

Different Facets of the Carpathians / 8 days

Of Highlands and Highlanders, of Nature and Crafts.



This tour takes in different parts of the mountains in Romania with their specific features, from the dramatic Bucegi complete with those grand calderas, impressive cliffs and poignant peaks to the smooth pastures and extensive woodlands in the Baraolt, as well as with the scenery diversity in the Piatra Craiului. At the same time, the image would not be complete without the people living there and which shaped the scenery we see today with their vernacular architecture, crafts and traditions. Add in a still inhabited medieval fortress-town, a couple of royal castles and a fine sample of the over 130 fortified churches in the region and this is going to be a very rich ten day-long journey!



ORBIS UNUM SRL

Str. Foișorului 98, Sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
orbis-unum.com | CUI: 51880465 | Tourism Licence No.: 3276

DAY 1

(Bucharest OTP) - Sinaia

Welcome to Romania! Upon arrival at Bucharest OTP Airport and taking advantage of the fact that the airport lies North of the city (on the mountain side), we shall immediately proceed to the resort of Sinaia, founded around a 17th century monastery and developed around two fine castles built by the royal family, all that at the foot of a mountain we shall explore in more detail towards the end of our journey.

- Arrival at Bucharest OTP Airport.
- Drive to Sinaia (usually less than 2 hours).
- Accommodation, 4* B&B or hotel.



DAY 2 / NOT MON, TUE (if the Sinaia Castles are to be visited)

Sinaia - Prejmer - St. Ann Lake - Mohoș / Mohos Bog - Valea Zălanului / Zalánpatak

This morning we can start with a visit to Peleș Castle. Built as a summer residence of the royal family, it stuns one with its rich decoration, as every other room is set in a different style. It will be then on the road and over Predeal Pass into Transylvania, where we shall have a break to visit Prejmer Fortified Church. The Saxons that built it were invited to settle in this part of Transylvania by Hungarian King Geza II; special status was granted provided they obliged and protected the kingdom boundary from invaders. They duly did so, and soon enough their houses, churches and towns turned into de facto fortifications. After this visit, we shall change traditional areas, as we shall enter the Székely land; the Székelys are an old branch of the Hungarians still preserving their own runic script and keen on their traditional lifestyle. Given this local history insight, it will be back to the mountains, as we shall enjoy a walk around the only lake in the country hosted by a volcano crater and then across the adjacent Mohoș Bog with its specific flora. The late afternoon will see us leave them busy roads and head into remote countryside, following King Charles III that, visiting this region, fell for it to the point where he bought over a farm built in 1900, had it restored and turned it into a retreat He uses on every visit to

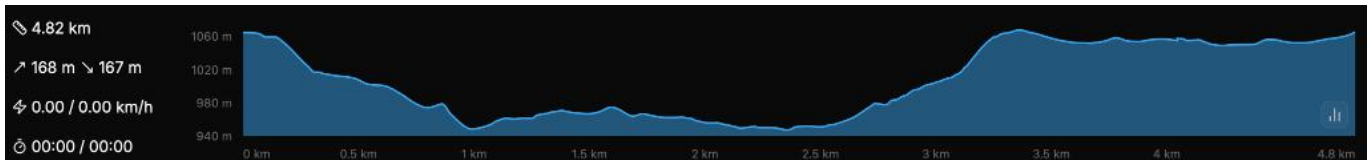


ORBIS UNUM SRL

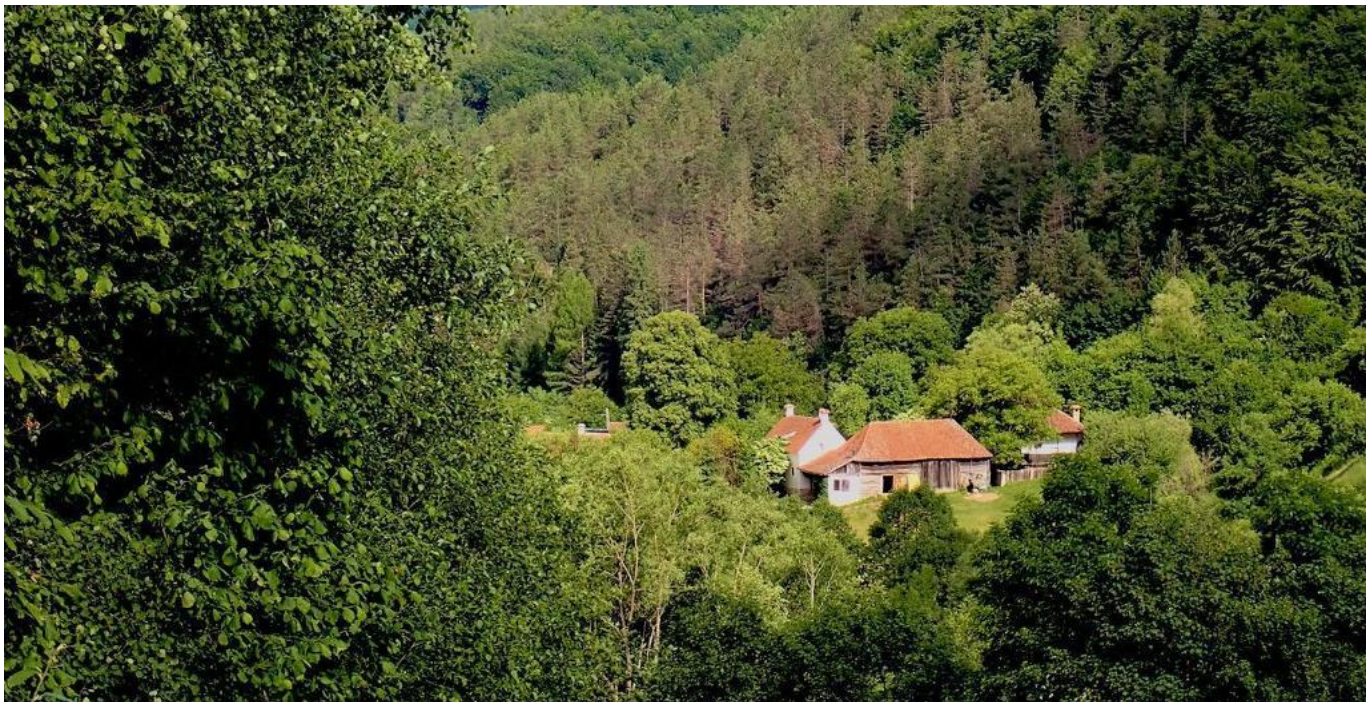
Str. Foișorului 98, Sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
orbis-unum.com | CUI: 51880465 | Tourism Licence No.: 3276

Romania. Our accommodation? Right in the old houses there! Meals? Cooked by the ladies in the village!

- Breakfast.
- Visit to Peleş Castle (ground floor).
- Drive to Prejmer (ca. 1 hour 15 minutes).
- Visit to Prejmer Fortified Church.
- Drive to St. Ann Lake (ca. 1 hour 30 minutes).
- Walk around St. Ann Lake and across Mohoş Bog.



- Drive to Valea Zălanului (ca. 1 hour)
- Dinner in Valea Zălanului.
- Accommodation in the traditional houses in the Valea Zălanului Farm (no TV sets in the rooms, otherwise all needed amenities, 3* standard).



DAY 3

Valea Zălanului / Zalánpatak - Baraolt / Barót Mountains - Valea Zălanului / Zalánpatak

Today we shall not move. Well, almost, at least our luggage will not. There are about 130 people living in the village and time seems to have stood still here to the point where one might oblige and do the same. Yet we shall only partly follow suit, using a trail that starts right at our farm and heads up across patches of woods and wonderful clearings to a hillside affording charming views of the valley, the village and highlands that seem to span out for as far as the eye can see. Upon returning down, we shall have a treat, but one that we shall also need to give a hand to the cooking of: the kürtöskalács, a baked pipe-like dessert topped with walnuts and sugar or honey.



ORBIS UNUM SRL

Str. Foişorului 98, Sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
orbis-unum.com | CUI: 51880465 | Tourism Licence No.: 3276

- Breakfast.
- No drive today.
- Walk up the mountains to the clearings overlooking the village and valley.



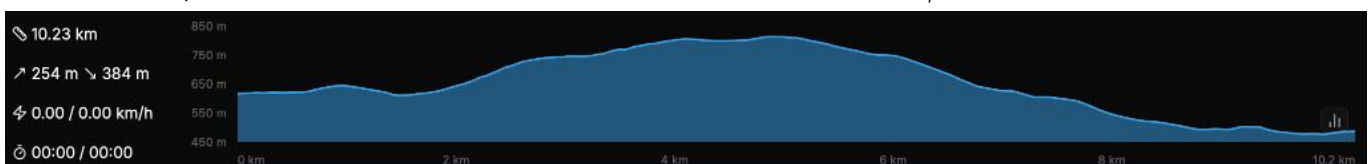
- Time at leisure in the village, optional visit to the local craft museum.
- Kürtőskalács cooking presentation involving the guests.
- Dinner in Valea Zălanului.
- Accommodation in the traditional houses in the Valea Zălanului Farm (no TV sets in the rooms, otherwise all needed amenities, 3* standard).

DAY 4

Valea Zălanului / Zalánpaták - Dealul Crucii / Kereszt Hegyi - Micloșoara / Miklósvár - Valea Zălanului / Zalánpaták or Micloșoara / Miklósvár

The day will start with a walk or horse-pulled cart ride to the foot of the highlands followed by a hike up the Dealul Crucii. These smooth mountains with their extensive woodlands and charming clearings often dotted with cattle or sheep could hardly be more bucolic. A copious picnic will wait for us at the small shelter at the top and we shall then start on the way down on the other side, with fine views Westwards. Once down in Micloșoara, a different kind of treat will be waiting for us: the Kálnoky Hunting Mansion founded back in 1648, the rooms of which are filled with period furniture, glassware and textiles meant to provide a good image of the aristocratic lifestyle in the area we are in, the Székelyföld, while its quite extensive grounds, including the pond and the grand old tree-flanked access alley add to the original splendour. A stone's throw away, Count Tibor Kálnoky maintains a few old, traditional houses and a manor house where we shall stay overnight, providing a great way to explore the lifestyle of the local population. Just like in Valea Zălanului, we might not therefore miss the lack of TV sets in the old rustic rooms. Optionally, a half an hour drive will get us back to Valea Zălanului, hence not changing the accommodation.

- Breakfast.
- Horse-pulled cart ride or walk to the trailhead.
- Hike up the Dealul Crucii and down on the other side, to Micloșoara.



- Picnic lunch on the Dealul Crucii (everything will be already there).
- Visit to the Micloșoara Hunting Mansion.
- Drive to Valea Zălanului (unless accommodation set in Micloșoara), ca. 30 minutes.
- Dinner in Valea Zălanului or Micloșoara.
- Accommodation in the traditional houses in the Valea Zălanului Farm or Micloșoara (no TV sets in the rooms, otherwise all needed amenities, 3* standard).



ORBIS UNUM SRL

Str. Foișorului 98, Sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
orbis-unum.com | CUI: 51880465 | Tourism Licence No.: 3276

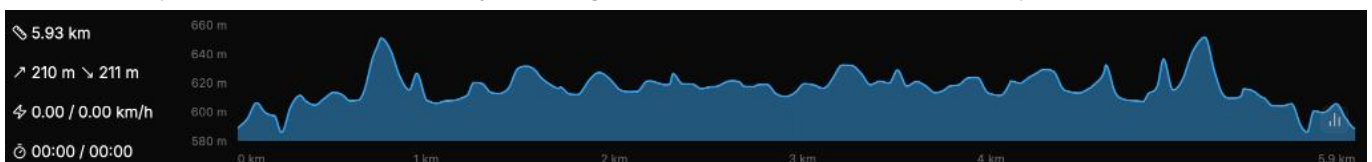


DAY 5

Valea Zălanului / Zalánpatlak - Vârghiș / Vargyas - Corund / Korond - Sighișoara

The day will commence with a drive to Vârghiș and an easy walk along the scenic homonymous gorges providing yet a different view of these mountains. Once back on the road, we shall head up North across fine countryside to Corund, one of the major pottery centres in the country, where we shall visit a local craftsman. With its typical patterns of blue or red paint on a white background, or sometimes of an assortment of green and brown on the same white background, the pottery here is just as beautiful as it is useful. Then, in the afternoon we shall reach the still inhabited fortress town of Sighișoara. Built by the Saxons (the 'fortify-everything' folks mentioned before), the place still preserves the Medieval atmosphere, mystery and picturesqueness that are best explored on foot. The various churches, the bastions, the highschool on the hill and the wooden, covered stairway leading there, these are just a few of the places we shall definitely enjoy exploring here!

- Breakfast.
- Drive to the Vârghiș trailhead (ca. 1 hour).
- Walk along Vârghiș Gorges (n. the route below goes and returns the same way; optional viewpoints can be reached by making additional detours if so chosen).



- Drive to Corund (ca. 1 hour 45 minutes).
- Visit to a potter's workshop in Corund and explanations of the craft.
- Drive to Sighișoara (ca. 1 hour 15 minutes).
- Walking tour of the Sighișoara fortress-town.



ORBIS UNUM SRL

Str. Foișorului 98, Sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
orbis-unum.com | CUI: 51880465 | Tourism Licence No.: 3276

- Accommodation in Sighișoara, 4* guesthouse located in one of the old houses inside the fortress or 4* hotel out of the fortress walls.



DAY 6

Sighișoara - Viscri / Weisskirch - Brașov - Vulcan / Volken - Peștera or Măgura

Following a busy - but equally scenic - road today, we shall head to Brașov, a major Saxon town. Yet on the way a rather short detour will take us to Viscri, a typical Saxon village that was greatly restored partly also with the know-how brought over by a trust founded by King Charles III which maintains an old house here as well; a walk in the village and a visit of the local, small, but photogenic fortified church will definitely be rewarding. And then Brașov, complete with all ado and buzz around it, will still impress us: the busy Republicii pedestrian street, the airy Council Square and the Black Church are just a few of the places to see here. Back to the countryside, the early evening will see us in another Saxon village, Vulcan. An organ concert in the local fortified church followed by dinner cooked by the local ladies and served in the parish house will complete this culturally rich day, but it will not be over before heading up to a highland, sparsely populated village at the foot of Piatra Craiului Mountains where we shall spend the night in a comfortable lodge.

- Breakfast.
- Drive to Viscri (ca. 1 hour).
- Walk through the village in Viscri (no hiking).
- Visit to the fortified church in Viscri.
- Drive to Brașov (ca. 1 hour 45 minutes).
- Walking tour of Brașov excluding visits. Time at leisure.
- Drive to Vulcan (ca. 30 minutes).
- Organ concert in the fortified church in Vulcan.
- Dinner in the parish house in Vulcan.
- Drive to Peștera or Măgura (ca. 45 minutes).
- Accommodation in a 4* lodge in Peștera or Măgura.



ORBIS UNUM SRL

Str. Foișorului 98, Sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
orbis-unum.com | CUI: 51880465 | Tourism Licence No.: 3276

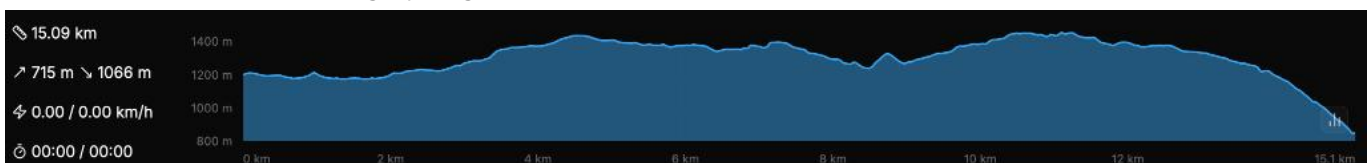


DAY 7

Peștera or Măgura - Joaca Pass - La Table Clearing - Curmătura Hut - Botorog Spring - Peștera or Măgura

A day dedicated to nature and the outdoors! We shall start hiking right at the accommodation and head smoothly up the Piatra Craiului, across woods and clearings, with superb views of the limestone ridge above or the mighty Bucegi Mountains to the South (weather allowing). And to make it a true mountaineering day, we can have the typical hiker's lunch at Curmătura Hut before heading down to the trailhead and Botorog Spring from where we shall definitely enjoy a 15 minute drive back to our accommodation (walking is possible, but it is uphill, which we might have had enough of by then!).

- Breakfast.
- Hiking from the accommodation to Joaca Pass and on to La Table Clearing, Curmătura Hut and down to Botorog Spring.



- Optional lunch at Curmătura Hut (to be ordered and paid for locally).
- Drive back to the accommodation from the Botorog Spring trailhead (15 minutes).
- Accommodation in a 4* lodge in Peștera or Măgura.



ORBIS UNUM SRL

Str. Foișorului 98, Sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
orbis-unum.com | CUI: 51880465 | Tourism Licence No.: 3276

DAY 8

Peștera or Măgura - Moieciu de Sus - Guțanu Clearing - Strunga Pass - Padina

This morning an hour's drive will take us to the trailhead at the foot of Bucegi Mountains (the ones we could see dramatically rising South of our accommodation). A pleasant walk up the gravel road plying Bângăleasa Creek followed by a steeper trail up will deliver us to Guțanu Clearing affording some of the most memorable views on this tour: the grand Strunga and Guțanu walls and cliffs rising from the woods and scree slopes below, as well as the impressive Colții Țapului Peak are hard to forget. A smooth trail at the foot of the said Strunga Wall will get us to Strunga Pass complete with its anti-Communist resistance movement of the 1950-1960s. And then, after taking in the great views spanning - weather allowing - all the way to Romania's highest mountains (the Făgăraș culminating at 2545 m.a.s.l.), we shall carry on all downhill to Padina, where a comfortable and definitely welcome lodge will be waiting for us.

- Breakfast.
- Drive to the trailhead off Moieciu de Sus (1 hour).
- Hike up to Guțanu Clearing, on to Strunga Pass and down to Padina.



- Light packed lunch.
- Accommodation in a 4* lodge in Padina area.



ORBIS UNUM SRL

Str. Foișorului 98, Sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
 orbis-unum.com | CUI: 51880465 | Tourism Licence No.: 3276

DAY 9

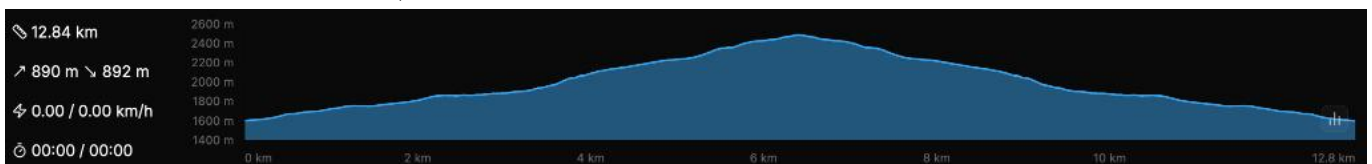
Padina - Bucegi Mountains - Padina with options

A few options will be available today, according to the weather conditions and the way we feel:

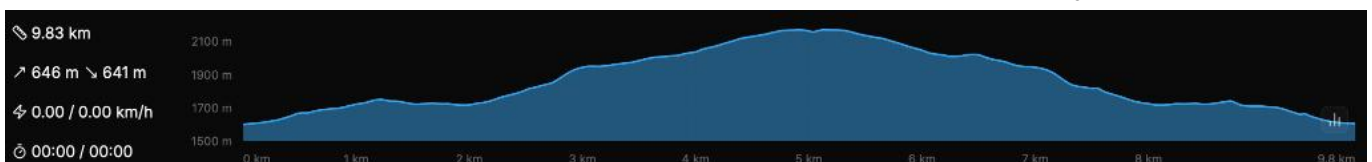
1. We shall approach the highest point in the Bucegi, Omu Peak, rising at 2507 m.a.s.l. While the trail plying Ialomița Creek up to Obârșia Pass and on to the peak is smooth, with a constant, but not too steep gradient, it is long, true. There is a hut at the very top and basic meals are available, while views are, let us say, generous.
2. We can instead choose the shorter Doamnele Creek including its set of waterfalls and the mountain shelter just off Bătrâna Peak where we turn around.
3. We walk down along Zănoaga Gorges to Scropoasa Hut located on the shore of a small reservoir.
4. We hop on a cable car (running daily except for Mondays) and head up to Babele Hut, where an easy, short walk can get us to see the element-shaped Babe (En. old ladies) and Sfinx (En. sphynx), and a longer one can get us to Caraiman Peak on a minor promontory of which there is a huge WW1 memorial overlooking Prahova Valley we drove along on Day 2. The return can be by cable car again (mid afternoon closure observed) or walking.

Whichever way we choose, memorable a day this will be again!

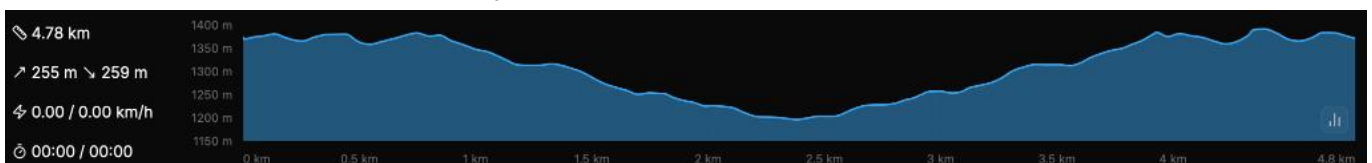
- Breakfast.
- Hiking with the options below (the guide reserves the right to choose according to the weather conditions and the way the members in the group feel):
 - Padina - Ialomița Creek - Omu Peak hike and back the same way.



- Padina - Doamnele Creek - Bătrâna Shelter and back the same way.



- Padina - Zănoaga (this stretch driven, ca. 15 minutes) - Zănoaga Gorges - Scropoasa Hut and back the same way.

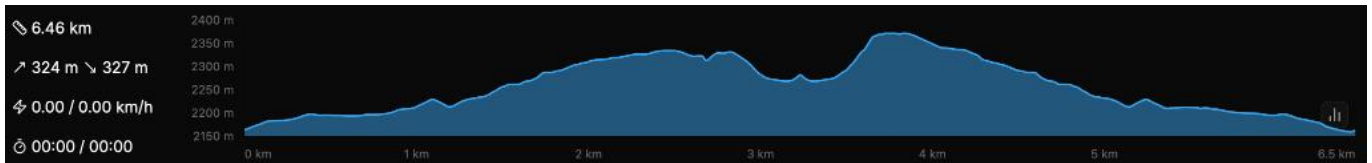


- Drive to the cable car terminal in Peștera (10 minutes), followed by cable car ride to Babele Hut, then walk around the Babe and Sfinx (30 minutes return, 20 m. gain) or all the way to the Caraiman WW1 Memorial and back to Babele (graph below). Return by cable car or walking.



ORBIS UNUM SRL

Str. Foișorului 98, Sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
orbis-unum.com | CUI: 51880465 | Tourism Licence No.: 3276



- Accommodation in a 4* lodge in Padina area.



DAY 10 / BEST NOT ON SUNDAY

Padina - Bucharest OTP

Well, all things eventually come to an end. Even good ones, such as our tour. So, while we do hope to see you again in Romania for more of the nature and local traditions, we wish you a safe journey home and fine memories of this trip. Including that kürtőskalács recipe, remember? ;-)

- Breakfast.
- Transfer to Bucharest OTP Airport for the return flight (ca. 3 hours, it might take considerably more on a Sunday afternoon).



ORBIS UNUM SRL

Str. Foișorului 98, Sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
orbis-unum.com | CUI: 51880465 | Tourism Licence No.: 3276



ORBIS UNUM SRL

Str. Foişorului 98, Sector 3, Bucharest, Romania
orbis-unum.com | CUI: 51880465 | Tourism Licence No.: 3276