

The Treasures of

Romania

Led by the Very Rev James Atwell

Monday 10th – Wednesday 19th May 2021



The Treasures of Romania is your invitation to join a journey which reaches into the landscape, the history, the spirituality and the resilience of a nation steeped in its traditions. It will take us from the contemporary vibrancy of Bucharest on an arc of discovery as we fly to Cluj Napoca to begin our land journey. The initial staging post will be the rural area of Marmures with its ancient villages, wooden churches and traditional way of life. Our accommodation will be in a local Orthodox convent. We move on across the Carpathian mountains to the region of Bucovina legendary for its monastery churches with painted exterior walls, now recognized as of World Heritage status by UNESCO. There we shall join Orthodox Sunday worship. Our continuing journey takes us via Moldavia back through the Carpathians and the stunning Bicaz Gorge into the forests, castles and medieval towns of Transylvania. A highlight will be an encounter with a traditional way of life and a night's accommodation in an historic mansion in Szeklerland. Our continuing progress will be via Sinaia with its complex of royal residences. We shall then visit a Children's Hospice in the care of an Orthodox priest. Our final night will be in a chateau in the Wallachia wine region before returning home full of vibrant memories and insights.



Every effort has been made to provide a journey which is less about tourism and more about a pilgrimage. It is designed to allow us to understand as much as possible about the identity of the people and of the regions we visit, including their spiritual heart in the Orthodox tradition. As well as the regular hotels, our accommodation involves a touch of monastic life for two nights and two nights in historic settings. The latter experience means that we have to forego the availability of single rooms for those two nights. There will be an optional daily Eucharist.

You are welcome to join us, but do not put off a decision too long as numbers are limited by accommodation.

James Atwell.

Day 1: Monday, May 10

BUCHAREST

Arrival in Bucharest – the capital of Romania. Pickup the group from the airport and transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is free. Accommodation in Bucharest: 4-star hotel.

Meals: Welcome dinner.

Day 2: Tuesday, May 11

FULL-DAY TOUR OF BUCHAREST

After breakfast, full day sightseeing tour of Bucharest including a visit to the famous Parliament Palace. The walking tour includes Revolution Square and the bustling old centre of Bucharest. You'll also admire The Village Museum and famous boulevards and neighbourhoods of this interesting city.

The settlement of Bucharest was first mentioned in 1459 and, ever since, the town has been through a series of continuous changes, representing the central scene of Romania's political, artistic, university, financial and cultural life. Between the two world wars, due to the elegant architecture and to the elite living in Bucharest, the city was nicknamed "Little Paris". The Guinness Book of Records registers the Palace of Parliament as the second largest administrative building in the World, after the Pentagon – with a floor area of 330,000m² – and the third in the world by volume, with 2,550,000m³. The building is situated in the historical and geographical centre of Bucharest and it was built on a hill. The building, which was started in July 1984, is structured on six levels and divided into 21 areas. It includes a huge combination of monumental sculptures, gilded ornaments, decorative flooring, laced ceilings, brocade curtains, heavy carpets and tapestry, all in a succession of chambers, galleries, lavish vast rooms and halls, which split themselves or merge in a simple, overwhelming and harmonious way.

Located in a green area of Bucharest and inaugurated in 1936, The Village Museum is one of the most beautiful and most interesting museums in the country. It boasts old and original houses brought from different parts of the country. While at the Museum there will be a meeting with a person from the Orthodox Church, including discussion about the life of the church.

In Revolution Square you'll get the story of the anticommunist revolution from 1989 and you'll find out more about the hardships an entire nation had to suffer for 45 years.

The day ends with what became the most bustling area of Bucharest, the Old Centre. Once the place of princely families and nobles, later an area of the craftsmen, the Old Centre has become today the Mecca of bars, restaurants and quaint cobblestone streets.

Return to hotel; opportunity to explore local facilities for dinner at own initiative and cost. Accommodation in Bucharest: 4-star hotel

Highlights: - Bucharest panoramic tour - The Palace of the Parliament (standard English tour, mandatory to carry your passport with you to visit this place) - The Village

Museum (Including: meeting with a person from the Orthodox Church) - Constitution Square - Revolution Square - Bucharest old town
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch.

Day 3: Wednesday, May 12

BUCHAREST - CLUJ NAPOCA – SURDESTI - MARAMURES

Pickup from the hotel in the morning and transfer to the airport for the flight to Cluj Napoca. From here you will be transferred to Maramures rural area, a place where the purity of nature blends with the beauty of the old villages, a place where the locals kept untouched their traditions, where the carved wood represents a common way of building. On the way to the accommodation, you will pass through rural areas and reach the UNESCO site of Surdesti . The local wooden church, built in the 18th century, is an amazing example of the local architecture, a wooden church surrounded by a well-preserved rural landscape. You can also stop for a short time at a local complex of whirlpools, water mill and distillery where the locals are still coming to wash their clothes, make corn or wheat flour and also to drink the famous plum brandy known as “palinca”. You will walk around 270m to reach the whirlpool complex. In the evening, arrive at your accommodation, in the village of Barsana. Accommodation in Barsana village: Barsana monastery (basic accommodation, monastic services) – private rooms with private bathrooms. **Highlights:** - Surdesti wooden church (UNESCO Heritage)
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

Day 4: Thursday, May 13

MARAMURES DAY TOUR: BARSANA – SIGHET – SAPANTA – BARSANA

Breakfast in the morning. After this, continue your visit in Maramures and stop in the city of Sighet, where you will hear more about the horrors of the communist regime. You will visit a former prison where during the communist years many important Romanian leaders, but also common people who were against the regime, lost their lives.

Carry on to Sapanta village where you will admire the famous Merry Cemetery. The Merry Cemetery has gained originality and value by means of the chopped, carved and painted crosses on which the artisans have chiselled out versified epitaphs; most of them display a remarkable sense of humour, particular to the area and to all the Romanians. The value of these works of art is recognised both at home and abroad.

In the same village you'll stop to admire the highest wooden structure in the world: Peri Convent, recently rebuilt.

In the afternoon, head to a picturesque village and enjoy a short horse-driven carriage ride. Get to see the locals, some of the traditional houses and get to know the traditional life style in the village. Accommodation in Barsana village: Barsana monastery (basic accommodation, monastic services) – private rooms with private bathrooms. **Highlights:** - The Communist prison in Sighet - Sapanta Merry Cemetery - Sapanta Peri wooden church - Horse drawn carriage ride in a village from Maramures.
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

Day 5: Friday, May 14

BARSANA – MOLDOVITA - BUCOVINA

Today the trip is long but beautiful. In the morning, you will visit the house of a local wood carver who took part at the Smithsonian World Festival in Washington. After this, you will leave the village of Barsana and head to the Bucovina historical region. First, you will have one last stop in a village in Maramures and visit a small but beautiful museum dedicated to the Romanian woman. This is the first museum in the country dedicated exclusively to the woman. Here, you can understand and see all the occupations of the peasant women from birth to death. The charm of the unusual museum depends on the special location, the originality of the construction and the exhibits, but also on the authenticity of the guide, who is also a woman, a local peasant. Her stories about the unique museum are not just learned stories to make visitors curious! They are life stories, and she tells them in an original way.

Then, cross the Carpathian Mountains and enter for the first time Bucovina, known for its painted monasteries and for the traditional houses adorned with beautiful floral and geometrical motifs, for its traditions kept over the centuries and for its hospitable people. The tour of Bucovina includes several painted churches, all of them UNESCO sites. We will begin with a stop at the Museum of Eggs where you will admire a great exhibition of painted eggs and see an egg painting demonstration. Then, stop in the village of Moldovita and visit the first painted convent of your trip. You'll receive explanations about the frescoes and why they were painted on the exterior walls more than 400 years ago. Accommodation in Bucovina: 4-star hotel, rooms with private bathroom. **Highlights:** - Visit a wood carver's workshop - Visit the Museum of the Romanian Woman - Visit the Egg Museum - Visit Moldovita painted convent (UNESCO Heritage)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

Day 6: Saturday, May 15

BUCOVINA – HUMOR – VORONET – PIATRA NEAMT

Breakfast in the morning and then start the day with a visit of Sucevita convent, the most impressive and the best preserved of all the painted churches. This religious complex, which looks more like a fortress, is set in a beautiful valley surrounded by green mountains. Here we shall share in Orthodox worship. Continue the trip to 2 other painted convents: Humor and Voronet. Erected in 1488, Voronet Monastery represented one of the first Moldavian creative elements showing a distinctive style. The church is a combination of Byzantine, Gothic and local elements. The exterior painting on the western wall depicts, on five registers, the Doomsday scene, unique in the whole world. The Voronet Monastery entered the universal cultural heritage also for having in the composition of the paintings the inimitable "Voronet blue". In the evening, arrive in the Moldavian city of Piatra Neamt. Accommodation in Piatra Neamt: 4-star hotel. **Highlights:** - Sucevita painted convent (UNESCO Heritage) - Religious service in the morning - Humor painted convent (UNESCO Heritage) - Voronet painted convent (UNESCO Heritage)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

Day 7: Sunday, May 16

PIATRA NEAMT – BICAZ GORGE – THE RED LAKE - SZEKLERLAND

Today the journey is long but impressive. You will leave behind Moldova to enter into Transylvania. It is here where you'll be astonished by the wonders of nature. The Bicaz Gorge and Red Lake are among the best known landmarks of Romania. Then, you'll be taken to the core of the Hungarian minority that lives in an area known as Szeklerland. It is here where you'll be able to admire the traditional way of living of these people and their amazing old houses. You'll stay overnight in a beautiful mansion in a Hungarian village from Szeklerland. Accommodation in SZEKLERLAND: superior mansion (en-suite rooms; **NB No singles**). **Highlights:** - Bicaz Gorge - The Red Lake - The villages of Szeklerland - Visit an old, but still functional, water mill
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

Day 8: Monday, May 17

SZEKLERLAND – PREJMER – BRAN - BRASOV

After breakfast, you will be introduced to the story of the Saxons, an old German minority from Romania who came to Transylvania starting with the 11-12th century. Originally, they were Catholic, after the 16th century they became Protestant. Their legacy is one of the most important in the Romanian culture. You will visit one of the hundreds of fortified churches that existed in Transylvania: Harman Castle Church. Continue the trip to Bran village and visit the famous Bran castle also known as Dracula's castle. Bran Castle was a safeguard castle for the trade route that connected Transylvania and Wallachia. It was built by the people of Brasov between 1377 – 1378. It represents, in the consciousness of any tourist, the dark residence of prince Dracula, a fictional hero in Bram Stoker's famous novel.

In the afternoon, head to Brasov medieval town where you will enjoy a walking tour in the old downtown. Brasov, also known as "Kronstadt", is one of the 7 German cities that were founded in Transylvania during the 13th century by the Saxons. You'll admire the beautiful buildings like the Black Church which is built in Gothic and Renaissance styles.

Also, you will see the narrowest street in Romania, Rope Street, Schei and Catherine's Gates, St. Nicholas Church and the old Schei neighbourhood. Accommodation in Brasov: 3-star hotel. **Highlights:** - Prejmer castle-church (UNESCO Heritage) - Bran Castle - Walking tour of Brasov old town

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

Day 9: Tuesday, May 18

BRASOV – SINAIA – WALACHIA WINE AREA

After a scenic drive you will leave Transylvania and you will stop in Sinaia to visit the most beautiful castle in Romania – Peles Castle. Peles Castle, built in two stages between 1875 and 1914, was the summer residence of King Carol I and his wife, Queen Elisabeth. The museum complex in Sinaia includes both Peles castle and Pelisor castle and the Foisor royal residence. In the afternoon, visit a children's hospice in the care of an Orthodox Priest. In the evening, arrival in Wallachia wine area and stop at a

chateau. Enjoy a delicious dinner and taste several types of wines which are produced here. Accommodation in a village from Wallachia Wine area: chateau, private rooms with private bathrooms; **NB No Singles. Highlights:** - Peles castle (standard tour, ground floor exhibition) - Visit a children's hospice - Wine tasting
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

Day 10: Wednesday, May 19

WALLACHIA WINE AREA - BUCHAREST

Breakfast in the morning and then transfer to the airport for the flight back home.

Itinerary subject to change.

£1695 per person

Included in the Price

- Return flights from London to Bucharest and from Bucharest to Cluj Napoca
- Accommodation on for 7 nights in 3* and 4* hotels and 2 nights in a local convent on bed & breakfast basis
- Meals as per the programme (includes 8 dinners & 8 lunches)
- Transport by modern coach
- Horse drawn carriage will be on day 4
- Licensed English-speaking tour guide
- Entrance fees to all sites included in the programme
- Gratuities for guide, driver and hotels
- Tips for waiters at restaurants
- Airport taxes
- ATOL protection

Not Included in the Price

- Items of a personal nature & extras at hotels (drinks etc)
- Single supplement £224* see note
- Dinner on Day 2
- Travel insurance
- Photographing or filming fees at the visited sites, where required

Accommodation in Barsana village is at the Barsana monastery (basic accommodation, monastic services) - private rooms with private bathrooms.

*** No single rooms on days 7 & 9 - only shared accommodation available**

How to Book

You can either book online at www.christian-travel.com or by completing the attached booking form and sending it together with your deposit of £200 (full payment if within 10 weeks of departure) to:

Worldwide Christian Travel
36 Coldharbour Road, Bristol BS6 7NA

Please make cheques payable to
'Hadler Tours Limited'

Worldwide Christian Travel
36 Coldharbour Road, Bristol BS6 7NA
Tel: 0117 973 1840
Email: info@christian-travel.com
Website: www.christian-travel.com

Worldwide Christian Travel has been organising Christian holidays and tours, mainly to the Holy Land, for 50 years. We cover all aspects of travel and are one of the most comprehensive Christian travel organisers in the country. Worldwide Christian Travel is a trading name of Hadler Tours Limited.

General Information

Fitness

People of all ages are welcome, but, whatever your age, we must insist on a reasonable level of fitness. A number of sites involve rough walking.

Your Protection

Hadler Tours Limited is a member of ABTA with membership numbers 93522 & V2096. ABTA and ABTA Members help holidaymakers to get the most from their travel and assist them when things do not go according to plan. We are obliged to maintain a high standard of service to you by ABTA's Code of Conduct. For further information about ABTA, the Code of Conduct and the arbitration scheme available to you or if you have a complaint, contact ABTA, 30 Park Street London SE1 9EQ Tel: 020 3117 0500 or visit www.abta.com.

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3078. For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

Passports, Visas and Vaccinations

Travellers are responsible for ensuring that they have a valid passport for travel to the relevant countries. Visas are not currently required for British Passport holders visiting Romania. At the time this brochure went to press no vaccinations or inoculations are required for travel but you may wish to consult your own doctor for advice concerning this. If you have any queries regarding the above, we will be happy to help.

Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice please visit www.fco.gov.uk or call 0870 606 0290.

Further Information and Paying The Balance

Further information will be sent to you regarding any action that may be required approximately 12 weeks before departure.

A final invoice will also be sent at this time and the balance for the tour must be paid at least 10 weeks before departure.

Travel Information

Full travel information, including details of meeting points, flight times, accommodation and travel information, will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks before departure. Normally, tickets are not issued but are handed to you at the airport or departure point by our representative who will be there to ensure that you depart without a hitch and to deal with any last minute difficulties.

Travel Insurance

It is compulsory to have travel insurance for your booking. Holiday Extras have a range of policies available at very competitive prices.

You can obtain a quote online by visiting www.christian-travel.com or alternatively you can call 0871 360 2742 and quote ABTA number 93522.

Gratuities

Our normal procedure is to deal with tips on a group basis and these are included in the price. The tour leader will distribute them to the guide, driver and hotels on your behalf. Individual tipping is not recommended unless the circumstances are exceptional.

Room Check In and Check Out Times

The standard international practice is to let rooms from midday to midday. However times do vary. Check-in times are usually between 2pm and 3pm, check-out times between 10am and 12 noon on the day of departure. Therefore, if you check-in immediately after a night flight this would normally count as one night's accommodation. Similarly if your return flight is at night you will normally be required to vacate your room at 12 noon prior to leaving for the airport. Day rooms are subject to availability/cost and should be arranged locally with the accommodation management.

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Please note that the cost of the tour may be subject to surcharges - please see the booking conditions. Currency exchange rates used £1 = € 1.1005 as published in the Financial Times on 14th August 2017.

* APC (ATOL Protection Contribution) provides passenger protection via the ATTF (Air Travel Trust Fund). For further information visit www.caa.co.uk

