

To discover Skopje

A cultural travel guide to the capital of North Macedonia

To date, there is no German travel guide to Skopje that focuses on the city and its neighbouring municipalities. At the same time, several English-language publications concentrate on Skopje's architectural developments over the centuries, as well as a wide range of academic literature on the city's diverse social spaces and the political developments that affect them.

Travellers from Germany still need to discover many findings and insights about Skopje and North Macedonia. The travel guide planned by Mitteldeutscher Verlag Halle aims to close this gap so that German-speaking visitors to the city will have a comprehensive and handy essential guide to the architecture and culture of Skopje by 2028 at the latest when Skopje will be the European Capital of Culture..



Stefan Applis & Matthias Schumann

Skopje entdecken

Ein Kultureiseführer für die Hauptstadt Nordmazedoniens



For many, Skopje's nomination as European Capital of Culture in 2028 fulfilled a kind of destiny for the city on North Macedonia's path to Europe against the backdrop of an eventful history of settlement stretching back more than two millennia, within which the greatest constant seems to be constant change. Architecture plays a vital role as a store of knowledge and values in cultural and individual memory. It reflects specific social ideas and values and influences our way of living and perceiving our (urban) environment. After an earthquake destroyed large parts of Skopje in July 1963, the city was rebuilt with help worldwide. As a result, many examples of the modernist architectural style known as Brutalism, which was being discussed internationally at the time, were built in Skopje, adding to the city's rich historical significance.

However, Skopje is more than just a museum of urban planning for the social utopian and international architectural styles of the 1960s and 1970s; architectural traces in the old town date back to Ottoman times. With the "Skopje 2014" program, a European city was to be created in the centre, raising hopes of an increase in tourism and new jobs. In a populist architectural mix of centuries, everyone should at least be able to find a building to their taste; most buildings formally refer to the Serbian Kingdom (1882-1918) or to the time of Alexander the Great. The travel guide "Discover Skopje" invites readers to explore the architectural styles of the city, its history and the diverse living environments within which its inhabitants shape their lives in this eclectic and heterogeneous metropolis.

Skopje entdecken

Stefan Applis & Matthias Schumann



mitteldeutscher Verlag

The authors **Stefan Applis** und **Matthias Schumann** have been publishing on social, political and economic developments in various countries in Eastern and South Eastern Europe for many years.

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On the one hand, the planned travel guide will have a solid academic basis; all sources used in the book will be referenced so that readers can always form their own opinions based on the literature. On the other hand, many residents of Skopje will have their say about life in their city; double pages in reportage style complement the classic travel guide format. From these reports, readers can set out to explore Skopje for themselves and also discover places and spaces on the outskirts. The guidebook will focus on the city's architectural heritage and the everyday life that unfolds in the built environment, highlighting the creativity and ingenuity with which the inhabitants of Skopje shape the city's life, often under adverse circumstances.

Stefan Applis, born 1969 in Fürth, is a geographer, photographer, and professor at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen. He teaches geography and philosophy/ethics at university and school. For many years, his geographical projects have taken him to Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and the southern Caucasus. His travel guide, "Swanetien entdecken," was honoured with the Destination Award of the International Tourism Fair in Berlin 2023.

Matthias Schumann, born 1973 in Radebeul, works as a photographer, curator, photo trainer and project manager. His photographic work focuses on Eastern Europe and the political, social and cultural transformations. His photographs have been exhibited in the USA, Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Bulgaria, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Spain and North Macedonia. In 2017, Matthias Schuhmann worked in Skopje on a photo documentation of the modernist architecture of the two cities as part of the cultural exchange celebrating the 50th anniversary of the city partnership between Skopje and Dresden.



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In addition, Matthias Schumann's 2017 project on modernist architecture in the city and people's everyday lives in the buildings constructed after the earthquake disaster in the 1960s and 1970s forms an essential basis of the travel guide project.



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The planned travel guide will use expressive photography to convey a differentiated idea of the city's spatial design and its inhabitants' diverse everyday life.

It is modelled on the Georgian travel guides „Swanetien entdecken“ and „Tuschetien entdecken“, published by Mitteldeutscher Verlag Halle, which take a geographical and ethnographic approach. The travel guide „Swanetien entdecken“ was awarded the Destination Award at the International Tourism Fair in Berlin in 2023.



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