

## Eastern Europe & Balkans Unveiled with Transylvania



**Tour Name:** Eastern Europe & Balkans Unveiled with Transylvania

**Tour Code:** BCTR

**Days:** 13

**Day 1**  
**Wed, 20 May**

### **Bucharest**

Welcome to Bucharest, the capital of Romania. It has a complex – and sometimes confronting – past, having spent more than four decades under Communist rule. But today, it's a dynamic, modern and energetic city with a thriving café culture, excellent museums and pockets of glorious Belle Epoque architecture.

**Day 2**  
**Thu, 21 May**

### **Bucharest > Sibiu (B,D)**

This morning, you'll begin your journey into Transylvania by travelling from Bucharest to the medieval town of Sibiu. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant with your fellow travellers after checking into your hotel.

**Day 3**  
**Fri, 22 May**

### **Sibiu > Sighisoara > Brasov (B)**

#### **Freechoice:**

Today you can choose from the following Scenic Freechoice:

**Explore the walled city:** The World Heritage-listed walled city at the centre of Sighisoara was built by the Saxons between the 12th and 17th centuries. Much of it still stands today, making it one of the best-preserved medieval cities in the world. A local guide will show you the highlights.

**Hike the hill:** If you're feeling more active, hike up the covered stairway to the 14th century Church on the Hill. It's a spectacular example of Gothic Transylvanian architecture and has been restored many times throughout history. The climb rewards you with superb views over the city. Afterwards you'll travel to Brasov, a colourful town that brings together Gothic spires, medieval watchtowers, sprawling squares and Soviet-era concrete. Here, check into your hotel for a two-night stay.

**Day 4**  
**Sat, 23 May****Brasov (B,D)**

This morning, your guide will show you the sights of Brasov, a charming town that brings together Gothic spires, medieval watchtowers, sprawling squares and Soviet-era concrete. Dracula is Transylvania's most famous figure. Though author Bram Stoker never visited Romania, he is said to have been inspired by the place you'll visit this afternoon – Bran Castle. Perched dramatically on a cliff top, this white stone fortress was built in the 14th century and is a maze of narrow passageways, hidden rooms and sunny courtyards. Tonight, join your fellow travellers and enjoy a delicious dinner in one of Brasov's finest restaurants.

**Day 5**  
**Sun, 24 May****Brasov > Bucharest (B,D)**

After breakfast, a local guide will take you to Peles Castle, a Neo-Classical masterpiece built in the 1870s by the first king of Romania as a summer residence. Inside, the rooms are exquisitely decorated with paintings, carved wood and stained glass. Nearby, Sinaia Monastery is the oldest monastery in the region and is home to two churches, one from the 17th century and one built by the royal family in the 19th century. This afternoon, you'll begin the journey back to Bucharest, where you'll check into your hotel for the night. Enjoy dinner at the hotel this evening.

**Day 6**  
**Mon, 25 May****Bucharest > Giurgiu (B,L,D)**

Today you'll explore the city of Bucharest, with your selected Scenic Freechoice followed by a panoramic tour of the city by coach. Travel from the south of Bucharest to Primaverii Palace, stopping to see its squares, including Union Square, University Square, Roman Square, Victory Square and Charles de Gaulle Square.

**Freechoice:**

Choose from the following Scenic Freechoice activities:

**Ceausescu's Spring Palace:** Located in one of the wealthiest districts in Bucharest, this 1960s residence is made up of 80 distinctive and elegant rooms decorated with silk wallpaper, wood panels, paintings by famous Romanian painters, mosaics, marble, chandeliers and mirrors made of Murano glass.

**Village Open Air Museum:** Explore the ethnography exhibits depicting Romanian heritage and culture at the Village Open Air Museum. The museum depicts authentic houses, barns, churches and more, rebuilt by craftsmen using traditional techniques.

This afternoon, you will be transferred to Giurgiu, where you will be welcomed on board your luxurious Scenic Space-Ship.

**Day 7**  
**Tue, 26 May****Silistra (B,D)**

Arrive in Silistra early this morning. This Bulgarian town has changed hands many times over the centuries. As a major Turkish fortress and trade centre in the 15th century, it played a significant role in the Russo-Turkish wars of the 1870s, briefly became part of Romania after the Second Balkan War and finally reverted to Bulgaria in 1940. The town is dotted with historic sites stretching back to late Roman times.

**Freechoice:**

Choose from the following Scenic Freechoice activities:

**Active walk to Silistra Fort:** Take a guided walking tour of the fort and learn about its history. It is the best preserved of the six points of the Turkish fortification system.

**Visit Alfatar Village:** Take an excursion to the small village of Alfatar, located just outside of Silistra. Visit the ethnographic museum featuring a typical country house, see customary attire and visit the Alfatar school to meet local children for a charming choir performance and learn about daily life for young Bulgarians.

**Sveshtari Thracian Secrets:** Explore the ancient Thracian Tomb of Sveshtari and discover the rich heritage and flavours of Bulgaria on this unique guided tour.

**Day 8**  
**Wed, 27 May****Rouse (B,L,D)**

This morning you'll arrive in Rouse, which has been described as 'Little Vienna'.

**Freechoice:**

These interesting Freechoice excursions are available today:

**Excursion to Veliko Tarnovo and Arbanassi:** Take a full day excursion from Rouse to Veliko Tarnovo, one of Bulgaria's oldest towns. Enjoy the panoramic views of the old town and see the Asenevtsi Brothers Monument. You will then venture to the nearby leafy village of Arbanassi.

**Walking tour of Rouse:** Join a local guide for a sightseeing tour of this opulent town, resplendent in Belle Epoque architecture and leafy manicured squares, and an exclusive piano recital.

**Day 9**  
**Thu, 28 May**

**Cruising Day (B,L,D)**

Today you'll cruise through the spectacular scenery of the Djerdap Gorge system, or Iron Gates. This stretch of the Danube is the natural border between Serbia and Romania, and features four narrow gorges, soaring cliffs and the mighty rock carving of Decebalus, the former Romanian king. Spend some time relaxing in your suite, many of which feature a Scenic Sun Lounge, allowing you uninterrupted views to watch a rolling tapestry of river life as you cruise the Danube. Perhaps relax on the Sun Deck then mingle with other guests in the Panorama Lounge & Bar.

**Day 10**  
**Fri, 29 May**

**Belgrade (B,L,D)**

The capital of Serbia, Belgrade is known as the 'Door to Central Europe' and lies at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers. This eclectic city is steeped in history, Brutalist and Art Nouveau buildings and a bohemian vibe. One of the oldest capitals in Europe, Belgrade has been rebuilt almost 40 times.

**Freechoice:**

Choose from the following Scenic Freechoice activities:

**Guided tour of Belgrade:** Tour the iconic sites of the city with a guide. You will explore the city's highlights such as cobbled streets of the Bohemian Quarter and Kalemegdan Fortress. Afterwards, enjoy free time to explore on your own.

**Panoramic tour of Belgrade with Tito's Memorial:** Join a panoramic tour of Belgrade with a local guide. See and learn about the major sites of the city including the Ottoman heritage of the Old Town and visit the memorial dedicated to Tito, the former ruler of Yugoslavia.

**Cycling tour along the Danube:** Trace the banks of the Danube on two wheels during this guided cycling tour. This afternoon, you're free to explore Belgrade further. You might like to soak up the bohemian culture with a wander along the cobblestoned Skardalija Street, a district once frequented by writers and artists and other creative souls, now home to traditional restaurants, local stores and galleries.

**Enrich**

Visit the St. Sava Temple, the largest orthodox temple in the Balkans. Have a chance to admire the frescos-lined walls of the cathedral's crypt where the church choir will perform some of the most beautiful hymns just for you. The crypt's remarkable acoustics make this a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, as white marble adorns the remarkable ceilings.

**Day 11**  
**Sat, 30 May**

**Osijek (B,L,D)**

Your Scenic Space-Ship will arrive this morning in the Croatia town of Osijek, a small city with a turbulent history. Many of the grand Baroque buildings remain standing but bear the scars of the war. Osijek is famous for its food, which features plenty of paprika, locally-made sausages and river fish.

**Freechoice:**

Choose from the following Scenic Freechoice activities:

**Walking tour of Osijek:** Take a guided walking tour of Osijek to see the highlights of the town including the well-preserved Baroque Old Town and fortress. You'll also have the opportunity to hear some traditional and classical music popular in the region.

**Baranja wine region:** In this picturesque region straddling Croatia and Hungary, explore a rich wine-making tradition and scenic vineyards. Enjoy a tasting experience blending rich flavours, local culture and breathtaking landscapes.

After your touring this morning, visit the home of a local Croatian family and have lunch with the family members. Immerse yourself in this cultural and culinary experience, and enjoy an authentic meal prepared with fresh vegetables from the host's garden.

**Day 12**  
**Sun, 31 May**

**Mohács > Budapest (B,L,D)**

You will arrive in Mohács this morning. Straddling the Danube, this small Hungarian town was the site of the 16th century Battle of Mohács, which led to the destruction of the Hungarian monarchy and the rise of Ottoman and Habsburg rule.

**Freechoice:**

These interesting Freechoice excursions are available today:

**Guided tour of Pecs:** Located close to the Croatian border, this guided tour will take you to city's first telephone exchange, which opened in 1885; the Turkish Bath of Pasha Memi, demolished in the late 19th century but unearthed in the 1970s, and more.

**Villány wine village:** The region of Villány is known for its big, bold red wines. Visit the charming village, with rows of historic wine cellars where you can sample local drops.

**Zsolnay Ceramics Museum:** Founded in 1853, Zsolnay Porcelain has a proud history of creating hand-painted ceramics. View a splendid collection housed in the company's former factory.

**Day 13**  
**Mon, 01 Jun****Budapest (B)**

After breakfast, transfer to Budapest airport for your onward journey, taking with you a treasure trove of wonderful memories.

This itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for operational reasons such as high and low water. As such, the cruise may operate altered from that stated above. Please refer to our terms and conditions. Please book your flight to depart out of Budapest after 12:00 PM.