

TRANSYLVANIA & THE BALKANS

Tour Overview

 Start Point Bucharest	 End Point Bucharest	 Meals 12 Breakfasts 1 Lunch 6 Dinners	 Transport Air-conditioned Coach	 Tour Type Fully Guided Tour
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Itinerary

Day 1: Start of tour in Bucharest

 Dinner  Hotel CH Bucharest (or similar)

Start your journey in Bucharest, the "Paris of the East". Meet your Tour Leader and fellow travellers at the start hotel for a short overview of what's to come. Then, head out for your orientation walk and join the optional experience later to explore the different sides of Bucharest. Tonight, tuck into a Welcome Dinner with the group.

Included:

- An orientation walk in Bucharest
- Welcome dinner in Bucharest

Optionals:

- Romania in Two Worlds

Day 2: Bucharest - Sinaia - Bran - Brasov

 Breakfast  Hotel Ambient (or similar)

Today is classic Transylvania. Drive from Bucharest through the mountains to visit two of Romania's most famous castles: Peleş Castle, overlooking the Carpathian Mountains, and Bran Castle – where Dracula lives. In the afternoon, you'll do an orientation walk in medieval Brasov, with one of Europe's narrowest streets, at only 1.3 metres wide.

Included:

- A guided tour of Peles Castle
- A guided tour of Bran Castle
- An orientation walk in Brasov

Day 3: Brasov - Sighisoara - Sibiu

 Breakfast, Dinner  ibis Styles Sibiu Arsenal (or similar)

Today, head to the medieval town of Sighișoara for a guided tour, including its UNESCO-listed fortress, one of the best-preserved citadels in Europe. Then, continue to Sibiu for an orientation walk to explore the legacy of 12th-century Saxon settlers, and see the "Bridge of Lies," the oldest cast-iron bridge in Romania. Tonight, enjoy an included dinner of traditional Romanian cuisine.

Included:

- A guided tour of Sighișoara
- Traditional Romanian dinner in Sibiu

Day 4: **Sibiu - Corvin Castle - Alba Carolina - Cluj-Napoca**

 Breakfast  Wyndham Cluj (or similar)

Today, take in Corvin Castle with a local guide. This is one of Europe's most dramatic Gothic castles, and also one of its most photogenic. Then, see the nearby star-shaped Alba Carolina Citadel, featuring over 12 kilometers of defensive walls. Next, head to Cluj-Napoca, home for tonight. You'll do a short orientation walk, then the evening is yours to explore.

Included:

- A guided tour of Corvin Castle
- A visit to the star-shaped Alba Carolina Citadel

Day 5: **Cluj-Napoca - Oradea - Budapest**

 Breakfast, Dinner  ibis Styles Budapest City (or similar)

This morning, travel from Romania into Hungary, taking in Oradea's Art Nouveau square en route. Later, you'll see Budapest light up as we arrive in the early evening for a guided tour. Then, enjoy an included Hungarian dinner with your fellow Chasers.

Included:

- A guided tour of Budapest

Day 6: **Budapest: Free Day**

 Breakfast  ibis Styles Budapest City (or similar)

Today is yours to explore. Opt for an excursion to the thermal baths to relax, choose an optional city sightseeing tour showcasing two distinct parts of the city, or see the Parliament light up from the water on a Danube dinner cruise. Alternatively, wander through medieval attractions like the alleys of Castle Hill on your own, or shop for souvenirs.

Optionals:

- Buda vs Pest
- Budapest Baths
- Danube Dinner Cruise

Day 7: **Budapest - Novi Sad - Belgrade**

 Breakfast, Dinner  Nobel Design Belgrade (or similar)

Today we cross the border into Serbia, stopping in the historic centre of Novi Sad and exploring Liberty Square in the Old Town. Later, move on to Belgrade for a guided tour including an impressive fortress at the confluence of the Danube and the Sava rivers. This evening, indulge in an included dinner for a taste of Serbian culture.

Included:

- Visit Liberty Square in Novi Sad
- A guided tour of Belgrade

Day 8: **Belgrade - Niš - Skopje**

 Breakfast, Dinner  Hotel Turist City Center (or similar)

Today, you'll drive through the south of Serbia with vineyards, plum orchards, and dense forests as the backdrop. En route to North Macedonia, you'll stop in Niš and explore Tinker's Alley before crossing into Skopje. Here, let a local guide show you the city's eclectic, statue-filled centre before settling in for an included dinner.

Included:

- Explore Tinker's Alley in Niš
 - A guided tour of Skopje
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Day 9: **Skopje: Free Day**

 Breakfast  Hotel Turist City Center (or similar)

Today, Skopje is your playground. Get to know the city at your leisure, or opt for one of the excursions. Choose between a guided day trip into Kosovo and see Pristina, Gracanica Monastery and more, including lunch, or take the trip to Matka Canyon, featuring caves of up to 176 meters deep, and the striking blue Lake Ohrid, including boat rides.

Optionals:

- Kosovo Day Trip
- Lake Ohrid & Matka Canyon

Day 10: **Skopje - Rila Monastery - Sofia**

 Breakfast, Dinner  Ramada by Wyndham Sofia City Center (or similar)

Cross into Bulgaria today to see the UNESCO-listed Rila Monastery. This centre of Bulgarian religion and culture houses sacred relics, some dating back to the medieval period. Later, head to Sofia for a guided walking tour of the capital's landmark sights, including the famous Neo-Byzantine St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. End the day with an included Bulgarian dinner.

Included:

- See Rila Monastery
- Visit the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia

Day 11: **Sofia - Plovdiv - Etar - Veliko Tarnovo**

 Breakfast  Hotel Panorama Veliko Tarnovo (or similar)

Get ready for a full day of Bulgarian heritage. First, explore Plovdiv on a short orientation walk, including the Roman theatre and old town. Next, head to the open-air ethnographic village of Etar that recreates a traditional 18th- and 19th-century Bulgarian village. Later, continue to the dramatic hilltop town of Veliko Tarnovo, home for the night.

Included:

- An orientation walk in Plovdiv
- Visit the open-air museum village of Etar

Day 12: **Veliko Tarnovo - Ruse - Bucharest**

 Breakfast, Lunch  Hotel CH Bucharest (or similar)

Start making your way back into Romania today. En route, stop in Ruse for a wine tasting with a local sommelier to discover how the region's continental climate on the Danube River influences its wines. At the same winery, enjoy a celebratory Farewell Lunch with the group. Then, continue to Bucharest for the last evening on tour.

Included:

- A guided tasting of Bulgarian wine
- Farewell Lunch in Ruse

Day 13: **Bucharest**

 Breakfast

Your tour concludes this morning after a final breakfast together. Say your last goodbyes, exchange contact details and share photos. If you're not ready to make your way home yet, take a few hours to head back into the city. Perhaps stroll through one of the scenic public gardens, grab a coffee, or shop for last-minute souvenirs.

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