

# EXPLORE!

## Cycle Romania

8 days

Romania - Trip code CRT

## Cycle Romania

On this cycling holiday in Romania we discover beautiful countryside, experience local hospitality and explore historic towns. We get well off the beaten track travelling deep into the Transylvanian Alps, the legendary home of Dracula. Along the way we cycle through the imposing Bran Valley and to the foot of the Piatra Craiului Mountains. Visit the imposing castles of Peles and Bran, as well as the Libearty Bear Sanctuary.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Transylvania** - Get into the heart of the Southern Carpathians, cycle in beautiful countryside
- ★ **Bran and Peles castles** - Ornatly decorated Medieval and Neo-renaissance castles
- ★ **Brasov** - Explore Medieval Old Brasov on foot
- ★ **Sighisoara** - Discover this beautiful UNESCO listed medieval town
- ★ **Bucharest** - Stay in Romania's capital city, known in the 1930's as the Paris of the East

### 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.

### CYCLING GRADE:

#### Moderate

Medium length rides suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. Mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

**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 - Trip starts Bucharest airport, drive to Brasov

On arrival to Bucharest airport we drive to the medieval city of Brasov (3 hour drive). We will stop for an evening meal and an opportunity to change money on our way.



**Accommodation: Hotel Safrano** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 2 - Brasov walking tour, Bran castle and Bear Reservation

Today starts in Brasov with a short city walking tour in one of the most historic towns in Transylvania. The town is a gem of old buildings, cobbled streets and local atmosphere with many of its medieval fortifications still visible. There are several churches dating from the 14th through to the 18th Century which are overlooked by a magnificent 14th Century Gothic Cathedral (the Black Church). We then leave Brasov and after a short drive arrive for our included visit to the Bear Sanctuary, which was created to rescue bears found suffering throughout Romania where they had been pets or attractions for restaurants and petrol stations. The bears now live in 160 acres of oak and hazel forest which is run by the Millions of Friends Organisation. Our visit helps fund the upkeep of the sanctuary and you get to view these magnificent creatures in a natural setting. After our visit, we have lunch and then familiarise ourselves with our bikes and cycle to Bran for our included visit to the castle (known as Dracula's Castle). Perched on a crag in a valley between two high mountain ranges, the castle controlled an international trade route, but it is now a rural backwater. From here we ride up the Turcu valley for 8km and then continue by bus to our night stop in Cheile Gradistei.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 23km, with approximately 285 metres total ascent.



**Accommodation: Hotel Sport Cheile Gradistei** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

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## DAY 3 - Ride along the edge of Piatra Craiului National Park

We have a full day cycling close to the Piatra Craiului National Park today. Starting our ride directly from the hotel. Piatra Craiului (The Royal Rock) is known for its abundance and diversity of flowers and wildlife and is popular with all outdoor sports. We follow the valley floor with spectacular views of the Transylvanian Alps, part of the Carpathian Mountains. On our way, there should be many opportunities to see flowers, bird and butterflies, but we also make an optional stop to visit an operational historic water driven flour mill. Dating back to 1873 we will witness the production of flour from a traditional method by the 4th generation of the same family. Finally we arrive in the very small village of Bucium where we spend the night. There is an optional 8km cycle to visit Bucium Monastery, and those that prefer can just check into the guesthouse and relax. Here we can enjoy the hospitality of a local family with a lovely garden with views of the mountains.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 55km, with approximately 396 metres total ascent.



**Accommodation: Casa Moga** (or similar)

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Standard Guesthouse

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

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## DAY 4 - Visit the Sambata Monastery, cycle via Arpasu to Albota

Today we continue cycling with good views of the Fagaras Mountains- the longest, highest ridge of the Carpathian Mountain range. Stopping for our picnic, we may visit the ancient water barrel whirlpools, traditionally used for felting cloth and washing large fabrics. In the afternoon we will have an included visit to the Romanian Orthodox Sambata Monastery, dedicated to the Dormition of the Virgin Mary. Continuing along the valley, we pass through Arpasu to our final destination in Albota set by the water at the foot of the mountains.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 59km, with approximately 540 metres total ascent.



**Accommodation: Hotel Albota** (or similar)

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Standard Hotel

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

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## DAY 5 - Cycle the Olt River Valley to Talmaciu, drive to Sibiu

Departing Albota on our bikes, we cross the plain to join the riverside, and then use gravel tracks to follow the water course. Passing villages, dams and herds of water buffalo, we arrive in Avrig to visit the 18th century Orangerie and the park of the summer

residence of the former governor of Transylvania, Samuel Von Brukenthal. Today's ride ends in Talmaciu, we then drive by bus (30 minutes) to the city of Sibiu for a walking tour that takes in the 15th century city walls and bastion fortifications. Sibiu is known as the red city due to its brick construction and is the most fortified town in the Principality of Transylvania. We then check into our accommodation.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 55km, with approximately 120 metres total ascent.



**Accommodation: Hotel Roberts** (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Drive to Carta, ride via Agnita to Centrul Tarii

After a short drive this morning, we arrive in Carta, an area in which time seems to have stood still. The farmers here still use traditional methods including scythes and sickles to farm their land and horse drawn wagons to move their hay. Here we visit the ancient church and ruins of an old Cistercian Abbey. Passing local villages with a few rest stops, we then cycle into the Hartibaciu Valley. Passing through Agnita, where the fortified church still hides a few secrets from its shady past, there is a final hill climb to arrive at our accommodation for the night in Centrul Tarii, considered to be the centre of Romania.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 38km, with approximately 385 metres total ascent.



**Accommodation: Casa Elisabetha** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

## DAY 7 - Cycle to UNESCO listed Sighisoara

For our final day on the bikes we have the option to ride as much or as little as you like. Cycling firstly to Biertan, we stop at the 15th century fortified church- a World Heritage Site. there is time for an optional guided visit and lunch before continuing on the final section of our ride to the destination of Sighisoara. On arrival, leaving the bike behind, there is free time to allow exploration of the town on foot, which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The rest of the afternoon and evening is free to explore. Don't miss the old town fortifications, the Church on the Hill, covered stairs and the clock tower.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 37 - 74km depending on which option you chose, with approximately 450 metres total ascent if you 74km.



**Accommodation: Hotel Villa Franka** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Visit Peles Castle, drive to Bucharest

Today we drive Bucharest (290km); it will take about 6 hours but we will make plenty of stops. One of these stops will be to see the wonderful Peles Castle. Built for the Hohenzollern monarch Carol I, Peles resembles a Bavarian chateau and is richly decorated with stained glass, Persian carpets, Renaissance weapons, ebony and mother of pearl. Our journey ends in Bucharest, Romania's largest city and the capital since 1832. Bucharest became run down in the communist days, 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. We spend our last night in Romania here and look back on the great week of cycling in Transylvania before heading home in the morning.



**Accommodation: Hotel Minerva** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Trip ends Bucharest

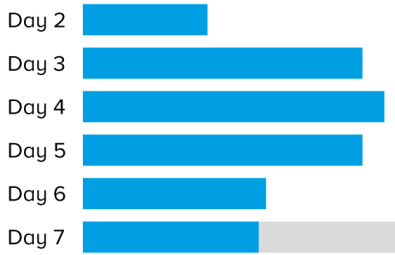
After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

# Cycling information

## DAILY DISTANCES



Optional Rides

CRT 2018

## DAILY DISTANCES



CRT 2019

### General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 267km over six days (an average of 44km per day). We generally cycle on quiet country roads with little or no traffic. 10% of the route is on gravel paths. Day 5 is more or less flat but all other days have at least one hill. We have graded the route as moderate.

### Bike included

21 gear Merida or B'TWIN mountain bike

### Bike information

Your included bike will be a 21 gear Merida or B'TWIN mountain bike with front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. A water bottle holder and 2.5 litre handlebar bag is included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. The support vehicle is available throughout the rides. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

### Cycling grade

Moderate



CRT 2018



CRT 2019

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 8  
Dinner: 4



### Transport

Bus  
Bicycle



### Accommodation

1 nights standard guesthouse  
1 nights simple guesthouse  
6 nights standard hotel

# Trip information

## Country information

### 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

+2

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion

Eastern Orthodox

#### Language

Romanian

## Budgeting and packing

### Clothing

We recommend you bring padded cycle shorts and quick drying cycle shirts for the daily cycling. Soaked cotton clothes tend not to dry while cycling. Cycling gloves are strongly recommended as they will protect you from sunburn and may also help protect your hands if you fall. A jumper or fleece is also advisable for the evenings as temperatures can drop sharply. A raincoat is advisable for early spring as there may be sporadic rain showers.

### Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to trips that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

### Luggage

20kg

### Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. It is a legal requirement in Romania to wear a helmet that meets current safety criteria. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

### 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 recognized 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. 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. Accordingly you should allow at least GBP 20 for tipping local crew.

### **Country Information**

## **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**

£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, Bicycle

### **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.

Standard - Our 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.

## 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.

### 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: 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](http://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 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, 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.

## 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.

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