



THE CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS, VILLAGES AND CASTLES

Guided walking – 10 days / 9 nights



Romania is a wild and bucolic country. In villages the locals still rely on craftsmanship and have a strong link with nature. The Piatra Craiului and Bucegi Mountains are especially preserved and offer perfect surroundings for hiking. Come to discover these natural parks, their rich fauna and flora, their great horizons and their spectacular landscapes! You will also discover the local way of life: pastoral and full of traditions. These mountains with exceptional natural conditions offer a strategic advantage; fortresses were erected here to protect the Transylvania

borders. In the 14th century, the Saxons built the Bran fortress. This magnificent castle had a protecting role against Ottoman invasions and the migratory peoples. However, it is, above all, associated with the prince Vlad the Impaler of Wallachia, the character at the origin of the fictional character of Dracula...

D1 Tues. 8th Sept. - Depart UK and Welcome in Bucharest

Welcome at Bucharest airport by one of our representatives. Private transfer to your hotel. Depending on your arrival time, possibility to freely discover the Romania Capital. In the evening we will have our welcome dinner at a nice restaurant.

Meals: dinner



D2 Wed. 9th Sept. - Transfer to Brasov

Meeting your guide at the North Train Station in Bucharest after breakfast. Train transfer to Brasov where you'll have a private transfer to your central hotel in Brasov. Travelling by train will create a great opportunity to experience the stunning views from Prahova Valley where the Prahova river makes its way between the Bucegi and the Baiului Mountains, in the Carpathian Mountains. Free time to visit Brasov or short walk on Tampa hill (2-3hrs), offering beautiful views over the historical town. Dinner & lunch not included.

Transfer: 2h40 by bus

Meals: breakfast

D3 Thurs. 10th Sept. - Varghis keys and Viscri

Today we'll transfer to the village of Varghis. From there we'll start a 3-4h walk through the Varghis Gorges. We'll discover a variety of limestone cliffs, tall and steep slopes, from which spring a lot of mountain streams, all combined with lush greenery.

After we have refreshed ourselves with so much fresh air, we'll move on to an impressive UNESCO recognized site - the fairytale fortified church of Viscri. This charming church was restored with Prince Charles's help. But our journey doesn't stop here. After such an intense history lesson, you deserve a plentiful dinner, which we'll provide for you at the guesthouse in the same village, Viscri.

Transfer: 1h30 by bus

Walk duration: 3-4h, +/-700

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner



D4 Fri. 11th Sept. - Piatra Craiului National Park and Curmatura Hut

After a short transfer, we head into the Piatra Craiului National Park. Our walk will start with a nice steady climb following woodland trails that are picturesque and rich in birdsong. We end up to our lovely lunch spot at Cabana Curmatura, where we can take-in the views of the Valley and Canyon surrounding us. Lunch will be a real delight today with local soup and an amazing apple pie!! Full up from lunch we make our way downhill through open hills before entering a large wooded area along the river. We will follow an old track to The Jurassic Zarnesti Canyon. The last ascent will bring us to the fairy-tale village of Magura where we will spend our next couple of nights in a traditional and cosy guesthouse.

Transfer time: 1h00 in the morning

Walk duration: 5h30, 15km, +750/-600m

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner



D5 Sat. 12th Sept. - Bran Castle

Our walk will start from Magura, and we begin with a slow ascent through green pastures and traditional farmland. We will join a shaded forest track for some time, where we will still be gradually ascending, before the forest opens up to reveal a magnificent hilltop where we can stop and admire the wonderful views below! We make our way to our hillside lunch spot with a gentle walk. Our lunch spot is picturesque as it overlooks a very remote farmhouse that has no electricity and no running water, and is owned by a charming local farmer herding his cattle with not a care in the world!! After lunch we follow a good terrain before descending a very steep hill (500m). The descent is paired with fantastic views of Bran Castle so take your time, go slowly and take it all in. When we reach Bran you can choose to go inside or simply explore it from outside. Most people know Bran Castle as "Dracula's Castle", from Bram Stoker's novel. This story is loosely based on Vlad Tepes who ruthlessly defended this part of Transylvania, and in the process, the legend of his rather



gruesome killings inspired the story of Dracula. Bran Castle is an amazing example of 14th century Gothic architecture that looks like it was carefully placed on top of a mountain. Going to Bran Castle one can really experience the feeling of what it was like to live in those times and places. As you wander through the mazes of rooms, stairways, secret passages and levels connected with wooden ladders, it's easy to imagine the history and secrets hidden there. It's on mountaintops, so you can walk around outside for great views and fresh Carpathian Mountain air. After we have had ample time to explore we will have a private transfer to our guesthouse.

Transfer time: 35 mins from Bran to Magura

Walk duration: 4h30, 12 km +350/-600m

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner



D6 Sun. 13th Sept. - Mountain village

Today we continue the walk at the foot of the Piatra Craiului Mountains in this bucolic landscape in the middle of pastures, sheepfolds and woods. We will approach a sheepfold where, if it's not too late in the year (our notes: the animals are there until around 15th of September), we can stop and taste the traditional cheese "burduf" being made here at this remote Cheese house. Our guide will give us a talk on cheese making.

We will end the stage in a scattered village, which seems not to care about time passing. We will see spectacular landscapes in the surrounding mountains. Accommodation in a nice guesthouse set in an idyllic village.

Walk duration: 5h00, 14 km +/-550m

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner

D7 Mon. 14th Sept. - Mountain Village walk - Bucegi Mountains

After waking up to a picturesque setting you will enjoy a hearty breakfast before starting on your walk. Today's walk takes you through a mix of quaint villages where traditional customs and cultures still exist. You will pass by one of the oldest houses in this area, which is nearly 200 years old. We will stop in a lovely local house where there is a small museum about the villages you are walking through. Depending on the time of day it may also be possible to visit two local Orthodox Churches before relaxing in your cosy guesthouse whose owner is a well renowned cook. That's why all our meals will be home-cooked with the owner's own traditional agriculture.

Walk duration: 4h00, 13 km +250/-350m

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner

D8 Tues. 15th Sept. - Ridge to ridge walk at Bucegi Mountains

Our walk begins with a nice slow steady climb to the top of the ridge, passing many Sherpa Huts along the way to La Bisericuta, where we will have spectacular views of the Bucegi Mountains and the Valley Bangaleasa below. There will be plenty of time to take photos here and admire the scenery. Slowly we will descend into the Valley below and enter the Bucegi National Park. From here, a longer walk is possible to a second ridge and onto our lunch spot at Poiana Gutanu Meadows, where we will have a well-deserved rest and a packed lunch.



Walk duration:

Long: 5h30, 18 km +/-850m

Short: 3h30, 12 km +/- 350m
Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner

D9 Wed. 16th Sept. - Bear sanctuary – church of Vulcan

After a short transfer, today we will visit the Bears Sanctuary, where you will hear plenty of interesting stories about the bears that you will see. From there we will start a short easy hike to visit the fortified church, the witness of the Saxon heritage since they colonised Transylvania in 13th century. In the village we will have a surprising encounter with the priest of this old church an enthusiastic and intelligent young man who will explain to us the story of the church and will make us taste some local specialities. After that we will meet our vehicles and transfer in a magnificent traditional village with great views to the crests of the surrounding mountains for the last three nights. From here we will transfer back to Bucharest, with a small stop to see the magnificent Castle Peles. The evening will be free to spend some quality time in Bucharest exploring this astonishing city. Accommodation at a 3* central hotel.



Transfer time before the walk: 45min

Transfer time to Bucharest: 3h

Walk duration: 4h00, 14 km +250m/--350m

Meals: breakfast, picnic, dinner

*** Any people joining for the weekend extension to Bucharest fly from the UK and arrive at 17.00**

D10 Thurs. 17th Sept. - Bucharest & Departure

Breakfast at the hotel. Bucharest it was known between the two world wars as "the Eastern Paris". Today is a very eclectic city, where you can see the influences of The Medieval period with its Ottoman occupation and of the modern period with the influence of neoclassical French architecture and of the communist period. If your flight schedule allows, you can visit the Romanian capital with the help of a road-book created by us with a lot of attention. End of the trip.

Meals: breakfast

***Any people not taking part in the Bucharest extension weekend fly home at 14.25**

*** Bucharest extension for those remaining continues until Sunday 20th when they return to the UK, departing Bucharest at 07.55**

Services	Carpathian Mountains, villages and castles Guided walking – 10 days / 9 nights
GUIDE	English speaking local Romanian guide until your arrival in Bucharest on Day 9 evening, with a first-aid kit.
WELCOME	Bucharest airport.
END OF THE TRIP	Day 10, after breakfast.
TRANSFERS	All transfers are by train, private minibus or taxis.
LUGGAGE	During hiking days, you only need to take a small day pack. Your main luggage is transferred between the guesthouses.

LODGING	<p>Double occupancy with private facilities.</p> <p>1 night in Brasov, 2* hotel in centre of the city, simple yet charming</p> <p>1 night in Viscri</p> <p>2 nights in Magura</p> <p>1 night in Ciocanu</p> <p>2 nights in Moieciu de Sus</p> <p>2 nights in Bucharest, 3* hotel in centre of the city</p>
MEALS	<p>9 breakfasts, 7 picnics and 7 dinners to our guesthouses.</p> <p>Dinner: 3 course menu- entrée/soup, main dish and a dessert.</p> <p>Occasionally dinner is a 2 course meal.</p> <p>Not included: Drinks. Dinner day 2 & 9.</p>
LENGTH & LEVEL	<p>10 days / 7 days of walking. Medium+ level of walking with a maximum day at 6 hours.</p> <p>Some walks could change depending of the group level or the weather conditions.</p>
NOT INCLUDED	<p>Meals as indicated, drinks, items of personal nature. Entry fees into monuments (except the Sanctuary), gratuity for TL, the insurances.</p>
INCLUDED	<p>Entrance fee to Bears Sanctuary.</p>
GROUP SIZE	<p>Minimum 6, maximum 14 participants.</p>
SINGLE Supplement	<p>+ £110. All of the single rooms will be billed, including the forced ones.</p>
TO NET PRICES	<p>£750 / pax from 6 to 9 participants</p> <p>£690 / pax from 10 to 14 participants</p>