

# Cross Cultural Transylvania Pilgrimage

July 31 - August 13, 2019

(rev. 10/07/18)

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Join Unitarians from the Khasi Hills to explore and experience the historic roots of Unitarianism as we connect with our co-religionists in Romania. We will spend 2 weeks in the pastoral countryside of central Transylvania, getting to know both the Indian Unitarians and our partners better as we visit local sights and have fun together.

This budget pilgrimage begins in Bucharest on Wednesday, July 31, and ends back in Bucharest Tuesday, August 13, 2019. Along the way we will visit historic Unitarian sites and places of a more general interest, including:

- Bucharest – two nights, and a city tour in this elegant European capital city!
- Sinaia – home to Peles castle, the summer palace of the Romanian Royals.
- Sibiu (Hungarian name: Nagyszeben) – the historic Saxon capital of Transylvania, named the European Cultural Capital for 2007-8.
- Torda - where the first act of religious tolerance in Europe was signed in 1568
- Kolozsvár (Romanian name: Cluj-Napoca) – the city in central Romania where the Transylvanian Unitarian Church has its headquarters, high school and the church which houses the rock that Francis David spoke from when he "converted the whole town's population to Unitarianism."
- Gyulafehérvár (Romanian name: Alba Iulia) - where a 1000-year-old church houses the tomb of the Unitarian King Sigismund and his mother, Isabella.
- Déva – participate in a vesper service in the citadel where Francis David was martyred.
- Segesvár (Romanian name: Sighisoara) – 13<sup>th</sup> century medieval walled city which is both a UNESCO World Heritage site and the purported birthplace of Vlad Tepes – aka "Dracula".
- The Homoród Valley - where 19 Unitarian villages with historic frescoed churches are set among unparalleled scenery.

The trip will begin and end in the Romanian capital city of Bucharest. It then travels north over the Carpathian Mts. into Transylvania where we will tour several Unitarian holy places and tourist sites before arriving in your partner village to experience Transylvanian village or town life for several days. Pilgrims will discover the warmth and loving hospitality of Transylvanian Unitarian families attending church, sharing meals, and getting to know Unitarians from another culture.

The trip is open to all, young and not so young. Through this trip we hope to foster a new understanding of our historical roots and build deeper relationships with each other and our co-religionists overseas. The tour logistics will be coordinated by the UU Partner Church Council Pilgrimage Service which has more than a decade of experience facilitating the visits of North American UUs to Eastern & Central Europe.

**Proposed Itinerary:** (B/L/D – Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner included in trip fee): hotels subject to change due to availability at time of booking.

- **Wednesday, July 31** – Arrive OTP Bucharest airport, transfer to hotel. Free afternoon to rest and relax. Evening reception & dinner with UUPCC staff. Overnight Bucharest – Hotel Herastrau\*\*\*(D)
- **Thursday, August 1** – Guided Bucharest bus & walking tour with visits to Palace of Parliament, Metropolitan Church (seat of the Romanian Patriarch), Embassy district, and other sites of interest. Group lunch followed by free time at your choice of the Peasant

Museum or the outdoor Village Museum. Evening folklore dinner show. Overnight Bucharest – Hotel Herastrau\*\*\*(BLD)

- **Friday, August 2** –Depart via motor coach for two-hour drive to the Carpathian Mountain resort town of Sinaia. Hotel check-in and group lunch upon arrival. Guided tour of Peles Castle, summer palace of the Romanian Royal Family. Free afternoon/evening to visit the Orthodox monastery of Sinaia, shop, stroll or just relax. Dinner on your own. Overnight Sinaia – Hotel Caraiman\*\*\*. (BL)
- **Saturday, August 3** - Morning drive through the mountains to Bran Castle (1 hour driving time), aka – “Dracula’s Castle”, for a group lunch and self guided tour. Free time to shop for tasteless souvenirs Late afternoon arrival in Sibiu (2 hours driving time). Hotel check-in & orientation in city center. Dinner on your own. Overnight Sibiu – Imparatul Romanilor\*\*\* (BL)
- **Sunday, August 4** - Morning check-in with UUPCC staff followed by free morning to visit the museums, churches, and shops of your choosing. Lunch on your own. 2pm departure for Déva (1 ½ hour driving time). En route we detour slightly to visit the 13<sup>th</sup> century fairy-tale castle at Vadjahunyad. Early evening arrival in Déva. Hotel check-in and group dinner. Evening fountain & music/light show in city square. Overnight Déva – Hotel Sarmis\*\*\* (BD)
- **Monday, August 5** - Morning vesper service in the ruined fortress above Déva followed by a visit to the Déva Unitarian church before departing for Cluj/Kolozsvár (2 ½ hours driving time). Two stops en route. First we visit the newly restored Transylvanian royal city of Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár to tour the 1000-year old church which houses the tombs of the Unitarian King, Sigismund, and his mother, Isabella. Group lunch before continuing to Torda where we stop at the Church of the Edict to honor the place where the first decree of religious tolerance in Europe was issued in 1568. Group dinner & overnight Kolozsvár - Unitarian Center for Students & Pilgrims (UCSP). (BLD)
- **Tuesday, August 6** - Morning Unitarian tour of Kolozsvár including 1<sup>st</sup> Church (which houses the famous Francis David rock), the Unitarian HQ & High School, and St. Michael’s Church where Francis David once preached. Group lunch, followed by a free afternoon to shop, stroll, catch up on email, visit the Botanical Garden, or just relax. Evening program TBD provided by Hungarian Unitarian Church’s tourism office. Dinner on your own. Overnight Kolozsvár – UCSP. (BL)
- **Wednesday, August 7** - Depart Kolozsvár after breakfast for the town of Székelykeresztúr (3 1/2 hours driving). En route we stop in the picturesque Hungarian provincial city of Targu-Mures/Marosvásárhely to tour the world famous Teleki Library, Transylvania’s first public library, and the spectacular Art Nouveaux Cultural Palace. Group lunch before continuing to Székelykeresztúr. Group dinner & overnight Unitarian Guest House. (BLD)
- **Thursday, August 8** - Morning orientation in the citadel of Segesvár (a UNESCO World Heritage site) by UUPCC staff followed by a free morning to explore the city on foot, shop, climb the clock tower, and tour the attractions & museums of your choice. Lunch on your own. Afternoon departure for the frescoed Unitarian church at Székelyderzs (a UNESCO World Heritage site). Group dinner in Székelyudvarhely before returning to Székelykeresztúr Unitarian Guest House. (BD)
- **Friday, August 9** - Morning shopping trip to the nearby craft village of Korond for fabulous deals on all manner of hand work and local crafts. Afterward we partake of a group lunch, and then depart for hosting congregations. (There will be different destinations this day

depending upon your congregation). Welcome reception/dinner before settling in with host families. Evening program TBD. Dinner & overnights - home stays & guest houses. (BLD)

- **Saturday & Sunday, August 10 - 11** - Partner days making new friends & reconnecting with old. Program specifics TBD by organizers and hosting congregation. Overnights home stays or guest houses as required by circumstances. (BLD)
  - **Monday, August 12** - Depart for Bucharest after breakfast (5-6 hours driving depending upon location of partner stay) Farewell luncheon en route with UUPCC staff in Sinaia. Evening arrival in Bucharest. Free evening to repack and rest. Dinner on your own. Overnight Bucharest – Airport RIN\*\*\*\*. (BL)
  - **Tuesday, August 13** - Shuttles to airport for return flights to the US (B)
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**14 days/13 nights base land package offered by UUPCC Pilgrimage Service \$1,195 double occupancy + 150 registration fee. Add \$195 for single supplement.**

*\*Children 12 & under sharing accommodations with 2 adults are \$595 and not subject to registration fee.*

**Land package includes:** ground transportation, accommodations, meals (as indicated above), tour director, guide(s), interpreter(s), and entrance fees to programmed tourist sites.

**Does NOT include:** airfare, visa fees, gratuities, alcoholic beverages, personal expenses incurred during free programs, departure or arrival airport transfers before/after specified trip dates or different from main party.