tasty and much cheaper, and most outlets will carry either Skopsko or Zlaten Dab. Its not hard to find good cafes but a good place to start is by the riverside near the old bridge, and at night this becomes a lively party area as well. In addition to local cafe's, you'll also find the city's Irish bar where you can go if you feel the need for a more familiar drinks menu.

## Accommodation

ELTAM has arranged accommodation at various hotels in Skopje that can be easily reached and have very good connection to the Conference event. All the offered hotels are with different prices which delegates can choose. In order to reserve accommodation at your preferred hotel we recommend to book as soon as possible, because for a group of delegates (10) you can get a discount from the hotel. You can also find info about accommodation on many sites on the internet. Just type: hotel accommodation in Skopje, Macedonia.

- **Hotel 'JADRAN'** 8 27 Mart St., tel 00 389 (0)23118427 Skopje  
1/1 room 39 E; 1/2 room= 60 E; 1/3 room= 80 E per person  
\*\*for more than 10 people 1/1=30 E; 1/2= 50E; 1/3=69E  
\*\*lunch or dinner 7.5 E
  
- **Hotel ' Ferijalen Dom'** tel 00 389 (0)23111712 Skopje  
1/1 foreigners = 1900 den; domestic guests =1500 den  
1/2 foreigners =3000 den ( per room); domestic guests =2000 den ( per room)
  
- **Hotel ' Karpos'** Sekspirovska bb, 1000 Skopje ;tel 00389 (0)23088388;  
[www.hotelkarpos.com.mk](http://www.hotelkarpos.com.mk) ; e-mail ;: [hotelkarpos@hotelkarpos.com.mk](mailto:hotelkarpos@hotelkarpos.com.mk)  
1/1 room 110 E ; 1/2 room 130 E ( per person)  
Special discount rates for reservations before 01.10.2008  
1/1 room - 70 E 1/2 room - 90 E (per person)  
\*\* additional meal 11 E per person
  
- **Hotel ' Bimbo'** ul 29 Noemvri 63, 1000 Skopje, Macedonia  
➤ Tel 389 (O ) 2 3214 517  
1/1 room= 32 E; 1/2 room=44 E; 1/3 = 66 E (per person)
  
- **\* all prices include breakfast**
  
- **Hotel Stone Bridge**  
ul Kej Dimitar Vlahov 1 ,1000 Skopje  
tel + 389 2 3244900, fax 389 2 3244982  
[info@stonebridge-hotel.com](mailto:info@stonebridge-hotel.com)  
[www.stonebridge-hotel.com](http://www.stonebridge-hotel.com)  
weekend rates 1/1 96 E ; rack rates 138 E  
1/2 111 E 159 E  
Rates include use of swimming pool, jacuzzi sauna, fitness centre and cable and wireless internet in all rooms in the hotel 5 stars

- **HOTEL "Laki"** prices from 13 E to 35 E.  
Leninova 79  
tel. (++389 2) 3128 120  
3116 836  
fax: (++389 2) 3116 827

## **Transportation around the city**

‘ NASE TAXI ‘ tel 15 152; mob 070 415 152; toll free: 0800 15 152;  
[contact@nasetaxi.com.mk](mailto:contact@nasetaxi.com.mk)

Taxi from the downtown to the American University is approximately 120,00 denars or 2 E for three people.

## **Safety**

Skopje, just like most of the rest of Macedonia, is a relatively safe place. But, the usual rules about common sense apply here as they would anywhere. The places where crime occurs most often are in the places where tourists have little reason to be at.