



Transylvania's Heritage by bike - guided version

8 days / 7 nights

Transylvania is famous across the world for its mysterious legends and its blood thirsty count who's said to have been ruling these wild lands from his hilltop castle for centuries. Although these are only legends, Transylvania is indeed a most spectacular place, where tradition, the breath-taking natural scenery and the wide variety of animals and plants which inhabit it, still co-exist harmoniously today, not caring of the fast paced advancements of the modern world we're surrounded with. Guarded by the glorious Eastern Alps, also known as the Carpathian Mountains, this fairy tale land was always fiercely fought for. First, the Saxons settled here, early in the 11th century and they bravely kept the passes between Transylvania and Wallachia safe from the powerful Tatars and the Ottomans. This bloody and fascinating history is waiting for you to discover it. You will experience not only brilliant castles, fortified churches and medieval towns but also small environmental reserves, untouched still by the heavy hand of modern advancements, and absolutely sublime in their natural simplicity

YOUR PROGRAM

Day 1 - Arrival in Bucharest

We're starting in Bucharest where you will be welcomed by your guide and transferred out of Bucharest (either by train or private transfer, according to the final number of participants) to a small and peaceful town named Vulcan on the outskirts of Transylvania, in Brasov's county. This transfer is roughly three hours long, but we will manage it just fine with the help of a few breaks on the way. Night in the village's cozy Parochial Home. (Dinner)

Day 2 - Cycling to the oldest water mill in the country

After breakfast we're all ready and set up to begin our ride on an easy and flat stretch of road, overseeing the spectacular panorama with snowy summits of the Postavaru Mountains, as we cross through the little mountain town of Zarnesti. At lunch we stop for visit at the still working oldest flour mill in Transylvania, powered by the clear river which runs just next to it. Also, here is where we will learn the tumultuous story of the owner's life and his mill's hardships during the rough communist time. After a well-deserved refreshing lemonade and a tasty piece of cake, we continue our adventure, heading to a lovely little village where we'll spend the night, just at the foot of the grand Fagaras mountain range. If we're lucky and the weather is on our side, we will lengthen our journey by just a little bit, enough to allow us to discover an ancient and mystical worshipping cave, home to Zalmoxis, the supreme deity of the Dacian people who have ruled these lands 2000 years ago. Night in a charming family guesthouse.

(Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner ~55 km, +250, -400m)



Day 3 - The foot of the Fagaras Mountains

Today the Fagaras mountain's ridges will follow and charm us all day long as if to prove its grandeur, these being the highest Romanian Mountains. In the morning after we had our copious breakfast, we begin today's adventure by heading to the quaint small village of Lisa, where an over 100-year-old, still functional machine which tailors woolen blankets, covers and clothes is waiting for us to hear its turbulent story. So we will stop here and listen to the owner's tales and see for ourselves the old and intricate ways of producing perfect woolen produce. When we're done, we retake our ride through the once successful industrial town, nowadays laying barely asleep, surrounded by the ruins of its old communist machinery and majestic mountaintops. We then head our home for tonight just next door to a stunning ruined Cistercian Monastery where we can still sense the spirits of its old monks working and praying. Here we'll have the opportunity to meet the nowadays pastor who's a natural storyteller, and who's going to enchants us with the place's rich history and funny legends. Possible detour to the spiritual Sambata de Sus (Higher Saturday) Monastery, + 10km. Night in a comfortable guest house, on the grounds of Carta's watermill.

(Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner ~65 km, +300m, -450m)

Please note that depending on the seasonal period accommodation on this day is possible in either Carta or Cartisoara. As a consequence, on some departures our groups may visit the Monastery in Carta on day 4.



Day 4 - Cycling to the largest Fortified Church of Transylvania

Soon after we filled our breakfast appetite we begin with a thrilling bridge crossing of the river Olt. We then continue our journey onto picturesque country roads where we might see locals at work, either carrying fresh produce by horse carts, plowing the fields in the old fashioned ways or simply working their home garden and being thrilled to see and meet new visitors. But we must resist the temptation and continue advancing through these pristine pastoral landscapes and past the 15th century fortified church of Richis as we reach to enter a once thriving town. As we enter it we will be able to see its enormous fortified church piercing the sky with its spiking towers and marking the grounds with its grand ring-walls. Free time for those who wish to discover its fascinating interiors. Since 1993, this church has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage site and for good reason, since this is undoubtedly a magical site to experience. Night in a lovely guesthouse by the



Fortified Church.

(Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner ~68 km, +600m, -650m)



Day 5 - Cycle to Sighisoara

In store for today we have a most beautiful ride through authentic Transylvanian villages, we will then catch up with the Tarnava Mare river and we will also pass by the nearby hop fields. Our evening's is one of the best of Romanian cities, Sighisoara. This is one of the last remaining and still inhabited European medieval citadels and also part of UNESCO's Heritage sites. Once we got there, we will have the rest of the afternoon entirely for ourselves! We will have plenty of visit choices, from the colorful and quirky medieval streets to the most famous Romanian clock tower, and the house of Vlad the Impaler's father. Night in a 3* lovely hotel in the heart of Sighisoara's Citadel. (Breakfast, Lunch, ~40 km, +380m, -400m)



Day 6 - Bucolic Transylvania

The journey we've prepared for today will take us on a peaceful country road which crosses through the curvy Transylvanian hills and takes us into the little quiet village of Apold. We stop for a little while to throw a look around before getting back on our saddles. We resume cycling through small farming villages, past local Shepherds looking after their sheep. For lunch we will stop at yet another impressing fortified church and here we will uncover some more interesting Saxon particularities and traditions. We will finish today's ride in a small and traditional town where we will sleep in actual traditional Romanian homes. This will give you the opportunity to truly feel like a Romanian and better interact with your hosts. Today's dinner will be organized at the largest guesthouse and it will consist of proper Romanian family dishes. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner ~48 km, +600m, -500m)



Day 7 - Following the royal heritage

Today begins with a quick uphill through a refreshing forest before we reach a nice and easy stretch of road through several small towns before arriving in Viscri. Once we get here we will start exploring this striking old village and see in depth how it was living as a Saxon back hundreds of years ago. We will also have the option to visit Viscri's beautiful fortified church. This church was brought back to life with the help of the Prince Charles foundation in 1991 and nowadays it is considered amongst the best examples of fortified churches across the world. To fully immerge you into the local spirit, we've also prepared two special meetings for you, one with the village's brick maker and the second with its blacksmith. These are two special members of this society as they are the only ones allowed to tackle with the villages restored building. For the rest of the day you'll be free to explore at your own pace since we will be located straight in Viscri's heart. (Breakfast, ~35 km, +300m, -250m)



Day 8 - End of the trip

After serving our final rustic breakfast we will embark in our bus and head to Dracula's Bran Castle, situated right on the border between Transylvania and Wallachia. Since you are probably all very curious to see it, we will have a photo stop in front of it and hear its intriguing story. After this, if we have time, we will make another stop at the romantic castle of Peles which was the Royal Family's summer residence. Since this is a really beautiful place we will have a short walk around its spectacular gardens before we retake our trip to reach Bucharest. Once we got to Bucharest you are free to explore it as you wish with the help of the self-guided written instructions that we'll give you. End of the trip. (Breakfast) Accommodation in Bucharest available upon request.

Please note. Bran Castle is an extremely popular tourist destination and can be very busy. That's why we consider more convenient to have 2 shorter stops (Bran and Peles) and also have the time to have a short stroll in Bucharest



Additional information

TARIFFS

Price from 850 euros per person.

OPTIONS

Single supplement : 100 euros per person.

Bike rental (Arcade hybrid bikes, 21 gears, back bag, repair kit, pump.) Not included: helmet, speedometer : 85 euros per person.

Bike rental (Trek hybrid bikes with front suspension, bottle holder) : 95 euros per person.

E-bike rental : 260 euros per person.

INCLUDED

Accommodation

meals (7 breakfasts, 5 picnics and 5 dinners in the guest-houses)

English speaking local Romanian guide for 8 days, with a first - aid kit. Free visit in Bucharest

24h/24 local assistance available

NOT INCLUDED

Some of the meals (see above)

drinks, items of personal nature

bike rental with helmet

handelbag

transfer to the meeting point and from the drop off point

insurances and personal expenses

Suggested Items: light fleece top; Light windproof/waterproof jacket; headlamp, sun hat, personal clothing for mild to hot weather, sturdy walking shoes, sunblock, sunglasses.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

8 days of which 6.5 of cycling. Medium level (from 35 to 74 Km/day, with some climbs).

CARRYING

Luggage will be transferred from one guest-house to the other.

ACCOMMODATION

Double occupancy:

- 1 night in 3* small hotel in Sighisoara (D5)

- 6 nights in guesthouses, exceptionally shared facilities

SIZE OF GROUP

Minimum of 6 people.



DEPARTURES

From April to the end of October.

DEPARTURE

Bucharest.

DISPERSION

Bucharest.

HOW TO GET THERE

By plane: Otopeni airport in Bucharest.

By train : Bucharest train station.

SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

The exits of the biggest cities can have busy traffic for a few kilometres.