ROMANIA E BULGARIA (9 Giorni)

ROMANIA AND BULGARIA (9 Days)

**Day 1: Bucharest** Arrival in **Bucharest** (Romanian for "Buchuresti"), the capital and the most populous city of the country on the Dâmbovița river. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

**Day 2: Bucharest - Sinaia - Dracula Castle - Brasov (Km. 215)** Departure for **Sinaia**, a historic village 800 m. high from the breathtaking landscape, known as the "Pearl of the Carpathians". "Sinaia" takes its name from its monastery. Visit to the **Castle of Peles**, built in the second half of the 19th century and richly decorated in the style of the Bavarian Castles. Proceeding to the picturesque village of **Bran** where on the high rocky spur stands the castle of the same name, better known as the Dracula Castle; built in 1378, once a customs post and a defense of the trade road that connected the province of Wallachia to Transylvania. **Curiosity**: Its identification with Count Dracula is pure fantasy, the castle has never proved the presence of vampires and Vlad Tepes himself, the Wallachian prince who inspired the story of the Irish writer Bram Stoker, never lived here. Dinner and overnight in hotel in **Brasov**, an authentic old merchant colony called "Corona", today the largest city in Transylvania for its cultural and commercial importance with an unmissable historical city center. **Curiosity**: At the entrance of the city you will find the Hollywood inscription "Brasov" on the top of Tampa mountain. Rather than walking in a city in Romania you will feel like you have been magically brought back to Germany or Austria.

**Day 3: Brasov - Sighisoara (Km. 120)** Visit of **Brasov**, the picturesque medieval town surrounded by 15th century walls, 12 m. high, 3 km. long and with 7 bastions. Tour of the main square "**Piata Sfatului**", the **Hirscher House**, known as the House of Merchants, the Black Church, known as the biggest Gothic church in Eastern Europe, the Church of St. Nicholas with the First Romanian School next to it and the museum. **Curiosity**: A legend associates the Sfatului square with the Grimm brothers' fairy tale "the Pied Piper", saying that the children who disappeared from Hamelin (Germany) at the hands of the Pied Piper, reappeared right here. Continuation to **Sighisoara**, a colorful medieval town that seems to have come out of a fairy tale. The famous Clock Tower at the entrance of the square of the Citadel, where elegant historical buildings appear, such as the Renaissance ''Deer House'', whose name comes from the life-size painting of two deer joined by a single head. Dinner and overnight in hotel. **Curiosity**: If you continue walking you reach the old staircase of 1656 (Scara Acoperita) from the wooden roof, with its 175 steps you reach the Church on the Hill (Biserica din deal) which contains the only known crypt in Transylvania.

**Day 4: Sighisoara - Sibiu - Bucharest (Km. 370)** Departure for **Sibiu**, an ancient Roman settlement, called "Cibium", one of the most beautiful cities of Transylvania, World Heritage Site by UNESCO together with both Brasov and Sighisoara. Visit of the historical city center: the Great Square with the Bruckental Museum and the Town Hall, the Evangelical Church. The street from Piaţa Mica descending towards the bottom of the town is overlooked by an iron viaduct called the 'Bridge of Liars', since here for centuries politicians held rallies deceiving the citizens with never kept promises (the whole world is a country...). **Curiosity**: the first hospital (1292) and the first pharmacy (1494) in Romania were opened in Sibiu, as well as the first homeopathy laboratory in the world (1797). Continue to **Bucharest** through the valley of the Olt river, with its beautiful scenery. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

**Day 5: Bucharest - Veliko Tarnovo (Km. 185)** Visit of the center of **Bucharest**: the **People's House**, built during the communist regime and today the second largest building in the world after the Pentagon, the Victory Avenue, the Revolution Square, witness of the last days of Ceausescu's life, the Romanian Athenaeum, the Patriarchal Cathedral, the Royal Palace, today home of the important Art Museum, the Union Square with its famous avenue of fountains.  **Curiosity**: The "Therme Bucuresti" are the largest spa center in Europe. With an area of 250,000 square meters and 3,000 square meters of swimming pools, they are a true paradise of wellness.Departure for **Veliko Tarnovo**, with a history of over 5,000 years is one of the oldest Bulgarian cities. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

**Day 6: Veliko Tarnovo - Arbanasi - Plovdiv (Km. 205)** Visit of **Veliko Tarnovo**, the medieval capital of Bulgaria where the ancient and the modern blend harmoniously together.The untamed medieval fortress of **Tsarevets**, surrounded by the Yantra River, made the city impregnable. Walking along its walls you reach the Execution Rock, the place from where traitors were thrown into the river.  **Curiosity**: The district of "Varosha" (the old town), with its characteristic terracotta roofs, gives Veliko Tarnovo a passionate atmosphere. The Bulgarian tourists themselves choose to stay in this ancient capital of Bulgaria to spend romantic weekends. We continue to **Arbanasi**, a town-museum with a fortress with high stone walls and over 140 renovated historic houses within. Visit to the Church of the Nativity and the house of **Konstantsaliev** (named after the family who lived there over 400 years ago). In the afternoon continuation to Plovdiv, a city of prehistoric origins and ancient capital of Thrace, built on 7 hills along the banks of the Maritsa River. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

**Day 7: Plovdiv - Rila - Sofia (km. 235)** A morning dedicated to the visit of **Plovdiv**. The second largest city in Bulgaria has a vast heritage of art and culture that testifies to its 8,000 years of history. Stroll through the old town, almost entirely on foot, full of art galleries, kiosks, parks and gardens. Visit of the **Church of Saints Constantine and Helen** which houses excavations of Roman necropolis, the Roman Amphitheater. In the afternoon visit of the famous Monastery of Rila, the largest in Bulgaria, immersed in pine and beech forests and surrounded by peaks over 2,200 meters. A true spiritual jewel. Dinner and overnight in hotel in **Sofia**.

**Day 8: Sofia** A day dedicated to Sofia's visit. The National Museum of History, the Church of Bojana, the Cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky which is the most important religious building in the capital, the Basilica of St. Sophia, the National Theater, the Palace of Cultures, the Russian Church, the Parliament Square with the ruins of the Church of St. George, the Banya Bashi Mosque. Dinner and overnight in hotel. **Curiosity**: the city of Sofia has changed its name at least 6 times. The Greek name Sofia (Sò-fia) arrived around 1300 and means "wisdom".

**Day 9: Return back home**