



Cruise Details

Name:	Black Sea Explorer with Transylvania
Reference:	SCENICBBTR081024-1
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Amber
Regions:	Danube
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Departs On:	08 Oct 24
Departs From:	Budapest
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Arrives On:	22 Oct 24
Arrives At:	Bucharest
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Cruise Nights:	14
Total Vacation Days:	15

Itinerary

Day 1: Budapest (Hungary)

Fly from the UK to Budapest. Welcome to Budapest, the Hungarian capital and one of Europe's most diverse and vibrant cities. Divided by the Danube, with Buda on one side and Pest on the other, this city became united in 1873 when a newly built bridge connected the two. The city is an architectural treasure trove comprising styles from Gothic to Art Nouveau and everything in between. It is also well known for its hot springs and thermal baths and has a vibrant nightlife scene.

Enjoy a two night stay in a luxury hotel.

Arrives On: 08 Oct 24

Day 2: Budapest (Hungary)

This morning you will join your fellow guests for a sightseeing tour of Budapest. Explore this magical city by coach and foot, crossing the bridge between Buda and Pest. Commence your

tour on the Buda side where you will see Várkert Bazár before crossing the Margaret Bridge to the Pest side where you will see Széchenyi and Elisabeth squares. Enjoy dinner in a local restaurant tonight before returning to your hotel.

Arrives On: 09 Oct 24

Day 3: Budapest (Hungary)

This afternoon you'll board your Scenic Space-Ship. At tonight's welcome reception, raise your glass to the wonderful cruise ahead.

Arrives On: 10 Oct 24

Day 4: Kalocsa (Hungary)

You will arrive in Kalocsa this morning. This historic Hungarian town has some of the richest folk art in the world, like its beautifully decorated porcelain. It was an important agricultural centre in the 19th century and the region has retained much of its rural charm.

Freechoice: This morning, choose one of these Scenic Freechoice excursions:
Hungarian Traditions: The region of Kalocsa is teeming with culture and traditions. It is famous for its traditional handicrafts such as needlework and embroidery. Learn about the origins of these beautiful designs as well as other crafts.
Hungarian Horse Show: Kalocsa is located on the Great Hungarian Plain, with an agricultural history dating back more than 2,000 years. Witness a traditional horse show, meet the local horsemen who will demonstrate impressive equestrian skills and enjoy a tasting of local delicacies.

Arrives On: 11 Oct 24

Day 5: Osijek (Croatia)

Your Scenic Space-Ship will arrive this morning in the Croatia town of Osijek, a small city with a turbulent history. Over the past 500 years it has been part of the Ottoman, Habsburg and Austro-Hungarian empires, and in the 1990s was the epicentre of the Croatian War of Independence. Many of the grand Baroque buildings remain standing but bear the scars of the war. Osijek is famous for its food, which is heavily influenced by Hungary and features plenty of paprika, locally-made sausages and river fish.

Freechoice:
Today, explore the region in one of these Scenic Freechoice excursions:
Walking tour of Osijek: Take a guided walking tour of Osijek to see the highlights of the town including the well-preserved Baroque Old Town and fortress. You'll also have the opportunity to hear some traditional and classical music popular in the region.
Boat cruise at Kopacki Rit: Kopacki Rit is one of the largest natural wetlands in Europe, covering 238 hectares, and you will have the opportunity to explore it by boat. Learn more about this beautiful untouched

piece of nature in the easternmost part of Croatia through a presentation by one of the park's rangers. During a 50-minute boat ride, you will cruise among lush greenery, hundred-year-old willow woods and meadows, spotting the variety of flora and fauna including deer, wild boar, white tailed eagle and black stork.

Ancestry of the Kitchen: Recipes have long been passed down through generations and often kept as family secrets. Today, guests will meet with a local who will divulge a family recipe from traditional fish stew, while also chatting to you about life in this region.

After your touring this morning, all guests will visit the home of a local Croatian family and have lunch with the family members. Immerse yourself in this cultural and culinary experience, and enjoy an authentic meal prepared with fresh vegetables from the host's garden. North-eastern Croatia is the 'bread basket' of the country, so it is only natural that the villagers take great pride in their gardens. You'll be treated to a feast for both the palate and the eyes.

Arrives On: 12 Oct 24

Day 6: Belgrade (Serbia)

The capital of Serbia, Belgrade is known as the 'Door to Central Europe' and lies at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers. This eclectic city is steeped in history, with Neolithic ruins found nearby, a fortress built by the Romans, Brutalist buildings that sit beside Art Nouveau buildings and a bohemian vibe. One of the oldest capitals in Europe, Belgrade has been rebuilt almost 40 times.

Freechoice: Explore your way with one of this morning's Scenic Freechoice activities:

- Guided city tour with extended free time:** By coach and foot, you'll tour the major sites of the city with a guide. You will explore the city's highlights such as cobbled streets of the Bohemian Quarter and Kalemegdan Fortress, an imposing structure that has been the site of more than 100 battles and offers panoramic views of the rivers below. Afterwards, enjoy free time to explore on your own.
- Guided city tour including Tito's Memorial:** Join a more in-depth tour of Belgrade with a local guide. See and learn about the major sites of the city including the Ottoman heritage of the Old town, the imposing fortress and Republic Square followed by some free time in the city centre. During this tour you will also visit the memorial dedicated to Tito, the former ruler of Yugoslavia.
- Cycling tour along the Danube:** Trace the banks of the Danube on two wheels during this guided cycling tour.
- Walking tour with a student:** Learn about life in Belgrade from a local. Get to the heart of the city and understand the troubles and triumphs that Belgradians have experienced. You'll get to know these happy and resilient people as you are guided through their city with a local student.

This afternoon is free at leisure to explore Belgrade further. You might like to soak up the bohemian culture with a wander along cobblestoned Skardalija Street, a district once frequented by writers and artists and other creative souls, now home to traditional restaurants, local stores and galleries.

Enrich

Tonight, we have a special treat in store for you with our Scenic Enrich event:

- Classical concert at St. Sava Temple:** Visit the St.

Sava, the largest orthodox temple in the Balkans. Have a chance to explore the frescos-lined walls of the cathedrals crypt where the church choir will perform some of the most beautiful hymns just for you. Because of the acoustics in the crypt, this is a once of a lifetime opportunity.

Arrives On: 13 Oct 24

Day 7: Iron Gates (Romania)

Today will cruise through the spectacular scenery of the Iron Gates. This stretch of the Danube is the natural border between Serbia and Romania, and features four narrow gorges, soaring cliffs and the mighty rock carving of Decebalus, the former Romanian king.

Spend some time relaxing in your suite, many of which have a window that converts into a Scenic Sun Lounge, allowing you uninterrupted views to watch a rolling tapestry of river life as you cruise the Danube. Sweat it out in the state-of-the-art gym or take time out in the wellness centre, then mingle with other guests as you sit back with a regional wine or beer in the Panorama Lounge & Bar.

Arrives On: 14 Oct 24

Day 8: Svishtov (Bulgaria)

Your Scenic Space-Ship will arrive in the Bulgarian town of Svishtov this morning. Here you will have the choice to disembark and take an excursion to Veliko Tarnovo, known as the City of the Kings, or stay on board and sail towards Rousse (or Ruse), which has been described as 'Little Vienna'.

Freechoice: Choose one of today's Scenic Freechoice excursions:

Excursion to Veliko Tarnovo and Arbanassi: Take a full day excursion from Svishtov to Veliko Tarnovo, one of Bulgaria's oldest towns which is built among lush, forested hills on the banks of the twisting Yantra River. In the 14th century as the Byzantine Empire weakened, Veliko Tarnovo was the Bulgarian capital and was known as the third Rome. On the way to town, you will stop to enjoy the panoramic views of the old town and see the Asenevtsi Brothers Monument. You will then venture to the nearby leafy village of Arbanassi, stopping to see the 17th century Konstantsaliev House for an insight into how affluent locals lived, and the Christ Nativity Church.

Guided city tour of Rousse: Stay on board your Scenic Space-Ship and enjoy a relaxing morning sailing to Rousse. Upon arrival join a local guide on a sightseeing tour of this opulent town, resplendent in Belle Epoque architecture and leafy manicured squares. Afterward you'll enjoy a short piano recital and some free time to wander, before returning to the ship.

Arrives On: 15 Oct 24

Day 8: Ruse (Bulgaria)

Arrives On: 15 Oct 24

Day 9: Silistra (Bulgaria)

Arrive in Silistra early this morning. This Bulgarian town has changed hands many times over the centuries; a major Turkish fortress and trade centre in the 15th century, it played a significant role in the Russo-Turkish wars of the 1870s, briefly became part of Romania after the Second Balkan War, and finally reverted to Bulgaria in 1940. The town is dotted with historic sites stretching back to late Roman times.

Freechoice:
Explore your way with this morning's Scenic Freechoice
Active walk to Silistra Fort: Transfer to Silistra Fort by coach. Upon arrival take a guided walking tour of the fort and learn about its history. It is the best preserved of the six points of the Turkish fortification system, which played an important role in the Russo-Turkish wars.
Visit Alfatar Village: Take an excursion to the small village of Alfatar, located just outside of Silistra. Visit the ethnographic museum featuring a typical country house, where visitors will see how the residents of this region have lived over the centuries and have kept their traditions alive. Also see the beautifully restored Holy Trinity temple, a treasured symbol of the Bulgarian Orthodox religion, and visit the Alfatar school to meet local children and learn about daily life for young Bulgarians.
Excursion to Varna: Take a full-day excursion to the Black Sea coast. Varna is a cosmopolitan city, home to Roman bath ruins, a white-sand beach, and many open-air bars and restaurants. Your local guide will be delighted to show you through the city, including the recently renovated Cathedral and the Military Naval Museum (Please note: The Military Naval Museum is closed on Sundays, and will be replaced with Varna Archaeological Museum).

Arrives On: 16 Oct 24

Day 10: Giurgiu (Romania)

Upon arrival, take an orientation tour of the city by coach, from the south of Bucharest to Primaverii Palace stopping to see its squares, including Union Square, University Square, Roman Square, Victory Square and Charles de Gaulle Square.

After the orientation tour, explore more of this enchanting city with Scenic Freechoice

Freechoice:
Ceausescu's Spring Palace: Located in one of the wealthiest districts in Bucharest, this 1960s residence is made up of 80 spacious and elegant rooms decorated with silk wallpaper, wood panels, paintings by famous Romanian painters, mosaics, marble, chandeliers and mirrors made of Murano glass.
Village Open Air Museum: Explore the ethnography exhibits depicting Romanian heritage and culture at the Village Open Air Museum. The museum depicts authentic peasant houses, barns, churches and more, rebuilt by craftsmen using traditional techniques.
This evening you will enjoy dinner with your fellow guests before heading to your hotel.

Arrives On: 17 Oct 24

Day 10: Bucharest (Romania)

Arrives On: 17 Oct 24

Day 11: Bucharest (Romania)

This morning, you'll begin your journey into Transylvania. This mountainous region of Central Romania is wrapped up in ancient myths, folklore and legendary literature. Its landscape has barely changed in more than 600 years, dotted with perfectly-preserved medieval villages and spectacular castles amid deep green forest. Peles Castle is a Neo-Classical masterpiece built in the 1870s by the first king of Romania as a summer residence for the royal family. Inside, the rooms are exquisitely decorated with paintings, carved wood and stained glass, and there's a fascinating collection of artwork and artifacts. Nearby, Sinaia Monastery is the oldest monastery in the region and is home to two churches, one from the 17th century and one built by the royal family in the 19th century. Your final destination for today is Brasov, a colourful town that brings together Gothic spires, medieval watchtowers, sprawling squares and Soviet-era concrete. A local guide will take you on a tour of the sights before you check in to your hotel. Finish your day with a delicious dinner at one of the city's finest restaurants.

Arrives On: 18 Oct 24

Day 11: Brasov (Romania)

Arrives On: 18 Oct 24

Day 12: Brasov (Romania)

Dracula is Transylvania's most famous figure. Writer Bram Stoker based his famous novel on the real life prince Vlad III, also known as Vlad the Impaler. Though Stoker never visited Romania, he is said to have been inspired by the place you're visiting today – Bran Castle. Perched dramatically on a clifftop, this white stone fortress was built in the 14th century and is a maze of narrow passageways, hidden rooms and sunny courtyards. Travel on to the village of Sighisoara, the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler himself. It's also one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Europe, with cobblestone lanes and colourful buildings that have remained largely unchanged since the 12th century.

Arrives On: 19 Oct 24

Day 12: Sighisoara (Romania)

Arrives On: 19 Oct 24

Day 13: Sighisoara (Romania)

You'll be woken by the sound of church bells this morning, ringing out across the town squares in the same way they have done for centuries. Or perhaps by the laughter of children as they make their way to school. One of the most wonderful aspects of Sighisoara is that it is still a living town, not just a tourist site, so you'll be immersed in the everyday lives of the people who are lucky enough to live here.

Freechoice: Today's Scenic Freechoice to choose from:

Explore the walled city: The World Heritage-listed walled city at the centre of Sighisoara was built by the Saxons between the 12th and 17th centuries. Much of it still stands today, making it one of the best-preserved medieval cities in the world. A local guide will show you the highlights.

Hike the hill: If you're feeling more active, hike up the covered stairway to the 14th century Church on the Hill. It's the most spectacular examples of Gothic architecture in Transylvania and has been restored many times through history. The climb is difficult but you'll be rewarded with superb views over the city.

This afternoon, it's on to Sibiu, another medieval town with a rich Saxon history. As you admire the historic buildings during your guided tour, you might get the feeling that they are looking back at you – many of the buildings here have unique dormer windows in the roof that resemble human eyes.

Afterwards you have free time to take in the beauty of this city at your leisure. Perhaps join the locals for an al fresco coffee in the Big Square (Piata Mare) or Little Square (Piata Mica), both just metres apart in the centre of the old town or take a moment to duck inside the Holy Trinity Cathedral, a Romanian orthodox church that was built just over 100 years ago. The elaborate paintings and stained-glass windows across the ceiling will take your breath away.

Arrives On: 20 Oct 24

Day 13: Sibiu (Romania)

Arrives On: 20 Oct 24

Day 14: Sibiu (Romania)

Leaving Sibiu this morning, you'll cross back over the Southern Carpathian Mountains to reach the Cozia Monastery. Built between 1386 and 1388, it's one of the most architecturally and culturally important monasteries in Romania and many other religious complexes have been modelled after it. Sitting on the edge of the Olt River and with mountain peaks behind, it's a breathtaking site that has long been inspiring spiritual connections.

With the villages and vistas of Transylvania behind you, you'll make your way back to the capital Bucharest this evening.

Arrives On: 21 Oct 24

Day 14: Bucharest (Romania)

Arrives On: 21 Oct 24

Day 15: Bucharest (Romania)

After a final breakfast in Bucharest, it's time to farewell this fascinating part of Eastern Europe. The spectacular landscapes, medieval villages and sense of fairy tales come to life will stay with you long after your journey. Transfer to the airport for your flight to the UK.

This itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for operational reasons such as high and low water. As such, the cruise may operate altered from that stated above. Please refer to our terms and conditions.

Arrives On: 22 Oct 24

For more information on this cruise, please call +44 (0)1202 767926.

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