



Cruise Details

Name:	Black Sea Explorer with Transylvania
Reference:	SCENICBBTR121024-2
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Amber
Regions:	Danube
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Departs On:	12 Oct 24
Departs From:	Bucharest
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Arrives On:	26 Oct 24
Arrives At:	Budapest
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Cruise Nights:	14
Total Vacation Days:	15

Itinerary

Day 1: Bucharest (Romania)

Fly from the UK to Bucharest. Welcome to Bucharest, the capital of Romania. It has a complex – and sometimes confronting – past, having spent more than four decades under Communist rule. But today, it's a dynamic, modern and energetic city with a thriving café culture, excellent museums and pockets of glorious Belle Epoque architecture.

Check in to your hotel for an overnight stay.

Arrives On: 12 Oct 24

Day 2: 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: 13 Oct 24

Day 2: Brasov (Romania)

Arrives On: 13 Oct 24

Day 3: 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 cliff top, 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: 14 Oct 24

Day 3: Sighisoara (Romania)

Arrives On: 14 Oct 24

Day 4: 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: 15 Oct 24

Day 4: Sibiu (Romania)

Arrives On: 15 Oct 24

Day 5: 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: 16 Oct 24

Day 5: Bucharest (Romania)

Arrives On: 16 Oct 24

Day 6: Giurgiu (Romania)

Arrives On: 17 Oct 24

Day 6: Bucharest (Romania)

Today you'll explore the city of Bucharest, with your selected Scenic Freechoice followed by a guided tour of the city by coach. Travel 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.

Freechoice: This morning's Scenic 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: Take a visit to the ethnography exhibits depicting Romanian heritage and culture at the Village Open Air Museum. The museum depicts traditional peasant houses, barns, churches and more, rebuilt by craftsmen using traditional techniques.

This afternoon, you will be transferred to Giurgiu, where you will be welcomed on board your luxurious Scenic Space-Ship.

Arrives On: 17 Oct 24

Day 7: Silistra (Bulgaria)

Arrive in Silistra early this morning, a Bulgarian town that played a significant role in the Russian-Turkish wars.

Freechoice: 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 Russian-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

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Arrives On: 18 Oct 24

Day 8: Ruse (Bulgaria)

This morning you'll arrive in Rousse (or Ruse), which has been described as 'Little Vienna'.
Freechoice: Choose one of today's Scenic Freechoice excursions:
Guided city tour of Rousse: 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.
Excursion to Veliko Tarnovo and Arbanassi: Take a full-day excursion from Rousse to Veliko Tarnovo, one of Bulgaria's oldest towns which is built among lush forested hills and 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 lives, and the Christ Nativity Church.

This afternoon, relax on board as you continue to sail along the Danube. Mingle with other guests as you sit back with a regional wine or beer in the Panorama Lounge & Bar and soak up the scenery.

Arrives On: 19 Oct 24

Day 9: Iron Gates (Romania)

Today you will cruise through the spectacular scenery of the Iron Gates, a narrow gorge carved out between the Carpathian and Balkan Mountains. This stretch of the Danube is the natural border between Serbia and Romania and features four narrow gorges, soaring cliffs and the might 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. Or perhaps you'd prefer to sweat it out in the state-of-the-art gym or take time out in the wellness centre.

Arrives On: 20 Oct 24

Day 10: Belgrade (Serbia)

Arrive in the capital of Serbia this morning. 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:
This morning's Scenic Freechoice:
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. 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: 21 Oct 24

Day 11: Osijek (Croatia)

Today you will visit Osijek, a small city with a turbulent history. Osijek was at the epicentre of the 1990s war, and its scars are still evident on its buildings today.

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: Covering 238 hectares, Kopacki Rit is one of the largest natural wetlands in Europe, and you will have the opportunity to explore it by boat. Learn more about this beautiful untouched 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, meadows and spot 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 of 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 typical 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, from which ingredients are used to make a feast for both the palate and the eyes.

Arrives On: 22 Oct 24

Day 12: Kalocsa (Hungary)

Your space ship will arrive early this morning in Kalocsa, one of the oldest towns in Hungary. This historic town has some of the richest folk art in the world and was an important agricultural centre in the 19th century.

Freechoice:

Today's Scenic Freechoice:

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: 23 Oct 24

Day 13: Budapest (Hungary)

Arrive in Budapest this morning, 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.

You will disembark your Scenic Space-Ship and be transferred to a luxury hotel for a two-night stay. Enjoy dinner with your fellow guests and enjoy the evening to wander around Budapest as the sky darkens and city lights begin to sparkle. Perhaps check out the Jewish Quarter's famous ruin bars, which are housed in old and abandoned buildings that were left in decay after WWII.

Arrives On: 24 Oct 24

Day 14: Budapest (Hungary)

Today you'll have the entire day at your own leisure to explore this magical city.

You may wish to cross the bridge between Buda and Pest to see Matthias Church, the iconic Fisherman's Bastion where you'll have enchanting views of Budapest, and the medieval town on Castle Hill, located on a limestone plateau 170 metres above the city.

Or pack your swimsuit and make your way to one of the city's thermal baths for a relaxing soak in the therapeutic waters. Szechenyi Baths are the largest, boasting 15 indoor baths and three vast outdoor pools.

Arrives On: 25 Oct 24

Day 15: Budapest (Hungary)

After breakfast, 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: 26 Oct 24

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

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