



Dear Friends,

Welcome to Part 1 of our travel and culture edition! We're thrilled to bring you a collection of stories and destinations that are sure to inspire your next adventure.

Discover the breathtaking beauty and vibrant community spirit of Bulgaria's Iskar Gorge, where cool mountain air and clear river waters offer a perfect summer escape. Explore how local heroes are revitalizing their villages, maintaining nature trails, and creating unique cultural festivals that celebrate the region's rich heritage and natural wonders.

Join renowned historian Bettany Hughes on a journey through Bulgaria's myriad treasures in her stunning documentary revealing the country's hidden gems and historical significance.

Whether you're planning your next trip or simply looking to broaden your horizons, our newsletter has something for everyone.

And we will be back with more next week!

Be the first to read the latest stories and discover new opportunities by [subscribing to this newsletter](#).

## Destination Iskar Gorge

When the weather's too hot even for romance — [a calamity memorably described in Cole Porter's hit "Too Darn Hot" and immortalized through jazz great Ella Fitzgerald's soaring performance](#) — Bulgaria is a good place to be. The country's cool mountains and plentiful waterways provide a welcome respite from summer's scorching temperatures.

The Iskar Gorge stands out among Bulgaria's top summer escapes: not only is it one of the most beautiful places anywhere, but also the combination of crisp mountain air and the Iskar River's replenishing cool is a balm for body and spirit.

We traveled along the gorge to avoid the heat in the city, but we also found inspiration — in the people who call the area home. They maintain mountain trails, clean riverbeds, repair broken signs and put up new ones, organize events, grow clean food, revive depopulated villages, and bring festivities back to long-empty community centers.

Whether you have a day, a weekend, or a whole week, the region has plenty of things for you to see and do. So, put on your favorite playlist and [set your GPS route](#) to Iskar Gorge. Happy travels!

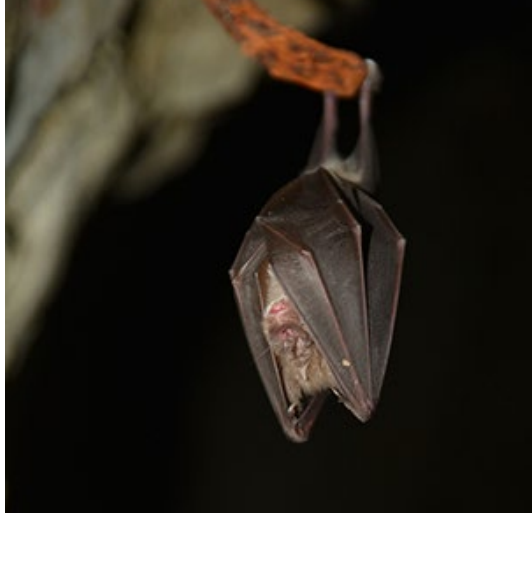
### Clear Tents, Panoramic Views, and Mythical Characters

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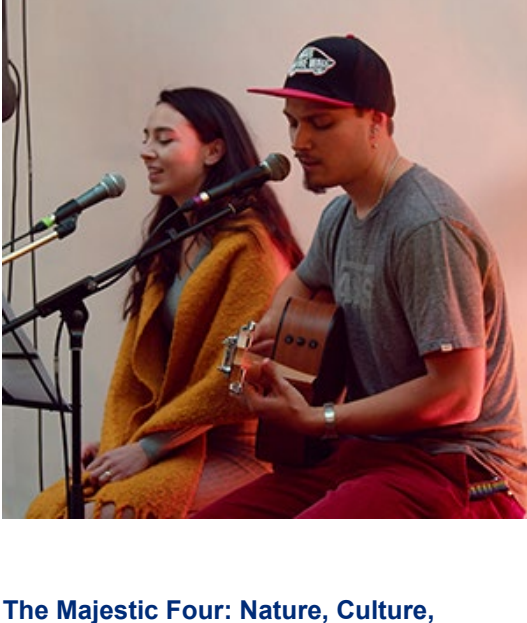
### Who Eats Whom? and Other Lessons from Vratsa Balkan

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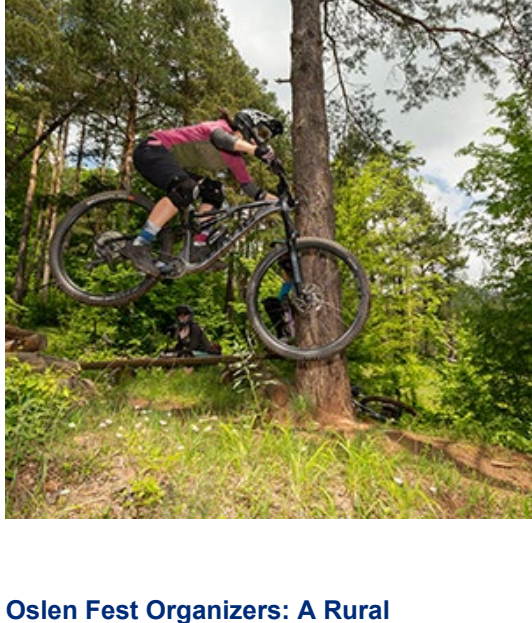
### You Won't Hear This Music on the Radio: Open Vratsa Fest

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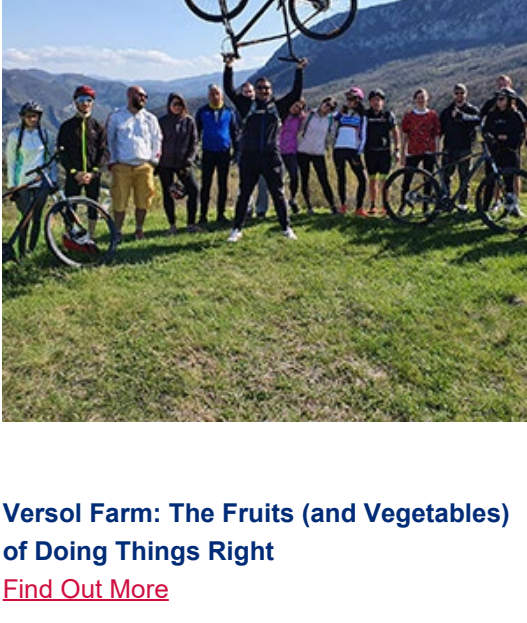
### Create Enduring Mountain Memories with Enduro Cycling

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### The Majestic Four: Nature, Culture, Food... and Cycling

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### Oslen Fest Organizers: A Rural Renaissance Is Mission Possible

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### Versol Farm: The Fruits (and Vegetables) of Doing Things Right

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## Treasures of Bulgaria



### British Historian Bettany Hughes Uncovers Bulgaria's Boundless Treasures

Wherever you dig in Bulgaria, a treasure is bound to crop up sooner or later. This is what renowned British historian Bettany Hughes found out after spending a few weeks there last year. The result of her explorations is the documentary *Treasures of Bulgaria*, available on Viasat World Bulgaria's YouTube channel.

Whether she holds the oldest worked gold in the world, the one from the Varna necropolis, or visits Bulgaria's newest archeological gem, the ancient city of Heraclea Sintica, breathtaking footage and Ms. Hughes' remarkable storytelling reveal Bulgaria like never before.

This documentary was produced with support from the America for Bulgaria Foundation.

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### Bishop's Basilica of Philippopolis Shortlisted for SHARE Architecture Awards

We are thrilled to announce that the Bishop's Basilica of Philippopolis in Plovdiv has been shortlisted in the cultural heritage category of the prestigious SHARE Architecture Awards, which celebrate remarkable architecture projects in Central and Eastern Europe. The Basilica's extraordinary transformation — a testament to the power of public-private partnerships — was made possible with substantial support from the America for Bulgaria Foundation. The Basilica highlights how historical preservation and modern design can coexist, providing a breathtaking display of ancient mosaics and serving as a vibrant public space.

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Sending cooling regards,

Your friends at the America for Bulgaria Foundation

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