

EXPLORE!

BEST SELLER

Best of Romania and the Danube Delta
11 days

Romania - Trip code TD



Best of Romania and the Danube Delta

Enter a land of remote villages, ancient customs and beautiful scenery on this Romanian adventure. We visit painted monasteries in the Bukovina hills, take a historic steam train journey through the remote Vaser Valley and walk in the forested Carpathian Mountains. We also unravel the myths of Dracula's legendary Transylvania and cruise along the backwaters of the Danube Delta - a bird watcher's paradise.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Bucharest** - Explore the city including the Village Museum
- ★ **Transylvania** - Visit Bran Castle and walk in the Transylvanian Alps
- ★ **Brasov** - Explore Medieval Old Brasov on foot
- ★ **Maramures** - Remote area with traditional villages, exploring on foot and by bus
- ★ **Bucovina** - Visit the monasteries of Moldovita, Sucevita and Putna
- ★ **Borsa** - Historic train journey and walk through the forested Vaser Valley
- ★ **Danube Delta** - 2-night cruise in this famous birdwatchers' paradise - explore the wildlife sanctuary by boat and on foot

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

Arrive in Bucharest and meet the group. Bucharest is Romania's largest city and became the capital in 1832. In the past Bucharest has been thought of as somewhat drab and dull, but thanks to a period of urban renewal and modernisation, it's now a bustling city at the centre of Romanian culture, art and media. On all our trips to Romania we use minibuses to get around. Many of the roads in the Romanian countryside are twisty and narrow and the road surfaces can be poor in places, so by using these smaller buses it means that we're able to access areas that the larger coaches can't get into. The minibuses usually have around 20 seats with two next to one another and then a single seat on the opposite side of the aisle and four along the back row. The seats are comfortable and equipped with armrests and seat belts. There's normally a rack for day bags and coats above the seats and the main luggage is stored in the rear boot. Leg room is however less plentiful than on a full size coach. There are a few photographs of the type of minibuses used within the image gallery tab for this trip.



Accommodation: Hotel Minerva (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - City tour of Bucharest before travelling to Moieciu

This morning we make a tour of Romania's capital, a remarkable blend of turn of the century elegance and communist excess. Situated on the Danube plain and set amid a series of lakes and spacious gardens, remnants of more gracious days still exist to charm the visitor. We visit many of the older parts of the city to see some of the buildings that have earned it the reputation as the 'Paris of Eastern Europe'. We also make a visit to the fascinating Village Museum, which has assembled wooden churches, windmills and peasant dwellings from different regions of the country. After the city tour we drive to Moieciu. Time allowing, we will visit

Pelisor Palace (optional), a fine exhibition of an Art Deco and Art Nouveau interior and after the visit we continue to nearby Moieciu village where time permitting we can do a short walk in the Bucegi mountains whose forests are now protected as a nature reserve.



Accommodation: Casa Zada Guest House (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Visit to famous Bran Castle and Brasov before arriving in Bistrita

Today we start our day with a short drive to the castle at Bran. The truth behind 'Dracula's Castle' is even more fascinating than its myths! Earlier this century it was the home of the remarkable British born Queen Marie of Romania, grand daughter of Queen Victoria. Vlad the Impaler, the heroic 15th century ruler of Wallachia never lived here and there is no connection with the excellent novel by Bram Stoker - who never came near Transylvania. Perched on a crag in a valley between two high mountain ranges, it controlled an international trade route, but is now a rural back-water. We continue to the medieval city of Brasov. The old town still has its medieval walls, town hall and several churches dating from the 14th- 18th centuries. There are also the ruins of an old citadel. Brasov is one of the most historic cities of Transylvania. The town is a gem of old buildings, cobbled streets and local atmosphere, all clustered within the medieval fortifications and overlooked by a magnificent 15th century Gothic cathedral. We have an option to visit the Black Church here. We then continue our journey to Bistrita with a short stop en route at a medieval town on hill top, Sighisoara, an UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Accommodation: Hotel Bistrita (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - See Sapanta and the UNESCO-listed Merry Cemetery en route to Borsa

Leaving Bistrita this morning, we make our way through high forested hills and fertile valleys dotted with orchards and meadows. We visit the village of Sapanta, to see the Merry Cemetery, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where each gravestone includes a humorous caricature and short poem about the deceased. We also visit the Monastery of Barsana, which is one of the most photographed landmarks in the Maramures. The beautiful tall wooden church is 57 metres high and is a great example of the clever construction techniques used on these traditional wooden structures. At lunchtime today we'll have an authentic and hearty meal in a villager's home. Romanian cuisine is delicious and often includes things such as pearl barley or polenta, fresh root vegetables and cabbage, stewed beef or pork, sour cream and home baked bread. This afternoon we continue our drive to Borsa, a small ski resort nestled in the Rodna Mountains.



Accommodation: Hotel Cerbul (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - Train through the Vaser Valley and scenic alpine hike to Moisei

There are few settlements in Europe that remain so untouched that bears still roam freely in the forests. Today we enter such a region, as we take the narrow gauge railway from Viseu de Sus up the Vaser Valley to Novat. We chug slowly through the valley passing huge expanses of beech and spruce forest, that echo with the sound of mountain rivers rushing through them. We then walk up a forested valley along lonely trails, enjoying the stillness and freshness of the forest. After a stiff climb of over 600 m, we reach a ridge where there are spectacular views across the Viseu Valley. We descend through hay meadows and scattered copses to Moisei, where we meet our bus (5 to 6 hours walk). (Please note that if the railway is closed we will take an alternative route to walk in this beautiful area.)



Accommodation: Hotel Cerbul (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - Hike in the Rodna Mountains; drive to Sucevita via Moldovita Monastery

Leaving Borsa by chairlift, we walk (initially steeply up onto the mountain ridge) along the top of a ridge, if possible we will stop at a shepherd's hut where we may be invited to sample some fresh sheep's cheese, washed down with tuica, the fiery local plum brandy. After a couple of hours of walking we meet our bus and drive east across the Carpathians to Moldavia and the northern region of Bucovina. Here we discover the remarkable medieval monasteries, founded during the reign of Prince Stephen the Great (1457-1504) and his successors. Whilst most Romanian churches have frescoes inside, what makes these so astonishing are the fantastic frescoes on the exterior walls. These vivid Biblical images were used to educate the medieval population in an exciting graphic fashion. Painted during the 16th century, the frescoes are a fusion of formal Byzantine style, with colourful folk art. The monasteries are now UNESCO World Heritage sites, but also house thriving religious communities of nuns and monks. We stop at Moldovita, which nestles beneath the forests of the Obcina Mare ridge. Among the most interesting scenes pictured here are the 'siege of Constantinople' and the 'Last Judgement'. We drive up to the Ciumirna Pass, and continue through the forest to our accommodation near Sucevita.



Accommodation: Popas Turistic Bucovina (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 7 - Walk to Sucevita and Putna monasteries before driving to Bacau

We include a visit to Sucevita monastery, the largest of the monasteries in the Bucovina region, with massive towers and stone walls protecting the inner buildings, which are decorated with portraits of historical legends and biblical scenes. There is an excellent small museum showing some of the treasures of the monastery, the most valuable items being 17th century embroideries, icons and gold work. We then hike through the romantic countryside along paths and old cart tracks, in the lovely valley north of Sucevita. First we take a trail through the beech woods to emerge in a grassy valley dotted with the houses that form the rambling village of Putna, close to the Ukrainian border. The walk is moderately easy and we have plenty of time to complete it (5 to 6 hours walk). Putna monastery (founded in 1466) is the oldest in Moldavia, and inside is the tomb of Stephen the Great. We meet our vehicle and drive to Bacau where we spend the night.



Accommodation: Hotel Karo (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 8 - Drive to and cruise in the Danube Delta on a pontoon boat

This morning we drive to the ancient port of Tulcea, the so-called 'Gateway to the Delta'. From here we board our pontoon - a barge style vessel resembling a large house boat - that will serve as both our transport and our floating accommodation while in the delta. Though simple, it has a sun-deck and twin berth cabins on the lower deck and provides an innovative and flexible way of seeing the abundant birdlife of the delta. From this base we can reach the smaller waterways and reedy channels and visit the tranquil and beautiful lakes hidden in the backwaters.



Accommodation: Floating Hotel Anda (or similar)



Simple Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 9 - Exploring and bird watching on our cruise in the Danube Delta

The Danube Delta - over 4,000 square kilometres in all - is one of the great glories of Europe. It is a premier wildlife sanctuary and paradise for birdwatchers and photographers alike. We spend the day aboard the pontoon, with the opportunity of closer views of the many species which inhabit the delta. Apart from its rich wildlife, the Delta is simply a beautiful place to relax aboard our vessel. We make our way through a maze of channels fringed by vast reed beds and ancient willow trees. Whilst different birds are seen depending on the month of visiting, most people will see the spectacular White Pelican. Vast quantities of birds congregate here, including grebes, falcons, egrets, swans and cormorants. The marshy conditions make life difficult for the birds' terrestrial predators, making the delta an even more attractive haven and breeding ground. Much of this can be enjoyed from the deck of our pontoon. We will also take time to visit a village in the Delta. These are some of the most remote settlements in Europe, far away from any roads.



Accommodation: Floating Hotel Anda (or similar)



Simple Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - Our cruise ends and we drive back to Bucharest

We spend the morning sailing back to Tulcea, and after lunch drive back to Bucharest, arriving late in the afternoon.



Accommodation: Hotel Minerva (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 11 - Trip ends in Bucharest

Today our trip ends at Bucharest.



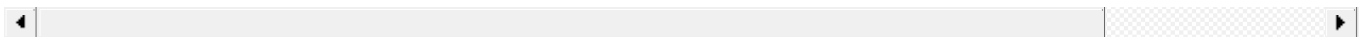
Meals Provided: Breakfast

Free Single Room Upgrade



Book any departure before the 20th December 2017 and you'll get a free single room upgrade.

[Find out more details here](#)



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 10
Lunch: 5
Dinner: 5



Transport

Bus
Boat
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Boat Crew
Driver(s)



Accommodation

2 nights simple boat
1 nights standard guesthouse
7 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

Bucharest: Palace of Parliament €10.00. Sinaia: Pelisor Palace €8.00. Brasov: Black Church €4.00

Clothing

Pack summer clothing, although medium weights are needed for autumn and spring when it can be cold. Temperatures are cooler in the mountains 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 the Delta. Only small face towels are provided in the hotels, so if you prefer a larger bath towel it is advised that you take your own. Walking poles may be useful. 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 £15.00 for tipping of the driver and the boat crew. 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, Boat, Train

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

On days 8 and 9 of our trip we will be staying aboard a pontoon, which is a barge style vessel resembling a large house boat. It will serve as both our transport and our floating accommodation while in the Danube Delta. Though simple, it has a sun deck, dining room and twin berth en suite cabins on the lower deck. There is no Wi-Fi access or bar on board. The plug sockets within the cabins are only available to use when the boat's generator is on (usually between 06.00-10.00, 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-23.00). Our meals on board will be a set menu with drinks included and vegetarians can be catered for as long as we know in advance. It provides an innovative and flexible way of seeing the abundant birdlife of the delta, and allows us to reach the smaller waterways, reedy channels and tranquil lakes hidden in the backwaters. All the accommodation used on this trip (except in Bucharest) are on multiple levels with narrow staircases and no lifts, so we recommend packing as light as possible, as you will need to carry your own bags up and down the stairs.

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.
