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BEST SELLER

Grand Tour of Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria

BULGARIA, ROMANIA, SERBIA - TRIP CODE RSB

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

In two-weeks experience the highlights of Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria. Explore their bustling cities along with the rolling Transylvanian countryside, the Rose Valley and the Black Sea coast. Also discover the extensive history from ancient Roman right up to the more recent communist regimes.

- **Legendary Castles** - Delve beneath the myths at Castle Bran and marvel at the exquisite stained glass and décor in Peles Castle
- **Belgrade** - Discover the Ottoman, Roman and Communist history in the old capital of Yugoslavia
- **Rila Monastery** - Visit this spectacular UNESCO World Heritage Site with its brightly coloured frescoes



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 14
Dinner: 1



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



TRANSPORT
Bus



ACCOMMODATION



TRIP PACE:
Full on



GROUP SIZE:
10 - 16

Itinerary

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

Trip information

Climate and country information

Bulgaria

Climate

Bulgaria has a somewhat temperate climate, influence by the combination of Mediterranean and Eastern European weather systems. The winters are mild and the summers warm and fresh. The alpine regions can be cooler, but Ezerovo is one of the sunniest areas in this part of Europe, with some 280 days of sunshine a year.

Time difference to GMT

+2

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Bulgarian Orthodox, Islam

Language

Bulgarian, Russian and English.

Romania

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	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	2 Pin Round	Eastern Orthodox	Romanian

Serbia

Climate

Serbia has a continental climate with warm summers and cold winters. There is a chance of sporadic rain in spring and autumn, though generally it is in the form of short showers. Thunderstorms can occur in summer, generally helping to cool the air. Temperatures from May to October are generally in the low to mid 20's (in °C), but can reach into the 30's (in °C) in July and August - although sometimes warm air currents from Africa can reach here and push the temperatures as high as 40°C.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+1	2 Pin Round	Christian (mainly Serbian Orthodox)	Serbian

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Many of the castles and museums charge a camera fee. You should allow approximately £15.00 for this.

Orsova:

Boat trip on the Danube Iron Gates to see King Decebalus' head (duration approximately one hour) on day four, 50 Romanian Leu (RON) per person.

Baile Herculane:

On day four a taxi to and from the hot springs will cost approximately 20-25 RON per way for a maximum of four people per vehicle.

Rila:

On day nine we include entry to the History Museum, however there are four other museums at Rila Monastery that you might also like to visit. The entrance fees for these are:

Ethnographic Museum 5 Bulgarian Lev (BGN)

Hrelyu Tower 5 BGN

Kitchen 3 BGN

Icons 3 BGN

Plovdiv:

On day 10 the entrance fee to the Roman Theatre is 5 BGN per person. There are a lot of concerts held here and so it frequently isn't possible to visit inside the theatre.

Kazanluk:

On day 10 the entrance fee to the Rose Museum is 5 BGN per person.

Bucharest:

On day 14 the entrance fee to the Palace of Parliament is 40 RON per person. Please note you must take your passport with you to be permitted entry. Please let your trip leader know at the beginning of your trip if you're interested in visiting this and they can help you to check availability and book onto a tour. Please note that since the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest is still an active government building that it might not always be open to visitors.

Clothing

July and August are the hottest months and lightweight cotton clothing is best. During spring and autumn temperatures can be lower or drop during the evenings and there is also a stronger possibility of rain, although light rainwear may be needed at any time of year. Layered clothing and a warm fleece are recommended for cooler evenings and in the mountains along with a windproof/waterproof jacket. Ladies should take a headscarf to cover their head when entering religious sites.

Footwear

We recommend taking comfortable walking shoes for exploring and trainers or sandals for relaxing.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

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

Equipment

We advise taking a water bottle for our included walks as well as sun glasses, sunscreen and a sun hat. In case of emergency we recommend that you carry a first aid kit and a torch, which you may also find useful for viewing frescoes as churches and tombs can be dimly lit. For the time spent in the countryside you might find mosquito repellent handy. Bring a swimming suit and towel for bathing in hot springs and taking a dip in the Black Sea.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that has done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It is a tricky one, and down to personal

preference, but we would recommend £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

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 please allow £30.00 of local currency for tipping.

In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Bulgaria

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£9	£15	£2.3	£1.8

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Bulgarian Leva.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

All major currencies may be exchanged, but Euros are easiest to exchange. We suggest you travel with Euros cash.

Where To Exchange

Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities.

ATM Availability

Major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

In larger hotels and restaurants in the main cities. Bulgaria is a cash society so the opportunity to use credit cards on this trip will be limited.

Travellers Cheques

We do not recommend Travellers cheques. Places to exchange Travellers cheques are very limited.

Romania

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£8	£10	£1	£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.

Serbia

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£8	£12	£1.20 - 4.00	£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Dinar.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Euros, US Dollars and Pound Sterling can all be exchanged for local currency. However, Euro is the best currency for exchange in most places. Please note if using Pound Sterling then only Bank of England issued bank notes are accepted. Scottish and Northern Irish bank notes are not accepted. Please consult your Explore Leader for more information on currency exchange.

Where To Exchange

Banks or official Forex Offices in the main towns and cities. British banks don't generally exchange Dinars, so you should exchange any unwanted local currency before you leave Serbia. Your Explore Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Generally widespread, but limited in more rural areas.

Credit Card Acceptance

Accepted in major restaurants and hotels.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be exchanged for the local currency but only in banks and they are only accepted in major hotels and shops in the main towns and cities.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

Accommodation notes

Some of the hotels and guesthouses used on this trip have bedrooms on multiple floors with narrow staircases and no lifts, so we recommend packing light, as you will need to carry your own bags up and down the stairs.

On days five and six our hotel in Belgrade is in an excellent location, but the décor in the rooms is a bit old fashioned.

On days 12 and 13 of this trip we will stay in Balchik, where we have the unique experience of staying in rooms in the old villas that formed part of the Black Sea Summer Palace of Queen Marie of Romania. This accommodation is rated as simple as the villas are historic and the décor is quite dated. All rooms are en suite and vary in terms of size and décor. Rooms won't be serviced on second night of our stay. Once the day visitors leave we have the botanical garden palace grounds to ourselves to explore. There is a restaurant in the grounds and other bars and restaurants are just a short walk away along the coast.

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety 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 citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any time.

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport Information

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

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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

The exploration of the towns and cities visited on this trip will mostly be done on foot, so that you can get a proper feel for all the fascinating places that are visited.

At some of the museums visited, where we have a guided tour, this may be with other non-Explore customers as the museum doesn't provide private guided tours.

On all our trips that include Romania we travel by minibuses. 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 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 for this trip within the image gallery tab.

Ability to swim

No

Bulgaria

Vaccinations

We recommend protection against typhoid, hepatitis A, polio and tetanus. Please check the 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Romania

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. Please check the 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Serbia

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend being up-to-date with your routine vaccination courses and boosters as recommended in the UK including protection against measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, hepatitis A, typhoid and polio. Tick-borne encephalitis protection is recommended by some medical sources at certain times of the year. Ticks are most active between spring and late autumn. Please check the 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Additional Information



Why book this trip

In just two-weeks you can experience the highlights of the three fascinating countries. You'll travel from bustling cities to remote mountain ranges and from rushing rivers to Black Sea sand beaches. Along the way you'll learn of the regions extensive history from ancient Roman right up to communist regimes.

Reviews



AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE



AIRPORT
TRANSFERS