

# PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions to help you put together your perfect trip

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# UNDERSTAND ROMANIA & BULGARIA

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you can make sense of what you see

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# ON THE ROAD

YOUR COMPLETE DESTINATION GUIDE  
In-depth reviews, detailed listings  
and insider tips



## SURVIVAL GUIDE

VITAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION TO  
HELP YOU HAVE A SMOOTH TRIP

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# › Romania & Bulgaria

## Top Experiences ›

### SLOVAKIA

**Carpathian Mountains**  
Rugged plateaus and well-marked trails (p72)

### ● Miskolc

### HUNGARY

**Maramureş**  
Austerely beautiful wooden churches (p175)

### ● Debrecen

**Sibiu**  
Maze of cobbled streets and lustrous squares (p106)

### ● Oradea

### ROMANIA

### ● Timișoara

### BANAT

### ● Vršac

### Zrenjanin

### ● Moravița

### ● Reșița

### ● Anina

### ● Târgu Jiu

### ● Uzhhorod

### UKRAINE

### ● Chernivtsi

### Bucovina

Painted monasteries with dazzling frescoes (p202)

### Bran Castle

A mass of turrets and castellations (p91)

### ● Băiți

### MOLDOVA

### ● Chișinău

### ● Iași

### ● Suceava

### ● Sighetu Marmației

### ● Baia Mare

### ● Satu Mare

### ● Cluj-Napoca

### ● Turda

### ● Sibiu

### ● Brașov

### ● Sibiu

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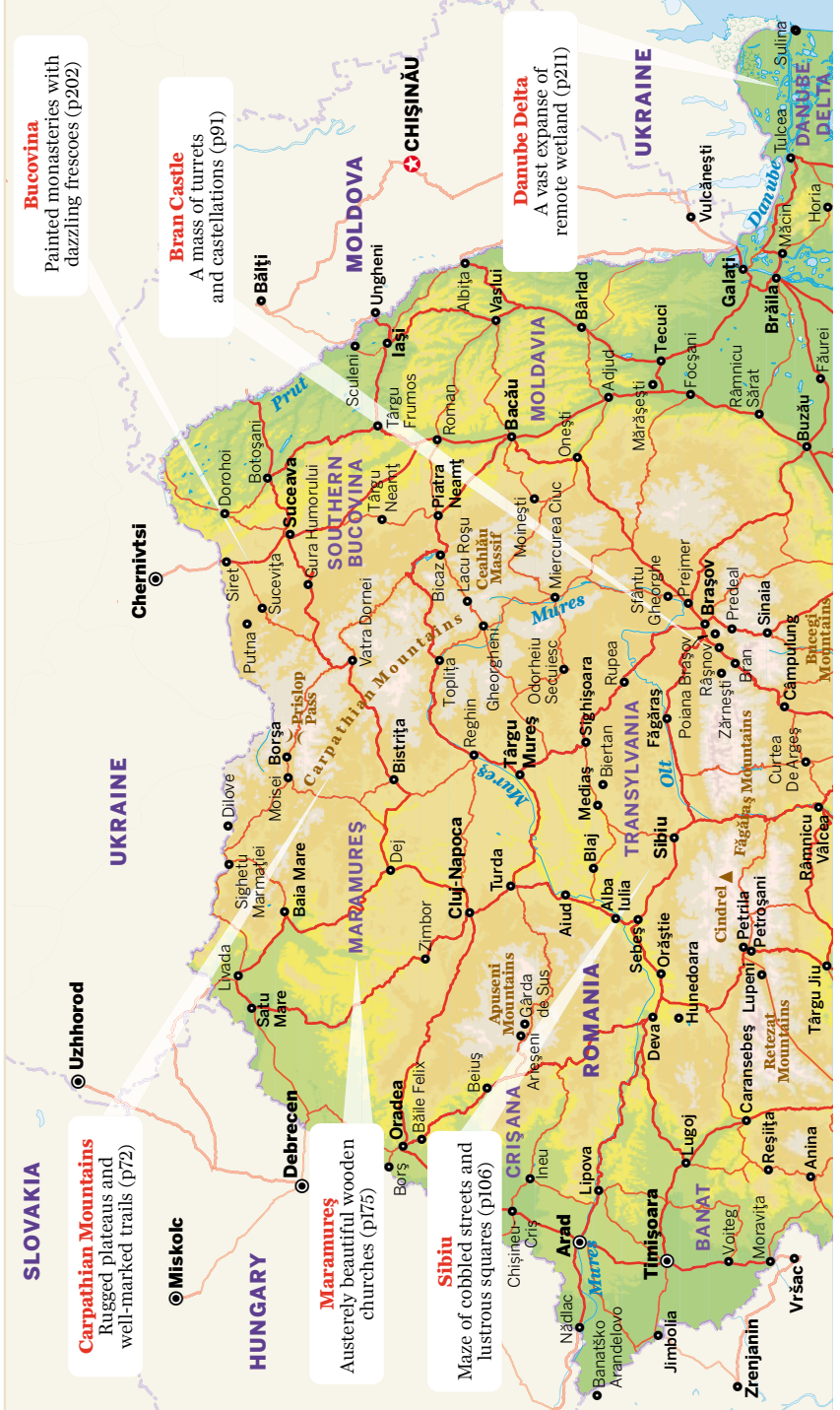
### ● Sibiu

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### Bucharest

Palace of Parliament - modern and mind-blowing (p31)

### SERBIA

### Sofia

Majestic Aleksander Nevski Memorial Church (p303)

### Rila Monastery

Bulgaria's most storied spiritual treasure (p322)

### Pirin Mountains

Long ski seasons and steep runs (p327)

### SKOPIE

### MACEDONIA

### Melnik

Home to fine wine since Thracian times (p334)

### Plovdiv

Fun-loving, with restaurants, bars and galleries (p337)

### Kazanlık

Thracian tombs: splendour of the ancients (p383)

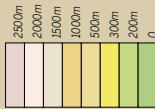
### Romania's Black Sea Beaches

Something for everyone (p217)

### Veliko Târnovo

Medieval capital offers antiquity and nightlife (p363)

### ELEVATION





➤ **Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first**

➤ **Look out for these icons:**



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



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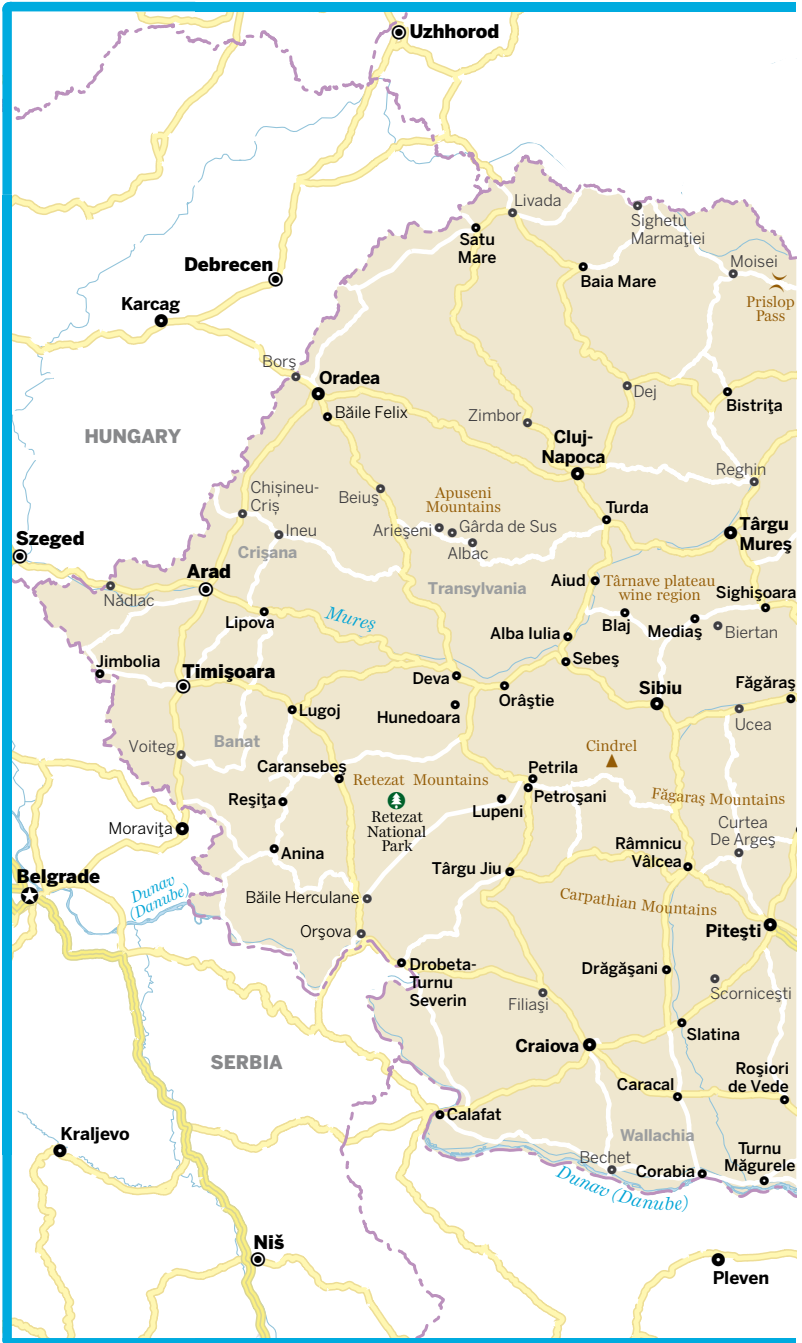
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# Romania





# itineraries

*Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide the starting point for a trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to [lonelyplanet.com/thorntree](http://lonelyplanet.com/thorntree) to chat with other travellers.*



10 Days

## Classic Romania

This classic route for travellers wanting a taste of Transylvania starts in the capital, **Bucharest**, where most flights arrive.

Hire a car at Bucharest or hop a train northward toward the mountains, stopping in **Sinaia** for a couple of nights and checking out **Peleş Castle**.

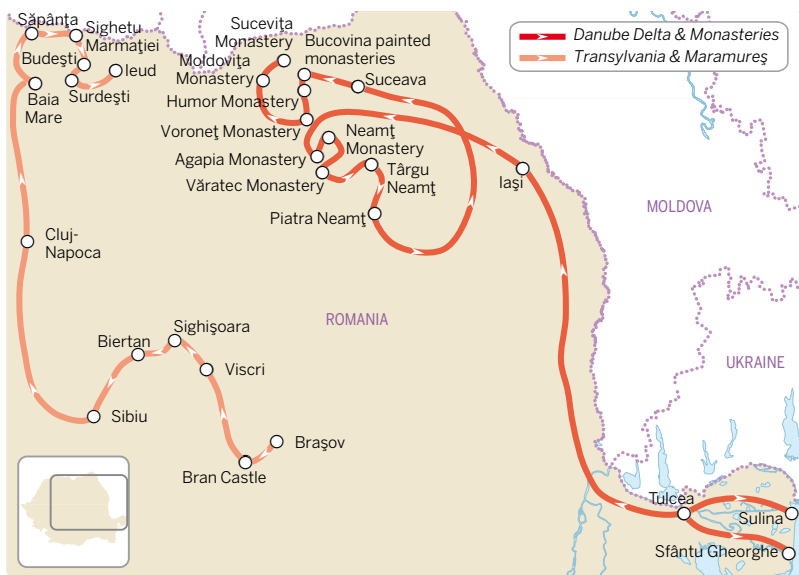
From there, take a cable car up into the **Bucegi Mountains** for hiking or biking. Drive or bus north for a couple of nights in **Braşov**, a lively hub with a cobbled centre.

Take day trips to the infamous 'Dracula's Castle' at **Bran** and another stunner at **Râşnov**, with the option of skiing and hiking at nearby **Poiana Braşov**.

If you have a car, spend a night in **Viscri** before continuing on for a night in **Sighişoara**, where the dramatic citadel offers B&Bs, espresso and Dracula's birthplace. From here, head southwest for a night or two in **Sibiu**.

If you have a car (and it's summer), drive south along the breathtaking **Transfăgărăşan Road**, which tackles the biggest of the Carpathians. South of the pass, stop at the 'real Dracula's castle' of **Poienari Citadel** outside **Curtea de Argeş** before returning to Bucharest.





7–10 Days

## Danube Delta & Monasteries

This tour starts in **Tulcea**, the gateway to the delta, though it could be done in reverse, beginning in **Suceava**. If you're arriving in Bucharest, take the bus or drive (3 to 4 hours) to Tulcea.

If you've only got a day or two for the delta, stay overnight in Tulcea and enter the delta via boating day trips. If you've got a few days or longer, skip Tulcea and grab a passenger ferry to deeper, more scenic destinations such as **Sulina** or **Sfântu Gheorghe**.

After getting your birdwatching and boating on, return to Tulcea and take the bus or drive north to **Iași**, Moldavia's largest city. Spend a day taking in the sights. Use Iași as a base to explore the **Agapia**, **Văratec** and **Neamț** monasteries or head west and settle in at **Piatra Neamț** or **Târgu Neamț**.

From here, it's a short hop to **Suceava**, a good base for exploring the **Bucovina painted monasteries**. Highlights include the **Voronet**, **Humor**, **Moldovița** and **Sucevița** monasteries. Accessing the monasteries is tricky without a car. If travelling by public transport, allow a couple of extra days.

10–14 Days

## Transylvania & Maramureș

If you're coming to Romania to get a taste of small-town life, this tour is for you. **Brașov** makes a good base; if you're starting from **Bucharest**, take the train north on arrival. Spend at least a day or two in Brașov, and use it as a base for exploring **Bran Castle** and amazing fortified churches such as the one in **Viscri**.

From here, head north to the Unesco-protected town of **Sighișoara** and its historic citadel. Spend the night before heading south to the former Saxon stronghold of **Sibiu**. If you've got your own wheels, make a detour to take in another gorgeous village at **Biertan**. Sibiu is one of the liveliest cities in Romania, and well worth a couple of nights.

From here, you'll have to backtrack towards Sighișoara or head north through **Cluj-Napoca**. If you've got the time, this is another lively metropolis that merits at least a night.

From here push northward to **Baia Mare** or to **Sighetu Marmăției**, bases for further exploration of Maramureș. Don't miss the **Merry Cemetery** near Săpânța. From Sighetu Marmăției, it's just a short hop to the pretty villages of **Budești**, **Surdești** and **Ieud**.

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Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



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# Bulgaria







# itineraries

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Two Weeks

## From Sofia to the Coast

Start off with a few days in the capital, **Sofia**, taking time to visit a couple of the fascinating museums, galleries and churches. From Sofia, you can take a day trip out to the beautiful **Rila Monastery**, Bulgaria's most important pilgrimage site and one of the country's real highlights.

Take the bus – or train, if you prefer – from Sofia to **Burgas** on the southern Black Sea coast. Spend at least one night in this laid-back city, and take a stroll through the lovely Maritime Park down to the beach. Take the bus for the short trip southwards along the coast to the ancient town of **Sozopol**, with its quaint cobbled lanes and attractive sandy beaches. Spend three or four days here, relaxing by the seaside, sampling the fresh local seafood and maybe enjoying one of the free outdoor concerts or a yacht trip around the peninsula. If you're here in summer, catch the ferry up to **Nesebâr**, famed for its numerous medieval churches, and spend the day sightseeing.

Return to Burgas to get the bus or train back to Sofia.



## Two Weeks Along the Danube to the Sea

From Sofia, head north by bus to the little town of **Vratsa**, where you can spend a couple of days walking in the mountains or visiting the interesting museums. From here, travel by bus to **Pleven** where you can pick up another bus to **Ruse**, for your first glimpse of the mighty Danube. One of Bulgaria's most elegant and appealing cities, Ruse is known for its grand Viennese-style architecture and boasts several diverting museums, extensive parkland and a lively cafe scene.

Spend three or four days in Ruse, taking a day trip south of the city to the **Rusenski Lom Nature Park** to visit the remarkable rock churches and caves, and maybe spot some of the rare local wildlife.

From Ruse head eastwards to **Silistra**, a quiet town on the Danube, for a relaxing day or two before continuing to the Black Sea coast at **Varna**. You could easily spend several days in Bulgaria's 'maritime capital'. Relax on the long, sandy city beach, enjoy a show or concert at one of the city's many cultural venues, or go clubbing along the vibrant seafront.

## Three Weeks Southern & Central Bulgaria

From Sofia, catch a bus south to tranquil **Melnik**, famous for its wine, chalky 'pyramids' and National Revival-era mansions. Soak up the sunshine for a couple of days and visit historic **Rozhen Monastery** nearby. Continue by bus to **Bansko**, for two or three days of summer hikes or winter skiing.

From Bansko, take the train as it meanders on a narrow-gauge rail through mountainous forests before reaching Septemvri, on the main line to **Plovdiv**; this city boasts a sublime old town with clustered, classic architecture, ancient sites, art galleries and cafes - it deserves three or four days, especially if you'll also visit nearby **Bachkovo Monastery**. Head north to **Hisar**, famous since antiquity for its healing waters.

Continue to quiet **Karlovo** for more traditional ambience before visiting **Kazanlâk**, famous for its ancient Thracian Tomb. Cross the mountains at the gorgeous **Shipka Pass**, stopping first in **Shipka** village, to see its gleaming, golden onion-domed church. Finally, unwind for a few days in **Veliko Târnovo**, Bulgaria's medieval capital. In the shadow of its impressive fortress, this university city offers elegant eating and vivacious nightlife.

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