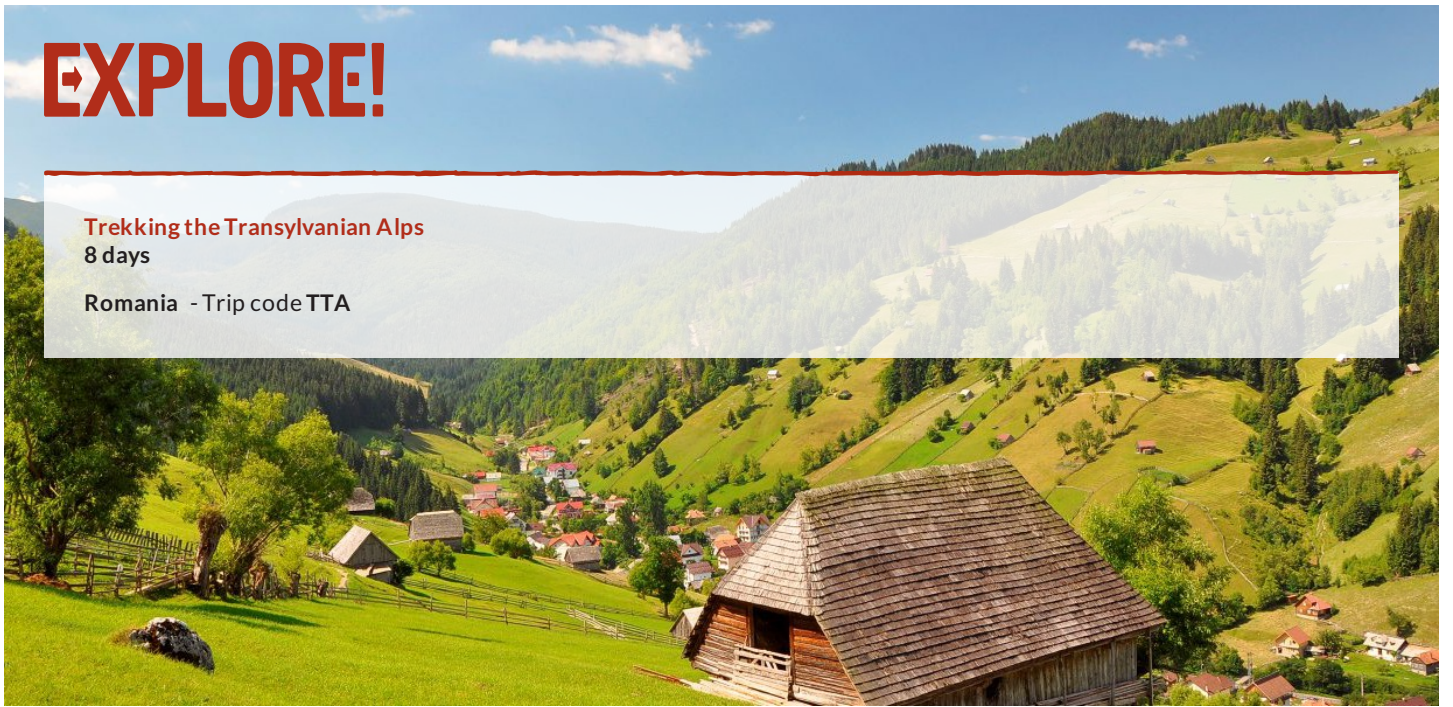


EXPLORE!

Trekking the Transylvanian Alps
8 days

Romania - Trip code TTA



Trekking the Transylvanian Alps

On this walking trip in Romania experience warm hospitality, discover beautiful countryside and explore historic towns. Get far off the beaten track, travelling deep into the Transylvanian Alps, the legendary home of Dracula. Staying in a local guesthouse and mountain huts, walk through the imposing Bran Valley and to the Piatra Craiului Mountains for one of the most spectacular ridge walks in Europe. There is also the opportunity to visit the ornately decorated Peles and Bran Castles.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Transylvania** - Get into the heart of the Southern Carpathians, walk in beautiful countryside
- ★ **Bran and Peles castles** - Ornately decorated (optional trips)
- ★ **A warm welcome** - Experience fantastic hospitality and traditional food from our guest house in Moieciu
- ★ **Bucharest** - Explore the city with a local guide, including the Village Museum

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, sometimes with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate To Challenging

Combining moderate grade walks with some more strenuous hikes. This grade is ideal if you are fit and want to challenge yourself with a few longer, more demanding trekking days, possibly on difficult terrain or at higher altitudes.

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 tour Bucharest Airport; drive to Sinaia

Arrive Bucharest airport and drive to hotel in Sinaia. Located in a beautiful mountainous region, at the foothills of the Bucegi Mountains, about 120km from Bucharest and 44km from Brasov, in the Prahova Valley, Sinaia is one of the oldest and most famous mountain resorts, often referred to as 'The Pearl of the Carpathians'.



Accommodation: Hotel Roberto (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Visit Peles Castle, cable car to Bucegi Plateau. Hike through the Bucegi mountains to the Omu Mountain Hut

After breakfast we visit in the Peles Castle (optional) which is considered by many as one of the most beautiful castles in all of Europe. It was the final resting place for several Romanian monarchs including King Carol I, who died here in 1914. Then we take a short cable car ride to the Bucegi Plateau. From here we start our walk through the Bucegi mountains which make up part of the southern Carpathians and walk for approximately 4 hours gaining about 500 meters in elevation to the highest peak, Omu Peak 2505m. Wind and rain have turned some rocks in to spectacular figures such as the Sphinx. We will finish the walk at the Omu Mountain Hut where we spend the night. If we arrive early enough there is the option to extend this walk with an additional one and a half hours trek to summit Bucsoiu a nearby peak. Our main luggage is transferred by road and will not be with us so we carry what we need for the night.

Today's 13km walk is expected to take around 4hrs with 775m ascent and 320m descent



Accommodation: Omu Hut (or similar)



Simple Hut



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 3 - Walk from Omu Hut descending through the Bran Valley to Moeciuc

We start our descent, including 50m on a scree path, to the Bran Valley with some stunning views of the Piatra Craiului Mountains. Today we walk from the peak of the Bucegi range to Moeciuc and on our way will see natural monuments, various alpine flora and fauna, which could include the edelweiss, mountain wild rose, capercaillie and chamois. This area is also home to the European brown bear but a sighting would be rare. The wild beauty of this area is truly special. Today we walk with some steep sections and rough terrain, good walking boots are essential. The last part of the trail leads us to the guest house through their orchard. Here after a long day we will be welcomed with hot delicious food, locally brewed alcohol and a well deserved hot shower.

Today's 20km walk is expected to take around 6hrs with 350m ascent and 2000m descent



Accommodation: Casa Zada Guest House (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 4 - Visit Bran Castle (optional); walk towards the Piatra Craiului Mountains

Today we start our day with an optional trip to the castle at Bran. The truth behind 'Dracula's Castle' is even more fascinating than its myths! Earlier this century it was the home of the remarkable British born Queen Marie of Romania, grand daughter of Queen Victoria. Vlad the Impaler, the heroic 15th century ruler of Wallachia never lived here and there is no connection with the excellent novel by Bram Stoker - who never came near Transylvania. Perched on a crag in a valley between two high mountain ranges, it controlled an international trade route, but is now a rural back-water. From here we start our walk to the Piatra Craiului mountains. Piatra Craiului (The Royal Rock) is probably Romania's most loved mountain especially by hikers and nature lovers. The shining glow of this huge white limestone ridge can be seen from afar and it is probably the source of its unusual name. The mountain ridge has the biggest bio-diversity of the country. Not surprisingly, it is a national park. The wildlife is very diverse and there are still black chamois on the high cliffs and brown bear, wild boar, deer and stag, foxes, wolf and even lynx in the forests. The Piatra Craiului Mountains are further known for the abundance and diversity of flowers and plants. We walk today for between five and seven hours and end at a mountain hut where we spend the next two nights.

Today's 18km walk is expected to take around 5hrs with 1340m ascent and 660m descent



Accommodation: Curmatura Hut (or similar)



Simple Hut



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - Piatra Craiului Ridge walk

Today we take a circular walk from our mountain hut to the Piatra Craiului's beautiful limestone ridge, which is about 25km long, from where we have superb views over the surrounding country. The walk today is challenging in parts with the odd section where you may need to scramble over rocks or through dense forest. Once we are up on the ridge the views of the southern Carpathians

are spectacular. After around six hours of walking we will return to our mountain hut for a well deserved hot meal and refreshments. Note: During the walk on the ridge there is a section approximately two metres in width which will require holding on to a chain to cross. Vertigo sufferers may wish to opt out of this walk. There will also be a descent of 300m on a scree path. Besides this, today's walk will not operate if it is raining or if there is a threat of rain. If this is the case an alternative walk in the area will be arranged.

Today's 7.5km walk is expected to take around 4hrs with 810m ascent and descent



Accommodation: Curmatura Hut (or similar)



Simple Hut



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - Walk from Curmatura Hut through the Zarnesti Gorge to Moeciu

Today we leave the mountain hut behind and walk to our guesthouse in Moeciu. Today's walk takes us through more beautiful countryside including the Zarnesti Gorge which has been used as a filming location for a number of movies including Cold Mountain.

Today's 18km walk is expected to take around 5 hrs with 470m ascent and 1100m descent



Accommodation: Casa Zada Guest House (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - Drive to Bucharest to explore the capital

This morning we drive to Romania's capital, a remarkable blend of turn of the century elegance and communist excess. Situated on the Danube plain and set amid a series of lakes and spacious gardens, remnants of more gracious days still exist to charm the visitor. We visit many of the older parts of the city to see some of the buildings that have earned it the reputation as the \Paris of Eastern Europe\ . We also make a visit to the fascinating Village Museum, which has assembled wooden churches, windmills and peasant dwellings from different regions of the country. After the city tour we have free time for shopping, relaxing or more sightseeing.



Accommodation: Hotel Minerva (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

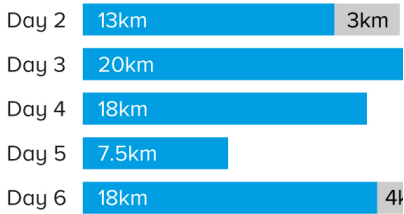
DAY 8 - Tour ends Bucharest

Tour ends in Bucharest after breakfast.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCE



 Optional Walks

Walking grade

Moderate to challenging

Trek details

Walks on 5 days for an betweenof 4 to 6 hours, plus two optional walks. There are some steep ascents and descents through forests and rocky mountain paths.

Max walking altitude (m)

2505



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 5
Dinner: 5



Transport

Bus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

2 nights standard guesthouse
2 nights standard hotel
3 nights simple hut

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

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.

Bran Castle - Entrance fee £7.5

Peles Castle - Entrance fee £6

Village Museum in Bucharest - Entrance fee £3.5

Clothing

No matter what the season please be prepared for high mountain conditions. It can get as cold as -5°C during the night and can still be in the minuses the next morning. There may also still be snow on the ground in spring and autumn in the mountains. Please therefore bring a woolly hat, gloves, warm socks and wear layered clothing. A fleece and windproof/waterproof jacket are essential.

Footwear

We recommend you bring walking boots with ankle support- leather or fabric are both fine. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage - so don't overload yourself. Your main luggage will not be with you on every nightstop so ensure your day bag is large enough to carry everything you might need.

For the two nights staying in Curmatura Hut (days 4 and 5) your main luggage will be stored at our accommodation in Moeciu ready for your return on day 6.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle, insect repellent, sunscreen, sun glasses, a sunhat and a torch. Walking poles may be useful as are gaiters for walking in snow if you do not have waterproof trousers. A sleeping bag liner will be needed for the nights in mountain huts, blankets and pillows are provided. There are limited washing facilities in the mountain huts, so wet wipes and hand sanitiser may be useful.

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 £15.00 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

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.

On this tour we stay well off the beaten track. The two mountain huts that we stay in for three of the nights of the tour are well located in the mountains and very simple. Washing facilities are limited as there is no running water, although there is a fresh water spring thirty metres from the hut at Curmatura. At both huts the toilet is outside the main building.

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 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.

Maximum altitude (m)

2505

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.
