



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

8 Days / 7 Nights

Romania is a wild and bucolic country. In villages the locals still rely on craftsmanship and have a strong link with nature. The Piatra Craiului and Bucegi Mountains are especially preserved and offer perfect surroundings for hiking. 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; 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 in the early afternoon (around 12PM) so we can get ready for the group train departure around 1PM. Train transfer to Brasov where you'll have a private transfer to your central hotel. 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. Short walking tour to unearth the history of this beautiful medieval town of 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 cozy 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 (castle admission fee not included). Afterwards 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: 5h30, 17 km +775m, -650m

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

From the guesthouse, you will be taken by horse-cart to the entrance of the Bucegi National Park, where the hiking route starts. Our walk begins with a nice slow steady climb towards the ridge. Before leaving the forest, we can choose to do either a shorter or a longer hike. The longer one brings us to the top of the ridge, overlooking impressive landscapes and clear view of the Strunga Wall, reaching the pass of Strunga at 2000m of altitude and passing by a mountain shelter on the former Transylvanian – Wallachian border. Going down, we will arrive at Poiana Gutanu Meadows. This is our thoughtfully chosen beautiful picnic spot for both hiking routes.

Going back to the village, we will be passing many Sherpa Huts along the way, where we will have spectacular views of the Bucegi Mountains and the Valley of Bangaleasa below. There will be plenty of time to take photos here and admire the scenery.

Hike:

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 colonized 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 man who will explain us the story of the church and will make us taste some local specialties. From here we will transfer back to Bucharest, with a small stop to see the magnificent castle Peles from the outside. The evening will be free and with our recommendations you will have a good time in our capital. Accommodation at a 3\* central hotel.

Transfer time before the walk: 45min

Transfer time to Bucharest: 3h

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

Transfer time to Bucharest: 3 hours after lunch in Vulcan + a break in Sinaia

Meals: breakfast, picnic/lunch

### 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

Transfer to airport: Available upon request

## Additional information

### TARIFFS

1290 euros per person.

Single supplement : 135 euros per person.

Supplement for a departure in case of 5 people (supplement - price per person) : 125 euros per person.

Supplement for a departure in case of 4 people (supplement - price per person) : 250 euros per person.

Supplement for a departure in case of 3 people (supplement - price per person) : 500 euros per person.

Supplement for a departure in case of 2 people (supplement - price per person) : 950 euros per person.

Transfer Bucharest OTP Airport - Bucharest city centre or railway station - max. 3 pax, one way. : 35 euros per person.

Extra night in Bucharest, 3\* central hotel, price per Double room, B&B : 95 euros per person.

Rentals: walking poles : 15 euros per person.

Extra night in Bucharest, 3\* central hotel, price per Single room, B&B : 90 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)

All accommodation

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 6, maximum 14 people.

### **STARTING POINT**

Bucharest North Train Station.

### **END OF THE TRIP**

Bucharest hotel.

### **EQUIPMENT TO TAKE**

Mandatory equipment

- Waterproof tracksuits (breathable Goretex type jacket and possibly trousers)
- Warm fleece jacket
- High walking shoes (preferably already worn)
- Backpack for day hiking (20-35l)
- Water bottle (allow at least 1,5l of water at the beginning of the day)
- Hiking poles

- 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 Fleeced Polartec or warm wool shirt for evenings. This will be worn a great deal; be sure it is totally suitable for your needs. A fleeced 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.

#### Optional equipment

- Cutlery and pans for picnics
- Lamp (frontal preferably - some guesthouses don't have head lamps)
- Toilet paper or tissues for the day
- Solar cream
- Sun glasses
- Personal pharmacy
- Your favourite snacks or energy bars

#### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

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