

# Hidden Trails

Ph. 1-888-9-TRAILS

*Equestrian Vacations  
- on & with Hidden Trails*

## About Hidden Trails



Hidden Trails is owned and operated by nature enthusiasts who love horses and adventure activities. We have been involved with riding and other outdoor vacations for over 20 years.

With our partners Voyage du Cheval (France), Pegasus (Germany) as well as Equitour (Switzerland and France) we have collected the best riding destinations all over the world in some hidden places we would like to share with you.

These rides are about galloping on endless beaches, forging rivers, cantering through forests, trotting along age-old trails, gazing at beautiful vistas and encountering foreign cultures. But most of all, these trips are about getting away from the cycle of too much work and never enough free time.

Escape from the rituals, which long ago froze our nights and days into little more than routine and away from the worries of our new tense times. It is so satisfying when we take the plunge of adventure - it's unfortunate that we invent so many reasons to put aside living our dreams of adventure. It is sometimes a tangled web that we weave through life. Some of the threads reveal a work-a-day world of commitments, duties and obligations. Other threads are of a quiet fabric of hope, responsibility and refreshment.

On our adventures you see the real country, its back country and meet the locals. The love for horses has no boundaries but possesses a common language we all speak and understand. The majority of the overseas rides are from inn to inn, some from castle to castle and a few are camping rides.

You will experience new countries and their customs and make new friends. The Hidden Trails trips are the best you can find.

They have been tested by our staff or associates and received our stamp of approval. If you are considering a special riding vacation anywhere in the world, call us first and let our experienced consultants match the perfect trip with your dream.

We will listen to you and give you objective advice to help you choose the best destination and adventure.

Your vacation is the most precious time of the year and we are committed to making it the most memorable time of your life. Wherever you go, have a great time and bring back some peace of mind.

Thank you for your continued support.

### Hidden Trails

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from within the USA or Canada or

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Address:

659A Moberly Road, Vancouver BC Canada V5Z 4B3 or

4406 Tennyson Road, Wilmington, DE 19802 USA

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Ph: 0- 808 189-0420

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# Monasteries, Mountains & Bran Castle - Romania, Europe

Tour Code: ZZ-HKRM01  
9 days / 8 nights ~\$1,205.00  
Dates: April to October

Trip Rating: ●●●●●  
Difficulty: ●●●●●  
Lodging: ●●●

Tack:  
Horses:  
Pace: Easy- Moderate. 2-5 hours  
hiking per d...

Airport: Bucharest



## Introduction

Transylvania, Romania

The first part of your journey leads up to the 'Sweet Land of Bucovina', with its world famous painted monasteries (UNESCO – World Heritage) and bucolic scenery.

The second part tackles you to Transylvania with the Carpathian Mountains, known through Bram Stokers 'Dracula' and Patrick Fermors 'Castles of Transylvania' are unique with its combination of history, legends, scenery and wildlife. You walk in three mountains: Posavarul, Bucegi and Piatra Craiului. You will pass idyllic alms with shepherds huts scattered around, walk through mountain villages, still unspoiled, and enjoy splendid mountain views.

## Accommodation

### Accommodations

If one hotel from the list below is not available at the date of the booking, we are using similar hotels (same standards).

Accommodation Itinerary - subject to changes based on availability

Night 1: Hotel in Bucharest

Night 2: Guesthouse in Putna

Night 3 & 4: Guesthouse in Sucevita

Night 5: Guesthouse in Manastirea Humorului

Night 6: Guesthouse in Bran

Night 7 & 8: Guesthouse in Magura

Bucharest - Hotel Minerva

The hotel was opened in 1937 in a 6-story neoclassical building and was renovated in 2008. It offers 91 rooms that are cozy and Italian in design, and feature Wi-Fi, a private bathroom, a safe, TV, a fireplace and IDD phone.

Putna - Dana Guesthouse

This charming guesthouse offers 4 simple but comfortable bedrooms. Each room has its own bathroom and free Wi-Fi internet.

Sucevita - Casa Cazac Felicia

The building is surrounded on two sides by a beautiful wooden porch, covered with wooden tiles where, during the summer you can admire the gorgeous landscape while having a delicious meal. The terrace as well as the yard is full of beautiful flowers.

In the afternoon, after 5.30 PM, you can hear from the monastery the "toaca" (a nun is hammering on a board) and the sound of the bells calling the nuns to the evening prayer, and, possibly, this will take your thoughts to the glorious times when the monastery was gathering around the entire village.

Manastirea Humorului - Pensiunea Maridor

Located among fields and rolling hills, this accommodation offers a relaxing environment. The rooms are simply decorated and feature charming antique furniture. Each of the 10 rooms is equipped with a TV and private facilities.

There is no internet connection available at this property.

Bran - Casa din Bran

This beautiful Transylvanian style building, located just next to Bran castle offers 15 elegant guestrooms. All rooms feature private facilities, a TV, air conditioning and internet access.

Magura - Pensiunea Pepino

Surrounded by a charming garden, the guesthouse is located in the village of Magura, and offers en-suite bedrooms. You can also make use of the common living room with satellite TV, or the washing machine or play football, basketball or table tennis on site.

### Meals

8 breakfast and 5 evening meals are included in this trip.

The breakfasts are eaten at the accommodations and included evening meals are taken in either the restaurant (if it's a hotel) or in the dining room (if it's a pension).

The style of the food is mainly Romanian.

Special diets and dietary restrictions:

Vegetarians, gluten/lactose free, etc... can be catered for when notified in advance.

## Itinerary

Sample Itinerary - subject to changes

### Day 1: Arrival

Overnight in Bucharest.

Meals included: none

Overnight at Hotel in Bucharest

### Day 2: Train to the Painted Monasteries

Train journey to Suceava (5 ½ h) and transfer to Putna Monastery. Visit Putna Monastery, the spiritual center of Romania. You may have a short round walk (1 h) to "Chilia lui Daniil Sihastrul", a small hermitage dug in a rock. In the 15th Century it was inhabited by the hermit Daniil who supposedly predicted to Stephen the Great that he will become ruler of Moldavia. After becoming ruler, Stephen the Great was advised by Daniil to build the Putna



Monastery. Accommodation close to the monastery.

Meals included: Breakfast

Overnight at Guesthouse in Putna

#### Day 3: Putna to Sucevita

From Putna you take the old monastery path to Sucevita Monastery. In summer, the forest is full of berries and wild mushrooms. The undercoat of emerald green on which the superb frescoes are painted (1596) gave the monastery the name 'a Poem in Green and Light'. The iconostasis is supposed to be the most beautiful one in the country. Sachererell Sitwell wrote in 1938: "The first view of the painted church of Sucevita is among the most impressive revelations of the Byzantine world". The little museum houses the most precious collection of medieval art in Moldavia, including medieval embroidered portraits and an epitaph with 1000 pearls.

Approx. 5.5 hours walking (17.5 km / + 450 m / - 450 m)

Meals included: Breakfast & Dinner

Overnight at Guesthouse in Sucevita

#### Day 4: Moldovita and round walk Sucevita

A car takes you over the Ciurarna pass with astounding panoramic mountain views. Visit Moldovita Monastery, famous for its warmth and brilliance of its frescoes. The blue undercoat for its tree of Jesse gave the monastery the name 'a parchment dipped in blue color'. Very beautiful is the Ladder of Paradise, which has the ascetical mystic of John Klimakos as a theme and the depiction of the ancient philosophers. Maybe you meet Sister Tatiana (she speaks some English) who will show you around. The little museum contains, besides a priceless silver-cased Evangelistary presented by Catherine the Great of Russia, valuable icons and miniatures. Back in Sucevita you may have a round walk and enjoy the bird's eye view upon the impressive, fortified monastery.

Approx. 2.5 hours walking (5 km / + 110 m / - 110 m)

Meals included: Breakfast & Dinner

Overnight at Guesthouse in Sucevita

#### Day 5: Voronet to Humor

Transfer to Voronet Monastery. "Voronet-Blue" is the key word. Its superb frescoes gave it the name 'the Sistine Chapel of the East'. Architecturally it combines Gothic and Byzantine features. Petru Comanescu still holds its truth: "...here in the clear mellow light of those parts of the walls of the church seem to have stolen the sparking blue of the sky, the green of the trees and the pastures, the gold of the sun and the red of the flowers growing in the peasants' gardens". Walk up to the Objina with good views over a valley and villages scattered around till you reach Humor. Humor monastery, which exudes friendliness and tranquil charm, is painted in warm blues, greens and reddish browns (from oriental madder pigment).

Approx. 4.5 hours walking (15 km / + 370 m / - 350 m)

Meals included: Breakfast & Dinner

Overnight at Guesthouse in Humor

#### Day 6: Private car transfer to Bran

Today you'll cross the Carpathians to Transylvania through the spectacular Bicz gorge, drive into Hungarian villages and further on to Bran where you'll stay overnight (5 – 6 h by car). One night in a guesthouse next to Dracula's Castle.

Meals included: Breakfast

Overnight at Guesthouse in Bran

#### Day 7: Bran Castle and Magura village

Visit the Dracula castle. It served as backstage for Roman Polanski's film 'Dance of the Vampires' and in former years, it was the refuge of the Romanian Queen Mary of Hohenzollern, the Granddaughter of Queen Victoria.

Walk, up to the "kalibash" village of Magura (from coliba - shepherd's hut) in the Piatra Craiului Mountains, one of the highest settlements in Romania. Farms and old wooden houses are scattered over beautiful pastures and meadows covered with wildflowers.

Approx. 3 hours walking (10 km / + 360 m / - 360 m)

Meals included: Breakfast & Dinner

Overnight at Guesthouse in Magura

#### Day 8: Magura Walk

Go on a loop walk to the mountain village of Pestera. On your way, you can explore the Pestera Lileilor (Bats cave). Then, your walk brings you high up to a ridge from where you have spectacular views to the main ridge of the Piatra Craiului massif, which looks like the back of a dragon. You walk over pastures and meadows covered with wildflowers.

Approx. 3 hours walking (10 km / + 360 m / - 360 m) or 2.5 hours walking (7 km / + 310 m / - 310 m)

Meals included: Breakfast & Dinner

Overnight at Guesthouse in Magura

#### Day 9: Departure

Transfer to the airport and departure.

Meals included: Breakfast

### Other Info

**Meeting:** Bucharest

**Airport:** Bucharest

**Transfer:** Bucharest Hotel

Pick-up transfers are not available for this trip.

Drop off at Bucharest airport after the tour on Day 9 included.

**Tack:**

**Horses:**

**Pace:** Easy- Moderate. 2-5 hours hiking per day

**Level:** 🐾🐾🐾 (2 to 3 out of 5) Easy-Moderate

**Riders:** Min 2 riders Max 12 riders

### The Monasteries

#### ROMANIA'S PAINTED MONASTERIES

Located on the northern border of Romania, Bucovina, part of the old province of Moldavia, is a mountainous region whose peaks and forests of beech and pine shelter gently sloping valleys. Here, during the short period of a quarter of a century, between 1522 and 1547, a group of churches sprang up, frescoed with a liberality and magnificence unparalleled in any other country. The painting of religious murals was widely practiced throughout the Orthodox Church, for the edification of the illiterate faithful who flocked to church on feast days, but here in Romania it achieved its finest flowering. The painted monasteries are covered within and without in vivid, minutely detailed frescoes whose colors remain fresh and strong. They have been compared to Persian carpets or to jewels set in cases of green grass and flowers within their severe enclosures. That they have survived to this day, despite the passage of time, wars, invasions, and the vandalism of rival religions or ideologies, is little short of miraculous.



#### Development of Moldavian Style

In the second half of the fifteenth century, the Moldavian ruler Stephen the Great built forty-four churches – one after each of his victories over the Turks – that established the style of elegant octagonal steeples raised on a tall star-shaped base. In his time, monasteries were decorated with enameled disks and colored bricks placed around the steeple, below the cornice, and along architectural elements. There are indications that even then, masons familiar with the technique of fresco painted colored bricks on the parts of the facades that were not adorned with glazed bricks. The idea of extending the figurative interior painting to the exterior surface of the walls may have originated in this practice, although the paintings in the open galleries of many medieval Byzantine churches in Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria do already spread somewhat to the outside walls. Monasticism was always supreme in the Eastern Church. The rulers and rich families of the two Romanian Principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia, continued the tradition of erecting churches and religious buildings. They endowed the monasteries with land, forests, vineyards, orchards and villages, and would enrich them with art treasures long after their founding. About a dozen painted monasteries dating from the second quarter of the sixteenth century remain in Bucovina. The most remarkable are the monastic foundations at Humor (hoo mor), Moldovița (mol do vee' tsa), Arbore (are' bo ray) and Voroneț (vo ro nets). Sucevița (sue che vee' tsa), dating from 1600, represents a late return to the style developed some seventy years earlier. The tradition of painted churches continued into the nineteenth century in other parts of Romania, although never to the same extent. The painted monasteries show the influence of the Byzantine tradition of the Byzantine artists active in Wallachia in the 14th and early 15th centuries, but increasingly the artists were indigenous.

#### General Description

Bucovina is a region of continual rain in the spring and autumn, and it is buffeted by blizzards in winter. Violent winds from the steppes have damaged the northern side of the churches over the centuries, but the outer wall frescoes are generally admirably preserved. At one time it was thought that this permanence was due to plant pigments being mixed with egg yolk, which is fatty and therefore more waterproof than water and size. Recent studies find that the rich colors are based on harmonious combinations of a few tones derived from minerals – red ochre extracted from iron oxide clays; red from lead oxide; blue from unstable copper carbonate and in Voroneț from lapis lazuli; green from basic copper carbonate; yellow ochre from clays rich in hydrated iron oxide. These pigments were mixed with lamp-black or charcoal to counteract the drawing action of the plaster. Other substances including animal size, vinegar, egg, gall and honey have been identified. Classic fresco technique was used, about four square meters or more being painted in a day's work. Details were added al secco, in particular on faces and in inscriptions, and gold leaf was sometimes added.

The Moldavian churches differ from the cathedrals and great churches of Western Europe in having few windows, and therefore less need for buttressing except where there is a steeple. If there is any visible Gothic influence, it is only as a mere detail in the stone plinths, doorways and window frames of the buildings. Designed for small congregations, they are small and intimate. On holidays and feast days, the neighboring population would attend services, gathering outside the church within the monastery precinct. At Easter, a midnight candlelit procession wound around the church.



#### PUTNA MONASTERY

The beginnings of Putna Monastery, the most important religious, cultural and artistic centre in mediaeval Moldavia, take us back to the year 1466 when, upon the initiative of Prince Stephen the Great (1457-1504), a church of impressive dimensions was built on a patch of forest cleared for the purpose. The edifice was erected among 1466 and 1469 and consecrated in 1470; to it were added a few more buildings: a princely home standing on the southern side, outer walls and defense towers; all of them completed in 1481. A few years only after the completion of the buildings and fortifications, a dreadful fire destroyed most of the church, the outer walls and the princely home. The following years, the prince and founder rebuilt the church that soon recovered its former lofty appearance.

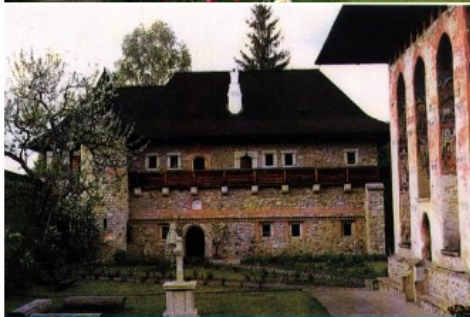
In 1536, another conflagration seriously damaged all the buildings; there followed a new restoration completed in 1559, on the initiative and at the expense of Prince Alexandru Lăpușneanu (1552-1561; 1564-1568).

Despite subsequent restoration work, partial or complete, time, earthquakes and landslides caused a lot of damage to all the monuments Putna Monastery consists of leaving their indelible marks on them, so that the church more especially required renovation and repairs. In 1653, the church, which had been built in the 15th century was pulled down to its foundations and replaced in 1654-1662 by a new building which, with slight alterations, has lasted to this day. In this period, the princely residence and the precinct walls were also enlarged and repaired. However, this important restoration did not last more than three quarters of a century, for in 1739, Putna Monastery was destroyed by a powerful earthquake, which made it necessary to start ample restoration work between 1757 and 1761, upon the initiative and with the endeavors of Metropolitan Iacov Putneanul.

Another important stage in the building of the monastery in the past was marked by the restoration work effected from 1854 to 1856, when the precincts were enlarged and new walls were erected, 23 m. to the north of the previous ones. New cells were built parallel to the wall; the old princely residence was demolished, a new building – including a kitchen, a refectory and cells – was erected, together with a new abbey on the western side and a chapel on the north side.

Restoration work on the monastery was started again towards the close of the 19th century, under the supervision of the Austrian architect K.A. Romstorfer. Ample scientific restoration work was under way in 1969, when the church, the treasury tower, the entrance tower and the belfry – built in 1882 to replace a 15th-century tower – were restored in succession. Between 1974 and 1977, the former abbey standing on the western side of the courtyard was replaced by a wooden building, a museum housing art collections, while the cells built in 1854-1856 on the northern side were replaced and renewed.

The size and complex plan, the rich decorations (carved stone, terracotta and paintings) as well as the appearance for the first time in the ecclesiastical architecture of Moldavia of the exonarthex and of arches arranged slantingly in the vaulting of the pronaos are the basic characteristics of the earlier church of Putna Monastery, making of it a brilliant prototype in which the most important achievements of the previous epoch perfectly combine with the valuable renewing contribution of Stephen the Great's masterbuilders who erected the monument. An attempt at reconstituting the plan and spacial structures of the earlier church at Putna proves that



even if its characteristic features - the presence of the burial vault and the vaulting of the pronaos more especially - are to be found in other previous monuments, they were to be taken over and adapted creatively to grace other places of worship built subsequently.

The new church, having the same triconch plan, was erected among 1654 and 1662. It was almost the size of the earlier monument and its walls rest partly on the old foundations. There are some important alterations in the vaulting system, while the outer wall on the west, built a little back from the former wall towards the interior, was strengthened by two buttresses supporting obliquely the corners of the building. The wall separating the burial vault from the nave has been replaced by two thick octagonal pilasters resting on strong stone pedestals.

The only carved element preserved from the 15th-century church is the monumental porch which links the pronaos to the burial vault; it is rectangular in shape decorated with crossed mouldings characteristic of Stephen the Great's epoch. The iconostasis, richly carved in wood, dates from 1773 and belongs to the period of constructive upsurge - characterizing Metropolitan Iacov Putneanul's pastorate. The only edifice dating from Stephen the Great's time which has been preserved whole - the only evidence that at the time of its first erection Putna Monastery was a genuine fortress, the strongest and loftiest of all Moldavian Monasteries - is the treasury tower, built in 1481, standing on the western side of the precincts.

To the same earlier period belong the vestiges of the former princely home and its outhouses which archaeological diggings rediscovered in recent times and made it possible to study them.

One reaches the courtyard of the monastery by passing under the entrance lower, reconstructed in 1757 at the expense of Prince Constantin Racoviță (1749-1753; 1756-1757), on the site or very close to another tower erected by Stephen the Great in 1481. Besides the repeated filling and levelling of the steep sloping terrain, widely different initially - in height from north to south, one can notice in the evolution of the precincts of Putna a concern for the preservation of its fortified character and for a correct use of the inner space. The outer walls of the monastery, first erected in 1481, were successively rebuilt in the mid-seventeenth (1654-1662), eighteenth (1757-1760) and nineteenth (1854-1856) centuries, when the constructors built the new walls on the old foundations dating from the 15th century.

On the initiative and with the support of its founders, a short time after it was built, Putna Monastery - together with some antecedent monasteries, such as Sucevița, Neamț, Bistrița and Moldovița - became an outstanding seat of Romanian mediaeval culture. As early as 1467, scribes, calligraphers and miniature painters who had learned their craft under Gavril Uric came from Neamț to work at Putna Monastery.

Besides skilful calligraphers and miniature painters, many embroiderers, icon makers, weavers, silversmiths, sculptors in wood and book-binders toiled on in the quiet atmosphere of the monks' cells at Putna. They continued valuable Romanian patterns and achieved works of great artistic value which today are the pride of all museums and libraries housing them.

Special mention should be made of the sumptuous and elegant Four Gospels created here, adorned with miniatures in which perfect drawing combines with a motley color scheme in which gold prevails, as well as the fine embroideries (epitaphs, iconostasis curtains, coverings of tetrapods and of graves, stoles, etc.), many of them on show in the museum of the monastery.

A famous school where Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic were taught was set up in the latter half of the 15th century and was open all through the 16th century. One of the outstanding scholars who taught at the school was Eustatie, of Romanian stock, who at the end of the 15th century transcribed the music of several psalms and composed many psalms himself.

A careful study of the history of Putna Monastery - an important cultural and artistic centre, a refuge and a defense fortress in times of stress, a princely residence and burial place - reveals that, for Romanians everywhere, the monastery is the symbol of a period of remarkable economic, social and political progress, a telling proof of the permanent aspirations and struggle of the Romanian people for liberty, independence and national unity.



#### SUCEVIȚA MONASTERY

High walls and heavily buttressed defensive towers surround the great monastic complex of Sucevița, giving it the appearance of a fortress. It was founded in 1581 by Gheorghe Movilă, Bishop of Rădăuți. His brother Ieremia, ruling prince of Moldavia, added defenses and two porches with oriental pointed arches on either side of the church. An elegant steeple resting on a star-shaped base tops the church. Massive eaves protect the outside frescoes, painted by local artists Sofronie and Ion probably in 1601.

The iconography essentially repeats established models. Here, however, the visitor entering through the fortified gateway in the north wall is first confronted with an unusual and magnificent depiction of the Ladder to Paradise. Red-winged angels in orderly rows attend the righteous on a slanting ladder to the heavens, each rung inscribed with one of the monastic virtues. Sinners fall through the rungs and are driven by grinning dark devils to the chaos of hell. The scene is surmounted by the story of creation in a series of scenes with a light background.

The three apses that form a trefoil at the eastern end show the usual procession of saints on a predominantly green and blue background. The figures are arranged in rows according to their significance: angels and seraphim appear at the top, archangels and prophets beneath them, then holy men (including hermits dressed only in their own hair, which has grown all over them like a shaggy fleece), martyrs, and finally military saints and ancient philosophers. On the south side, foliage entwines the rows of figures in the Tree of Jesse. Following it is the Hymn to the Virgin. The western wall is not painted. Tradition says that work stopped after the painter fell from the scaffolding and died. The rich interior decorations include, in the enclosed porch, the Last Judgement, with its river of fire and enigmatic apocalyptic figures.

Sucevița was a princely residence as well as a fortified monastery. The thick walls today shelter a museum that presents an outstanding collection of historical and art objects. The tomb covers of Ieremia and Simion Movilă - rich portraits embroidered in silver thread - together with ecclesiastical silverware, books and illuminated manuscripts, offer eloquent testimony to Sucevița's importance first as a manuscript workshop, then as a printing center.

#### MOLDOVIȚA MONASTERY

Ivy-covered walls enclose the graceful church of the Annunciation at Moldovița, a foundation dating from the first half of the 15th century, completely reconstructed by Peter Rareș in 1532. Toma of Suceava painted the frescoes



in 1537. The apse paintings depict the traditional procession of the saints leading up to the Virgin enthroned with the Child in her lap above the narrow east window. Below them, a representation of the Paschal lamb reminds the faithful that Christ conquered death in the sacrifice of the Cross. On the south side, an elegant Tree of Jesse on a blue background springs from a recumbent Jesse at the foot of the wall to marshal the ancestry of Christ around the Holy Family.

The Siege of Constantinople along the bottom of the south wall depicts Christians routing the infidel with arrows and cannons and miraculous icons being paraded around the ramparts. Still visible are graffiti scratched by Austrian troops in the eighteenth century.

On the west end of the church, tall arches light the porch and shelter the depiction of the Last Judgment. The interior frescoes are not obscured by soot as much as in other churches, and the Abbess, armed with breviary and laser pointer, proved ready to help identify the saints and martyrs pictured on the walls of the pronaos. The defensive exterior walls, five meters high and more than a meter thick, incorporate white stone buildings with black-shingled roofs. Nun's cells line one side of the compound, while in the northwest corner is a restored two-story princely residence now used as a museum of ecclesiastical embroidery and religious art.

#### SOLCA MONASTERY

The Moldavian general Stephen Tomsa II, a former mercenary, built Solca Monastery from which only the church remains between 1612 and 1615.

It is a triconch building, with an octagonal bell tower on the naos. A fortified wall surrounds it, almost 3 meters thick. Very rare are the large cellars for storing gunpowder and the fortified arrow slits in the walls of the naos. It has four pairs of buttresses with Gothic profiles. The vaulting system of the naos is typical Moldavian. Note the moulding rope surrounding the pronaos and the naos in the interior (small shields as ornaments, in Gothic style).

The church has a treasury reached from the naos by a ladder. The tombs are of Duca Voda, Andrei Abaza and his daughter.

The altar screen was painted 1855. Nice are the glazed roof tiles. Solca has a delightful rustic charm.

#### HUMOR MONASTERY

The church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Humor dates from 1530, as attested by an inscription engraved in stone near the entrance on the outer wall of the church. It was founded by the boyar Teodor Bubuog, Chancellor of Petru Rareș, who is buried here with his wife Anastasia, and replaced an earlier church that had been destroyed. Nevertheless, these were insecure times when looting and fires resulted from social unrest or exterior attacks. The monastery was enclosed in defensive walls in 1641. Today only a massive tower and the belfry remain, and a wooden stockade hung with colorful local rungs for sale replaces the walls. The Cossacks set the monastery on fire in 1653, and in the eighteenth century, when the Austrians occupied Bucovina and suppressed the Orthodox monasteries (1786), it became a simple parish church. It was re-established as a convent in 1990. A new church with gleaming metal roof stands on a hill nearby.

Baskets of decorated eggs and colorful local rugs are put on display on wooden stockade along the walk leading up to the belfry gate.

The church, topped by a cross-shaped shingled roof, is steeples, indicating that a ruling prince did not build it. The tall walls therefore did not need buttresses and offer a plain surface for the frescoes, which date from 1535. They have suffered great losses, although the south side is relatively well preserved. The dominant colors are dark red, blue, and green. The Virgin's Council besides the Gothic window is particularly beautiful. More damaged is the Siege of Constantinople that covers the lower part of the wall below it. Both form part of the "Hymn to the Virgin," after a poem dedicated to her in thanksgiving for her intervention in saving the city of Constantinople from a Persian attack in A.D. 626. In a wonderful political spin, considering the Ottoman threat to Moldavia, the Siege depicts the enemy as turbaned Turks rather than Persians. Unusually, Toma of Suceava, the master painter here, has signed a self-portrait that depicts him as a Moldavian horseman attacking a Turk. Tall arches, probably adopted from Wallachian models, open the porch to the outside and daylight. Within it the Last Judgment covers the entire surface of the west wall with its river of fire and its depiction of the sea giving up its dead to judgment – obscurely symbolized by a woman mounted on a dolphin, holding a ship. The Tree of Jesse has been moved from its traditional place on the south wall to the north face.

The splendid interior frescoes, cleaned some twenty years ago under an UNESCO project, include two donor portraits: Teodor Bubuog, the founder, and his wife appear in the Burial Chamber and Petru Rareș with his second wife in the nave.

#### VORONET MONASTERY

The church of St. George at Voroneț dates from 1488. Strong buttresses at each corner ground the church to the earth, while its wide roof and spire give it a light winged feeling. Stephen the Great erected it in three months and three weeks after his third defeat of the Turks in 1486, to fulfill a pledge made to a hermit, Daniel, who had encouraged him to fight. The church was built on the spot of Daniel's wooden hermitage, and he is buried in it. Voroneț was therefore a votive church, not a monastery, and so had only a naos and nave.

The interior frescoes date from the time of Stephen's foundation. Between 1547 and 1550 Petru Rareș had an enclosed porch added, creating side entrances, each surmounted by a Gothic window, and ordered the external frescoes painted by anonymous monks. Because of this late date, the siege of Constantinople is not pictured: the Turks had established control over central Europe, and naturally took a dim view of such flagrant propaganda.

The church strikes by its blue coloration, due to the use of lapis lazuli. The paintings on the north and, to a lesser extent, the west sides of the church have suffered damage, but those on the south and west wall are beautifully preserved. The Tree of Jesse is a harmonious composition in which white scrolls and details stand out against the blue background and red-toned figures. Scenes from the lives of St. Nicholas and St. John surround the door.

The enclosed porch leaves an unbroken surface on the west for a magnificent Last Judgment, probably the greatest of all those depicted on the painted monasteries. Angels sound the "bucium", the Romanian shepherds' instrument similar to the alpenhorn, as the graves give up the dead and wild animals come bearing the limbs they have devoured. An elephant ambles along, King David is shown playing the Moldavian cobza (a kind of guitar or lute), and the Siren who seems to depict the sea rides her dolphin. In a medallion above them sits Christ in glory, while below him is the throne of judgment, adorned with the cross and bearing the Gospel and the dove that symbolizes the Holy Spirit. The hand of God below holds the scales that weighs the souls of men. Devils try to bring down one side, while angels fight them off with lances. To the right, evildoers (depicted as contemporary kings and popes, Jews, Turks, and Tatars) await divine judgment, and a river of fire bears sinners to eternal torment. At the bottom, St. Peter leads the elect, opening the doors to Paradise, identified by a light background with stylized plants, where patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (the latter two holding on their laps the souls of the righteous, depicted as swaddled infants), St. John the Baptist, and two angels attend the Virgin. On the northern wall are shown scenes from the creation of the world and the life of Adam and Eve.

Monks eventually attached themselves to the foundation, but as elsewhere the monastery was dissolved after 1786. The surrounding monks' cells disappeared, the enclosing walls were destroyed and only the church and bell tower remain. Nuns returned in 1991; they farm and have opened a painting workshop.





Rates and Dates 2024 - ZZ-HKRM01

Rates include: Accommodations, All breakfast and 5 dinners, Train ticket from Bucharest to Suceava, Transfer Suceava - Putna, Moldovita excursion, Transfer Sucevita - Voronet, Transfer Manastirea Humorului - Bran, Transfer from Zarnesti to Bucharest airport, Luggage transport during walks, Digital route notes and maps & Contact on ground

Packages and Options

Season	Description	EUR	~US\$
A 2024	9 day self-guided trip	€1095	\$1205

The US Dollar Rate is based on a EUR Exchange Rate of 1.1 and subject to currency fluctuation

Transfer Option

Description

2024	Arrive to Bucharest hotel on your own on Day 1		
2024	Transfer from Zarnesti to Bucharest airport included on Day 9		
2024	Single supplement	€270	\$300
2024	Solo hiker supplement	€430	\$475

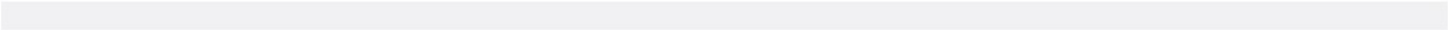
Tour Dates

Season	Tour Dates		
A 2024	04/15/2024 - 10/14/2024	9d / 8n	9 day self-guided trip

Min/Max: 2/12

Daily departures during season.

Rates do not include:Lunches and 3 dinners, Drinks, Transfer from Bucharest airport to hotel in Bucharest (25 euros a taxi or 5 euros with the shuttle bus/train), Transfer from hotel in Bucharest to train station (10 euros) & Entrance tickets



# Reservation Form

Tour : \_\_\_\_\_ Code #: \_\_\_\_\_ from: \_\_\_\_\_ to : \_\_\_\_\_

The Travelers (Last Name, First Name)	Male Female	Single room / or tent	Birth Date MM/DD/YY	Height	Weight	Special diets													
						Special diets	Beginner	Novice	Intermediate	Strong Inter.	Advanced	ride English	ride Western	mostly arena	mostly hacking				
1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Special Diets: \_\_\_\_\_

Your fitness level: Excellent ☐ Moderate ☐ Poor ☐ How long have you been riding? \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you ride? \_\_\_\_\_ Have you been on other riding tours? No ☐ Yes ☐ last trip when? \_\_\_\_\_

If Hidden Trails offers a transfer from the local airport/station: I would like the transfer to be included: YES ☐ NO ☐

In an emergency, name and phone number of contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Attention: Please, if there is more than one participant, all have to sign the reservation form - make copies if needed

With my signature I confirm my reservation of the listed program(s) under the Hidden Trails Booking Conditions. I'm aware, and I made all participants aware of the risk involved with these outdoor adventure activities. All participants have read and agree with the Hidden Trails Booking Conditions and the Hidden Trails Recreational Activity Release and Indemnity Agreement in this brochure or as listed on the Internet.

I (we) will sign and forward the Recreational Activity Release and Indemnity Agreement at least 10 weeks before trip starting date.

Last Name and First Name (The Traveler) \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Postal/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (wk) \_\_\_\_\_ (hm) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature (mandatory) 1. \_\_\_\_\_

Please, charge a 25% deposit (minimum \$ 350 per person) now and full payment 10 weeks before the travel date to my credit card.

For payments by VISA ☐ or Mastercard ☐ (no debit cards)

Cardholder: \_\_\_\_\_

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ 3 digit Security # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp.Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address for Credit Card (if different than mailing address):  
\_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed a check for the deposit ☐

Additional Signatures:

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Travel Cancellation Insurance** Credit Card required

Sign me (us) up ☐ initial \_\_\_\_\_

No, we will provide our own ☐ initial \_\_\_\_\_

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Mo-Fr 8:30 am to 6 pm

Pacific Standard Time

