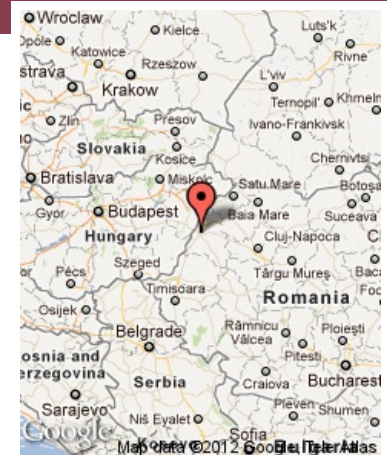


Romania Hiking Holiday



Highlights

The lost world of the Apuseni Mountains: a living complex of water, limestone and wild forest. This 10-day trekking adventure will see you in Romania hiking through this unique region self-sufficiently, culminating in an ascent of Bihorul Peak, the tallest in the Apuseni.

Located in Western Romania and surrounded by the mighty Romanian Carpathians arch, part of Europe's largest mountain chain, the Apuseni Mountains offer some of the most unspoiled natural beauty this side of Europe, as well as a culture unchanged in centuries. The Transylvanian region is arguably Europe's last wild frontier – the mountains harbour the continent's highest populations of lynx, wolves and brown bears, as well as over a third of its plant species – and rural life reflects this, with forestry, hay-making and livestock-rearing the major livelihood strategies. The landscape is almost unknown in Europe: meadows of wild flowers, soaring limestone cliffs, freshwater lakes and vast cave networks! More impressive still is the scale, with gently undulating hills as far as the horizon, punctuated occasionally by the odd hay wain or traditional wooden farmhouse.

This 10-day trek takes you to Romania hiking through the heart of the lost world of the Apuseni. Starting from the pleasant town of Oradea, you'll hike along the rocky banks of the rushing Cris River, then it's up into the mountains proper! Through pine forests, past huge bat-filled caves and cool mountain lakes, you'll make your way to Padis, the agora of the Apuseni, where many of the region's trekkers gather to exchange stories and trail info. This is your launch pad for exploring the myriad wild karst phenomena: Somesul Cald Gorge, Cetatile Ponorului Cave and Poiana Ponor. You'll also hike to the beautiful Poiana Florilor (Glade of Flowers) and the underground glacier Focul Viu (The Living Fire). On the penultimate day of the tour you'll scale Bihorul Peak (1,849 metres), the highest in the Apuseni, for a spectacular view of the wilderness that you've traversed! Then, on the final day, it's back to Oradea to relax the muscles at a thermal spa before enjoying a slap-up dinner with your team.

Is it for me?

A truly awesome adventure, but not one for the fainthearted! You'll be walking for nine days across countless different terrains on mostly unmarked trails, camping every night, spending almost every waking hour in the company of other group members. Clearly, then, this isn't going to be first choice for honeymooners or young families. But if you're an experienced walker with a keen sense of adventure, this is a must-do trek! The itinerary is fairly rigid and the pace is lively (in order to make the most of your 10 days), but there's still time to indulge other interests like photography and wildlife-watching. You're also assured of good banter, with small groups usually consisting of between four and eight like-minded people; previous guests often tell us that they've stayed in touch with people they've met on this trek, such is the immensity of the experience!

Accommodation

Accommodation is in guest houses (ranked at 2 or 3 daisies – according to the Romanian system), mountain cabins or village families. The hosts are warm and generous, the food is mostly home-prepared from local and organic ingredients and very tasty. All the facilities have indoor bathrooms with running hot and cold water. In some occasions families share the same facility with guests (in this case it might happen that your bedroom may be accessible only through a bedroom being used by another person from the group) while in others you are accommodated in a separate facility which is exclusively for guests. All accommodation providers try to limit their negative impact on the environment and use as much as possible renewable or recyclable building materials.

Prices from

641 GBP (10 days) per person

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Most of the meals are home-prepared, based on local recipes and using products (vegetables, eggs, meat, milk) from own garden. It is not a problem at all to have vegetarian foods, the host just has to be informed in time. However, the meals in this area are mostly based on meat (usually pork) and they tend to be sometimes fat, especially during the winter period and Christmas, Easter and New Year's eve celebrations. If you would like to have another type of food during your trip, please confirm in advance. Traditional home made drinks are wine and fruit (usually plum) brandy which is quite strong. In the mountain area jams and liqueurs made from wild berries are also usual and they are totally natural – no preservatives, artificial colours or flavors. If you would like to have herbal teas, just let them know.

Itinerary

Days 1 & 2: Crisul Repede Nature Reserve

Discover one of the main nature reserves in the Apuseni Mountains in Romania hiking through the rocky banks of Cris River, observe the flora and fauna of the area, and visit Vadu Crisului cave, also a protected area. Trek to the centre of the mountains, following unmarked routes and enjoy a silent night at a campfire near a mountain lake..

Days 3 & 4: Padurea Craiului Mountains

Visit the Meziad cave nature reserve, a cave where you can learn about the life of the bats and how ancient populations lived here. Trek to a mountain resort nearby and taste the famous mineral water from the Wonder Spring while enjoying a walk in old pinetree forests.

Days 5, 6, 7: Padis area – core of the Apuseni Mountains Trek to Padis area, the “agora” of the Apuseni Mountains, where trekkers gather from all over the Apuseni. Daily hikes to some of the most fascinating and wild karst phenomena: Somesul Cald Gorge, Cetatile Ponorului Cave, Poiana Ponor (Ponor Glade). Discover a complex and fascinating world of water, limestone and wild forests, a true Lost World.

Day 8: Galbena Gorge and Poiana Florilor

Trek to Poiana Florilor (The Flowers' Glade), enjoy the view and diversity of the flowers, discover the underground glacier “Focul Viu” (The Living Fire) and dare to be a pioneer in the wilderness of Galbena Gorge.

Day 9: Bihorul Peak (1849m)

Celebrate the final day of the trip by climbing the highest peak of the Apuseni Mountains and enjoying the view of the entire mountains you have trekked.

Day 10: Felix thermal spa & Oradea city

Relax in a thermal spa near Oradea, visit the city with its famous buildings and enjoy the last evening over a traditional Romanian dinner and socializing in a local restaurant.

Details

Getting there

There is an airport at Oradea and you can fly there (indirectly) from London and other European airports.

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed

Travellers should bring

Below is a recommended list only - please adapt to suit your own needs/experience. Please be aware if you do not have certain vital items (e.g. walking boots, etc) the level of your hikes may be changed for your personal safety.

Recommended kit list

Short underwear top and bottoms - avoid cotton (2 sets); top (Polartec 100); bottom (Schoeller, Pile or fleece); waterproof trousers (Gore-Tex); rain parka/jacket with hood (Gore-Tex); socks (wool or synthetic - no cotton); boots (Gore-Tex or waterproof breathable material lining); low boots / sport sandals (for relaxing).

Additional items

Light torch (head torch/hand one); knife/ swiss army knife + cutlery (fork/spoon/plates); water bottle/hydration system (1 litre); small/day pack (15/20 litres); trekking rucksack (50/70 litres); trekking poles (adjustable - no ski poles); sun glasses - 100% UVA/UVB; sunscreen (factor 20); sun hat; lip protection; camera (classic or digital, plus extra film, batteries and charger); favourite snack foods (no more than 500g unless you have some special dietary needs, in which case, please consult the guide); personal toiletries; towels; personal medical kit; personal medication; repair kit - small sewing kit; mobile phone.