
GEEO ITINERARY

Budapest-Romania-Bulgaria-Istanbul 6/23/26

Day 1: Budapest Arrive in Budapest at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.

Arrive at any time. There are no planned activities until the Welcome Meeting in the evening. The main international airport is **Budapest's Ferenc Liszt International Airport (BUD)**, and the main train station is **Budapest Keleti**, about a 10-minute walk from the hotel.

Consider arriving 1-2 days early to explore the city, adjust to the time zone, and buffer against flight delays. We can request extra hotel nights for you before the program begins. With the Danube River dividing old town (Buda) from the newer area (Pest), there is plenty to see and do in the city. Opt to visit Buda Castle, window-shop in Pest, or soak in the city's famous thermal baths.

Hotel Check-in and Welcome Meeting

Hotel check-in is normally between 2-3 p.m. Check with reception for the exact time and location of the group welcome meeting, typically between 6-7 p.m. Please make every effort to attend this meeting. If you're running late, send a message in the group WhatsApp or call the emergency number on your trip voucher so that your tour leader can let you know where and when to meet the group.

After the meeting, you might choose to get dinner at a nearby restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another.

Joining Instructions

Make sure you're heading to the correct location: Ibis Styles Budapest Center at Rákóczi út 58.

Taxi: Metered taxis cost approximately €25-30 EUR.

Public Transport: Take bus 200E to Kőbánya Kispest, then metro line 3 (blue line) to Arany János utca. Walk to the hotel from there.

Private Transfer: Book through [Viator](#)—look for highly-rated services with many reviews.

Day 2: Budapest to Balla Géza Winery Enjoy a morning free to explore Budapest, and then visit a social enterprise café for a drink and an optional bite to eat. Then travel to the Balla Géza Winery for a wine tasting and traditional Romanian dinner.

Explore the charming city of Budapest during some free time this morning. Opt to join your group on an early morning walk that ends at Great Market Hall, the city's largest (and oldest) indoor public market. Visit Gellert Hill to learn about the history of Buda and Pest, divided by the Danube River. On a clear day, capture amazing panoramic shots of the river as it snakes through this ancient city. Continue onto Liberty Square, then take a quick peek at the Gellért Thermal Baths to learn about its place in Hungarian culture. Upon arriving at Great Market Hall, sample local specialties that have been enjoyed in this busy market for over 120 years.

On your way out of town, stop for a refreshment at Nem Adom Fel Café and Bar, whose proceeds help fund the non-profit Nem Adom Fel Foundation (meaning "I never give up"). The foundation was established in 2005 to empower differently-abled Hungarians, and most of the employees at the cafe are living with a disability. Your visit helps this café to invest in the foundation's efforts, which also include

supporting rural Roma communities through much-needed social programs.

Continue to Balla Géza Winery, located on the outskirts of Arad, a region known for its wine growing. Since 1999, Balla Géza has been working to bring back the red wines that this region was once famous for. Visit the Minis vineyard and enjoy a wine tasting with the group, and then sit down to a traditional Romanian dinner featuring three different courses. If time allows, explore the grounds before heading to the winery's guesthouse, where you will spend the night.

Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by private vehicle

Meals included: Breakfast | Dinner

Day 3: Balla Géza Winery to Sighișoara Enjoy breakfast at the Balla Géza Winery before traveling to the enchanting town of Sighișoara. Use your free time here to explore the cobblestone streets and medieval architecture.

Breakfast is included at the Balla Géza Winery this morning.

Then it's time to drive to the Sighișoara. During your free time there, explore the medieval walled citadel and enjoy the cobblestone streets and medieval architecture.

There are two great free attractions everyone should see in Sighișoara. The Clock Tower, also known as the Council Tower, is considered one of Sighișoara'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.

Approximate travel time: 4.5 hrs by private vehicle

Meals included: Breakfast

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

Enjoy a half-day guided tour of Sighișoara and the nearby countryside. Take in the beautiful rolling scenery and visit medieval villages and fortified churches.

In the early evening, transfer to the city of Brașov, the best preserved medieval city in Romania.

Approximate travel time: 1.5 hrs by private vehicle

Meals included: Breakfast

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

Today we will visit 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 defensive fortification 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 for yourself.

You'll have the afternoon free to explore Braşov on your own. We recommend visiting the Scheil District. During the Saxon rule of Braşov, from the 13th to the 17th century, Romanians were forbidden from owning property inside the citadel walls, 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 that leads to the impressive Solomon's Rocks (Pietrele Lui Solomon), a popular picnic area for locals during the weekend but relatively quiet at other times.

We also recommend a visit to the Black Church (8 RON), which is Romania's leading Gothic church and the biggest church between Vienna and Istanbul. It is a famous landmark in Braşov and has the largest church bell in the country, weighing a hefty 7 tons! Explore its beautiful interior, including stained glass windows and a collection of 119 Turkish carpets, the largest in Europe.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 6: Braşov/Bucharest Travel to Bucharest and enjoy an orientation walk.

Upon arriving in Bucharest, go on an orientation walk with your tour leader. Take time to explore the Soviet-esque architecture and the beautiful cathedral, or indulge in Bucharest's international cuisine. There is a lot to see and do in Bucharest. See some of our recommendations below under "Optional Activities."

Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by train

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 7: Bucharest/Veliko Tarnovo Enjoy some free time to explore more of Bucharest before traveling to Bulgaria and one of the oldest cities in the world, Veliko Tarnovo.

Explore more of Bucharest this morning and then travel to Veliko Tarnovo in Bulgaria, one of the oldest cities in the world. 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

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 8: Veliko Tarnovo Enjoy the morning in the medieval town of Veliko Tarnovo. In the afternoon, visit the hilltop village of Arbanasi.

After a free morning, hike up to the hilltop village of Arbanasi, which was once the residence of choice for the wealthy Roman elite and is still a countryside haven for the high-flyers of modern Bulgaria. The hill offers amazing panoramic of Veliko Tarnovo and the surrounding area. You'll want to visit the 16th-century Church of the Nativity (6 BGN) to see the amazing murals.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 9: Veliko Tarnovo/Sofia Travel to Sofia and take an orientation walk of the capital city. Later, enjoy a stroll down Sofia's chic pedestrian area, Vitosha Boulevard, or visit the eclectic Ladies' Market.

After arriving in Sofia, enjoy an orientation walk of the capital city of Bulgaria.

Opt to visit the 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

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 10: Sofia/Plovdiv Travel to Plovdiv, Bulgaria's second-largest city. Visit the hilly old town, museums, or the Theatre of Ancient Philippopolis, one of the many Roman ruins found here.

Travel to Bulgaria's second-largest city, Plovdiv, dating as far back as 4000 BC. Wander the atmospheric streets of the hilly old town and admire the colorful buildings. Opt to visit the Ancient Theatre of Philippopolis, nearly 2,000 years old, and tread in the steps of Roman legionnaires. Or visit the Ethnographic Museum, which has an impressive collection of traditional Bulgarian costumes.

In the evening, opt to relax over coffee and a Bulgarian baklava, a specialty of the area.

Approximate travel time: 2 hrs by train

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 11: Plovdiv/Istanbul Spend time in the morning exploring more of Plovdiv before boarding an afternoon bus to Istanbul.

Enjoy some free time this morning in Plovdiv before departing Bulgaria on a long bus ride to Istanbul.

Approximate travel time: 7 hrs by local bus

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 12: Istanbul Enjoy a city tour with a local Turkish guide. Opt to visit the Blue Mosque, the Grand Bazaar, the Hagia Sophia, and the Topkapı Palace.

Begin the day in Istanbul with a 3-4 hour walking tour of the old city, walking past the historic Hippodrome, the magnificent Hagia Sophia, and the Blue Mosque. The Hagia Sophia is one of the great churches of the Byzantine Empire; it was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest. Be awed by the Blue Mosque's symmetry and internal tile work, and take the chance to learn more about Islamic ceremonies, as it is a working mosque.

While admission to the sites is not included, we highly recommend that you go inside, which may require extending your stay in Istanbul by a day or two after the program ends. Istanbul is a safe, tourist-friendly city.

In the evening, there are plenty of cool little bars and restaurants to celebrate the end of an amazing journey over a raki or two.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 13: Istanbul Depart Istanbul at any time.

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart İstanbul at any time. The main international airport is **Istanbul Airport (IST)**, but many airlines also use **Sabiha Gökçen International Airport (SAW)**. If you wish to extend your stay in İstanbul, consider booking post-tour accommodation with us.

Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk.

Meals included: Breakfast

Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO programs in the same school year and receive 10% off the lesser value program(s), up to 3 programs per year.

Interested in extending your time abroad? We can help you find a trip from our tour partner G Adventures' larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but by booking through GEEO we can offer you a discounted educator price, and you will be helping our non-profit.

Accommodations List

The hotels listed below reflect the properties *expected to be used* for this program. Final accommodations are subject to change based on group size, availability, or seasonality. **The confirmed start and end hotels are listed on your trip voucher:**

Day 1 Budapest (Jun 23): Ibis Styles Budapest Center

Day 2 Arad (Jun 24): Balla Geza Winery

Day 3 Sighișoara (Jun 25): Hotel Sighisoara

Day 4 Brașov (Jun 26): Central Residence Annapolis Brasov

Day 5 Brașov (Jun 27): Central Residence Annapolis Brasov

Day 6 Bucharest (Jun 28): ibis Styles Bucharest City Center

Day 7 Veliko Tarnovo (Jun 29): Hotel Concorde

Day 8 Veliko Tarnovo (Jun 30): Hotel Concorde

Day 9 Sofia (Jul 1): Hotel Budapest Sofia

Day 10 Plovdiv (Jul 2): Clepsydra Residence

Day 11 Istanbul (Jul 3): Hotel Centrum Istanbul

Day 12 Istanbul (Jul 4): Hotel Centrum Istanbul

***Itinerary Disclaimer:** While it is our intention to adhere to the routes described on our website, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable,

to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The information on our website is a general guide to the tour and region, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.