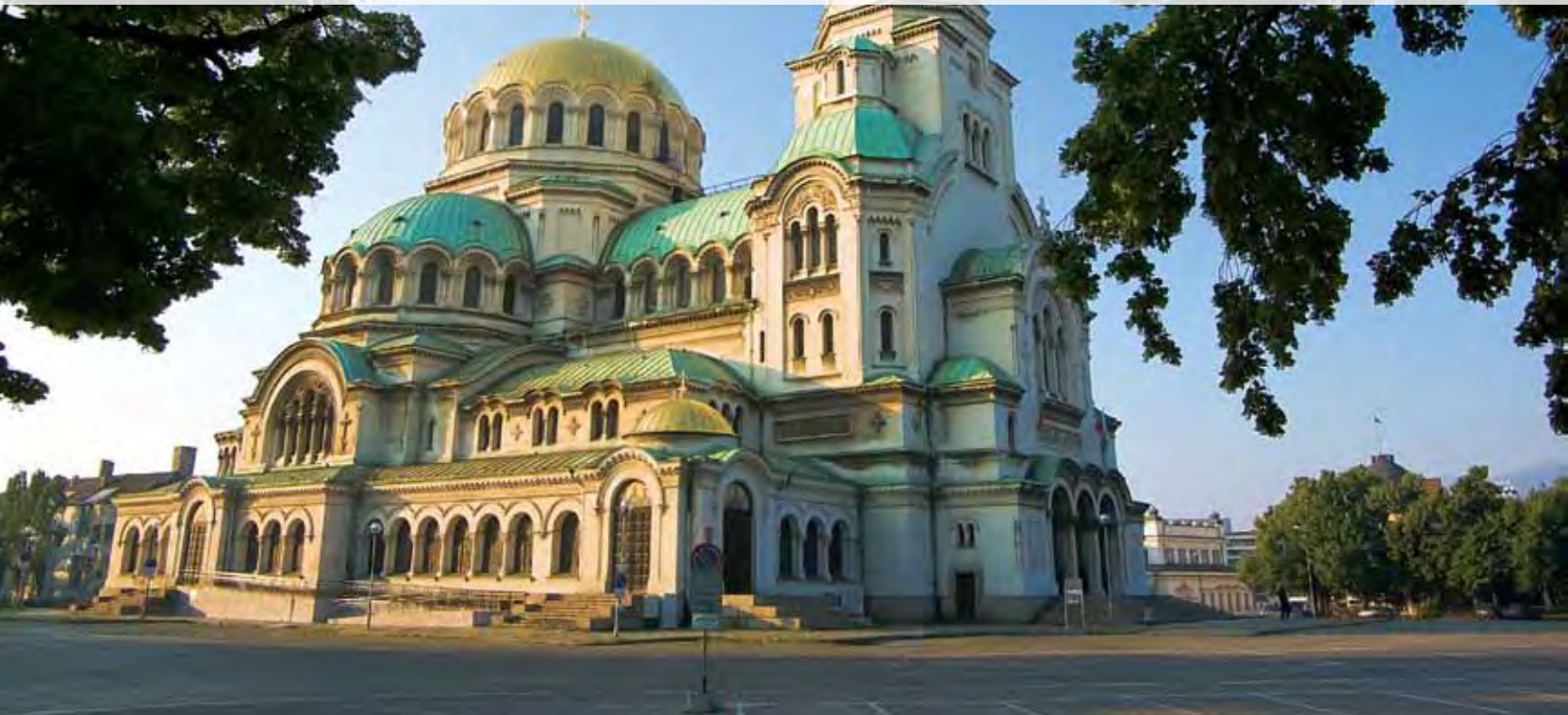


DIVERSITY OF CULTURES

TT•DC

13 days from Sofia to Plovdiv, Veliko Trnovo, Bucharest, Brasov, Cluj and Budapest

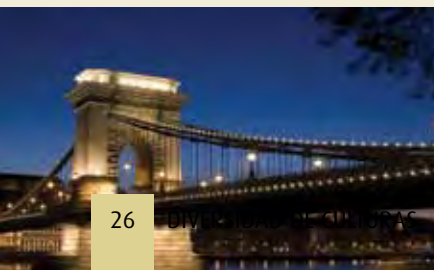


TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Sofia:** St. George Church, St. Sophia Church, and the golden domed Alexander Nevski Cathedral
- Visit to the **Rila Monastery**
- Roman Amphitheatre and Byzantine fortress in **Plovdiv**
- Tour medieval **Veliko Trnovo**, the former capital of the Bulgarian kingdom
- Explore the stone village of **Arbanassi**
- **Bucharest:** The Rumanian Open Air Village Museum, the Triumphal Arch, Roman Atheneum and Stavropoleos Church
- **Sinaia:** Peles Castle, former Romanian royal family summer residence
- **Bran Castle**, legendary castle of Count Dracula
- **Brasov:** Black Church
- **Budapest:** The Parliament, Royal Palace, Castle Hill area, Fisherman's Bastion, St. Matthias Church, and Hero's Square

HOTELS:

- **Sofia:** Princess
- **Plovdiv:** Trimuntzium Princess, Novotel
- **Veliko Trnovo:** Yantra, GH Veliko Trnovo
- **Bucharest:** Golden Tulip, NH Bucharest, Crowne Plaza
- **Brasov:** Aro Palace
- **Cluj:** Agape
- **Budapest:** Mercure Corona, NH Budapest, Grand Hungaria



ITINERARY

Day 01: Sofia

Arrive in Sofia and check into the tour hotel. This evening, meet with your Tour Director for a welcome dinner.

Meals: D

Day 02: Sofia

Sightseeing of Sofia highlights the 3rd century St. George Church, St. Sophia Church, and the golden domed Alexander Nevski Cathedral. The rest of the day is free at your leisure.

Meals: B

Day 03: from Sofia to Rila Monastery and Plovdiv

This morning leave Sofia and drive to the famous Rila Monastery to visit the church with its amazing frescoes and monastery museum. Then proceed to Plovdiv for dinner and overnight in the tour hotel.

Meals: B, D

Day 04: From Plovdiv through Valley of the Roses to Veliko Trnovo

Morning sightseeing tour of Plovdiv takes you through its winding cobblestone streets to visit the Roman Amphitheater. Depart with the coach via Valley of the Roses and drive to Kazanlak to visit a Thracian Tomb and Hellenistic frescoes. Then it is over the scenic Shipka Pass through the Balkan Mountains to Veliko Trnovo, once the capital of the Bulgarian kingdom.

Meals: B, D

Day 05: Veliko Trnovo

Morning tour of Veliko Trnovo with houses seemingly perched atop each other on the steep hillsides. See the fortress on Tsarevets Hill, the Patriarchal Church and the old town market street. On our afternoon visit to Arbanasi, we first stop at Etara, an open-air museum which presents Bulgarian architecture and life during the Revival Period, from about 1760 to 1880. Arbanasi is a picturesque village of red-tile roofed, stone houses, where we visit the Church of the Nativity – the most richly decorated church in Bulgaria. Return to Veliko Trnovo for overnight.

Meals: B

Day 06: From Veliko Trnovo to Bucharest

After breakfast, leave Bulgaria and drive across the Danube, which is the border between Bulgaria and Romania, to Bucharest, the capital, which was and still is called Paris of the East.

Meals: B, D

Day 07: Bucharest

On a tour of the city we see the Palace of Parliament (the second largest building in the world after the Pentagon), the Metropolitan Church, Romanian Athenaeum and Arch of

Triumph. We visit Harastrau Park and enjoy a guided stroll through the open-air Folk Village Museum. The rest of the afternoon is free.

Meals: B

Day 08: From Bucharest via Sinaia and Bran to Brasov

The first stop on today's journey is Sinaia, one of the most beautiful mountain resorts of Romania and its Peles Castle, built by Carol I of Romania as his summer residence. After visiting this amazing castle, we proceed to Bran, the legendary castle of Count Dracula. After the short drive we reach Brasov where the sightseeing tour of Brasov features the Town Hall and the Black Church. This exciting day ends with dinner and entertainment in one of the Brasov local restaurants.

Meals: B, D

Day 09: From Brasov via Sighisoara to Cluj

After breakfast, leave first to Sighisoara, designated UNESCO World Heritage Site for its 850 year old testimony to the history and culture of the Transylvanian Saxon. The city is also known as the birthplace of Vlad III. Tepes. The character of Count Dracula was created by Bram Stoker on basis of his life story and legend. In the afternoon, proceed to Cluj, the final destination of this day's journey.

Meals: B, D

Day 10: From Cluj to Budapest

Leave Romanian Transylvania, "the area beyond the forest" and its capital Cluj, drive through rolling hills to reach the steppes of Hungary and its capital, Budapest.

Meals: B, D

Day 11: Budapest

Budapest is a graceful capital along the banks of the majestic Danube with soaring architecture, culinary delights, and a vibrant cultural scene. Comprehensive touring showcases the city's charms. Walk along the Fishermen's Bastion for stupendous views of the Parliament Building, and visit St. Stephen's Cathedral, the largest church in Budapest. Then see Heroes Square, the Danube Embankment and the impressive Chain Bridge. The afternoon is free to explore the surprising sights and unexpected delights of Budapest on your own. Be sure to join local residents for a cup of coffee, tea and pastries at the fashionable Café Gerbeaud, located on Vorosmarty Square for over 125 years.

Meals: B

Day 12: Budapest

A whole day on your own in this exciting city. You can explore on your own or go shopping and check out the stylish boutiques of Vaci Utca,

the Antique District and the stores of the West End. Take a shopping break with coffee and cake at the elegant New York Café or take an optional guided tour to the artist village of St. Andrea which attracts people with its many art shops and galleries as well as small coffee houses on the bank of the Danube River. Maybe it is time to explore Danube bend by boat to see Visegrad, once the capital of Hungarian kingdom or take the tour of Hungarian Puszta. The choices and attractions are numerous. In the evening, join your fellow travelers and Tour Director for the farewell dinner.

Meals: B, D

Day 13: Budapest

Your program with us finishes after breakfast in Budapest and transfer to the airport for your homebound flight.

Meals: B

INCLUDED FEATURES:

- First class hotels, rooms with private facilities
- Service charges and taxes
- Welcome drink upon arrival with your Tour Director
- Breakfast daily, 6 hotel dinners
- 2 dinners with entertainment in Brasov and Budapest
- Touring by modern air-conditioned motor coach
- Professional Tour Director throughout
- Qualified local city guides
- Luggage handling in hotels