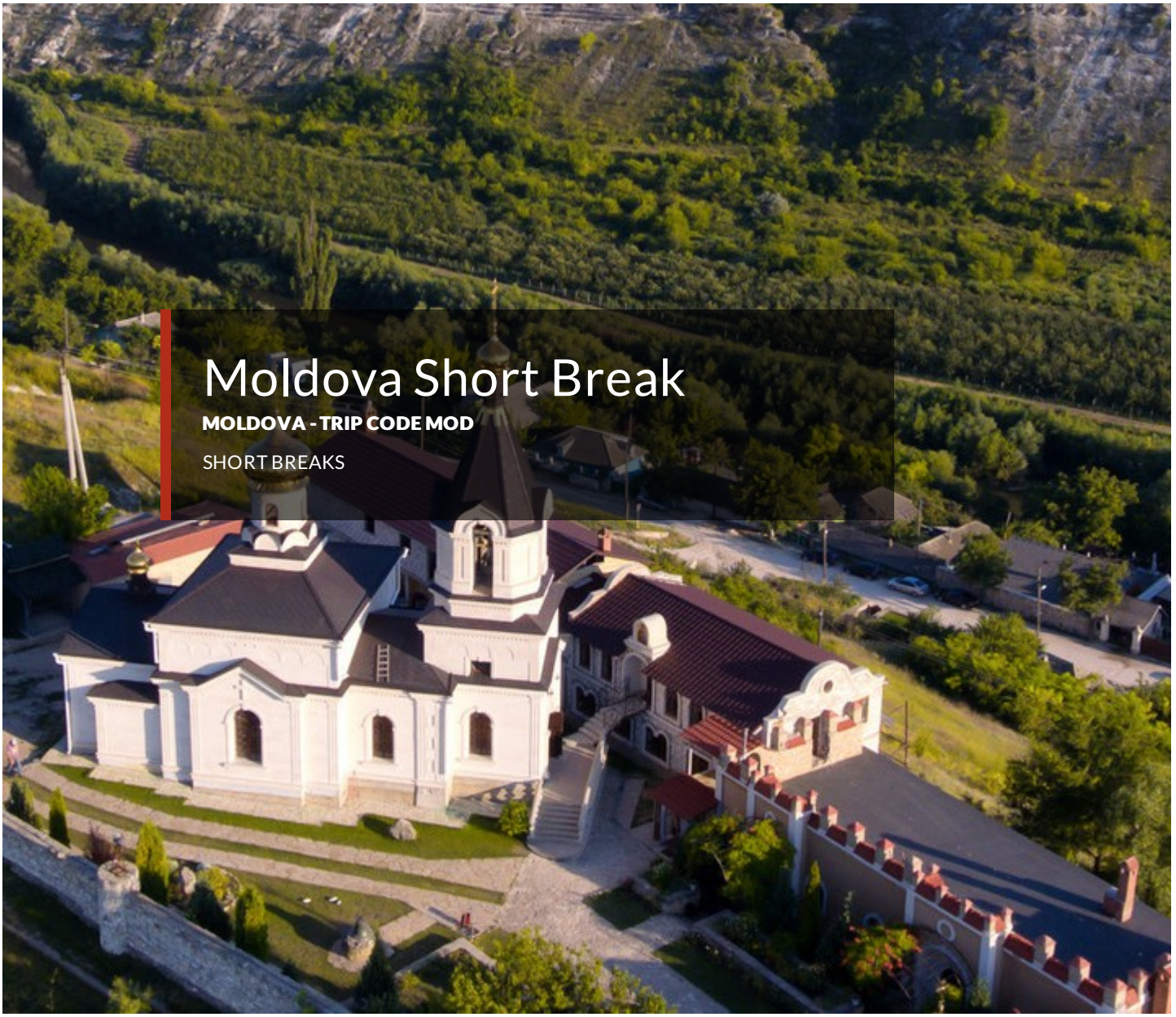
EXPLORE!



Moldova Short Break

MOLDOVA - TRIP CODE MOD

SHORT BREAKS

Why book this trip?

Having successfully emerged from behind the Iron Curtain, this short break is designed to give a taster of everything that makes Moldova unique. Along the way taste Moldovan wine, Kvint brandy and traditional hearty cuisine.

- **Tiraspol** - Discover the capital of the breakaway territory of Trans-Dniester, which harks back to the days of the USSR
- **Chisinau** - Explore Moldova's little known capital with its 1950s Soviet architecture and large parks
- **Orheiul Vechi** - See ancient fortresses and unusual rock-carved monasteries overlooking the dramatic Raut River Gorge
- **Festival Departures** - Join a departure to visit Tiraspol on Victory Day to see the military parade or on Independence Day to experience the celebrations.

INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 4
Dinner: 3

TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)

TRANSPORT
Bus

ACCOMMODATION
4 nights standard hotel

TRIP PACE:
Full on

GROUP SIZE:
12 - 18

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join trip in Moldova's capital Chisinau

Arrive in Chisinau and check-in to the hotel. Chisinau is located in the very heart of Moldova and is the country's capital city. Moldova has a chequered history, which includes the nationalist movement and power struggles of the 1990s, which led to its freedom from the Soviet Union. Most of the city was destroyed during World War II and an earthquake in 1940, so the architecture is mainly in the 1950s striking Soviet style, but there are also two large parks, which give the city a much greener feel. Moldovans are known to be some of the friendliest people in Eastern Europe and nowhere is that more obvious than in Chisinau, where we spend the next two nights.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Best Western Flowers (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Chisinau walking tour; visit to Cricova or Milestii Miei Cellar and wine tasting dinner

Explore the city's main sights on a walking tour this morning including the Orthodox Cathedral of Christ's Nativity, the exterior facade of the Presidential Palace and the Parliament building and the Holy Gates, which is known as Moldova's 'Arc de Triomphe'. There's the chance to haggle in the local food market and bazaar and join the locals promenading in the park along the Avenue of the Classics of Moldovan Literature, which is lined with statues and busts of Romanian and Moldovan authors and social figures.

There's the opportunity to visit the emotive Army Museum in the Centre of Culture and Military History. The exhibits here document Soviet-era repression and the crimes perpetrated by Lenin and Stalin. They tell the story of mass deportation, gulag labour camps, manmade famines and other harrowing tales.

This afternoon at the Cricova or Milestii Miei Wine Cellar, discover the extensive cellars and sample their sparkling wine. Moldova is recognised for its good wine and back in the Soviet era the country was known as the 'the vineyard of the USSR'. Cricova and or Milestii Miei make use of tunnels constructed in the building of Chisinau in the 15th century. They've been producing wine here since the 1950s and have a number of wines that have won prestigious awards.

Returning to Chisinau this evening, dinner will take place in the Carpe Diem Wine Bar to sample traditional Moldovan cuisine coupled with a variety of excellent local wines.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Best Western Flowers (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 3 - Visit Bendery Fort and tasting at Asconi Winery; walking tour of Tiraspol

Leaving Chisinau this morning the first stop made will be at the family owned Asconi Winery where we will get to sample three of their excellent wines. The next visit will be at the 16th century Ottoman fort at Bendery, which is nestled between a former army base and a very impressive bas-relief of the Soviet Worker.

Crossing the border we will experience one of the most unique places in Europe - Tiraspol, the capital of the breakaway state of Trans-Dniester. Unlike the rest of Moldova, Trans-Dniester hadn't wanted to separate from the Soviet Union, so back in 1992 after a short conflict they declared their independence. However, it's not recognised by any of the United Nations as an independent state even though it has its own government, military, postal service, currency, flag and national anthem.

Once the border formalities are complete we set off on foot to view the numerous war memorials including those commemorating the 1992 Civil War and Trans-Dniester War, and the Supreme Court, Statue of Lenin, De Voln Park and Arch of Bendery.

After free time for lunch we will check in to the hotel. Dinner this evening will be taken at the home of a local family where there is the opportunity to ask them questions and learn about their lives in this special hidden part of Europe.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Russia (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 4 - See Tiraspol Independence Day parades and the ancient churches at Orheiul Vechi

This morning we have the chance to witness one of the most unusual events in Europe - today is what those living in Trans-Dniester regard as their Independence Day. The celebration includes military parades where flags fly and the local dress up in their best and often traditional and colourful folk outfits.

After seeing the festivities we leave Tiraspol at around 11am to spend the rest of the day in Orheiul Vechi in rural Moldova. The visit to the Orheiul Vechi Complex is undoubtedly one of the highlights of the trip. This site is of great historical and archaeological importance and is home to one of the most unusual church complexes in Eastern Europe. Set in a ruggedly beautiful valley gorge, shaped by the Raut River, there are several ancient monuments amongst and carved into the huge limestone outcrops that date from 10th century BC up to 14th century AD. The Cave Monastery was dug into the cliff by Orthodox monks. Above ground there's a church dedicated to the Ascension of Saint Mary and a museum providing a further insight into the area. We take an Easy graded walk around the site which takes around two to three hours and covers five to six kilometres with a picnic stop along the way.

Before returning to Chisinau, enjoy a traditional Moldovan dinner of dishes such as zeama - a tasty chicken soup and mamaliga - a type of polenta with fried meat and fresh seasonal vegetables washed down with homemade wine. During dinner there's the chance to see and join in with traditional folk songs and dancing.

Please note that if the weather is too poor to do the walk then a visit will be made to the Curchi Monastery instead.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Best Western Flowers (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 5 - Trip ends in Chisinau

The trip ends after breakfast at the hotel in Chisinau.

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

Moldova

Climate

Moldova has a temperate continental climate. Summers are generally hot, sunny and less humid than in Central Europe, with temperatures normally between 20 to 23°C. Winters are cold and snowy with temperatures averaging between 0 to -6°C. Short thunderstorms can occur in June and July, but rainfall in Moldova isn't abundant.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	2 Pin Round	Orthodox Christians	Moldovan and Romanian

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.

Chisinau:
Entrance to the Army Museum in the Centre of Culture and Military History, operates on day two for around one hour, 40 Moldovan Leu (MDL) per person.

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, so pack layers. Rainwear may be needed at any time of year. A warm fleece/jacket is recommended for cooler evenings.

Women should bring a headscarf for religious site visits.

Footwear

Take 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

A water bottle, sun glasses, sunscreen and a sun hat are all essential. An umbrella may also be useful at any time of year and gloves, a woolly hat and scarf if you are travelling in autumn.

Only small face towels are provided in some hotels, so if you prefer a larger bath towel it is advised that you take your own.

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 please allow £10.00 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.

Moldova

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
£11	£15	£3	£0.8

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Moldovan Leu. The de facto currency in Trans-Dniester is the Trans-Dniestrian Ruble. Moldovan Leu can only be exchanged for Trans-Dniestrian Ruble whilst in Trans-Dniester. Attempting to pay for purchases in Trans-Dniester in any other currency is considered an illegal act.

Recommended Currency For Exchange
The most widely accepted currencies for exchange are US Dollars (USD) and Euro. Notes should be in perfect condition or may not be accepted. It's not always easy to change Pound Sterling.

Where To Exchange
Most major towns and cities - your Explore Leader will advise you on arrival. Only exchange money at reputable places like banks, ATM's and official Forex Offices.

ATM Availability
Major towns and cities have ATM's for cash withdrawal; although cash machines often do not work so please do not rely on them. ATM's in Trans-Dniester don't accept foreign bank or credit cards.

Credit Card Acceptance
In major restaurants and hotels in Chisinau. Outside the capital it won't always be possible to pay by card.

Travellers Cheques
Travellers cheques are very difficult to change in and Moldova.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

Accommodation notes

Please note that the majority of hotels in the Moldova don't have air-conditioning.

The city of Tiraspol has been cut off from tourism for a number of years and so the choice of hotel's here is limited and the facilities and decor are less sophisticated than in other parts of Europe.

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

Moldova: 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 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 now 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.

Ability to swim

No

Moldova

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against hepatitis A and diphtheria. Check that your polio and tetanus vaccinations are up-to-date before travel. The UK Foreign Office currently recommends that you should consider whether to immunise against tickborne encephalitis and rabies. 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

If you're short on holiday leave and want to experience somewhere that is only a short flight away but is completely different to other destinations in Europe and is somewhere few people have experienced, then this is the short break for you. Travel off the tourist trail, get a taster of lesser visited Moldova and experience life in a unknown breakaway state.

Festival Departures: Join a departure to visit Tiraspol on Victory Day to see the military parade honouring the fallen from World War II or on Independence Day to see the celebrations on the anniversary of this self-declared independent state breaking away from Moldova. Alternatively, on the 5th October visit Chisinau during the Moldova Wine Festival.

AWARD WINNING EXPLORE LEADERS

PRICE GUARANTEE PROMISE

AIRPORT TRANSFERS