



RIDE WORLD WIDE

Romania - Transylvania 2017

Ride Information Sheet

These rides take place in Transylvania, central Romania, not far from the town of Brasov, based from Sepsikorospatak which was the centre of the country estate of the Kálnoky family. The rides are run by Count Tibor Kálnoky and his wife Anna and are a trip back into the past, to a wonderfully unspoilt horse-drawn rural society that has scarcely changed in generations. The region you visit is Sekler country, an area settled by the Hungarian army centuries ago, where Hungarian is still the most widely spoken language. 6 night trips are run from set dates during spring, summer and autumn months. Extra nights at Miklósvár, the Kálnoky's lovely guesthouse, and visits to places such as Bucharest, Brasov and Sighisoara are easily arranged. Please see overleaf for the set departure dates and contact Ride World Wide to check availability.

The Horses The horses used for these rides are locally bred ponies characteristic of the area along with Arab and Lipizzaner crosses and Hungarian Gidrans. Their breeding includes Huzul, a historic and robust breed unique to the Carpathian mountains, Semigreu (a Lipizzaner-Ardenne cross) and some locally bred Lipizzaners and Arabs. They range from around 14.2hh to 16.2hh. They are keen and spirited, adaptable and well suited to the going, which can get rough and is steep in places. They are also of calm temperament and sensible to handle. English general purpose and endurance saddles are used and saddle bags are provided. Most of the horses are ridden in snaffle bridles but some may be ridden in Pelhams.



Riding The 6 night trip includes 5 full days riding and there is generally between 3 and 6 hours in the saddle, with breaks to rest and for lunch. When moving accommodation at night on the circuit outings, luggage is transported for you by back up vehicle. Rides are lead by two guides, one English speaking, and groups are usually limited to a maximum of 8 riding guests.

Pace The rides are at a moderate pace overall, with routes taking you through forests and up and down mountain tracks. There are lots of opportunities for trots and canters each day as much of the riding is across open grassland. There is a little road work each day (some on tar roads) in the vicinity of the villages you pass through, but roads are generally very quiet with little motorised traffic.

Riding Experience To participate in these rides you should have a reasonable amount of previous riding experience. The terrain is varied and you cover about 150km during the course of the week. The minimum requirement is that you are comfortable and secure in the saddle at a walk, trot and canter and are used to riding in open country and over different types of terrain. The horses used are sensible and well mannered to ride so they are well suited to people of intermediate riding ability and above. You should also be reasonably riding fit to take part and we recommend you ride regularly at home before you go to accustom yourself to the hours you will spend in the saddle.

Terrain, flora & fauna The area you ride through is very unspoilt and little touched by tourism. Some of the riding is through beech woods and there are one or two places where riders might need to dismount to walk over rough ground, depending on conditions - a good chance to stretch your legs! However overall the area is excellent for riding, with plenty of space, wonderful open mountain pastures full of wild flowers in the spring, varied scenery and many wonderful views. There are bears, deer and wild boar in the forests - though you are unlikely to see them while riding. The birdlife is interesting too with storks, eagles and woodpeckers often seen. There is also much cultural interest, you may visit churches and watermills and witness local people living in conditions that have changed little for hundreds of years - horses are still widely used for ploughing fields and pulling carts.

Accommodation Accommodation on the ride is quite varied and each ride is slightly different. You will experience life as the locals live in the villages and at traditional guesthouses. The first night and the last two nights are usually spent at Miklósvár in houses which your host, Tibor, has re-built with great care and attention to detail or in houses in the village. Each room in the guesthouse at Miklósvár is different with lovely antique furniture and woodburning stoves, typical of the region, which may be lit in the winter. On some occasions, depending on availability at Miklósvár, you may also stay in a typical Transylvanian farmhouse belonging to Prince Charles at Zalánpaták, which has been restored in similar fashion. Other nights are spent in rural guesthouses in villages, equivalent to 'B&Bs', usually staying with a family - the group may not all stay in the same house but may be split between 2 or 3 families. They are simple but clean and well maintained, with inside plumbing, bathrooms and loos, hot water and central heating. Bathrooms are often shared and may be along a corridor, through the kitchen or downstairs. Most bathrooms have showers rather than baths but are clean, and there is usually plenty of hot water. Rooms are generally twin bedded - if you would like a single room then this is sometimes possible although cannot be guaranteed.



Meals Food in rural Romania is generally organic and full of flavour and you will have the chance to sample some traditional dishes although the choice can be limited by what vegetables, etc. are in season. Breakfast is eaten at your guesthouse and is typically a selection of eggs, cheese or cold meats, bread or toast and butter and jam, with perhaps a choice of tea or coffee to drink. Tea (chai) in Romania is not always black, PG Tips style - but can be green or herbal. Lunch is generally a very simple picnic out riding - ham or cheese sandwiches, or bread with cold chicken or pork, with fruit for pudding. Dinner, which is eaten at your guesthouse or hotel, is often soup (a strong point of Romanian cooking!), then a main course which will sometimes include regional specialities such as wild boar or venison stew, stuffed peppers, different types of sausage, seasoned minced-meat wrapped in cabbage or vine leaves or perhaps spicy meatballs, followed by a cold pudding or fruit. Food is locally grown and fresh, however usually only one menu is prepared at guesthouses and there is limited choice. Vegetarians can of course be catered for, but please let us know in advance by filling in the dietary requirements on the booking form. Dinner includes mineral water, tea or coffee and usually half a bottle of wine or a bottle of beer per person. Drinks at hotel bars are not included. Mineral water, tea and coffee are carried in saddle bags while riding and for lunch (soft drinks and alcohol are not usually available). You will also be offered 'Komeny' the local caraway seed brandy quite regularly - be warned that it can be very strong! (It is perfectly acceptable to decline!)

Weather Most rides are run from set dates between April and October when the weather in the area is best. In spring and early summer the ground is scattered with wild flowers; in August and September the hay fields are harvested and the countryside is busy with horse drawn carts; later in September and in October the forests are full of colour with the changing leaves. Average daytime temperatures between April and October are roughly as follows - April 11°C; May 16°C; June 19°C; July 21°C; August 21°C; September 18°C; October 13°C - though it may be about 5 degrees hotter at midday and about 5 degrees colder at nightfall. Rain is possible at any time so you need to be prepared for this (we will send you a clothing list when you book).

What to bring We will send you a list of things to bring when you make your booking.



Dates 2017

16th to 22nd April
30th April to 6th May
14th to 20th May
28th May to 3rd June
11th to 17th June

25th June to 1st July
9th to 15th July
23rd to 29th July
6th to 12th August
20th to 26th August

3rd to 9th September
17th to 23rd September
1st to 7th October
15th to 21st October

Rates 2017-2018 - £895 per person

Rates INCLUDE 6 nights shared accommodation, all riding, guiding and equipment, meals (from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 7), wine with dinner.

Rates EXCLUDE international flights / travel to Romania, transfers from / to Bucharest (see below), any visa fees, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), extra drinks / bar bill, personal extras, telephone calls etc, and any tips you may wish to leave.

Accommodation is generally in twin rooms and single rooms cannot always be guaranteed. If you are travelling alone and prefer a single room let us know and we will do our best to book one.

NB - Extra nights at Miklósvár or in the towns of Brasov or Sighisoara, or in Bucharest can easily arranged either before or after the riding.

Travel arrangements You will need to fly to Bucharest for these rides and we can arrange meeting / transfers from Bucharest airport to Miklosvar where the first night is spent. Ideally you should arrive before 16.30 as it is about a 4 to 5 hour drive to the start point. Tarom Romanian Airlines or British Airways both fly daily direct from London Heathrow to Bucharest Otopeni with fares from around £300 per person return including tax. Ryan Air, Blue Air and Wizz Air also operate flights from several UK airports to Bucharest Otopeni. KLM offer services between UK regional airports and Bucharest via Amsterdam. We can book British Airways flights and would be very happy to advise further on, and to book flights for you (our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213). Please ask if you would like a quote.

Transfers - The cost for transfers between Bucharest airport and the start point of the ride is £150 per person, return. This assumes 2 or 3 guests travelling together. If just one person is travelling then private transfers cost £300 return. There is also the option of taking a train from Bucharest to Brasov. We can arrange meeting from Bucharest airport, transfer to the station, train tickets, meeting from Brasov train station and transfer to Miklosvar. The total cost is around £120 each way for a single traveller. The journey by train takes quite a lot longer and is not usually possible if you arrive Bucharest after 13.00 but works well if you plan an extra night either in Bucharest or Brasov.

Transfer costs are subject to change - please confirm these at the time of booking.

Example Itinerary The following is an example itinerary but please note that it is only an example of what is planned and your guide may change the day by day programme in his discretion if local conditions, the weather etc. require.

Day 1 - [Your own arrangements to arrive Bucharest Otopeni airport. You will be met on arrival and either transferred by private vehicle direct to Miklósvár (about 4 to 5 hour drive) **OR** morning arrival in Bucharest, transfer to Bucharest Gar de Nord station and take a train to the medieval town of Brasov (about a 2 ½ hour journey). You will be met on arrival at the Brasov station and driven about 40 minutes to Miklósvár.] The night is spent at your hosts' guesthouse or in one of villager's houses in Miklósvár. The village of Miklósvár was part of the Kálnoky family estate and the old hunting manor is on the edge of the village. The area was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire but became Romanian during the 1st World War. A couple of the traditional houses in the village have been carefully restored in order to preserve their original Transylvanian charm and character and accommodation is in these guesthouses. The guesthouses are situated within spacious gardens, with storks nesting on nearby rooftops. Meet your guide or Countess Anna Kálnoky for a welcome dinner. Night at Miklosvar. (D)



Day 2 - Breakfast and transfer to the riding centre at Valea Crisului (Sepsikorospatak, "Round Brook"), by car (approx. 37km). Meet the horses and a short familiarization, then the ride begins climbing slowly onto a ridge, heading north along high pastures with magnificent views stretching to the high Carpathian Range. Continue along the ridge, meeting shepherds and their flocks on the pastures. At the end of the day you descend through the forest to reach Malnas Bai (Malnasfurdo, "Raspberry Baths"), where you spend the night as guests of a local hunter's family or with another family in the village. Accommodation is simple and bathrooms will have to be shared - the group may be split, staying in different houses but you will all have dinner together at one house. Once a thriving spa with plenty of mineral water springs, (which are an acquired taste!), this village has typical wooden turn-of-the-century Transylvanian spa architecture, although now in a rather rickety shape. For those who wish it is usually possible to arrange a visit to the Aquasic Spa, located in the village (additional charge). About 5 hours riding. Dinner and night at Malnas Bai. (B,L,D)

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Day 3 - Set off riding, climbing north-westerly into the deep forests of the Hatod region, where 6 villages share the same woods (hatod = “one sixth”). You will follow a quiet forest track, alongside which bear tracks are sometimes to be found. A picnic lunch en route. Descend on gentle grassy slopes to the Batanii villages (“Big Bacon and Little Bacon”) to reach the lovely “Little Bacon” where you will leave the horses at a farm. Accommodation is again simple, with families in the village, and again bathrooms will have to be shared. The villagers here are known to be especially hospitable and friendly, and before dinner will take pride in showing you their still functioning watermill and traditional looms. Enjoy a delicious dinner with a local family before returning to the guest house for the night. About 5 hours riding. Dinner and night at Batanii Mici. (B,L,D)

Day 4 - Breakfast and head northwest again, through the village of Herculian (Magyarhermany), then through forests and farmland, to climb up to Szep Arca (“Pretty Face”) hill on the southern slopes of the Hargita Range. Wide views open out on distant Barot and Olt Valley. You descend northwest into the Kormos (“Sooty”) valley, where Romania’s ex-dictator Ceausescu had his private hunting villa. There are wild boar and bears in the forest close by and in the spring and summer months the water meadows have beautiful wild flowers. The horses are left in Filia Erdofule and about a 15 minute drive takes you to the nights accommodation, a villa in the Kormos valley. About 3 hours riding. Dinner and night at Kormos (B,L,D)

Day 5 - Return to the horses and set off riding, turning south down the Kormos Valley on a long ride along the lower slopes of the hills, passing the villages of Filia Erdofule (“Forest’s Ear”) and Barot. Continue along the gentler slopes, which offer good chances for canters, and into the valley of the river Olt to reach Miklósvár, your destination for the night. About 6 hours riding. Dinner and night at Miklósvár. (B,L,D)

Day 6 - Breakfast and set off riding from Miklósvár, back to the stables at Sepsikorospatok riding through forested hills, crossing valleys and streams, perhaps stopping for a picnic at Prince Charles’s property at Zalánpatok. This route was common place for many generations of the Kálnoky family who often had to ride between these two villages, where their two estates were situated. This part of the region is particularly rich in wildlife as there are no roads or villages for 25km. Arriving at Sepsikorospatok you will be transferred back to Miklósvár, about 30 minutes by car, for your last night. About 6 hours riding. Farewell dinner and night at Miklósvár. (B,L,D)

Day 7 - Breakfast [*and then drive about 4 hours to Bucharest airport in time for your flight home*]. (B)

General visa and health information (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

Visas If you hold a full British Passport and are visiting Romania for a holiday only and staying less than a month you do not need to arrange a visa in advance.

Health No inoculations are legally required for Romania but Tetanus and Hepatitis A are recommended.

(DRAFT 02/06/17)

