



Explore Romania

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# Explore Romania

## Romanian Countryside

### DAY 1 – ARRIVAL IN BUCHAREST

Arrival at Henri Coanda airport where you are picked up by your guide.

Transfer to a 4\* hotel for check-in.

### DAY 2 – BUCHAREST – COZIA – SIBIEL

Morning walking tour in Bucharest after breakfast to discover this astounding metropolis standing at the crossroads between East and West, once known as Little Paris, nowadays struggling for a comeback after the communist aftermath.

We transfer to Sibiel, following the beautiful Olt valley. On the way we can stop to visit Cozia monastery, with its main church dating from the 14th century and a wonderful blend of styles. Later in the afternoon we'll arrive in Sibiel – typical Transylvanian village surrounded by mountains and forest, and steeped in ancient Romanian tradition.

Dinner and accommodation in a family-run traditional guesthouse/homestay.

### DAY 3 SIBIEL – SIBIU – SIBIEL

After breakfast we transfer to Sibiu, which in 2007 was the European capital of culture. The city is known to exist from the 12th century, rising in prominence to become an important trading town. Sibiu is packed full of fascinating sites to explore, from its ramparts and towers to its passageways linking the two parts of the town together.



Here we can take a stroll in the old centre following pedestrian streets that will guide us through a maze of ramparts, cathedrals, larger and smaller squares, corridors, towers, museums.

On our way back to our guesthouse from Sibiel, we take another road that passing through Cisnădie and Cisnădioara, two charming Saxon towns both hosting their own fortified centres.

Dinner and accommodation as the previous night.

### DAY 4 – SIBIEL – BIERTAN – SIGHISOARA – VISCRI

We drive to Biertan in the morning - one of the first Saxon settlements in Transylvania, the first attestation of its name coming from 1283. As any other Transylvanian Saxon Community, it had an urban organization, with the Franconian style of the rows of houses around the central square overlooked by a grandiose fortress-church. It is the largest of the numerous fortified churches in this part of Romania. A visit to this monument will introduce us in the atmosphere of the 13th-14th century, when the Saxon settlers of central Transylvania were starting to fortify their churches as a result of the massive Mongol invasion of 1241 that swept through Europe, devastating the entire eastern and central part.

We leave Biertan and head to Sighisoara – a medieval town included in the UNESCO heritage list, inhabited continuously ever since its settlement in the 13th century.

We go for a tour of the citadel including the house where Vlad Tepes – Vlad the Impaler (the Romanian ruler also known as Dracula) was born.

We then quit Sighisoara and head towards Viscri, a Saxon village where the Price of





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Wales owns a typical house.

“Check-in” in peasant houses then we have dinner prepared by the locals, accompanied by homemade brandy and wine.

### **DAY 5 – FULL DAY IN VISCRI**

In the morning we embark on a ride in horse pulled carriages around the village and the surrounding hills. We have the opportunity of seeing some local traditional craftsmen at work and we will also visit the local fortified church.

We then head back to our quarters for a lunch prepared by our hosts, accompanied by homemade brandy and wine.

Free afternoon in the quiet atmosphere of the village followed by dinner and accommodation as the previous night.



### **DAY 6 – VISCRI – TARGU MURES – TURDA – CLUJ-NAPOCA**



We leave Viscri and continue to Targu Mures. The historical center of Targu Mures is particularly rich: the Administrative Palace, the Theater, the Wooden Church, the Orthodox Synagogue, the Medieval Citadel and the Roses Square are all situated within walking distance from one another.

We continue our tour by discovering the city of Turda, the old town itself featuring a pedestrianized square lined with Hapsburg facades. Here we can also visit one of the few salt mines in Europe where salt was extracted only by human power. It's worth mentioning that it was recently rated as the “coolest underground place in the world” by Business Insider.

We end our day in Cluj-Napoca – historical capital of Transylvania, which today is considered one of Romania's most important cultural, academic and commercial centres. Accommodation in 3\* hotel in the city centre.

### **DAY 7 – CLUJ – SIGHETU MARMATIEI – SAPANTA – BOTIZA**

TIME to discover Cluj – a vibrant, cosmopolite city, also known as the “Treasure City” of Transylvania. Its story stretches on more than 2000 years, the foundations of the roman town of Napoca being on display as a testimony in the Union Square.

We quit the city and continue to Sighetu Marmatiei where we can visit The Communist Memorial and then continue our journey to the village of Sapanta, home to one of Romania's most remarkable sights, the unique ‘Merry Cemetery’ of Ion Stan Patras. Patras was a local artist and poet who, during the 1930s, began carving a series of decorative crosses and tombstones that depicted in words and images the lives of the deceased. These colorful grave markers were covered in paintings and amusing anecdotes, instilling in the place a sense of celebration rather than sadness, a tradition that has been carried on to this day by Patras's students.



At the end of the day the road will take us to the sleepy village of Botiza, one of the prettiest in all of Maramures and site of the some of the region's best homestays.



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Dinner and accommodation in a guesthouse.

### **DAY 8 – BOTIZA – BARSANA – IEUD – POENILE IZEI – BOTIZA**

Heading to the Monastery of Barsana after breakfast. The monastery is one of the most popular places of pilgrimage in Maramures. The term "Barsan" designates a shepherd who keeps his sheep in rich and long wool, the word becoming a patronym in medieval time everywhere on the territory of present day Romania.

We then drive to the village of Ieud, one of the oldest in the Maramures and home to the country's second oldest church. The UNESCO classed Church on the Hill preserves fantastic interior paintings depicting heaven and hell.

From here we'll be heading back to Botiza for an afternoon walk in the surrounding hay meadows.

Dinner and accommodation as the previous night.

### **DAY 9 – BOTIZA – MOLDOVITA – SUCEVITA**

Today we resume our journey through the Carpathians by driving to Moldovita in Bucovina. Before getting there we climb over three mountain passes. Here we stop to visit the village's Eastern Orthodox monastery, a wonderful 16th century building that blends Byzantine and Gothic influences.

Our next visit is to the workshop of Glicheria Hretiu, a skillful master of the art of egg painting. Following a tradition that is meant to date back to the crucifixion, painted eggs are believed to bring luck and keep away unholy spirits, with each intricate color and pattern dispelling a different form of evil.

After a demonstration of her skills and a chance to see some samples of Glicheria's work we drive across the last mountain pass and on to the small village of Sucevita.

Accommodation and dinner in a local guesthouse.

### **DAY 10 – SUCEVITA – VORONET - SUCEVITA**

In the morning we pay a visit to the local monastery, the last and the largest covered in exterior frescoes. Close to Sucevita we also find the black pottery workshop of Marginea.

We continue then to Voronet monastery – with exterior frescoes dating from the 15th century, considered the Sistine Chapel of the East, and, in the afternoon we complete our circuit by returning to Sucevita.

Dinner and accommodation as previous night.



### **DAY 11 – SUCEVITA – TARPESTI – FOCSANI**

Today we drive south making our way to Tarpesti. We stop here for a couple of hours to visit the extraordinary Popa collection and museum. It is one of our journey's cultural highlights as it affords us an opportunity to pay a visit to the house of the late Mr Popa, whose collection of archaeological artefacts spans years of work and encompasses more than 20 different sites. The site is still under the care of his family in their beautiful home.



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Following this stop we continue south, drifting further away from the mountains and into the Moldavian plateau. We'll end your day in Focsani town, known in many writings as "City of the Milcov", one of the most popular wine-producing regions in Romania.

Accommodation in 3\* hotel.

### **DAY 12 – FOCSANI – TULCEA - MURIGHIOL – UZLINA**

We quit Focsani and continue via Siret valley to Galati, on the ancient commercial road that connected the Orient, through Constantinople and the Black Sea, through the middle of Moldavia then Poland, to the wealthy cities of the Hanseatic League on the shores of the Baltic Sea.

Here we pass the Danube by ferry towards Tulcea, the gate to the Danube Delta. After a short stop in Tulcea, we continue towards Murighiol from where we are transferred by private boat to our guesthouse for the following nights.

Dinner and accommodation in 4\* guesthouse in Uzlina.



### **DAY 13 – NO DRIVING DANUBE DELTA**

Today we have two rides by small boat on the winding channels of the Danube Delta. About 3-4 h in the morning and 2 or 3 h in the afternoon, depending on the weather and the water level.

Lunch will be served at the guesthouse.

In the afternoon, return to our guests for dinner and accommodation.

### **DAY 14 – NO DRIVING DANUBE DELTA**

Today we'll have again all day out, with two possibilities: Letea village and the nearby forest or Sulina city with access to the Black Sea. We have picnic in Letea or Sulina and then we return to our guesthouse for dinner and accommodation.



### **DAY 15 – UZLINA - MURIGHIOL – TULCEA – BUCHAREST**

Early in the morning we are transferred by boat back to Murighiol. From here we start the transfer back to Bucharest, driving across the vast planes of Baragan. Transfer towards the airport in Bucharest for the flight home.

~ End of the program ~



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