

Explore Central Europe - Prague to Bucharest

This tour explores the charms and wonders of Central Europe; from the gothic architecture in the cities to the utterly stunning countryside. History, legend and culture are all there to be discovered. Starting in Prague, the tour moves on to Krakow and the Tatra Mountains, the hot spas and then the Hungarian plains. The tour ends in Romania with its colorful markets, historic villages, painted monasteries, Transylvania and the city of Bucharest.

Itinerary at a Glance

- Arrive in Prague with full day touring Prague, taking in the Hradcany, St.Vitus cathedral and Charles Bridge.
- Take a walking tour of Krakow, see Rynek the main square, the castle and cathedral
- Trip to the Auschwitz/Birkenau memorial museum.
- Cross the Tatra mountains to take a dip in a Slovakian geothermal hot pools
- A stop in Poprad to see the ruined synagogue and the huge castle at Spis
- See the famous Hungarian horse shows and enjoy haggling in the colorful Debrecen flea market
- Visit Sighetu Marmatiei, the Prison, now the Museum of Arrested Thought and the Merry Cemetery
- Stay just outside the mountain village of Botiza in a homestay.
- Visit the ancient Romanian monasteries of Bogdan Voda and Barsana
- Take a scenic drive to Campulung and visit the wood carving museum
- Stay in the forest in Sucevita and visit the famous Voronet and Sucevita painted monasteries
- Tour the atmospheric citadel of Sighisoara, the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler
- In Biertan visit the huge fortified church
- Visit a man who uses spider webs to make pictures
- Visit 'Dracula's Castle' in Bran
- In Sinaia visit the Royal Castle of Peles
- Tour Bucharest including the Palace of the Parliament; the world's second largest building
- Depart from Bucharest

Full Itinerary

Day Two: Arrive in Prague

Take an orientation tour on foot through the wonderful historical centre of the city with a local guide, to see the sights around Tyn Square including; the Astronomical Clock, Powder Tower and Charles Bridge.

Day Three: Prague

A full day city tour, take a tram up to Hradcany and the entrances in the castle complex including St. Vitus Cathedral.

Day Four: To Krakow

Take the deluxe touring coach today to Krakow. Stop enroute in Olomouc to see the interesting Plague column. Upon arrival in Krakow take an evening walking tour to the main square Rynek, the largest medieval city square in Europe with wonderful atmosphere.

Day Five: Krakow

Morning walking tour of the old city of Krakow, including entrance to the castle and cathedral and passageway to Dragon's Den. Stop by the factory made famous in the film Schindler's List. An afternoon trip to the Auschwitz memorial museum. Stop in Birkenau, although there is little left of the original camp it is still very atmospheric. Alternative trips: Nowa Hutna, the site of the steel works with its socialist architecture and the new church that Pope John Paul worked hard to have built. The Wieliczka salt mines and the chapel, the underground tour to see the fabulous carvings and underground works.

Day Six: Slovakia/Hungary

Cross the Tatra Mountains into Slovakia with a fun stop in Slovakia to take a dip in the geothermal hot pools, quite a surreal experience as the steam curls up around with views of the forests in the background. Stop in Poprad to see the ruined synagogue followed by a stop to view the huge castle at Spis.

Day Seven: To Romania

See the famous Hungarian horse shows. Be amazed by the tricks and stunts performed, from controlling four galloping horses by standing on the horses' backs, to mock battles. Shopping and haggling in the colorful Debrecen flea market, where people from all over Eastern Europe arrive to sell everything from Soviet memorabilia to modern items like toothbrushes.

Day Eight Romania

A drive up into the mountains, very close to the border with the Ukraine, for a visit to Sighetu Marmatiei, the Prison and Museum of Arrested Thought and the Merry Cemetery with a local guide. In 1935 Stan Ion Patras started to add pictures and poems to his crosses at the cemetery, detailing aspects of the deceased's life and death; the result has to be seen to be believed. Continue into the mountains to the historic village of Botiza, renowned for its colorful woven rugs. Dinner and an overnight stay in a local Agrotourism in the enchanting countryside outside the village.

Day Nine: Romania

Visit the monasteries of Bogdan Voda and Barsana with a local guide to explain the rich history that has been uncovered here.

Day Ten: Romania

Take a scenic drive to Campulung. There will be snow on the pass over the mountains unless the tour is taken in mid-summer. Visit, with a local guide, to the wood carving museum. An afternoon trip to the Voronet Monastery and an overnight stay with dinner in Sucevita in the forest nearby. The monasteries in this area are like small castles in defense of the Turks and then the Europeans trying to stop the Ottoman Empire advancing. The monasteries have some of the most amazing paintings to be seen. The Voronet monastery was built in 1488 and has a color 'Voronet blue' named after the predominant color used on the paintings there. The forests in this area are home to about one third of the population of European bears and wolves.

Day Eleven: Romania

Visits to Sucevita Monastery and then Moldovita Monastery which is quite small compared to the others. Both have startling beautiful wall paintings with vibrant colors. Then out of the mountains to Sighisoara.

Day Twelve: Romania

Sighisoara is a citadel in the true medieval sense. This fortress on the hill has the old buildings and the church, with the modern town situated below. Visit the restaurant that was the birthplace of Vlad Tepes, also known as Vlad the Impaler, considered to be the inspiration for the Dracula myths. Take a walking tour with a local guide around the citadel with visits to the local museums. In Biertan visit the huge fortified church before an unusual visit to meet a man who uses spider webs to make pictures.

Day Thirteen: Brasov

A short walking tour of the city walls and the Black Church in Brasov. Continue to Bran and visit 'Dracula's Castle'. The castle was only used briefly by Vlad Tepes (Vlad the Impaler) but is a great visit all the same. Take the short route past more fortified churches to Sinaia and visit the Royal Castle of Peles. This was the world's first castle fully operated by electric power, finished in 1914 with 170 rooms; it is in a beautiful setting looking out over the mountains.

Day Fourteen: Bucharest

Take a morning city coach tour. Visit the unfinished but vast Palace of the Parliament, the second largest building in the world with 1,100 rooms. The tour highlights the scale of the building; one million cubic meters of marble and 3,500 tones of crystal. The tour will also visit the memorials and relevant sites of the 1989 revolution around the city. Free time to relax in the coffee shops and do some last minute shopping before the transfer to the airport.