

Route IV

Day I

Arrival at the Bucharest airport

Transfer from the airport to the hotel in Bucharest

If time allows, city tour will be given, visiting the monuments of the Romanian capital, 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**.

Dinner at a restaurant and accommodation at a hotel in Bucharest.

Day II

Bucharest – 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 vaivode 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.

We then visit Poienari Citadel.

Poienari Citadel is located in Arges county and, initially a tower, the 14th century building was developed during the reign of Vlad Tepes (the Impaler). The citadel used to be a hideaway because of its emplacement, on top of a hill, in a hard to reach and to observe location. Nowadays, in order to reach the ruins of the castle you will have to climb 1480 steps and we will only visit if people are willing to climb.

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 – Alba Iulia – Hunedoara – Sibiu (300 Km)

In the morning, departure to the city of Alba Iulia, the historical and spiritual capital of Romania, where we will visit:

The Christian Reunification Cathedral: the construction started in 1921 and was finished in 1922 and the style is neo-Romanian with traditional byzantine elements. It is a historical monument of national importance, a symbol of the Romanian Reunification because, in the place where the cathedral was built, on December 1st, 1918, all Romanians became united through the Alba Iulia Proclamation. It is also known as the Coronation Cathedral because on October 15th, 1922, king Ferdinand and queen Mary were crowned as the first kings of Greater Romania.

The Catholic Cathedral, the oldest cathedral in Romania; its construction started in the 11th century and it represents one the most valuable Roman styled monuments in

our country.

The Union Hall, built in the beginning of the 20th century, is the place where in 1918 the Transylvania and Romania Unification document was signed.

The Statue of Mihai Viteazul (the Brave) the first unifier of the three Romanian regions, in 1600.

Alba Carolina Citadel, built in the 17th century during the Habsburg occupation, inspired by the French fortifications developed by marshal Vauban.

The Obelisk of Horea, Closca and Crisan, raised in the memory of the three heroes of the Transylvanian Peasant Uprising, 1784-1785.

The wooden church, raised in place of an old construction built by the unifier Mihai Viteazul, the former Centre of the Ardeal Mitropoly.

Hunedoara Castle, located in south-western Transylvania, in Hunedoara city. Also known as the Corvin Castle, it has a history of over seven centuries and an impressive aspect, being one of the most beautiful and best preserved medieval castles in Europe.

It was the residence of the Corvin family and was built in its actual form in the 15th century in place of a fortification donated in 1409 by king Sigismund of Luxembourg to Voicu Hunyadi. The one who started the construction is Voicu's son, Ioan (Iancu) of Hunedoara, vaivode of Transylvania. The castle was modified several times and was even expanded by Iancu's heirs.

The dominant architectural style is the gothic one but neo-gothic, Renaissance and baroque elements are also present, all these making the castle a fascinating building. It has a surface of 7000 square meters and 42 rooms, two large terraces and two attics.

If time allows, we will also visit the **Church of Streisangiorgiu**, one of the oldest medieval buildings in Romania, raised in the beginning of the 12th century, in a Roman style.

Lunch at a restaurant in Alba Iulia

Traditional dinner with a folk program at a pension in Sibiel

Accommodation at a hotel in Sibiu

Day IV

Sibiu – Sighisoara – Poiana Brasov (220 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.

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 V

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 VI

Sinaia – Targoviste – Bucharest (170 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.

Lunch at a restaurant and then departure to Targoviste, the old capital of Wallachia, where we will visit:

The Royal Court, a compound of monuments that have a great historical and artistic value, speaking about the past times of medieval Wallachia. It was a lordly residence for three centuries, hosting 33 Wallach vaivodes - from Mircea cel Batran to Constantin Brancoveanu (the martyr lord). The main elements of this architectural compound are: **The Royal Church**, built in 1584 by lord Petru Cercel; **Chindia Tower**, built during the second reign of Vlad Tepes (the Impaler, 1456-1462), a tower with multiple functions: fortification, gazebo, treasury cache, access gate; **the Royal Houses** built after 1396 by Mircea cel Batran and by Petru Cercel in 1584.

Departure to Bucharest, accommodation in hotel and dinner in a restaurant.

Day VII

Transfer from hotel to the airport in Bucharest.

If time allows, we can visit **Snagov Monastery**, where lies the tomb of Vlad Tepes.

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

Possible accommodations

Bucharest – 3*, 4* or 5* hotels

Sibiu – 3*, 4* or 5* hotels

Poiana Brasov – 3*or 4* hotels

Sinaia – 3* or 4* hotels

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