

EXPLORE!

NEW

Family Active Romania Adventure
8 days

Romania - Trip code FRO



Family Active Romania Adventure

When it comes to travelling with kids, Romania may seem off the beaten track, yet the country hosts many surprises and an array of activities to suit the whole gang. Explore the historic capital of Bucharest, travel to the heart of Transylvania where it's not unusual to see farmers going about their work using horse-drawn carts and along the way visit Bran Castle, legendary home of Dracula. Spend time at a bear sanctuary and be as active as you want in the picturesque Apuseni Nature Park trying out biking, kayaking and hiking.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Historic Bucharest** - Take part in a treasure hunt in Bucharest's old town.
- ★ **Transylvanian mystery** - Explore Count Dracula's Bran Castle.
- ★ **Wildlife** - Visit a bear sanctuary in the heart of Transylvania.
- ★ **Great outdoors** - Spend two days in the picturesque Apuseni Nature Park hiking, biking and kayaking as well as the option of caving and canyoning.
- ★ **Visit an amusement park deep underground** - Visit Salina Turda, an excavated salt mine, turned into an amusement park with a full size ferris wheel deep underground.
- ★ **Local living** - Take a horse and cart ride through picturesque villages and explore ancient citadels.

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 trip in Bucharest, capital of Romania

Arrive in Bucharest, drive 16km to our centrally located hotel.. Situated on the Danube Plain and set amid a series of lakes and gardens, Bucharest has often been referred to as 'Little Paris of the Balkans.' The city has shaken off its drab recent past; undergoing radical modernisation, it's now a bustling city at the centre of Romanian culture, art and media. The cities scale is grand, characterised by the 'Ceausima', Bucharest's 12-storey Palace of Parliament is the second largest building in the world (after the Pentagon) dominating the central plaza. Depending on your arrival time walk out and enjoy the cafes and people watch.



Accommodation: Hotel Minerva (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Explore Bucharest, treasure hunt on foot in the old town. Visit Dracula's Bran Castle

After breakfast head out for a tour of Bucharest blending turn of the century elegance and Communist excess including Revolution Square, the Royal Palace and Victory Street. Leaving our bus behind us, we head to the old town on foot for a treasure hunt ending up at the ruins of Dracula Palace. Heading north, we bid farewell to the capital, stopping briefly at Snagov Monastery, where it is supposed that Vlad the Impaler is buried. Situated on an island at the northern end of Snagov Lake, Vlad the Impaler has strong connections to Snagov building fortifications around the monastery including an escape tunnel and a prison and torture chamber. Continuing our journey we drive 2 to 3 hours to Brasov famed for its charming tangle of narrow streets and multi-coloured houses. Stopping for lunch, we also visit the first Romanian school dating from 1495. Children can experience a sense of life for past generations; sitting in the old school benches with the museum curator taking a brief lesson. The final stop of the day is the imposing castle at Bran. The truth behind Dracula's Castle is even more fascinating than its myths. In the early 20th century it was the home of the remarkable British born Queen Marie of Romania, granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Vlad the Impaler, the infamous 15th

century ruler of Wallachia, never actually lived here and Bram Stoker never came near Transylvania! Perched on a crag in a valley between two high mountain ranges, the castle controlled an international trade route, but is now a rural backwater. Exploring the village, the castle and the museum gives us a chance to unravel fact from fiction. From here it's a short drive to the Transylvanian village of Moieciu, where we stay in a local guesthouse. Sit around the campfire after dark roasting marshmallows after a wholesome home cooked dinner.



Accommodation: Casa Zada Guest House (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 3 - Rural Romania. Visit a bear sanctuary, take a horse and cart ride and overnight in medieval city of Sighisoara.

This morning we make our way to the Liberty Bear Sanctuary, a home for rescued bears. Set in a forest; the sanctuary has assisted in rescuing countless bears from zoos and captivity; the bears can now roam free in a natural environment of forested enclosures containing hibernation dens and large freshwater pools. Driving north for two hours to the charming Saxon village of Viscri,). Break for a delicious lunch at a host family's house after which we can take a horse and cart ride around the village reminiscent of a bygone age, visiting the local baker, blacksmith and fortified church. Continue to Sighisoara. Arriving in Sighisoara is a bit like stepping back in time. This tiny medieval city of winding cobbled alleys, pastel-coloured buildings, steep stairways and secluded squares now harbouring cafes, craft shops and hotels. Take a short tour along Sighisoara's alleys and medieval towers finishing at the house Vlad the Impaler was born. The evening is left free to sample the regions hearty cuisine including beef goulash with dumplings, tarragon chicken or warming spicy soups washed down with craft regional beer or a glass of local wine.



Accommodation: Hotel Sighisoara (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Drive to the heart of Transylvania, visit citadel at Alba Lulia.

Drive two hours to Alba Lulia, heading into the heart of Transylvania. Explore the cities spectacular restored citadel with its arrow-shaped bastions and highly decorative gates. In the old town stroll along the wide, tree-lined streets and learn about its historical significance in shaping modern day Romania, enclosed between its walls lies several centuries of attractions all laden with history. After lunch journey to Smida, a riverside village in the heart of Apuseni Natural Park, our base for the next three nights. Check into the Smida Park Mountain Resort and Spa which features an indoor swimming pool and a host of activities for the whole family to enjoy including table tennis, bike hire and kayaking.



Accommodation: Pensiunea Smida Park (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Apuseni Natural Park. Guided nature walk to view carnivorous plants in the wild. Further optional activities (tennis, cycling, kayaking).

The meadows and rolling hills of Apuseni Natural Park is an ideal playground for families wanting to enjoy the great outdoors. Setting off from our base in Smida, we start the day with a guided ranger walk to view carnivorous plants in the wild, we continue

along the shores of the lake making our way back to the hotel. In the afternoon we get to choose from a number of optional activities including renting mountain bikes to explore the network of cycle trails, or try kayaking on the nearby lake, see the optional excursions section for more details. Alternatively relax by the pool soaking up the fantastic scenery. Late afternoon there is a guided walk through forests to a Sheppard's hut where we will get the chance to sample local cheeses. It's not untypical to see farmers young and old come together scything hay by hand and collecting the dried hay to pile into vast stacks. The walk gives us an opportunity to see rural Romania at its very best.



Accommodation: Pensiunea Smida Park (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Apuseni Natural Park. Optional caving and canyoning. Free afternoon for further activities (tennis, cycling, kayaking)

This morning there is the option to go on a caving and canyoning excursion. Drive 25km to a drop off point, walking a short distance to Cetatile Radesei cave, where we collect our equipment including a helmet and wetsuit. Descending into the vast cave we walk for around 30 minutes, covering 260 meters. With a height of up to 15 meters in places, we follow a stream running through the cave network through wide corridors and vast amphitheatres. As we near the end the roof disappears and we enter a narrow canyon known as Somesului Cald gorge with deep pools filled with water. Over the next 2 hours we slowly descend the gorge, covering 1.5km in total with the rocky walls towering 150 meters above us. Towards the end the valley opens up and we end the trip with a pleasant 5km forest walk back to our vehicle. For those not wishing to take part in the caving and canyoning there is plenty to enjoy in this spectacular region, steeped in myth, folklore and superb wildlife. Butterflies are abundant, and there are numerous other birds and plants to enjoy on walks from our hotel. Your Explore leader will be on hand to recommend activities to try today including hiking, mountain biking, and kayaking on the lake. The hotel also offers a host of activities for families including a tennis court and a swimming pool.



Accommodation: Pensiunea Smida Park (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Drive to Salina Turda, a former salt mine, turned tourist attraction. Continue to Cluj-Napoca, walking tour of historic centre.

After breakfast drive to one of the unique highlights of the trip, Salina Turda, a former salt mine turned tourist attraction. This underground wonderland has been fitted out with bright lights and pedestrian walkways, not to mention an amphitheatre, ferris wheel and underground lake. The vast space mine has had a colourful history over the years, including cheese storage centre and during the second world war, an anti-aircraft shelter. Later, in 1992, it was opened to the public, and has been a unique attraction ever since. After lunch we continue to Romania's second largest city, Cluj-Napoca. After checking into our hotel, we set out on foot. Blending a rich cultural infusion of Saxon, Hungarian and Roma influences, we stroll through the Baroque city centre stopping to hear the stories behind landmarks like the Banffy Palace and the Gothic Cathedral of St. Michael, which has changed its religious denomination a total of five times since its initial construction and still dominates the downtown market area. For those wishing to explore the city further consider the National History Museum for an enchanting reminder of what natural history museums used to be, alternatively head to the Botanical Gardens to relax among the fragrant blooms and native flowers.



Accommodation: Hotel Panorama Business Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Cluj-Napoca

Trip ends in Cluj-Napoca after breakfast.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Family information

Minimum age

7

Why book this trip

Romania is destination that will appeal to the whole family; there is something for everyone in this week long journey starting in the capital, Bucharest and travelling north through the heart of Transylvania to the vibrant youthful city of Cluj-Napoca. Along the way we travel deep underground in an excavated salt mine, turned into an amusement park with a full size ferris wheel, take a horse and card ride through picturesque villages, stay overnight in Moeciua at a delightful homestay, roasting marshmallows over an open campfire and explore ancient citadels wandering through streets that have changed little over the past two hundred years. Not wanting to neglect Romania's unspoilt landscapes we spend two full days in Apuseni Nature Park in a family friendly hotel with an indoor pool and plenty to keep the family entertained, hiking, biking and kayaking.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Dinner: 1



Transport

Bus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

1 nights standard guesthouse
6 nights standard 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

A selection of optional activities are listed below to help you budget for your Family adventure. Whilst the basic tour price you pay before you travel includes a great selection of highlights, we have also built in free time to allow you the flexibility to choose from a carefully selected range of additional excursions and activities or take time to relax, the choice is yours. At certain destinations along the way there may be several options to choose from and it may not be possible to fit all the activities in; your Explore Leader will be able to give advice on which are the most suitable for your family. Apuseni Natural Park Day 5 or 6: Kayaking on Belis Fantanele lake. 1 hour €8 adult, €5 child. 4 hours €18 adult, €14 child Day 5 or 6: Bike hire to explore the numerous off road trails in the park. 4 hours €12 adult, €10 child or full day option €20 adult and €17 child. Day 6: Morning caving and canyoning excursion and walk. €30 per person

Clothing

Pack summer clothing, although medium weights are needed for autumn and spring when it can be cold. Temperatures are cooler in Apuseni Natural Park so a fleece is essential plus a windproof/waterproof jacket.

Footwear

Comfortable walking boots are essential. Trainers/sandals for general travel.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage - so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle, insect repellent, sunscreen, a sunhat and a torch. Binoculars are useful for wildlife spotting in Apuseni Natural Park. Only small face towels are provided in some of the hotels, so if you prefer a larger bath towel it is advised that you take your own. We recommend also taking a personal first aid kit.

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 of the driver.

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 trip.

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.
