

ORIENTATION WEEK 2026 · MU-VARNA

Survival Guide

2026



Dear future MU-Varna student,

Welcome to the Medical University of Varna! Choosing to study medicine or dentistry in another country is a real achievement, and you have every reason to be proud of yourself. We also know how much can hit you at once in the first weeks: a new language, a new city and an academic system unlike the one you know. Every senior student has stood exactly where you stand today, and that is precisely why this guide exists.

Think of it as your blueprint for the first year, from finding a taxi at the airport and sorting out your migration paperwork to understanding the exam system and discovering the best beach spots to unwind. Take a deep breath, look forward to your new home, and let us get started. You will be fine.

One of the first international students, “Martin”, graduated from the international programme of the Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” Varna. With his “A Brief Student’s Survival Guide to Varna” he laid the foundation for the guide you are holding now.

Most of the questions you will meet in your first weeks, months or years in Varna should be answered on the following pages. If something is still unclear, do not hesitate to ask your “buddy” or any other student. Somebody will always be glad to help you!

Your Orientationweek-Team!

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1. First arrival in Varna

1.1 Airport transfer

Most students arrive by plane. Depending on where you are travelling from and how much you want to spend, you can fly straight into Varna or reach the city comfortably through one of several other airports.

1.1.1 Varna Airport (VAR)

Flying directly into Varna is the fastest and least stressful option. From the airport it is a 15–20 minute taxi ride to the Main Building of the University, and there are two ways to get to the city center.



Varna Airport



Taxi. The ride costs around **€13–€15**, depending on the time of day and the traffic. Please skip the random cabs waiting outside, since they are the ones that overcharge. Two companies are trusted by students: **Triumf Taxi** (triumftaxi.bg) and **Hippo Taxi** (hippotaxi.bg). Both always run the taximeter, charge fair prices and can be booked through their apps or by phone (Triumf: 052 644 444). More about ordering a cab is in the chapter “Types of transport”.



Bus. The second option is bus number **409** (direction Journalist or Golden Sands). It departs every 30 minutes right in front of the arrival terminal and brings you to the city center for about €0.50. Be aware that you can only pay in cash on this bus.

1.1.2 Sofia Airport (SOF)



Sofia is the biggest airport in Bulgaria and offers connections from all over the world. From there you can take a 40-minute domestic flight to Varna, or continue overland:

- **By bus:** buses leave from the airport and from the Central Bus Station (next to the Main Train Station). The journey takes about 6.5–7 hours, depending on the operator and the route, and costs roughly €20.
- **By train:** expect 6.5 to 10 hours, depending on the route, and a fare of about €10–€20.

1.1.3 Burgas Airport (BOJ)

Burgas lies about 2.5 hours from Varna by bus. The easiest way is the so-called “M-BUS”, which runs frequently between the two cities and costs around €7. The alternative is the train, but it needs 4 hours and stops many times on the way. Check the timetable and book your seat here: bgrazpisanie.com/en/line/burgas-varna/mbus/147

1.1.4 Bucharest Airport (OTP), Romania

Bucharest is the closest major international hub outside of Bulgaria, about 3.5 hours from Varna by road. Direct shuttles and buses run from the airport to the bus station in Varna, and the trip takes around 4 hours.

1.1.5 Where to book

- **Flights:** Skyscanner or Google Flights
- **Trains:** the official Bulgarian Railroad, bdz.bg/en
- **Buses:** Omio, Obilet or BG Razpisanie

1.2 Money: the euro and cash withdrawal



Good news for your first arrival: since **1 January 2026 Bulgaria uses the euro**, and the lev is no longer in use. If you come from the eurozone, you do not have to exchange anything at all. If you arrive with another currency, you can change it at an exchange point directly at the airport or withdraw euros from a cash point. Many students like “**Varchev Exchange**”, because it sits conveniently right next to the Main Building of the University. Exchange bureaus are everywhere in Varna, but their rates sometimes differ from the international one, so always look at the displayed rate first.

Prices in older guides, on websites and in some contracts may still be quoted in leva. For converting them, the rate was fixed for good: **€1 = 1.95583 leva**, which means that 1 lev is about €0.51. Cards, Apple Pay and Google Pay are accepted almost everywhere in Varna, so you will rarely need much cash. Keep a little cash on you anyway, for example for bus 409 from the airport.

1.3 Hotels

Whether you need a bed while you look for an apartment or a comfortable place for your visiting family, Varna has plenty of good options, from a cheap sleep to real luxury. Booking.com, Agoda and Airbnb are the sites to search.

BUDGET €35 – €55 per night	
Hotel Orbita	The closest hotel to the Main Building of the University
Hotel Amfora	The best choice if you want to be near the beach
Hi Hotel	A compact boutique stay in the city center

MID-RANGE €60 – €110 per night	
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All three are about a 20-minute walk from the University.

mOdus Hotel	A stylish design hotel near the Sea Garden
Rosslyn Dimyat	Pool and wellness center, great 24-hour food
Hotel Capitol	About 20 minutes on foot from the University

PREMIUM €110 – €200+ per night	
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If you want it extra nice: these hotels often come with large spa areas that you can also use when you are not a guest, so from time to time you can treat yourself to a relaxing spa day.

Graffiti Gallery	A luxury design-boutique in the city center
Panorama Hotel	Right on the sandy beach
Swiss-Belhotel	Spa and wellness facilities, open to non-guests too

1.4 Bulgarian for beginners

Bulgarian	English
Добър ден (Dobar den)	Hello
Чео / Довиждане (Ciao / Dovizhdanie)	Goodbye
Мерси / Благодаря (Mersi / Blagodarya)	Thanks
Моля / Заповядайте (Molia / Zapovyadaite)	Here you are
Как си? Аз съм добре (Kak si? Az sam dobre)	How are you? I am fine
Къде е университетът, тоалетната, ресторантът...? (Kade e universitetat, toaletnata, restorantat)	Where is the university, toilet, restaurant?
Колко струва? (Kolko struva?)	How much is it?
Може ли ... вода, портокалов сок, бира? (Mozhe li voda, portokalov sok, bira?)	Can I have water, orange juice, beer?
Дайте ми ... моля (Daite mi ... molia)	Give me ... please
Как да стигна до ...? (Kak da stigma do ...?)	How do I get to ...?
Искам (Iskam) ...	I want ...
Бих желал (Bih zhelal) ...	I would like ...

2. About the University

Official website of the University: mu-varna.bg

MU-Varna does not hold all its classes under one roof. Over the course of your studies you will visit several buildings for seminars and lectures, and they are not always easy to find at the beginning, so here are the addresses of the main ones. Your personal classroom assignments are published on Webstudent. Do not worry if your account does not work right away, because it can take a couple of weeks until it is activated.

2.1 University buildings

- **Main Building, Medical University:** ul. "Professor Marin Drinov" 55, 9002 Varna Center
- **Faculty of Dental Medicine, Pharmacy and Medical College:** bul. "Tsar Osvoboditel" 150, 9002 Varna Center
- **St. Marina Hospital (main clinical base):** bul. "Hristo Smirnenski" 1, 9010 Varna
- **Bregalnitsa Students Hostel:** ul. "Bregalnitsa" 1, 9002 Varna Center

Some classes are also held at these places:

- **RHI (Regional Health Inspectorate):** ul. "Bregalnitsa" 3, 9002 Varna Center
- **St. Anna Hospital:** bul. "Tsar Osvoboditel" 100, 9002 Varna Center



The Main Building of the Medical University of Varna

2.2 Admission Office and Students office

Admission Office: you will find it in Room "210 A" of the Main Building. This is your very first stop, because here you officially sign in to your programme during your first week.

Students office: after that, this is the place to go for everything ongoing. You get your "Knishka" certified and stamped here (more below), sign in for each new semester, hand in your doctor's note when you were ill and request your study records or sort out your enrollment paperwork. In short, whenever you have any difficulty with the University, the people working there are willing to help :)

For Medical students:

- The office is on the first floor (for Bulgarians this counts as the second floor) of the Main Building. Information: mu-varna.bg/EN/Students/Pages/faculty-medicine.aspx
- Reception hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10:00–12:00 and 13:30–15:30

For Dental Medicine students:

- The office is on the second floor (for Bulgarians the third floor) of the Faculty of Dental Medicine. Information: mu-varna.bg/EN/Students/Pages/faculti-dentmed-students.aspx

- Reception hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10:00–12:00 and 13:30–15:30

2.3 Knishka (student book)

Your “Knishka” is the official record of your studies and one of the most important things you own as a student in Bulgaria. It proves your enrollment, holds the marks of all your exams and works as the diary of your sick days. Longer periods of illness, confirmed by a doctor’s note, are logged in it, together with a record of your achievements throughout your time in Varna.

Professors check it at every exam, and often it is the first thing they ask to see, so always carry it with you and keep it in good shape. Losing it can cause a lot of trouble.



The Knishka

In the left column you write down the name of each subject. The order of the curriculum works well (you find it on the two pages linked in 2.2), but some students prefer the order of their exam dates. Put the subjects with an exam first, each in a row with the fields for your mark on the right. The names of your assistant and professor are shown in Webstudent (see below). If you remember them, ask in the first week of the semester anyway and write them down carefully for later.

To excuse an absence from a seminar, bring a sick note issued by a doctor of MU-Varna to the Students office. They will fill it in on the back of your “Knishka”.

2.4 Blackboard, Webstudent and study platforms

Blackboard / Webstudent are the official platforms of the University. Blackboard is where the materials for lectures and seminars are uploaded every week and for the whole semester, and where you take tests and exams. There is also an app for iOS and Android. You get your login data from the Students office, which is also the place to go if you have problems with it or want to change your data. Help (PDF): [mu-varna.bg help for students](https://mu-varna.bg/help-for-students)

Webstudent (webstudent.mu-varna.bg) takes care of the organizational side:

- your grades, your schedule and the schedules of your professors, including their contact information
- your exam results, the tuition fees you have paid and the signatures of your teachers for attending classes
- the “Request forms” you fill in when you need administrative data from the Students office

Besides these two, a few other platforms are worth knowing:

- **Kenhub:** excellent for anatomy and goes into real depth. It is not the cheapest option, though.
- **Amboss:** great for everyday clinical life. It links diseases to their symptoms and gives a solid overview of what actually matters.
- **Access Medicine:** provided by the University itself and useful for clinical classes and clinical skills.

2.5 The University as a system

The University teaches according to the multidisciplinary approach: on a single day you can have several different seminars and lectures across different subjects. This is in contrast to the cyclical or modular system of some universities, where you concentrate on one subject at a time in longer blocks.

The academic year is split into two semesters. The winter semester starts in mid-September and runs until around Christmas, followed by the exams in January and the retakes, which run until mid-February. The summer semester then lasts from mid-February to the end of May, with the exams in June and the retakes until mid-July.

Seminars and lectures. Seminars are mandatory, lectures are optional. You can decide whether to attend a lecture depending on your interests or on how much extra help you need in a subject.

Signatures. To be admitted to an exam session, you first need signatures in your “Knishka” for every subject, from your assistant (who leads your seminars) and from your professor (who leads your lectures). You can see them in Webstudent (point 2.4). If a student has too many absences, assistants and professors may refuse the signature, which in effect means repeating the year. In most subjects you may have two unexcused absences. Every further missed seminar has to be made up, which you arrange with your assistant. In other words, you can miss 3 seminars, but you must catch up on 2 of them to get the signature.

Exam regulations. If you do not pass an exam in the regular session, you get a retake shortly afterwards, and if you fail that one too, there is a final chance in the September retake. To advance to the next year you may have at most one exam that is ultimately failed, meaning not passed in the regular exam, the first retake and the September retake combined. Your first three attempts at any exam are free of charge, but from the fourth attempt on you have to pay a fee. Exams you have not passed can be taken again in the next regular or September session, which you should clarify beforehand with your assistant and the Students office.

2.6 Student organizations

Apart from your studies, several student-run groups shape a lot of life at MU-Varna:

- **Orientation Week Team** (Instagram: [muv.orientation.week](#)): we plan everything freshmen experience in their first weeks, such as the Opening Day, Ecopark, the Buddy Dinner, the Varna Hunt and the freshmen party, always in coordination with the University. We also accompany the excursion as supervisors and act as a bridge between students and university staff. Our goal is to give you the best possible start at MU-Varna and to help you connect with your fellow students.
- **Student Council** (Instagram: [studentcouncil.muvarena](#)): an elected body that represents the interests and needs of students across the whole University. It is also the umbrella for other organizations that run events, like the Black Sea Symposium.
- **Momentum** (Instagram: [momentumvarna](#)): run by students and independent from the University. It organizes mostly social events, for example the Beer Bachelor, stitching courses and parties.
- **Medimeisterschaften** (Instagram: [medimeisterschaften.varna](#)): run by German students. Every year they produce an original song for the Medimeisterschaften, a festival exclusively for medical students in Germany, and organize several parties throughout the year.

And there are plenty more beyond these four, covering just about every interest and background.

3. Registering yourself

3.1 Migration office



As a student in Varna you are obliged to register as a “long-term resident” of Bulgaria, and you are strongly advised to do it early, because you need the registration to sign in for the second semester. It takes several visits to the Migration office: first to collect the forms and declarations you need, then to submit your complete file and finally to collect your residence card.

- **Address:** №1 “San Stefano” St., 9000 Varna
- **Reception hours:** Monday to Friday, 08:30–12:00 and 13:00–17:30

The following documents are required:

- **Application form:** you receive it directly from the Migration office. The first half is in English, the second half in Bulgarian.
- **Passport or ID card,** plus a copy.
- **Rental contract as proof of address:** the landlord has to sign you an original contract, and it has to be notarized. If the owner does not submit it in person, you also need the owner’s address declaration, notarized as well.
- **Health insurance:**
 - EU citizens: the EHIC or an equivalent proof of health insurance
 - Non-EU citizens: compulsory Bulgarian health insurance covering your full stay
- **Certificate of enrollment** (original), which you receive from the Students office after you have been enrolled for the semester. Non-EU students additionally submit a copy of the certificate issued by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education.
- **Proof of financial means** to cover your expenses during your stay:
 - EU citizens: a copy of your credit card plus a notarized declaration of financial support
 - Non-EU citizens: a notarized declaration of financial support (plus bank or sponsor documents if requested)
- **Receipts for the paid fees** (see below).

Notary. At your first visit, ask the Migration office for the “declaration of financial support” form and let a notary sign it. The nearest notary is at ul. “27-mi Yuli” 1, 9000 Varna Center. This single document costs about 10 BGN (≈ €5), while the notary costs for the whole process tend to end up closer to €30 once every required document is included. Prices may shift slightly after Bulgaria’s switch from the lev to the euro on 1 January 2026, so treat all amounts here as estimates and confirm the current prices when you go.

Fees. You pay at the bank right next to the Migration office. For the first payment, the permit fee, count on around **€10.50**. For the second payment, it depends on how quickly you want your document (30 days is normally fine). The amounts below are converted from the previous fees in leva and rounded, so confirm them at the office:

- **EU citizens:**
 - 30 days: about €9 (+ about €1 bank fee)
 - 3 days: about €18 (+ about €1 bank fee)
- **Non-EU citizens, residence permit:**
 - 6 months: about €102
 - 12 months: about €256
- **Non-EU citizens, ID card processing:**
 - 30 days: about €23 (+ about €1 bank fee)

- 10 days: about €46
- 3 days: about €115

Each time you pay you receive two receipts, one for you and one for the Migration office. If you are a first-year student, we strongly advise you to take a student from a higher year with you. They can speak and read Bulgarian and will help you fill out the documents.

3.2 Bank account



As a student of MU-Varna you will need a bank account, preferably at a local bank. It is one of the requirements for the Bulgarian long-term residence permission and it is useful for receiving money from home. You can do everything on your own, but it is definitely easier if a Bulgarian friend or a student from a higher year comes with you. Be prepared that some bank employees do not speak English, so you may have to explain your problem in Bulgarian, which can be very hard in the first year.

DSK Bank, Fibank and UniCredit Bulbank are all student-friendly local choices. Please check the ATM fees of your bank for Bulgaria beforehand, because they vary. The ATM on campus charges around €2–€3 per withdrawal.

Many international students skip a local account altogether and use **Revolut** or **Wise** instead, since Apple Pay and Google Pay are accepted almost everywhere. **For German students:** DKB is a popular equivalent. It is an online bank, so your banking business is in German with pretty good customer service, and as a student you get a free Visa card. Another possibility is the Hanseatic Bank with its free credit card and a daily exchange rate for every foreign currency. Conditions for free withdrawals change from time to time, so check them before you rely on them.

Exchange bureaus are all over Varna. Their rates can, however, deviate from the international one, so we recommend “Varchev Exchange”, where the international rate is easy to see and which has an office close to the University. “Forex Change” and “String” are other reliable bureaus. They matter now mostly for non-euro currencies.

3.3 Mobile contract



Important: you have free roaming in the EU. You can use the contract from your home country in Bulgaria without extra fees, and a Bulgarian contract works nearly without limits in your home country, too. Most major European providers work well in Bulgaria, so keeping your home number and flatrate is often a good option. Just keep in mind that some Bulgarian services, such as food ordering, ask for a national phone number.

A1, Yettel and Vivacom all offer solid prepaid and student plans. It makes sense to find an apartment first before signing a contract, because two of the operators offer bundles (mobile plus home internet and TV), which give you an overall discount ;) “Vivacom” and “A1” have the best coverage. The prices below were converted from the 2023 leva prices and are only a rough guide, so please check the current offers. Only post-paid plans are listed; every operator offers pre-paid plans as well.

- **Vivacom** (vivacom.bg): smartphone contracts from about €6.50 to €25 a month, reaching from 100 Mbit/s to unlimited speed in Bulgaria, with unlimited calls in Bulgaria and up to 31,500 MB a month for roaming abroad. Fiber internet at home is offered around the city for about €8 a month (50,000 Mbit up to 1 Gbit). There are also tablet and TV options; TV with German and English channels starts at about €5 in a combination package.

- **A1** (a1.bg, formerly Mtel): similar to Vivacom. Smartphone plans range from 300 MB to 15,000 MB. Fiber internet at home is about €8 a month for 50,000 Mbit up to 1 Gbit, and TV with German and English channels starts at about €4.50.
- **Yettel** (formerly Telenor): smartphone contracts from about €5 to €25, reaching from 650 MB to 20,000 MB, and some of them include HBO Go and free Facebook and WhatsApp usage. Yettel does not sell plans for internet at home.

All operators have plenty of plans to choose from, and each of them has its own advantages and disadvantages. If you are satisfied with your contract from home, you can simply keep it and switch to a Bulgarian one later.

4. Apartments

4.1 Renting



Renting an apartment is the most popular choice among foreign students, because the student dormitories are not available for foreign students. The best neighborhoods for MU-Varna students are the **Center, the Greek Quarter and Chayka** (close to the Sea Garden). A comfortable 1-bedroom apartment runs **€450–€500 a month, and sometimes more.**

There are two main ways to look for an apartment:

- **Student groups:** it is also worth asking older students directly, browsing Facebook Marketplace or posting in the MUV WhatsApp community. The “MUV Apartments” group is a good place to start, and it is also how many students find roommates. There you find offers for shared and single apartments that have already been lived in by other students.
- **Renting agencies:** if there is no suitable apartment for you, one of the many agencies will search for the right one. You can reach them via phone, email or Facebook, and nearly all of them speak proper English. For listings in Varna, check **Rentica.bg** and **Express Imoti** first.

Some of the agencies are:

- “Express Imoti”: expressimoti.bg/en
- “Rentica”: rentica.bg
- “New Age”: svobodni-kvartiri.com
- “Jhome”: jhome.bg
- “Openhouse”: open-house.apartamenti.com

Tips for renting an apartment in Varna:

- **Read the contract carefully** and, if you disagree with a part of it, ask for that part to be changed.
- **Think about the location.** Do you want to live close to the university buildings, the beach, the hospital, or outside of Varna? Most students prefer to live near the Main Building in the first two years, because they can easily walk home from the University, the city center and the beach. In these two years your lessons are held in four buildings: the Main Building, the HEI building, the Pharmacy building and the Medical College.
- **Daylight matters.** Make sure your study desk and the apartment get enough of it.
- **Contract length.** The normal renting period is one year, but sometimes you can talk your landlord into a shorter contract. Also take care of the cancellation periods.
- **Agent commission.** The commission for the real-estate agent is usually half of the monthly rent. Tell them exactly what you want, because most often the furniture style is not very “modern”. Sometimes an agent needs one or two weeks to answer, so contact many agents at once.
- **Deposit.** The damage deposit is normally one monthly rent.
- **Paying the rent.** Most often you pay the rent in cash and receive no receipt unless you ask for one. Consider a small book in which your landlord signs every payment and in which you can also keep your water and electricity invoices.
- **Water and electricity** are normally paid in the Easy Pay shops, in the offices of “Energo-Pro” or via the app “epay.bg” (you can pay with your fingerprint and credit card, the payment number has to be given to you by your landlord). This is very useful in summer when you are away and cannot pay your bills, but you can also ask your

landlord to handle the payment during summer, and most of them will support you. You have one month to pay a bill, otherwise your electricity (but not your water) is cut off.

- **Missing furniture:** ask your landlord to provide it. Most often he agrees, and sometimes you can even choose your favorite pieces, like a study desk or a bigger bed.
- **Building quality** is sometimes not that good, especially in older buildings, so watch out for water damage (mostly on the top floor) and be very careful about mould. In most cases owners do not fix a water problem but paint over the damaged area, so you only see it after the first heavy rain.
- **Security.** Consider blocks with proper locking systems, sometimes with security systems or guards. Ask your landlord about changing the lock, so that only you have the key and not some previous tenants.

4.2 Furniture

Most apartments in Varna come fully furnished, so you generally do not have to buy a bed or major furniture. If you still need something extra, like bedding, décor, a desk lamp, a new couch or a study desk, there are several reliable options: **IKEA**, **JYSK** and “Praktiker”.

The IKEA in Varna is an order center inside the **Delta Planet Mall**. You can visit the showroom, find many home accessories and order the furniture that is not in stock, either directly in the store or online at ikea.bg. Delivery is very cheap: for an order over about €50 it costs roughly €2.50, and it takes about 5–7 days.

5. What you can explore/do in Varna in your free time

5.1 Shopping and cinema

- **Delta Planet Mall:** the newest and largest mall in the city, with over 140 stores, a large Cinema City and the IKEA order center.
- **Grand Mall Varna:** closer to downtown, with an IMAX cinema, a solid food court and a retro arcade.
- **Varna Mall:** home of a Kino Arena cinema.

Cinema tickets are cheap in comparison to other European countries: an IMAX ticket costs around €5 per person. If you show your student card, you also get a student discount. More shops and addresses are listed in chapter 7.

5.2 Sports

5.2.1 Swimming

Besides the swimming activity offered by the University, you can pursue this passion outside of it. Of course there is the Black Sea, which is easy to find. If you prefer a pool, there is the swimming complex “Primorski” on Boulevard Primorski, close to the volleyball fields on the beach, where students pay only about €1 for swimming. Close to the “Varna Mall” you will also find the Dolphins swimming pool.

For those who like spa, there are attractive options in and near Varna. The “Swiss-Belhotel” provides a large spa area with sauna, pool, massages and much more at moderate prices. Another option is “Aqua House” in “St. Constantin” and “Helena”, easily reachable by taxi, at about €15–€22.

5.2.2 Climbing

The Wall (Funtopia Varna) on Nikola Vapzarov Str. is the best indoor bouldering and rope gym in the city, and lots of students come here on a weekly basis.

5.2.3 Paintball and go-karting

Varna Karting Track in the Vinitsa neighborhood, just outside of Varna and easy to reach by taxi or car, offers a 1,050 m outdoor track and an on-site paintball arena. More information: varnakarting.com/en

5.2.4 Judo and martial arts

Sport Club Jet Varna offers Kickboxing, Kyokushin and Aikido. **Senshi Gym** covers a wide range of martial arts at a truly world-class level and has hosted international galas and professional training camps. For dedicated Judo, try **Judo Club Varna**.

5.2.5 University sports

From the second to the fourth semester you have to choose one of the following sports, one hour a week:

Soccer	Tennis	Bulgarian dancing
Boxing	Handball	Basketball
Swimming	Sailing	Volleyball
Fitness	Aerobics	“Conditioning” training

There are also university teams that you can join and with which you can even compete against other universities from all over Bulgaria.

5.2.6 Horseback riding

Equestrian Club Varna, just outside the city in Kichevo village, offers trail rides through the countryside as well as regular riding lessons, for individuals and in groups. More information: horseclubvarna.com

5.2.7 Surfing and wakeboarding

You made it: living next to the sea is a dream for many people, especially for surfers. Whether you are experienced or want to start, the Black Sea coast around Varna offers the conditions for it. It will never become a surf mecca, but there are spots where you can catch waves when the north-eastern winds push them onto the beaches. If you prefer a wakeboard, **Wake Park Varna** sits right on the central beach at Third Buna.

In Varna you can go to “Cubo Varna Surf” for lessons or to rent SUPs and windsurf boards. Another popular spot for students is Sunny Day beach, just south of Golden Sands. A 15-minute car ride allows a small session before university starts in the morning, or you simply skip uni and stay the whole day (it happens now and then when the waves are too good). Depending on the conditions you can switch between this spot and Kabakum beach, ten minutes on foot to the north. There, in summer only, Chris runs the small, cozy surfer bar “Ri-Bar” and offers wetsuits, surfboards and lessons for fair prices. He is a cool guy, so check it out.

For bigger surfing trips the south is your destination: one hour to south-facing Byala bay, where big swells roll in smoothly, and another 20 minutes to Irakli, with a demanding beach break and the possibility of camping on your own in the wilderness of a Bulgarian beach. Further south lie Sozopol (3 hours, south of Burgas) and Achtopol (another 30 minutes), which are known as the best spots in Bulgaria. Achtopol is even a point break and attracts surfers from all over the country in the rare event of good conditions.

In general you can surf all year, but the waves are better in winter. Then you need a good 6/5 mm wetsuit, since the water cools down to 6 °C. In summer good waves are rare, but you can even go without a wetsuit for a short time; for longer sessions a 3/2 mm suit is recommended.

5.2.8 Tennis, padel and pickleball

Courts are scattered all over Varna, so it is easy to get a game going with friends.

5.3 Art and social events

- **Glazy Studio** or **Ceramic Studio Habitat**: paint-your-own pottery, where you make a cup or a vase in whatever shape and color you like.
- **Corsi di Cucina**: a cozy Italian spot where you can take a hands-on pasta-making class and learn to make traditional Italian pasta from scratch.

5.4 Restaurants



Most restaurants are in the city center around “Sevastopol”. Big names like **Happy Bar & Grill** (great for big groups), **Staria Chinar** (excellent traditional grilled meats), **Godzila** (a student-budget favorite for pizza and salads) and “Nemo” will soon make up your basic food supply, but there are cheaper alternatives as well. Eating out is often cheaper than in your home country, which can make you quite lazy about cooking. Varna offers cuisine from all over the world, including Greek, German and many more that you will stumble across simply by walking around the city, and most restaurants even mix everything from sushi over pizza to burgers and steaks.

Restaurants by the sea: “Makalali”, “El Kapan”, “Sea House”, “Captain Cook”, “Happy”, “Morska Gara”, “Sea Terrace”, “The Beach” and “Seacrets”.

Around Sevastopol	Around the University Main Building
“Sundogs”, “Godzila”, “Largo”, “DaLucio”, “Staria Chinar”, “LaFamiliga”, “The Martini Bar”	Quantum Satis (student canteen with student discount), “Corner Burger”, “Nida”, “Candels”, “ChickenKink”, “Staria Chinar”

5.5 Beach/bars



The Varna city beach stretches all the way from the seaport. Breakwaters divide it into several smaller beaches, which the locals call “Buna”, the first Buna being the one farthest from the port. The coastline is a wonderful place for a walk in autumn, winter and spring, and a very lively one in summer, when all the restaurants, bars and discos are open.

The more prominent places are:

- **Cubo / Cubo Ribarski:** the absolute staple for Varna students, one of the most popular beach bars. Grab a beer, sit on the sand or the pier and settle in for a game of cards with friends.
- **Makalali:** right on Central Beach, relaxed by day, and some students even use it for studying once winter sets in. “Seacrets” is another nice spot for a coffee break or for studying right next to the sea.
- **Punta Cana:** great for cocktails and mainstream party hits.
- **Maze:** a genuinely popular club among students.
- “Menthol”: many foreign music groups play live on its stage.



Varna city beach

5.6 Socializing

In summer Varna flourishes. Temperatures reach around 30 °C, the water is warm, it is mostly sunny and a refreshing breeze comes from the sea. The tourist season is on and people come from everywhere to have fun. The best places to enjoy yourself are the bars along the beach of Varna... :)

Some are located in **Golden Sands**, 20 km from Varna and easily reachable by bus 409 or taxi, with plenty of bars and discos for every taste. During the Golden Sands season you will always find a crowd of MU-Varna students in the party areas there. Another summer resort is **Sunny Beach**, 50 km away, even bigger than Golden Sands and known as the “Party capital of Europe” according to The Daily Star.

In winter the situation is different. Family celebrations like Christmas and New Year’s Eve dominate the atmosphere, and the cold weather and chilling winds leave only the locals in town, who celebrate with their families. The tourist season is over and the variety is a bit

smaller. Still, many people, including our students, go to “Cubo”, “Avenue” (a club and major meeting point for lots of our students), “Rubik” (a bar with quite an alternative atmosphere) and “Planet Club” (a place with a fancy atmosphere).

6. Types of transport

6.1 Flying to your home country

6.1.1 Germany



There are different flight possibilities, but you can also drive home by car. It is about 2,000 km to the German border, and you pass through countries like Romania, Hungary and Serbia.

Flights:

- **Wizz Air:** very cheap (in winter sometimes €15 with hand luggage) and a nice, intuitive booking via the app or the internet. Flights go from Varna to Memmingen, Sofia, Dortmund, Eindhoven, Cologne, Nuremberg, Hamburg, Berlin and more.
- **Ryanair:** very cheap. Flights leave from Sofia to Hamburg, Berlin, Cologne, Baden-Baden and Memmingen. Sofia is easy to reach with Wizz Air and Bulgaria Air.
- **Austrian Airlines:** expensive, with a stopover in Vienna that is usually quick, so you do not lose much time. From Varna to nearly everywhere.
- **Turkish Airlines:** expensive, with a stopover in Istanbul. From Varna to nearly everywhere.
- **SunExpress:** a holiday airline that flies in summer only.

6.1.2 Spain

- **To Alicante:** flights run between Sofia and Alicante in both directions, with Bulgaria Air or Wizz Air. From Varna to Alicante it is much more expensive.
- **To Barcelona:** flights run between Sofia and Barcelona in both directions, with Wizz Air.

6.1.3 Great Britain

- **Wizz Air:** very cheap, but during holidays like the winter break the flight gets more expensive, so book as early as possible. Easy, intuitive booking via the app or the internet. Only to London Luton.
- **Ryanair:** cheap tickets, but you first need to get to Sofia (with Bulgaria Air, Wizz Air and others). Flights go to Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool and London Stansted.
- **Turkish Airlines:** more expensive, with a stopover in Istanbul that can be very long.

6.2 Transport in Varna

6.2.1 Taxi



The taxi is the most popular means of transport among students, and two companies are recommended. Both always run the taximeter, charge fair prices and can be booked via their apps or by phone:

- **Triumf Taxi:** triumftaxi.bg, phone 052 644 444
- **Hippo Taxi:** hippotaxi.bg

If possible, do not choose other taxi companies. Most often they have no taximeter and tell you a price for your destination before you start, which is way overpriced.

6.2.2 Bus and TicketVarna



Varna has a bus system that takes you easily to any destination within the city. There is a bus stop close to the University (next to the “DSK Bank”) from where you can reach the hospitals, the dental and the pharmacy building and many other destinations. All buildings associated with the University are within 5 minutes of walking from a bus stop. The buses arrive at regular intervals and most often get you to your destination even with 30-minute breaks in between.

Tickets: download the **TicketVarna** app (App Store / Google Play), register with your email, link a card and buy digital tickets directly from your phone in one tap.

Timetables and routes: on Android you can use the app “Varna Traffic”, which also works in English and acts like a navigation app: it finds the proper line close to your position that brings you to your destination as fast as possible. For iOS and Android alike there is “Moovit”, which is not only suitable for Varna but for many cities around the world. It determines your location via GPS, and you choose your destination on the map or by address and get the optimal route. For general information you can also visit varnatraffic.com, which shows the city map, stations and schedules.

6.2.3 Own car

Some students from the 3rd year on have their own car in Varna. It is very comfortable if you live near the beach and have to drive every morning to “St. Marina” hospital, to “Kaufland”, “Grand Mall” and so on, and it is one of the best ways to discover Bulgaria, since you do not depend on public transport.

You can either keep your car registered in your home country (EU) or register it directly in Varna. Many students prefer the latter, because taxes and insurance are cheaper than in Germany, the UK and so on. To register your car successfully:

- you need the Bulgarian long-term resident card from the Migration office (see point 3.1)
- you need to have the full data of your car with you (purchase contract and so on)

With both in hand, go to “KAT Varna”: bul. “Yan Huniyadi” 5, 9020 Planova Industrial Zone, Varna. After the entrance, park somewhere and look for one small office on the left, beside the big building. There you pay the registration fee, the environmental fee and the taxes for the upcoming year, in cash. After that you join the line of waiting cars, and sometimes you have to wait for 2 days. We recommend taking a student who speaks Bulgarian, because unfortunately nobody there speaks English.

6.2.4 Bicycles



Bicycles are very popular among students, and there are many places to buy one in Varna. A few of them:

- “Kaufland”: bul. “Hristo Smirnenski” 2, 9000 Varna (new bikes)
- “Decathlon”: bul. “Vladislav Varnenchik” 268, 9009 Varna (new bikes)
- “Praktiker”: boulevard “Republika” 49, 9000 Varna (new bikes)
- “Homemax”: bul. “Vladislav Varnenchik” 271, 9009 Varna (new bikes)
- “Джиро Байкс” (Giro Bikes): ul. “Knyaz Aleksander Batenberg” 22, 9000 Varna (new and used bikes)
- “Metro”: ul. “Atanas Moskov” 2, 9023 Zapad, Varna

Please be aware that Bulgarians are not used to cyclists, so you have to take even more care than at home. We also strongly advise you to buy a good lock so that your bike does not get stolen.

6.3 Transport around Bulgaria

You can reach most places outside Varna either by bus or by train. It is an easy way to explore the country or to get to another airport, such as Sofia or Burgas, when you fly home.



6.3.1 Bus. Buy your ticket on one of these websites or directly at the bus station, which is located right next to “Grand Mall” at blvd. “Vladislav Varnenchik” 158: busexpress.bg/en, busticket.bg. Buses are also bookable via Omio, Obilet or BG Razpisanie.



6.3.2 Train. The train station is located at Petko Slaveykov square 1, 9000 Tsentralna Zhp Gara, Varna. You can book tickets online at bdz.bg/en or buy them at the station. At the station you can also buy a student discount card for about €0.50. Do not forget to bring a student certification, your certificate of enrollment and a picture!

7. Shopping



There are many places to shop in Varna. The most popular are:

- “Delta Planet Mall”: bul. “Slivnitsa” 185, 9009 Vladislavovo, Varna (the newest and largest mall, 140+ stores)
- “Grand Mall”: “Akademik Andrei Saharov” 2 (closer to downtown)
- “Mall Varna”: bul. “Vladislav Varnenchik” 186
- “Sevastopol” and the “New Yorker” area, both in the city center
- “Decathlon” for sports equipment
- “Jumbo”, “JYSK” and “IKEA” for household shopping

Special things: “Eldo ET” supplies construction material (screws and so on).

7.1 Food

- **Kaufland**: bul. “Hristo Smirnenski” 2, 9009 Varna; boulevard “Republika” 60, 9020 Varna
- **Lidl**: ul. “Bitolya” 1A, 9000 Varna (right beneath the Pharmacy building); ul. “Mir” 45, 9010 Varna; bul. “Vladislav Varnenchik” 257, 9009 Varna
- **Billa**: bul. “Vladislav Varnenchik” 48, 9000 Varna Center; bul. “Knyaz Boris I” 99, 9002 Varna Center; ul. “Dimitar Ikonov” 36, 9010 Levski, Varna
- **Mini supermarkets** all over the city
- **Halal**: Lemas Halal meat, in Mall Varna
- **Fish market**: Kolhosen pasar, ul. “Drin” 53, 9000 Varna
- **Local food markets**: Chataldzha, and the Farmers Market at ul. “Drin” 65-51, 9000 Center, Varna

Food delivery is very common among students, because it is easy and cheap. The two main services are “Takeaway.com” and “Glovo” (glovoapp.com). Both have smartphone apps, and you pay in cash after delivery or by card in the app. The delivery fee is around €1–€1.50. So try it out :)

7.2 Household

- “Praktiker”, “Baumax”, “Technopolis”
- “Kaufland”, “Lidl”
- “DM”, “Lilly”
- small supermarkets and “Jumbo”
- “JYSK”, “Mömax”, “Homemax”, “IKEA” (order center in Delta Planet Mall), “English Home”, “Aiko”

8. Bulgarian culture and life in Varna

Varna, Bulgaria's "Sea Capital", is the place where ancient history, deep-rooted tradition and modern student life meet on the Black Sea coast. Getting a feeling for Bulgarian culture will make your time here richer, and a few practical differences are worth knowing upfront, too.

8.1 General information and history

A land of ancient history

Bulgaria is one of Europe's oldest countries and has been inhabited since the Stone Age. Varna itself lies beside one of the biggest finds in archaeology: the Varna Chalcolithic Necropolis (around 4400–4200 BC), where archaeologists uncovered the oldest processed gold in the world, more than 6.5 kilograms of 23.5-carat jewelry, weapons and ceremonial pieces of the sophisticated Copper Age "Varna Culture". Long before the Bulgarians arrived, the Thracians lived here, warrior tribes famous for their elaborate burial mounds and gold treasures. Their Odrysian kingdom flourished around 500 BC and still echoes through Bulgarian folklore today.

The birth of Bulgaria

The Bulgarian state was founded in 681 AD by Khan Asparuh, who united the Proto-Bulgarians with the local Slavic tribes. This makes Bulgaria one of the few European nations that has kept the same name for more than 1,300 years. Christianity arrived under Prince Boris I in 865 AD and has been the traditional religion ever since. Soon afterwards the disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius brought the Cyrillic and Glagolitic alphabets to the country. This started Bulgaria's Golden Age of literature, art and education, and it gave the wider Slavic world its written language. It also allowed Bulgarians to pray and write in Old Bulgarian (Old Church Slavonic), breaking the dogma of the time that allowed prayer only in three holy languages: Latin, Hebrew and Greek. The 24th of May is still celebrated nationwide as the Day of the Bulgarian Alphabet, Education and Culture.

Centuries of change

Bulgaria rose and fell as a medieval empire before nearly 500 years of Ottoman rule, which began in 1396 and which Bulgarians call "the Turkish slavery". Through all of it, folk traditions and Orthodox Christianity kept Bulgarian culture alive. The Bulgarian Renaissance brought the change: the monk Paisii Hilendarski wrote his "Slavo-Bulgarian History", and it took over 100 years of hand-copying until people longed for freedom and their own national state. The "Narodni Buditeli" ("People Awakeners") have their own holiday, National Awakening Day on the 1st of November. All of this culminated in the brave but unsuccessful April Uprising of 1876, followed by a brutal massacre that shocked Europe and pushed Russia to intervene.

Liberation came in 1878 after the Russo-Turkish War, with the decisive battle at Shipka and the heroic sacrifice of the "Opalchentsi" (volunteer militia). On the 3rd of March the peace treaty of San Stefano put Bulgaria on the map of Europe again after 500 years. That is why the 3rd of March is the national holiday, Liberation Day, and Bulgarians travel to Shipka peak to celebrate. The 20th century brought two world wars and, from 1944 to 1989, over four decades of communist rule, before the return to democracy. Bulgaria has been a NATO member since 2004 and an EU member since 2007, balancing its long history with modern European life, and as of 1 January 2026 it has adopted the euro.



Bulgaria at a glance

8.2 Traditions

A few customs date back to pre-Christian times and are still very much alive.

8.2.1 Folk dances and folk music

Characteristic and unmistakable even among the Balkan cultures, the folk dances, called “Horo”, are particularly vivid. They are chain dances in which many people dance the same steps while holding each other’s hands. The most famous styles are “Dunavsko horo”, “Katerinino horo”, “Byala roza” and “Makedonsko horo”. The folk music that goes with them has a special focus on the bagpipe. The dances consist of simple steps that repeat to the rhythm of the song for as long as it lasts.

8.2.2 Baba Marta tradition

“Baba Marta” (Granny March), or the “Martenitsa” tradition, is celebrated on the 1st of March and is thought to be an old pagan tradition from before Bulgaria was Christianized. It stands for the end of winter and the beginning of spring. The “Martenitsa” is a band or doll of white and red yarn, and people exchange them with wishes for health, strength and happiness. You wear yours until you spot the first stork or a blossoming tree, a sign that spring has come.

The best-known figures of the tradition are “Pizho” and “Penda”, hugging each other. “Pizho”, the male version, is mostly white and symbolizes strength. He is always intertwined with “Penda”, the female version, mostly red, the symbol of blood and health. The plain “Martenitsa” band shows this intertwining through its mixing of red and white.

8.2.3 Wine day

Wine Day, or “Trifon Zarezan”, is celebrated on the 14th of February, the same day as Saint Valentine’s Day. Many Bulgarians who have nobody to celebrate Valentine’s Day with celebrate “Trifon Zarezan” instead. Mid-February is usually the time when the vines are cut to ensure proper growth and an abundant harvest in autumn, and this tradition has grown into a holiday that celebrates fertility and the quality of Bulgarian wine.

8.2.4 Barefoot fire dancing

Fire dancing, known in Bulgaria as “Nestinarstvo”, is performed in villages of the Black Sea coast region, mainly on the holiday of “St. Konstantin and Elena” (21 May). It is a Thracian tradition recognized by UNESCO. Besides honoring the two saints, the holiday marks the transition from spring to summer. The dancers, most often women, dance barefoot on hot glowing embers in a trance. According to the tradition, the fire dancer is chosen and guided by the saint of the day, whose icon is carried during the dance. It is said that the dancers can

connect to the saint and through this connection interpret omens, give advice, foretell the future or communicate with the dead.

8.2.5 Kukeri

In winter and early spring, costumed dancers in bells, masks and furs perform the ancient ritual of the “Kukeri”. It is believed to scare off evil spirits and to bring a good harvest.

8.2.6 Orthodox Easter egg fight

Bulgarian Orthodox Easter differs from the common Easter traditions: it involves egg coloring, egg breaking and Easter bread. The eggs are colored on Holy Thursday before Easter Sunday, and the first egg is always red, symbolizing that Jesus has risen from the dead. The other eggs can be painted in any color, often drawn on with a wax candle. The egg breaking takes place before the big meal. Each family member chooses a colorful egg, and everybody taps their eggs against each other. Whoever holds the last unbroken egg is said to have a whole year of luck ahead. The typical Easter bread is called “Kozunak”, a sweet bread, sometimes with raisins.

8.3 Varna, city of festivals

Varna has earned its nickname “city of festivals”. Nearly 50 of them take place throughout the year, a tradition that dates back to the first Bulgarian National Music Celebrations here in 1926. The highlights include:

- **Varna Summer International Music Festival** (June–July): Bulgaria’s oldest, with classical concerts, opera and ballet
- **International Folklore Festival** (August)
- **Day of Varna** (15 August): the holiday of the city’s patron saint
- **Nikulden** (6 December): a charitable food festival centered on traditional fish dishes
- **Epiphany** (6 January): a cross is thrown into Varna Bay and young men dive into the winter water to retrieve it for good luck

Varna today. Modern Varna wears its history well. Spend a morning at the Archaeological Museum (home of the Varna Gold), the ancient Roman Thermae or the Naval Museum, then unwind in the Sea Garden or in the narrow streets of the Greek Quarter. By evening the city shifts into beach clubs, live music and open-air concerts.

8.4 Food, music and everyday life

Bulgarian food carries strong Turkish, Greek and Balkan influences. Look out for **shopska salad** (tomatoes, cucumber, peppers, onion and sirene cheese), **banitsa** (a flaky cheese pastry, often eaten for breakfast), the country’s famous **yogurt** (made with its own *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* culture), **lyutenitsa** (a spicy-sweet pepper and tomato relish) and the wines of the Varna region. Music runs through daily life too, from polyphonic folk songs to lively wedding bands and modern pop-folk (“chalga”).

8.5 Culture shock: a few practical differences

If you come from Germany or the UK, a handful of everyday things will stand out:

- **Head gestures:** traditionally, Bulgarians nod up and down for “no” (often with a little “tsk” sound) and shake the head from side to side for “yes”, the reverse of most of the world. It is less consistent among younger, more international crowds, especially in a student city like Varna, so when in doubt, listen for the spoken “da” (yes) or “ne” (no).
- **Time and punctuality:** academic and official appointments run on time, and you are expected to be on time as well. Socially, Bulgarians are more relaxed about time than

Germans in particular are used to, and a “meet at 8” among friends can easily mean 8:15. This will feel more familiar if you come from the UK.

- **Directness:** Bulgarians tend to say what they mean, especially about practical matters, and a “no” is a “no”. Coming from the UK this can feel blunt at first, but it is not meant as rudeness. Coming from Germany, the directness itself will not surprise you as much. What might be how quickly conversations turn warm and personal, even with people you have just met.
- **Hospitality:** if you are invited to someone’s home, expect rakia (local grape or plum brandy), more food than you can finish and more offered the moment you slow down. Bring a small gift such as flowers, wine or chocolate (skip chrysanthemums, which are associated with funerals), and try not to turn down an invitation outright.
- **Family and respect for elders:** family ties are closer and more multigenerational than in the UK or Germany. Offering your seat on the bus or letting an older person go first in a line is simply normal here.
- **Bureaucracy:** Bulgarian administration is more paperwork-heavy and more in-person than Germany’s efficient systems, and less digitized than the UK’s. You will feel this firsthand in the Migration office process (point 3.1). Patience, and copies of everything, go a long way.

8.6 What to visit in Bulgaria

8.6.1 Cities



Nessebar



Plovdiv



Veliko Tarnovo



Sofia

- **Nessebar:** a very old, picturesque town on an island, connected to the mainland by a bridge.
- **Burgas:** 20 km from Sunny Beach, the holiday area.
- **Plovdiv:** one of the oldest cities in Bulgaria, with a Roman-built old town and a charming city center.
- **Veliko Tarnovo:** located on the rim of a hill with a nice fortress, capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom.
- **Sofia:** the capital of Bulgaria.

8.6.2 Hiking



Hiking is very popular among young Bulgarians, and basically you can hike everywhere. The app “Wikiloc” is very useful and includes many hiking, skiing and biking paths. Bulgaria has four main mountain chains:

- **Pirin:** the highest peak is Vihren at 2,914 m, named after “Perun”, the highest god of the Slavic pantheon and the god of thunder and lightning. Skiing resort: Bansko.
- **Rila:** the most popular mountain chain in Bulgaria. The highest peak is Musala at 2,925 m. It includes the “Seven Rila Lakes”, one of the most popular locations in the country, the Borovets skiing resort and the Rila Monastery, the largest and most famous Eastern Orthodox monastery in Bulgaria.
- **Rhodopes:** a low mountain range, but nearer to Varna than Rila and Pirin. Skiing resort: Pamporovo.
- **Stara Planina:** the highest peak is Botev peak at 2,376 m. The mountains are remarkable for their flora and fauna and played an enormous role in Bulgaria’s history.

Hiking maps and trail markings are not as common as in the Alps, so keep your phone charged to use it as a GPS device. Paper maps are almost only available in the villages before the trailhead. From personal experience, the iOS app “Maps 3D” is very recommendable. The most comfortable way to get to the mountains is your own car, because the trails are often hard to reach by public transport. Still, public transport exists to the skiing areas, to the starting point of the Seven Lakes and to the Rila Monastery, most often from Sofia central bus station.

8.6.3 Skiing

There are four main areas:

- **Pamporovo:** the nearest ski resort from Varna and not so crowded, due to higher prices.
- **Bansko:** a popular resort where the Women’s World Cup in skiing takes place every year. Very good but expensive hotels. Ski rental is about €13 per day.
- **Borovets:** the biggest ski resort in Bulgaria. Renting skis, shoes and socks costs about €10 per day, and the parking situation is very nice.
- **Chepelare:** the cheapest place of them all.

8.6.4 Excursions by the University

For first-year students there are these excursions:

- **Orientation-week trip:** at the end of the Orientation Week we take you on a trip around Varna. It is all about socializing and getting to know the country you are going to study in. Accompanied by students from higher years and by teachers, you get the perfect start into the first semester.
- **Plovdiv trip:** of course you learn the Bulgarian language in seminars and lectures, but the best way to learn about a culture is to experience the country itself. That is why the Bulgarian department organizes a weekend trip every year, from Varna via Nessebar and Burgas to Plovdiv, one of the oldest cities in Europe.

8.7 Secret spots

A few places that locals and senior students like to keep to themselves:

- **The lighthouse in Galata:** one of the best sunset views around, ideally enjoyed with friends.
- **A quiet “hidden beach”,** tucked away behind the street corner that runs down to the water. You will know it once you have found it. It is calmer and more private, especially in summer.

- **For drinks**, the Piano Bar (a rooftop spot) and a small, low-key speakeasy bar are both local favorites.
- **Beyond Varna**, Bulgaria has plenty more to explore, like hiking in the mountains around Sofia or wandering through Plovdiv's old town and its charming city center. There is a lot of nature and history left to discover.

9. Tips in general

9.1 Car renting

Top Rent a Car Varna: about €50–€77 for one week, depending on the season (converted from the 2023 price, so please ask for the current one). In summer it can be very busy, so a reservation is recommended. Website: toprentacar.bg

9.2 Safety

Varna is generally a very safe city with low crime rates, loved by tourists from Bulgaria and from the rest of the world. As long as you use common sense, nothing will trouble your mind.

9.3 Medical advice

There are many options to choose from, some of them:

- The University recommends GPs and doctors, who are listed in front of the Students office.
- **St. Marina:** bul. "Hristo Smirnenski" 1, 9010 Varna
- **Dental faculty:** bul. "Tsar Osvoboditel" 150, 9002 Center, Varna

9.4 Things to consider before flying to Bulgaria

- **Lab coats:** they are also available in Varna.
- **Anatomy atlas** ("Sobotta" or "Prometheus"): it can be cheaper in your home country. Make sure it is in English-Latin, or German-Latin for German students.
- **Rain-proof shoes:** Varna gets a lot of rain during winter.
- **Warm clothing:** it can get very windy all year round, especially in autumn and winter.
- **Proof of health insurance:** make sure you are covered while staying abroad.
- **ID card / passport:** they should be valid until you go back to your home country, with enough time left to renew them.
- **Credit/debit cards:** familiarize yourself with the fees for using them abroad.
- **Medications:** if you take very specific drugs, check their availability in Bulgaria. Another advantage of bringing medication from home is that you understand the instructions on the box (travel kit).
- **Financial support (German students: "BAföG"):** you may apply even if you do not qualify for support while studying in your home country, because the law is different for studies abroad.

9.5 Dry cleaning services

- **"Bubbles":** ul. "Makedonia" 95, 9000 Varna Center
- **"Clean Zone":** ul. "Stefan Stambolov" 12-A (next to Banya "Gabata", Shishkova gradinka), 9000 Greek Quarter, Varna

We wish you a successful journey in Varna and a wonderful student experience at MUV!