

# The Riders of Transylvania

## ROMANIA

Venture into the mysterious landscape of Transylvania on a **horseback trail** through a world of counts and countesses, medieval villages and aristocratic houses. Ride through the spectacular scenery of the Carpathian mountains, where hay is still cut by hand, ox still pull the carts and the horse is omnipresent.

<b>Trail Riding</b>	 <b>7 days / 5 days riding</b>	 <b>From £1,287</b>	
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## ITINERARY

### Highlights

- A 100% Romanian team of local guides who are happy to share their passion for their country
- The untouched nature of Transylvania and the rural way of life where the horse is still king
- Some nights are spent in beautifully restored properties once belonging to princely families of Transylvania
- Chance to spend a night or two with Romanian families
- Unique architectural heritage with many preserved medieval villages

### Day 1 — 1: EUROPE - BUCHAREST - MIKLOSVAR - No riding


 Countess Anna Kalnoky's house

On arrival at Bucharest airport (flights not included) you will be met and transferred to the small village of Miklósvar which is 25kms from the stables. Transfers are payable locally (see dates and prices).

The area was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire and became Romanian during the 1st World War. A number of the traditional houses in the village have been restored in order to preserve their original Transylvanian charm. Accommodations today will be in the castle or guesthouses (first come, first serve basis). The cottages are situated within spacious gardens.

Meet your guide or Countess Anna Kalnoky during dinner and discuss the week ahead.


### Day 2 — 2: KOROSPATAK - MALNAS BAI - 4-5 hours riding

 Malnas Bai b&b

After breakfast you will be transferred to the riding centre at Valea Crisului (40min by car). The ride starts slowly with a climb onto a ridge with

magnificent views stretching to the high Carpathian Range. Leave the villages of Kálnok and Zálán down in the valley and meet shepherds with their flocks on the pastures. At the end of the day, descend through the forest to reach Malnas Bai where you stay the night as guests of a local hunter's family (bathrooms might have to be shared). Once a thriving thermal village with plenty of mineral water springs, this village has typical wooden turn-of-the-century Transylvanian spa architecture, although now in rather rickety shape.

### Day 3 — 3: MALNAS BAI - BATANII - 5 hours riding

 Krisbacon b&b

After breakfast, you climb back north-westerly into the deep forests of the Hatod region, where 6 villages share the same woods. Ride along a quiet forest track, alongside which bear tracks can sometimes be found. After riding around the extinct volcano “Murgo”, you descend on gentle grassy slopes to the Batanii villages (“Big Bacon and Little Bacon”) to reach your accommodation which is in village houses at lovely Little Bacon. The villagers here are known to be especially hospitable and friendly, and before dinner will take pride at showing you their still functioning watermill and traditional looms.

### Day 4 — 4: BATANII - MIKLOSVAR - 6 hours riding

 Count Kálnoky's house

Head northwest through forests and hay meadows, to climb up to Szép Arca hill on the southern slopes of the Hargita Range. Wide views open out onto the distant Barót and Olt Valley. Descend south across a valley to reach the hills south of Barót. Picnic will be at a small lake. 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. You will be accommodated at Count Kálnoky's guesthouses but there is limited space - if the guesthouses are full then you will stay in local village houses. Visit the castle, its museum and park in the afternoon and hang out at the Stone Pub for pre-dinner drinks in the evening.

### Day 5 — 5: MIKLOSVAR - ZALANPATAK - 4-5 hours riding

Leave Miklósvár and head east along forests and pastures, passing through Szárazajta / Aita Seaca (‘Dry’ Ajta village), to climb up to the ridge above Zálánpatak valley. Enjoy beautiful views on the Carpathian mountain range before descending southeast to the village of Zálánpatak / Valea Zalanului, which was part of the Kálnoky family estate as a glass manufacture. It now harbours H.R.H. The Prince of Wales's private retreat. Accommodation for the next 2 nights will be in restored traditional houses. Before dinner, you will have a walk in the evening on the Prince's estate to watch wildlife venturing out onto the meadows at sundown.

### Day 6 — 6: ZALANPATAK - KOROSPATAK - ZALANPATAK - 4 hours riding

From Zálánpatak, you return to Kőröspatak across hills and brooks. This trip was very common for many a generation of the Kálnoky family who had to ride often between the two villages. It is a medium ride through spectacular surroundings with wonderful views from the high pastures. After crossing the ancient village of Kálnok, your final canter will take you to the ruins of the old tower above Kőröspatak. Before reaching the stables you will walk the horses in the little stream crossing the village. You will be transferred back to Zálánpatak guesthouse for the evening.

### Day 7 — 7: MIKLOSVAR - BUCAREST - EUROPE

After breakfast you will be transferred back to Bucharest for your flight back to Europe. .

We recommend booking a flight in the late afternoon to leave plenty of time for your transfer.

## DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
05/05/2024	11/05/2024	£1,522	Guaranteed departure
19/05/2024	25/05/2024	£1,522	Guaranteed departure
02/06/2024	08/06/2024	£1,522	Full
16/06/2024	22/06/2024	£1,522	Full
30/06/2024	06/07/2024	£1,522	Open
14/07/2024	20/07/2024	£1,287	Full

28/07/2024	03/08/2024	£1,287	Guaranteed departure
11/08/2024	17/08/2024	£1,287	Open
25/08/2024	31/08/2024	£1,287	Guaranteed departure
08/09/2024	14/09/2024	£1,287	Full
22/09/2024	28/09/2024	£1,287	Full
06/10/2024	12/10/2024	£1,287	Full
20/10/2024	26/10/2024	£1,287	Open

## Price details

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- Flights to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.
  - Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room.
  - Groups are composed of a minimum of 3 international riders and a maximum of 8 riders, plus guides.
  - This ride is guaranteed for groups of only three riders with no small-group supplementary charge; however the route is slightly modified. If there are 4 or more riders in the group then you will follow the route described in the itinerary. By signing up for this ride, you are agreeing to these conditions.
  - Minors are welcome from 15 years old on the condition that they are accompanied by a parent. Parents must sign a document on-site assuming all responsibility for their children during the ride.
  - Transfers are not included are €95/£85 per person each way from Bucharest airport, with a €15/£14 supplement if pick-up from downtown. Transfer rates are valid for 2 people, single transfers will be subject to a 100% supplement. If more than 3 riders in the car we can offer a 20% discount. Payable locally.  
Guests can also to take the train from Bucharest to Braşov (just 2 ½ hours), and the transfer from Brasov to Miklósvár then starts from €35 per person. There are no set times for the transfers, but check-in at the first guesthouse is from 2:00 pm till 21:30 pm, so you should aim to arrive in this time frame. Dinner is at 7:00 pm, so late arrivals should have arranged for their own dinner. Check-out from the guesthouse on departure is until 12 noon, so guests should depart before then.
  - If you sign up for the ride as a single rider and end up in a single room, a single supplement is payable locally (€180, approx £155-\$200). Riders who would like to guarantee a single room: this is payable locally and subject to availability.
  - Bear watching is also available (usually on Wednesday when riders are staying at Miklosvar. The cost is 70 EUR/person including transport (min 2 people required), and payable locally.
- Please Note
- The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.
- The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

## Price includes

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### SUPPORT TEAM

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- 1 English-speaking assistant
- 1 Romanian English-speaking horse guide

### LOGISTICS

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- 1 cook
- 1 support vehicle
- 1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

### ACCOMMODATION

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- Double or 3-bed rooms in guesthouses or hotels

## MEALS

Full board from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 7 (drinks excluded)

## Price doesn't include

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### MEALS

2 lunches on day 1 and 7 - depending on your flights  
Beverages and personal extras

### TRANSPORT

International flights  
Transfers fees - please see price details above

### EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

### INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation  
Visas and personal purchase

## EQUESTRIAN INFO

## Horses

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The local horses are between 14.2hh and 16.2hh and are a mixture of breeds, including Arabs, Lipizzaners and Huzul - a robust breed unique to the Carpathian mountains. They are keen spirited, adaptable and well suited to the terrain.  
English saddles and bridles are used.

## Guide & local team

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A horse riding instructor and long-distance rider, Romfeld has a degree in philosophy and grew up in the region. As a guide he is very reassuring and disciplined and will take great pleasure in showing you his home region in the spring.

Elekes has a degree in geography and is proficient in horseback archery. He is passionate about his country, its tranquility and stunning countryside. He will be your guide on rides in spring and autumn.

Steliana is a much loved guide - as much for her calm and organised nature as for her lively and energetic side that is brought out when it's needed! She has a strong background in tourism; she is a qualified horse-riding instructor and has ridden in CSO competitions.

All the Romanian guides have at least an intermediate level in English.

## Minimum riding ability

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### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

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.

There is a maximum rider weight of 90kg/ 14st/ 198 lbs.

### PACE

The rides are at a moderate pace, with routes taking you through forest and up and down mountain tracks. There are lots of 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.

## TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

You will be requested to assist with the care and preparation of your horse although help is on hand if required.

## TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

The area you ride through is very unspoilt and untouched by tourism. Some of the riding is through forest and up and down mountains and there are one or two places where you might need to dismount and lead your horse over rough ground. You need to be riding fit as you will cover 150km during the week. You are requested to ride regularly at home before joining the trip.

## EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

English tack. Small saddlebags are provided.

We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

## TRAVEL INFO

### COMFORT

The accommodation varies throughout the trail. You will experience life as the locals live in the village, but also enjoy the charms of Count Kalnoky's and The Prince of Wales's cottages.

Rural guesthouses in the villages are roughly equivalent to British 'B&Bs' and you are staying with a family. They are simple but clean and well maintained, with inside plumbing, bathrooms and loos, hot water and central heating. Bathrooms are often shared and may be along a corridor or through the kitchen. Most bathrooms have showers rather than tubs but are clean with plenty of hot water.

Kalnoky's and Prince of Wales cottages: The guestrooms are furnished exclusively with antique Transylvanian furniture, including most of the textiles. All rooms have double beds with woollen and duvet covers. In order to create an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity, the rooms do not have television or radio; instead, you will find plenty of interesting books on the shelves. Each room has an electric kettle, with tea and coffee provided.

### 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 or inn and is typically a selection of eggs, cheese or cold meats with bread or toast. Lunch is generally a very simple picnic out riding - ham or cheese sandwiches with fruit for pudding. Dinner, which is eaten at your guesthouse or hotel, is often soup, then a main course which will sometimes include a regional speciality such as wild boar or venison stew, peppers stuffed with meat or vegetables, 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 the guesthouse and there is no choice.

Vegetarians can of course be catered for, but please let us know in advance.

Drinks are not included and payable locally.

### CLIMATE

The average temperature in the south and along the Romanian coast is around 11°C, but is only 2°C in the mountainous regions. Winters in Romania can be particularly harsh and foggy; it often snows copiously between December and April.

In summer, it is generally hot and sunny along the Black Sea coast, with rainfall reaching its peak across the country in spring. The mountains receive the most rain and the Danube Delta the least.

Between April-May and September-October the temperature up in the mountains is usually around 12°C - 16°C and in the summer, a very agreeable, 22°C in the day - with some rainstorms possible.

### TIPS

Tips usually come to around 10% of the overall cost of your trip, but tipping always remains at your discretion.

## PACKING LIST

Head

- A riding helmet is mandatory. Helmet makers (GPA, HKM, LAS Helmets, Lamicell, Troxel, Equithème) now offer horse-riding helmets that are ventilated, strong, light and comfortable.
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding

#### Upper body

- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun or extra warmth
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Waterproof jacket (made from Goretex or equivalent) waterproof and breathable

#### Lower body

- 2 pairs of lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)
- A swimming costume
- Non-irritant cotton or synthetic underwear

#### Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged
- Lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Several pairs of warm socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

#### Other useful items

- Water bottle (1.5 litres or 2 equivalent)
- Toiletries
- Protein or cereal bars for the longer stretches of riding
- Small plastic bags for your rubbish
- Ear plugs (may be useful)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery

#### Medical kit

Make sure any allergies (to medication or otherwise) and clearly stated in your medical kit

- Any medication you regularly take
- Painkillers
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhea medication
- Vitamin C tablets
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Eye drops
- Hydrating/ soothing cream
- Plasters
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc..
- 10cm wide bandage
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

#### Our Recommendations

- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bum bag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lip balm etc)
- A soothing cream may be useful to treat areas irritated by long hours in the saddle
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!
- Keep a copy of your passport and insurance details with you.

#### In your hold luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant over 100 ml and all bottles can be decanted into small, clear, plastic Ziplock bags. We

recommend biodegradable washing products where possible.

- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- In your hand luggage carry any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .