

STOBI, THE CAPITAL CITY OF MACEDONIA SECUNDA EXCAVATION PROJECT: REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Program Information

PROGRAM SPECIFIC FIELD CONDITIONS

What are the average weather conditions during the time of the field school?

South European (subtropical) climate dominates the region, making summers hot. Temperatures may reach (30-40°C/90-100°F). Rainy and chilly days in this season are rare but not impossible.

Please describe the site(s) where the students will work, for example, outside and/or inside; in a city, town, or rural area; shady or sunny, etc.

The [archaeological site of Stobi](#) is near the village of Gradsko, Republic of North Macedonia. Since 2012, Stobi has been included in the World Monuments Fund Watch list among the sites with universal significance.

The **field school** includes the following three modules:

Fieldwork, including excavation of Roman and Late Roman layers and structures: practicing basic excavation techniques and developing archaeological field documentation by maintaining a field journal daily, filling locus sheets and labels, drawing an elevation plan/ a ground plan/ a cross-section, 3D positioning of finds, taking coordinates with a dumpy level, as well as taking photographs at the site;

Lectures and workshops in Roman and Field Archaeology, Finds' Processing and Documentation; workshops on Photogrammetry & Surveying for Archaeological and Architectural Recording alongside the excavation. Further training will be given in the operation of a Total Station and the establishment of a survey control network on site;

Excursions to the old towns of [Bitola](#), the [archaeological site of Heraclea Lyncestis](#) as well as to [Ohrid and Ohrid lake](#) (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Skopje and to the ancient [Macedonian capital Pella and the royal burial complexes in Vergina \(UNESCO World Heritage Site\) in Greece](#) (optional, not covered by the program fee).

Will there be other people onsite with the field school or working in the same area?

There might be excavations or conservation campaigns happening at the same time but at different places on the site. They are usually led by members of the Stobi team and involve 3-5 workers.

What does an average week look like?

Working days

6.00 am - 6.40 am - Breakfast
6.40 am - 1.00 pm - Fieldwork with 30-min break*.
1.00 pm - 5.00 pm - Lunch and siesta break.
5.00 pm - 5.45 pm - Lectures/ Workshops
6.00 pm - 7.30/8.00 pm - Finds processing. Workshops.
8.00 pm - 9.00 pm - Dinner.

Excursions (all day)

Visit the ancient town of [Bitola](#) and the archaeological site of [Heraclea Lyncestis](#).

Visit [Ohrid and Ohrid Lake](#) (UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Guided visit to Skopje, the capital of the Republic of North Macedonia.

[Optional excursion to Pella and Vergina, Greece](#), not included in the field school fee

What are the options for students to access money? Are there ATMs nearby? Should students plan to bring a certain amount of cash?

The Macedonian currency is the **Macedonian DENAR (MKD)**. You cannot pay in Euros or other foreign currency except in casinos and big hotels (where the exchange rate is really low)!

Macedonian banks accept all credit cards. Usually, Banks are open from 8.00 a.m. to 6 p.m. from Monday to Friday and from 8.00 a.m. to noon on Saturdays.

Shopping malls, super markets and many shops in the bigger towns and resorts will also accept credit cards. For most small shops throughout the country, the only way of payment is cash. Exchange of foreign currencies is possible not only at banks but also at numerous exchange offices. Most do not collect commission fees and have acceptable exchange rates (+/- 0.5-1.5% of the official rate).

ATMs are available all over the country and are a safe way to get Macedonian Denars.

You can see Macedonian notes and coins in circulation at:

www.nbrm.mk/?ItemID=C2B15406ABC3BC46B2525F66092FB01D

If you plan to use your credit/debit card in Macedonia, please inform your bank of your intention before departure. Otherwise, your bank will likely block your account/card for security reasons. Unblocking your card, when abroad, may cost you several phone calls and a lot of money.

ACTIVITY LEVEL & ACCESSIBILITY

Please provide information about the physical requirements of the program.

Fieldwork - expect to perform all types of fieldwork at the site, from digging, and brushing to mapping and sampling as well as finds processing along with lab work. Physical activities during the excavations will include: lifting, bending, kneeling, crouching, and carrying.

Please comment on how accessible your site is for people with mobility challenges.

Unfortunately, due to the uneven terrain, the field school is not suitable for students with mobility limitations.

PROGRAM COUNTRY & CULTURAL INFORMATION

What do you love about the country and area you work in? What do you think students will be most excited to discover?

The amount of archaeological remains & artefacts at the site of Stobi; How beautiful N. Macedonia's nature is.

How large is the community where students will be staying? Will students have opportunities to interact casually with local residents?.

The students will be accommodated at the site, interacting with the Stobi research team and sporadically with the local staff (kitchen & cleaning staff, workers)

Primary languages spoken by people in the area:

Macedonian.

What are some things students may find surprising about the local culture?

Not all the people in the country speak English.

Are there cultural aspects that students should be aware of before they come, particularly behaviors that could be offensive or misinterpreted (for example, eye contact, dress, gestures)?

The R. of North Macedonia is a new country that used to be part of the former Yugoslavia. Its culture is unique and different from what you experience in the West. North Macedonia's hospitality is exceptional and food is central to many social interactions. Expect to learn much about people significantly different from folks living next door to you in the US.

What cultural enrichment opportunities are students likely to have outside of the program?

They will have a couple of free hours during the excursion days in the cities of: Skopje, Bitola & Ohrid.

There are a couple of small villages near Stobi where students can go by taxi for shopping or a coffee; In the evenings they can watch movies or play games;

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

Please describe student accommodations.

Participants stay at the recently renovated, air-conditioned cabins at the archaeological base camp next to the ancient site of Stobi. Students will be housed in rooms with 2–3 beds each. Each cabin has 4 bedrooms, a living room, and 2 bathrooms with showers. A washing machine and Wi-Fi are available for free. The Stobi cleaning staff will clean the rooms & bathrooms and common spaces every day. At the beginning of the field school, students will be introduced to the safety protocol for the accommodations and the site upon arrival.

The closest village to Stobi is Gradsko (5 km), where there are grocery stores, a pharmacy, an ATM, and medical facilities. The closest big supermarket, drug-stores, pharmacies, banks with ATM and hospitals are in the city of Negotino (13 km from Stobi).

Please describe how/how often students can do laundry.

A washing machine is available at the site for free.

How are room assignments made? If rooms are assigned according to gender, how will you assign rooms for non-binary, trans and queer students?

In advance, according to gender (including non-binary and queer). In the case of trans-gender students accommodation will be assigned on a case-by-case basis after communication with the student. We have very limited or sometimes no option for a change of accommodation onsite so it is important to communicate relevant information in advance.

Are there options for single rooms? Would there be an additional charge (and approximate cost)?

No single rooms are available at the venue.

Will the program provide meals? If not all meals, please specify which meals students will be responsible for, and what facilities are available for them to get groceries and prepare meals.

Three meals (fresh, homemade food) per day are covered by the program. Meals usually take place at the field house premises, except for lunch during excursions. This field school can accommodate vegetarians, vegans and individuals with lactose-intolerance diets. Kosher and gluten-free diets are not possible to accommodate at this location.

Please describe typical meals that are offered by the program.

Breakfast: toast, varieties of cheese & meat, eggs, vegetables, fruits, corn flakes, milk, yogurt, jam and honey

Lunch: soup, salad, main dish (e.g. potatoes & meat; fish: beans; mousaka, etc.), fruit

Dinner: pasta; french fries & meat; omelet, dessert (cake; fruit; baklava)

VISA AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Indicate the visa requirements, if any, for US citizens. If there is a visa requirement, what type of visa should students apply for?

Citizens of EU, EEA, USA, Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand **do not need a visa** to visit N. Macedonia for up to 90 days. Citizens of all other countries may need a visa. The Balkan Heritage Foundation can send an official invitation letter that should be used at the relevant embassy to secure a visa to the program.

For more information about border crossing visit:

<http://www.bhfieldschool.org/countries/macedonia> and

<http://www.bhfieldschool.org/information/visa-help> and the links provided there.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

If students will fly, what airport should they fly into?

Skopje airport (N. Macedonia) or Thessaloniki airport (Greece)

Will you meet students? If not at a primary arrival point, like an airport, how should students get to the meeting point?

Shuttle or taxi service will be organized for all the students arriving at the two closest airports, Skopje airport (N. Macedonia) or Thessaloniki airport (Greece).

If the field site is not close to student accommodations, how will students get there? How long does it take?

The accommodation, the lecture room & kitchen are practically at the site. The distance to the excavation area is approx. 5 minutes walking.

PACKING LIST

Required

- Work shoes (preferably closed-toe shoes)
- An additional set of walking and hiking shoes
- Clothing suitable for outdoor activities (consider weather conditions from hot and sunny to rainy and chilly)
- Wide brim hat for fieldwork
- A light raincoat for possible rainy and windy days
- Medication - Bring individual prescription medications, enough for the entire program. It is not necessary to bring over-the-counter medicine from your country since you can buy all common types in Bulgaria (e.g. pain reliever, first aid needs)
- A converter for an EU-type electricity wall plug if needed

- A good attitude for work, fun, study, and discoveries
- Identification/passport
- Travel documents
- Credit/Debit card
- Extra glasses/contacts if worn

Recommended

- **Will students need formal or nicer clothes?** No.
- **Are there items that are hard to get locally, such as tampons or sunscreen?** No, they can be purchased in the nearby villages.
- **Shower shoes or indoor shoes?** Shower shoes.
- **Swimwear?** Yes, if they plan to swim in the Ohrid lake during the excursion day there.
- **How often can students do laundry?** A couple of times a week.
- **Items they should not bring?** Working tools

MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/Stobaeus>

<https://www.instagram.com/balkanheritage/>

<http://www.stobi.mk/Default.aspx?page=155>

<https://www.youtube.com/@bhfieldschool>