
GEEO ITINERARY

Z-BUDAPEST TO BULGARIA – Summer

Day 1: Budapest Arrive at any time.

Arrive in Budapest at any time. Check into our hotel any time after 3:00 p.m. and enjoy Hungary's capital city. We recommended arriving a day or two early to better explore this charming old city. With the Danube River dividing old town, Buda, from the newer area, Pest, there is plenty to see and do. Opt to visit Buda Castle, window shop in Pest, or soak in the city's famous thermal baths. Check the notice boards or ask at reception for the exact time and location of the group meeting, typically 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. After the meeting, you might like to take the option of heading out for a meal in a nearby local restaurant to further get to know your tour leader and travel companions. Please make every effort to arrive on time for this welcome meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up.

Day 2: Budapest/Sighișoara (B) Enjoy a brief orientation walk of Budapest and then have the rest of the day free to explore this charming city. This evening enjoy a refreshment at a social enterprise café before boarding an overnight train to Sighișoara.

Enjoy a brief orientation walk of Budapest to get a feel for this charming city. Then have the rest of your day free for visiting Buda Castle, wandering the streets of Pest, or soaking in a thermal bath. For a taste of everyday Hungary, opt for a guided walk that ends at Great Market Hall, a food lovers' paradise. This evening, stop for a refreshment at Nem Adom Fel Café and Bar, whose proceeds help fund a non-profit by the same name, which means "Never Give Up." Most of the employees at this social enterprise café are living with a disability and the charity advocates for rights for the disabled all over Hungary. Your meal helps this café to invest in the charity's efforts, which also includes supporting rural Roma communities through much-needed social programs. We then board an overnight train to Sighișoara. The train is typically three beds to a cabin, with a shower and toilet available in each car. Approximate travel time: 12 hrs by overnight train

Day 3: Sighișoara Enjoy a free day to explore the cobblestone streets and medieval architecture of Sighișoara.

Enjoy a free day to explore the cobblestone streets and medieval architecture of Sighișoara. Visit the walled citadel with its cultural attractions and great restaurants and bars. There two great free attractions everyone should see. The Clock Tower, also known as the Council Tower is considered one of Sighisoara's main sights. It was built in the second half of the 14th century and expanded in the 16th century. After a fire in 1676 when the town's gunpowder deposits located in the Tailors' Tower exploded, Austrian artists rebuilt the roof of the tower in its present baroque style and, in 1894, colorful tiles were added. You should also visit the Church of the Dominican Monastery. Built-in the late Gothic style, it was last repaired in 1929, quite sometime after it was first attested in a document back in 1298. For dinner, we recommend sampling some Romanian cuisine at the Casa Dracula. Once the original home for Vlad the Impaler, who was the model for Count Dracula, it is now a restaurant specializing in the hearty meat and game dishes of the region.

Day 4: Sighișoara/Brașov (B) With a local guide, venture into the Romanian countryside to visit traditional villages. Get a true sense of life in this less-visited region. Visit charming Brasov.

Enjoy a half-day guided tour of Sighisoara and nearby countryside. Take in the beautiful rolling scenery and visit medieval villages and fortified churches. Learn about the life and folklore of olden times from our expert local guide. In the early evening, transfer to the city of Brasov, the best-preserved medieval city in Romania. Approximate travel time: 1.5 hrs by private vehicle

Day 5: Braşov (B) Visit the picturesque Bran Castle and learn the history (and rumors) of this fascinating place.

Today we will visit the picturesque Bran Castle, impressively situated on a rock outcrop and dominating the valley. This 14th-century castle is steeped in history and folklore and is an unmissable highlight. Sometimes called "Dracula's Castle", it served as a defense point to protect the border between Transylvania and Wallachia. Rumors abound regarding Dracula's interaction with the castle. You'll have to visit to find out the truth. You'll have the afternoon free to explore Brasov on your own. We recommend visiting the Schei District. During the Saxon rule of Brasov, from the 13th to the 17th century, Romanians were forbidden from owning property inside the citadel walls and so they settled in the southwestern Schei district. Walk up Strada Prundului to Piata Unirii and the beautiful St. Nicholas Church; then, wander around the small curving streets that gradually slope upwards against the hill. Continue to the southern end of Schei and you'll end up on the gravel road to the impressive Solomon's Rocks (Pietrele Lui Solomon), a popular picnic area for locals during the weekend but relatively quiet all other times. We also recommend a visit to the Black Church (8 RON), which is the biggest church between Vienna and Istanbul. It's a famous landmark of the town of Brasov, is Romania's leading Gothic church, and has the largest church bell in the country, weighing a hefty 7 tons (6,350 kg)! Explore its beautiful interior, including stained glass windows and its collection of 119 Turkish carpets, the largest in Europe.

Day 6: Braşov/Bucharest (B) Travel to Bucharest and enjoy an orientation walk. Take time to explore the Soviet-esque architecture, the beautiful cathedral, or indulge in Bucharest's international cuisine.

Travel to Bucharest and enjoy an orientation walk. Take time to explore the Soviet-esque architecture, the beautiful cathedral, or indulge in Bucharest's international cuisine. There is a lot to see and do in Bucharest. Here are some recommendations: Palace of the Parliament- Enjoy a visit to the Palace of the Parliament, which contains both chambers of the Romanian parliament as well as the National Museum of Contemporary Art (MNAC). It's the world's largest civilian building with an administrative function, according to the World Records Academy; it's also the most expensive administrative building. National History Museum- Boasting more than 650,000 items, the museum, inaugurated in 1972, gives visitors a true understanding of Romanian culture. Housed in the former historic monument once known as the Palace of the Post, it is situated in the old historical center of Bucharest. National Village Museum- Check out examples of Romanian rural architecture at this outdoor museum that's literally a park 10 hectares large. It boasts rural homes built in the styles throughout Romania as well as churches, outhouses, and mills -- you'll really feel like you're walking through a Romanian village. To give an even more authentic feel to things, many structures are filled with furniture and pieces from the eras they replicate. Museum of the Romanian Peasant- Visit the Museum of the Romanian Peasant for an interesting look inside the rural culture of Romania. The museum displays a collection of costumes, artifacts of Romanian peasant life, and religious icons. Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by train

Day 7: Bucharest/Veliko Tarnovo (B) Enjoy some free time to explore more of Bucharest before traveling to Bulgaria and one of the oldest cities in the world, Veliko Tarnovo. Wander the medieval town, visit the museums, or sample your first taste of Bulgarian cuisine.

Enjoy some free time to explore more of Bucharest in the morning before traveling to Bulgaria and one of the oldest cities in the world, Veliko Tarnovo. Wander the medieval town, visit the museums, or sample your first taste of Bulgarian cuisine. Enjoy this charming town and opt to visit the Tsarevets Fortress just outside the city. Approximate travel time: 3 hrs by private vehicle

Day 8: Veliko Tarnovo (B) Enjoy the morning in the medieval town of Veliko Tarnovo. In the afternoon, visit the hilltop village of Arbanasi. Soak in the views over Veliko Tarnovo.

Enjoy the morning in the medieval town of Veliko Tarnovo. In the afternoon, visit the hilltop village of Arbanasi. This hilltop village was the residence of choice for the wealthy Roman elite and is still a country haven for the high-flyers of modern Bulgaria. The views all around and down to Veliko Tarnovo are amazing. You'll want to visit the 16th-century Church of the Nativity (6 BGN) to see the amazing murals.

Day 9: Veliko Tarnovo/Sofia (B) Travel to Sofia and take an orientation walk of the capital city. Later, wander down the pedestrian street or visit the eclectic Ladies' Market.

Today we travel to Sofia and take an orientation walk of the capital city. Later, wander down the pedestrian street or visit the eclectic Ladies' Market - Sofia's biggest market for fresh produce, meats, fish, cheeses, and spices. Don't miss the stunning gold-domed Alexander Nevsky church, honoring the Russian liberators whose contribution saw the end of Ottoman rule in Bulgaria. Sample modern takes on Bulgarian and international food, with some great trendy dining opportunities. Approximate travel time: 3-4 hrs by local bus

Day 10: Sofia (B) Depart at any time.

Our program ends in Sofia this morning. You may depart at any time. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEE0 trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEE0 will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don't see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip, but still would like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator, we can still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose!