



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

8 Days / 7 Nights

This 8-day guided walking adventure through the most appreciated Carpathian Mountains is a must do! Romania is a wonderful, bucolic country in which village locals still rely heavily on craftsmanship and maintaining a strong link with the stunning nature. The Piatra Craiului and Bucegi Mountains are very well preserved and offer the perfect setting for an unforgettable hike. Inside these pristine natural parks, you will be amazed by an incredibly rich fauna and flora and more so, you will also discover the pastoral way of life which is still full of traditions. Apart from this, these fabulous mountains, which are home to exceptional natural conditions offer a very strategic advantage. It is why fortresses were erected here 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 - Welcome and transfer to Brasov

Meeting your guide at the North Train Station in Bucharest at 14.15. Train transfer to Brasov where you'll have a private transfer to your central hotel in Brasov. Travelling by train will create a great opportunity to experience the stunning views from Prahova Valley where the Prahova river makes its way between the Bucegi and the Baiului Mountains, in the Carpathian Mountains. Free time to visit Brasov. Dinner not included.

Transfer: 2h40 by train

Meals: not included

#### Day 2 - Piatra Craiului National Park and Curmatura hut

After a short transfer, we head into the Piatra Craiului National Park. Our walk will start 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. The last ascent will bring us to the fairy-tale village of Magura where we will spend our next couple of nights in a traditional and cosy guesthouse.

Transfer time: 1h00 in the morning

Walk duration: 5h30, 15km, +750/-600m

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner

#### Day 3 - Bran castle

Our walk will start from Magura, and we begin 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 admire the wonderful views below! We make our way to our hillside 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 you can choose to go inside or simply explore it from outside. 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 guesthouse.

Transfer time: 35 mins from Bran to Magura

Walk duration: 4h30, 12 km +350/-600m

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner

#### **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 spectacular landscapes in the surrounding mountains. Accommodation in a nice guesthouse set in an idyllic village.

Walk duration: 5h00, 14 km +/-550m

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner

#### **Day 5 - Bucegi Mountains**

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 before relaxing in your cosy guesthouse whose owner is a well renowned cook. That’s why all our meals will be home-cooked with the owner’s own traditional agriculture.

Walk duration: 4h00, 13 km +250/-350m

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner

#### **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.

Walk duration:

Long: 5h30, 18 km +/-850m

Short: 3h30, 12 km +/- 350m

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner

### **Day 7 - Bear sanctuary – church of Vulcan**

After a short transfer, 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. From here we will transfer back to Bucharest, with a small stop to see the magnificent castle Peles. The evening will be free to spend some quality time in Bucharest exploring this astonishing city.

Accommodation at a 3\* central hotel.

Transfer time before the walk: 45min

Transfer time to Bucharest: 3h

Walk duration: 4h00, 14 km +250m/-350m

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner

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

Breakfast at the hotel. 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. If your flight schedule allows, you can visit the Romanian capital with the help of a road-book created by us with a lot of attention. End the of the trip.

Meals: breakfast

## **Additional information**

### **TARIFFS**

645 euros per person.

Single supplement : 75 euros per person.

Departure 5 people (price per person) : 90 euros per person.

Departure 4 people (price per person) : 150 euros per person.

Departure 3 people (price per person) : 250 euros per person.

Departure 2 people (price per person) : 450 euros per person.



Transfer from / to Bucharest airport - max. 3 pax : 30 euros per person.

#### **INCLUDED**

English speaking Romanian guide from Day 1 to Day 7, with a first aid kit

7 breakfasts

6 picnics (Day 2 to Day 7)

5 dinners (Day 2 to Day 6)

accommodations

transfers from D1 to D8 by public and private transport

Luggage transfer

#### **NOT INCLUDED**

hiking stick rental

entry fees to attractions

meals as indicated

the drinks, other than water

insurances

articles of a personal nature

#### **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 during the treks. You only have to carry your things needed for the day e.g. picnic, camera.

#### **ACCOMMODATION**

5 nights in guesthouses, in traditional mountain villages, in double rooms with showers and WC, exceptionally 1 sanitary for 2 rooms

1 night in a 2 \* hotel in Brasov

1 nights in a 3 \* hotel in Bucharest.

#### **SIZE OF GROUP**

Minimum of 5, maximum 14 people.

#### **DEPARTURE**

Nord Train Station

#### **DISPERSION**

Nord Train Station

#### **HOW TO GET THERE**

HOW to get from the AIRPORT to the North train station:

#### **BUS**

- To go to the North train station, exit the Arrivals terminal (from the ground level – if you see a flower shop to your right, you



are on the first floor) and walk towards the bus stop “Otopeni Plecări” (Otopeni departures).

- Take bus 780 and get off at the GARA DE NORD stop.
- From there walk straight into the train station, passing by Mc Donald’s. The train platforms will be right ahead.

#### TAXI

- You can order a taxi from the machines found near the exits of the terminals. A taxi costs maximum 60 lei, don’t accept to pay more or don’t take a taxi with another cost than 1,69lei/km!

#### PRIVATE TRANSFER

- We can arrange a private transfer for a total cost of 20 Euro, ~ 45 min – 1h (depending on the traffic).

#### UBER/TAXIFY

- The UBER and TAXIFY apps work very well so you can order a car that will take you to the hotel. The price depends on how many cars are available and on the traffic. The cost is of maximum 10 Euro.

#### HOW to get from the North train station to the AIRPORT:

##### BUS

- To reach the airport, at the end of the train platform take the corridor between McDonald’s and the information office.
- Just in front of the exit, there is a bus stop.
- Take the 780 bus that will take you straight to the airport.
- Get off at the AEROPORTUL INTERNATIONAL HENRI COANDA TERMINAL PLECARI (DEPARTURES).

##### TAXI

- You can order a taxi from the machines found near the exits of the train station. A taxi costs maximum 60 lei, don’t accept to pay more or don’t take a taxi with another cost than 1,69lei/km! Independent taxi drivers have different prices.

##### PRIVATE TRANSFER

- We can arrange a private transfer for a total cost of 20 Euro, ~ 45 min – 1h (depending on the traffic).

##### UBER/TAXIFY

- The UBER and TAXIFY apps work very well so you can order a car that will take you to the airport. Just exit the train station and walk around 200 m near the station so the GPS can locate you better. The price depends on how many cars are available and on the traffic. The cost is of maximum 10 Euro.

#### EQUIPMENT TO TAKE



- Walking Boots Should be sturdy and of good quality to handle all types of terrain. Ankle support is important. Leather, with a good durable sole, is the most suitable or, for people who prefer a more lightweight boot, Cordura/leather boots which have Gore-Tex or Sympatex waterproofing. They should be well broken in and be of correct fit. Proof your boots before you leave home. Waxing your boots regularly prolongs their life.

-Lightweight walking shoes/sneakers For wear around towns & villages. They can also be a backup pair for your walk.

-Socks & Underwear Take only good quality socks with wicking and insulating qualities. Road test them before you go on the trip to be sure they are comfortable with your boots. Take a suitable quantity of underwear (washing facilities are limited).

-Several Shirts and Walking Trousers T-shirts preferably with collar and at least 1 long-sleeved shirt for sun protection. If you sweat a lot it is a good idea to purchase at least one t-shirt in a breathable material. These are fast drying, keep moisture away from your skin and are available from outdoor stores. The quick-drying loose-fitting trousers are popular. You should bring one pair of the loose-fitting type trousers to wear in cities and for evenings etc. Shorts for warmer weather.

-Warm jacket Fleece Polartec or warm wool shirt for evenings. This will be worn a great deal; be sure it is totally suitable for your needs. A fleece jacket which blocks the wind (Windstopper) is the most preferable.

-Waterproof Jacket & Pants Must be waterproof, not shower proof, Gore-Tex is best. It must fit comfortably whilst wearing warm clothing and wearing your rucksack. It must have a proper hood, zipper flap and storm cuffs and come down over hips. Pants should have a zip on the side of the leg to make it easier to get them on quickly over boots.

-Daypack 24-35 liter rucksack is sufficient – make sure that it can hold all of your daily requirements such as water bottle or bladder, camera, warm clothes, and waterproofs.

#### Mandatory equipment

- Waterproof tracksuits (breathable Gore tex type jacket and possibly trousers)
- Warm fleece jacket
- High walking shoes (preferably already worn)
- Backpack for hiking large enough to carry all the business
- Food
- Water bottle (allow at least 1,5l of water at the beginning of the day)

#### Optional equipment

- Camping stove
- Cutlery and pans for picnics
- Hiking Battles
- Lamp (frontal preferably)
- Toilet paper or tissues for the day



- Solar cream
- Safety glasses with protection number 4
- Personal pharmacy
- Tent
- Sleeping bag

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Depending on the weather conditions, the route may be slightly modified.