

BALKAN TOUR

Budapest -Sofia

11Days



DAY 1 Arrival-BUDAPEST

Arrival to Budapest airport in the late evening. Transfer to the hotel. Accommodation and dinner at hotel Overnight, Budapest

DAY 2 BUDAPEST-EGER-DEBRECEN

07:00-09:00 Breakfast at the hotel

09:00 Sightseeing Budapest with a local guide

Budapest is one of the most beautiful and enjoyable European cities, called sometimes 'The Paris of the East'. With its rich history, amazing architecture and unique atmosphere, it is definitely a 'must-see' while travelling around central Europe. During the tour you will first discover the oldest part of the city- Castle Hill District on the Buda side. The Castle Hill was settled in 1242, after the withdrawal of the Mongolian invaders. On the Pest side you'll be driven along the Andrássy boulevard lined with elegant late 19th century buildings, including the State Opera House, the old Music Academy and several elegant mansions and villas. The first subway line in continental Europe was opened under the Andrássy boulevard. You will enter to Buda Castle and St Stephen's Basilica.

12:00 Lunch in a local restaurant
13:30 Transfer to Eger (132km)

15:30 Sightseeing Eger with a local guide

Eger is a Hungarian city located in the northern part of the country. It is famous for its architecture, thermal baths, wine and its castle, historically known for repelling the Turkish invasion in 1552. You will visit the castle.

17:00 Transfer to Debrecen (131km)
19:00 Accommodation and dinner at hotel Overnight, Debrecen

DAY 3 DEBRECEN- CLUJ-NAPOCA

07:00-09:00 Breakfast at the hotel
09:00 Transfer to Cluj-Napoca (214km)
13:00 Lunch in a local restaurant

14:30 Sightseeing Cluj-Napoca with a local guide

This western city in the region of Transylvania traces its origins back to the Dacian settlement of Napuca in the 2nd century A.D. After the Roman take-over of Dacia, it was renamed Napoca and in 124 A.D., received the rank of "municipium". The city quickly advanced socially and economically and during Marcus Aurelius' reign Napoca received the title "colonia", the highest possible urban status in the

Roman Empire. The name Cluj comes from Castrum Clus, first used in the 12th century as the name of the citadel surrounding the city. Clus means "closed" in Latin and refers to the hills that surround the city. German merchants, who arrived here in the 12th century, rebuilt the medieval earthen walls of Clus in stone after the Tartar invasion of 1241. Known as Klausenburg to the Germans* and Kolosvar to the Hungarians, Cluj became Cluj Napoca in the 1970s, when the communist regime added the name of the old Roman settlement to emphasize its Daco-Roman origin.

18:00 Accommodation and dinner at hotel Overnight, Cluj-Napoca

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DAY 4 CLUJ-NAPOCA – TIRGU MURES – SIGHISOARA – BIERTAN

07:00-08:00 Breakfast at the hotel
08:00 Transfer to Tirgu Mures (110km)

10:00 Tirgu Mures sightseeing with a local guide

Named literally for a 'market' on the Mures River and known as the city of roses, Tirgu Mures enjoys the best of both Romanian and Hungarian cultures. Numerous

vestiges attest the presence of Neolithic cultures and those of the Bronze and Metal Ages in this area. Archaeological diggings have brought to light Roman relics in the surrounding towns. During medieval times, guilds, made up of groups of craftsmen, played an important role in the evolution of the town. Targu Mures' top attraction is located at the south end of the square: the Culture Palace (Palatul Culturii), a flamboyant early 20th-century city hall with an outstanding stained-glass hall, housing some of main local museums.

12:00 Lunch in a local restaurant
13:30 Transfer to Sighisoara (55km)

14:30 Sightseeing Sighisoara with a local guide

Sighisoara (UNESCO), also called "The Pearl of Transylvania" a wonderful medieval city where you can still enjoy the medieval atmosphere. The historic centre of Sighisoara is composed of a fortified site spread over a steeply sloping plateau and dominated by City Hill, and the Lower Town with its woody slopes lying below. These two sectors form an indissociable group corresponding to the historic boundaries of the medieval town.

16:30 Transfer to Biertan (30km)

17:00 Visit Biertan fortified church with a local guide

Biertan is one of the most significant examples of Saxon villages in Transylvania. It is distinguished by three fortified churches that have been on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites since 1993. You will visit the Biertan Fortified church.

19:00 Transfer back to Sighisoara

19:30 Accommodation and dinner at hotel Overnight, Sighisoara

DAY 5 – SIGHISOARA – SIBIU – BRASOV

07:00-08:00 Breakfast at the hotel
08:00 Transfer to Sibiu (94km)

10:00 Sightseeing Sibiu with a local guide

Sibiu is a pedestrian-friendly city with two easily accessible levels: the Upper town, home to most of Sibiu's historic sights, and the Lower town, lined with colorful houses on cobblestone streets and bounded by imposing city walls and defense towers overlooking the river Cibin. Sections of the medieval wall still guard the historic area, where narrow streets pass steep-roofed 17th century buildings with gable overhangs before opening into vast, church-dominated squares such as Great Square and Little Square. Some of the main attractions are: Orthodox cathedral, Museum of steam locomotives, Big Square... You will visit the Brukenthal Palace and enter the Museum of Folcloric Traditional Civilization.

13:00 Lunch in a local restaurant
15:00 Transfer to Brasov (143km)

17:30 Sightseeing Brasov with a local guide

The city of Brasov is one of the oldest in Europe, dating from 1235. During the Middle Ages, Brasov was known as a powerful fortress surrounded by high stone walls and defended by bulwarks, towers and other small fortresses. The buildings and the streets in the historical centre still preserve a medieval note. You enter to the Black Church.

19:30 Accommodation and dinner at the hotel Overnight, Brasov

DAY 6 BRASOV-BRAN-SINAIA-BUCHAREST

07:00-09:00 Breakfast at the hotel
09:00 Transfer to Bran (28km)

09:30 Sightseeing Bran with a local guide

Bran Castle is a slender stronghold with tile roofs erected in the 14th century, located not far from the city of Brasov in Romania. It commands the green hills on the edge of the Little Carpathians, a sub-range of the great chain arcing across Romania.

The Bran castle, which you'll visit, was built in the 14th century, a stronghold to protect the villagers and landowners of the plains beyond the Bucegi Mountains, although it is most famous for being the location of the famous vampire, Dracula.

11:30 Transfer to Sinaia (49km)
12:30 Lunch in a local restaurant

14:00 Sightseeing Sinaia and Peles with a local guide

Prince (Spătarul) Mihail Cantacuzino founded the monastery upon his return from a pilgrimage to Mount Sinai. The first buildings were completed between 1690 and 1695. It was designed to serve as a monastery as well as a fortified stronghold on the route from Brasov to Bucharest. You will visit Peles Castle.

17:00 Transfer to Bucharest (125km)

19:00 Accommodation and dinner at the hotel Overnight, Bucharest

DAY 7 BUCHAREST-VELIKO TARNOVO

07:00-09:00 Breakfast at the hotel

09:00 Sightseeing Bucharest with a local guide

Bucharest is a booming city with many large infrastructure projects changing the old face of the city. Known in the past as "The Little Paris," Bucharest has changed a lot lately, and today it has become a very interesting mix of old and new that has little to do with its initial reputation. Finding a 300 year old church, a steel-and-glass office building and Communist-era apartment blocks next to one another is a common sight. Bucharest offers some excellent attractions, and has, in recent years, cultivated a sophisticated, trendy, and modern sensibility that many have come to expect from a European capital. Bucharest has been undergoing major construction and modernization works in recent years, such as the Basarab Overpass and the National Arena. You will visit the Historic National Museum and the Stavropoleos Church.

12:00 Lunch in a local restaurant

13:30 Transfer to Veliko Tarnovo (183km) 18:00 Accommodation and dinner at the hotel Overnight, Veliko Tarnovo

DAY 8 VELIKO TARNOVO-KAZANLAK-PLOVDIV

07:00-09:00 Breakfast at the hotel

09:00 Sightseeing Veliko Tarnovo with a local guide

After the Liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman dominion in 1878 Veliko

Tarnovo was the temporary capital of the country. In 1879 the First Constituent Assembly was called, on which the so called Tarnovo Constitution was adopted. Here was the First Grand National Assembly was also established. It elected Prince Alexander I of Batenberg (1857 – 1893) for Bulgarian ruler. In architectural terms, the appearance of the old part of the town takes the visitors in the past. Walking along Gurko street or Samovodskata Charshia (the crafts streets), the town guests have the possibility to see houses built over 200 years ago, as well as to sense a completely different atmosphere. The market street is a kind of an ethnographic complex with crafts workshops, souvenir shops and galleries. You will visit the Tsarvets Fortress.

11:00 Transfer to Kazanlak (100km)

13:00 Lunch in a local restaurant

14:30 Sightseeing Kazanlak with a local guide

An original Thracian tomb from 4th – 3rd century BC is situated in the Tyulbeto park. It is known as the Kazanlak Tomb. It is under a special storage regime. Its duplicate, constructed in scale 1:1, which presents the architecture, the archaeological materials and the wall-paintings of the Kazanlak Tomb, is situated next to it. This Tomb is one of the most significant monuments of the Thracian culture in the Bulgarian lands, included in the list of the global cultural inheritance of UNESCO in 1979. The tomb was accidentally found in 1944 in the north-east region of Kazanlak, and it is a significant monument of the Thracian art from

the early Hellenistic age. You will visit as well the Rose Museum.

16:30 Transfer to Plovdiv (105km)

18:30 Accommodation and dinner at the hotel Overnight, Plovdiv

DAY 9 PLOVDIV-RILA MONASTERY-SOFIA

07:00-09:00 Breakfast at the hotel

09:00 Sightseeing Plovdiv with a local guide

Plovdiv is the second largest city in Bulgaria, situated on the Maritsa River. Its unique location on these ancient crossroads has stimulated strong cultural and political influences from East and West civilizations, and yet maintained its unique cultural identity. Being older than most of the oldest towns like Rome, Athens, Carthage or Constantinople, an almost contemporary of Troy, Plovdiv is a town built upon layers of towns and a culture developed upon layers of cultures. Plovdiv is a picturesque town, with many parks and gardens, museums and archaeological monuments. Its old part, called the Old Town, with houses from the National Revival period (18-19th century), is an imposing open-air museum situated on the three hills of the ancient Trimontium. One of the most remarkable sights of the town, the Ancient Theater (a well-preserved Roman theater), is located there and is still used for open-air performances.

11:00 Lunch in a local restaurant

12:30 Transfer to Rila Monastery (222km)

16:00 Sightseeing Rila Monastery with a local guide

DAY 10 SOFIA

07:00-09:00 Breakfast at the hotel

09:00 Sightseeing Sofia with a local guide

Today you can enjoy a complete tour of the city of Sofia and see the highlights of the capital. Among the most impressive sites are the Alexander Nevski Cathedral that

dominates the city, the round church of St. George, which is the best preserved Byzantine building, the church St Russian. Nikolas, the Banya Bashi Mosque, the ruins of ancient Serdica and some more. You will enter the Cathedral and St Gorge church and you will visit as well the National History Museum.

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