



Romania: Mountains to Monasteries 2025

Majestic mountains, fabled castles and rustic medieval villages await on this storybook journey through Romania. Our spellbinding adventure will take us from the elegant streets of Bucharest to the dramatic forests of Transylvania, where mountain ridges sculpt the landscape, castle spires pierce the sky and half-timbered houses transport us back in time. What stories will be written into the pages of your Romanian fairytale?





About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

Important: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

Hotel Capitol @ 18:00

Calea Victoriei 29, București, 010061

Hotel Capitol @ 14:00

Calea Victoriei 29, București, 010061

Worth noting

Booking a May or September departure? Please note that the Transalpina route, which weaves its way through the Carpathian Mountains between Sibiu and Ramnicu Valcea, is sometimes closed due to poor weather conditions. If this is the case during your tour, we'll take an alternative – although equally as scenic – route.



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Tour highlights

- ✓ Uncover legendary tales of vampires in Transylvania's formidable Bran Castle
- ✓ Relish the sweet taste of homemade brandy during a local distillery tour
- ✓ Wander the perfectly preserved medieval streets of Sighișoara, a UNESCO World Heritage site
- ✓ Experience the charm of Brasov, the gem in the heart of the Carpathian Mountains

More inclusions

- ✓ 8 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners
- ✓ 8 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- ✓ Luxury minicoach

Currencies you'll use



Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

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Your itinerary

Day 1 | Bucharest (Romania)

A warm welcome to Bucharest! Romania's buzzy capital and the perfect location to begin our small-group adventure through this captivating country. After meeting our fellow explorers at the hotel, we'll venture off into the Old Town and get to know each other a little better over dinner.

As we weave our way through cobblestone streets, keep an eye out for the ornate, Belle Époque architecture from which Bucharest heralds its nickname 'Little Paris' (intricate cast iron balconies, elegant columns and allegorical statues – we're looking at you!). Paired with eateries that spill onto the paths like overflowing treasure chests and upbeat live music that swirls through the air like a dancer, you'd be forgiven for thinking you were in fact strolling the streets of Montmartre...

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Capitol (or similar)



Meals

+ Dinner

Expertly crafted small-group tours



Day 2 | Bucharest – Sinaia – Brasov

Fantastical castles, dense forests and mythical tales... today, we start our journey into mountain territory through the lush Prahova Valley, and we'll soon begin to discover why Romania is said to be the stuff of fairytales.

We'll kick things off in the spectacular mountain resort of Sinaia, nestled at the base of the Bucegi Mountains – whose towering ridges rise and fall like the spine of a dragon. Take a moment during your lunch stop to pause and inhale the fresh scent of pine (Sinaia is hugged by centuries-old fir trees, after all) before we pay a visit to our first castle: Peleş Castle, a neo-Renaissance masterpiece and former royal summer retreat. Hear the gentle murmur of fountains in the manicured gardens, spot trompe-l'œil frescoes that cling to courtyard walls and take in the panoramic views from the Central Tower's lookout. What an introduction to Romania's storybook castles!

Our home for the next two nights will be Brasov, and this evening is yours for the taking. So, what does the first chapter in your Transylvanian tale look like? Foodies could track down a local haunt for some regional cuisine – seek out *ciorbă de vâscu* (a hearty beef and vegetable soup) and *bulz* (cheese-stuffed polenta cakes) on the menu for dinner. The city's Black Church is also well worth a visit, deriving its name from its once-charred appearance following the Great Fire of 1689. Spend some time admiring the flying buttresses and vaulted ceilings that make this a Gothic triumph. Then, as night envelops Brasov's medieval rooftops, recharge with some well-earned shuteye – our Romanian adventure continues tomorrow...

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Casa Wagner (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

Expertly crafted small-group tours



Day 3 | Brasov – Bran – Brasov

Legends of vampires, whispers of ghosts and tales of secret passages – we’re diving deeper into all things mythical at the fabled Bran Castle, a former Saxon fortress and royal residence. Perched stoically atop a cliff like a brooding bird of prey, this formidable site takes its nickname, Dracula’s Castle, from the famous vampire you’ve probably heard a thing or two about... Surrounded by the undulating Carpathian Mountains like a sweeping cape, it’s easy to see why this castle has captured the imagination of so many visitors. What secrets will you discover as you weave through narrow passageways and unearth historical artefacts? After exploring, you could track down a *kürt? skalács* for a pick-me-up, a typical Hungarian sweet treat crafted from twirled pastry that’s often dusted with cinnamon.

En route back to Brasov, we’ll indulge in the region’s local tippie at a brandy distillery in Rasnov. Learn about the unique distilling process of this traditional, fruity spirit, visit the site’s cellar and sip on five delicious varieties – feeling the vibrant flavours dance on our taste buds. We won’t blame you for stocking up on a bottle or two to take back home!

Tonight, we have another evening to ourselves in Brasov. Hungry for more stunning views? Thrill seekers could hop on the Tampa Cable Car for sweeping vistas over the former Saxon colony. You’ll surely be dreaming of cinematic landscapes tonight...

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Casa Wagner (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

Expertly crafted small-group tours



Day 4 | Brasov – Viscri – Sighisoara

Fuel up on a classic continental breakfast, we're taking the scenic route to UNESCO World Heritage-listed Viscri, recognised for its Saxon fortified church. Hear the calls of cows and geese that roam freely, spy the jumble of terracotta-tiled roofs and smell the smoke from wood-burning stoves as you take a stroll through this rustic village. Often described as being frozen in time, it's easy to picture what life might have been like here in Saxon times. If we're lucky, we'll even get the chance to meet a local blacksmith in their home workshop to learn more about the traditional, local craft.

We're in for a treat at lunch – a home-cooked, family-style meal awaits. As you help yourself to scrumptious dishes made from sun-kissed produce from the nearby vegetable garden, it's the perfect moment to pause and share our favourite stories from our journey so far.

This afternoon, it's back to the city we go – Sighisoara beckons. Founded by the Transylvanian Saxons over a millennia ago, it's awash with impeccably preserved medieval structures – more on that tomorrow! The evening is yours to spend as you wish. And, with our hotel just a stone's throw away from the Old Town, be sure to ask your expert Tour Leader for some authentic options for dinner to round off another wonderful day.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Central Park
Sighisoara (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast
+ Lunch



Day 5 | Sighisoara – Corund – Sighisoara

Ready to discover more about Sighisoara's fascinating past? This morning, we'll enjoy a walking tour of the fortified Old Town to really get to the heart of this medieval citadel. Gaze up at the Clock Tower's multi-coloured tiles that shimmer like a snake's scales before exploring inside. Spy the pointed, Gothic windows that adorn the Church of the Dominican Monastery. And, watch the sun illuminate the pastel hues clinging to the city's houses. We'll even see the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler – a fearsome 13th-century ruler, believed to have inspired Bram Stoker's classic Gothic novel *Dracula*.

Leaving Sighisoara behind for now, we'll step off our luxury minicoach to feast on a traditional lunch together at a cosy, chalet-style restaurant. Then, recharged, it's time to embrace our artistic side for a pottery class in Corund. A local expert will teach us all about the techniques and traditions that make this village's ceramics so distinctive. And, inspired by the vibrant, folk-art designs, we'll even have the chance to try our hand at wheel throwing! Every piece tells a story – what will yours say?

Free time is your friend this evening, why not pay a visit to one of the hole-in-the-wall restaurants that we passed on our Sighisoara walking tour for dinner?

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Central Park
Sighisoara (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast
+ Lunch

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Day 6 | Sighisoara – Biertan – Sibiu

Tucked away among the gently sloping hills of the Transylvanian Plateau lies Biertan, whose UNESCO-listed, fortified church dominates the skyline and watches over the village like a guardian. Hear the echo of footsteps, past and present, as we spend time exploring this magnificent Gothic centrepiece – the highlight of our orientation tour this morning.

Afterwards, we'll continue our journey westwards to Sibiu, set against the backdrop of the majestic Carpathian Mountains. This walled city at the heart of Romania is renowned for its Germanic architecture, medieval Council Tower and brilliant museums. Did you know, Sibiu is nicknamed 'The City With Eyes'? The mysterious, eye-shaped dormer windows on the roofs of buildings might just have something to do with it...

Following an orientation walk, you'll have the rest of the day to explore at your own pace. So, which corners of Sibiu are calling your name? You could uncover the legends of the cast iron Bridge of Lies, marvel at the elaborate, floor-to-ceiling neo-Byzantine paintings inside the Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral or take the local bus to the ASTRA Museum – an open-air museum spotlighting traditional Romanian folk culture and rural life.

Tonight is all yours – and with our hotel right in the centre of the action, a drink (or two) while people watching is a must. *PSSSst!* You'll find some irresistible ice cream shops nearby for dessert. So, will it be one scoop, or two? Decisions, decisions...

Included today



Accommodation

Imparatul Romanilor (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 7 | Sibiu – Sibiel – Sibiu

There's a treat in store for the foodies among us today. After a leisurely-paced morning, we'll slowly wend our way just beyond the city to the delightful village of Sibiel, where a masterclass in rustic Romanian cuisine awaits.

We'll get to know our friendly host and learn how to make a rich, authentic goulash which will double as a delicious lunch. Immerse yourself in the local flavours and cooking techniques, using fresh vegetables from our host's garden to craft this traditional Romanian meal. If we're lucky, we might even get to hand-pick them ourselves. Feel the kick of paprika and the warm hug of the rich broth as you tuck into this hearty meat and vegetable stew, and be sure to take notes on the recipe for when you're hosting back home!

Then, it's back on the minicoach for a final night in Sibiu, but not before sampling some pine tree liquor (yes, really!) and *pálinka* (a fruity-flavoured brandy) for good measure.

Included today



Accommodation

Imparatul Romanilor (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Lunch



Day 8 | Sibiu – Cozia – Ramnicu Valcea

Today's drive to Ramnicu Valcea along the Transalpina route is nothing short of breathtaking. With a road that winds its way across the valleys and plateaus of the spectacular Carpathian Mountains like an unfurling ribbon, it's one of the most photogenic locations in Romania. Get those cameras charged and ready! As we weave our way along hairpin turns and mountain passes, look out for the stunning Oaşa lake, whose water shines like a million sapphires framed by dramatic pine forests.

This afternoon, we'll swap mountains for monasteries with a visit to Cozia Monastery. Founded in the 14th century, this handsome structure perched on the banks of the River Olt is still an active Romanian Orthodox site and is one of the country's most celebrated medieval landmarks. Spot the Byzantine-style rows of brick and stone on the facade, mint green copper domes and sprawling ancient frescoes as you explore this striking complex.

We'll conclude the day in nearby Ramnicu Valcea at our centrally-located hotel. Settle in and head to the rooftop terrace for beautiful views over the Făgăraş mountains as the sun drops below the horizon, leaving candy-coloured skies behind. There's a final group dinner planned this evening at the hotel, with award-winning dishes on the menu. So, tuck in, raise a toast and reminisce over the memories made on your Romanian adventure.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Simfonia (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Dinner

Day 9 | Ramnicu Valcea – Bucharest

Sit back and relax in the minicoach, today's journey back to Bucharest is all about superb views. Fog lingers between dense pine forests, like memories suspended in time. Mountain ridges etch across the landscape as if sculpted by a giant. Rural villages pepper the fields like dustings of snow. Take it all in as you reflect on the past nine days. While our journey may be coming to an end, the spirit of storybook Romania will live on in the pages of your travel tale.

Included today



Meals

+ Breakfast

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Travel advice

Finances

Changing money

Cash: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

Credit cards: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

Cash machines: ATMS are widely available.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain



countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

Please note: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

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Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

Clothing

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Sun hat | ✓ Long-sleeved tops | ✓ Light jacket |
| ✓ Sunglasses | ✓ Short-sleeved tops | ✓ Waterproof jacket |
| ✓ Sleepwear | ✓ Shorts/skirts | ✓ Trousers |
| ✓ Warm jacket | ✓ Socks | ✓ Swimwear |
| ✓ Underwear | ✓ Smart casual evening wear | ✓ Walking/comfortable shoes |

Other essentials

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| ✓ Multi-use adapter plug | ✓ Toiletries | ✓ Camera |
| ✓ Batteries | ✓ Sunscreen | ✓ Towel |
| ✓ Umbrella | ✓ Reusable water bottle | ✓ Insect repellent |
| ✓ Any personal medication | ✓ Basic medical kit (paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc) | |

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How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

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FAQs

How long are the driving journeys on this tour?

Due to Romania's unique road network, some journeys will be slightly longer than other Back-Roads tours. The longest drive days will be approximately four to six hours on our luxury minicoach. During these periods of travelling, your group will make regular stops at various sites, so you can stretch your legs and take in the picturesque surrounds.

Will we get to visit the castles highlighted in the itinerary?

Yes, entry to the castles is included as part of your tour, including the fabled Bran Castle.

That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.

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