

## **ROUTE III**

### **Day I**

Arrival at the Bucharest airport

Transfer from the airport to the hotel in Bucharest

If time allows, city tour will be given

Accommodation in the hotel and dinner at a restaurant in Bucharest

### **Day II**

Bucuresti – Curtea de Arges – Cozia – Sibiu (300 Km)

In the morning, departure to Curtea de Arges, the old capital of Wallachia; the city will be visited.

**Curtea de Arges Monastery**, built in the 16th century by voivode Neagoe Basarab in place of the old, 14th century Christian Mitropoly of Tara Romaneasca, is considered one of the most beautiful religious buildings in Europe. During the reign of the first Romanian king, Carol I, the monastery was transformed into a royal necropolis. The legend of the beautiful monastery speaks over time about the spirit of the Romanian people.

**The church of Saint Nicholas** was built in a byzantine style by the founder of Wallachia, Basarab I, in the middle of the 14th century. The preserved interior mural painting is also byzantine and has a great value because of its age. This church was initially the home of the Christian Mitropoly of Wallachia.

**Cozia Monastery** was founded on the shore of Olt river at the end of the 14th century by the great Wallach vaivode, Mircea the Elder, whose tomb can be found here. Every since the early days of this holy place we can speak of it as a cultural focal point, with a monastic school having functioned here. The church is preserved in its original state, being one of the most beautiful medieval monuments in Romania.

Lunch in Curtea de Arges

Dinner and accommodation at hotel in Sibiu.

### **Day III**

### Sibiu – Sighisoara – Vatra Dornei (300 Km)

We firstly visit the city of Sibiu, one of the oldest cities in Romania and an important European cultural centre, in 2007 being named the European Cultural Capital.

We will visit the two squares: the **Large Square** and the **Small Square**, places surrounded by old buildings that are representative for the local history, the **Catholic Church**, built in the 18th century, inspired by the early Viennese baroque spirit, the **Evangelic Cathedral**, known for its impressive baroque styled organ, the **Bridge of Lies**, **Brukenthal Palace**, hosting the oldest museum in Romania and the **Christian Cathedral**, which has the characteristics of a byzantine church, currently the cathedral of the Sibiu Archbishopric and Ardeal Mitropoly.

Departure to the city of Sighisoara, which is 90 kilometers away.

**Sighisoara** is famous for its inhabited medieval citadel, considered to be one of the most beautiful in eastern Europe. We will visit some of the towers that composed the stronghold's defensive system, the most significant being the Clock Tower (the city's symbol, built to defend the main gate, unique in Romania because of the figurines clock). We will also visit the Monastery's Church, the house where Vlad Tepes (the Impaler) was presumably born and the Church from the Hill, one of the most important monuments in the city, representative for the gothic style in Romania. Afterwards, we will depart to Vatra Dornei, driving through Tihuta Pass, a difficult route but full of gorgeous landscapes.

Lunch at a restaurant in Sighisoara, accommodation and dinner at a hotel in Vatra Dornei

### **Day IV**

### Vatra Dornei – Vatra Moldovitei – Sucevita – Radauti – Dragomirna – Gura Humorului (200 Km)

We will visit some of the monasteries in northern Moldavia, famous mostly because of their impressive paintings.

**Moldovita Monastery**, was built in 1532 and combines elements of byzantine

and gothic art. It is known especially because of the exterior post-byzantine painting, with well preserved portions, mostly of the southern wall.

**Sucevita Monastery**, attested since 1582 and built in a byzantine style, with gothic influences and elements from the old Moldavian wooden churches. Both the interior and exterior paintings present ample scenes from the Old and New Testaments.

**Dragomirna Monastery**, was built in the beginning of the 17th century by the Metropolitan of Moldavia, Anastasie Crimca. The monastery's church has its walls adorned with stone engravings and the steeple, sculpted with floral and geometrical motifs, is the most spectacular element.

We can also visit the stud farm from Radauti, where we can ride horses or attend a demonstration.

Lunch at a restaurant on route, accommodation and dinner at a hotel in Gura Humorului.

## **Day V**

### Gura Humorului – Voronet – Brasov – Poiana Brasov (350 Km)

In the beginning of the day we will visit **Voronet Monastery**, built in 1488 by Stefan cel Mare (the Great). The monastery stands out because of the western wall fresco that depicts the Last Judgement (the reason why the monastery is known as 'the Sistine Chapel of the East') and because of the colour used for the exterior painting, the Voronet blue being considered unique.

We then visit Humor Monastery or Neamt Monastery.

**Humor Monastery** was built by a boyar in 1530 in a Moldavian style and, like other manorial buildings, the church has no steeple. The monastery's church is adorned with byzantine frescos both on the inside and the outside.

**Neamt Monastery** is the largest religious settlement in Moldavia and dates from the 14th century. Here we can find the largest and oldest monastic library as well as a wonder-making icon that was painted in 655.

The monastery also has a museum where religious items and old manuscripts can be admired, all of great importance for the Romanian culture and religious art.

Lunch in a restaurant on the way

We continue travelling to Poiana Brasov, a mountain resort located in a wonderful landscape at 1000 m altitude, 12 km away from Brasov.

Accommodation and dinner in Poiana Brasov.

## **Day VI**

### Poiana Brasov – Brasov – Bran – Sinaia (110 Km)

We depart in the morning to Brasov, arrive somewhere in the afternoon and visit: **Saint Nicholas Church** located in the old neighborhood, Scheii Brasovului. The church was built in the 13th century in the place of another wooden church that used to be there ever since the first millennium of the Christian era. St. Nicholas Church is special in terms of architecture, being built in gothic style on the outside and in byzantine style indoors.

**The First Romanian School Museum** in Scheii Brasovului conceals a true treasure consisting of manuscripts and old books, some of which are unique in Romania and the world.

**The Black Church**, built by the Saxons in the 14th-15th centuries, is the largest gothic style church in Central and Eastern Europe.

**The Central Square**, surrounded by old houses, most of them built in the 17th century. In the middle of the square lies the old city hall, which was built in 1420 and had its upper side refurbished in a German baroque style, after the great fire in 1688.

**The Christian Cathedral** was raised in a neo-byzantine style at the end of the 19th century in the central square.

We then visit **Bran Castle**, one of the most famous European castles. It is located 30 km away from Brasov, between Bucegi Mountains and Piatra Craiului, in a beautiful landscape rounded by the legend of the vampire count that seems to dominate the castle's history. The Germanic populace from Brasov began the construction in 1377 after Ludovic I of Hungary confirms their right to build a stone citadel. The castle was raised in place of an old wooden stronghold belonging to the Teutonic knights (13th century), located on top of a peak. Initially, the castle had a

military role but gradually it became an important commerce centre.

Bran castle is known worldwide as Dracula's Castle, because of the numerous stories that spread mostly following the popularity of Bram Stoker's novel: 'Dracula'. The Irish writer seems to have gotten inspired from the medieval legends in Brasov about the Wallach ruler, Vlad Tepes (the Impaler), who was indeed cruel.

We will also visit the Medieval Customs Museum, where items (furniture, ceramics, art object) can be admired, items that belonged in Bran Castle until the 2009 retrocession.

We leave in the morning for Sinaia, a beautiful mountain resort, also known as the 'Pearl of the Carpathians'. Accommodation and dinner at a hotel in Sinaia.

## **Day VII**

### Sinaia – Bucuresti (135 Km)

After breakfast, we will visit the monuments in Sinaia:

**Sinaia Monastery** built in a Brancovenesc style at the end of the 17th century by a great boyar from Wallachia, Mihail Cantacuzino.

**Peles Castle** was raised at the end of the 19th century as residence for the first king in Romania: Carol I. Peles Castle is impressive mostly because of its German neo-renaissance architecture on the outside, while every room on the inside is adorned differently.

We travel to Bucharest where we will visit some monuments like: the **Arch of Triumph**, the **Romanian Athenaeum**, the **Royal Palace** (became the National Art Museum), the **Romanian History Museum**, **People's Palace** and the **Romanian Patriarchal Cathedral**.

We then visit **Cotroceni Palace**, built at the end of the 19th century as a second residence of the royal family.

**The Patriarchal Cathedral** was raised in the 17th century in a Romanian style.

Lunch at a restaurant when arriving in Bucharest

Dinner and accommodation at a hotel in Bucharest. Dinner can also be served in a traditional restaurant.

## **Day VIII**

Transfer from the hotel to the airport in Bucharest

For the second departure timetable, one of the following can be visited:

**The Romanian History Museum** where we can see a real sized replica of Trajan's Column in Rome, and the Romanian Treasure.

**The Village Museum**, founded by the sociologist Dimitrie Gusti between the two world wars as to preserve the values of traditional life from the Romanian village.

The museums are only opened on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and only during summer.

Possible accommodations

Bucharest – 3\*, 4\* or 5\* hotels

Sibiu – 3\*, 4\* or 5\* hotels

Vatra Dornei – 3\* or 4\* hotels

Gura Humorului – 4\* hotel

Iasi – 3\* or 4\* hotels

Poiana Brasov – 3\* or 4\* hotels

Price lists are provided on demand, depending on the number of participants.