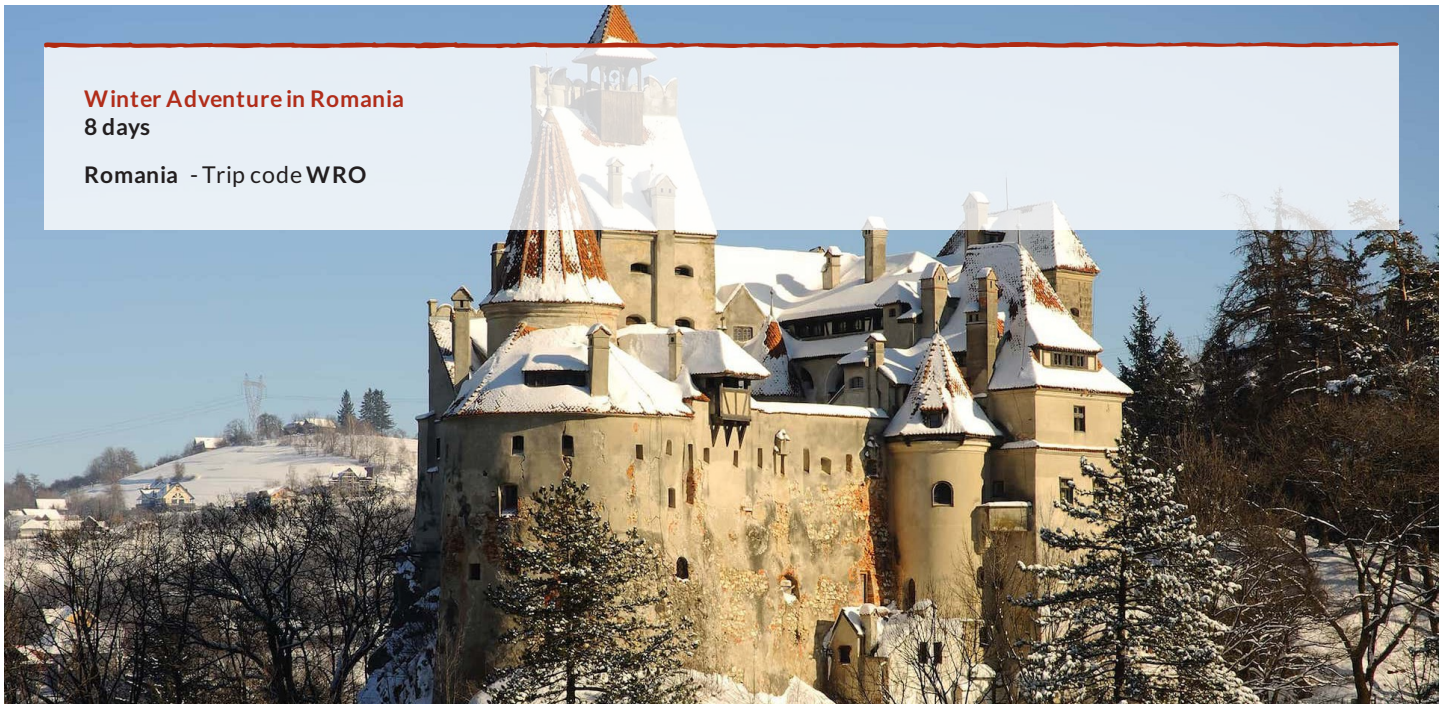


EXPLORE!

Winter Adventure in Romania

8 days

Romania - Trip code WRO



Winter Adventure in Romania

On this winter trip we explore Romania's most famous attractions, captivating towns and cities, natural beauty and stay in its fantastic Ice Hotel in the mountains above Lake Balea. We visit the legendary Bran Castle, the beautiful UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sighisoara and the historic city of Sibiu. As well as making the most of the winter scenery with a wildlife tracking excursion accompanied by a local expert, you'll have the chance to go snow shoeing and truffle hunting.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Ice Hotel** - Spend the night at Romania's only ice hotel above Lake Balea; a truly unique experience
- ★ **Transylvania** - Visit Bran Castle and Brasov and try wildlife tracking with an expert guide
- ★ **Sighisoara** - Discover this beautiful UNESCO listed Medieval town
- ★ **Viscri** - Explore the ancient Saxon town and visit its fortified church
- ★ **Bucharest** - Stay in Romania's capital city and visit the gigantic Ceausescu's Palace

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 the largest city in Romania; it became the capital in 1832 and is the centre of Romanian culture, art and media. It's become a bustling city in the 21st century thanks to it undergoing a period of urban renewal, modernisation and an economic upswing. 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 - Tour of Bucharest; drive to Moieciu

This morning we'll take a tour of Bucharest to see the Revolution Square, Metropolitan Church and the Old Town. The Revolution Square is deemed not only to be the landmark of the history of the city, but also of the entire country - it's a tourist sight not to be missed. We'll also visit the opulent Ceausescu's Palace before you have a couple hours to explore the city further. You may wish to visit one of the many museums, such as the Museum of Romanian Art, Museum of Romanian History or the Military Museum. You could also go to see street art in Garajul Ciclop or visit one of the few remaining caravanserais in Europe, Hanul lui Manuc. Later this afternoon we'll drive to our guesthouse in Moieciu where we enjoy a home cooked meal this evening.



Accommodation: Casa Zada Guest House (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 3 - Visit to Bran Castle, wildlife tracking excursion and afternoon in Brasov

This morning we visit the legendary Bran Castle, built in the 14th century to protect the mountain pass from the invading Turks. In the 20th century it was the favourite residence of Queen Maria of Romania. She restored and arranged for the castle to be used as a residence for the royal family. Bran is of course best known as the setting the Bran Stoker's Dracula and was once the home of Vlad the Impaler, who the Dracula legend was born from. Next, we visit a wildlife tracking centre where accompanied by an expert guide we get the chance to see tracks of wild boar, roe and red deer, wolves and bear. Following this excursion we drive to Brasov, where we visit the Black Church, city square, the First Romanian School Museum and the city walls. The school museum is hidden in the gardens of one of the oldest churches in Brasov. This evening is free for you to have dinner in Brasov before we return to Moieciu for the night.



Accommodation: Casa Zada Guest House (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Visit Viscri fortified church; chance to go truffle hunting

This morning we drive to Viscri, which is one of the many Saxon villages in Transylvania, but it's wonderfully preserved and the fortified church here is listed by UNESCO. It's a small village, with a population of no more than 500, from which only about 27 are now of Saxon descent. We'll take a walk through the village and visit the church and then the remainder of the day is free to explore at leisure. You may choose to go truffle hunting or visit a traditional local bakery or blacksmith. Alternatively, if the snow is thick you may want to take a sledge ride through the picturesque surroundings. We'll spend the night at a guesthouse in Viscri and take advantage of the excellent home cooking for dinner this evening.



Accommodation: Viscri Guesthouse (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 5 - Visit to UNESCO listed Sighisoara; cable car to the Ice Hotel

This morning we drive to Sighisoara which is an UNESCO World Heritage Site. We discover the town on foot including the old town fortifications, the Church on the Hill, covered stairs and the clock tower. After this, there is free time for you to continue exploring or you may want to try the delicious cakes and coffees that the local cafes have to offer and that the town is known for. After spending a little time here we drive to the fortified Church of Biertan, which was built in the 15th-16th centuries in the late Gothic style. It is placed high on a hilltop right in the centre of the village, in a valley surrounded by vineyards, forests and fields. This afternoon we drive to Lake Balea where we take a cable car up to 2034 metres, where we spend the night in the Ice Hotel. It's the only ice hotel in Romania, and has a lot to offer including an Ice Bar, Ice Restaurant, Ice Church and a Winter Park. The bedrooms are entirely made of ice including the beds, but you'll be provided with clean polar sleeping bags that will be warmed up just before bed, a soft mattress and blankets will be on hand too. In the Ice Bar you can purchase beverages served in ice glasses and enjoy a hot wine punch to warm up. Tonight we'll have a traditional Romanian dinner in the chalet beside the hotel.



Accommodation: Ice Hotel (Balea Lac) (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 6 - Chance for snowshoeing and sledging; cable car back to Lake Balea

Before we leave the Ice Hotel there is the chance for you to try snowshoeing and sledging nearby. This afternoon we'll take the cable car back to Lake Balea and then drive into Transylvania to Sibiu, where you have the evening free to relax. Our guesthouse tonight is in a protected building with all rooms facing a traditional inner courtyard. The bedrooms are all en suite, simply decorated and have a television. Some also have a balcony. The guesthouse has free Wi-Fi access, a bar and breakfast room.



Accommodation: Pensiunea Daniel (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - City tour of Sibiu Old Town; drive back to Bucharest

Sibiu was the largest and wealthiest of the seven walled citadels built in the 12th century. Your Explore Leader will take you beneath the ramparts and through the backstreets, past the first hospital and pharmacy in Romania and to Liar's Bridge. Here it is said that if you told a lie whilst on the bridge it would collapse, but it's also a known place where lovers would meet to declare their love and in recent times to attach padlocks to it as a symbol of their affections. You'll have some free time to explore the city as you please. You may like to visit Brukenthal National Museum, which is home to over 1000 works of art, sculptures and a Gothic exhibition. Alternatively, you may choose to discover the nearby countryside and villages which display a mixture of Saxon and Romanian traditions. Sibiu is a good spot for food lovers with a range of restaurants and some of the best, which are frequented by the locals, can be found around the Small Square. A speciality is 'Ciorba' which is a sour soup that comes in various varieties with vegetables or meatballs. Many local establishments in the town serve their beer by the metre. Later this afternoon we'll return to Bucharest where you are free this evening.



Accommodation: Hotel Minerva (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Bucharest

Today our trip ends in Bucharest.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

This trip offers the chance to discover Romania's best known sights in winter surroundings, such as Bran Castle, Sighisoara, Viscri and Bucharest. We've also include a one-night's stay at the wonderful Romanian Ice Hotel, which is a once in a lifetime experience.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Dinner: 3



Transport

Bus



Trip staff

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



Accommodation

3 nights standard guesthouse
1 nights simple 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

Sinaia: Pelisor Palace €8.00. Viscri: Truffle hunting in Moieciu; Cart or sledge ride in Moieciu Ice Hotel: Tubing €6.00 per hour.

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 for sightseeing 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, as are gaiters for walking in the snow if you do not have waterproof trousers. Snowshoes and ski sticks are provided and sledges can be rented from the Ice Hotel.

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

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.

At the Ice Hotel, you will be provided with clean polar sleeping bags that have been warmed up just before going to bed. All the beds at the hotel are made of ice and are doubles but you will have individual sleeping bags. The toilets are located just outside the hotel in a cable car building. A hot shower will also be available for you to use. We will have dinner in the chalet beside the Ice Hotel. You will need an overnight bag for your stay here. Our guesthouse on day 6 is housed with a protected building with rooms facing a traditional inner courtyard. Rooms are all en suite, simply decorated and have a television. Some also have a balcony. The guesthouse has free Wi-Fi access, a bar and breakfast room.

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.

Included activities

In Bucharest when visiting the Palace of Parliament or Casa Poporului as it's also known, you must take your passport with you to be permitted entry.

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.
