

# EXPLORE!



## Winter Adventure in Romania

ROMANIA - TRIP CODE WRO

WINTER ACTIVITY

### Why book this trip?

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This is winter adventure to discover Romania's highlights including the legendary Bran Castle, colourful Sighisoara and the capital city, Bucharest. Spend a night at the wonderful Ice Hotel, which is a once in a lifetime experience.

- **Ice Hotel** - Spend the night above Lake Balea at Romania's only ice hotel and go snow shoeing
- **Transylvania** - Visit Bran Castle, Brasov and a fortified Saxon church and try wildlife tracking
- **Bucharest** - Explore the Palace of Parliament with its grand marble interiors and controversial history

**INCLUDED MEALS**Breakfast: 7  
Dinner: 3**TRIP STAFF**Explore Tour  
Leader  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)**TRANSPORT**

Bus

**ACCOMMODATION**1 nights  
comfortable chalet  
3 nights  
comfortable  
guesthouse  
3 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, Romania's largest city that became its capital in 1832. It has gone through a period of urban renewal and modernisation and it is now a bustling city, at the centre of Romanian culture, art and media.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Bucharest at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today you need to arrive into Bucharest Henri Coanda International Airport (OTP), which is about 30 minutes' drive from the city centre. For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 6pm and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner. Due to a number of flights arriving into Bucharest later in the evening, our welcome meeting will take place on the morning of day two.

If you have free time on arrival then 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.

**ACCOMMODATION:**

Hotel Minerva (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Hotel****SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

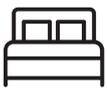
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## **DAY 2 - Tour of Bucharest and the Palace of Parliament; drive to Moieciu**

After our Leader does an initial welcome meeting, we will go out to explore Bucharest, Romania's capital city, to see the Revolution Square, Metropolitan Church and the Old Town. The Revolution Square is deemed not only to be the landmark of the history of the city, but also of the entire country - it's a site not to be missed. We'll also visit the opulent Palace of Parliament. We'll get to see the huge marble halls, crystal chandeliers and towering pillars in this controversial government building. It was created at great expenses and at great cost to the locals that were forcefully evicted from their homes to make way for its construction. You'll then have a couple hours to explore the city further and you may wish to visit one of its many museums, such as the Museum of Romanian Art, Museum of Romanian History or the Military Museum. You could also go to see street art in Garajul Ciclop or visit one of the few remaining caravanserais in Europe, Hanul lui Manuc.

This afternoon we will drive to the town of Sinaia in the Bucegi Mountains and whilst here you'll have the opportunity to visit Pelisor Palace or take a walk in the palace grounds. Later this afternoon we'll drive on to our guesthouse in Moieciu where we enjoy a home cooked meal this evening. Romanian cuisine is hearty and their red wine is surprisingly good. A typical meal can consist of 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.

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 or possible for us to go inside. If this is the case then instead we will visit the opulent 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.



### **ACCOMMODATION:**

Casa Zada Guest House (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Guesthouse**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

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## **DAY 3 - Go wildlife tracking, visit Bran Castle and spend the afternoon in Brasov**

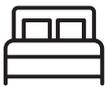
We start today by visiting a wildlife tracking centre where accompanied by an expert guide we get the chance to go on a walk in the countryside to try and spot the tracks left by wild boar, roe and red deer, wolves and bear.

We drive on to nearby Brasov, where we visit the Black Church, city square, the First Romanian School Museum and the city walls. The school museum is hidden in the gardens of one of the oldest churches in Brasov.

This afternoon we visit the legendary Bran Castle, built in the 14th century to protect the mountain pass from the invading Turks. In the 20th century it was the favourite residence of Queen Maria of Romania. She restored and arranged for the castle to be used as a residence for the royal family. Bran is of course best known as the setting for Bran Stoker's Dracula and was once the home of Vlad the Impaler, who the Dracula legend was born from.

This evening is free for you to have dinner in Brasov before we return to Moieciu for the night.

Please note that the order of activities today may vary due to weather conditions.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Casa Zada Guest House (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Guesthouse



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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#### **DAY 4 - Discover the Saxon fortified church at Viscri and UNESCO Listed Sighisoara**

This morning we drive to Viscri, which is one of the many Saxon villages in Transylvania, but it's wonderfully preserved and the fortified church here is listed by UNESCO. 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, visit the church and have free time to explore. You may choose to visit a traditional local bakery or blacksmith. Alternatively, if the snow is thick you may want to take a sledge ride through the picturesque surroundings.

Next we drive to the colourful town of Sighisoara which is an UNESCO World Heritage Site and the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler. We discover the town on foot including the old town fortifications, the Church on the Hill, covered stairs and the clock tower. After this, there is free time for you to continue exploring or you may want to try the delicious cakes and coffees that the local cafes have to offer and that the town is known for.

Lastly we drive to Bunesti where we spend the night. We'll take advantage of the excellent home cooking for our dinner this evening.



ACCOMMODATION:

Bike Check Inn (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Guesthouse



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

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**DAY 5 - Visit Biertan Church before taking the cable car up to Lake Balea**

This morning we drive to the fortified Biertan Church, which was built in the 15th-16th centuries in the late Gothic style. It is placed high on a hilltop right in the centre of the village, in a valley surrounded by vineyards, forests and fields, so it provides us with quite the view over this rural backdrop.

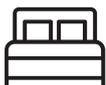
We'll make a brief lunch stop in Agnita town before driving on to Lake Balea where we take a cable car up to 2,034 metres, where we spend the night in a mountain chalet. The actual journey takes around 20 minutes although the total time taken to transfer the whole group may be longer as the cable car only holds 10 people at a time.

The Balea Lake Hotel is a chalet-style building which stands year-round on the edge of the lake. All parts of the hotel are heated, which can be a blessing after being out in the crisp, winter mountain air. There is a bar and restaurant where we will have our evening meal of typical hearty Romanian fare. All of rooms are simply decorated with wooden furniture and en suite bathrooms.

This afternoon we'll make the most of the wintery surroundings and go snowshoeing. Depending on the snow conditions we may also get the chance to go on a 'tunnel walk'. This is a road tunnel on the Transfagarasan Highway. This 90 kilometre road is one of the most spectacular in the world and has more tunnels and viaducts than any other road in Romania. Although the road will be closed in the winter, we can still see part of it as we walk through one of the tunnels to see the ice stalactites and stalagmites inside.

Tonight we'll have a traditional Romanian dinner in the chalet.

Please note that the tunnel walk is dependent upon gaining entrance to the tunnel which may not be possible if there is a snow drift.



ACCOMMODATION:

Balea Lake Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Chalet



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

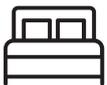
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### **DAY 6 - Chance for more snow shoeing; cable car back to Lake Balea**

Before we leave, there is the chance for us to have fun in the snow and perhaps go snowshoeing again.

This afternoon we'll take the cable car back down the mountainside and then drive to Sibiu. This was the largest and wealthiest of the seven walled citadels built in the 12th century. Our tour leader will take us beneath the ramparts and through the backstreets, past the first hospital and pharmacy in Romania and to Liar's Bridge. Here it is said that if you told a lie whilst on the bridge it would collapse, but it's also a known place where lovers would meet to declare their love and in recent times to attach padlocks to it as a symbol of their affections. You then have the rest of the evening free. Sibiu is a good spot for food lovers with a range of restaurants and some of the best, which are frequented by the locals, can be found around the Small Square. A speciality is 'ciorba' which is a sour soup that comes in various varieties with vegetables or meatballs. Many local establishments in the town serve their beer by the metre.

Our hotel tonight is a modern hotel in a quiet area just outside the old city walls, within walking distance to the city centre.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Roberts (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 7 - Drive back to Bucharest for free time to explore**

This morning we'll drive back to Bucharest, which takes us around five hours and we'll arrive at about 3pm. You have the rest of the day free to explore the city and to visit some of its many historic buildings or museums such as the fascinating Village Museum, which has assembled wooden churches, windmills and peasant dwellings from different regions of the country. If you fancy a change of pace, there is always the possibility of some shopping. Since the 1990s brand names and high-end stores have been pushing their way into the Romanian market. From high fashion boutiques to art galleries, shopping in Bucharest can fit any taste or budget. Stroll down Boulevard Magheru from Piata Romana to Piata Universitatii for a shopping extravaganza or go to one of the many shopping malls favoured by the local rich and famous.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Minerva (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 8 - Trip ends in Bucharest

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Bucharest.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Bucharest at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Bucharest Henri Coanda International Airport (OTP).



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### 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 |

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## 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.

Sinaia:

Pelisor Palace can be visited on day two; entrance is 25 Romanian Leu (RON) per person. To take photos inside there is an additional fee of 35 RON per person or 60 RON per person for using a video camera.

Viscri:

On day four it's possible to take a cart or sledge ride around the village (vehicle used will depend on how deep the snow is); 55 RON per person.

Ice Hotel:

On day six you can enjoy the snow and go tubing for 8 RON per person per run.

### Clothing

Winters in Romania can be cold with frequent snow fall or rain and icy conditions. You should therefore check the weather forecast before you travel for the latest information and pack accordingly. It's best to bring plenty of layers and warm clothing - similar to those you'd use for going skiing.

We recommend taking a good quality heavy duty water and wind proof jacket, waterproof trousers such as ski trousers or salopettes, a warm fleece jumper, woolly hat, thick socks, scarf and gloves (and glove liners for when you're taking photos). We'd also strongly recommend packing thermal underwear and spare socks just in case your feet get wet. You may also find fleece under trousers and a ski face/neck mask useful.

### Footwear

We recommend taking a comfortable pair of warm walking shoes for sightseeing that have sturdy tread and good ankle support in case of icy conditions and are waterproof in case of snow. Also bring trainers for using indoors and you may find a pair of snow boots useful.

### Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage, a daypack and an overnight bag for your stay at the Ice Hotel are needed. You're main luggage for the night at the Ice Hotel will remain locked in the coach at the cable car base station at Lake Balea. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage - so don't overload yourself.

## Equipment

We recommend bringing a water bottle, camera, personal first aid kit and a torch (in case of emergency and it can also be useful during your stay at the Ice Hotel). The sun can be very strong, so take a sun hat, sunscreen and sun glasses. You may find taking some over shoe ice grips or crampons and walking poles to be useful in case of icy conditions. Gaiters are helpful for walking in the snow if you do not have waterproof trousers or ski trousers. You may want to bring a hairdryer with you as these aren't available at all the hotels used on this trip.

Snow shoes and ski sticks are provided by the Ice Hotel. Please bring an overnight bag for your stay at the Ice Hotel.

## 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 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 approximately £15 of local currency 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 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.

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## **Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

### **Transport Information**

Bus

### **Accommodation notes**

At the Ice Hotel, you will be provided with a clean polar sleeping bag that has been warmed up just before going to bed. All the beds at the hotel are made of ice and are doubles but you will have individual sleeping bags. The toilets are located just outside the hotel in a cable car building. A hot shower will also be available for you to use. We will have dinner in the chalet beside the Ice Hotel. You will need an overnight bag for your stay here.

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## **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 be able to apply 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 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**

On all our trips to Romania we use minibuses to get around. 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 around 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 within the image gallery tab for this trip.

In Bucharest when visiting the Palace of Parliament you must take your passport with you to be permitted entry.

The exploration of the towns and cities visited on this trip will mostly be done on foot. The included snow shoeing is suitable for beginners.

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

## **Ability to swim**

Not needed.

## **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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## **Additional Information**



## Why book this trip

This trip offers the chance to discover Romania's best known sights in winter surroundings, such as Bran Castle, Sighisoara, Viscri and Bucharest. We've also include a one-night's stay at the wonderful Romanian Ice Hotel, which is a once in a lifetime experience.

## Reviews



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**