

Nessebar - Ancient Christian city and a wonderful rest resort

Author : admin



Last Friday together with *my best friend Mitko* together with *an old-school good friend Samuel* and another friend *Ge?rgi* travelled to Pomorie Monastery. The reasons to go there was to have a short pilgrimage journey and to baptize **Samuil** who had *the good desire to receive Baptism*. As always it is a God's blessing to spend time in monastery and this was time it was not different. We started the trip from Sofia to Pomorie in about 08:15 and with a few little breaks we reached the Monastery about 12:30. Before we start journey I call Pomorie Monastery's *abbot father Ierotey* to ask if he will bless our pilgrimage (for those who never was in monastery's everything happens with a blessing and it is best before a monastic trip to ask a blessing). Once arrived the *novice monk Milen* met us and accomodated us in two of the monastic rooms.

On next day, there was the standard morning prayer service and the bells rung to wake us up, after the service we had a small talk with father Sergiy, met some of the brothers and with abbots blessing together with father Sergiy, we went for a *few hours pilgrimage journey to Nessebar*.

Nessebar (the town ancient name is **Mesambria**) is an ancient city situated 16 km from **Pomorie** (known in ancient times as **Anchialo / Anchialo**). Both *Pomorie* and *Nesebar* was a great historical Christian sites from very ancient times, a cities where first civilization started before Christ. Here according to excavation Christianity started somewhere in the early II-nd century and undergoes ? bloom until the XI, XIII century. Here in those places according to some historic datas used to even have an archibishop seat. It is less known fact that Nessebar is one of the most ancient cities in all Europe and started its existence about *3200 years B.C.!*

In ancient times before Christianity Mesambria used to be inhabited with Thracians.

On the road to Nesebar we passed through Aheloy (Achelous) - a town where occurred [the Battle of Achelous \(y. 917\)](#) which is **the biggest battle in medieval European history (120 000 troops participated in battle)**.



Nesebar is a significant historical city and thus part of **UNESCO's world heritage** world site. It is divided in new and old city, whether new city's doesn't shiny with architecture, the old town architecture is preserved and absolutely unique. The fact that Nessebar used to be a important Christian center is still evident as even though the town area is situated in peninsula (consisting of *only 850 meters width and 350 meters hight*), it has **12 Churches** !



Nessebar Church of Christ Pantokrator

Some of the ancient Churches in Nessebar are dated from around VI to VIII century. Many of the Churches are in a style specific for Bulgarian empire build in analogy with the Tarnovo capital of Bulgaria at that time architecture, such architecture is very common for Bulgaria and Byzantine empire in the XIII and XVI centuries. Churches dated from the XIII c. is *St. Parascheva*, (XIII c.) *St. Theodor* (XIV c.), *St. Archangel Michael and Gabriel* (XVI).

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Unfortunately though there are many Churches in Nessebar, many of them are just historical monuments nowadays and others are turned into *Painting Galleries*. In all ancient city only 1 Orthoox Church - ***The Dormition of Virgin Mary*** is functional with regular Holy Liturgies served. The Church has a miracle making of the Theotokos. Many people have found relief and cure or fast help from God after praying in front of the *miraculous icon*.



Nessebar Miracle Making Icon of Holy Theotokos

To give thanks to Mother Mary many people who received cure or whose prayers came true by praying in front of the miraculous icon deliberately left their gold earrings, necklaces and even war medals. In the Church there are holy relics of number of Christian saints - saint Cyprian and Justina, saint Tatyiana, st. mrtr. Marina, st. Vlasij, st. Macarious ...

Father Sergij walk us through the city telling a bit of history of each of the Churches one of the Basilicas was much bigger the rest and fr. Sergius explained that this used to be a Church where a Metropolitan or a Bishop was serving.

We learned that in Nessebar was a very desired king region a place, a highly spiritual place with an overall of 40 Churches!

On the entrance of old nessebar there are remains of the old city fortress walls, the whole city houses and architecture is renaissance with a lot of wooden houses.



Nessebar city entry fortress remains



Wooden Houses in Nesebar

Besides the beautiful Churches the sea side is breath taking and from sea shore you can in the distance another resort city ***Sunny Beach***.



Nessebar winter sea coast view

In Nesebar there are plenty of souvenir shops, caffeterias, small ethnographic styled restaurants assuring a great time for every touries. Very neart to Nessebar is situated also a beautiful rest resort village **Ravda**. About 13:00 we left Nessebar and headed back to Pomorie with fr. Sergij who told us a what of Christian faith stories rich in wisdom. On next day Sunday after the end of Holy Liturgy the Abbot of Pomorie Monastery (fr. Ierotey) baptized Samuel and we had a lunch together with the brotherhood. In early afternoon we headed back to Sofia. As always *father archimandrit Ierotey* and *fr. Sergius* presented us with Christian literature as a gift and a CDs with faith related movies.