

Tour
Information



Romania – Transylvania and Bucharest





Travel

Passports

Please ensure your 10-year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to Romania.

Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

Romanian Embassy: 344 Kensington High St, Kensington, London W14 8NS

Visa section: Tel: 020 7602 9833 Mon-Thur – 09.00 – 14.00.

Email: londra.visa@mae.ro

Regarding visas matters, it is required to make appointments online at the following address: <http://evisa.mae.ro/>

Tickets

Included with your detailed itinerary is an e-ticket, which shows your flight reference number. You will need to quote/show this reference number at the check-in desk and you will be issued with your boarding pass. **Online check-in is not available for this booking.**

Your Group Scheduled or Club Class ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage Allowance

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

With British Airways your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45x 25cm including handles, pockets and wheels, and a personal bag (handbag or computer case) no bigger than 45 x 36 x 20cm including handles, pockets and wheels.

For more information please visit

www.britishairways.com

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Departure Tax

The departure tax is included in the price of your flight tickets.

Transfers

On arrival in Bucharest, transfer by coach to Brasov (approx. 2 hours 30 minutes), to the hotel for check-in for a five-night stay.

Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements. Please note that some airlines may charge for use of wheelchairs.



Accommodation

Aro Palace Hotel, Brasov

Brasov's only five-star hotel, this 1930's modernist building across the street from the Nicolae Titulescu park, this refined hotel is a short walk from the 19th-century landmark Schei Gate. Amenities include a restaurant, a bar and a nightclub, as well as banquet facilities. There's also a spa with an indoor pool, a fitness room and a sauna. Elegant, understated rooms come with satellite TV, minibars and free Wi-Fi. Room service is available.

For more information visit their website:

<https://aro-palace.ro/?lang=en>

Cismigiu Hotel, Bucharest

Conveniently located downtown Bucharest, the newly rebuilt four-star Cismigiu Hotel, dating from 1912, this art nouveau style hotel is just a few minutes away from the well-known bars and terraces of the Historical Centre. Wifi access is available throughout the hotel. The restaurant is set in a brewery and serves traditional Romanian dishes. There's also a gym and a rooftop terrace. The elegant suites and apartments come with flat-screen TVs, free Wi-Fi, minibars and sitting areas; some feature sofas and/or full kitchens. Room service is available.

For more information visit their website:

<https://www.hotelcismigiu.ro/en/>



Food

Romanian cuisine is a diverse blend of different dishes from several traditions with which it has come into contact, but it also maintains its own character. It has been mainly influenced by a series of European cuisines such as the Austrian cuisine, German cuisine, Greek cuisine, or Hungarian cuisine, yet it also includes culinary elements stemming from the cuisines of the Slavic-speaking countries of Eastern and Central Europe, most notably Serbian and Bulgarian as well as Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian.

There are quite a few different types of dishes, which are sometimes included under a generic term; for example, the category *ciorbă* includes a wide range of soups with a characteristic sour taste.

These may be meat and vegetable soups, tripe (*ciorbă de burtă*) and calf foot soups, or fish soups, all of which are soured by lemon juice, sauerkraut juice, vinegar, or *borș* (traditionally made from bran).

Cakes and desserts are sticky and very sweet. Romanians enjoy pancakes and pies with various fillings, as well as Turkish-influenced *baclava* and *savarină* (crisp pastry soaked in syrup and filled with whipped cream).

Drink

Romanians usually take their coffee black and sweet in the Turkish fashion; ask for *cafea cu lapte* if you prefer it with milk, or *fără zahăr* without sugar. Bars and pubs run the full gamut, from dark rough-and-ready dives to flash, modern concerns. A *crama* is a wine cellar, while a *gradina de vară* or *terasa* is a terrace or garden, usually offering *mititei* as well as beer. The national drink is *țuică*, a tasty, powerful brandy usually made of plums, taken neat. In rural areas, home-made spirits can be fearsome stuff, often twice distilled (to over fifty percent strength, even when diluted) to yield *palincă*, much rougher than grape brandy (*rachiu* or *coniac*). Most beer (*bere*) is European-style lager (*bere blondă*). You'll see *Silva* (from Reghin), *Ciucaș* (from Brașov), *Ciuc* (from Miercurea Ciuc), *Timișoreana* (from Timișoara) and *Ursus* (from Cluj – which, to all intents and purposes, is the national beer), while *Bergenbier* and *Eggenburger* are acceptable mass-produced brands; you will also occasionally find brown ale (*bere neagră* or *brună*). More excitingly, there is now an increasing number of craft beers on the market, the best of which is the delicious *Zăganu*, though at present you won't find it in too many places. Beer is usually sold by the bottle, so a request for *o sticlă* will normally get you one of whatever's available; draught beer is known as *halbă*.

Romania's best wines – and they are pretty good – are the white *Grasa* from Cotnari, near Iași; *Tămâioasă*, a luscious, late-harvested Moldavian dessert wine; blackberryish red *Fetească Neagră* from Dealu Mare, in Buzău county; and the sweet dessert wines from Murfatlar (notably Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, and white Muscat Ottonel). They can be obtained in most restaurants, while

some places may just offer you a choice of red or white. Sparkling (spumos) wines from Alba Iulia and Panciu (north of Focşani) are very acceptable. Wine is rarely sold by the glass, but it does no harm to ask – Serviţi vin la pahar?

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily

Dinner – Welcome dinner on the first evening



Destination

Modern Romania was formed in 1859 through a personal union of the Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. The new state, officially named Romania since 1866, gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1877. At the end of World War I, Transylvania, Banat, Bukovina, and Bessarabia united with the sovereign Kingdom of Romania. During World War II, Romania was an Axis power and, consequently, an ally of Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union, fighting side by side with the Wehrmacht until 1944, when it joined the Allies and faced occupation by the Red Army's forces. Throughout wartime Romania had lost several territories, of which only Northern Transylvania was regained after the war. Following the war, Romania became a socialist republic and member of the Warsaw Pact. After the 1989 Revolution, Romania began a transition towards democracy and a capitalist market economy.

Details of places of interest included in your tour:

Brasov

Founded by the Teutonic Knights in 1211 on an ancient Dacian site and settled by the Saxons as one of the seven walled citadels, Brasov exudes a distinct medieval ambiance and has been used as backdrop in many recent period films. Located in the Transylvania region of Romania, ringed by the Carpathian Mountains. It's resplendent with gothic, baroque and renaissance architecture, as well as a wealth of historical attractions, the towering Gothic-style Black Church and lively cafes. Piața Sfatului (Council Square) in the cobbled old town is surrounded by colorful baroque buildings and is home to the Casa Sfatului, a former town hall turned local history museum.

For more information about Brasov, visit:
<http://romaniatourism.com/brasov.html>

Bran Castle

Bran Castle is situated near Bran and in the immediate vicinity of Brașov, and a national monument and landmark in Romania. The fortress is situated on the border between Transylvania and Wallachia. Commonly known as "Dracula's Castle" (although it is one among several locations linked to the Dracula legend, including Poenari Castle and Hunyadi Castle), it is often erroneously referred to

as the home of the title character in Bram Stoker's Dracula. There is, however, no evidence that Stoker knew anything about this castle, which has only tangential associations with Vlad the Impaler, voivode of Wallachia, the putative inspiration for Dracula. Stoker's description of Dracula's crumbling fictional castle also bears no resemblance to Bran Castle. The castle is now a museum dedicated to displaying art and furniture collected by Queen Marie. At the bottom of the hill is a small open-air museum park exhibiting traditional Romanian peasant structures (cottages, barns, etc.) from across the country.

For more information about Bran Castle, visit:
<http://www.bran-castle.com/>

Prejmer

The largest fortified church in south-eastern Europe, Prejmer was built by Teutonic knights in 1212-1213.

The powerful surrounding walls are 40 feet high and 10-15 feet thick. Historical records attest that in its 500 years of existence, the fortress was besieged 50 times. However, it was only captured once, in 1611 by Gabriel Báthori, Prince of Transylvania; the fighters defending the fortress have surrendered after having no drinking water available for several days. Endowed with bastions, drawbridges and a secret, subterranean passage through which food supplies could be transported, the church's most famed war device was the "death machine," made of several weapons that could shoot simultaneously, causing the enemy severe losses. Access to the building was through a 100-foot-long arched passage fortified with two rows of gates. Each village family had a designated room for shelter in case of attack. The red-roofed wall accommodated 272 rooms, stacked over four stories and linked by wooden staircases.

For more information about Prejmer church, visit:
<http://romaniatourism.com/castles-fortresses-romania-prejmer-fortified-church.html>

Sighisoara

Sighisoara's citadel was built in the 12th century, when it was known as Castrum Sex (Fort Six), and was further strengthened and extended in the 15th century. The name of Sighisoara was first noted in a

written document issued by Vlad Dracul, Vlad the Impaler's father, in 1431. During the 14th - 16th centuries, the Saxon craft guilds erected towers around the citadel walls to protect the town from Turkish raids. Laid out on two to four levels, the towers stored ammunition and food supplies and were provided with firing windows for cannons, shells and arrows. Of the original fourteen towers and five artillery bastions, nine towers and two bastions have survived the test of time.

For more information about Sighisoara, visit:
<http://romaniatourism.com/sighisoara.html>

Biertan

The village of Biertan, first mentioned in an official document in 1283, is home to one of the largest and most impressive medieval strongholds in Transylvania. Surrounded by quaint streets and vineyards, the 15th century fortified church at Biertan is perched high on a hill in the middle of the village. Three tiers of 35-foot-high defensive walls, connected by towers and gates, encircled the complex, making the church impossible to conquer during medieval times. Featuring late-gothic architecture with heavy doors and double exterior walls, the church boasts the largest Transylvanian multi-paneled wooden altar and a remarkable wooden door which once protected the treasures in the sacristy. The door, a true marvel of engineering, has a particularly ingenious locking mechanism with 15 bolts that can be simultaneously activated by a key. Visitors can also admire the towers surrounding the church, namely the Clock Tower, the Bell Tower, the Gate Tower and the Bacon Tower. Within the grounds are several other interesting buildings, including the Prison Tower - which once served marital counselling purposes.

For more information about Biertan, visit:
<http://romaniatourism.com/castles-fortresses-romania-biertan-fortified-church.html>

Sinaia

Sinaia, nestled at the foot of the Bucegi Mountains and situated in the historical region of Muntenia, was named after Sinaia Monastery of 1695, around which it was built. The monastery, founded by Prince Mihai Cantacuzino in 1695, is named after the Biblical Mount Sinai. King Carol I of Romania built his summer home, Peleş Castle, near the town in the late nineteenth century. Its 160 rooms are adorned with the finest examples of European art, Murano crystal chandeliers, German stained-glass windows and Cordoba leather-covered walls. Peleş

Castle was the first European castle entirely lit by electrical current. The electricity was produced by the castle's own plant.

For more information about Sinaia, visit:
<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/romania/transylvania/sinaia>

For more information about Peleş Castle, visit:
<http://romaniatourism.com/castles-fortresses-romania-peles-castle-sinaia.html>

Bucharest

Known for its wide, tree-lined boulevards, glorious Belle Époque buildings and a reputation for the high life (which in the 1900s earned its nickname of "Little Paris"), Bucharest, Romania's largest city and capital, is today a bustling metropolis. Romanian legend has it that the city of Bucharest was founded on the banks of the Dambovitza River by a shepherd named Bucur, whose name literally means "joy." His flute playing reportedly dazzled the people and his hearty wine from nearby vineyards endeared him to the local traders, who gave his name to the place. Built at the special request of Nicolae Ceausescu, leader of Romania's Communist Party, the colossal **Parliament Palace** - formerly known as "People's House" (Casa Poporului) - is the world's second largest administrative building after the U. S. Pentagon. It took 20,000 workers and 700 architects to build this massive structure that boasts 12 stories, 1,100 rooms, a 350-ft.-long lobby and eight underground levels, including an enormous nuclear bunker. Built, furnished and decorated exclusively with materials sourced and made in Romania, the building reflects the work of the country's best artisans.

For more information about Bucharest, visit:
<http://romaniatourism.com/bucharest.html>.

Reading Suggestions

Cambridge Concise Histories: *A Concise History of Romania*

Spanning a period of 2000 years from the Roman conquest of Dacia to the present day, *A Concise History of Romania* traces the development of a unique nation situated on the border between East and West.

William Blacker: *Along the Enchanted Way: A Story of Love and Life in Romania*

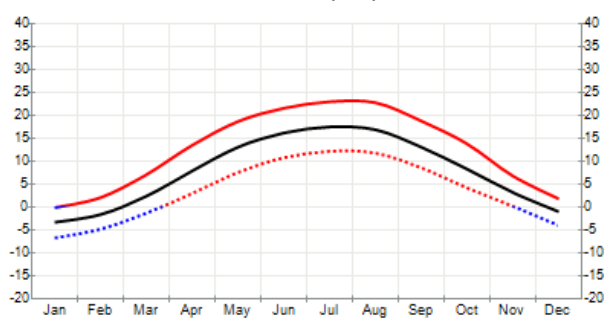
When William Blacker first crossed the snow-bound passes of northern Romania, he stumbled upon an almost medieval world. There, for many years he lived side by side with the country people, a life ruled by the slow cycle of the seasons, far away from the frantic rush of the modern world. In spring as the pear trees blossomed he ploughed with horses, in summer he scythed the hay meadows and in the freezing winters gathered wood by sleigh from the forest. From sheepfolds harried by wolves, to courting expeditions in the snow, he experienced the traditional way of life to the full, and became accepted into a community who treated him as one of their own.

Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.

The Basics

Climate – The weather in Romania at this time of year is likely to be pleasant and similar to the UK, although there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.



Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – Romanian.

Religion – Romanian Orthodox (87%).

National holidays – New Year's Day (01 Jan); Epiphany (06 Jan); Easter Monday; Labour Day (01 May); Whit Monday (21 May); National day (01 Dec); Christmas day (25 Dec); Second Day of Christmas (26 Dec).

Currency – New LEU; symbol Lei) = 100 bani. Notes are in denominations of 500, 100, 10, 5 and 1. Coins are in denominations of Bani 50, 10, 5 and 1. £1 = approx. 5.20 Leu.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 230 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is generally considered safe to drink in Romania, though nearly everyone drinks bottled water: it's cheap and available everywhere.

Shops and museums – Shops generally open Mon-Sat 0900-1800. In urban areas, supermarkets can remain open for much of the night.

Please note that many museums are closed on Mondays.

Clothes & shoes – lightweights are worn in summer on the coast and low inland areas. Rainwear is recommended throughout the year. Good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in Romania, depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping –To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Embassy Bucharest

24 Jules Michelet

010463 Bucharest

Romania

Tel: +40 (21) 201 7351

Email: press.bucharest@fco.gov.uk

Open Monday to Thursday, 8:30am to 5pm, Friday, 8:30am to 4pm

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3 Youngs Buildings, London, EC1V 9DB

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