

# TRAVEL

### 2D1N Batam Mid Autumn Celebration with Huang Wen Yong

**Package Includes:**

- 2-way ferry + land transfer
- 1 night accommodation at choice of hotel
- 1 breakfast, 1 lunch & 1 gala dinner
- Tour & sightseeing as per itinerary

Special Departure: 18 September 2010

**FREE** Exclusive WTS Limited Edition Luggage Tags

**Fr \$128 + \$27 (tax)**

WTS Travel www.wtstravel.com.sg

6735 8558 | 6587 8558 | 6467 8558 | 6764 8558 | 6346 8558 | 6452 2262

### SPECIAL AIRFARE

Taipei	fr \$252	Seoul/Busan	fr \$359
Yangon/Ho Chi Minh	fr \$252	Chennai/Mumbai	fr \$311
Kunming/Hong Kong	fr \$252	Kathmandu	fr \$311
Chengdu/Guangzhou	fr \$252	Milan/Frankfurt/Rome/ Athens/Moscow	fr \$660
Tokyo/Osaka	fr \$359	Los Angeles	fr \$660

\*Fares from \$100-\$700. \*Terms & conditions apply.

WTS Travel 6467 8558

### SUPER SPECIAL WEEKLY OFFER!

#### 3D2N MACAU/ZHUHAI/ ZHONGSHAN LEISURE TOUR

✓ FREE Macau City Of Dream Lunch / Dinner Meal Voucher (MOP \$168)

✓ FREE Macau Souvenir

✓ FREE "Dragon Treasure at The Bubble Show" Entrance Ticket

**fr \$125 (Land only)**

---

#### WANBAO HEALTH, WELLNESS & GOURMET CRUISE

##### 2N MALACCA/KUALA LUMPUR CRUISE

✓ 2N Stay Onboard SuperStar Virgo

✓ Cooking Demo by Mr Moses Lim

✓ Special Morning Exercise by Mr Lim Choon Huat

✓ Goodies bag + Lucky Draw Prizes up to \$10,000

✓ Gala Lunch / Limited Edition Cruise Certificate

✓ FREE Sunway Pyramid Privilege Card

✓ FREE Return Coach Transfer to Sunway Pyramid Shopping Mall

**fr \$259** Dep: Jul 28

---

#### 4D3N DISCOVER THE NATURE - SABAH

✓ Kota Kinabalu City Tour, Mount Kinabalu Park, Poring Hot Spring, Klias Wetland and Rivercruise

**fr \$348 (Land only)**

WTS Travel 6467 8558

## Taiwan. the Best of All Worlds Awaits

### 3D TAIPEI FREE & EASY

Includes return air ticket on China Airlines and 2 nights hotel stay with breakfast.

**\$505 Per Pax**

MIN 2 PAX TO GO!

### 4D TAIPEI SHOPPING & HOT SPRING TOUR

Includes return air ticket on China Airlines, 3 nights hotel stay with breakfast, return airport transfers and sightseeing to National Palace Museum, Mao's Princess House, Chiufen, Tienlu Handicraft Centre, Peitou Hot Spring and Shinlin Night Market.

**\$599 Per Pax**

MIN 2 PAX TO GO!

### 7D TAIWAN SCENIC ISLAND TOUR

Visit Taipei, Yilan, Hualien, Taitung, Keelung, Nantou and Taichung

**\$810 Per Pax**

MIN 2 PAX TO GO!

### 8D ALL TAIWAN DELIGHT TOUR

Visit Taipei, Hualien, Taitung, Keelung, Keelung, Keelung and Taichung

**\$925 Per Pax**

MIN 2 PAX TO GO!

East Asia Travel 62231131 | 66341131 | 65363235

# Fired up in Bulgaria

The voice of new Bulgaria resonates throughout the artist enclave of Plovdiv

Nellie Huang  
travel@mediacorp.com.sg



SLIGHTLY moody but charismatic, with a hint of melancholy, Plovdiv left a deep impression as I walked past its graffiti-covered walls and timeworn architecture. On the surface, this central Bulgarian city can pass off as any other Western European town with its cobblestone paths, churches and Roman ruins. But underneath Plovdiv's skin is a city of contrasts — edgy urbanites in spunky outfits living amid grim communist-era buildings. A former Eastern Bloc nation, Bulgaria has had its fair share of political battles and communist governance. For decades, its citizens were told how to lead their lives. Today, a young generation of Bulgarians are breaking out of the mould; expressing themselves through contemporary art and music — and they have chosen Plovdiv as their stage.

**So long, drab world**  
Transforming from a historic city to a vibrant, progressive art enclave, Plovdiv seems to have skipped decades to be where it is today. Art student Silvina Burdzhieva, however, has a different perspective: "Plovdiv hasn't changed much. It is, the people, who have changed." The proof is in the city, which has retained its air of nonchalance even as

its inhabitants speak passionately about a brave new world. Burdzhieva said: "Art allows us to freely express our thoughts and emotions. We have come a long way and I'd like to think that art has helped us to advance and progress." She's not alone in her enthusiasm. "Contemporary art is very hip at the moment. Plovdiv is now on the wave of popularity, and if we continue doing what we do best, we can be at the forefront of art, like the rest of Europe," said Burdzhieva's partner Stanimir Vrachev, who is a professional photographer.

We hiked up the cobblestone slopes of Plovdiv's historic centre to the peak of the Hill of the Liberators. From here, the view is of hills, ruins and outdoor cafes. As the second largest city in Bulgaria, Plovdiv is surprisingly compact. Yet, even with a population of some 380,000, it has, in addition to its numerous art galleries, a centre for contemporary art. Housed in an ancient Roman bath, the centre promotes various forms of modern expression. This summer, the focus is on the performing arts. Pushing boundaries is "not so scary" Snaking past teahouses and boutiques,

Otets Paisiy Street soon revealed that it too could be a venue for art. Larger-than-life photos of the street shot during the '60s were spread tastefully on its chiselled walls. According to Burdzhieva and Vrachev, this was part of the preparations for the Otets Paisiy Street Festival. At the end of the road is the couple's favourite hangout, a stylish and minimalist bar cum art gallery aptly named Art News Cafe. The news aspect is neatly contained in the cafe's rows of catalogues, magazines and books on contemporary art. A newsletter produced by the cafe details events in the art world. Owners Katherine and Vesselina Sariieva are the pushing force behind Plovdiv's emerging art scene, having organised several events here as well as the Otets Paisiy Weekend Festival. Despite bureaucratic obstacles, they have succeeded in setting up a popular arts centre. In their words: "Contemporary art is not so scary and it does not hurt." At the cafe's outdoor patio, we were joined by Burdzhieva's friends — several photographers, a philosopher and a sculptor who left her hometown of Sofia for Plovdiv. She said: "I like the liberal and free-thinking vibes in Plovdiv, it's very different from Sofia. Contemporary art is about being yourself, and I can only completely express myself here."

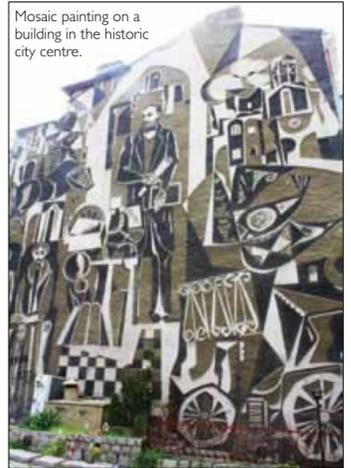
**Comfort zone? What's that?**  
The next day, the street festival was in full swing by noon. Music performances and



(Above) Street artists light up the night with a fiery performance during the Otets Paisiy Street Festival.

(Right) Graffiti-covered walls are common in this art enclave.

Photos: Nellie Huang



graffiti demonstrations drew revellers and curious passers-by to the thoroughfare. At Dzhumaya Dzhamiya square, a literary flash-mob gathered to read aloud simultaneously. In another area, professional modern dancers Ana Salazar and Monika Pungerovs sashayed around blindfolded, touching street poles and caressing the faces of the audience. We passed awestruck spectators to get to the Sariiev Gallery, founded by the Sariieva sisters to give artistic expression free rein. There, a performance artist stood behind a white screen with nothing but his face and private part — painted in gold — on display. Titled *24 Carat Art*, the audacious act featured Emil Mirazchiev, a symbolic figure in the Bulgarian contemporary art scene. As night crept in, street artists lit up the dark with twirling balls of fire. The crowd roared in awe; I cheered too — not only for the fire dancers — but for the thriving art scene that makes Plovdiv a thrilling place to be.

## SHE SAID

**Art allows us to freely express our thoughts and emotions ... I'd like to think that it has helped us to advance and progress.**

**Silvina Burdzhieva**

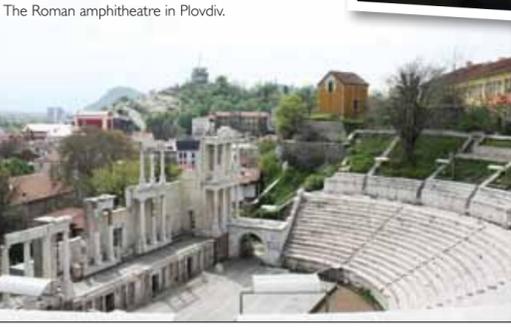
**TRIP NOTES**

**Go:** The gateway to Bulgaria is its capital, Sofia. Lufthansa, Air France, KLM and British Airways fly from Singapore to Sofia with one stopover. From Sofia, there are regular buses to Plovdiv. The ride is two hours. The best time to go is spring (April to June) and autumn (Sept to Oct), when temperatures are pleasant. Summer is a popular time to visit as Plovdiv's International Music Festival is held every May to July.

**Stay:** Bulgaria is becoming a noteworthy travel destination as it is a less expensive alternative to its Western European neighbours. The currency used is Bulgarian lev, which is similar in value to the Singapore dollar. A restaurant meal costs about \$10; lodging ranges from \$10 for a dorm bed (Hiker's Hostel) to \$100 per night for a luxury hotel room (Trimontium Hotel).

**Find:**

- Art News pCafe, 38 Otets Paisiy. Price of drinks starts from \$3. [www.artnewscafe.com](http://www.artnewscafe.com)
- Sariiev Gallery, 40 Otets Paisiy. [www.sariiev-gallery.com](http://www.sariiev-gallery.com)



The Roman amphitheatre in Plovdiv.

## ASIA ON SALE! (Now till 26 June 2010)

Cruise with 0%—Interest Instalment Plan! No credit card surcharges or admin fees needed.

UOB CARDS SPEND & REDEEM	FREE Pair of GV Movie Monies with min. S\$1,500 charge to any UOB Credit Card*	FREE Toiletries Bag with min. S\$800 charge to any UOB Credit Card*	Ask for Signature-on-file Service!*	Redeem UMS2800* for EXTRA \$50 OFF
--------------------------	--	---	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------

From 12 May to 31 July 2010, be the first 200 to charge \$8,000 to your UOB VISA Signature Card & receive a FREE Philips SoundBar DVD home theater worth \$399!\*

2N Malacca / KL Cruise OR Redang Cruise (Wed)	fr \$461.50*	UOB Cards 35% OFF Balcony Class Promo (Low Season)**
2N KL Cruise OR Redang Cruise (Fri)	fr \$637*	
3N Penang / Phuket Cruise OR Phuket / Langkawi Cruise (Sun)	fr \$708.50*	Visit UOBTravel.com for more details!*

\*Selected Sailing Dates : June to 1 Oct 2010  
Taxes range from S\$74 to S\$121\*

#20-01, Toa Payoh HDB Hub East Wing  
\*Selected depts/cabins. Exclude passenger handling fees & fuel surcharges. | Gifts are while stocks last. Other conditions apply.

**6252 6822**

UOB Travel

## Travel and Teach Learn to teach English

With our TESOL qualifications you will:

- have internationally recognised qualifications
- have proper training by experienced, qualified and international trainers
- the best grounding to prepare you for interviews
- heightened motivation to travel and teach
- have part time and full time options to choose
- learn to teach adults and children

Teaching is about practice and our courses have the most hours of teaching practice in Singapore. Guaranteed.

CELTA, Certificate IV, Advanced Certificate & Diploma

Call us 6536 2193

heartPOWER

## www.chanbrothershotels.com

**Why Book with Us?**

- ✓ Over 100,000 Hotels
- ✓ Competitive Prices
- ✓ Instant Confirmation
- ✓ Online Payment
- ✓ Exclusive Direct Promotions with Hotels
- ✓ Last-minute Same-day Booking Accepted

**Exclusive Hotel Offers (Book by 31 Jul)**

Taipei	Seoul
4★ Ambience fr \$135	3★ Cats fr \$89
4★ Imperial fr \$166	3★ Vabien Suites fr \$134
3★ Park fr \$176	3★ PJ fr \$150
4★ Grandee fr \$192	3★ Gangnam Artnouveau City fr \$130
4★ Seasons Classic fr \$289	

Ho Chi Minh City	Hanoi
3★ Family Inn Saigon fr \$76	3★ Capital fr \$33
3★ Metropole fr \$124	3★ Star View fr \$95
4★ Thao Dien Village fr \$154	3★ Conifer Boutique fr \$139
4★ Legend Saigon fr \$254	4★ Sofitel Plaza fr \$236
5★ Sofitel Saigon Plaza fr \$280	

Check Out More Hotel Deals NOW or call 6212 9688

## LIVE THE ARTS! VISIT THE JB 7TH ARTS FESTIVAL NOW! (29 JUN - 2 JUL)

Arts Festival Entrance Ticket is available at \$15 Now!

1 Day Malaysia Tour (PNF) Includes Lunch, Seafood Dinner, Fruit Farm Experience with 4x4 Monster Ride, Boat Ride to Lido Fish Village, Shopping and JB Arts Festival

Adventurous Tour with Durian Buffet (PNF) \$68

Nusajaya & Tg Piai (NUS) \$65

Kukup Discovery (NKT) \$60

2D 1N Exquisite Malaysia Tour (PNF) Includes International Breakfast, Lunch and Seafood Dinner, Fruit Farm Experience with 4x4 Monster Ride, Boat Ride to Lido Fish Village, Shopping and JB Arts Festival

3D2N Free & Easy Package: Penang FE (PENF) \$268, Kuching FE (KCHF) \$198, Langkawi (LKGF) \$188, Kuala Lumpur (KULF) \$228

4D3N Guided Tour Package: 3D Genting Highland, Kuala Lumpur, JB \$268, 4D Genting & Cameron Highland, Kuala Lumpur, JB (NH104) \$335, 6D Best of Malaysia (NH106) \$510

Flight & Stay: Penang Express/Special (NKPCH) \$368, Langkawi Express (MLGF) \$298, Penang Express (MPNF) \$348

Only agent in Singapore for Malaysia Guided Tour (Daily Departure (Min 4 persons))

3D2N Free & Easy Package: Penang FE (PENF) \$268, Kuching FE (KCHF) \$198, Langkawi (LKGF) \$188, Kuala Lumpur (KULF) \$228

4D3N Guided Tour Package: 3D Genting Highland, Kuala Lumpur, JB \$268, 4D Genting & Cameron Highland, Kuala Lumpur, JB (NH104) \$335, 6D Best of Malaysia (NH106) \$510

Flight & Stay: Penang Express/Special (NKPCH) \$368, Langkawi Express (MLGF) \$298, Penang Express (MPNF) \$348

Only agent in Singapore for Malaysia Guided Tour (Daily Departure (Min 4 persons))

3D2N Free & Easy Package: Penang FE (PENF) \$268, Kuching FE (KCHF) \$198, Langkawi (LKGF) \$188, Kuala Lumpur (KULF) \$228

4D3N Guided Tour Package: 3D Genting Highland, Kuala Lumpur, JB \$268, 4D Genting & Cameron Highland, Kuala Lumpur, JB (NH104) \$335, 6D Best of Malaysia (NH106) \$510

Flight & Stay: Penang Express/Special (NKPCH) \$368, Langkawi Express (MLGF) \$298, Penang Express (MPNF) \$348

Only agent in Singapore for Malaysia Guided Tour (Daily Departure (Min 4 persons))

3D2N Free & Easy Package: Penang FE (PENF) \$268, Kuching FE (KCHF) \$198, Langkawi (LKGF) \$188, Kuala Lumpur (KULF) \$228

4D3N Guided Tour Package: 3D Genting Highland, Kuala Lumpur, JB \$268, 4D Genting & Cameron Highland, Kuala Lumpur, JB (NH104) \$335, 6D Best of Malaysia (NH106) \$510

Flight & Stay: Penang Express/Special (NKPCH) \$368, Langkawi Express (MLGF) \$298, Penang Express (MPNF) \$348

Only agent in Singapore for Malaysia Guided Tour (Daily Departure (Min 4 persons))