

A walk through the history and beauty of the Macedonian pearl - Ohrid

Ohrid is a city in the southwestern part of North Macedonia, on the northeast coast of Ohrid Lake. Ohrid and Lake Ohrid are one of the main tourist destinations in North Macedonia. The city is known as the Balkan Jerusalem, and as the "City of Light", a literal translation of its old name, Lychnidos. The Ohrid region is included in the UNESCO World Heritage. According to one legend, when the Ohrid fortress was made, Emperor Justinian climbed the hills on which the city lies, and, looking at the beautiful surroundings, exclaimed "oh-hill", which means - a beautiful hill.

Ohrid Lake

One of the most beautiful gifts of nature in Europe is the Ohrid Lake and its surroundings. The lake is between 4 and 10 million years old, and therefore it is the oldest on our continent. At first glance it can confuse you with its size, so you might consider it to be a sea. The water of the lake is incredibly clear, so transparency in some places reaches even 22 meters. While it is special as such, by far the most spectacular quality is its impressive endemism. The lake is home to more than 200 species of endemic organisms. This includes the Ohrid trout, endemic freshwater fish that lives in Ohrid Lake, the rare snail species, and the relict algae species, as well as one of the most specific plants the underwater plant "Hara".

The infinity of Lake Ohrid is a view that you have to experience alongside its clear water, the warmth of the Macedonian summers, the hospitality of the local population, and the taste of the famous Ohrid specialties. Those who want an unusual and unforgettable adventure can try diving in underwater archaeological sites. Diving is very attractive and popular in Ohrid Lake. The lake is a true archaeological treasury and full of endemic species of flora and fauna. For example, the Ohrid round sponge, living at a depth of 35 meters, is rarely found elsewhere. Together with professional instructors, every tourist can enjoy a walk along the underwater archaeological sites in the [Bay of Bones](#) in Gradiste. Visitors are thrilled by the Neolithic pile

settlement that is unique from this kind in the Balkans and the artifacts that can be seen in the museum on the water.

Ohrid pearls

Unlike regular pearls, Ohrid pearls are made from shells, which are ground and made into balls of various sizes by adding at least eight coats of a secret emulsion, giving them their characteristic shine. Each layer has to be dried before the next one is applied. The emulsion's ingredients include scales stripped of Ohrid trout (endemic freshwater fish), but the rest of the process remains a mystery. For nearly 100 years, there have only been two families that have known how to produce the Ohrid pearls: the Talevs and the Filevs.

The city Ohrid

The narrow stone alleys in the old part of the city of Ohrid hide bits of the Macedonian history behind every corner. The deep blue color of the lake looks great against the white Ohrid architecture. The most representative example is the "[House of Robevci](#)", which is a protected cultural monument and museum. On the 10-denar banknote is printed the "Torso of the Goddess Isis", an exhibit exhibited in the House of Robevci. In the center of the city, there is also the Chinar, the largest and one of the oldest trees in the city, which has been declared a monument of nature.

The Turkish travel writer Evliya Celebija visited Ohrid in the 14th century and noted that the city has 365 churches and monasteries, one for each day of the year. There are many early Christian basilicas, such as the **Basilica of [St. Erasmus](#)** which was composed in the fourth century. In the old part of the city, there is the church of [St. Sofia](#), while the [Manar of Saint Naum in Plaoshnik](#) and the archaeological sites there tell a story that you can experience while enjoying the turquoise-green springs of the river Crn Drim.

Ohrid Cuisine

The traditional Ohrid cuisine includes the famous "*fish soup*" made with different types of lake fish, the "*Ohrid eels*", fish roasted in ashes, and the "*Ohrid trout*". These are a small part of the specialties prepared along the coast of the oldest lakes in Europe. The trout in Southwestern recipes is boiled, fried, and baked, always accompanied by vegetables that grow

in this region. Ohrid is famous for its special garlic spread "*makalo*". Only the locals know the secret recipe for making the delicious spread. "*Ohrid makalo*" pairs well with countless dishes, but especially with the unique Macedonian pasta "*tarana*". This pasta is made according to a traditional old recipe from milk and organic eggs. While in Ohrid don't forget to try "*gjomleze*". Gjomleze is a traditional dish that is prepared only from flour, water, and salt, baked in a special dish - Sač (Vrshnik).

Beaches along Ohrid Lake

Besides the city beaches in Ohrid and Struga, on the line from Ohrid to St. Naum stretches the Ohrid Riviera, in which every tourist can find their interest. This includes [Beach Gorica](#) (4 km from Ohrid), [Slavija](#) (4 km from Ohrid, in the area of St. Stefan), [Potpesh](#), [Lagadin](#), [Gradiste](#), [Eleshec](#), [Ljubanista](#), [Trpejca](#).