

Balkan Adventure



Balkan Adventure



-  Start Location
-  Plane
-  Cruise
-  Over night

-  Visited Location
-  End Location
-  Train
-  Ferry

Day 1 | Welcome to Bucharest



You'd be forgiven for thinking you were in Paris when you explore the Belle-Époque atmosphere of Romania's capital, Bucharest. Your first day will be free to explore the city your way, admiring the elegant boulevards that once hosted high society and an Old City filled with cobbled streets, Baroque architecture and vintage cafés. Later, join your Travel Director and fellow travelers for dinner. Why not toast to new friends to set the tone for your memorable journey?

Meals: Dinner

Hotel: Mercure Bucharest Unirii

Day 2 | Journey to Transylvania and Braşov



A full day of sightseeing stretches ahead, beginning in Bucharest where you'll join a Local Specialist to delve into the city's tumultuous history. See the immense Palace of the Parliament, one of the lasting legacies left behind by dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu, whose extravagant tastes culminated in the world's second-largest administrative building in stark contrast to the poverty of his people. Venture deep into the Carpathian Mountains to Sinaia and view Peleş Castle, the summer retreat of Romania's first king. Then, continue to Braşov and Check in to your hotel in Poiana Braşov ski resort. Enjoy traditional Romanian cuisine for dinner at your hotel against the backdrop of panoramic mountain views.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Hotel: Anna Sports

OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Bucharest Parliament Visit - Built and furnished exclusively with Romanian materials, the Bucharest Parliament building is the second-largest administrative building in the world after the Pentagon and reflects the work of the country's best artisans. Our guided visit will reveal a selection of its dazzling rooms, huge halls and quarters, where we will experience a luxurious display of crystal chandeliers, mosaics, oak paneling, marble, gold leaf, stained-glass windows and floors covered in rich carpets.

Adult: 37.00 EUR

Day 3 | Dracula's Castle and More in Braşov



The highlight of the day is this morning's visit to Bran Castle, the legendary home of Dracula. Dive Into Culture with a Local Specialist and learn about its history as the favorite royal residence of Queen Maria of Romania. Although the connection between the castle and Bram Stoker's famous literary figure is tentative at best, its imposing walls, towering spires and secret passageways may convince you otherwise. Next, we journey to the medieval streets of Braşov. The city once stood at the crossroads of trade routes linking the Ottoman Empire and western Europe, forging a melting pot of influences that can be seen to this day. Join a Local Specialist who will reveal the city's trading history and Saxon roots as you walk around Town Hall Square and see the Black Church, so named following the damage caused by the Great Fire of 1689. Your evening is free to indulge in some of the local Transylvanian favorites or consider joining your travel companions for an optional dinner.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: Anna Sports

OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Rustic Romania - Enjoy an evening of traditional Transylvanian cuisine in a location that is truly second to none. At the entrance to Poiana Brasov, one of the best preserved mountain areas and most popular ski resorts in Eastern Europe, the restaurant setting is both a winter and summer oasis for visitors. Our hosts will welcome us in their scenic garden before inviting us into their rustic mountain-style chalet, where we will be entertained by a local musician.

Adult: 73.00 EUR

Day 4 | Continue to Medieval Veliko Târnovo



Head south, through ancient villages and tranquil landscapes across the Danube River into Bulgaria. Your journey ends in Veliko Târnovo, the 'City of the Tsars' and former capital of the Bulgarian Empire. Relax after your scenic drive and join your travel companions for dinner at your hotel. After dinner, resist the urge to retire early and take a stroll through the Old City admiring the Renaissance gems that line its winding streets.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Hotel: Yantra Grand

Day 5 | Onwards to Historic Sofia



The fairy-tale façades of Veliko Târnovo exude medieval history around every turn and your Local Specialist will reveal a rich history and culture befitting a former imperial capital. At the heart of the city is Tsarevets Fortress, which you'll have an opportunity to visit as part of your sightseeing tour. Our next stop is the town of Arbanasi, renowned for its Bulgarian National Revival architecture and rich spiritual history reflected in the beautiful medieval frescoed churches that can be found here. Visit the Church of Holy Nativity before continuing to Sofia. Later this evening, you may wish to get your foot tapping to the live-music entertainment during an optional experience.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: Astoria Grand

OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Traditional Bulgarian Dinner with Musical Entertainment - Join us at one of the oldest folk-style restaurants in Sofia, housed in restored Revival houses dating back from 1866, where we will experience traditional Bulgarian cuisine with live folk music.

Adult: 72.00 EUR

Day 6 | Sofia Your Way



Join a Local Specialist for an in-depth sightseeing tour of Bulgaria's modern-day capital including views of the golden-domed St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral and St. Sofia Church. Settle in to the relaxed atmosphere and take a stroll along its elegant boulevards or sit in a park and people-watch. You could choose instead to join an Optional Experience to the UNESCO-listed Rila Monastery, founded by the hermit St. Ivan of Rila in the 10th century.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: Astoria Grand

OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Rila Monastery - Rising out of a forested valley, magnificent Rila Monastery is the largest and most important symbol of the Bulgarian Orthodox church. Founded in the 10th Century, the monastery looks like a fortress, but once through the gates you are dazzled by the kaleidoscopic frescoes and red-and-cream striped brickwork, set against the vertiginous green mountains. Our Local Specialist will explain the apocalyptic artwork beneath horseshoe-shaped arches, while black-robed monks go about their business.

Adult: 48.00 EUR

Day 7 | Journey to Macedonian Skopje



Cross the Macedonian border today, bound for Skopje, the capital, a religious crossroads, and a vibrant medieval trading center. See the Ottoman Empire's legacy in the mosques and bazaars as you join a Local Specialist for a sightseeing tour this afternoon.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: Solun Hotel & Spa

OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Skopje Dinner Party - This evening enjoy a dinner of North Macedonian specialties in a charming and rustic setting while being entertained by local musicians. A great fun evening out with the locals!
Adult: 68.00 EUR

Day 8 | Off to Albania and Tirana



Leaving North Macedonia behind, head to the Albanian capital of Tirana where, on arrival, you'll join a Local Specialist for a sightseeing tour. Delve into how the city has emerged from decades of communist rule into a vibrant, trendy tourism center – one where dour gray city blocks have been transformed into a kaleidoscope of colorful façades. You'll view such highlights as the Palace of Culture, the National Library and the Clock Tower before enjoying dinner at your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Hotel: Hilton Garden Inn

Day 9 | Journey to Budva



Travel to Budva next where your Travel Director will provide an orientation tour before you have the rest of the day to explore 'Montenegro's Miami' on your own. Head to Stari Grad (the Old Town) surrounded by 15th-century ramparts to explore its labyrinthine lanes and small squares where you could choose to sit back and watch the world go by.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: TQ Plaza

OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Happy Hour Cruise Along the Budva Riviera - We'll board our private launch in Budva for a relaxing and scenic cruise along the most popular Riviera of Montenegro. Two drinks are served along the way, as we sail around St Nicholas island, whose beaches are called Hawaii by the locals. We'll also pass exclusive resorts on our way to Becici.

Adult: 46.00 EUR

Day 10 | Visit Kotor, Venture to Mostar and Sarajevo



After an orientation in Kotor, join a Local Specialist in Mostar for a guided tour through colorful cobbled streets. Head to Sarajevo next where you'll delve into the rich religious and multicultural heritage that has earned it the nickname, the 'Jerusalem of Europe'. Tonight you'll enjoy dinner at your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Hotel: Mövenpick Sarajevo

Day 11 | Discover Sarajevo



Join a Local Specialist for a guided walking tour of Sarajevo, which will reveal centuries of religious history reflected in its beautiful synagogues, mosques and Orthodox and Catholic churches. Visit the War Tunnel, an underground tunnel of hope that was built in 1993 during the Siege of Sarajevo, allowing war supplies and humanitarian aid to reach the city at the height of the Bosnian War. Meet third-generation coppersmiths Adnan and Kenan, who are preserving Bosnia's Ottoman-era metalwork tradition on a MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience. Then, enjoy a free afternoon to explore at your own pace. Wander through the charming streets of the Old Town, where you can discover traditional shops, lively cafes and the poignant Sarajevo Roses. Local flavors and stories are on the menu tonight as you meet your host on your Be My Guest experience.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Hotel: Mövenpick Sarajevo

OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

East Meets West - Discover the best of Sarajevo on a visit to Sarajevo's iconic City Hall, an impressive Austro-Hungarian building that suffered major damage during the civil war and was reopened after restoration in 2014. Our Local Specialist will guide you through its stunning interior and share fascinating insights into its history. We then experience the unique cultural blend of Sarajevo while exploring an old merchant house with an intriguing mix of Ottoman and Austrian Imperial architecture.

Adult: 41.00 EUR

Day 12 | On the Road to Belgrade



Travel through lush forests, pastures and the Bosnian Mountains into Serbia - a scenic day of driving that will end in Belgrade. The 'White City' has a long history which you'll have an opportunity to discover tomorrow.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: Mercure Excelsior

OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Serbian Dinner in the Bohemian Quarter - It is only about a quarter of a mile long but the Skadarska street carries the spirit of Belgrade's bohemian life. With our Local Specialist we'll discover the street where the famous Serbian brandy flows. The sound of tambourines, songs and joy can be heard through the night. Indulge yourself in a hearty traditional dinner, while being entertained by live music.

Adult: 73.00 EUR

Day 13 | Explore Riverside Belgrade



Your Local Specialist will share the sights and sounds of Belgrade from an insider's perspective this morning. Delve into its Celtic, Roman, Serbian, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian history, then visit Kalemegdan Fortress, the symbol of the Serbian capital perched perfectly on a ridge overlooking the confluence of two great rivers. Discover how each of these empires has had a hand in rebuilding the fortress over the past 16 centuries. This evening, we reunite one final time for a rousing Farewell Dinner to reminisce over our shared travel experience.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Hotel: Mercure Excelsior

OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

The Genius & The Leader - The Nikola Tesla Museum in Belgrade is dedicated to undoubtedly one of the biggest inventors and scientists of our modern age, who spent the most productive years of his life in the USA, registering nearly 120 patents. We'll unravel the stories behind some of his genius inventions and hear the legends that surrounded 'the man who invented the twentieth century'. Later we visit the resting place of former Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito at the House of Flowers, built in 1975 as a winter garden near the leader's Belgrade home. Featuring impressive views of the city and set in tranquil surroundings, this is not just a scenic discovery, but also an important historical landmark. Our Local Specialist will share interesting stories of Tito and his rule.

Adult: 42.00 EUR

Day 14 | Farewell Belgrade



Our journey through the Balkans has come to an end. All that's left is to say a fond dovidenja as you bid your new friends farewell.

Meals: Breakfast