

Cultural tour - Nature and culture in Romania

15 days / 14 nights

Romania offers a wide range of attractions. Because you choose to travel differently, we choose the best for your holidays. You will discover traditional areas, landscapes and people in a country where devotion to the land and nature is rooted deep down in people's hearts. In the countryside a lot of people live by hand-craft and in harmony with the nature. It is a country where farming and field working have been the main activities for centuries and where history left a diverse heritage.

YOUR PROGRAM

Day 1 - Reception in Bucharest

The trip starts in Bucharest. Depending on your arrival hours you can stop to Peles castle, placed in an idyllic setting in the Carpathian Mountains, on a medieval route linking Wallachia to Transylvania. This castle was the summer residence for the royal Romanian family. Continue your route to Brasov. Night in a 3** hotel in the city centre of Brasov (~ 170km).



Day 2 - Brasov

Visit of Brasov. This city (Kronstadt in German) was founded in the XIII century when the Teutonic Knights were sent here by the order of Andrew II of Hungary to defend the border. At that time, throughout the Middle Ages, when Transylvania was part of the Kingdom of Hungary, the region was repeatedly invaded by various groups, including the Mongols and Tatars. Accommodation in the same place as the night before.

Day 3 - Fortified churches

Today you leave Brasov to visit the fortified churches around the city: first Herman, then Prejmer which is surrounded by a 12m high wall. These walls include 270 granaries and rooms in which villagers were taking shelter against attacks. You'll continue your ride to Lazarea, a small village at the foot of the Eastern Carpathian Mountains, in the Szekler (Hungarian) country where you can visit Lazar castle, built in 1450. Night in guesthouse (~180km).

Day 4 - Monasteries of Bukovina

Today you continue driving through the Carpathian Mountains to Bucovina. In this region, you will discover painted

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monasteries listed as UNESCO World Heritage sites. With their painted exterior walls, decorated with 15th and 16th century frescoes that are considered masterpieces of Byzantine art, these churches are unique in Europe. You can visit today two of them, Humor and Voronet monasteries. You will drive on spectacular routes along mountain lakes and beautiful gorges. Night in guest-house in Manastirea Humorului village (~230km).



Day 5 - Cacica

Today you visit other two important monasteries, but you can also visit a particular place, the salt mine of Cacica. Founded by Empress Maria Theresa's order, the salt mine was manually dug out and opened in 1791. Inside you will discover a chapel, a salty lake, a ball room and a tennis and volley court. Accommodation in the same place as the night before (~ 220km).



Day 6 - Villages of Maramures

Today you leave Moldavia and you make your way towards Maramures. On the route you can stop at the Prislop Pass (1416m), the highest pass in Romania. In Maramures, the woodwork, result of a secular tradition, will fascinate you. This know-how transmitted from father to son is now perfectly mastered by the craftsmen. You will visit a few centuries old wooden churches (among which some are UNESCO world heritage sites). Night in an old wooden house in Breb village (~200km).

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Day 7 - The Wonders of Maramures

Yoday you continue visiting Maramures. You will start with Sapanta, a village known for its unique "Happy Cemetery". Every grave is accompanied by a wooden sculpture and painted stela, with very vivid colours, which describes the life of the deceased person. Then, you visit "the Memorial of the Communism victims" in the ancient capital of Maramures, a museum situated in the former political prison, which will give you a sad testimony of the Romanian dark years.
The last main visit today is the incredible Barsana Monastery. A convent set up in the 1990s, observing the style and the traditional methods of construction. The result is a masterpiece of Maramures crafts. Night in guesthouse in Botiza (~ 90km).



Day 8 - The last steam train

During your last day in Maramures you take the last functional steam train in the country! This forest train will allow you to discover, thanks to its plan and its casual rhythm, a wild nature which shelters an extremely rich flora and fauna. (~80km).

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Day 9 - Sighisoara

Today you leave Maramures to explore the town of Sighisoara. This medieval citadel, known as one of the best preserved in Europe, will give you the feeling of travelling back in time, while walking through the narrow cobbled streets. Tailor's tower is a real wonder of the medieval architecture. Night in guest-house/small hotel in Sighisoara (~260km).



Day 10 - Traditional Saxon villages

Today you drive in the fortified heart of Transylvania - you will visit its Saxon churches. From the top of the towers you will have beautiful view on the surrounding country side and coloured traditional houses which gives "post-card landscapes". You will cross villages like Biertan, with its double wall fortification, Slimnic and Valea Viilor. This last small village was founded in the 13th century and shelter a magnificent charming fortified church surrounded by 1.5m wide walls, listed as UNESCO World Heritage site. Mrs. Müller, the dean of the village and the last German there will be delighted to talk to you about its history. Night in guest-house/small hotel in Sibiu (~95km).

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Day 11 - Sibiu

Visit of Sibiu, the most beautiful city of Transylvania, a medieval city outstandingly well preserved and restored. Its unique architectural style and the atmosphere floating in this city, the European capital of the culture in 2007, will definitely seduce you. If you really feel like driving you can go to the open-air village Museum or you can do it tomorrow, when leaving the city.



Day 12 - The Southern Carpathian Mountains

You can visit the surrounding villages (e.g. Cisnadie, Cisnadioara, Rasinari) and their fortified churches and small nice streets. Then, you continue driving along the highest peaks in Romania, Fagaras Mountains. On your way you can stop at Sambata de Sus, the only monastery in Transylvania build in a Wallachian style, and at the medieval fortress of Fagaras, transformed in the 17th century in a Renaissance fortified castle. You drive forward and arrive in Magura, a small traditional village at the foot of Piatra Craiului Mountains. Accommodation in a traditional guesthouse (~ 160km).

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Day 13 - The Bran castle

Today you visit Bran Castle, better know like Dracula Castle. For many years the castle was home to Queen Marie of Romania, the grand-daughter of England's Queen Victoria. Then you continue driving to Rasnov, a citadel built in the 13th century to defend Transylvania from the Turkish attacks. It is built on the top of a hill and offers an impressive overall view on the surroundings. In the afternoon, from Magura village you can make an easy walk in the middle of the highest straggling villages from Romania (2-3h, +/-150m). The way of life here make us think that local people are not touched by the passing of the time. Many of the inhabitants are livestock breeders and shepherds. Night in the same place as the night before (~70km).



Day 14 - Bucharest

Today you drive further to discover the Romanian capital. Bucharest, "the Eastern Paris" will surprise you with a mix of 18th and 19th century buildings, socialist blocks, and modern buildings. The gigantic "House of the People", second biggest building in the world will also be a part of the program. Night in a 3*** hotel in the city centre (~180km).

Day 15 - End of the journey

Breakfast. Transfer to the airport. End of the trip (~20km).

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Additional information

TARIFFS

1150 euros per person.
Single room supplement : 380 euros per person.
Single traveller supplement : 500 euros per person.
Car rental, 14 days (Economy class, Class B, type Ford Fiesta, manual transmission). Included: pick-up and return at the hotel, insurance. Not included: fuel will be at your expense, warrant. : 755 euros per person.
Car rental, 14 days (Compact class, Class D, type Seat Arona, automatic transmission). Included: pick-up and return at the hotel, insurance. Not included: fuel will be at your expense, warrant. : 880 euros per person.

INCLUDED

14 breakfast, 6 picnics, 7 dinners, the nights, road-book, maps, permanently contactable local assistance.

NOT INCLUDED

Transfer to the meeting point and from the drop off point, the car rental, the fuel, the insurances, the meals like indicated, the drinks and the personal expenses.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

8 days, around 2000km

CARRYING

You will take the luggage in the rented car.

ACCOMMODATION

Double occupancy in hotels or guest-houses

SIZE OF GROUP

Minimum of 2 people.

DEPARTURES

From April to the end of October.

STARTING POINT

Bucharest train station.

END OF THE TRIP

Bucharest train station.

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