



Explore Travel Romania  
19 bis Calistrat Hogaş street, Piatra-Neamt, Romania  
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# Explore Romania

GOING TO THE HEART OF IT

## A Glance at the Traditional Crafts in Romania

**Group size:** 4 to 14 people

Did you ever wear a wool sweater or wool socks made by your grandmother? Many adults in Romania had :) and had seen their grandmothers knitting for the whole family. What about witnessing how people are manufacturing pottery or the shepherds making the cheese at the sheepfold, the blacksmith applying horse shoes or how the homemade brandy is produced? These and many other crafts are still alive in the Romanian villages, where every generation passed their knowledge to the younger one, saving them from being lost forever. This tour tells the story behind every object that is made by the hands of those who are welcoming us to their workshops or homes. All mixed with idyllic countryside and beautiful cities we are visiting on our way.

### Highlights:

- A medley of traditional crafts: shepherds' hat manufacturing, brandy distillery, wooden charcoal producers, egg painting, black pottery, traditional bricks and tiles, sheepfold and many other
- A ride in horse pulled carriages in Viscri village
- A visit at Dracula's castle in Bran village
- Accommodation in authentic peasant houses for a few nights

### Day 1

Arrival in Bucharest on Henri Coanda airport. Transfer to the hotel, in the city centre.

City tour – Bucharest is a very cosmopolite city, full of contrasts, which is now under 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 two world wars are now being rediscovered and put into value.

Welcome dinner with folkloric program in one of the most appreciated restaurants in Bucharest.

Accommodation in a 4\*\*\*\* hotel in the city centre.





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### **Day 2**

In the morning we take a walk in Lipscani area, the old Bucharest commercial area, where almost every street was named after the artisans who used to work and sale their artifacts here: glass blowers, leather craftsmen, furriers and so on. We can visit the museum and shop exhibiting glass objects produced by the very few remaining glass blowers in a technique very similar to those used in creating the Murano glass artifacts.

After the walk we start our transfer towards Transylvania crossing the Carpathians, via the Olt valley. In the evening we arrive in Sibiul village (meaning Little Sibiu) – part of Marginimea Sibiului ethnographic area, where the Romanian shepherds had created and are still supporting a strong, original culture.

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

### **Day 3**

We start the day with a walk through the village and a visit to a weaving rugs workshop. We then visit the Museum of Icons on glass, which holds the largest existing exhibition 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. We will be explained the process of painting on glass.

Short transfer by car to Saliste, where we visit the workshop of a craftsman who produces specific hats that shepherds have been wearing till nowadays, followed by a visit to the local water corn flour mill. And finally we make a stop at a traditional sheepfold, where we can see how the shepherds are living, preserving hundreds of years old traditions. We can see how the different types of cheese are produced and we can taste several types of cheese with traditional mamaliga (a type of polenta).



We travel for 30 minutes to Sibiu, which was in 2007 the European capital of culture. The city is known to exist from the 12th century, rising in prominence to become an important trading town. 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.

We drop by the House of Journeymen (Casa Calfelor), the house that welcomes the German, Swiss, French and other travelling journeymen in their 3 years and 1 day initiation journey outside their native country, during which time they are not allowed to come closer than 50 km to their homes. Each year they organize workshops, where the journeymen demonstrate their abilities, as worthy representatives of their specific guilds: carpenters, stone masons, painters, jewelry makers, farriers, bakers, shoemakers, tailors and so on.

In the evening we return to Sibiul, where our hosts are waiting for us with a delicious dinner and the local brandy and wine.



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### Day 4



After breakfast we travel to Sighisoara, a medieval citadel included in the UNESCO heritage list, inhabited continuously ever since its settlement by the German colonists. Built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, at the height of its strength, the fortress had 14 towers 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. Tour of the citadel.

Option to organize lunch in the house where Vlad Tepes –

Vlad the Impaler (the Romanian ruler, who inspired Bram Stoker's character, Dracula) was born.

In the afternoon we continue to Viscri village (Deutschweisskirch). This is a Saxon village included in the UNESCO heritage list, one of the villages in Romania where the Prince of Wales owns a traditional house. His Royal Highness has a long-standing interest in Romania and has visited the country regularly since his first visit in 1998. Viscri is also the only place for the moment in our country with an organic wastewater treatment plant.

We "check-in" in several authentic Saxon peasant houses which will accommodate us with their traditional conditions.

Traditional dinner prepared by the locals, accompanied by homemade brandy and wine.

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



### Day 5

In the morning, we take a ride around Viscri village in horse pulled carriages (traditional transportation method that is still used nowadays) heading to the place where Imre and Piroška, husband and wife, are making wooden charcoal. We can see them at work and have them telling us about the traditional method they have been using for more than 8 years to produce the coal.

We continue with a visit to a family producing traditional bricks and tiles made from local clay and fired in a kiln. These have been the basic building materials in the Saxon villages for many generations. To produce these bricks, the process is split into more stages including, at certain times of the year – a spectacular four-night non-stop firing of the kiln.

Next visits are to the village blacksmith workshop, then to see the village ladies who are weaving winter wool socks, and finally at the local brandy distillery.



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We have dinner and spend the night in the peasant houses. (common bath for two rooms)

### **Day 6**

In the morning we leave Viscri and the Transylvania region, crossing again the Carpathians towards Moldova and Bucovina regions. We travel through a very beautiful area, passing via Bistrita – another Saxon city – and then the Tihuta mountain pass – which appears also in Bram Stoker's Dracula novel as Borgo Pass – the pass between Transylvania and Bucovina.

At noon we arrive in village, where we stop by the house of the peasant artist Nicolae Popa, a self-taught archeologist, Tarpesti ethnographer and collector. Mr. Popa died in autumn of 2010 in his 92nd year of life. He was also a talented craftsman, who was creating in his workshop ceremonial masks for the celebration of the New Years. We visit the Popa Museum and have lunch prepared by the family.

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

We arrive in Sucevita village, where we spend the night in a guesthouse.



### **Day 7**

In the morning, we visit Sucevita monastery a masterpiece of its own, painted in dominant green and red. We 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 we visit an egg painting workshop where we are demonstrated the special technique required in this extremely delicate operation, and see an exhibition of these local treasures.

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

In Sucevita, our hosts are waiting for us with a lovely dinner.





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### **Day 8**

After breakfast we leave Sucevita, heading to Brasov, one of Transylvania's major cities. We travel via Bicaz Gorges – the most spectacular gorges in Romania, with rock walls as high as 300 m and we pass through 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 we continue 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. We 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 we arrive in Brasov. 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 the Western Europe – Brasov has been a popular destination throughout the ages. City tour.

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

### **Day 9**

After breakfast we transfer to Bran village, where we 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. We visit the imposing structure guarding the passing point between the two Romanian provinces: Walachia to the south and Transylvania to the north.

We have lunch with sheep cheese and mutton specialties in a restaurant owned by a traditional food passionate.

Transfer to the airport.





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~ End of the program ~

**The estimated price per person can vary between 670 € and 1225 € depending on the group size.**