



## The Carpathian Mountains, villages and castles - guided version

8 Days / 7 Nights

Come to discover these natural parks, their rich fauna and flora, their great horizons and their spectacular landscapes! You will also discover the local way of life: pastoral and full of traditions. These mountains with exceptional natural conditions offer a strategic advantage; they were chosen to erect fortresses to protect the Transylvania borders. In the 14th century, the Saxons built the Bran fortress. This magnificent castle had a protecting role against Ottoman invasions and the migratory peoples. However, it is, above all, associated with the prince Vlad the Impaler of Wallachia, the character at the origin of the fictional character of Dracula...

### YOUR PROGRAM

#### Day 1 - Reception in Bucharest & transfer to Zarnesti

Reception at the airport and transfer to the charming mountain hut in Zarnesti (~3.5h), a mountain village and main entrance to the National Park Piatra Craiului. On the road, we will have the opportunity to visit the Peles Castle, gorgeous jewel of the New German Renaissance, built in 1870, and which was the summer residence of King Charles I.



#### Day 2 - Zarnesti - Bear sanctuary – Church of Vulcan

Today we will visit the Bears Sanctuary, where you will hear plenty of interesting stories about the bears that you will see. From there we will start a short easy hike to visit the fortified church, the witness of the Saxon heritage since they colonised Transylvania in 13th century. In the village we will have a surprising encounter with the priest of this old church an enthusiastic and intelligent young men who will explain us the story of the church and will make us taste some local specialities. After that we will meet our vehicles and transfer in a magnificent traditional village with great views to the crests of the surrounding mountains for the next three nights. around 4 hours, 14 km, +250m, -350m



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### Day 3 - Piatra Craiului National Park and Curmatura hut

Today we head into the Piatra Craiului National Park. Our walk starts with a nice steady climb following woodland trails that are picturesque and rich in birdsong. We end up to our lovely lunch spot at Cabana Curmatura, where we can take-in the views of the Valley and Canyon surrounding us. Lunch will be a real delight today with local soup and an amazing apple pie!! Full up from lunch we make our way downhill through open hills before entering a large wooded area along the river. We will follow an old track to The Jurassic Zarnesti Canyon. around 5.30 hours, 16 km, +/-750m



### Day 4 - Mountain village

Today we continue the walk at the feet of the Piatra Craiului Mountains in this bucolic landscape in the middle of pastures, sheepfolds and woods. We will approach a sheepfold where, if it's not too late in the year (our notes: the animals are there till around 15th of September), we can stop and taste the traditional cheese "burduf" being made here at this remote Cheese house. Our guide will give us a talk on cheese making. We will end the stage in a scattered village which seem not to care about time passing. We will see surprising landscapes in the surrounding mountains. Our guide will give us a talk on cheese making. around 6.30 hours, 19km, +/-750m



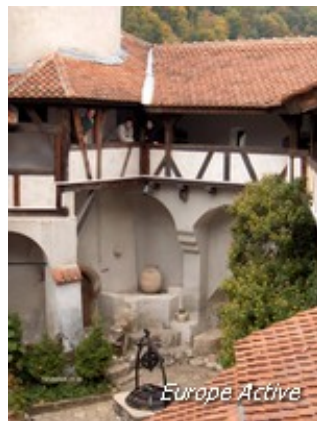
### Day 5 - Bran castle

Our walk will commence at Magura, and begins with a slow ascent through green pastures and traditional farm land. We will join a shaded forest track for some time, where we will still be gradually ascending before the forest opens up to reveal a magnificent hill top where we can stop and take in the wonderful views below! We make our way to our hill side lunch spot with a gentle walk. Our lunch spot is picturesque as it overlooks a very remote farm house that has no electricity and no running water, and is owned by a charming local farmer herding his cattle with not a care in the world!! After lunch we follow a good terrain before descending a very steep hill (500m). The descent is paired with fantastic views of Bran Castle so take your time, go slowly and take it all in.

When we reach Bran we will have a guided tour of the castle. Most people know Bran Castle as "Dracula's Castle", from Bram



Stoker's novel. This story is loosely based on Vlad Tepes who ruthlessly defended this part of Transylvania, and in the process, the legend of his rather gruesome killings inspired the story of Dracula. Bran Castle it's an amazing example of 14th century Gothic architecture that looks like it was carefully placed on top of a mountain. Going to Bran Castle one can really experience the feeling of what it was like to live in those times and places. As you wander through the mazes of rooms, stairways, secret passages and levels connected with wooden ladders, it's easy to imagine the history and secrets hidden there. It's on mountaintops, so you can walk around outside for great views and fresh Carpathian Mountain air. After we have had ample time to explore we will have a private transfer till our new guesthouse run by a family of farmers in Moieciu de Sus village. . That's why all our meals will be home-cooked with their own production, issued by traditional agriculture, without chemical fertilisers. around 4 hours, 11 km, +350m/-600m



#### **Day 6 - Ridge to ridge walk at Bucegi mountains**

Our walk begins with a nice slow steady climb to the top of ridge, passing many Sherpa Huts along the way to La Bisericuta, where we will have spectacular views of the Bucegi Mountains and the Valley Bangaleasa below. There will be plenty of time to take photos here and admire the scenery. Slowly we will descend into the Valley below and enter the Bucegi National Park. From here, a longer walk is possible to a second ridge and onto our lunch spot at Poiana Gutanu Meadows, where we will have a well-deserved rest and a packed lunch.

Long option: around 5.30 hours, 18 km, +/-850m

Short option: around 3.30 hours, 12 km, +/-350m





### **Day 7 - Bucegi Mountains - Mountain Village walk – Bucharest**

After waking up to a picturesque setting you will enjoy a hearty breakfast before starting on your walk. Today's walk takes you through a mix of quaint villages where traditional customs and cultures still exist. You will pass by one of the oldest houses in this area, which is nearly 200 years old. We will stop in a lovely local house where there is a small museum about the villages you are walking through. Depending on the time of day it may also be possible to visit two local Orthodox Churches.

From here we will transfer back to Bucharest, with a small stop in the magnificent medieval town of Brasov. The evening will be free to spend some quality time in Bucharest exploring this astonishing city. Accommodation at the hotel. around 1 hour, 4 km, +250m



### **Day 8 - Bucharest & Departure**

Breakfast at the hotel and private transfer to the airport for your flight back. If your flight schedule allows, you can take a free tour of Bucharest, the Romanian capital. Bucharest it was known between the two world wars as "the Eastern Paris". Today is a very eclectic city, where you can see the influences of The Medieval period with its Ottoman occupation and of the modern period with the influence of neoclassical French architecture and of the communist period  
End of the trip.





## Additional information

### TARIFFS

595 euros per person.

Single supplement : 75 euros per person.

### INCLUDED

English speaking local Romanian guide until your arrival in Bucharest on Day 7 evening, with a first-aid kit. Nights, meals (7 breakfasts, 6 picnics and 6 dinners to our guesthouses), transfers, transfers of luggage.

### NOT INCLUDED

Transfer to the meeting point and from the drop off point, the insurances, entry fees into monuments, the drinks and the personal expenses, dinner on Day 7. Guide on Day 8.

### LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

8 days / 5 days of walking. Medium+ level of walking with a maximum day at 6 hours. Some walks could change depending of the group level or the weather conditions.

### CARRYING

Luggage will be transferred by car or cart during the treks. You only have to carry your things needed for the day e.g. picnic, camera.

### ACCOMMODATION

Double occupancy with private facilities:

- 6 nights in charming guesthouses.
- 1 night in 3\*\*\* hotel in Bucarest.

### SIZE OF GROUP

Minimum of 5, maximum 14 people.

### DEPARTURE

Bucharest Otopeni airport

### DISPERSION

Bucharest Otopeni airport

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

7 breakfasts, 6 picnics and 6 dinners to our guesthouses.

Dinner: 3 course menu– entrée/soup, main dish and a dessert. Occasionally dinner is a 2 course meal.

Not included: Drinks. Dinner day 7.