



Explore Travel Romania
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Explore Romania

GOING TO THE HEART OF IT

The Life in Trasylvania, Bucovina and Maramures

A well-balanced mixture of city sites, countryside and beautiful natural landscapes for you to explore with you family and close friends, deciding for yourselves how many places you want to see and how much time you want to just relax. Going from Bucharest to Transylvania and then to Bucovina and Maramures, spending time in big cities and in small villages as well, staying at the hotel, but also in authentic peasant houses, eating in restaurants and experience a traditional meal at the countryside – you will discover a great deal about Romania.

Highlights

- The charming Romanian villages of Sibiel, Viscri, Sucevita, Ieud, Hoteni, where your hosts and our friends will happily welcome you in their houses
- The legendary Dracula's Castle
- The sites listed in UNESCO World Heritage: Sighisoara citadel, the painted monasteries in Bucovina and the wooden churches in Maramures
- The unique The Merry Cemetery from Sapanta village
- Beautiful Transylvanian cities of Brasov, Sibiu and Cluj packed full with interesting sites to explore

Day 1



Arrival in Bucharest on Henri Coanda airport. Take the rented car and transfer to the city centre.

Bucharest is a very cosmopolite city, full of contrasts, which is now in an intense reviving process after almost 50 years of communism (like the country itself), a period that left its strong marks on the people, architecture and the way of life. Architectural values from the period between the 2 world wars are now being rediscovered and put into value.

Accommodation in a 3*** hotel in the city centre.

Day 2

In the morning leave towards Sibiu. The European Capital of Culture in 2007, the city is known to exist from the 12th century, rising in prominence to become an important trading town. Like Brasov, which you will visit the next day, it was inhabited by Saxon merchants who formed themselves into guilds, fortifying the town to protect its wealth. 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. City tour.

In the evening travel for about 30 min to Sibiel village (meaning Little Sibiu) – part of Marginimea Sibiului ethnographic area, where the Romanian shepherds had created and are still supporting a strong, original culture.

Spend the night in peasant guesthouses and have a traditional dinner accompanied by local brandy and wine.





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Day 3

Start the day with a walk through the village and a visit to the Museum of Icons on glass, which holds the largest existing exposition of icons on glass in Transylvania, a miracle of artistic creativity and religious inspiration born of the riches of the Orthodox Christian tradition and the imagination of Romanian peasant painters.



Then transfer to Bran village, to visit the Bran Castle (also known as Dracula's Castle). This is a beautiful 14th century castle, restored in the 19th century to its former glory, by the royal family of Romania. Visit the imposing structure



guarding the passing point between the two Romanian provinces: Walachia to the south and Transylvania to the north.

Continue to Brasov, one of Transylvania's major cities. Also known as Kronstadt due to the presence of German colonists as early as the 12th century, fringed by the peaks of the Southern Carpathian Mountains and resplendent with Gothic, Baroque and Renaissance architecture, as well as a wealth of historical attractions, Brasov is one of the most visited places in Romania. As one of the medieval Saxon's seven walled citadels built in the 12th century – and its location at the intersection of the trade routes linking the Ottoman Empire and western Europe – Brasov has been a popular destination throughout the ages.

Accommodation in a 3*** hotel in a medieval building situated in the main square of the city.



Day 4

In the morning you have some time to discover the city and then continue to Viscri village (Deutschweisskirch). This is a Saxon village included in the UNESCO World Heritage list, one of the villages in Romania where the Prince of Wales owns a traditional Romanian house.

Possibility to take a ride in horse pulled carriages around the village and to visit the village fortified church.

Accommodation in peasant houses. (common bath for two rooms)

Day 5

In the morning start the trip towards the north-east of the country.





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The first stop on the way is Sighisoara, a medieval citadel included in the UNESCO heritage list, inhabited continuously ever since its settlement by the German colonists. Built in the 13th century, at the height of its strength, the fortress had 14 tours and bastions (nine remain) and three rings of defensive walls. The entrance into citadel is guarded by two gates, one on the east and the other one to the western side. Most of the oldest houses inside the citadel date from the late 1600s, built after a fire destroyed a town.



You will travel then through a very beautiful area that has largely escaped the scars of industrial pollution, inhabited by the Szekler minority in Romania. Szeklers are Hungarian-speaking people, who settled here in the ninth century, when they were given land in exchange for protecting Hungary's frontiers against invading forces. You can discover the specific architecture and traditions in a place where nature

seems to exist in harmony with farming methods, some having more in common with those used in the 18th century rather than with the modern ones.

In the late afternoon arrive in Lacu Rosu – the Red Lake resort – situated at about 900 m altitude, home of a natural dam lake formed in the 19th century. From here continue via Bicz Gorges – the most spectacular gorges in Romania, with rock walls as high as 300 m. After the gorges you enter another region of Romania – Moldavia. In the evening arrive in Piatra Neamt, the city considered The Pearl of Moldova.

Overnight in Piatra Neamt in a 4**** guesthouse.



Day 6

The first stop of the day is at the mid-16th-century monastery Agapia, home for an impressive number of nuns, who, in addition to their routine domestic and agricultural work, weave carpets and paint icons. The church contains paintings of a well-known Romanian 19th century artist, Nicolae Grigorescu.

From Agapia we transfer to Tarpesti, where you can stop by the house of the peasant artist Nicolae Popa, a self-taught archeologist, ethnographer and collector. Mr. Popa died in autumn of 2010 in his 92nd year of life, but his family is carrying on his legacy.

In the afternoon transfer to the Bucovina region (the land of beech trees), an oasis of Romanian spirituality, housing the famous exterior painted monasteries (Vornet, Moldovita, Sucevita, Arbore and Humor) included in UNESCO's World Heritage list.

In the afternoon you reach Sucevita village. Accommodation in a guesthouse.



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Day 7

In the morning visit Sucevita monastery a masterpiece of its own, painted in dominant green and red. You then have a short 20 minutes transfer to Moldovita monastery. We visit this wonderful masterpiece of the Moldavian Gothic adorned with exterior lively painted frescoes dating back to the beginning of the 16th century. Then visit a workshop of painted eggs, where you will see the special technique required in this extremely delicate operation, and see an exhibition of these local treasures.

In the afternoon return to Sucevita, but stop on the way in Marginea village, home of Marginea Black Ceramics - visit the black pottery centre and see the craftsmen at work.

In Sucevita, your hosts are waiting for you with a lovely dinner.

Day 8

In the morning leave Sucevita for the last part of the trip – the Maramures area. On the way you follow the shores of Golden Bistrita and pass through the beautiful villages of Ciocanesti and Botos, surrounded by high mountains covered in thick black conifer forests. You can make a stop in Ciocanesti village to admire its specific houses with rich ornaments and paintings.

In the early afternoon you will reach Ieud village. Out of its two parish churches, the older and the more fascinating one is the late 17th century Biserica din deal (Church on the hill), included as well in the UNESCO World Heritage list. Beautiful murals cover every centimeter of available space inside of this lovely church.

Spend the night in Ieud in a peasant house at the welcoming Ilea family. (common bath for 2 rooms)



Day 9

Travel in the morning to Bârsana – named after bârsani, local shepherds who breed long-haired sheep – where you can visit Barsana monastic complex, an oasis of tranquility and beauty.



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You can also pay a visit to the workshop and exhibition of Mr. Bârsan, one of the last sculptors specialized in traditional wood carving in Maramures.

Then continue to Sighetu Marmatiei, the capital of historical Maramures, and visit the former Austro-Hungarian Prison, where you take a plunge into Romanian recent history by visiting The Memorial of Communist repression and anticommunist resistance. From here transfer to Sapanta village where you can see The Merry Cemetery, which is unique all over the world due to its bright color paintings and humoristic verses on the crosses.

In the evening reach Hoteni village, one of the best preserved typical villages in the rural Maramures. Accommodation in a carefully restored traditional wooden house at the feet of Gutai volcanic mountains.

Traditional dinner prepared by your host.

Day 10

Start by car in the morning and in about 15 min get to Sarbi village, with its rows of handsome carved gates, where you visit Mr. Borodi, a producer of traditional hats. Continue to Ocna Sugatag, where you have the possibility to spend some time at the open air salt water swimming pool, together with the locals. Today a climacteric spa resort, the place used to be a rich salt mine, documents dating the 14th century are attesting that the main activity in the area was the salt extraction.

In the afternoon start your transfer to Cluj-Napoca. You can make a short stop in Baia Mare, the county town of Maramures, visiting the city center with its main place, Piata Libertatii (The Freedom Square), a space and its surrounding buildings recently restored to become an oasis of elegance in a town which suffered from the industrial pollution, being an important mining center (extraction of gold, silver and other nonferrous metals in the area dates back more than 2000 years).

In the evening arrive in Cluj-Napoca, where you spend the night in a 3*** guesthouse.



DAY 11

Cluj-Napoca, a large city, surrounded by seven hills, is considered to be the cultural and economic capital of Transylvania. The size of its lively historic center enables one to walk around in an hour or so, but so much is concentrated here, that you could spend several pleasant days wondering around. Leave the car at the airport in Cluj, before taking your flight back home.

~ End of the program ~

The estimated price per person can vary between 490 € and 620 € depending on the group size.