

Bulgaria & Romania: Frescoes & Fortresses

THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE ROSES TO THE PAINTED MONASTERIES

SMALL GROUP TOUR



17 Days

2 departures in 2010

June 1-17 (features Rose Festival) •
September 21-October 7

Land Tour Cost

5-16 travelers \$5,495
Single Supplement \$795

Stay a little longer... Combine this tour with Belarus, Ukraine & Moldova, page 67.

MIR Signature Features

- Visit a pottery master in his Plovdiv workshop
- Admire the unique painted monasteries of Bucovina
- Go beyond the Dracula myth and discover the culture of Transylvania



Romanian painted monastery



Bulgarian folk dancers

Explore the complex history and fascinating culture of Bulgaria and Romania, two Balkan countries whose rugged terrain and consequent isolation have helped preserve their heritage. Discover the luminous frescoes of the painted monasteries, breathe in the fragrance of the Valley of the Roses, and spend an afternoon visiting with villagers in a tiny Transylvanian town.

Days 1-6: Sofia, Plovdiv, Veliko Tarnovo Begin the journey in Sofia, Bulgaria, a city with more than 7,000 years of history. Visit the serene Rila Monastery, founded in 927 as a retreat for hermits. Pause in the Thracian settlement of Plovdiv with its ancient Roman and 19th century architecture, before setting off through the beautiful countryside of the Valley of Roses toward Veliko Tarnovo, capital of the 12th century Second Bulgarian Empire. Here, the remains of the Royal Fortress still stand at the top of Tsarevets Hill.

Days 7-8: Bucharest Crossing the Danube into Romania, tour its capital, Bucharest, and contemplate Ceausescu's last folly, the 3,100-room Palace of the Parliament.

Set out north to Transylvania, a land of mixed Hungarian, Romanian and Saxon heritage.

Days 9-15: Transylvania, Painted Monasteries, Medieval Towns In Sinaia, admire the German-influenced 19th century Peles Castle. Explore the birthplace of Vlad Dracul in the citadel of Sighisoara, and visit Bran Castle, which served as Bram Stoker's model for Dracula's ancestral home. Drive via dramatic Bicz Canyon to four of the UNESCO-listed painted monasteries of Bucovina, and enjoy lunch and a demonstration of traditional egg painting in a private home. Stroll the Old Town Square in the Saxon town of Sibiu.

Days 16-17: Horezu, Bucharest Stop in Romania's pottery capital, Horezu, before a farewell dinner in Bucharest.

