



## BCC Film Fund | A GATEWAY TO INSPIRATIONAL AND STUNNING LOCATIONS

Welcome to our location guide. Balkan Cinema Cities provides locations in a wide variety of categories to meet the needs of the film industry. Our location library includes varied properties in the Bulgaria, Albania and Macedonia. If you do not see what you need, please let us know so that we can assist you further. All of the above mentioned countries have great locations and landscapes. They are a gateway to everything you need - airports, churches, cities, contemporary, periods, factories, farms, fortresses, houses, lakes & rivers, landscapes, mansions, monasteries, mountains, ruins, sea, ports, villages, even areas that can be used to film desert scenes. All of which is easily accessible from the production bases at the cities-members of BCC: Sofia, Varna and Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria), Tirana, Korca and Kruja (Albania), Skopje and Bitola (Macedonia). Two – Sofia and Bitola are among the seven cities of film, in the UNESCO program, film creative cities network.

These are cities that already have an existing film infrastructure, experience in film making and also trained people who can operate heavy international productions:

- Cities with an excellent infrastructure and large-scale studios (Sofia)
- Cities that given the beautiful locations they have nearby have constant filming of national and international co-productions (Bitola, Korca, Tirana)
- Cities that will use the benefits of this platform to attract new investments and promote their resources and locations to attract filmmakers not only from the region but also from across Europe.
- Cities like Sofia, Bitola, Tirana, which are known for their International film festivals and have been synonymous with quality and promotion of best films from Europe and around the world for years - Sofia IFF, ICFF Manaki Brothers, Tirana IFF.



## OVERVIEW

Bulgaria offers very diverse film locations. Here you will find ancient fortresses and monasteries along with contemporary architecture buildings. The country has many appeals, including its varied scenery that can pass for Canada, Alaska and Russia in the winter, and France, Middle America and even more tropical locations in the summer months. The greatest draw for filmmakers, however, is the low cost of filming in Bulgaria compared to the more traditional locations such as Los Angeles. There have been a number of big budget American and European films which have been shot predominantly in Bulgaria in recent years.



## PERMITS

Permits for filming in public areas in Bulgaria can be secured by contacting the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in writing. On the whole, Bulgarian authorities and citizens are welcoming and encouraging to international film crews. Filmmakers do not often face restrictions to where or when they can film, unless there are exceptional circumstances to take into account. A visa is not required for filmmakers who intend to stay in Bulgaria less than 30 days. However, for stays that continue for over 30 days, a visa will be needed and so it will be necessary to submit an application to the Bulgarian Embassy.

## STUDIOS

Bulgaria's capital city of Sofia has several studios among the largest in Eastern Europe. They can provide all the necessary facilities required for every step of the film production process. The complex features 13 sound stages and has several standing sets including replicas of New York City, Ancient Rome, a Japanese Dojo, Wartime Italy, and an Arabian set which was used in the filming of Conan the Barbarian.

## LOCATIONS

Bulgaria has a range of versatile landscapes and both historic and modern urban areas, which can be effectively used to substitute a variety of different countries and cities around the globe. During the warmer months of late spring, summer and early autumn, Bulgaria's mountains, forests, lakes and wide valleys resemble American states such as Northern California and Colorado, or even New Zealand and South America. In the winter months the landscape becomes snowy, making low lying areas look similar to areas of Russia, and mountainous regions like the French Alps or even the Canadian Rockies. The Black Sea coastline can easily be transformed on film to resemble the French Riviera or coastal areas of the Mediterranean.

## EQUIPMENT

State of the art equipment can be rented from the Nu Boyana Film Studios, as well as a number of independent rental companies in the city of Sofia. For a full list of film equipment and services contact us.



## OVERVIEW

Albania has a total area of 28,750 square kilometers. Its coastline is 362 kilometres long and stretches on the Adriatic Sea and the Ionian Sea. The lowlands of the west face the Adriatic Sea. 70% of the country is mountainous and often inaccessible. The highest mountain is Korab situated in the district of Dibra, reaching up to 2,753 metres. The country has a continental climate at its high altitude regions with cold winters and hot summers.

Besides the capital city of Tirana, the principal cities are Durrës, Elbasan, Shkodër, Gjirokastër, Vlorë, Korçë and Kukës. Recent administrations have improved the country's infrastructure and opened competition in seaports, railroads, telecommunications, electricity generation, natural gas distribution and airports. Tourism in Albania is a large industry and is growing rapidly. Notable attractions include the ancient sites of Apollonia, Butrinti, and Krujë. Albania's coastline is popular due to its relatively unspoiled nature and its beaches.

Albania is best known for its well preserved Ottoman cities, archaeological ruins, castles and fortresses, mosques and churches, Soviet architecture, rugged mountains, rivers, waterfalls, lakes, national parks and white sand beaches with azure seas. The Albanian Alps in the north of the country are home to the picturesque Theth National Park, Valbona Valley National Park, and the ancient cities of Shkoder and Puka. Southern Albania is home to many beautiful beaches including Dhermi, Ksamil, and Borsh. The area is also where you can find the old Ottoman cities of Gjirokaster and Berat (with Mount Tomorr as the backdrop). Butrint is known for its ancient Greek and Roman ruins. Tirana is the capital and main entry point by air. The city can double for urban Italian looks as well as old Soviet locations.

## PERMITS

Permits are arranged with the relevant municipality. A general police permit may also be required. Most permits are free and require at least 2 weeks to process. Additional fees may apply for filming historic locations. Allow more lead time and costs for shoots that require exclusive use of public space. Please contact us for location specific information. No formal work permit required. Entry is subject to regulations from country of origin.

## COSTS

Local costs are some of the lowest in Europe. The appropriate level of production support can match every budget. Talent day rates and buyouts are negotiable. Casting facilities are undeveloped and street casting is often required. Albania offers mostly Albanian talent looks characterized by dark Mediterranean features. Its close proximity to major European production centers allows easy access to those pools of talent should you ever need to look further. Albania's mountain region is home to a fascinating community of Sworn Virgins, otherwise known as burneshas, or females who have chosen to live their lives as men.





# MACEDONIA

## OVERVIEW

Macedonia is a small country, but one with a vibrant film industry. It has strong -production and service companies, along with skilled technicians. There are around 280 sunny days a year, low taxes, low operation costs and competitive labour costs. Striking landscapes and a stunning array of shooting locations mountain valleys, forests, a medieval fortress, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, an island, and small desert can all be found in Macedonia. Macedonia is one of the most attractive destinations for cultural tourism in Europe. There is a strong road and rail network. The country is compact, easy to get around, with mountains, rural locations, lakes and urban settings only one-hour drive from the cities of Skopje and Bitola. Macedonia is home to some 1,000 churches and monasteries and more than 4,200 archaeological sites.



## FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

A 20% cash rebate on qualifying Macedonian spend of at least \$113,000 (€100,000) for international producers was introduced in 2014. They need to work with a local production partner.

- low taxes
  - vat of 18% to all taxable sales and import, except to sales and import taxable with the preferential rate of 5%(ex. for hotel & catering the rate is 5%)
  - personal income tax of 10%
  - income from copyright and industrial property rights - depending on the type of the artwork (paintings, artistic work in music,

- low operational costs

Macedonia is one of the most cost-competitive locations in Europe.

- competitive labor cost advantage in Europe
- exceptional and skilled production companies and crew Macedonia with experience in international production.
- quality production service for films cgi, vfx, sfx

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND CREWS

There are many well-regarded service companies. Most technicians speak reasonable English. Macedonia is a member of Eurimages and an active co-producer, providing opportunities for local talent. The local industry can host three big international projects at the same time.