

EXPLORE!

Family Romanian Winter Adventure

6 days

Romania - Trip code FRW



Family Romanian Winter Adventure

This short winter break heads into the heart of the Transylvanian Alps. We learn winter survival lessons and how to make bread as well as wildlife tracking. There are a couple of treasure hunts around Bucharest and Sighisoara to bring these sightseeing trips to life along with the chance to try ice skating in the capital. The highlight of the trip is a visit to Bran Castle, better known as the setting for Bram Stoker's Dracula and a night by Balea Lake. PLEASE NOTE This departure does not stay at the Ice Hotel but spends the night at a hotel close by. We will visit the Ice Hotel during the trip to see how the rooms are created from huge blocks of ice each year.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Balea Lake** - Spend a night at one of Romania's most stunning locations
- ★ **Transylvania** - Visit Bran Castle better known as the inspiration for Bram Stoker's Dracula
- ★ **Viscri** - Explore the ancient Saxon village and learn how to make bread and a horse shoe
- ★ **Bucharest** - Stay in Romania's capital city and have a treasure hunt to discover its highlights
- ★ **Carpathian Mountains** - Learn some winter survival techniques and try out sledging

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:**Moderate**

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:**10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour Bucharest

Known for its wide tree-lined boulevards and grand buildings, Bucharest is a bustling metropolis. Romanian legend has it that the city was founded on the banks of the Dambovitza River by a shepherd named Bucur, whose name literally means 'joy'. His flute playing reportedly dazzled the people and endeared him to the locals who decided to give his name to the city.



Accommodation: Hotel Minerva (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Drive to Brasov, visit Dracula's Bran Castle and afternoon wildlife tracking

This morning we drive to the town of Brasov, where we visit the Black Church, city square, the First Romanian School Museum and the town's city walls. The school museum is hidden in the gardens of one of the oldest churches in Brasov. We then take a short drive to the legendary Bran Castle, built in the 14th century to protect the mountain pass from the invading Turks, the castle is located high above a valley perched on a rock with views over Transylvania. In the 20th century it was the favourite residence of the royal family and is now famous as the setting the Bran Stoker's Dracula. Although Bram Stoker never visited Romania, he depicted the imaginary of Dracula's castle based upon a description of Bran Castle that was available to him at the time and based this gruesome legend on Vlad the Impaler, a prince whose reputation was of a blood-thirsty ruthless tyrant who terrorised the area at the time - visit if you dare but make sure you leave before it gets dark!. We spend the afternoon on a more sedate quest with a visit to a wildlife tracking centre and accompanied by expert guide we get the chance to see tracks of wild boar, red deer, wolves and bear before arriving in Moieciu for the night.



Accommodation: Casa Zada Guest House (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 3 - Cable car into the area of the Balea Lake. Winter survival lesson and optional sledging

Once we arrive in the heart of the Carpathian Mountains we take a cable car and ascend to 2,034 meters where the hotel is located. The actual journey takes around 30 minutes although the total time taken to transfer the whole group may take longer as the cable car can only take 10 people. The hotel is by Balea Lake with stunning views of the immediate area. We also get the chance to visit the Ice Hotel which uses ice carved from Balea Lac. The Ice Hotel has an ice restaurant, an ice bar and even an ice church, which is created each year from ice blessed by local priests! The bedrooms are entirely made of ice including the beds. In the ice bar, you can purchase drinks served in ice glasses. Once we have settled into our accommodation, we walk to the 'Tunnel Walk' which is on the road tunnel of the Transfagarasan highway (the 90km road is one of the most spectacular roads in the world and has more tunnels and viaducts than any other road in Romania - it was named as the best road in the world by BBC's Top Gear presenters). Although the road will be closed in the winter, you can still see parts of it and we walk through one of the tunnels to see the ice stalactites and stalagmites. Please note this is dependent upon gaining entrance into the tunnel which may not be possible if there is a snow drift. We then meet the Romanian Mountain Rescue Team who teach us a few winter survival skills including putting up a shelter and cooking a meal. There is also an optional sledging activity along a 50-100 metre set route near the Ice Hotel. Although there is no minimum age, younger children need to travel down with a parent. Please note this is weather dependant and can be done the following morning if required.



Accommodation: Balea Hut (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 4 - Drive to Sighisoara for a treasure hunt and lunch and then onto Viscri where we make bread and a horse shoe

We leave around 10am to catch the cable car back to the base station at Lake Balea. We then drive to Viscri via a stop at Sighisoara which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and also the birthplace of Dracula! We discover the town on foot with a short treasure hunt planned to find the old town fortifications, the Church on the Hill, covered stairs and the clock tower. We then have lunch here and you may want to try the delicious cakes and coffees that the local cafes have to offer and that the town is known for. We then continue driving to Viscri and when we arrive, the Explore Leader gives a short orientation walk of the area. Viscri is a wonderfully preserved village with a fortified church that is listed by UNESCO. If the snow is thick enough we travel by a horse drawn sleigh ride to visit a local bakery where we learn how to make traditional bread and to the village blacksmith where we learn how to make a horse shoe.



Accommodation: Viscri Guesthouse (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 5 - Drive to Bucharest, treasure hunt quiz and optional ice skating

We spend the morning heading back to Bucharest where on arrival we have a treasure hunt quiz around the city that includes visiting the Revolution Square, Ceausescu's Palace, Metropolitan Church and the Old Town. The rest of the afternoon is left free to discover the city or try out ice skating (optional).



Accommodation: Hotel Minerva (or similar)



Standard Hotel

DAY 6 - Trip ends in Bucharest

Trip ends in Bucharest after breakfast.

Family information

Minimum age

7

Why book this trip

This trip is designed to appeal to families with children aged between 4-8 years old although it is obviously great fun for all the family. There are fewer active elements compared to the other winter trips in the Explore family programme and this trip includes fun activities such as treasure hunts, a sleigh ride and making bread - the highlights will be visiting Dracula's castle which is a once in a lifetime experience.



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 5
Dinner: 3



Transport

Bus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

2 nights standard guesthouse
2 nights standard hotel
1 nights simple hotel

Trip information

Country information

Romania Trips

Climate

Romania's climate is continental, temperatures being strongly influenced by the physical features of the Carpathians. Temperatures will fall from highs of 18°C (by day) to lows of 6°C (at night) in October; by January they will hover around freezing during the day and go down to -10°C at night. They will then rise to reach October temperatures again by April. Temperatures will generally be lower in the mountains than in Bucharest. Snowfall may occur at any time.

Time difference to GMT

+2

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Eastern Orthodox

Language

Romanian

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Biertan Church: Entrance 3 Euros per person Ice Hotel; sledging E10 per person Budapest; Ice skating E10

Clothing

Travellers should pack warm clothes (layers will be best), a thick water and wind proof jacket, a jumper/fleece, hat, scarf and gloves. You may also find thermal underwear useful.

Footwear

Comfortable pair of warm walking shoes that have sufficient grip for icy conditions and are waterproof in case of snow.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage, a daypack and an overnight bag for your stay at the Ice Hotel are needed. You're main luggage for the night at the Ice Hotel will remain locked in the coach at the cable car base station at Lake Balea. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage - so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

We recommend taking a water bottle, torch, camera and personal first aid kit. You may find that walking poles are useful.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow £10.00 for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Country Information

Romania Trips

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£8

Dinner price

£10

Beer price

£1

Water price

£0.7

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Romanian Leu.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Sterling Pounds, US Dollars and Euros cash can all be exchanged for local currency. Old style £10 and £20 notes are not accepted.

Where To Exchange

Please note that the exchange rates at the airport on arrival are particularly low.

ATM Availability

In most towns, your tour leader will advise you.

Credit Card Acceptance

Major stores and restaurants only.

Travellers Cheques

It is not possible to exchange Travellers Cheques on the tour.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Romania: Visas are not required by UK, EU nationalities, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Non refundable permits

Romania Trips

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, although we recommend vaccination against tetanus, hepatitis A, typhoid and polio. Tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. The Foreign Office currently recommend considerations of vaccination against rabies if travelling in rural areas of Romania. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
