

# Rural Romania and Backroads of Bulgaria

Trip Code: RAB

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP

MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike through the heart of Transylvania's spectacular Carpathian Mountains
- Head off the beaten track and walk in Bulgaria's undiscovered national parks
- Stay in alpine hamlets, sample local cuisine and immerse yourself in Balkan culture
- Explore the fascinating castles, towns and cities of Peles, Sofia, Bucharest and Brasov

## AT A GLANCE

- 12 days walking and sightseeing
- Join at Sofia, End in Bucharest

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

# Introduction

Bursting with captivating scenery, fascinating culture, a relaxed pace of life and warm welcome, Romania and Bulgaria are fantastic destinations for a walking holiday in the heart of the Balkans. Here you'll find beautiful panoramas, fabulous folklore and delicious cuisine, plus that rare feeling of taking a step back in time. In Bulgaria we start by exploring the lively capital of Sofia, home to a gold-domed cathedral and eclectic mix of architecture. After the capital we escape to the country to enjoy some charming walks off the beaten track. Walking in Bulgaria's undiscovered national parks ensures we'll be surrounded by colourful flora and fauna. We end our time Bulgarian adventure in Veliko Tarnova, the City of the Tsars, as we wander down Ottoman streets to a dramatic fortress. From Bulgaria we cross the Danube and enter neighbouring Romania. First stop is the fascinating capital of Bucharest, home to the incredible Palace of the Parliament, and wonderful Parisian style architecture. After Bucharest it's the exquisite castle of Peles before starting a magical walking journey through the heart of Transylvania's Carpathian Mountains. Here we'll stay in timeless mountain hamlets, discover Romania's alpine shepherds and taste a rich variety of traditional dishes. This charming walking and cultural holiday finishes perfectly in the medieval gem of Brasov.

## Is this holiday for you?

This lovely walking holiday visits a wonderful variety of alpine locations in both Bulgaria and Romania plus city highlights. The holiday includes a number of daily walks which include approximately 4 to 5 hours of walking during the day. These walks are mostly on footpaths which are good underfoot and include small lanes and mountain trails. While there is sufficient walking on each day to satisfy regular hikers, it is intended that this should be a walking and cultural holiday with a relaxed walking pace. Part of the overall holiday experience are the small rural villages you visit and the traditional food. The cultural element of this holiday is a major part, and although accommodation in Bulgaria and Romania is simpler than other parts of Europe, the warm welcome and timeless feel, more than makes up for the lack of hotel facilities in traditional guesthouses.

# Itinerary

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Version:

## Holiday Information

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### What's Included

- A professional and qualified Romanian leader in Romania and a Bulgarian leader in Bulgaria
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival & departure
- Accommodation as described
- Meals as per the Meal Plan
- All land transport required by the itinerary

### What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips
- Some meals are per the Meal Plan
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

### Joining Arrangements & Transfers

A single timed transfer from the airport to the hotel in Sofia is provided late morning on Day 1 of the itinerary, anyone arriving earlier is welcome to wait at the airport to join this transfer by prior arrangement.

On the last day of the holiday a single group transfer from Brasov to Bucharest Otopeni Airport will be provided for early afternoon flights

If your flight schedules do not fit with these single timed airport transfers we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also readily available.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

### Meal Plan

All breakfasts, 10 lunches and 9 dinners are included in the holiday.

## Food & Water

Many places on this holiday have drinkable water from the tap to fill your personal water bottles. Please check with the leader at the various locations. Please take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) for days when drinking water out of the tap is not available. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

One of the highlights of this holiday is the wonderful variety of local food you'll get to sample. Whilst staying in local guesthouses and the rural areas, meals will be prepared using local ingredients which are all locally sourced. Romanian and Bulgarian food is excellent with local specialities including smoked bacon and sausages, stuffed cabbage rolls and cornmeal (similar to polenta) which is worth a try when served with sour cream. Bean soup, baked pumpkin, roasted corn on the cob and oven baked potatoes are wonderful with their crispy skins. Soups, stuffed vegetables and pies made with spinach and soft cheese, salads and a wide range of cheeses are all excellent. Desserts are something of a speciality and range from dough filled with sweet cheese to mouth-watering papanash (little doughnuts served with sweet cheese and blueberries) plus crepes served with either jam, marmalade, chocolate or a soft ricotta-style of cheese. Breakfasts usually consist of bread, butter, jam or honey, tomatoes, cheese, yogurt, fruit juice, eggs and tea or coffee. Don't leave Romania without trying Polinka, a powerful plum brandy!

## Accommodation

During this holiday the group will spend 8 nights in comfortable local hotels and 7 nights in simple pension/guesthouse accommodation. The nights we spend in simple guesthouses in Bulgaria and in Romania are a part of the holiday experience, as these places have been picked because of their wonderful locations and authentic atmosphere. On one of the night we will have use of shared bathroom facilities, but the atmosphere and warm welcome from the owners more than makes up for the lack of hotel facilities.

If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning on extending your holiday additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional Romanian leader in Romania and a Bulgarian leader in Bulgaria.

## Spending Money

The national currency of Romania is the Romanian Leu and the currency in Bulgaria is the Lev. We estimate 250-300 euro should be sufficient to cover your expenditure including tips for local staff, drinks and non-included meals. Local cash can be drawn from ATMs using credit or debit cards at Bucharest and Sofia Airports and in Sofia, Brasov, Veliki Tarnovo and Bucharest. We recommended you withdraw a small amount of local currency to cover your arrival as the leader will brief everyone on obtaining local currency during the first briefing.

## **Guidance on Tipping**

Tipping is the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your trekking leader and local team. Tipping is entirely voluntary and should be dependent on good service. We advise you to tip as a group.

## **Baggage Allowance**

During this trip you'll have access to your main luggage each night. There is no baggage limit other than that imposed by the international carrier (normally 23kg) but we do ask you to restrict your baggage to one main bag and one small daypack.

## **Group Size & Holiday Status**

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

### Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

## Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

## GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

## Currency

The unit of currency in Bulgaria is the Lev.

The unit of currency in Romania is the Romanian New Leu.

## Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a walking holiday getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. We would suggest that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your holiday. Walking, running, cycling and swimming are good for developing better stamina and before departure we suggest that you try to fit in a number of longer day walks.

## Climate

The main season for visiting Romania and Bulgaria is from June to September and the weather is generally good. We can expect daytime valley temperatures of between 20°C and 25°C and dropping to around 12°C at night. In the more mountainous areas there is always the possibility of mixed weather which may include the occasional storm.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travellaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travellaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

- The Rough Guide to Romania
- Lonely Planet Romania
- Dracula - Bram Stoker
- Transylvania and Beyond - Dervla Murphy
- Bulgaria - Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture
- The Shadow Land - Elizabeth Kostova
- Walking the Woods and the Water: In Patrick Leigh Fermor's Footsteps from the Hook of Holland to the Golden Horn

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Please note that a paper copy of your travel insurance is required if you are travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

### You should bring the following items:

- Walking boots / shoes
- Trainers / sandals for sightseeing



- Socks
- Underwear
- Walking trousers
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Shorts
- T-shirts and/or casual shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Sun protection (including for lips)
- Water bottles 1 Litre (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag, toiletries and wetwipes
- Small Towel
- Antibacterial hand wash

Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium) painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, insect repellent (DEET), and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are a good idea.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE OPTIONAL:

- Walking poles

- Camera
- Pen-knife (for picnics)
- Travel clothes
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

## Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. [>> Find out more](#)

## Land Only Information

We sell this holiday on a Land Only basis and you should book your transport to Sofia and return from Bucharest Otopeni Airport. Please refer to the 'Joining arrangements and transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Ryan Air fly from London Stansted to Sofia and back from Bucharest. Whizz Air also do the routing from London Luton.

Transport SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

If flying from the UK there are a number of low cost airlines offering flights to Sofia and back from Bucharest Otopeni Airport. A flight search website such as Skyscanner or Kayak may be useful to research your options.

If you would prefer to book a 'flight inclusive package' using scheduled airlines from the UK please contact our flights department for a quote. Whilst flight prices are likely to be more expensive you will benefit from full financial protection.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

This wonderful two week walking adventure includes charming hikes and traditional overnights in alpine areas where tourists are a rarity. KE includes the perfect amount of cultural sightseeing, and plenty of home-cooked local cuisine in family run guesthouses. Proud to be recommended as a top Secret European Break by Wanderlust Travel Magazine.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 22/07/2024 and the trip is subject to change