



Cruise Details

Name:	Eastern Europe & Balkans Unveiled with Transylvania
Reference:	SCENICBBTR200526-2
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Amber
Regions:	Danube
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Departs On:	20 May 26
Departs From:	Bucharest
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Arrives On:	03 Jun 26
Arrives At:	Budapest
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Cruise Nights:	14
Total Vacation Days:	15

Itinerary

Day 1: Bucharest (Romania)

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.

Arrives On: 20 May 26

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.

Arrives On: 21 May 26

Day 2: Brasov (Romania)

Arrives On: 21 May 26

Day 3: Brasov (Romania)

This morning a local guide will take you on a tour of the sights of this colourful town that brings together Gothic spires, medieval watchtowers, sprawling squares and Soviet-era concrete.

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'll visit this afternoon – 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.

Back in Brasov, finish your day with a delicious dinner in one of Brasov's finest restaurants.

Arrives On: 22 May 26

Day 3: Brasov (Romania)

Arrives On: 22 May 26

Day 3: Brasov (Romania)

Arrives On: 22 May 26

Day 4: Brasov (Romania)

This morning travel 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.

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: 23 May 26

Day 4: Sighișoara, Transylvania (Romania)

Arrives On: 23 May 26

Day 4: Sibiu, Transylvania (Romania)

Arrives On: 23 May 26

Day 5: Sibiu, Transylvania (Romania)

This morning your local guide will walk you through the highlights of Sibiu during a guided tour before you 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: 24 May 26

Day 5: Bucharest (Romania)

Arrives On: 24 May 26

Day 6: Bucharest (Romania)

Today you'll explore the city of Bucharest, with your selected Scenic Freechoice followed by a panoramic 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:

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: 25 May 26

Day 6: Giurgiu (Romania)

Arrives On: 25 May 26

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.

Arrives On: 26 May 26

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: 27 May 26

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: 28 May 26

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.

Panoramic city tour including Tito's Memorial: Join a panoramic 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.</p><p>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.
</p><p>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.</p>

Arrives On: 29 May 26

Day 11: Osijek (Croatia)

<p>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.</p><p>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.

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.</p><p>After your touring this morning, 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.</p>

Arrives On: 30 May 26

Day 12: Mohács (Hungary)

<p>Straddling the Danube, this small Hungarian town was the site of the 16th century Battle of Mohacs, which led to the destruction of the Hungarian monarchy and the rise of Ottoman and Habsburg rule. From here, you will explore the surrounding regions with one of the following Scenic

Freechoice excursions.

Freechoice: Today's Scenic Freechoice: Pecs city tour: First settled by the Romans and then later the Turks, and located close by the Croatian border, this richly historic and fascinating city is a melange of cultures. It's filled with Roman and Turkish architecture and ruins, elegant Baroque buildings, and is famous for its decorative arts and crafts, in particular porcelain. On a guided tour, you will see the city's first telephone exchange, which opened in 1885; the Turkish Bath of Pasha Memi, which was demolished in the late 19th century but unearthed in the 1970s; the county library and more.

Villany wine village: The region of Villany is known for its big, bold red wines, which account for most of the local wine production thanks to its sub-Mediterranean climate. The village is a charming place to visit, with rows of historic white wine cellars where you can sample some of the local reds. You will also visit an old mill.

Zsolnay Ceramics Museum: Founded in 1853 and still in operation today, Zsolnay Porcelain has a proud history of creating hand-painted decorative, ornamental, and architectural porcelains, and is known for its signature eosin glaze technique. View a splendid historic collection at the museum in Pecs, which is housed in the company's former factory.

Arrives On: 31 May 26

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 discover this city on 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. After the sightseeing tour you will 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: 01 Jun 26

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: 02 Jun 26

Day 15: Budapest (Hungary)

After breakfast, transfer to Budapest airport for your onward journey. 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. Please note: Preview itinerary subject to change.

Arrives On: 03 Jun 26

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

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