



Eastern Europe:

Art, Culture & Adventure

September 1st-September 10th
September 12th with extension
2023

Information Packet



**YOUR
CUSTOM**
TRAVELS



The picturesque streets of Sighișoara

The Balkans: A beautifully diverse and historically significant area for the last several millennia.

The countries that occupy this piece of Eastern Europe share rich culinary traditions and local legends turned global phenomena. Eclectic Bucharest, often known as Little Paris for its class and style, will welcome us to the region with an unforgettable molecular gastronomy experience. The mysterious Carpathian Mountains of Transylvania will remind us of tales of Count Dracula as rolling blankets of fog cover the majestic mountain-top castles for which the area is well known. Explore Serbia's rich history of wine, starting with the country's 600-year period under Roman rule, continuing through to the turn of the century and the unique dessert wine - Bermet - featured on the Titanic, and finally to the present as a new wave of Serbia's growers reestablish the country as Europe's greatest up and coming wine region. Enjoy the diversity of cuisines offered in multi-cultural Belgrade, a city that served as a prize in over 115 wars and which was destroyed and rebuilt 40 times over its 9,000-year history. Once we've thoroughly explored the city, we will leave bustling metropolitan life for pure relaxation in our private waterfront villa on the Bay of Kotor as we sample

some of the best mussels in the world in the UNESCO protected gem of Montenegro and experience a unique variety of Rakia, the ubiquitous fruit brandy which unites the people of the entire Balkan region!

Your Custom Travels is once again excited to share a special new journey with our guests. We will see these wonderful countries through the eyes of local guides who specialize in particular aspects of their region to give us a truly local cultural experience. We will study the diverse histories of the area while indulging in the delicious food and drinks which form the core of the Balkan experience. Bring your cameras because the flavors you experience will be equally matched by the local towns and natural landscape, as you will explore impressive ancient castles, functional medieval monasteries, grandiose communist era palaces, charming island chapels, and quaint historical inns on our path around the peninsula.

Noroc Živeli!
“Good luck and may we live long!”
(Cheers!)



Winery in Fruška Gora region

DAY 1: Bucharest, Romania

Arrive into Bucharest in the early afternoon from departure city.

After collecting luggage and clearing customs, prepare to arrive at Eastern Europe's largest beer hall for a stein of the cold stuff and lunch. Feeling refreshed, we will head to the Spring Palace for a tour of former communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu's grand mansion.

From one impressive location we will travel to another as we check into the five-star Grand Hotel Continental, our hotel for the evening. Once we have showered and gotten ready, we will continue to The Artist for a magical culinary experience you will never forget!

DAY 2: Bucharest & Braşov, Romania

Today we will continue to explore central Bucharest and begin our journey into the mountains of Transylvania!

In the morning we will enjoy breakfast at our hotel and then depart for a walking tour of the Bucharest old town. We will explore both the University and Constitution Squares for a deeper understanding of the history leading to the beautiful architecture around us before enjoying lunch in this pedestrian haven.

After lunch we will take a guided tour through the working Palace of the Parliament – the second largest administrative building in the world behind the United States Pentagon and a structure which exceeds the Great Pyramid of Giza in size.

This afternoon we will leave the big city behind and transfer to our first site in Transylvania, the baroque town of Braşov, home to the areas' Saxon heritage. We will check into our hotel, the stately five star Aro Palace, before exploring the main square in Braşov for a lovely dinner.

DAY 3: Braşov & Sighişoara

Today will be our first of several visits to a UNESCO world heritage site, as we delve further into Transylvania to finish the day at the colorful cobblestone lined and fully walled medieval town of Sighişoara.

The morning begins with breakfast at our hotel before we see Braşov's most important sites. We will take cable car ride up the coincidentally named Tampa Mountain to view the town from the best possible angle. We will then visit the Black Church, a striking Gothic monument which houses the largest collection of oriental carpets outside of Turkey, and owes its name to the charred walls damaged in a massive blaze in 1689.

From Braşov we will travel to the foreboding Bran Castle, the home of Count Dracula where we will learn about the legend which brought the region of Transylvania to international prominence.

Lunch will be served in the village of Bran, underneath the eye of Dracula's castle, before we journey to our next destination of Sighişoara. The best preserved inhabited citadel in Europe will welcome us with its charm as we enjoy a traditional dinner and lodging in the town's premier bed and breakfast, found in the former home of the area's most prominent scholar and historian.

DAY 4: Sighişoara & Bucharest & Belgrade (Serbia)

We start the day with breakfast at our inn then we will depart quaint Sighişoara for the ride back to Bucharest.

Along the way we will stop at Peleş Castle to see a museum housed within the personal palace of the Romanian royal family - one of most beautiful castles in the world.

From Peleş we will finish the ride to the Bucharest airport for an afternoon flight into Belgrade, Serbia.

This evening we will land in Belgrade and after checking into our five star "Leading Hotels of the World group" property with Japanese and Brazilian styling, Square Nine, we will journey to a wonderful private dining experience hidden within a converted apartment at the city's new premier restaurant, Salon 5.

After dinner we have the opportunity to stroll the pedestrian promenade behind our hotel for drinks, coffee, or some live music at our leisure.



St. Sava Temple, Belgrade, Serbia

DAY 5: Belgrade & Fruška Gora National Park, Serbia

We start the day with breakfast at our boutique hotel then travel along the famous Fruška Gora wine route to the cultural center of the national park - the inviting town of Sremski Karlovci.

On our way out of Belgrade, we will tour the impressive Saint Sava Temple, the largest church in Southeastern Europe and a monument to the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Leaving Belgrade behind for the morning, we will cruise into the Fruška Gora national park, known as the jewel of Serbia for its rolling topography and over 60 family wine cellars. We will explore a specialized historical winery and bee keeping museum where we can sample their delicious wines and several varieties of honey.

After our first tasting, we will explore the central plaza of Sremski Karlovci

before enjoying lunch at a bohemian paradise on the shores of the Danube River. From lunch we will take a brief visit to Our Lady of Peace Church, the site of a foundational event in the history of diplomacy. Finally, we will visit our second family cellar known for the best wine in the region and a unique method for creating memorable Rakia.

Once we have had our fill of local wine, sausages, and cakes, we will head back to Belgrade for a casual evening enjoying cocktails and snacks at the floating bars, known as Splavovi, which make Belgrade a world-famous nightlife destination.

DAY 6: Belgrade

We start the day with breakfast at our hotel and then an informative and tasty walking tour of the city will dominate our day.

Throughout the day we will be walking all around Belgrade sampling the traditional cuisine of the cultural hub of Serbia. We will try a wide variety of foods, including small quick plates, unique cheeses, aged meats, fresh fruit, local wine, coffee and Rakia, all while learning about the long history of the city which created this multitude of culinary delights.

Walking the well-manicured grounds of the Kalemegdan fortress, which spans the divide between the Sava and Danube rivers, will ensure that by the end of the day we will understand how these various cultures from the Austro-Hungarian to the Ottoman, and later the united Yugoslavian, left their marks on the cities architecture as well as the food offered.

The evening will be free to spend at your leisure as we will have spent all day savoring a variety of cuisines and you may prefer lighter fare or something else instead of a formal dinner.



Local Sample Tapas

DAY 7: Belgrade & Kotor, Montenegro

We start the day with breakfast at our hotel before departing for the interactive and fun Nikola Tesla museum. We will spend the later part of the morning exploring the many scientific discoveries and inventions for which Tesla achieved fame and notoriety. Once we finish in the museum, we will take our van to the airport to fly to our third destination, Montenegro!

We will land in Tivat, Montenegro this afternoon and take a brief ride to our five-star private villa which will be home for the next three nights.

Early this evening we will reconvene as a group and take a drive just up the seaside road to another quaint village known as Perast for a cocktail. We can walk the small town center and then we will enjoy a chic welcome dinner at eclectic Verige 65.



Villa in Montenegro

DAY 8: Kotor

Breakfast at our villa and relaxation by the pool or bay in the morning.

Once we feel ready to explore, we will depart for a fun boat trip around the bay of Kotor, stopping at the charming Our Lady of the Rocks for an inspiring tale of the man-made island's importance to the fisherman of the region. From the church island our private boat will take us to a small family mussel farm where you will sample mussels that are hand pulled from the bay as you enjoy their home-made wine.

Full from mussels, oysters, and wine, we will take our boat back to the old walled city of Kotor, another UNESCO protected site, for a brief tour of the Venetian fortifications.

After a little rest and time to unwind, we will depart our villa to a wonderful seaside dinner at a traditional Montenegrin Konoba (local restaurant).

DAY 9: Kotor

We've been traveling between three countries for the past week now, so we wanted to offer a leisurely day enjoying everything the villa has to offer to cap off the vacation.

Breakfast this morning at our "home away from home" and a free day to spend lounging at our very own private UNESCO site with snacks, cocktails, a spacious pool, and unrivaled access to the Kotor bay.

In order to continue the relaxation of the day, we will have a wonderful feast prepared for us at the villa this evening by our private chef.



Kotor Bay from our Villa

DAY 10: Kotor Farewell (departure to the airport)

On our final day, we will eat breakfast at the villa as we say our goodbyes and prepare for departure.

Those who choose to do the three-day extension will continue on with us to Dubrovnik, Croatia by van as it is only a two hour drive from the villa.

YOUR TRIP INCLUDES:

10 Days & 9 Nights in Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro

All Hotels and Villa stays

Daily breakfasts

Seven lunches

Two Snacks while in transit (Days 4 & 7)

Eight dinners - Two cocktails included per person at dinner

Diverse itinerary with emphasis on history, culture, foods & wine

All transportation while on the tour* (including Airport transfers)

Flights from Romania –Serbia-Montenegro

Tour guides

All gratuities

Entrance fees

YOUR TRIP DOES NOT INCLUDE:

* International flights to and from the USA

* Baggage Fees

* Mini-Bar purchases

* Covid PCR Test to return to USA

The above delineated tour is USD \$5,450.00 per person

Single Supplement \$300.00.

\$1,500 per person deposit required to secure your space, final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.

(This deposit is not refundable)



Our Lady of the Rocks - Kotor Bay

The Pearl of the Adriatic: Stunning Dubrovnik

Located in southern Croatia this vibrant port known for its unique Old Town flavor is the final UNESCO world heritage site we will visit on our tour. For those wishing to partake in the extension of the original Eastern Europe experience, we have quite the treat for you!



Depart Montenegro via comfortable van in the morning after breakfast, heading to Croatia. The drive is about 2 hours.

Arrive in the heart of Dubrovnik and check into our centrally located boutique apartments for the next two nights.

Lunch will be at the neat and cozy Lucin Kantun where we will enjoy a variety of tapas and a view of how they are made in the restaurant's intimate open kitchen layout.

After lunch explore the story of Dubrovnik's history on a walking tour of the Old City and the walls. This private tour with a local expert will take us through most of the afternoon.

Return to our rooms for a short rest in preparation for evening explorations of Dubrovnik from above, as we take a cable car ride to the top of mount Srđ to the Panorama restaurant where we will have the best possible views of the Adriatic Riviera as we dine.

DAY 11: Dubrovnik, Croatia

Good Morning Croatia: how about a hearty breakfast overlooking Dubrovnik from another angle as we prepare for a fun day of exploration of hidden gems, narrow streets and a mix of traditional Croatian cooking!

After breakfast we will have some free time to explore the shops and beautiful marinas that dot the town.

Around 3pm we will meet as a group and take a ride out into the countryside for an exciting traditional Croatian cooking class at a private farm. We will pick our own vegetables and learn the traditions and methods used to create some of the special dishes for which this area is known. After spending the rest of the day enjoying this gastronomic experience, we will return to Dubrovnik in the evening for a final celebration cocktail as we discuss all the wonderful places we've visited together.

DAY 12: Dubrovnik Farewell (departure to the airport)

On our final day of the extension, we will eat breakfast as we say our goodbyes and prepare for transfers to the airport.



Dubrovnik Food Story

YOUR TRIP EXTENSION INCLUDES:

3 Days & 2 Nights in Dubrovnik, Croatia

Boutique Apartment Stay

Daily breakfasts

One lunch

Two dinners - Two cocktails included per person at dinner

Diverse itinerary with emphasis on history, culture, foods

All transportation while on the tour* (including Airport transfers)

Tour guides

All gratuities

Entrance fees

YOUR TRIP EXTENSION DOES NOT INCLUDE:

* International flights to and from the USA

* Baggage Fees

* Mini-Bar purchases

* Covid PCR Test to return to USA

The above Dubrovnik extension is USD \$1,450.00 per person

Single Supplement \$100.00.

