

A King's Castle by Day, Dracula's Lair by Night

Bucharest's Belle Époque streets to a king's mountain castle, Dracula's legendary lair, and the medieval citadels of Transylvania.

DURATION

8 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

May – September

for warm days and full access to every castle and fortress; September brings thinner crowds and the first color in the Carpathians (summer highs run 75–82°F / 24–28°C, dropping into the 60s°F / high teens°C by September evenings)

FROM

\$1,150 USD / person

for 2 people

Eight days link Romania's grand, gritty capital to the fairy-tale side of Transylvania — King Carol I's opulent mountain retreat at Peleş Castle, the clifftop fortress at Bran forever tied to the Dracula legend, and the walled Saxon citadels of Sighișoara and Sibiu, all reached by scenic train rather than a rental car — with real hotels, trains, and 2026 prices for every stop.

Day 1

Arrive in Bucharest, Old Town & Caru' cu Bere

Land in Romania's grand and gritty capital and spend the afternoon threading Lipscani's Belle Époque streets before a traditional dinner in the city's oldest beer hall.

Airport Transfer to Bucharest Old Town

~40 minutes · From \$25 USD, taxi or hotel transfer for 2

Henri Coandă International Airport sits about 10 miles north of the center; a metered taxi or pre-booked hotel transfer is the simplest way in, since ride-hailing pickup zones can be confusing on a first visit.

Check-In: Hotel Cismigiu

From \$95 USD / night, for 2 people

A restored early-1900s building steps from Cismigiu Gardens and a 10-minute walk from the Old Town, with high ceilings, wrought-iron balconies, and a rooftop terrace over the park.

Hotel Cismigiu · <https://www.hotelcismigiu.ro>

Walking Tour of Lipscani & the Old Town

~2 hours, self-guided · Free

Cobblestone lanes once lined with 19th-century merchant houses now hold cafés and bookshops — don't miss the frescoed interior of Stavropoleos Monastery and the ornate CEC Palace on Calea Victoriei.

Dinner — Caru' cu Bere

~1.5 hours · \$20–\$30 USD / person

Bucharest's oldest beer hall, open since 1879, serves Romanian classics like sarmale and mici under stained-glass ceilings and neo-Gothic frescoes, often with live folk music and dancers.

Caru' cu Bere · <https://www.carucubere.ro>

Day 2 Bucharest — Palace of Parliament & Village Museum

A full day in the capital balances Ceaușescu-era megalomania with open-air folk architecture, ending with a domed concert-hall landmark on the way to dinner.

Palace of Parliament Guided Tour

~1 hour, guided · 60 RON / ~\$13 USD per person (photo ID required)

The world's heaviest building and second-largest by floor area, built for Nicolae Ceaușescu, opens select wings and underground galleries to guided tours booked in advance.

Palace of Parliament (CIC) · <https://cic.cdep.ro>

Dimitrie Gusti National Village Museum

~2 hours · 15 RON / ~\$3 USD per person

More than 300 authentic wooden houses, churches, and windmills were relocated here from across Romania's regions, forming an open-air museum on the shore of Herăstrău Lake.

Romanian Athenaeum, Exterior & Foyer

~30 minutes · Free (concert tickets extra)

A domed 1888 concert hall with a colonnaded rotunda facing Revolution Square — check the schedule for an evening performance by the George Enescu Philharmonic before dinner nearby.

Overnight — Hotel Cismigiu

From \$95 USD / night, for 2 people

Second night at the same hotel before tomorrow's train into the mountains.

Hotel Cismigiu · <https://www.hotelcismigiu.ro>

Day 3 Transfer to Sinaia — Peleş Castle

A scenic train ride into the Carpathians ends at Romania's most opulent royal residence, a Neo-Renaissance castle built into a forested mountainside.

CFR Train — Bucharest Nord to Sinaia

~1h45min · From \$6 USD per person, one-way (2nd class)

Romania's national rail operator runs frequent InterRegio trains from Bucharest's main station straight into the resort town of Sinaia, climbing steadily into the Prahova Valley's pine forests.

CFR Călători · <https://bilete.cfrcalatori.ro>

Peleș Castle Grand Tour

~1 hour, guided · 120 RON / ~\$26 USD per person (+35 RON photo pass)

King Carol I's 1883 summer residence holds 160 rooms of carved wood paneling, stained glass, and armor across four floors — the Grand Tour covers the upper floors closed to the basic ticket.

Peleș National Museum · <https://pelescastle.com>

Sinaia Monastery

~45 minutes · Free (donations welcome)

A fortified 17th-century monastery just downhill from the castle, its Byzantine frescoes and walled courtyard gave Sinaia its name — after Mount Sinai — and its start as a pilgrimage stop.

Check-In: Hotel Cerbul

From \$55 USD / night, for 2 people

A 19th-century hunting-lodge-style hotel a short walk from both the castle grounds and the town center, with wood-beamed rooms and mountain views.

Hotel Cerbul · <https://www.hotelcerbul.ro>

Day 4 Sinaia to Brașov — Old Town & Tâmpa Mountain

A short hop deeper into Transylvania lands in Brașov's Saxon old town, framed by a Hollywood-style sign on the mountain rising straight up behind it.

CFR Train — Sinaia to Brașov

~1 hour · From \$5 USD per person, one-way

The same Prahova Valley line continues north to Brașov, one of Transylvania's best-preserved Saxon merchant towns, ringed by fortification walls and defense towers.

CFR Călători · <https://bilete.cfrcalatori.ro>

Council Square & the Black Church

~2 hours · Est. 15 RON / ~\$3 USD per person for the church

Piața Sfatului's pastel merchant houses ring the old Council House, and a five-minute walk leads to the soot-darkened Gothic Black Church, still hung with Anatolian rugs donated by 17th-century merchants.

Tâmpa Mountain Cable Car

~2 minutes each way · Est. 35 RON / ~\$8 USD per person, round trip

A cable car climbs 400 meters straight up from the old town to a summit overlook, with Braşov's red rooftops and a Hollywood-style "Braşov" sign spread out below.

Check-In: Hotel Aro Palace

From \$85 USD / night, for 2 people

A grand 1892-founded hotel on the edge of the old town, rebuilt in its current Art Deco form in the 1960s, with the Black Church and Council Square both a short walk away.

Hotel Aro Palace · <https://aro-palace.ro>

Day 5 Bran Castle & Râşnov Fortress Day Trip

A short drive from Braşov reaches the clifftop castle forever linked to the Dracula legend, plus a hilltop peasant fortress with sweeping views over the Bucegi Mountains.

Day Trips Brasov — Bran & Râşnov Small-Group Tour

Half-day, ~5 hours · Est. €50 / ~\$55 USD per person (entry fees separate)

A small-group van tour covers the roughly 30km from Braşov to Bran and Râşnov with a local guide, handling parking and timing so the day isn't spent waiting for buses.

Day Trips Brasov · <https://daytripsbrasov.com>

Bran Castle (Dracula's Castle)

~1.5 hours · 120 RON / ~\$26 USD per person

The clifftop 14th-century fortress that inspired Bram Stoker's Dracula holds turret staircases, a courtyard well, and a small exhibit on Vlad the Impaler, the historical figure tied to the legend.

Bran Castle · <https://www.bran-castle.com>

Râşnov Fortress

~1 hour · Est. 18 RON / ~\$4 USD per person

A 13th-century peasant fortress built as a refuge rather than a noble's home, with restored watchtowers and a panoramic terrace looking out over the Râşnov valley and the Bucegi range.

Dinner — Restaurant Sergiana

~1.5 hours · \$15–\$25 USD / person

A Braşov institution for traditional Transylvanian cooking — bear and venison stews alongside classic pork and cabbage dishes, served in a rustic, folk-art-lined dining room.

Restaurant Sergiana · <https://www.sergiana.ro>

Day 6 Braşov to Sighişoara — the Medieval Citadel

The train continues deeper into Transylvania to Sighişoara, a UNESCO-listed hilltop citadel and the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler, with an overnight inside its walls.

CFR Train — Braşov to Sighişoara

~2h30min · From \$8 USD per person, one-way

A regional line crosses rolling Transylvanian farmland to Sighişoara, one of the last inhabited medieval citadels in Europe, its nine surviving towers still ringing the old town.

CFR Călători · <https://bilete.cfrcalatori.ro>

Sighişoara Citadel & Clock Tower Museum

~2 hours · Est. 10 RON / ~\$2 USD per person for the tower

A covered wooden stairway climbs to the birth house of Vlad the Impaler, and the 64-meter Clock Tower's history museum tops out on a balcony over the citadel's cobbled lanes and pastel houses.

Check-In: Casa Wagner

From \$75 USD / night, for 2 people

A 700-year-old merchant house inside the citadel walls, right on Piata Cetăţii, with exposed timber beams and rooms named for the guilds that once occupied the building.

Casa Wagner · <https://sighisoara.casa-wagner.com>

Dinner — Casa cu Cerb

~1.5 hours · \$15–\$25 USD / person

A 16th-century merchant house turned restaurant just inside the citadel gate, serving Transylvanian dishes like papanaşi and stuffed cabbage under wood-beamed ceilings.

Casa cu Cerb · <https://casacucerb.ro>

Day 7 Sighişoara to Sibiu — Old Town & the Bridge of Lies

A short train ride reaches Sibiu, a former European Capital of Culture whose pastel old town is watched over by rooftop dormer windows shaped like half-closed eyes.

CFR Train — Sighișoara to Sibiu

~2 hours · From \$7 USD per person, one-way

The line crosses the Târnava Mare valley into Sibiu, once a walled Saxon stronghold and one of Transylvania's wealthiest medieval trading towns.

CFR Călători · <https://bilete.cfrcalatori.ro>

Old Town Walk — Bridge of Lies & Council Tower

~2 hours, self-guided · Est. 10 RON / ~\$2 USD for the tower

Wrought-iron benches line the Large and Small Squares, connected by the cast-iron Bridge of Lies, while the 13th-century Council Tower's viewing platform looks out over a skyline of "eyelid" roof windows.

Brukenthal National Museum

~1.5 hours · Est. 40 RON / ~\$9 USD per person

Romania's oldest public museum, opened in 1817 inside a Baroque governor's palace, holds a European Old Masters collection alongside Transylvanian decorative arts.

Brukenthal National Museum · <https://www.brukenthalmuseum.ro>

Check-In: Golden Tulip Ana Tower Sibiu

From \$90 USD / night, for 2 people

A modern high-rise hotel a short walk from the old town, with a rooftop view over Sibiu's church spires and the Fagaras Mountains on a clear day.

Golden Tulip Ana Tower Sibiu · <https://ana-tower-sibiu.goldentulip.com>

Day 8 Sibiu to Bucharest — Departure

A last Transylvanian breakfast and a scenic ride back across the Carpathians close out a trip that ran from a king's mountain castle to a vampire's cliff-top lair.

Dinner — Crama Sibiul Vechi

~1.5 hours · \$15–\$25 USD / person (final night, if flight timing allows)

A cellar restaurant beneath the old town's streets serves Transylvanian classics — sour soups, grilled meats, and cabbage rolls — with live folk music most evenings, a fitting last dinner in Transylvania.

Crama Sibiul Vechi

CFR Train — Sibiu to Bucharest Nord

~5 hours · From \$13 USD per person, one-way

A direct InterRegio line crosses back over the southern Carpathians to Bucharest, retracing the mountains in daylight before the final transfer to the airport.

CFR Călători · <https://bilete.cfrcalatori.ro>

Departure — Henri Coandă International Airport

~40 minutes from Bucharest Nord · From \$25 USD, taxi or hotel transfer

A metered taxi or pre-booked transfer covers the last leg north to the airport, closing out a trip that ran from Bucharest's Belle Époque streets to a vampire's mountain lair and back — check international carriers' recommended arrival times, typically 2–3 hours before departure.