Easy 4

Bansko – Banderishka poliana – Banderitsa hut - Baikushevata mura (Baikushev's white fir) – Okoto lake – Bansko

Duration: *6hrs

Ascent: 1120m

There are 2 options to do this rout:

The 1st one is to walk all the way – it takes about 6hrs. 3hrs walking uphill from Bansko to the Eye lake and 3hrs back downhill. The terrain is not steep.

*The 2nd one is to use transportation - either the gondola (Bansko-Banderishka poliana-Bansko) or the shuttle bus (Bansko - Vihren hut-Bansko).

*note: before you consider taking this option, check the operating hours and the timetables of the gondola and the shuttle bus (shuttle bus operates only in summer July-September).

1st: Starting point: Gondola station (behind Kempinski), Bansko.

100 – 103 Walk up the ski road until you reach Banderishka poliana – this is the upper gondola station with a restaurant and a fun park.
Continue straight up towards the shooting range, which is part of the biathlon training area. Follow the signs pointing the direction to Banderitsa hut and Vihren hut (х. Бъндерица, х. Вихрен).
Look for marks made with white and yellow paint on the stones and trees along the way. The path goes on the right (west) riverbank and takes you to the back of Banderitsa hut.
In front of Banderitsa hut is the asphalt road, which goes to Vihren hut. Take right and walk up the road until you see a sign with a map on your right. Look up and you’ll see a wooden stairway. It goes to the 1300 yrs old fir tree called “Baikushevata Mura”.
Continue on the asphalt road to Vihren hut.

Opposite the hut entrance and across the parking lot there are few stone steps and yellow signs. Take the path up (it's steep at first but just for a while) following the yellow and blue marks along the way.
This path goes on the right (west) riverbank. Walk until you reach a small wooden bridge across the river and yellow signs. Cross the river and follow the path and the red and green marks along the way.

127 – 130 You’ll reach an yellow sign “Езеро Окoto (ОКОТО LAKE) 3min”.
131 – 135 On the way back follow the red and green marks all the way to Vihren hut. Then walk on the same way back to Bansko following the yellow marks along the way and signs “Банско (Bansko)”.
*You can shorten the walking distance by taking transportation in any direction. A nice combination is to take the shuttle bus up to Vihren hut, then walk to the Okoto lake and walk back on the way to Banderishka poliana where you can take the gondola to Bansko (duration is 2hrs including transportation) or walk all the way back to Bansko (altogether 4 hrs incl. transportation).