



RIDE WORLD WIDE ROMANIA TRANSYLVANIA RIDE 2025

RIDE INFORMATION

These rides take place in Transylvania, central Romania, not far from the town of Brasov. The region they explore is Sekler country, settled by the Hungarian army centuries ago, where Hungarian is still the most widely spoken language. It has retained a wonderfully unspoilt horse-drawn rural society that has scarcely changed in generations and set against the backdrop of the Carpathian mountains, with endless rolling hills, wildflower meadows and beech forests to explore, may also 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 Kálnoky family country estate. Horses have always played an important role for the Kálnokys who set up their first formal regiment of Hussars in 1741 and part of their mission now is to introduce riders to the heart of Transylvania and its culture, in which 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 and 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 ride 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 Gidrans, favoured by the Hungarian Calvary, the Hussar's Shagya Arabs, Semigreu (a Lipizzaner-Ardenne cross), some locally bred Lipizzaners, and sure footed crosses with ponies of the Carpathian mountains. They range from around 14.2hh to 16.2hh, 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 style saddles. Most horses are ridden in snaffle bits. Saddle bags are provided where necessary.

RIDING

The Transylvania Ride itinerary includes 5 full days riding, with 4 to 6 hours in the saddle on each riding day, with breaks to rest and for lunch. Rides are led by an English speaking guide - in many cases the Kálnoky family's eldest son, Count Mátyás Kálnoky, who is a certified riding guide and always eager to introduce riders to the region in which he has grown up. Depending on groups size there may also be a back-up rider and when moving accommodation at night, luggage is transported for the group by back up vehicle. Groups are generally limited to a maximum of 8 riding guests.

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

Rides are aimed at riders of an intermediate standard and above and to participate you should have a reasonable amount of previous riding experience. The minimum requirement is that you are comfortable and secure in the saddle and able to control a well schooled horse at a walk, trot and fast 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 although you must also be reasonably riding fit - the Transylvania Ride covers a distance of about 120 kms in all over the week so we highly 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 unspoilt and little touched by tourism. Some riding is through beech woods and there are one or two places where you may need to dismount to walk over rough ground, depending on conditions (always a good chance to stretch legs) but overall the region is excellent for riding, with varied scenery, plenty of open space, mountain pastures that are full of wildflowers in spring, and many wonderful views. There are deer, wild boar and also bears in the forests - although you are unlikely to see them whilst riding, occasionally a visit to a bear hide can be arranged (extra charge). The birdlife is interesting too with storks, eagles and woodpeckers often seen and there is much of cultural interest: ancient churches, watermills, horses still widely used to plough and pull carts, a chance to witness local people living a lifestyle that has changed little for hundreds of years.



ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation on the ride is varied and depends what is available locally. The first and fourth nights are usually in Miklósvár either staying in village houses which your host, Tibor, has renovated with great care and attention to detail or in the old manor house on the edge of the village. There are 5 en-suite bedrooms at the manor (used on a 'first come, first served' basis) but whether staying here or in a village house, rooms have been tastefully restored, all are different and furnished with antique furniture and perhaps woodburning stoves, typical of the region. The last two nights are usually spent in a typical Transylvanian farmhouse in Zalánpaták which has been restored in similar fashion to the guesthouses at Miklósvár and belongs to King Charles III.

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ACCOMMODATION cont.

The other two nights are in simple but more modern style village guesthouses which, although less characterful are clean and well maintained, with bathrooms (may be shared or along a corridor) with showers, loos and hot water. There are saltwater hot-tubs at both Miklosvar and Zalanpatak for muscle-relaxing baths after riding (extra charge). Accommodation is generally twin bedded - although occasionally triple, or even 4 in a room may be possible depending on group mix. As rooms are limited singles cannot, unfortunately, be guaranteed. Some singles may be possible on some nights, at extra cost (see below), but this cannot be confirmed until close to the departure date and generally you need to be prepared to share a twin room with another (same sex) guest.

MEALS

Rides include breakfast, a simple picnic lunch and also dinner each evening. Breakfast, served at the main guesthouse in Miklosvar and otherwise at your accommodation, is typically a selection of eggs, cheese or cold meats, bread or toast and butter and jam, with a choice of tea or coffee to drink - although tea ('chai') in Romania is not always black 'PG Tips' style and may be green or herbal. Lunch, carried in saddle bags and eaten out riding, is a simple picnic (often pretty much the same every day - be warned!) - ham or cheese sandwiches, or bread with cold chicken or pork, with an apple for pudding. Dinner, served in the old wine cellar (or outside if the weather is good) at Miklovar or at your guesthouse, offers more variety and scope for trying local flavours and specialities. There is often a soup (a strong point of Romanian cooking), then a main course which might include a regional speciality 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, but usually only one menu is prepared and choice is limited by what is available. Vegetarians can of course be catered for, but please let us know of any dietary requirements well in advance. Mineral water, tea or coffee are included with dinner (usually there is only water at lunch stops although your guide may occasionally carry a flask of coffee) and wine and beer are available to purchase (a bottle of wine is approx 15 Euros). You may also be offered 'Komeny' the local caraway seed brandy quite regularly - be warned it can be very strong! (It is perfectly acceptable to decline!)



WEATHER

Rides are run from set dates between April and October when the weather in the area is best. Winter snow usually clears in early April and in spring and early summer (late May /June) the ground is scattered with wildflowers; in August and September hay fields are harvested and the countryside is busy with horse drawn carts whilst later in September and in October, changing leaves fill the forest with autumn colours. It is increasingly hard to predict weather patterns and temperatures to expect but as a guide, historic average daytime temperatures are roughly - 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°C hotter at midday and 5°C colder at nightfall. Rain is possible at any time so be prepared for this.

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 it is only an example of what is planned and the route, day by day riding programme and / or accommodation may be changed at your guide's discretion if local conditions, the weather or factors such as riders' ability etc. require.

Day 1 (Sunday) - [eg Transfer from Bucharest Otopeni airport - ideally flights should arrive before 16.00 and there is an option to book a transfer by private vehicle direct to Miklósvár (about 4 to 5 hours' drive)]. The first night is in Miklósvár, a village which was once part of the Kálnoky family estate. The area was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire but became Romanian during WW1. The manor house on the edge of Miklósvár is now a museum and both it and several of the traditional houses in the village have been carefully restored to preserve their original Transylvanian charm and character. Accommodation is either in the manor house itself or in one of the restored village houses which are all situated within spacious gardens, with storks nesting on nearby rooftops. Meet your riding 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 about 40 minutes by car to the riding centre at Korospatak (Valea Crisului - 'round brook'). Meet the horses and a short familiarization in the sand school, then once everyone is settled, set off riding. The route starts with a slow climb 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, head down through forest to reach Malnas Bai (Malnasfurdo, "Raspberry Baths"), where the night is usually at Villa Anna, a modern guesthouse. The village was once a thriving spa with plenty of mineral water springs (which are an acquired taste!), and 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-west into the deep forests of the Hatod region, where 6 villages share the same woods (hatod = "one sixth"). The route follows a quiet forest track, alongside which bear tracks are sometimes seen. Stop for a picnic lunch en-route and after lunch ride on down gentle grassy slopes to the Batanii villages ("Big Bacon and Little Bacon") and the lovely "Little Bacon" where you will stay the night. Accommodation is at Cabana Bodjav, a simple guesthouse set amongst trees a short way from the village. Dinner is usually at a private house in the village, cooked for you by a wonderful octogenarian lady who takes great pride in showing her traditional weaving loom. 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 the distant Barót and Olt Valley. Head down southwards and cross a valley to reach the hills south of Barót there is a picnic stop at a small lake. The lake, the result of a collapsed mine, is at the old mining settlement 'Köpecbánya' which is now mainly populated by gypsies. From here ride along the lower line of the forest and 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. 100 euros per person payable locally). Dinner at Miklósvár and night at the manor or in a village house. (B,L,D)



Day 5 (Thursday) - Breakfast and mount up to ride east along forests and pastures, passing through Szárazajta / Aita Seaca ('Dry' Ajta village), then climbing up to the ridge above Zalănpatak valley, with views to the distant Carpathian mountain range. Ride down southeast to the village of Zalănpatak / Valea Zalanului, which was part of the Kálnoky family estate, where glass was manufactured, and now harbours King Charles III private retreat. Accommodation for the night is in bedrooms in the carefully restored farm buildings and before dinner, there may be a chance to walk in the King's estate to watch wildlife venturing out onto the meadows at sundown - with no roads or villages for about 25 kms the area is a wildlife haven. About 4 - 5 hours riding. Dinner and night at Zalănpatak. (B,L,D)

Day 6 (Friday) - From Zalănpatak ride back to the riding centre at Köröspatak, crossing hills and streams, a common route for generations of the Kálnoky family as they rode between the two villages. After crossing the ancient village of Kálnok, the final canter takes you to the ruins of the old tower above Köröspatak. Say goodbye to your horse and guide and transfer by vehicle back to Zalănpatak for the final night. About 4 hours riding. Farewell dinner and night at Zalănpatak. (B,L,D)

Day 7 (Saturday) - Breakfast and depart [eg onward transfer can be booked - about 4 hours to Bucharest airport; departing flights should ideally be **after** 14.00]. (B)



DATES & RATES 2025

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

6th to 12th April

15th to 21st June*

24th to 30th August

20th to 26th April

29th June to 5th July

7th to 13th September

4th to 10th May*

13th to 19th July

21st to 27th September

18th to 24th May*

27th July to 2nd August

5th to 11th October

1st to 7th June*

10th to 16th August

19th to 25th October

High Season (May and June) = *

Prices are based on a minimum of 3 riders.

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 twin or double shared accommodation. Due to limited accommodation, single rooms are generally **not** possible and you need to be prepared to share a room with another (same sex) guest. If you are travelling alone and would like a single room where possible, please let us know and we will do our best to make arrangements - a single supplement of 30 euros per night is payable if a single room is available and will be billed to you in Romania. Please note however that single rooms are **not** always available and depend on final group size, dates and group mix etc.

Non-riders and extra nights 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 activities such as guided walks, bird watching, village and cultural visits are also on offer. Extra nights at Miklósvár or Zálánpaták, and also in Bucharest or in the towns of Brasov or Sighisoara, can easily be arranged either before or after the riding. Contact us for details.



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 and 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 Miklósvar / Zalănpatak. **All transfer rates are subject to change** but currently, assuming 2 or more guests travelling together, transfers are 190 Euros per person return - **payable locally**. If just one person is travelling, there is a 100% surcharge (extra 190 Euros). There is also a 10 euro per person (20 euro if traveling alone) supplement for collection or drop off in central Bucharest. We will do our best to co-ordinate guest transfers so costs can be shared but this cannot be guaranteed. If you prefer not to spend extra nights in Romania before / after the ride, your arriving flight should ideally arrive Bucharest **before 16.00** on day 1, and your departing flight should depart Bucharest **after 14.00** on day 7. 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 train trip itself is interesting and takes only 2 ½ hours but, once you have added transfers to the station and connecting train times, the whole journey takes quite a lot longer and is not usually possible if you arrive in Bucharest after 13.00. It works well however if you plan an extra night in either Bucharest or Brasov. We can arrange meeting from Bucharest airport, transfer to your hotel / the station, train tickets, meeting from Brasov train station and transfer onto Miklósvar / Zalănpatak. As a guide, budget about 250 euro per person one way for this, assuming 2 travelling together and including one night twin B&B accommodation in Bucharest (Hotel Moxa or similar).

Please contact us for further questions about travel and if you would like to arrange a visit to Brasov, Sighisoara, Sibiu or other Transylvanian cities.

GENERAL VISA & HEALTH INFORMATION

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

Visas Romania follows Schengen area rules and you do not need a visa to visit as a tourist if you hold a full British Passport and are visiting Romania (and other Schengen countries) for a period of less than 90 days in any 180 days.

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 06/05/2025)

