

Discover the Soul of Romania: A 12-Day Private Tour

Perfect as a Danube Cruise Extension

Discover the soul of Romania on this 12-day private journey designed as the perfect pre- or post-extension to your Danube cruise. From the elegance of Budapest to the charm of Bucharest, travel through time as you explore vibrant towns, majestic castles, remote monasteries, and living traditions. Experience local life with home-cooked meals, folklore shows, and artisan encounters. Breathtaking landscapes, such as the Bicz Gorges and the Transfăgărășan Road, complement the cultural richness. This itinerary offers a deep, personal connection to Romania's past and present — all in comfort, with handpicked experiences along the way.

Day 1: Budapest – Carei | Welcome to Romania

After disembarking from your Danube cruise, journey eastward into Romania. Your first stop is the elegant **Karolyi Castle** in Carei, where you'll explore aristocratic halls and manicured grounds. A **tasting at a local winery** introduces you to Romanian wines in a relaxed countryside setting. Settle into your hotel and enjoy a quiet evening in this peaceful town, the perfect gentle start to your cultural adventure.

Hotel House of Charles 4* or similar



Day 2: Carei – Vadu Izei | The Wooden Soul of Maramureș

Travel into the heart of Maramureș, a land of wooden churches and timeless traditions. Stop in Săpânța to marvel at the vividly painted **Merry Cemetery**, then continue to the towering wooden church of **Peri Monastery**. Visit Sighet's the moving **Memorial to the Victims of Communism** and the unusual **open market**, where the fruits and vegetables are vying for space with products originating from Ukraine, only a couple of miles away. End your day with a **home-cooked dinner** and **private folklore show** in a local guesthouse in Vadu Izei.

Rural family stay: Casa Covaciu or similar + traditional dinner and private folklore show





Day 3: Vadu Izei – Gura Humorului | Into Bucovina's Painted World

Begin with the exquisite **Barsana Monastery**, a masterpiece of Maramureș woodcraft. Drive into the Rodna Mountains for a **chairlift ride** and **short hike** to Romania's highest waterfall, Cascada Cailor. Continue into Bucovina to visit the delightful **Painted Egg Museum** and end your day at the **Voroneț Monastery**, famed for its vibrant blue frescoes and serene setting among pine-covered hills.

Hotel Sentir 4* or similar

Day 4: Gura Humorului – Văratec | Monastic Life & Folklore

Delve deeper into monastic Bucovina with visits to two more remarkable monasteries: **Moldovița** and **Sucevița**, UNESCO-listed for their intricate exterior frescoes. After lunch, stop at the **Popa Museum** to discover the artistry of Romanian folk sculpture and masks. Your day concludes at Văratec Monastery, a living spiritual community where you'll **dine with the nuns** and **sleep within the monastery walls**. A unique opportunity to glimpse into the nuns' way of life.

Unique accommodation within the walls of the Văratec monastery + dinner cooked and served by the nuns.



Day 5: Varatec – Sighisoara | From Dramatic Cliffs to Medieval Charm

Depart the peaceful monasteries and descend through the dramatic **Bicaz Gorges**, a breathtaking drive between towering cliffs. Continue through scenic landscapes into Transylvania and arrive in the storybook citadel of **Sighișoara**. Explore cobble streets, ancient towers, and colorful houses on a guided tour. Known as the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler, Sighișoara is rich in legends and perfectly preserved medieval charm.

Fronius Residence 4* or similar



Day 6: Sighișoara – Sibiu | Cultural Gems of Transylvania

Stop at the half-ruined yet evocative **Bethlen Castle**, a hidden Renaissance gem slowly awakening from decades of neglect. Its faded grandeur offers a glimpse into Transylvania's noble past. Meet a **Roma (gipsy) family** to gain insights into their heritage, challenges, and vibrant traditions, often unseen by mainstream tourism. Then travel through Saxon villages toward **Sibiu**, once a capital of European culture. Stroll through its majestic squares, admire baroque façades, and walk across the iconic Bridge of Lies.

Hotel Republique 4* or similar



Day 7: Sibiu – Hunedoara – Alba Iulia – Sibiu | Castles and Citadels

A day of imposing castles and deep history. Visit the gothic **Hunyadi Castle** in Hunedoara, the former residence of Transylvanian rulers, then continue to the **Church of Densuș**, an enigmatic 7th-century structure built with Roman stones. Enjoy a **traditional Romanian lunch** in the home of a local village family. On the return journey to Sibiu, a short stop in **Alba Iulia**, with its beautifully restored Vauban-style citadel. The city is the symbol of the country's unity.

Hotel Republique 4* or similar



Day 8: Sibiu – Braşov via Transfăgăraşan | The Ultimate Road Trip

Cross the Carpathians on the breathtaking **Transfăgăraşan** Road, hailed by *Top Gear* as one of the world's best drives. Continue to **Bran Castle**, dramatically perched and steeped in both legend and history — often linked with Dracula, though its real story is richer still. Arrive in **Braşov**, nestled beneath forested hills, and enjoy a walking tour of the medieval town center, with its Black Church, ornate guild houses, and relaxed café culture.

Hotel Prinz Gregor 4* or similar



Day 9: Hungarian Villages near Braşov | Hungarian Heritage of Transylvania

Step into the Hungarian heritage of southeast Transylvania. Visit the impressive **Prejmer citadel**, a UNESCO site, and explore a functioning water mill that still grinds flour the old-fashioned way. Discover the quirky Ika Tower and Haszmann Pál **ethnographical museum** with its open-air collection of rural tools and agricultural machinery. Join a local for a two-hour long **hands-on bread-making workshop** followed by a **traditional Hungarian lunch**.

Hotel Prinz Gregor 4* or similar



Day 10: Braşov – Bucharest | From Royal Trails to City Lights

Journey south toward Bucharest, stopping at the fairy-tale **Peleş Castle** nestled in the mountains of Sinaia. One of the most spectacular castles on the continent, Peleş was the favorite project of the country's first king, who devoted it 42 years of his life and a large part of his considerable fortune. With its ornate woodwork, secret passages, and royal legacy, it's a tour highlight. Continue through the rolling countryside, towards the capital. Arrive in **Bucharest** and settle in for the capital's vibrant mix of past and present.

Hotel Capitol 4* or similar



Day 11: Bucharest | Highlights of the Capital

Take in the capital's layered identity on a guided city tour. See wide boulevards, Belle Époque architecture, and the imposing **Palace of the Parliament** — the world's heaviest building. Admire the **Arch of Triumph**, a proud symbol of Romanian unity, and enjoy an interior visit of the splendid **Romanian Atheneum**, the city's beloved concert hall. Wrap up with a culinary stroll through the lively **Obor Market**.

Hotel Capitol 4* or similar



Day 12: Departure | La Revedere, Romania!

After breakfast, enjoy a relaxed **private transfer** to the airport for your onward journey. Whether this tour began or ended your Danube cruise, it completes your experience with intimate insights into Romanian culture, history, and landscapes. Depart with rich stories, warm memories, and a connection to a land that's both complex and welcoming.

What's included:

- A private tour – just for you and your family or friends;
- The services of an English-speaking guide throughout the trip (guiding available in Spanish or French upon request);
- Pick-up directly from your Danube river cruise ship in Budapest;
- Transportation in a modern, comfortable vehicle, with all associated costs covered;
- 11 nights in centrally located 4-star hotels, charming B&B and monastic accommodation*;
- Daily breakfast, 3 traditional home-cooked meals and one monastic dinner;
- A wine tasting of Romanian wines;
- A private folklore show;
- All entrance fees and guided visits as outlined;
- A beautiful, welcoming country ready to be explored.

**Staying one night at the monastery is subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed in advance — however, it is usually not a problem to arrange, especially if requested early.*

What's not included:

- International flights or other transportation to/from the start or end of the tour;
- Meals not specifically mentioned above;
- Gratuities for your guide (at your discretion).