

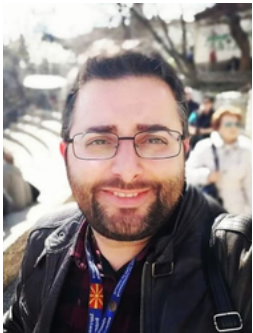


TOUR DETAILS

Where the mountains meet the mirror-still waters of one of Europe's oldest lakes, Ohrid has been quietly accumulating history, beauty, and meaning for over three thousand years. We will move through cobblestone streets and ancient shores where Byzantine frescoes glow inside centuries-old churches and a medieval fortress looks down over a town that has outlasted empires, each stop carrying its own legends, from the Macedonian kingdom that first gave this place meaning to the monks who made it one of the earliest centers of Slavic literacy. By the time the stars reflect across the glassy lake and the old town settles into its evening calm, you will understand why Ohrid is a place that lingers long after the journey home.



★ MEET YOUR TOUR GUIDE: APOSTOLIS



Since the age of 20, Apostolis has been looking for a way to promote the magnificent city of Ohrid to the world. After getting his Bachelor's degree in Tourism in Greece, he returned to Ohrid in 2012 to fulfil his dream of becoming a professional tour guide. That very same dream encouraged him to open his own tour agency, and nowadays, after many years of work and experience, being a tour guide has remained Apostolis's greatest passion.

PRIVATE TOURS | Your guide is available for private tours, live-stream or in person. It's a special way to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, holiday, or special occasion - or to add to an upcoming trip. Please reach out to Wowzitude and we will be happy to connect you.

i WHAT TO EXPECT

Get ready for something special. We're traveling with no passport, no plane ticket and no luggage. And yet you'll experience all the sights, sounds and stories with just your laptop, favorite snack and amazing guide.

The tour will be live streamed by your guide directly. While on the tour you'll be able to see a full screen video of your guide and their surroundings, interact with them and other travelers.

🎵 MUSIC SELECTION

- Angelot by Toše Proeski: <https://youtu.be/NdZHsIyl1Mc?si=uiyb7-PKilYfGu5t>
- Mojot Svet by Karolina: <https://youtu.be/NsXxHFEbiI0?si=f2UnwXGk3hkqbgXw>

OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA – RECIPES

Macedonian Bunar (Summer Fruit Wine Punch) | 6 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups dry white wine
- 2 cups lemon-lime soda or sparkling water
- 1 cups fresh strawberries, sliced
- 1 pieces fresh peach, sliced
- 0.5 pieces fresh lemon, sliced into rounds
- 2 cups ice

PREPARATION

1. Combine fruit: Add 1 cups fresh strawberries, sliced, 1 pieces fresh peach, sliced, and 0.5 pieces fresh lemon, sliced into rounds to a large pitcher or jar.
2. Add wine and chill: Pour in 3 cups dry white wine and stir gently. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to let the fruit infuse.
3. Finish and serve: Just before serving, add 2 cups ice and top with 2 cups lemon-lime soda or sparkling water. Stir lightly and serve cold in tall glasses with a spoon to catch the fruit.



Tavče Gravče (Macedonian Baked Beans) | 4 Servings

INGREDIENTS

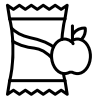
- 1 pounds dried white beans (cannellini or great northern)
- 1.5 cups yellow onion, finely diced
- 4 pieces garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons sweet paprika
- 1 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 1 pieces dried chili pepper (whole)
- 2 pieces bay leaves
- 4 tablespoons sunflower or vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoons salt and black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped (garnish)
- 0.5 pieces onion rings, for topping

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Soak the beans: The night before, cover 1 pounds dried white beans (cannellini or great northern) in a large bowl with cold water and soak overnight. Drain and rinse before cooking.
2. Cook the beans: Place the soaked beans in a large pot, cover with fresh water by 2 inches, and add 2 pieces bay leaves and 1 pieces dried chili pepper (whole). Bring to a boil, skim any foam, then reduce heat and simmer for 1.90 minutes until beans are tender but not mushy. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the cooking liquid.
3. Make the roux: Preheat oven to 375°F. In a skillet over medium heat, warm 4 tablespoons sunflower or vegetable oil. Add 1.5 cups yellow onion, finely diced and cook until soft and golden, about 9 minutes. Add 4 pieces garlic cloves, minced and cook 1 more minute. Stir in 2 tablespoons sweet paprika and 1 teaspoons smoked paprika until fragrant and combined.
4. Combine and bake: Add the cooked beans to the skillet and stir to coat. Season with 1 teaspoons salt and black pepper. Transfer everything to a baking dish or clay pot. Pour in enough reserved cooking liquid to just cover the beans. Top with 0.5 pieces onion rings, for topping rings.
5. Bake until crusted: Bake uncovered for 35 to 40 minutes, until the top is golden and a light crust has formed. Remove from oven and rest for 10 minutes.
6. Garnish and serve: Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped (garnish) and serve hot directly from the dish with crusty bread.



OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA – SNACKS



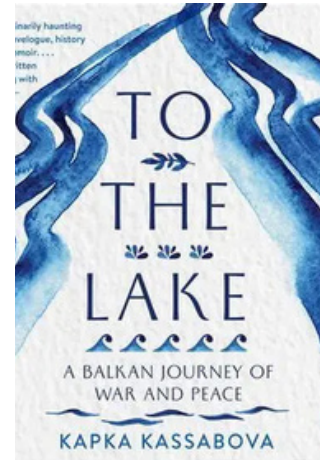
- **Brian's Ajvar (Roasted Red Pepper Spread):** Ajvar is Macedonia's most beloved pantry staple, a rich, smoky spread made from double-roasted red peppers and eggplant that locals pile onto fresh bread and eat as a snack any time of day.
- **Macedonian Halva (by Haitoglou Bros):** Halva is a traditional confection made with tahini, sugar, and spices, known for its sweet, crumbly, and fluffy texture.
- **Lokum (Turkish Delight, Macedonian Style):** A sweet inherited from centuries of Ottoman influence, lokum is a soft, chewy confection dusted in powdered sugar and flavored with rosewater, citrus, or pistachio.



OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA – BOOKS

BOOK SELECTION

- **To the Lake by Kapka Kassabova:** This lyrical travel memoir traces Kassabova's journey to Lakes Ohrid and Prespa, borderlands shared by North Macedonia, Albania, and Greece. As she swims and walks these ancient shores, she uncovers family stories, collective trauma, and political complexity in one of the most moving and beautifully written portraits of the Ohrid region ever published.
- **North Macedonia (Bradt Travel Guide) by Thammy Evans:** This guide covers the full breadth of North Macedonia, from the oldest lake in Europe to medieval monasteries and the pretty lakeshore town of Ohrid, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Extensively researched and richly detailed, it doubles as a cultural companion as much as a practical guide.
- **My Husband by Rumena Bužarovska:** Smart, funny, and quietly cutting, this collection of short stories has made Rumena Bužarovska one of the finest contemporary voices in Macedonian literature. Her sharp, hyperrealist prose offers an intimate window into modern Macedonian life and is one of the most celebrated works to emerge from the country in recent decades.



OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA – MOVIES

MOVIE SELECTION

- **Before the Rain (1994):** Directed by Milcho Manchevski, this landmark Macedonian film weaves together three stories of ethnic tension and conflict, shot partly in and around Ohrid. It remains the defining film of its era from this region and is available to rent on Amazon Prime Video in the US.
- **Honeyland (2019):** This Academy Award-nominated documentary follows the last female wild beekeeper in Europe as a family of nomadic beekeepers arrives and threatens her fragile way of life. A stunning and quietly devastating film, it is available to stream on Hulu in the US.
- **God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya (2019):** Directed by Teona Strugar Mitevska, this award-winning film follows a young woman who catches a ceremonial cross during an Epiphany ritual traditionally reserved for men, sparking a fierce clash with her conservative community. Available to rent on Amazon Prime Video in the US.



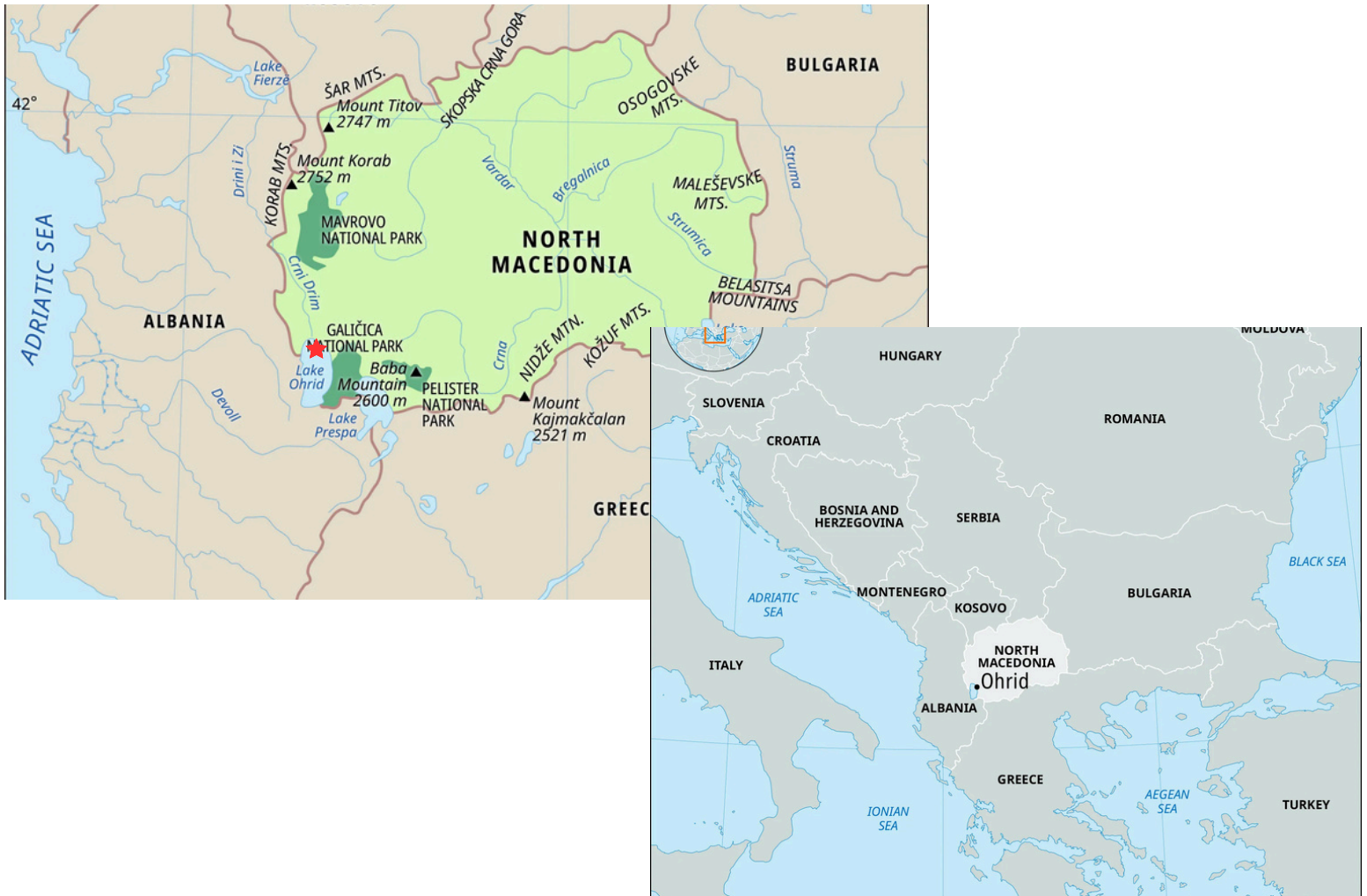
OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA – FUN FACTS



FUN FACTS

- 1. The City of Light.** Ohrid's ancient name was Lychnidos, a Greek word believed to mean "city of light" or "a precious stone that emits light." It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in all of Europe, with roots stretching back thousands of years before the first church or fortress was ever built.
- 2. One Church for Every Day of the Year.** Ohrid once had 365 churches, one for each day of the year, which is exactly how it earned its nickname as the Jerusalem of the Balkans.
- 3. The Birthplace of the Cyrillic Alphabet.** Two Macedonian brothers, St. Cyril and St. Methodius, developed the Cyrillic alphabet in the 9th century, and their disciples continued to teach it at the monastery in Ohrid, from where it spread across the eastern Slavic world. Nearly half a billion people use it today.
- 4. A Lake Older Than Most of Europe's Rivers.** Lake Ohrid is a rift valley lake formed by tectonics pulling two areas of land apart, making it somewhere between four and ten million years old and one of the oldest lakes on the planet.
- 5. An Ancient Theatre Hidden in Plain Sight.** The Ancient Theatre of Ohrid was uncovered completely by accident in the 1980s during construction work, and is now entirely surrounded by modern houses. Today it still hosts live performances as part of the annual Ohrid Summer Festival.

OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA – MAP



OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

HISTORY & CIVILIZATION

- Ohrid has been ruled by Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Ottomans, and more across thousands of years. What do you think holds a community together through that kind of change, and does anything from your own lifetime come to mind?
- St. Clement of Ohrid opened what is considered the first Slavic school of higher learning here in the 9th century, at a time when very few ordinary people could read or write. What changes to education have you witnessed in your own lifetime that felt just as significant?

FAITH & ARCHITECTURE

- Ohrid once had 365 churches, one for every day of the year, earning it the nickname the Jerusalem of the Balkans. What does it say about a community when its entire skyline is defined by places of worship?
- The Church of St. Sophia has lived several lives, serving as a cathedral, a mosque, a museum, and today a concert hall. Have you ever seen a building in your own life completely change its purpose? What do you think is gained or lost when that happens?

FOOD & DAILY LIFE

- Macedonian hospitality is deeply tied to food, with generous meals seen as a genuine expression of welcome. How does that compare to the role food played in your own family or community growing up?
- Coffee culture across the Balkans treats café visits as unhurried social rituals rather than quick stops. How has the pace of everyday socializing changed over your lifetime, and do you miss anything about the slower version?

NATURE & THE LAKE

- Lake Ohrid is one of the oldest lakes on the planet, estimated at up to ten million years old. What does it feel like to stand beside something that ancient, and does it change how you think about our own place in history?

CULTURE & THE ARTS

- The Cyrillic alphabet, used today by nearly half a billion people, has its roots right here in Ohrid. Can you think of another example where a single small place quietly changed the course of an entire civilization?
- The ancient theatre of Ohrid was discovered by accident during construction work in the 1980s and still hosts live performances today. What do you think it feels like to watch a concert in a space built over two thousand years ago?



OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA – ACCESSIBILITY



WHERE OHRID TRULY SHINES FOR ACCESSIBILITY

- The Lake Promenade is the crown jewel for visitors with mobility needs. Along the lake, the promenade offers accessible paved pathways that stretch along the water's edge, offering sweeping views of the mountains, the shimmering lake, and the old town rising above it. This is a genuinely beautiful, smooth, and relaxed route that anyone can enjoy at their own pace.
- Lakeside cafes and restaurants along the waterfront are largely flat, welcoming, and easy to navigate, making them ideal spots to rest, eat, and take in the atmosphere without any physical strain.
- Boat tours on Lake Ohrid offer one of the most accessible and breathtaking ways to experience the destination. Several charter operators along the shoreline offer lake excursions, and being on the water puts your clients at the heart of Ohrid's beauty without navigating a single cobblestone. Views of the cliffside churches, the mountains, and the crystal-clear water are stunning from the lake itself.
- The town is equipped with ramps, elevators, and accessible facilities in a number of areas, and wheelchair-friendly paths and designated swimming areas make it easier for those with mobility challenges to access the waterfront and beach areas.
- Hotels and accommodations along the lake have been gradually improving, with a number of properties offering accessible rooms. It is recommended to book accommodation in advance and specify any accessibility requirements to ensure the right room is secured.

WHERE CHALLENGES EXIST, AND HOW TO WORK AROUND THEM

- Many of the historic parts of the town feature cobblestones and stairs, which can be difficult for wheelchair users. The old town climbs steeply uphill, and while it is visually spectacular, it is better experienced virtually or from a distance for those with significant mobility limitations.
- The Church of St. John at Kaneo, a stunning medieval church located on a cliff overlooking Lake Ohrid, is not wheelchair accessible, as it involves navigating steep, narrow steps. However, the views from accessible parts of the town and lakeside are still breathtaking. This church is actually one of the most photographed views in all of the Balkans and is beautifully visible from the lake promenade and by boat.
- Private transportation is strongly recommended over public buses for anyone with mobility needs. Planning ahead and using private transportation or accessible taxi services is recommended. Many local tour operators can arrange accessible vehicles with advance notice.

NORTH MACEDONIA'S BROADER COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

- North Macedonia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and has put legal frameworks in place requiring new buildings to meet accessibility standards. While enforcement is still developing, this represents a meaningful national commitment to inclusion.
- North Macedonia's accessibility framework includes requirements for signage in Braille and easy-to-read formats in public buildings, as well as provisions for live assistance, sign language interpreters, and guides to facilitate access to public facilities.
- The local population in Ohrid is generally friendly and helpful towards individuals with disabilities. If assistance is needed, locals and service providers are known to be willing to help. This warm, community-oriented culture is one of the city's most genuine and consistent qualities.

OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA – SUSTAINABILITY



AN HONEST CONTEXT

Ohrid's sustainability story is compelling but still very much in progress. Lake Ohrid has existed for approximately two to three million years and is home to over 200 species of plants and animals found nowhere else on earth. That extraordinary biodiversity is what drives the conservation urgency here, and the effort is real, growing, and increasingly global in its reach.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE PROTECTION

- Ohrid holds the rare distinction of being recognized by UNESCO for both its natural and cultural heritage, a dual designation held by very few destinations anywhere in the world.
- In 2014 the Ohrid-Prespa Transboundary Reserve was added to UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and in 2021 the lake was designated a Ramsar wetland of international importance, passing all nine criteria for that distinction and placing it among the most rigorously protected ecosystems on the planet.

ACTIVE LAKE CONSERVATION

- International conservation teams regularly conduct underwater cleanups in the lake, removing abandoned fishing nets that threaten aquatic life and focusing particular attention on the natural spawning grounds of the native Ohrid trout.
- Fishing for trout was completely banned for a full decade after stocks fell to critically low levels, giving the population time to recover while sustainable trout farming was introduced to supply local restaurants.

GREEN TOURISM AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

- Sustainable tour operators in North Macedonia bring visitors to remote areas in small groups and regularly organize community cleanups that travelers can join. Rural homestays, farm-to-table dinners, and visits to local artisan collectives ensure that tourism spending goes directly into the hands of local families.
- Hotel investment along the lakeshore is increasingly focused on green upgrades, with energy reduction projects supported by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development already underway.

THE HONEST CHALLENGE

Ohrid is not a destination that has solved its sustainability challenges. UNESCO has raised serious concerns about overdevelopment and pollution, and the work is far from finished. For a traveler who cares about sustainability, that makes Ohrid something more interesting than a destination with everything figured out. It is a place where your visit, your choices, and your awareness genuinely matter, and where the conservation story is unfolding in real time.

OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA – MYTHS & FACTS



- **Myth:** North Macedonia is too obscure and difficult to visit to be worth the trip.
 - **Fact:** Ohrid has a functioning local airport with seasonal European connections, regular daily bus service from Skopje, and direct connections from Albania and other neighboring countries. English is widely spoken in tourist areas, credit cards are broadly accepted, and the town is compact and easy to navigate. What it lacks in global name recognition it more than makes up for in beauty, history, and genuine warmth from its locals.
- **Myth:** Ohrid is a quiet, sleepy little village.
 - **Fact:** While Ohrid has an undeniable old-world charm, it is one of the most visited destinations in the entire Balkans during summer, drawing large crowds of regional and European travelers to its beaches, restaurants, and waterfront. The Ohrid Summer Festival, held each July and August, brings performers and theatre companies from around the world to the city, including concerts held in a 2,000-year-old ancient theatre.
- **Myth:** The Ohrid Pearl is just a tourist gimmick.
 - **Fact:** The Ohrid Pearl is one of the most genuinely unique artisan products in Europe. Unlike conventional pearls, it is made using a centuries-old technique involving the iridescent scales of the Ohrid bleak fish found only in this lake. The process is so rare and distinctive that it has been recognized as part of North Macedonia's intangible cultural heritage and remains one of the few places in the world where the craft is still practiced by hand.
- **Myth:** North Macedonia and Greece have always agreed on the country's identity and name.
 - **Fact:** When North Macedonia declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, a lengthy and at times heated dispute with Greece over the use of the name Macedonia lasted nearly three decades. It was only resolved in 2019 through the Prespa Agreement, when the country formally adopted the name North Macedonia. The agreement was historic and remains one of the more remarkable diplomatic resolutions in recent European history.
- **Myth:** The lake is shared equally between North Macedonia and Albania.
 - **Fact:** While Lake Ohrid does straddle the border between the two countries, the majority of the lake, roughly two thirds of its surface area and most of its depth, lies within North Macedonia. The lake reaches a maximum depth of around 940 feet, making it one of the deepest lakes in Europe, and its underwater springs are so powerful that they feed the lake almost entirely from below rather than from surface rivers.

Can You Say It? | Macedonian Edition

Get ready to try a few simple and useful phrases in Macedonian. Don't worry about being perfect, just have fun with it!

Hello

Zdravo (ZDRAH-voh)

Yes / No

Da / Ne (dah / neh)

Good morning

Dobro utro (DOH-broh OO-troh)

How are you?

Kako si? (KAH-koh see)

Thank you

Blagodaram (blah-go-DAH-rahm)

Goodbye

Doviduvanje (doh-vee-DOO-vahn-yeh)

Please

Te molam (teh MOH-lahm)

I don't understand

Ne razbiram (neh raz-BEE-rahm)

24 HOURS IN OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA



8:00 AM | Breakfast at the Harbor

- Start your morning slowly at Terrazza Aquarius, a lakeside café with sweeping views of the water and old town. Enjoy Macedonian coffee and fresh pastries while taking in the quiet beauty of Ohrid before it wakes.

9:00 AM | The Old Bazaar

- Walk into Ohrid's historic bazaar, where cobblestone streets are lined with family-run shops selling handmade crafts and the famous Ohrid Pearl. Grab a burek from a local bakery and enjoy it as you explore.

9:45 AM | Church of Saint Sophia

- Visit this remarkable 11th-century church, once a Byzantine cathedral and later an Ottoman mosque. Inside, admire its stunning frescoes and layered history.

10:30 AM | Ancient Theatre of Ohrid

- Climb to this Hellenistic theatre from around 200 BC, now restored and still used for performances. Take in the view over the town and lake from its stone steps.

11:00 AM | Plaoshnik

- Explore this significant site where St. Clement founded one of the first Slavic universities. See the reconstructed church, his tomb, and ancient mosaics overlooking the lake.

12:00 PM | Samuel's Fortress

- Walk to the fortress above the old town for panoramic views of Ohrid, the lake, and surrounding mountains.

1:30 PM | Lunch

- Dine at Gladiator for traditional Macedonian dishes near the theatre, or head to Letna Bavča Kaneo for lake views and fresh local fish.

3:00 PM | Church of St. John at Kaneo

- Visit Ohrid's most iconic church, set dramatically on a cliff above the lake. The setting is peaceful, scenic, and unforgettable.

4:15 PM | Lakeside Boardwalk

- Stroll along the wooden path back toward town, enjoying close-up views of the clear water. Stop for a drink and relax along the way.

5:30 PM | Icon Gallery & Robevci House

- Discover a world-class collection of Byzantine icons, then step into a preserved 19th-century home offering insight into local life.

7:30 PM | Dinner

- Enjoy a traditional meal at Restaurant Sveta Sofija or Damar, known for local specialties, wine, and warm atmosphere.

9:00 PM | Evening on the Waterfront

End the day along the lakeside promenade, where the softly lit town and still water create a peaceful, memorable close.

OHRID, NORTH MACEDONIA – PEACE BY THE LAKE



What Makes Ohrid Feel So Peaceful

There is something about Ohrid that you notice almost immediately, even before you can explain it. It is not just the scenery, though the lake and mountains are undeniably beautiful. It is a feeling, a sense of calm that seems to settle in as soon as you arrive.

Part of this comes from the pace of life. In Ohrid, the day unfolds slowly. Mornings begin with coffee by the water, often without hurry or agenda. People take their time. Conversations linger. There is space in the day that allows you to simply be present.

The natural setting also plays a powerful role. Lake Ohrid is one of the oldest lakes in Europe, and its stillness is striking. On many days, the surface reflects the sky so clearly it feels almost unreal. The air is fresh, the light is soft, and even in the heart of the town, there is a quiet that feels uninterrupted.

History adds another layer to this sense of calm. In Ohrid, the past is not hidden away. It is woven into daily life. Churches, ancient paths, and centuries-old structures exist alongside homes, cafés, and gathering places. This continuity creates a feeling of grounding, as if time here moves differently.

There is also a simplicity to life in Ohrid that is deeply comforting. Meals are shared slowly. Evenings are spent walking along the water. There is no need to rush from one place to another. The experience is not about checking off sights, but about noticing what is around you.

As the day comes to an end, this feeling becomes even more pronounced. The lake grows still, the town quiets, and the lights reflect softly on the water. It is in these moments that Ohrid feels most like itself.

Peace here is not something that is created for visitors. It is something that already exists, shaped by nature, history, and daily life.

All you have to do is slow down enough to feel it.

