Central and Eastern Europe

Included on tour

Round-trip flights on major carriers; Full-time Tour Director; Air-conditioned motorcoaches and internal transportation; Superior tourist-class hotels with private bathrooms; Breakfast daily.

Sightseeing:
Bucharest
Sinaia
Bran
Brasov
Sibiu
Sighisoara
Timisoara
Budapest

Entrances:
People’s Palace
Peles Castle
Bran Castle
Open Air Museum, Brasov
Black Church, Brasov
School Museum, Brasov
St. Nicholas Church, Brasov
Biertan Fortified Church
Bruckenthal Museum
Corvin Castle
Revolution Museum, Timisoara
Matthias Church, Budapest
Budapest Basilica
Danube evening cruise, Budapest
Szechenyi thermal baths
Buda Castle
Gellert Hill Citadel

Overnight stays:
Bucharest (2)
Brasov (1)
Sibiu (2)
Timisoara (2)
Budapest (4)

Sign up today efst.com/
Your itinerary

Day 1: Board your overnight flight to Bucharest!

Day 2: Bucharest

Arrive in Bucharest
Bun venit! (That’s “welcome” in Romanian.) Welcome to Bucharest, the capital of Romania. Upon arrival your Tour Director will orientate you in the city.

Visit the Triumphal Arch
See the arch that was built in honor of Romania’s independence in 1878. If it looks familiar, it should. There is also an “arc de triomphe” in Paris, France, and during its heyday Bucharest was known as the “little Paris.” French was so widely used among the educated that Romania also styled itself “un pays francophone” - a French-speaking country.

Dinner is included this evening.
Overnight in Bucharest

Day 3: Bucharest

Guided sightseeing of Bucharest
Today you’ll explore the old town with an expert local guide. The architecture of the historic city center illustrates the country’s connection to Western Europe on the one hand, and the history of Turkish rule and influence under the Ottomans.

Visit People’s Palace
Today you will have the opportunity to visit the seat of the Parliament of Romania, the second largest administrative building in the world (only the Pentagon is larger). Dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu had the building constructed in an attempt to show how wealthy and powerful the Socialist Republic of Romania was. Taking advantage of the 1977 earthquake, he had roughly 7 square kilometers of existing buildings demolished in order to make room for what he intended to be the world’s largest parliament building. At the time of the revolution in 1989, when he was killed, the building was still not completed.

Free time in Bucharest
Enjoy free time to make your own explorations of the city. Lunch is included today at Caru’ cu Bere (pending availability), a historic business whose history traces back to 1879. Descendants of the founder were able to reclaim the historic building after the revolution and restore it. The restaurant is extremely popular because of its delicious food, but don’t let that completely distract you from the building’s historic architecture and artwork!

Overnight in Bucharest

Day 4: Bucharest | Brasov

Travel via Sinaia and Bran to Brasov

Guided sightseeing of Sinaia
A local guide will introduce you to the town situated in central Romania’s beautiful Bucegi Mountains.

Visit Peles Castle
Built between 1873 and 1914 to serve as the summer residence of King Carol I, Romania’s first king, the Neo-Renaissance castle is located in the Carpathian Mountains. Looking like something out of a fairytale, several of the rooms inside have national themes, being ornately decorated with art and furniture from a variety of specific countries and regions. Romania’s most famous composer, George Enescu, was regularly invited by Queen Elizabeth of Romania to give concerts at the castle, and the two eventually collaborated on a series of German songs. The royal family of Romania was of German extraction, a solution to the problem created by the union of the regions of Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia to form the country of Romania, in which the choosing of a ruler from one of those regions was unacceptable to the other two. Romania’s last king, Michael, a cousin of Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain, was born in 1921 at the nearby Foșcor Castle (which is not open to the public). Michael I is remembered for having courageously turned the nation against its Nazi-allied government at the height of WWI, and he remains the oldest surviving head of state from that era, even though he has lived in exile since the Communist authorities forced him to abdicate in 1948.

Visit to Bran Castle
Learning about the unique history with a local expert, you will have the opportunity to explore the famous castle, completed in the year 1388. A description of this castle is believed to have served as the inspiration for Dracula’s castle in Bram Stoker’s novel. Some have proposed that Dracula was based on the historical figure Vlad the Impaler, a national hero famous for defending the region against Turkish invasion. Vlad’s historical connections with Bran Castle are uncertain, however. You can understand why Bran is nonetheless marketed to tourists as “Dracula’s Castle”: the ruins of Vlad’s mountain fortress, Poenari Castle, is at the top of a 1,480 step climb!

Open Air Museum
The nearby open air museum seeks to provide a glimpse of life as it was in a bygone era in Romania.

Guided sightseeing of Brasov
During your guided sightseeing today, you will visit St. Nicholas Church, the First Romanian School Museum, and the Black Church.

Travel via Sighisoara to Sibiu
En route to Sibiu you will stop for a guided sightseeing in Sighisoara, birthplace of Vlad Tepes, whose one-time home has been turned into a restaurant.

Visit to Bran Castle
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Arrive in Brasov
Located in Transylvania, Brasov is a popular tourist destination. It is known for its medieval Saxon walls and bastions, café life, and Gothic-style Black Church, a 14th century cathedral which continues to be used for Lutheran services on Sundays.

Lunch and dinner are included today (lunch will be at Cabana Vanatoreasca, pending confirmation)
Overnight in Brasov

Day 5: Brasov | Sibiu

Guided sightseeing of Brasov
During your guided sightseeing today, you will visit St. Nicholas Church, the First Romanian School Museum, and the Black Church.

Travel via Sighisoara to Sibiu
En route to Sibiu you will stop for a guided sightseeing in Sighisoara, birthplace of Vlad Tepes, whose one-time home has been turned into a restaurant.

Arrive in Sibiu
Sibiu was the largest and wealthiest of the seven walled citadels. Built in the 12th century by German (Saxon) settlers, the town is known for its architecture and art scene. In 1904, it became the third city in the Austro-Hungarian Empire to have electric power, and the second city in Europe to have an electric tramway. It was chosen as the 2007 European Capital of Culture.

Visit the Biertan fortified church
Enjoy a visit to the Lutheran church.
Overnight in Sibiu
Day 6: Sibiu

Guided sightseeing of Sibiu
Tour the old town, taking in the gates and walls that partially enclose the city. You will tour the old town, taking in the gates and walls that partially enclose the city. Cross the cast-iron Liar’s Bridge and see Piata Huet. You will pass by the Lutheran Cathedral, a soaring Gothic church. The Ursuline Church provides an example of the way churches sometimes changed their affiliation over the course of their history. Although this building is more recent, it reflects a Dominican monastic presence in the area that traces back to the 15th century. At the time of the Reformation, it shifted to being Lutheran, along with the local Saxon population. It subsequently passed to Catholic nuns from the Ursuline order. More recently it has been used by the so-called “Greek Catholic” church, or the Orthodox Church United with Rome, which came into existence after the Habsburg conquest of Transylvania, when an effort was made to obtain equal rights for Romanians by acknowledging the authority of the Pope while allowing churches to continue to use the Byzantine rite.

Visit the Bruckenthal Museum
Erected in 18th century, the museum houses a large collection of Romanian and European works of art.

Overnight in Sibiu

Day 7: Sibiu | Timisoara

Travel to Timisoara via Alba Iulia and Corvin Castle
En route to Timisoara you will visit the charming town of Alba Iulia, home to Romania’s largest citadel. Continue on to Corvin Castle, one of the largest castles in Europe and one of the seven wonders of Romania.

Arrive in Timisoara
Timisoara is the capital city of Timis County, and the main social, economic and cultural center in western Romania. On our way there, we will pass not far from Lugoj, the birthplace of Béla Lugosi, the actor who became famous for playing what many still consider the definitive on-screen rendition of Dracula.

Dinner is included this evening.

Overnight in Timisoara

Day 8: Timisoara

Guided sightseeing of Timisoara
During your sightseeing today you will see the Orthodox Cathedral, Victory Square, Stronghold Synagogue, Serbian Palace, Union Square and Reformed Church. László Tökés is credited with having sparked the revolution that brought about the fall of the Communist dictatorship in 1989 when he was the pastor of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Timisoara (he now represents Hungary as a Member of the European Parliament).

Visit the Revolution Museum
Learn about the 1989 revolution during your visit to the museum today.

Overnight in Timisoara

Day 9: Timisoara | Budapest

Travel to Budapest
In 1873, a city was formed from the union of two towns either side of the Danube River. Traditionally, Buda has been the civic center of the city, with government buildings and palatial homes for the gentry. In Pest, one finds the city’s industrial, business and commercial element. Budapest has long been known for its musical, theatrical and literary character, and attracts many tourists to its mineral springs and parks.

Walking tour of Budapest
Your Tour Director introduces you to the city of Budapest. Walk past the Parliament and to the Fishermen’s Bastion for a wonderful panoramic view of Hungary’s capital.

Dinner is included this evening.

Overnight in Budapest

Day 10: Budapest

Guided sightseeing of Budapest
Begin your tour at Heroes’ Square, where you will see the Millenary Monument and statues of famous Hungarian personalities. Drive down Andrássy Boulevard, past the State Opera House to the Hungarian Parliament. The castle has witnessed several invasions-the most recent occurred during WWII. Look for bullet holes in the outer walls, blasted by Russian tanks during the 1956 uprising. Visit the 13th-century Matthias Church, famous as the site of several coronations and for its colorful tiled roof. Your tour ends with a stop on Gellért Hill, from where you can take in some of the best views of the city. You will also visit the beautiful Budapest Basilica.

Evening Danube River cruise
Enjoy a relaxing cruise down the beautiful Danube River this evening in Budapest. The Danube splits the city into its two halves, Buda, the older, more mountainous side, and Pest, the city’s flatter, newer and more commercial side.

Overnight in Budapest

Day 11: Budapest

Visit the Széchenyi Thermal Baths
Enjoy some time soaking in the hot, warm and cool pools of the famous Széchenyi baths. Dating back to 1881, these baths were the first thermal spas on the Pest side of the city.

Free time in Budapest
Enjoy free time in Budapest to explore the city at your leisure. Perhaps you want to visit the controversial House of Terror Museum, set in an unassuming building on genteel Andrássy Avenue. The building was acquired by the Nazi-aligned Arrow Cross party during World War II, and later became the headquarters for the political police following the
Communist 'liberation' of Hungary. Learn how terror and suspicion were used in Hungarian society as a means of political control. Or, opt to visit the Hungarian National Museum. This museum is home to a replica of the crown of St. Stephen, and focuses on the history of Hungary.

Overnight in Budapest

Day 12: Budapest

Visit Buda Castle
Visit Buda Castle, and explore the Budapest History Museum which is now housed there. You’ll see exhibitions that focus on the 2000 years of the city, including learning about the original separate towns of Buda, Pest and Obuda.

Walking tour of Danube Promenade
Take some times to explore the Danube Promenade with your Tour Director. You will start at the Chain Bridge, which connects the Buda and Pest sides of the city. Continue past the Shoes on the Danube, a memorial to the Jews who were shot and fell into the Danube during World War II.

Visit the Gellert Hill Citadel
Enjoy an alternate view of the city as you ascend Gellert Hill.

Dinner is included this evening.

Overnight in Budapest

Day 13: Budapest

Transfer to the Budapest airport for your return flight
Your Tour Director assists with your transfer to the airport, where you'll check in for your return flight home.

Itinerary is subject to change

For complete financial and registration details, please refer to the Booking Conditions at www.efcst.com/bc.
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