An Introductory Guide to the Bulgarian Language

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AN INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO THE BULGARIAN LANGUAGE

For those who are interested in facts and information, the following is a short description of the Bulgarian Language.

Bulgarian is a Slavonic language, like Russian, Czech, Polish, and Serbian. Its history is centuries old and it is the earliest written language. It is a phonetic language, i.e. you pronounce what is written. Of course, first you get familiar with the Cyrillic alphabet! Overall, it is easy to be mastered by English speakers: its structure is similar to English; besides so many Volunteers have learned it and speak it fluently. Naturally there are some distinctive features like the gender of nouns and the verb system.

The Old Bulgarian period dates back to the creation of the alphabet, the *Glagolitsa*, (circa 862 - 863 AD) by the Thessaloniki monks, Cyril and Methodius. The invention of the Glagolitic alphabet, comprised of 41 letters, constituted an original creative act. It was a new graphic system and ingenious creation, exactly adapted to the phonetic peculiarities of the Old Bulgarian language. Between the ninth and eleventh centuries yet another script was created in Bulgaria - the Cyrillic alphabet, or *Kirilitsa*. It includes the 24 letters of the Greek titular code lettering to which several new signs have been added for the sounds peculiar to the Old Bulgarian tongue. **The Cyrillic script** is used by (among others) Bulgarians, Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Serbians, Macedonians and Mongolians, who adopted it from the Russians.

The Modern Bulgarian period is the third phase in the historical evolution of the traditional language of the Old Bulgarian and Middle Bulgarian periods. It has all the characteristic features of the Bulgarian of today. Thus, in a variety of ways, the language of Cyril and Methodius lived through the centuries, and conveyed the literary and language traditions, from the time of Cyril and Methodius to that of the modern Bulgarian literary language.

Bulgarian is an easy language to learn for speakers of English, as its structure is similar to English. However, there are some differences: the alphabet and sound system, the verb system, the place of the definite article, and the gender of nouns.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT YOU ARE EXPECTED to know the Bulgarian alphabet when you arrive. As soon as you master the sounds and the letters you will be able to read Bulgarian. What follows are several phonetic assignments for you, for this purpose.

CONTENTS

The text accompanies the following seventeen (17) audio tracks:

- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_1.mp3 (Time: 1:38) (File Size: 1.88 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_2.mp3 (Time: 2:01) (File Size: 2.30 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_3.mp3 (Time: 3:05) (File Size: 3.54 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_4.mp3 (Time: 0:58) (File Size: 1.11 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_5.mp3 (Time: 3:19) (File Size: 3.79 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_6.mp3 (Time: 1:02) (File Size: 1.19 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_7.mp3 (Time: 4:29) (File Size: 5.13 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_8.mp3 (Time: 2:25) (File Size: 2.78 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_9.mp3 (Time: 2:53) (File Size: 3.30 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_10.mp3 (Time: 0:46) (File Size: 901 KB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_11.mp3 (Time: 2:55) (File Size: 3.34 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_12.mp3 (Time: 1.29) (File Size: 1.71 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_13.mp3 (Time: 1:40) (File Size: 1.92 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_14.mp3 (Time: 1:53) (File Size: 2.16 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_15.mp3 (Time: 3:48) (File Size: 4.35 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_16.mp3 (Time: 2:26) (File Size: 2.79 MB)
- BG_Bulgarian_Lesson_17.mp3 (Time: 2:33) (File Size: 2.91 MB)

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A LANGUAGE GUIDE TO BULGARIAN

Lesson 1: THE BULGARIAN (CYRILIC) ALPHABET

Letter		Pronunciation	Letter		Pronunciation
Аа	a	as in "far"	Рр	r	as in "risk"
Бб	b	as in "bag"	Сс	s	as in "sit"
Вв	v	as in "van"	Тт	t	as in "tin"
Гг	g	as in "good"	Уу	oo	as in "boot"
Дд	d	as in "dog"	Фф	f	as in "fill"
Ее	e	as in "men"	Хх	h	as "hot"
Жж	zh	as in "s" in "pleasure"	Цц	ts	as in "cats"
Зз	z	as in "zoo"	Чч	ch	as in "chin"
Ии	i	as in "tin"	Шш	sh	as in "short"
Йй	y	as in "yes"	Щщ	sht	as "-shed" in "washed"
Кк	k	as in "key"	Ъъ	u	as in "but"
Лл	l	as in "lip"	Ьь		this letter has no sound,
Мм	m	as in "man"			it softens the preceding
Нн	n	as in "not"			consonant
Оо	o	as in "or"	Юю	yu	as in "youth"
Пп	p	as in "pen"	Яя	ya	as in "yard"

PHONETIC DRILLS

1. Listen to the alphabet as many times as you need.

2. Listen to the alphabet and repeat it as many times as you feel comfortable with the sounds.

Lesson 2

Look at the alphabet and find the letters that are written the same as the English letters. Say the Bulgarian sounds. Now listen and repeat them. Did you discover any differences?

А В Е К М Н

О Р С Т У Х

Some letters are written the same as in English, but pronounced differently. Say the Bulgarian sounds of the letters from ex. 3 that differ most from the English ones. Now repeat the following letters.

Е У Р Н Х С В

Others are pronounced and written very differently from English. Look at the alphabet and find these letters. Now repeat them.

Ж Ц Ч Ш Щ Ъ Ю Я

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Some of these letters are written differently from English, but have a similar pronunciation. These are:

Б	В	Г	Д	Ж	З	И
Л	П	Ф	Ч	Ш	Щ	Ъ
Ю	Я					

Lesson 3

Listen to the words and repeat them:

America	Америка
Florida	Флорида
Nevada	Невада
Bulgaria	България
Sofia	София
Europe	Европа

First look at the script and read the words. Did you guess their meaning? Now listen and repeat.

БАНКА	ДОЛАР	КОКА КОЛА	ВИНО
ПАСПОРТ	ТЕЛЕФОН	ФАКС	БАР
АПАРТАМЕНТ	ОФИС	ПРЕЗИДЕНТ	РЕПУБЛИКА
БАНАН	ПИЦА	ШОКОЛАД	КАФЕ

Word dictation. Listen to the words, repeat them and try to write them. Check the spelling below.

МАМА	ТАКА	ОСЕМ	КОЛА	ТОК	ТОР
МЕК	КАК	САК	САМ	СОС	САКО
ОКО	ОС	КОС	МОСТ	ТО	ТАМ
ТОКА	ТЕКА	ДАТА	ДАМА	МЕД	КАНАДА

Introduce yourself following the model.

I am …..... (your name)	'az sum...	Аз съм...
I am from America	'as sum ot.Amerika.	Аз съм от Америка.

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Lesson 4: SOME USEFUL EXPRESSIONS IN BULGARIAN

Greetings/Wishes:

Good morning!	dob'ro 'ootro!	Добро утро!
Good afternoon!	'dobur den!	Добър ден!
Good evening!	'dobur 'vecher!	Добър вечер!
Good night!	'leka nosht!	Лека нощ!
Hello!	zdra'vey! (sg./informal)	Здравей!
	zdra'veyte! (pl./formal)	Здравейте!
Good bye!	do'vizhdane!	Довиждане!
Welcome to Bulgaria!	dob're dosh'li v Bulgaria!	Добре дошли в България!
Here you are.	Zapoviadaite.	Заповядайте.
All the best!	'fsichko 'hoobavo!	Всичко хубаво!
Have a nice day!	pri'yaten den!	Приятен ден!

Lesson 5:

Meeting Somebody/Your Host Family:

What is your name?	kak se 'kazvash? (sg./informal)	Как се казваш?
	kak se 'kazvate? (pl./formal)	Как се казвате?
My name is...	'kazvam se..../	Казвам се...
	'az sum... (or tell the name only)	Аз съм...
How do you do?	pri'yatno mi e!	Приятно ми е!
Glad to meet you!	pri'yatno mi e!	
Where are you from?	ot ku'de si? (sg./informal)	От къде си?
	ot ku'de ste? (pl./formal)	От къде сте?
I am from...	'as sum ot... / ot... (sum).	Аз съм от... / От... съм.
How are you?	'kak si? (sg./informal)	Как си?
	'kak ste? (pl./formal)	Как сте?
I am fine, thanks.	blagoda'rya, dob're sum.	Благодаря, добре съм.
And you?	a 'ti? (sg./informal)	А ти?
	a 'vie? (pl./formal)	А вие?
Not too well.	ne 'mnogo dob're.	Не много добре.
Do you speak English/Bulgarian?	go'vorite li an'gleeski/'bulgarski?	Говорите ли английски/български?
A little.	'malko.	Малко.
I am sorry, I don't.	suzha'lyavam, ne go'vorya.	Съжалявам, не говоря.
Do you understand?	raz'birate li?	Разбирате ли?
I don't understand.	ne raz'biram.	Не разбирам.
I don't know.	ne 'znam.	Не знам.
Please, speak more slowly.	'molya, govo'rete 'po 'bavno.	Моля, говорете по-бавно.
I am married.	o'muzhena sum. (said by a woman)	Омъжена съм.
	'zhenen sum. (said by a man)	Женен съм.
I am single.	ne 'sum o'muzhena. (said by a woman)	Не съм омъжена.
	ne 'sum 'zhenen. (said by a man)	Не съм женен.

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I am divorced.	raz'vedena sum. (said by a woman)	Разведена съм
	raz'veden sum. (said by a man)	Разведен съм.
Do you have children?	'imate li de'tsa?	Имате ли деца?
I have one child.	'imam ed'no de'te.	Имам едно дете.
I have two children.	'imam dve de'tsa.	Имам две деца.
I have a son/a daughter.	'imam sin/dushte'rya.	Имам син/дъщеря.

Lesson 6:

Forms of Address:

Mrs.	gospo'zha	Госпожа
Miss	gos'pozhitsa	Госпожица
Mr.	gospo'din	Господин

Members of the Family:

man	muzh	мъж	mother	'maika	майка
woman	zhe'na	жена	son	sin	син
boy	mom'che	момче	daughter	dushte'rya	дъщеря
girl	mo'miche	момиче	brother	brat	брат
father	ba'shta	баща	sister	ses'tra	сестра

Lesson 7:

Some Basic Questions and Answers (Initial Community Exchanges):

What is this?	kak'vo e to'va?	Какво е това?
This is a hotel.	to'va e ho'tel.	Това е хотел.
What does it mean?	kak'vo 'znachi to'va?	Какво значи това?
How do you say *table* in Bulgarian?	'kak e na 'bulgarski *table*?	Как е на български *table*?
Where is the hotel?	ku'de e ho'tela?	Къде е хотелът?
It is over there.	tam e.	Там е.
Go...	vur'vete...	Вървете...
...straight	...na'pravo	...направо
...to the right	...na'dyasno	...надясно
...to the left	...na'lyavo.	...наляво.
How can I get to the hotel	'kak da 'stigna do ho'tela?	Как да стигна до хотела?
How can I get to...	'kak da 'stigna do...	Как да стигна до...
the center?	'tsentura?	центъра?
the station?	'garata?	гарата?
To/on the right.	na'dyasno.	Надясно.
To/on the left.	na'lyavo.	Наляво.
Straight ahead.	na'pravo.	Направо.
Where can I buy coffee?	ku'de 'moga da 'koopya ka'fe?	Къде мога да купя кафе?
Have you got coffee?	'imate li ka'fe?	Имате ли кафе?
Yes, we have.	da, 'imame.	Да, имаме.
No, we haven't.	ne, 'nyamame.	Не, нямаме.
Please, give me a coke.	'molya, 'dayte mi 'kola.	Моля, дайте ми кола.

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How much is it?	'kolko 'stroova?	Колко струва...?
Here you are.	zapo'vyadayte.	Заповядайте.
Thank you.	blagoda'rya.	Благодаря.
You're welcome.	'nyama zash'to./ 'molya.	Няма защо./ Моля.
Sorry. (it is my fault)	izvi'nete.	Извинете.
Excuse me, may I ask you something?	izvi'nete, 'mozhe li da vi po'pitam 'neshto?	Извинете, може ли да Ви попитам нещо?
Excuse me, may I ask you for something?	izvi'nete, 'mozhe li da vi po'molya za 'neshto?	Извинете, може ли да Ви помоля за нещо?
Yes, please.	da, ka'zhete.	Да, кажете.
Yes, of course.	da, raz'bira se.	Да, разбира се.
I have a problem.	'imam prob'lem.	Имам проблем.
I need help.	'imam 'noozhda ot 'pomosht./ pomog'nete mi!	Имам нужда от помощ. / Помогнете ми!
I've lost my way.	iz'goobih se.	Изгубих се.
Please, show me the way on the map.	'molya vi, poka'zhete mi 'putya na 'kartata.	Моля Ви, покажете ми пътя на картата.
I don't feel well.	ne se 'chufstvam dob're.	Не се чувствам добре.
I'm sick.	'bolen sum.	Болен съм.
I'm tired.	oomo'ren sum.	Уморен съм.
What time is it?	'kolko e cha'sa?	Колко е часът?
It's two o'clock.	cha'sa e dva.	Часът е два.
Would you like a coffee?	'iskate li ka'fe?	Искате ли кафе?
With pleasure.	s oodo'volstvie.	С удоволствие.
No, thanks.	ne, blagoda'rya.	Не, благодаря.
Where can I get a taxi?	ku'de 'moga da 'vzema tak'si?	Къде мога да взема такси?
Can I get a receipt, please?	'mozhe li da mi da'dete kasova belezhka, 'molya?	Може ли да ми дадете касова бележка, моля?
Where can I change dollars?	ku'de 'moga da obme'nya 'dolari?	Къде мога да обменя долари?
What is the exchange rate?	ka'kuf e 'koorsa?	Какъв е курсът?

Lesson 8:

In a Restaurant:

A table for one/two, please.	'masa za e'din/'dvama, 'molya.	Маса за един/двама, моля.
Are the seats available?	svo'bodno li e?	Свободно ли е?
What would you like?	kak'vo shte zhe'laete?	Какво ще желаете?
I would like...	'molya, 'dayte mi...	Моля, дайте ми...
...a glass of mineral water	...'chasha mine'ralna vo'da	...чаша минерална вода
...juice/coffee/tea/milk	...sok/ka'fe/chay/'mlyako	...сок/кафе/чай/мляко
...a bottle of wine	...bu'tilka 'vino	...бутилка вино
...beer	...'bira	...бира ...кола
...a coke	...'kola	...салата
...a salad	...sa'lata	...пържола
...a steak	...pur'zhola	...омлет
...an omelette	...om'let	
We don't have any.	'nyamame.	Нямаме.

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I'm a vegetarian.	az sum vegetari'anets. (said by a man)	Аз съм вегетарианец.
	az sum vegetari'anka. (said by a woman)	Аз съм вегетарианка.
Do you serve vegetarian food?	ser'virate li vegetari'anska Hra'na?	Сервирате ли вегетарианска храна?
Here you are!	zapo'vyadayte!	Заповядайте!
Thank you!	blagoda'rya!	Благодаря!
Enjoy your meal!	do'bur ape'tit!	Добър апетит!
Cheers!	naz'drave!	Наздраве!
Where is the bathroom?	ku'de e toa'letnata?	Къде е тоалетната?
Can I have the bill, please?	'mozhe li 'smetkata?	Може ли сметката?
Here you are!	zapo'vyadayte!	Заповядайте!
Thank you!	blagoda'rya!	Благодаря.

Lesson 9:

Food Items:

meat	me'so	месо	cheese	'sirene / kashka'val	сирене/ кашкавал
veal	'teleshko	телешко	butter	mas'lo	масло
pork	'svinsko	свинско	salt	sol	сол
lamb	'agneshko	агнешко	sugar	'zahar	захар
chicken	'pile	пиле	vinegar	o'tset	оцет
turkey	'pooyka	пуйка	black pepper	'cheren pi'per	черен пипер
fish	'riba	риба	fruits	plodo've	плодове
ham	'shoonka	шунка	apples	'yabulki	ябълки
mushrooms	'gubi	гъби	oranges	porto'kali	портокали
bread	hlyab	хляб	yoghurt	'kiselo 'mlyako	кисело мляко
cucumbers	'krastavitsi	краставици	white wine	'byalo 'vino	бяло вино
tomatoes	do'mati	домати	red wine	cher'veno 'vino	червено вино
peppers	'chooshki	чушки	beer	'bira	бира
potatoes	kar'tofi	картофи	soft drink	bezalko'holno	безалкохолно

Lesson 10:

The Days of the Week:

Sunday	ne'delya	неделя
Monday	pone'delnik	понеделник
Tuesday	'ftornik	вторник
Wednesday	'sryada	сряда
Thursday	chet'vurtuk	четвъртък
Friday	'petuk	петък
Saturday	'subota	събота

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Lesson 11:

Numbers:

one	ed'no	едно	seventeen	sedem'nayset	седемнайсет
two	dve	две	eighteen	osem'nayset	осемнайсет
three	tri	три	nineteen	devet'nayset	деветнайсет
four	'chetiri	четири	twenty	'dvayset	двайсет
five	pet	пет	thirty	'treeset	трийсет
six	shest	шест	forty	che'tiriset	четирийсет
seven	'sedem	седем	fifty	petde'set	петдесет
eight	'osem	осем	sixty	shey'set	шейсет
nine	'devet	девет	seventy	sedemde'set	седемдесет
ten	'deset	десет	eighty	osemde'set	осемдесет
eleven	edi'nayset	единайсет	ninety	devetde'set	деветдесет
twelve	dva'nayset	дванайсет	one hundred	sto	сто
thirteen	tri'nayset	тринайсет	two hundred	'dvesta	двеста
fourteen	chetiri'nayset	четиринайсет	three hundred	'trista	триста
fifteen	pet'nayset	петнайсет	one thousand	hi'lyada	хиляда
sixteen	shes'nayset	шестнайсет			

Lesson 12:

House Orientation:

House	'kushta	Къща
Bedroom	'spalnya	Спалня
Bathroom	'banya	Баня (where you wash and have a shower; because in some houses in Bulgaria the bathroom and the toilet are separate)
Toilet	toa'letna	Тоалетна
Where is...	ku'de e...	Къде е...
...the bedroom?	...'spalnyata?	...спалнята?
...the bathroom?	...'banyata?	...банята?
...the toilet?	...toa'letnata?	...тоалетната?
cold water	stoo'dena vo'da	студена вода
hot water	'topla vo'da	топла вода

Lesson 13:

Common Medical Problems:

I am sick.	'bolen sum. (said by a man)	Болен съм.
	'bolna sum. (said by a woman)	Болна съм.
I have a headache.	bo'li me gla'va.	Боли ме глава.
I have a cold.	nas'tinal sum. (said by a man)	Настинал съм.
	nas'tinala sum. (said by a woman)	Настинала съм.
I have a stomach ache.	bo'li me sto'maha.	Боли ме стомаха.

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Call the Medical Officer.	oba'dete se na 'lekarya.	Обадете се на лекаря.
I am tired.	oomo'ren sum, (said by a man)	Уморен съм,
	oomo'rena sum, (said by a woman)	Уморена съм,
I want to go to bed.	'iskam da si 'lyagam.	искам да си лягам.
I cannot drink water from the tap.	ne 'mi e pozvo'leno da 'piya vo'da ot chesh'mata i'li ot 'sudove za suHra'nenie.	Не трябва да пия вода от чешмата.
Where is the bathroom?	ku'de e toa'letnata?	Къде е тоалетната?

Lesson 14: Listening Exercises

Listening Exercise 1:

- Здравейте! Как се казвате?	A: Hello! What's your name?
- Аз съм Бил. А Вие?	B: I'm Bill. And you?
- Аз съм Мария.	A: I'm Maria.
- Приятно ми е.	B: Pleased to meet you.
- Приятно ми е.	A: Pleased to meet you.

Listening Exercise 2:

- Здравейте! Аз съм Бил.	A: Hello! I'm Bill.
- Аз съм Мария.	B: I'm Maria.
- Приятно ми е.	A: Pleased to meet you.
- Приятно ми е.	B: Pleased to meet you.
- Откъде сте?	A: Where are you from?
- Аз съм от България. А Вие?	B: I'm from Bulgaria. And you?
- Аз съм от Америка.	A: I'm from America.
- Довиждане.	B: Good bye!
- Довиждане.	A: Good bye!

Lesson 15:

Listening Exercise 3:

- Добър ден!	Good afternoon!
- Аз съм Мери. Аз съм от Америка.	I'm Mary. I'm from America.
- Аз съм от Флорида.	I'm from Florida.
- Аз съм учителка.	I'm a teacher.
- Аз съм доброволка от Корпус на мира.	I'm a Peace Corps Volunteer.

- Добър ден!	Good afternoon!
- Аз съм Бил. Аз съм от Америка.	I'm Bill. I'm from America.
- Аз съм от Невада.	I'm from Nevada.
- Аз съм учител.	I'm a teacher.
- Аз съм доброволец от Корпус на мира.	I'm a Peace Corps Volunteer.

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- Добър ден!	Good afternoon!
- Аз съм Джими. Аз съм от Америка.	I'm Jimmy. I'm from America.
- Аз съм от Тексас.	I'm from Texas.
- Аз съм бизнесконсултант.	I'm a business consultant.
- Аз съм доброволец от Корпус на мира.	I'm a Peace Corps Volunteer.
- Добър ден!	Good afternoon!
- Аз съм Дона. Аз съм от Америка.	I'm Dona. I'm from America.
- Аз съм от Монтана.	I'm from Montana.
- Аз съм екоспециалист.	I'm an environmentalist.
- Аз съм доброволка от Корпус на мира.	I'm a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Listening Exercise 4:

- Извинете, къде е тоалетната?	A: Excuse me, where is the bathroom (toilet)?
- Ей там.	B: Over there.
- Извинете, къде е пощата?	A: Excuse me, where is the post office?
- Ей там.	B: Over there.

Lesson 16:

Listening Exercise 5:

- Добро утро!	A: Good morning!
- Добро утро!	B: Good morning!
- Как сте?	A: How are you?
- Добре.	B: I'm fine.
- Заповядайте, седнете! Искате ли кафе?	A: Please, have a seat! Would you like some coffee?
- Да, благодаря.	B: Yes, please.
- А мляко?	A: What about milk?
- Не, не обичам мляко.	B: No, I don't like milk.
- Искате ли салам?	A: Would you like sausages?
- Не, благодаря. Аз съм вегетарианец.	B: No, thanks. I'm a vegetarian.
- Искам сирене и масло.	I'd like some cheese and butter.
- Моля, още кафе.	Some more coffee, please.

Listening Exercise 6:

- Обичате ли кафе?	A: Do you like coffee?
- Да, обичам кафе.	B: Yes, I do.
- Обичате ли мляко?	A: Do you like milk?
- Да, обичам мляко.	B: Yes, I do.
- Обичате ли сирене?	A: Do you like cheese?
- Да, обичам сирене.	B: Yes, I do.

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Lesson 17:

Listening Exercise 7:

- Обичате ли кафе?	A: Do you like coffee?
- Не, не обичам кафе.	B: No, I don't.
- Обичате ли мляко?	A: Do you like milk?
- Не, не обичам мляко.	B: No, I don't.
- Обичате ли сирене?	A: Do you like cheese?
- Не, не обичам сирене.	B: No, I don't.

Listening Exercise 8:

- Може ли чаша вода?	A: Can I have mineral water?
- Да, заповядайте!	B: Yes, here you are!
- Може ли едно кафе?	A: Can I have tea?
- Да, заповядайте!	B: Yes, here you are!
- Може ли един сандвич?	A: Can I have a sandwich?
- Да, заповядайте!	B: Yes, here you are!

Listening Exercise 9:

- Едно кафе, моля.	A: Coffee, please.
- Заповядайте!	B: Here you are!
- Благодаря. Колко струва?	A: Thank you. How much is it?
- 50 стотинки.	A: 50 stotinki.

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