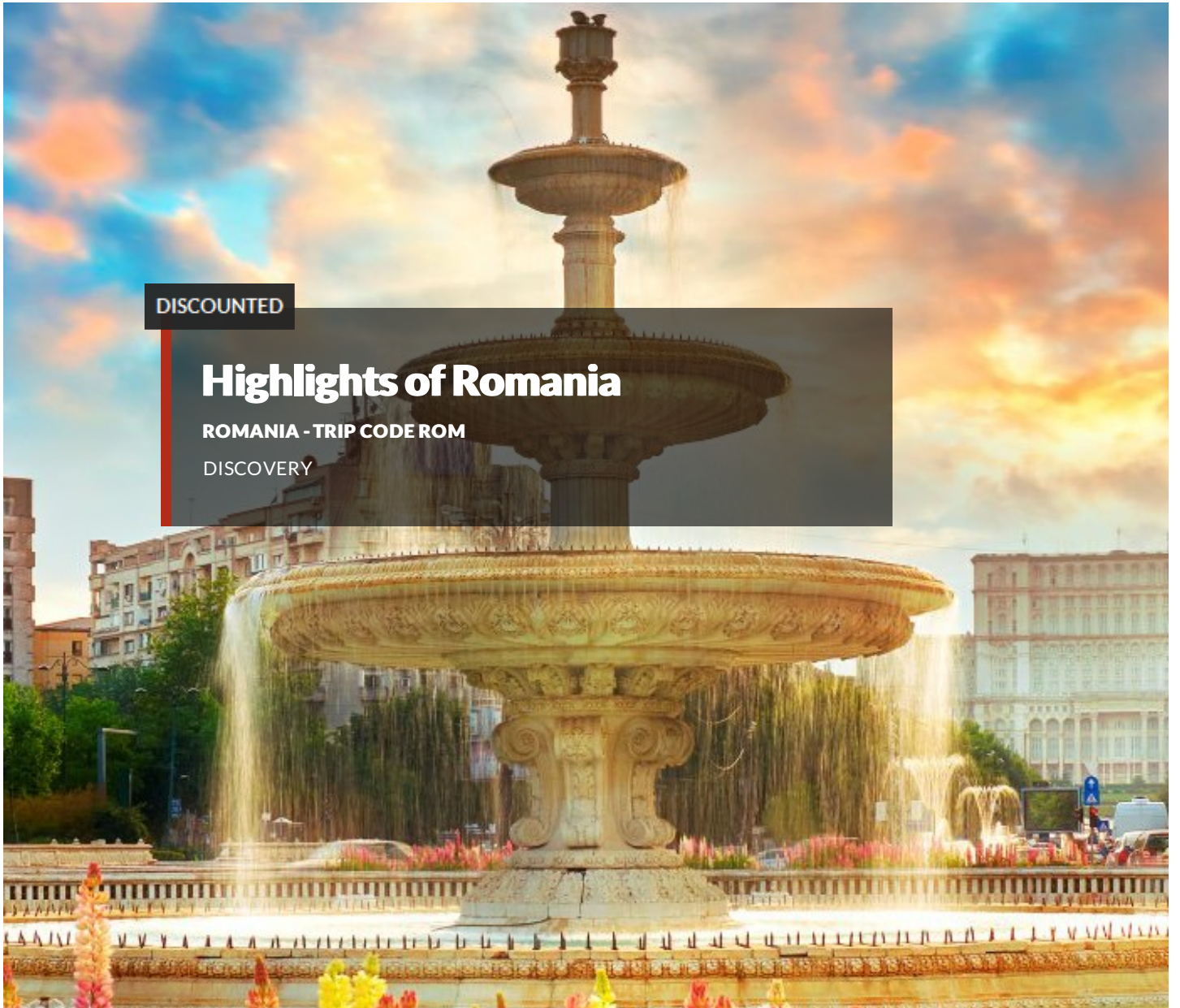


EXPLORE!



DISCOUNTED

Highlights of Romania

ROMANIA - TRIP CODE ROM

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

Romania is a country still steeped in tradition. Even on the streets of the capital, Bucharest, new cars travel beside horse and carts; it's truly a world where old meets new. On this highlights trip discover its dramatic mountains, medieval towns and fairytale castles.

- **Medieval architecture** - Wander through the cobbled lanes of Sighisoara and discover the Alba Iulia Citadel
- **Bears** - See the great work being done to protect Romania's brown bears at the Liberty Bear Sanctuary
- **Transylvania** - Delve beneath the Dracula myths at Castle Bran and marvel at the exquisite Peles Castle



INCLUDED MEALS

Breakfast: 7
Dinner: 1



TRIP STAFF

Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)



TRANSPORT

Bus



ACCOMMODATION

3 nights
comfortable
guesthouse
4 nights
comfortable hotel



TRIP PACE:

Moderate



GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

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 and our local leader. Bucharest is Romania's largest city and became the capital in 1832 and thanks to a period of urban renewal and modernisation, it's now a bustling centre of Romanian culture, arts and media.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Minerva (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Walking tour of Bucharest; chance to visit the Palace of Parliament

We begin by our local leader taking us on a tour of Romania's capital. Bucharest is situated on the Danube Plain and set amid a series of lakes and spacious gardens and here we will see a remarkable blend of turn of the century elegance and communist excess. We visit many of the older parts of the city to discover the architecture that earned it the reputation as the 'Paris of Eastern Europe' such as the

beautiful columned facade of the Romanian Atheneum concert hall and the Royal Palace of Bucharest. We also make a visit to the fascinating Village Museum where we can see a collection of old wooden churches, windmills and peasant dwellings from different regions of the country.

This afternoon is free for you to relax and enjoy exploring Bucharest at your own pace. There's plenty to discover in the city's Old Town or there's a multitude of museums available to choose from including the National Museum of Romanian History, the Military Museum and the Folk Art Museum, to name but a few.

Alternatively, perhaps you'd like to visit inside the Palace of Parliament, which is an incredible construction, the second largest building in the world and one of Bucharest's most photographed sights. Inside you'll find marble columns, grand halls and glittering crystal chandeliers. Many homes were destroyed to make way for this massive structure and it took 13 years to build at an alleged cost of over three billion Euros, so it's of little surprise that it was and still is a very controversial building.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Minerva (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Discover Peles and Bran Castles and stay in rural Transylvania

Driving out of Bucharest we head into the rolling countryside filled with forests, farmland and dramatic mountain peaks. We arrive in Sinaia, known as the 'pearl of the Carpathians' and visit the wonderful Peles Castle. Built for the Hohenzollern monarch Carol I, it resembles a Bavarian chateau and is richly decorated with stained glass, Persian carpets, Renaissance weapons, ebony and mother of pearl.

After a little free time for lunch we drive into Transylvania, and to perhaps what is the most famous castle in the world, Bran Castle, the apparent haunt of Count Dracula. Perched on a crag in a valley between two high mountain ranges, it dominates the surrounding scenery. We'll learn that the truth behind 'Dracula's castle' is even more fascinating than the myths. It was the home of the remarkable British born Queen Marie of Romania, grand daughter of Queen Victoria, whereas Vlad the Impaler, the heroic 15th century ruler of Wallachia who Dracula is based on, never lived here. In fact, the author of the much-loved Dracula novel, Bram Stoker never even came to Transylvania.

This evening we will stay in a quaint local guesthouse in the Transylvanian village of Moieciu, where we have a delicious home cooked meal this evening. Romanian cuisine is hearty and their red wine is surprisingly good. A typical meal can consist from stewed beef, freshly baked bread, pearl barley, cabbage, roasted root vegetables and sour cream. Before a meal the locals tend to sip the aperitif, tzuica, a strong plum brandy.



ACCOMMODATION:

Casa Zada Guest House (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Guesthouse



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

DAY 4 - Visit the Liberty Sanctuary, Brasov and the Saxon village of Viscri

The Romanian bear population is one of the few strong and healthy ones remaining in Europe, and the Carpathian Mountains are home to about 43% of all European bears (approximately 6,000 individuals). This region is therefore of key international importance in the conservation of brown bears and due to increasing human-bear interactions, it's also the focus of research into the effective management of bears and their habitats. This morning we will visit the Liberty Bear Sanctuary, a home for rescued bears. Set in an oak and hazel tree forest; the sanctuary has assisted in rescuing countless bears from zoos and captivity and is helping to educate the local communities on the importance of looking after their native wildlife. There are around 70 bears currently at the sanctuary that roam free in a natural environment of large forested enclosures containing hibernation dens and cooling freshwater pools.

Next we drive to Brasov to take a walk in the old town. Brasov is a treasure trove of centuries-old buildings and churches, cobbled streets and local atmosphere, all clustered within the medieval city walls and overlooked by a magnificent 15th century Gothic cathedral. We will stroll through the City Square and down the extremely narrow Rope Street before visiting the Black Church and having free time for lunch.

We drive on to Viscri, which is one of the many Saxon villages found in Transylvania, but what makes it special is that it's wonderfully well preserved and the fortified church here is UNESCO-listed. 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 we have the option to take a horse and cart ride to visit the church, the local baker, and the blacksmith that still ply their trade in the same way as they have for generations.

This evening we arrive in Sighisoara, which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site and feels a bit like stepping back in time. This tiny medieval city of winding cobbled alleys, pastel-coloured buildings, steep stairways and secluded squares now harbours cafes, craft shops and hotels. This evening we'll take a walk with our leader before having free time for dinner to sample the regions tasty cuisine such as beef goulash with dumplings, tarragon chicken or warming spicy soups washed down with craft beer. For dessert you could try one of the delicious cakes, which the town is known for.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Villa Franka (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Explore Sighisoara and Alba Iulia Citadel; arrive in the Apuseni Natural Park

Before leaving Sighisoara this morning we discover its winding alleys on foot including the old town fortifications, the Church on the Hill, covered stairs and the clock tower. It's also possible to see the building where Vlad the Impaler was born.

We drive to Alba Iulia to explore the city's spectacular restored star shaped citadel with its pointed bastions and highly decorative gates. In the old town we stroll along the wide, tree-lined streets and learn about its historical significance in the shaping of modern day Romania. Most of the fortification dates from the 18th century and inside the walls are a wealth of museums, churches, the Coronation Cathedral, and the Unification Hall, where the union between Transylvania and Romania was sealed in 1918.

After lunch we travel to Smida, a riverside village in the heart of the Apuseni Natural Park. We check into our guesthouse which has a restaurant with outdoor terrace, sauna, Jacuzzi and tennis court.



ACCOMMODATION:
Poiana Soarelui Guesthouse (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Guesthouse



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Free day in Apuseni Natural Park to relax, hike or bike

The meadows and rolling hills of the Apuseni Natural Park is an ideal base for outdoor activities or simply to sit back and enjoy the mountain vistas. Today is free for you to do as much or as little as you like. You might choose to hike through forests and hamlets where farmers young and old come together scything hay by hand and piling it onto high stacks. Alternatively you could try rowing on the nearby lake (June to September) or taking a horse and carriage ride.



ACCOMMODATION:

Poiana Soarelui Guesthouse (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Guesthouse



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Walking tour of Cluj-Napoca; option to visit the Botanical Gardens

This morning we drive to the final location visited on our trip, Romania's second largest city, Cluj-Napoca. Blending a rich cultural infusion of Saxon, Hungarian and Roma influences, we stroll through the Baroque city centre stopping to view landmarks like Taylor's Bastion, the Banffy Palace and the Gothic Cathedral of Saint Michael, which has changed its religious denomination a total of five times since its initial construction and still dominates the downtown market area.

This afternoon is free for you to further explore the city and perhaps to visit the National History Museum, or watch the world go by whilst sipping a coffee in a cafe on the Market Square. Alternatively, you could wander among the fragrant blooms of the Japanese Garden and native flowers found in the very popular Botanical Gardens.

Our hotel is located close to the old town so it is in an ideal spot for exploring the city this afternoon.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Victoria (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Cluj-Napoca

Our trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Cluj-Napoca.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	2 Pin Round	Eastern Orthodox	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.

Many of the castles charge a photography fee. You should allow approximately £15.00 for this. Additionally, the Liberty Sanctuary charge a photography fee of approximately £10.00.

Bucharest:

on day two the Palace of Parliament entrance is 40-45 RON (Romanian Leu). Please note you must take your passport with you to be permitted entry. It is still an active government building so it might not always be open to visitors and maybe closed at short notice.

Viscri:

On day four you can take a horse and cart ride around the village visiting the local baker, blacksmith and fortified church approximately 50 RON.

Apuseni Natural Park:

On day six there are a variety of different options available:

Trekking - self guided route information provided locally.

Rowing - (available in June to September) easy grade on a lake. Self guided route information and equipment provided locally. Hire rates for a 1 person for 4 hours is 70 RON or 1 hour is 30 RON or a 2 person for 4 hours is 100 RON or 1 hour is 40 RON.

Horse and cart ride - for 30 minutes for 1-2 people is 50 RON or 3-4 people is 70 RON.

Football or volleyball courts - to hire a court during the day per hour is 100 RON or in the evening it's 150 RON per hour.

Tennis court - to hire the court is 50 RON per hour and racket hire is an additional 10 RON per hour.

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.

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 also recommend that you carry a torch and a first aid kit. For the time spent in the countryside you may find mosquito repellent handy.

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 £20.00 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.

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.

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.

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, Australian, New Zealand, US and 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 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

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.

Wildlife in Romania



The Carpathian region of Romania is home to an estimated 6,000 brown bears, which is one of the few strong and healthy populations remaining in Europe. The female brown bear can weigh up to 200kg and the males weigh in at around 350kg - the largest on record in Romania being an astonishing 480kg.

Bears are most active in the morning and evening when they forage for food, then resting during the day in their woodland habitat. The mating season is between May and July and the cubs are then born over the winter and take their first exploratory steps in the spring. Towards the end of the summer, the bears will be more active as they seek out food to increase their weight before the harsh winter. Over the winter, the brown bear generally hibernates so sightings will not be possible.

On this trip we will visit the Liberty Bear Sanctuary, a home for rescued bears. Set in an oak and hazel tree forest; the sanctuary has assisted in rescuing countless bears from

zoos and captivity and is helping to educate the local communities on the importance of looking after their native wildlife. There are around 70 bears currently at the sanctuary that roam free in a natural environment of large forested enclosures containing hibernation dens and cooling freshwater pools.

Why book this trip

In just one week see all of Romania's most famous sights as well as spending time in the countryside and sampling delicious food and wine. Romania is a very affordable destination, it's easy to get to and it has so much to offer. It's a country full of mystery and folklore that captures the imagination.



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**