



## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the right.
- ❑ Drivers are required to carry a valid driver's license, passport, International Driving Permit (IDP), vehicle documents and proof of insurance. Only a 1968 IDP is accepted.
- ❑ The Macedonian Denar (MKD) is the official currency. Having local currency on hand is recommended. Small establishments may not accept credit cards; this may include fuel stations in some areas.
- ❑ Pedestrians account for an estimated 33% of all road traffic fatalities.
- ❑ Riders of motorized two- and three-wheeled vehicles make up about 9% of traffic deaths.
- ❑ Avoid driving at night. Many roads are poorly lit.
- ❑ Car jackings occur. Drive with windows up and doors locked at all times.
- ❑ Legal blood alcohol limit is zero for novice and professional drivers, and below 0.05 g/dl for general population. Legal limits also apply to front-seat passengers.
- ❑ There are 4.2 road deaths per 100,000 people in North Macedonia, compared to 2.2 in Sweden and 2.3 in the UK.



Source: CIA Factbook

## ROAD CULTURE

- **There is** a general disregard of traffic regulations by motorists.
- **Reckless** road behavior is common.
- **Many drivers** speed and run through stops signs and traffic lights.
- **Motorists** may make illegal left turns from far right lanes.
- **Drivers often** operate older vehicles that lack headlights and taillights.
- **Motorists may** drive against traffic, even on main roads.
- **Drivers rarely** slow down or stop for pedestrians, even at marked crosswalks.
- **Motorists often** park on sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk in roads.
- **In general**, drivers are friendly toward bicyclists, but may not observe adequate distance for cycling safety.
- **Illegal** motorcycle races often take place in cities at night.

## ROAD CONDITIONS

- **There are** 14,410 km (8,950 miles) of roads, including 335 km (208 miles) of motorways.
- **Road conditions** vary widely.
- **Major highways** are generally in good repair.
- **Secondary** and rural roads are inadequately maintained and are poorly lit.
- **Roads** bearing an "A" prefix are motorways. Roads with an "E" prefix before route number are part of the international E-route network.
- **Many** mountain roads are unpaved, narrow, winding and lack guardrails.
- **Secondary** and mountain roads may be poorly marked.
- **During** winter months, many roads are not regularly cleared of snow. Road surfaces are often hazardous.
- **Slow-moving** farm vehicles and equipment are common on rural roads.
- **There are** many horse-drawn carts on roads, particularly in rural areas.
- **Beyond** major cities, fallen rocks and loose livestock create dangerous road conditions.
- **Motorways** are toll roads. Tickets are issued at the beginning of the road. Fees are paid at toll booths when exiting motorways. Local currency, Euros and some debit/credit cards are accepted.
- **Pedestrian** infrastructure is underdeveloped. Motorists often disregard pedestrians, even at zebra crossings.
- **There are** bike paths in major urban zones, but they are lacking in other areas.
- **Demonstrations** occasionally occur and may disrupt road travel and public transportation, especially in the center of Skopje as a response to political events, on significant holidays and during international events.
- **Avoid all** public demonstrations. Even peaceful public gatherings may suddenly turn confrontational.
- **When traveling** near the border with Kosovo, stay on main roads and do not travel after dark.



## Road Conditions, continued

- **The following roads** may present particular challenges to motorists:
  - » **Qafë Thanë/A2** is a high-elevation international mountain pass linking the southwestern region of the country to Korçë County in southern Albania. The road has an elevation of 1,000 meters (3,280 feet) and serves as the main route connecting the two countries. Surfaces are paved. It is part of the international E852 motorway. Steep sections have grades of up to 7%. Sections are narrow, with soft graded shoulders. There is heavy traffic on this route, which connects to the popular tourist destination of Struga. Motorists may be unfamiliar with road conditions and traffic rules.
  - » **Road 302** leading to Kozjak Lake in the western part of the country is narrow, steep and twisting. The surface is paved. Some sections may not be well maintained. Traffic increases during summer and autumn months. The road is open year-round, but may not be regularly cleared during winter. Surfaces can be icy.
  - » **Popova Šapka** is a high-mountain pass in the north, located in the Šar mountain range. The road is paved. Ice and snow may occur year-round. Bring snow tires or chains if traveling on this road.

## REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS

- **North Macedonia** is subject to forest fires, flooding, landslides, earthquakes and fog.
- **Forest fires** occur during summer months. Smoke may obscure driver vision. Debris, including fallen trees and branches, may block roads.
- **Heavy rains** are common during spring and summer, and may result in flooding and landslides. Roads may become impassable and bridges damaged. Road travel and public transportation may be disrupted.
- **The country** is in an active seismic zone. Earthquakes occasionally occur, and may be followed by strong aftershocks.
- **Frequent heavy fog** is common from November to February in and around Skopje.
- **Be familiar with emergency procedures.** The Red Cross provides a website and free, downloadable emergency app: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

## TRANSPORTATION

- **Transportation options** include cars, buses, minibuses, taxis, motorcycles, motorbikes/mopeds, bicycles, e-scooters, trains and boats.
- **Public transportation** is limited.
- **The bus network** in Skopje is generally regarded as reliable.
- **Many local buses and minibuses** are older vehicles. Condition varies.
- **Bus and minibus drivers** may not speak English.
- **Intercity buses** connect most cities, and are generally considered to be safe and dependable.
- **Bus travelers** may be required to pay a “station fee” inside the station in order to access bus platforms.
- **Licensed taxis** from large companies are considered safe, and can be identified by 15-digit phone numbers on vehicle sides that begin with “15.”
- **Use only metered taxis**, or agree on fare prior to travel.

Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	50 kph (31 mph)
Secondary and rural roads	80 kph (50 mph)
Settlement/village roads	60 kph (37 mph)
Highways	130 kph (80 mph)

Always adjust speed according to signage, hazards and weather conditions.

Signs are generally pictorial and may not follow European Union conventions.

Stop	No stopping	Pedestrian crossing	Shared pedestrian and bicycle path	U-turns prohibited	No entry	Traffic circle ahead	No vehicles	Children playing



## Transportation, continued

- **Taxi drivers** may not speak English. Carry a copy of destination address written in Macedonian.
- **Unofficial taxis** usually follow set routes; drivers stand near vehicles and shout out destinations. Vehicles are unregulated and may not be safe.
- **Rideshares** are not available.
- **Bicycling** is popular in many areas, particularly during warm months. There are few bike paths and bike crossing lights. Infrastructure is underdeveloped.
- **There are** many motorcycles and motorbikes/mopeds.
- **E-scooter** transportation is increasing in popularity.
- **Rail service** is limited and unreliable. Routes may be suspended without notice.
- **Ferries** operate routes from Crete, and on Lake Ohrid.

## TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **Drivers must** be at least 18 years of age to drive, and 21 to rent a vehicle. Some rental agencies may have other restrictions.
- **Seat belts** are compulsory for all vehicle occupants. Compliance is low.
- **Child restraints** are required for children up to five years of age. Children under 12 are prohibited from riding in front seats. Children under two may travel in rear-facing child seats in the front of vehicle provided airbag has been deactivated.
- **Taxis** are exempt from child restraint laws.
- **Helmets are** mandatory for motorcycle drivers and passengers. Laws do not require helmets to be fastened; for safety, fasten helmets.
- **Children** are not prohibited from being motorcycle passengers. For safety, children should not be

passengers on motorcycles.

- **Bicycles** must be equipped with white front lights and red rear lights; white front reflectors and red back reflectors; a bell; and brakes on both wheels. Lights must be on at all times when riding.
- **Cyclists must** use bike paths or cycling lanes where available. Bicycles are prohibited from highways.
- **On roads**, bicycles must stay as far right as possible.
- **Bicyclists** are not required to wear helmets. For safety, cyclists should wear fastened helmets.
- **Helmets** are required for e-scooter drivers. Reflective vests must be worn from dusk to dawn, during inclement weather, and when visibility is limited. This include periods of heavy smog or fog.
- **E-scooter** drivers may not ride on roads if a bicycle path or sidewalk is available, and must stay on the righthand side of bike paths and sidewalks traveling at speeds under 6 kph (3.7 mph).
- **Horns** may only be used for emergencies in built-up areas; elsewhere, including on main roads and motorways, horns should be used to alert other drivers of the intention to overtake.
- **Car and motorcycle** headlights must be used at all times.
- **All** passenger cars must be equipped with a warning triangle and a reflective jacket or vest.
- **Vehicles must** carry snow chains or be fitted with winter tires from Nov. 15 to March 15.
- **Police may** carry out random breath tests.
- **On-the-spot** fines may be given for some traffic infractions. Police may not demand cash payment, and must issue a ticket to be settled at a nearby bank or post office.

## Skopje (Capital)

- » Driving is not recommended. Traffic jams are common, particularly at noon and during twice-daily commuter hours. Motorcycle drivers may weave through traffic.
- » Traffic signs and road networks are confusing.
- » Most city streets are in good repair.
- » Transportation options include cars, buses, minibuses, taxis, motorcycles, motorbikes/mopeds and e-scooters.
- » Public transportation and taxi drivers may not speak English. Carry a copy of destination written in Macedonian.
- » The bus network is extensive and generally regarded as reliable.
- » Official public buses are run by the Skopje Public Transportation Agency (Јавното сообраќајно претпријатие Скопје).
- » Buses do not accept cash. Travelers may be required to pay a “station fee” in order to access bus platforms.
- » Reloadable bus cards may be purchased at the main bus station adjacent to the building. A yellow converted bus serves as a ticket sales office.
- » Public buses are red. Most are double-decker.
- » City buses and minibuses operated by multiple private companies are different colors. Condition of vehicles varies.



## Skopje, continued

- » The main bus station, including long-distance bus routes, is next to Skopje Railway Station and Local Bus Station. Some buses pick up and drop off passengers on the road outside of the station rather than inside.
- » Long distance buses connect to cities and rural areas throughout the country.
- » Taxis are plentiful. Use only licensed taxis with a phone number on vehicle sides that begin with “15.”
- » Most taxis are metered. Request that driver uses meter, or agree on fare prior to travel.
- » Avoid unregistered taxis, which follow set routes. Drivers generally stand near vehicles and shout out destinations.
- » There are no rideshare services.
- » Trains are operated by Macedonian Rail. Skopje Railway Station is the main station.
- » Rail service is limited. Most routes, including those serving Kosovo, Belgrade and Greece, have been suspended.
- » Many people travel by bicycle. Bike paths and infrastructure are underdeveloped.
- » The number of e-scooters is increasing.
- » Skopje International Airport is about 28 km (17.3 miles) from city center.
- » TAV Airport Express public shuttle bus service is available between the airport and city. Tickets may be purchased at the TAV airport bus office next to the exit gate.
- » Airport taxis are regulated and are white in color. Vehicles have a taxi sign numbered from 1 to 65.
- » Taxi queues are located outside the exit doors from the arrivals terminal.
- » Most major car rental agencies are represented at the airport.

## Bitola

- » Second-largest city. Located in the north of the country. Most streets are well-maintained.
- » Transportation options include cars, buses, minibuses, taxis, motorcycles, motorbikes/mopeds and e-scooters.
- » Driving is not recommended. Streets are narrow and confusing. There are many motorcycles and motorbikes.
- » Public transportation is limited to buses and taxis. Drivers may not speak English. Carry a copy of destination written in Macedonian.
- » Condition of local buses and minibuses varies.
- » Regular bus routes connect the city and Skopje. Travel time is around three hours. Other long-distance routes include Ohrid.
- » Taxis can be found throughout the city, near hotels and popular tourist sites, or ordered by phone.
- » Use only licensed taxis with “taxi” signs on roofs. Drivers may not activate meters unless directed to do so.
- » Unregistered taxis are common. Drivers stand next to cars and call out the destinations they serve.
- » Rideshares are unavailable.
- » Bitola Railway Station is the main station. Train travel is limited and unreliable.
- » Pedestrians are at risk. Drivers generally disregard persons on foot, and may use sidewalks for parking.
- » Bicycle use is common. Cycling infrastructure is underdeveloped.
- » E-scooters are becoming more popular. Drivers are allowed to ride on sidewalks, but many do not exercise caution near pedestrians.

## ACCOMMODATIONS AND INCLUSIONS FOR MOBILITY CHALLENGED

- **Accessibility** for persons with mobility or other physical or sensory challenges is generally limited.
- **Although** the law requires new buildings to be accessible, most public buildings are not. Many new facilities are built without accessible features including ramps and elevators.
- **Sidewalks** and paved surfaces are often uneven.
- **Public transportation** for persons with reduced mobility is limited or unavailable.
- **All government buses** purchased since 2013 in Skopje are accessible to persons with mobility challenges. In other areas of the country, public transportation is largely inaccessible.

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **Responders** to emergency numbers, doctors and medical staff may not speak English.
- **Pre-program** emergency numbers into your phone before departure.
  - » Police: 192
  - » Traffic police: 122
  - » General emergency: 112
  - » Ambulance: 194
  - » Roadside assistance: 196
- **Roadside** emergency services are limited.
- **Quality and availability** of medical care varies by location and provider; medical care is below western standards outside of Skopje. Trauma services in Ohrid are generally regarded as good.
- **In general**, first responders are unable to access or provide urgent medical care beyond major urban centers. Outside of Skopje and main tourist destinations including Ohrid, ambulance services are not broadly available.
- **There are** four private hospitals with emergency services in Skopje that are considered to have higher quality standards than other medical facilities.
- **Ambulances** usually take passengers to state hospitals unless a private hospital is specifically requested.
- **Most** government-run emergency services are of low standard. Basic resources and supplies are scarce in public medical clinics.
- **Many resorts** and hotels have exclusive arrangements with care providers, limiting a patient's choice of facility.
- **Cash payment** is usually required by care providers; payment may be demanded prior to the delivery of services.
- **Minimal** or no overnight care is available in non-emergency wards. In the event of serious illness or injury, medical evacuation to another country may be necessary.
- **Pharmaceutical** medications prescribed in other countries may be illegal in North Macedonia. Insulin is unavailable to non-citizens.
- **If involved in a crash:**
  - » Call police.
  - » Place warning triangle in a position to alert other road users.
  - » Do not move vehicle until police indicate you may do so.
  - » Authorities may hold passports of visiting drivers until crash is resolved.
  - » Take photos and collect contact information from other driver(s) and any witnesses if possible.
  - » Police may require a witness, or another individual involved in crash, to transport an injured person to a nearby medical facility.



### ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRAVEL (ASIRT)

ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company crash on the roads of Turkey.

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