

LESSON 4

DIALOGUE

Затворете прозореца, моля!

Милена: Моля ви се, господине, затворете прозореца!

Дейвид: Защо? Задушно е. Имаме нужда от въздух! Не затваряйте прозореца, моля.

Милена: Не знаете ли? Течението е много опасно за малките. Нали виждате? Децата седят на течение! Митко, веднага затвори прозореца!

Димитър: Добре, мило. Затварям.

Ангел: Седнете, господине. Аз съм до прозореца, сегатватварям.

Таня: Надке, вземимолливите от пода.

Надка: Защо, мамо?

Таня: Не питай, само слушай. Сложимолливите в чантата. Къде е чантата? Камене, знаеш ли къде е чантата?

Камен: Да, знам. Сегатслагам всичко в чантата.

Таня: Благодаря, Камене, добромомче.

Ангел: Пушите ли? Имате ли една цигара?

Дейвид: Не, ние не пушим. Нали знаете, димът е много опасен за малките.

Джули: И за големите. Вие, ако пушите, излезте в коридора, моля.

Ангел: Добре, госпожице. Сегатизлизам.

BASIC GRAMMAR

4.1. Aspect

Nearly every verbal idea in Bulgarian is expressed by two different verbs, each of which conveys a different point of view, or “aspect”. One of these views the action as general, basic and unbounded, and is called “imperfective”. The other views the action as bounded in some way or another, and is called “perfective”.

The combination of the two verbs is called an “aspect pair”. Dictionaries usually list the two together, with the imperfective form first. When one knows only the perfective, one must predict (or guess) the imperfective form in order to look up the meaning of the verb in the dictionary. For this reason, it is best to learn both members of an aspect pair at the same time.

All glossary listings from now on will be in this format; the glossary to this lesson repeats all verbs learned up to this point, now in the form of aspect pairs. Following are examples, always listed with imperfective preceding perfective.

<i>Imperfective / Perfective</i>	<i>meaning</i>
вли́зам / вля́за	enter, go in
ви́ждам / ви́дя	see
затва́рям / затво́ря	close
ка́звам / ка́жа	say
оста́вам / оста́на	stay, remain
отва́рям / отво́ря	open
пра́щам / пра́тя	send
сла́гам / сло́жа	put
тръ́гвам / тръ́гна	leave, set out

Perfective verbs most frequently refer to a single instance of completed action. Imperfective verbs usually describe an action in progress, refer to the general idea of an action, or suggest multiple, repeated instances of a single action. Because of the nature of their meaning, verbs such as **съм** “be” and **има́м** “have” exist only in the imperfective aspect.

4.2. Imperative

There are two sets of imperative endings in Bulgarian. These are:

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
Type 1	-й	-йте
Type 2	-и́	-е́те

Singular forms are used when addressing a person one speaks to as **ти**, and plural forms are used either with a group or when addressing a person one speaks to as **вие**.

To form the imperative, drop the final letter of the 1st singular present form. Add Type 1 endings to verbs of the a-conjugation or verbs whose 1st singular ends in -я preceded by a vowel. Add Type 2 endings to all other verbs, and shift the accent to the ending.

	<i>1st sg. present</i>	<i>sg. imperative</i>	<i>pl. imperative</i>
Type 1	затв ^а р-ям п ^и -я бр ^о -я зн ^а -я	затв ^а р-яй! п ^и -й! бр ^о -й! зн ^а -й!	затв ^а р-яйте! п ^и -йте! бр ^о -йте! зн ^а -йте!
Type 2	п ^и ш-а в ^ъ рв-я затв ^о р-я чет-а	п ^и ш-й! в ^ъ рв-й! затв ^о р-й! чет-й!	п ^и ш-ете! в ^ъ рв-ете! затв ^о р-ете! чет-ете!

Some verbs have irregular imperatives. Among the most common of these are:

	<i>1st sg. present</i>	<i>sg. imperative</i>	<i>pl. imperative</i>
(irregular)	в ^и дя в ^л яза изл ^я за	в ^и ж! вл ^э з! изл ^э з!	в ^и жете! вл ^э зте! изл ^э зте!

Positive commands are usually formed from perfective verbs. This is because the focus is on the speaker's desire that an action be performed once and completed. Negative commands are normally formed from imperfective verbs. This is because the focus is on the speaker's desire that the process of an action not be undertaken. Below are two examples:

perfective

Затвори вратата! Close the door!

imperfective

Не затв^аряй вратата! Don't close the door!

4.3. Masculine definite objects

When masculine definite nouns are used as the object of a verb or preposition, the final -т of the article is lost, and the article is written -а. Nouns whose article is written -ят simply drop the -т. Here are examples:

subject

Прозорецът е голям.
Как се казва лекарят?

The window is big.
What is the doctor's name?

object

Той седи до прозореца.
Това шише е на лекаря.

He is sitting by the window.
This bottle belongs to the doctor.

4.4. Verbs of body position

Bulgarian has two different verbs each for the concepts “sit”, “stand” or “lie”. One means to assume the position (as in “sit down, stand up, lie down”) while the other means to be in the position (as in “be seated, be standing, be lying down”). By the nature of their meaning, verbs of the second group exist only in the imperfective aspect.

ASSUME a position		BE in a position	
<i>imperfective</i>	<i>perfective</i>	<i>imperfective</i>	
сядам	седна	седя	SIT
ставам	стана	стоя	STAND
лягам	легна	лежя	LIE

4.5. Embedded questions

When a question is integrated into another sentence, usually as the object of a verb, it is said to be “embedded”. In English, such questions shift the word order of the original question. In Bulgarian, however, the word order remains unchanged. Note that in all three of the examples below, the Bulgarian question **къде е чантата** (“where is the bag”) maintains the same word order, while the English question does not. Note too that the sentence in which a question is embedded does not have to be a question itself.

	Къде е чантата?	Where is the bag?
Знаеш ли	къде е чантата?	Do you know where the bag is?
Не, не зная	къде е чантата.	No, I don't know where the bag is.

4.6. Prepositions

The preposition **в** means either “in” or “into” depending on the context.

Мобливите са в чантата.	The pencils are in the bag.
Сега слагам всичко в чантата.	Now I'm putting everything into the bag.

4.7. Subjectless sentences

Bulgarian sentences which describe general conditions do not have a subject. English, by contrast, must use the subject “it”. For example:

Тúка е задúшно. Задúшно е тúк. It’s stuffy in here.
Днéc е тóпло. Тóпло е днéc. It is warm today.

In order to translate correctly from English to Bulgarian, this “it” (which linguists call the “dummy it”) must be distinguished from the “it” that refers to something in particular, as in “It’s a house.” Do not use тоvá in Bulgarian unless the “it” is of this second sort.



Synagogue, downtown Sofia

EXERCISES

I. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate form of the article.

1. Детé ___ е мно́го голя́мо. Виждаш ли детé ___?
2. Коридо́р ___ на вла́к ___ е тесен. Те́ защо́ сто́ят в коридо́р ___?
3. Къде́ са мо́ливи ___? В ча́нта ___ или в ку́фар ___?
4. Къде́ е трамва́ ___? Има ли мя́сто в трамва́ ___?
5. Обу́вки ___ са под пе́йка ___. Виждаш ли обу́вки ___?
6. Дим ___ е мно́го опа́сен. Седя́ далече́ от дим ___.
7. Влезте́ в кабинéт ___ на ле́кар ___. Ле́кар ___ е ту́ка.

II. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate form of one of the following verbs: затва́рям / затво́ря; вли́зам / вля́за; оста́вам / оста́на; тръ́гвам / тръ́гна; ка́звам / ка́жа; ся́дам / се́дна.

1. Не _____ в купéто, няма мя́сто.
2. Мо́ля ви се, _____ врата́та, ста́ва течéние.
3. _____ ту́ка о́ще ма́лко, не _____!
4. _____ и́стината.
5. Не _____ това́, ако не é и́стина.
6. Защо́ стои́ш до врата́та? _____, _____ на пе́йката!
7. Не _____ на та́зи пе́йка, не é чи́ста.

III. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate verb of body position.

1. Ка́мен и На́дка пъту́ват за Со́фия. Те́ _____ до прозо́реца.
2. Ка́мене, _____ на сто́ла!
3. Ка́мене, _____ от сто́ла!
4. В коридо́ра на вла́ка има́ мно́го хо́ра. Те́ _____ пра́ви.
5. Ку́чето спи́. То́ _____ под пе́йката.
6. _____, Ка́мене. Мно́го е къ́сно.
7. За момче́то няма́ мя́сто. То́ _____ на по́да. А́нгел ка́зва:
“ _____! По́дът не é чи́ст.”

ADDITIONAL GRAMMAR NOTES

4.1a. Aspect

Perfective verbs imply a meaning of boundedness and imperfective verbs imply the absence of such a meaning. The most frequent sort of boundedness is that of a single instance of an action, usually with a view to its completion. Present tense verb forms are normally used in the perfective only after various conjunctions or particles which signify boundedness. Examples will be seen in the next lesson.

Because of the non-bounded meaning of the imperfective aspect, present tense verb forms are used very frequently in the imperfective. Here are examples of the three primary meanings of the present imperfective:

action in progress

Какво рисуваш? Къща ли?
Таня отваря вратата.

What are you drawing? A house?
Tanya opens the door.

generic idea of action

Пушите ли?
Надка рисува много добре.

Do you smoke?
Nadka draws very well.

habitual, repeated action

Обикновено почиваме в
Копривщица.
Четя усилено други книги.

Usually we go to Koprivshtitsa
for our vacation.
I've been reading other books
in a concentrated fashion.

The perfective aspect can also be used to describe habitual actions in a more vivid, immediate manner. Students are advised to avoid this usage for the present. It takes time, and exposure to the language, to learn the proper emotional contexts for such usage. For example:

Седнем в колата и сме там.

[All we have to do is] get into the car and
there we are!

Bulgarian dictionaries list many verbs only in the imperfective aspect. Sometimes this is because the meaning of the verb is not compatible with the idea of boundedness (e.g. **имам**, **съм**). More frequently, it is because Bulgarians often consider the basic idea of a verb to be imperfective. Examples of such verbs, which are called “simplex verbs”, are **пиша** “write”, **четя** “read”, **пия** “drink”.

The perfective forms of these verbs are created by adding a prefix to them. Several types of prefixes can be added to these verbs; in each case, the prefix adds a particular sort of bounded meaning to the verb. Bulgarians consider that the addition of a prefix *always* changes the meaning of the verb -- sometimes slightly, sometimes radically. For this reason, every prefixed verb has a separate imperfective verb associated with it, and correspondingly, a separate listing in the dictionary. Here is an example of a “basic” verb, and of an aspect pair related to it by prefixation:

Simplex (<i>imperfective only</i>)		Aspect pair (<i>perfective / imperfective</i>)	
Verb	<i>meaning</i>	Verb pair	<i>meaning</i>
гледам	look	разглеждам / разгледам	study, examine

The perfective forms of these basic verbs, and this general type of aspect relationship, will be discussed in Lessons 7, 18 and 26. At this point, the student should focus on learning aspect pairs of the sort *казвам / кажа*.

4.2a. Imperative

Affirmative commands are usually given in the perfective aspect and negative commands in the imperfective aspect. The imperfective imperative can be also used to convey repeated commands, or greater abruptness and a more insistent (and consequently less polite) command. These usages will be studied in later lessons.

Type 1 endings are also added to the irregular verb *дам* “give”, whose present tense conjugation will be learned in Lesson 9. Its imperative is:

<i>present</i>	<i>singular imperative</i>	<i>plural imperative</i>
дам	дай!	дайте!

4.3a. Masculine definite objects

Although the object form of definite masculine nouns is written *-a*, its *sound* remains [-ъ-]. That is, although it has lost the final *-т* of the subject article, both in writing and in pronunciation, it retains the same vowel *sound*. The object form of the article in *-ят* keeps the same vowel letter in the written form, *-я*, although the vowel in all four of these article forms is pronounced as if written [-ъ-]. This pronunciation is especially clear when the article is accented. For example (the apostrophe denotes softening of the preceding consonant):

Димът е много опасен за малките.	[ДИМЪТ]	Smoke is very dangerous for children.
Тѐ седят далече от димá.	[ДИМЪ]	They are sitting away from the smoke.
Денят е хубав.	[ДЕНЪТ]	It's a nice day.
Работи през деня.	[ДЕНЪ]	He works during the day.

Most Bulgarians do not distinguish definite subjects from objects when speaking, and will often pronounce the subject form without the final -т. The distinction must be made in writing, however.

4.4a. Verbs of body position

The structural similarities between the three different sets of verbs for body position can help the student remember them. These similarities are described below for each of the three types, listed by column number.

(1) <i>imperfective</i>	(2) <i>perfective</i>	(3) <i>imperfective</i>	
сѣдам	сѣдна	седя	<i>SIT</i>
ставам	стана	стоя	<i>STAND</i>
лягам	легна	лежя	<i>LIE</i>

- (1) Paired imperfective verbs indicating a change of position all belong to the а-conjugation and all have the sound [a] in the root.
- (2) Paired perfective verbs indicating a change of position all belong to the е-conjugation, all have the consonant -н- in them, and all are accented on the stem.
- (3) Unpaired imperfective verbs denoting a state all belong to the и-conjugation, and all are accented on the ending.

Two of these verbs have additional meanings: **ставам** (perfective **стана**) also means “get up [in the morning]”, “become” and “happen”; and **лягам** (perfective **легна**) also means “go to bed”.

4.6a. Prepositions

- (a) The preposition **от** is used to indicate the basic ingredients or material of which something is made. If the ingredient is an added one, the preposition **с** is used. Both these meanings are usually rendered in English by an adjective.

салáта от зѐле и мóркови	carrot and cabbage salad
омлѐт с гѣби	mushroom omelet

(b) The basic meaning of the preposition **освѐн** is “except [for]”. The idiomatic expression **освѐн това** means “in addition, besides”.

4.8. Shifting vowels in verb roots

The **е/я** vowel shift, seen earlier in **голям / голѐми**, can also occur in accented verb roots. Two very common such verbs are the perfectives **изляза** “go out” and **вляза** “enter, come in”. Here is the conjugation of **изляза**, with the shifting vowels underlined:

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
<i>1st person</i>	изл <u>я</u> за	изл <u>ѐ</u> зем
<i>2nd person</i>	изл <u>ѐ</u> зеш	изл <u>ѐ</u> зете
<i>3rd person</i>	изл <u>ѐ</u> зе	изл <u>я</u> зат
<i>imperative</i>	изл <u>ѐ</u> з!	изл <u>ѐ</u> зте!

The rule governing the alternation is the same as with adjectives: if **-е-** or **-и-** occurs in the following syllable, the alternant **-е-** is used; otherwise the alternant **-я-** is used. In conjugation, present tense forms with the theme vowel **-е-** have the root vowel **-е-**, while the 1st singular and 3rd plural have the root vowel **-я-**.

The fact that the alternant **-е-** occurs in the imperative of this verb must be learned separately.

4.9. Generic definiteness

Bulgarian uses definite articles in a number of instances where English does not. One of the commonest of these is in referring to general categories. Consider the following sentence, and the several possible English translations:

Течѐнието е много опѐсно за мѐлките.

Drafts are very dangerous for children.

A draft is a very dangerous thing for children.

A draft is a very dangerous thing for any small person.

Here, the noun **течѐние** refers both to the generic category “draft” and to any one specific instance of this category. Normal English usage is either without an article or with the indefinite article. Bulgarian, however, must use the definite article. Similarly, when the adjectives **мѐлък** and **голям** are used in the definite plural, they can refer both to the generic categories “children” and “adults” and to any particular representatives of these categories. (The neutral words for children and adults are **децѐ** and **възрастни**, respectively.)

The Bulgarian generic use of the definite article is similar to that found in French and German. English speakers must pay attention to learn this usage.

4.10. Third-plural passives

As in English, third person plural verb forms often convey the idea of the passive mood. The subject is “they”, but the persons to whom the pronoun “they” refers are unspecified. Examples:

Не знаям каквó серви́рат.

I don't know what they serve here.
I don't know what is served here.

Тук вся́чко го́твят до́брé.

They cook everything well here.
Here everything is cooked well.

4.11. Alternate verb forms

Many people in the capital city of Sofia say both зная́ and зная́м in the 1st singular of the verb meaning “know”. Both variants are considered correct.



Mosque, downtown Sofia

SAMPLE SENTENCES

1. Децата обичат сладко.
2. Пушенето е опасно за здравето.
3. Българите пият червено вино.
4. Човекът е смъртен.
5. -- Вие кой сте?
-- Аз съм Бойко Атанасов.
-- Какъв сте?
-- Лекар съм.
6. Кой съм аз? Знаеш ли кой съм аз?
7. Какъв съм аз? Знаеш ли какъв съм аз?
8. Как се казваш?
9. Кажете как се казвате!
10. Закъде пътувате? Той пита закъде пътувате.
11. Милена стои права. Димитър казва: “Моля, седни. Има свободно място до прозореца.” Милена сядва до прозореца. В купето влизат Тания и Надка. Милена седи до прозореца. Тя става и казва: “Моля седнете. Вие сте с малко дете.”
12. Лекарят казва: “Легнете, имате нужда от преглед”. Той излиза от кабинета. Пациентът ляга. Лекарят влиза. Пациентът лежи на леглото.

SENTENCES FOR TRANSLATION

1. “See what there is here?! Beer and rakia! Have [= drink] a beer!”
“No, this beer seems warm. I don’t like warm beer.”
2. We’re going out for a bit, because we’re getting hungry. Are you hungry too?
3. “Wait a minute! Don’t shut the door! I’m coming in also.”
“Hurry up! We don’t have much time.”
4. Don’t sit in the draft! Don’t you know that drafts are dangerous?
5. “Ask the waiter where the menu is.”
“I don’t need a menu. I know what they serve.”
“Are you saying you know the menu by heart?”
6. Please put the salad and the rakia here. But don’t put the omelet here now.
We’re not in a hurry.
7. Please put the drawings and the pencil in separate bags. And don’t put the book
in the bag. I’m reading that book.
8. Come into the water, the lake is very warm today. The children are also coming
in.
9. Children, don’t come into the house that way! See, this house has a door!
10. Take the bus! Don’t take the tram, it’s very slow.



READING SELECTION

В ресторанта

Марин: Гладен ли си? Изглеждаш неспокоен.

Пламен: Вече огладнявам. Освен това следобед съм на работа и нямам много време. Виждаш ли сервитьора наблизо?

Марин: Чакай малко. За първи път съм тук. Не знам какво сервират. Още разглеждам листа.

Пламен: Аз знам менюто наизуст. Поръчвам пържола с гарнитур и шопска салата. Ти какво предпочиташ? Какво гледаш толкова в менюто, не знаеш ли български? Поръчай същото.

Марин: Ти бързаш, но аз не бързам. Винаги избирам бавно. Освен това съм вегетарианец. Ако обичате!

Сервитьорът: Моля!

Марин: Имате ли омлет?

Сервитьорът: Да, разбира се.

Марин: А колко струва?

Сервитьорът: Омлетът с шунка струва 150 лева, омлетът с гъби 130 лева, а омлетът с кашкавал 120 лева.

Марин: А какви салати имате?

Сервитьорът: Салата от зеле и моркови и шопска салата.

Марин: Пламене, тук добре ли правят омлета?

Пламен: Тук всичко готвят добре. И напитките са винаги студени.

Марин: Това ме подсеща. И една малка ракия. С хубава салата винаги пия ракия. А ти?

Пламен: Знаеш, че съм на работа. Не мога.

Марин: Пий една бира тогава. Аз плащам.

Пламен: Бира може. Утре черпя аз.

GLOSSARY

ако	if	кола	car, automobile
ако обичате	if you please	ко́лко	how much, how many
		ко́лко стру́ва?	how much does it cost?
би́ра	beer	ку́че	dog
бу́рзам	hurry, be in a hurry	ку́сен	late
ведна́га	immediately, at once	ле́в	lev (Bulgarian currency)
взе́ми мо́ливите!	pick up the pencils!	120 ле́ва	120 levs / leva
взи́мам (or взема́м) / взе́ма	take	легло́	(see L. 6 for ending) bed
ви́ждам / ви́дя	see	ле́гна see ля́гам	
вина́ги	always	лежа́ (-иш)	lie, be lying
вли́зам / вля́за	enter, go in	ли́ст	sheet of paper
водá	water	ля́гам / ле́гна	lie down, go to bed
въ́здух	air		
въ́зрастен	adult	ма́лките	small ones, children
въ́зрастни	grownups	ме	me (see L. 5)
гарни́тура	garnish	меню́ (neuter)	menu
гле́дам	look at	ми́л	dear
голе́мите	big ones, adults	ми́ло	darling (vocative)
го́твя	prepare, cook	мо́га	can, be able (see L. 5)
гъ́ба	mushroom	мо́же	possible, OK
		мо́ля	please
		мо́ля ви се,	if you please, sir
		госпо́дине	
да́й, да́йте!	give! (see L. 9 for conjugation)	мо́ля!	at your service
дале́че	far, far away	мо́рков	carrot
де́н, -я́т (pl. дни́)	day		
ди́м, -ъ́т	smoke	на ра́бота съ́м	be at work, be on the job
заду́шен	stuffy	набли́зо	nearby
затва́рям / затво́ря	close	наи́зуст	by heart, verbatim
зе́ле	cabbage	напи́тка	beverage, drink
зна́м = зна́я	know	неспоко́бен	uneasy, restless
изби́рам / избра́	choose, select	огладня́вам / огладне́я	get hungry
изгле́ждам	look, appear, seem	омле́т	omelet
изли́зам / изля́за	leave, go out	омле́т с гъ́би	mushroom omelet
изуча́вам / изу́ча (-иш)	study, make a study of	омле́т с кашкава́л	cheese omelet
има́м ну́жда от	need, have need of	омле́т с шу́нка	ham omelet
		опа́сен	dangerous
кабинéт	office (e.g. doctor's)	осве́н	except [for]
ка́звам / ка́жа (-еш)	say	осве́н това́	besides, in addition
какво́	what for, why	оста́вам / оста́на	remain, stay
какво́ гледа́ш	why are you so	от	[made] of
то́лкова в	absorbed in	отва́рям / отво́ря	open
кашкава́л	kashkaval (yellow cheese)	пациéнт (ка)	patient (medical)

Четвърти урок / Lesson 4

пíтам	ask	слúшам	listen, obey
плáщам / плáтя	pay	смéням / сменя	change, replace
пóд	floor	смъртен	mortal
подсéщам / подсéтя	remind, call to mind	спя	sleep
поръчвам / поръчам	order	ставам / стáна	get up, stand up, become, happen
почивам / почíна	rest, go on holiday	стóл	chair
прáв	straight, upright	стоя	stand, be standing
прáщам / прáтя	send	стоя прáв	stand, remain standing
прéглед	examination (medical)	струвам	cost
предпочítам / предпочетá	prefer	студén	cold
през	during (<i>see L. 9</i>)	събíрам / съберá	gather
пúша (-иш)	smoke	същóто	the same thing
пúшене	smoking	сядам / сéдна	sit down, take a seat
първи	first	такá	that way, like that
пържóла	chop, steak	тáм	there
пържóла с гарнитúра	steak with the trimmings	товá ме подсéща	that reminds me
път	time (instance)	тогáва	then, in that case
рáбота	work, job	тóлкова	so much, so many, to such a degree
рáбóтя	work	тръгвам / тръгна	set out, leave
разбíрам / разберá	understand	úтре	tomorrow
разглéждам / разглéдам	examine, study	úтре чéрпя áз	it's my treat tomorrow
ресторáнт	restaurant	хóра	people
салáта	salad	цигáра	cigarette
салáта от зéле	cabbage salad	чéрпя	treat [someone]
салáта от мóркови	carrot salad	чíст	clean
сегá излízам	I'll go out right away	човéк	man, person
сéдна <i>see</i> сядам		шóпска салáта	"Shope salad"
седнéте, господíне!	have a seat, sir!	шóпски	pertaining to the "Shope"
седя	sit, be seated	шúнка	area near Sofia
седя на течéние	sit in a drafty place		ham
сервíрам	serve, have available		
сервитьóр (ка)	waiter		
слáгам / слóжа (-иш)	put		
следóбед	afternoon		
следóбед сьм на	I have to work this		
рáбота	afternoon		

CULTURAL COMMENTARY

Forms of address: nicknames

Nicknames are very common in Bulgaria, and often end in **-ко** or **-че**. The nickname **Митко** is formed from the second syllable of **Димитър** plus **-ко**.

Families

Bulgarians are extremely fond of children. They will usually make special efforts to help pregnant women or mothers with small children.

Food and drink: restaurants; vegetables; Shopska salata; drinks with meals

The range of available options in Bulgarian restaurants is often quite predictable, although in recent years there has been an increase in variety. Meat is normally available. A fried or grilled chop (**пържола**), usually of pork, is a frequent choice. When the menu specifies “garnish” (**гарнитѳра**), the main portion of meat will be served together with various accompaniments, usually fried potatoes and/or rice, and stewed or pickled vegetables.

Vegetarianism is not unknown in Bulgaria, although it is not yet common. In the months when fresh fruits and vegetables are readily available, the cuisine centers around them, and in winter months, cheese and eggs are staples.

Salads are very popular in Bulgaria. An especial favorite is “shopska salata” (**шопска салата**), which is composed of chopped cucumber, tomato, onion, and pepper, and is topped with grated feta cheese. It is a particular Bulgarian custom to eat this salad (or at least some of its components) as an accompaniment to a pre-dinner rakia. Bulgarians find incomprehensible the Western custom of eating nuts, pretzels, or popcorn as an accompaniment to alcoholic drinks.

In many parts of Bulgaria, the drinking of rakia is limited to the appetizer portion of the meal; beer or wine are drunk with the main meal. Some Bulgarians will drink rakia throughout, however. Formerly, all drinks were served at room temperature, but in recent years it has become fashionable to drink beer and soft drinks cold. Hospitality decrees that friends should take turns treating each other to drinks. Most drinks come in standard portions. The request of **една малка** (or **една голяма**) **ракия** will bring a standard sized drink.



Refectory, Troyan Monastery (north-central Bulgaria)