



RIDE WORLD WIDE

ROMANIA

TRANSYLVANIA RIDE 2024

RIDE INFORMATION

These rides take place in Transylvania, central Romania, not far from the town of Brasov. The region you ride through is Sekler country, an area settled by the Hungarian army centuries ago, where Hungarian is still the most widely spoken language. It remains a wonderfully unspoilt horse-drawn rural society that has scarcely changed in generations. Set against the backdrop of the Carpathian mountain range, with endless rolling hills adorned by wild flower meadows and beech forests, this may be Europe's last riding heaven! The rides are organised by Count Tibor Kálnoky and his wife Anna from stables in Sepsikorospatak, which was once the centre of the country estate of the Kálnoky family. Horses have always played an important role for the Kalnokys who set up their first formal regiment of Hussars in 1741. Their mission is to introduce riders right into the heart of Transylvanian culture, where horses have kept their traditional role in day to day life.

DATES

6 night Transylvania Rides, following a progressive route from village to village, are run from set dates between April and October. Other dates and shorter rides can occasionally be planned for private groups on request. Extra nights at Miklósvár, the Kálnoky's lovely guesthouse and / or visits to Bucharest or historic towns such as Brasov and Sighisoara are easily arranged. Please see set departure dates below and contact Ride World Wide to check availability.



HORSES

The horses used for these rides are locally bred and characteristic of the area. They include Hungarian Calvary's Gidrans, the Hussar's Shagya Arabs, Semigreu (a Lipizzaner-Ardenne cross), some locally bred Lipizzaners, and Huzul crosses, a historic and robust breed unique to the Carpathian mountains. They range from around 14.2hh to 16.2hh. They are forward going, 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.

TACK

English style, with general purpose and endurance saddles. Most horses are ridden in snaffle bits. Saddle bags are provided.

RIDING

The Transylvania Ride itinerary includes 5 full days riding. On riding days, there is generally between 4 and 6 hours in the saddle, with breaks to rest and for lunch. When moving accommodation at night, luggage is transported for you by back up vehicle. Rides are led by an English speaking guide - in many cases this will be the Kálnoky family's eldest son, count Mátyás Kálnoky, a certified riding guide who is eager to show you the marvels of the wonderful region he has grown up in. There is usually a back-up helper and groups are generally limited to a maximum of 8 riders.

WEIGHT LIMIT

90kgs (14 stone) in riding clothes - if you are close to this please contact us before booking to ensure a suitable horse is available.

PACE

The rides are at a moderate pace overall, with routes taking you through forests and up and down mountain tracks. There are 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 120km during the course of the week on the Transylvania Ride. 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, 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 but it is sometimes possible to arrange a visit to a bear hide (extra charge). 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 these rides is quite varied. You will experience life as the locals live in the villages and at traditional guesthouses. On the Transylvania Ride, the first and fourth nights are usually spent at Miklósvár in houses which your host, Tibor, has re-built with great care and attention to detail. Rooms will either be in the manor house on the edge of town (there are 5 en-suite rooms and it's first come first serve) or in guesthouses in the village. Each room in Miklósvár is different with lovely antique furniture and woodburning stoves, typical of the region, which may be lit in the winter. The last two nights are usually spent in a typical Transylvanian farmhouse in Zalánpaták belonging to King Charles III, which has been restored in similar fashion to the guesthouse at Miklósvár. Other nights are spent in rural houses 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

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ACCOMMODATION cont.

between 2 or 3 families. They are simple but clean and well maintained, with inside plumbing, bathrooms, loos and hot water. 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. There are saltwater hot-tubs at both Miklosvar and Zalanpatak for **muscle-relaxing long baths after the rides (extra charge)**. Accommodation is generally twin bedded - but sometimes triple, or even 4 in a room depending on group mix. If you would like a single room then this is sometimes possible, at extra cost, although cannot be guaranteed (please see rates below).

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, carried in your saddle bags - ham or cheese sandwiches, or bread with cold chicken or pork, with an apple for pudding. Dinner, which is eaten at your B&B or guesthouse, 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 - wine and beer are available to purchase (a bottle of wine is approx 15 Euros). Drinks at bars are not included. Mineral water, tea and coffee are carried in saddle bags for lunch while riding (soft drinks and alcohol are not usually available). You may 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 when you book.

ITINERARY

The following is an example of the Transylvania Ride 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 (Sunday) - [[You will be collected from Bucharest Otopeni airport, ideally flights should arrive before 16.00, and transferred by private vehicle direct to Miklósvár (about 4 to 5 hour drive)]. The night is spent at your hosts guesthouse in Miklósvár. The village of Miklósvár was part of the Kálnoky family estate and the manor on the edge of the village is now a museum. The area was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire but became Romanian during the 1st World War. The Miklósvár manor house and several of the traditional houses in the village have been carefully restored in order to preserve their original Transylvanian charm and character and accommodation is either in the manor house or in the village guesthouses. The guesthouses are situated within spacious gardens, with storks nesting on nearby rooftops. Meet your guide or Countess Anna Kálnoky to discuss the week ahead, before dinner in the characterful wine cellar. Night at Miklósvár. (D)



Day 2 (Monday) - Breakfast and transfer to the riding centre at Korospatak (Valea Crisului - ‘round brook’), by car (approximately 40 minutes). Meet the horses and a short familiarization in the sand school, 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 usually spend the night at Villa Anna. 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. About 4 to 5 hours riding. Dinner and night at Malnas Bai. (B,L,D)

Day 3 (Tuesday) - 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 stay the night. Accommodation is again simple, with families in the village, and bathrooms may 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. About 5 hours riding. Night at Batanii Mici. (B,L,D)



ITINERARY cont.

Day 4 (Wednesday) - Head northwest through forests and hay meadows, to climb up to Szép Arca ("Pretty Face") hill on the southern slopes of the Hargita Range. Wide views open out on distant Barót and Olt Valley. Descend southwards and cross a valley to reach the hills south of Barót where you stop for a picnic at a small lake. The lake is the result of a collapsed mine and is situated at the old mining settlement 'Köpecbánya' which is now mainly populated by gypsies. From here you follow the lower line of the forest along the beautiful valley of the Olt river, reaching Miklosvar's manor grounds and stables in the afternoon. About 6 hours riding. Conditions permitting, there may be an option to go bear watching in the evening (extra charge of approx. 90 euros per person payable locally). Dinner and night at Miklósvár (B,L,D)



Day 5 (Thursday) - Head east along forests and pastures, passing through Szárzajta / Aita Seaca ('Dry' Ajta village), to climb up to the ridge above Zalanpatak valley, with views to the distant Carpathian mountain range. You descend southeast to the village of Zalanpatak / Valea Zalanului, which was part of the Kálnoky family estate, where glass was manufactured, and now harbours King Charles III private retreat. Several traditional houses in the village have been carefully restored, where you will be accommodated for the next 2 nights. Before dinner, you will have a chance to walk in the King's estate to watch wildlife venturing out onto the meadows at sundown. This region is particularly rich in wildlife as there are no roads or villages for 25km. About 4 - 5 hours riding. Dinner and night at Zalanpatak. (B,L,D)

Day 6 (Friday) - From Zalanpatak you return to the riding centre at Köröspatak crossing the hills and streams. This ride was a common route for many a generation of the Kálnoky family who had to ride often between the two villages. After crossing the ancient village of Kálnok, the final canter will reach the ruins of the old tower above Köröspatak. Say goodbye to your horses and guides and transfer by vehicle back to Zalanpatak guesthouse. About 4 hours riding. Farewell dinner and night at Zalanpatak. (B,L,D)

Day 7 (Saturday) - Breakfast and depart [eg transfer about 4 hours to Bucharest airport, onward flights should ideally be after 13.00]. (B)



DATES & RATES 2024

Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are now quoted in euros. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the euro/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

Transylvania Ride (6 nights) - 1480 Euros per person; High Season 1750 Euros per person

7th to 13th April

21st to 27th April

5th to 11th May*

19th to 25th May*

2nd to 8th June*

16th to 22nd June*

30th June to 6th July

14th to 20th July

28th July to 3rd August

11th to 17th August

25th to 31st August

8th to 14th September

22nd to 28th September

6th to 12th October

20th to 26th October

High Season (May and June) = *

Prices are based on a minimum of 3 riders.

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DATES & RATES cont.

Rates INCLUDE 6 nights shared accommodation, all riding, guiding and equipment, meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 7 (drinks are NOT included).

Rates EXCLUDE international flights / travel to Romania, **transfers to / from the start / end point**, any visa fees, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), **all drinks / you bar bill**, personal extras, telephone calls etc, and any tips you may wish to leave.

Single supplements - Please note that rates quoted above assume shared accommodation. If you are travelling alone and are happy to share with another guest of the same sex, the supplement is not charged. If you would like a single room, where possible, the single supplement is payable (30 euros per night, you will be billed for this in Romania). Please note that single rooms are not always possible and will depend on the group size etc.

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

Non-riders Non-riding partners or friends are welcome and can either hire a car; or we can arrange bicycle hire. Guides can then supply directions to meet the riders each evening at the new accommodation. At Miklosvar there are also other activities on offer, guided walks, bird watching, village and cultural visits etc. Extra nights at Miklósvár or Zalănpatak, and also in Bucharest or in the towns of Brasov or Sighisoara, can easily be arranged either before or after the riding.



FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

It is usually best to fly to Bucharest for these rides (although meeting can also be arranged at Sibiu, Cluj or Bacau airports on request). 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 and Wizz Air also operate flights from several UK airports to Bucharest Otopeni. KLM offer services between UK regional airports and Bucharest via Amsterdam.

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FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION Cont.

Transfers - Transfers can be arranged on request from Bucharest airport to the start / end of the ride at Miklósvár / Zalănpatak. The rate assuming 2 or more guests travelling together, is currently 190 Euros return which is payable locally. If just one person is travelling, there will be a 100% surcharge (extra 190 Euros). There is also a 10 euro per person supplement for meeting in central Bucharest. We will do our best to co-ordinate guests so that transfers are always shared but this cannot be guaranteed.

If you prefer not to spend extra nights in Romania before / after the ride then ideally your flight should arrive Bucharest before 16.00 on day 1, and depart after 13.00 on day 7 for your return home.

Please contact us for transfer prices between Sibiu, Cluj Napoca or Bacau airports.

Another option is to take a train from Bucharest to Brasov, which is only 40 minutes drive from Miklosvar. The journey by train is interesting and takes only 2 ½ hours but, what with transfers to the station and connecting train times, it takes quite a lot longer in all and is not usually possible if you arrive Bucharest after 13.00. It works well if you plan an extra night either in Bucharest or Brasov. We can arrange meeting from Bucharest airport, transfers to your hotel / the station, train tickets, meeting from Brasov train station and transfer to Miklósvár / Zalănpatak. The cost is approx 180 per person one way, assuming 2 travelling together, including one night twin B&B accommodation in Bucharest (Hotel Moxa or similar).

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

If you have further questions about travel, would like quotes for hotels in Bucharest and also for visits to Brasov, Sighisoara, Sibiu and other Transylvanian cities please don't hesitate to contact us.

GENERAL VISA & 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 the TravelHealthPro website (NaTHNaC) recommends that most travellers are up to date with Tetanus and Hepatitis A.

(DRAFT 28/02/24)

