



RIDE WORLD WIDE

Romania - Transylvania 2012

Ride Information Sheet

These rides take place in Transylvania, central Romania, not far from the town of Brasov, based from Sepsikorospatak which was the centre of the country estate of the Kálnoky family. The rides are run by Count Tibor Kálnoky and his wife Anna and are a trip back into the past, to a wonderfully unspoilt horse-drawn rural society that has scarcely changed in generations. The region you visit is Sekler country, an area settled by the Hungarian army centuries ago, where Hungarian is still the most widely spoken language. 6 night trips are run from set dates during spring, summer and autumn months and a special 'Hunting Festival' is planned for early November. Extra nights at Miklósvár, the Kálnoky's lovely guesthouse, are easily arranged. Please see overleaf for the set departure dates and contact Ride World Wide to check availability.

The Horses The horses used for these rides are locally bred ponies characteristic of the area along with Arab and Lipizzaner crosses. Their breeding includes Huzul, a historic and robust breed unique to the Carpathian mountains, Semigreu (a Lipizzaner-Ardenne cross) and some locally bred Lipizzaners and Arabs. They range from around 14.2hh to 16.2hh. They are keen and spirited, adaptable and well suited to the going, which can get rough and is steep in places. They are also of calm temperament and sensible to handle. English general purpose and endurance saddles are used and saddle bags are provided. The horses are ridden in snaffle bits.



Riding The 6 night trip includes 5 full days riding and there is generally between 3 and 6 hours in the saddle, with breaks to rest and for lunch. When moving accommodation at night on the circuit outings, luggage is transported for you by back up vehicle. An extra day can be added to the itinerary on request but this has to be agreed the whole group in advance. Rides are lead by two guides, one English speaking, and groups are usually limited to a maximum of 8 riding guests.

Pace The rides are at a moderate pace overall, 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.

Riding Experience To participate in these rides you should have a reasonable amount of previous riding experience. The terrain is varied and you cover about 150km during the course of the week. 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. You should also be reasonably riding fit to take part and we recommend you ride regularly at home before you go to accustom yourself to the hours you will spend in the saddle.

Terrain The area you ride through is very unspoilt and little touched by tourism. Some of the riding is through forest and up and down mountains and there are one or two places where riders might need to dismount to walk over rough ground, depending on conditions - a good chance to stretch your legs! However overall the area is excellent for riding, with plenty of space, wonderful open mountain pastures full of wild flowers in the spring, varied scenery and many wonderful views. There is also much to see of cultural interest with many local people living in conditions that have changed little for hundreds of years and with horses still widely used for ploughing fields and pulling carts.

Accommodation Accommodation on the ride is quite varied and you will experience life as the locals live in the villages, a typical Transylvanian farmhouse belonging to Prince Charles as well as the privacy of Ceausescu's hunting lodge. Rural guesthouses in villages are equivalent to 'B&Bs', staying with a family - the group may not all stay in the same house but may be split between 2 or 3 families. 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, through the kitchen or downstairs. Most bathrooms have showers rather than tubs but are clean with plenty of hot water. Ceausescu's hunting lodge is set in the forest far from any village. It is typically soviet, built with little cultural sympathy or taste - antlers and bear skins adorn the walls, there is a sitting room with an open fire, a big dining room and double bedrooms with their own bathrooms. The first night is usually spent at Zalánpatak in a farmhouse belonging to the Prince of Wales, and last two nights at Miklósvár in houses which your host, Tibor, has re-built with great care and attention to detail. Each room is different with lovely antique furniture and woodburning stoves, typical of the region, which are lit in the winter. Rooms are twin bedded and if you would like a single room then this is possible although cannot be guaranteed.



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, bread or toast and butter and jam, with perhaps a choice of tea or coffee to drink milk (which is often straight from the cow!) Tea (chai) in Romania is not often the black, PG Tips style - but more commonly green or herbal - so you may want to take your own tea bags. 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 (a strong point of Romanian cooking!), 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 guesthouses and there limited choice. Vegetarians can of course be catered for, but please let us know in advance by filling in the dietary requirements on the booking form. Dinner includes mineral water, tea or coffee and usually half a bottle of wine or a bottle or beer per person. Drinks at hotel bars are not included. Mineral water is carried in saddle bags while riding and for lunch (soft drinks and alcohol are not usually available). You will also be offered 'Komeny' the local caraway seed brandy quite regularly - be warned that it can be very strong! (It is perfectly acceptable to decline!)

Weather Most rides are run from set dates between April and October when the weather in the area is best. In spring and early summer the ground is scattered with wild flowers; in August and September the hay fields are harvested and the countryside is busy with horse drawn carts; later in September and in October the forests are full of colour with the changing leaves. Average daytime temperatures between April and October are roughly as follows - April 11°C; May 16°C; June 19°C; July 21°C; August 21°C; September 18°C; October 13°C - though it may be about 5 degrees hotter at midday and about 5 degrees colder at nightfall. Rain is possible at any time so you need to be prepared for this (we will send you a clothing list when you book).

What to bring We will send you a list of things to bring when you make your booking.



Dates & Rates 2012

1st to 7th April

15th to 21st April

29th April to 5th May

13th to 19th May

27th May to 2nd June

Rate - £895 per person

10th to 16th June

24th to 30th June

15th to 21st July

29th July to 4th August

12th to 18th August

26th August to 1st September

9th to 15th September

23rd to 29th September

7th to 13th October

21st to 27th October

Hunting Festival - 31st October to 6th November

Rate £1295 per person

Rates INCLUDE 6 nights shared accommodation, all riding, guiding and equipment, meals (from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 7), wine, beer and soft drinks with dinner.

Rates EXCLUDE international flights / travel to Romania, transfers from / to Bucharest, any visa fees, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), extra drinks / bar bill, personal extras, telephone calls etc, and any tips you may wish to leave.

Accommodation is generally in twin rooms and single rooms cannot always be guaranteed. If you are travelling alone and prefer a single room let us know and we will do our best to book one.

NB - Extra nights at Miklósvár or in the towns of Brasov or Sighisaora, or in Bucharest can easily arranged either before or after the riding.

Transfers - The cost for transfers from / to Bucharest is £135 per person, return. This assumes 2 or 3 guests travelling together. For 3 or more people the rate reduces to £105 per person return. If just one person is travelling then private transfers cost £270 return. There is also the option of taking a train from Bucharest to Brasov. We can then arrange meeting from Brasov train station and transfer to Zalănpatak. The cost for this is around £100 each way for a single traveller.

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Travel arrangements You will need to fly to Bucharest for these rides and we can arrange meeting / transfers from Bucharest airport to Zalănpatak where the first night is spent. Tarom Romanian Airlines or British Airways both fly daily direct from London Heathrow to Bucharest with fares from around £300 per person return including tax. KLM offer services between UK regional airports and Bucharest via Amsterdam. The budget airlines, WizzAir and Easyjet, also operate flights from the UK to Bucharest Baneasa airport. We can book British Airways flights and would be very happy to advise further on, and to book flights for you (our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213). Please ask if you would like a quote.

Example Itinerary The following is an example itinerary but please note that it is only an example of what is planned and your guide may change the day by day programme in his discretion if local conditions, the weather etc. require. Please enquire for Hunting Festival itinerary.

Day 1 – [Your own arrangements to arrive Bucharest Otopeni airport ideally before 15.00. You will be met on arrival and either transferred by private vehicle direct to Zalănpatak or Miklósvár (about 4 hour drive) **OR** transfer to Bucharest Gar de Nord station and assistance to a train taking you to the medieval town of Brasov (about a 2 ½ hour journey). You will be met on arrival at the Brasov station and driven to Zalănpatak or Miklósvár.] The night is spent either in a lovely restored farmhouse, belonging to Prince Charles, which is situated at the end of the village of Zalănpatak with views out over meadows and forest; or at your hosts guesthouse in Miklósvár. Meet your guide or Countess Anna Kálnoky for a welcome dinner. Night at Zalănpatak. (D)



Day 2 - Breakfast and transfer to the riding centre at Valea Crisului (Sepsikorospatak, “Round Brook”), by car. Meet the horses and a short familiarization, then the ride begins climbing slowly onto a ridge, heading north along high pastures with magnificent views stretching to the high Carpathian Range. Continue along the ridge, meeting shepherds and their flocks on the pastures. At the end of the day you descend through the forest to reach Malnas Bai (Malnasfurdo, “Raspberry Baths”), where you spend the night as guests of a local hunter’s family or with another family in the village. Accommodation is simple and bathrooms will have to be shared - the group may be split, staying in different houses but you will all have dinner together at one house. Once a thriving spa with plenty of mineral water springs, this village has typical wooden turn-of-the-century Transylvanian spa architecture, although now in a rather rickety shape. About 4 hours riding. Dinner and night at Malnas Bai. (B,L,D)



Day 3 - Set off riding, climbing north-westerly into the deep forests of the Hatod region, where 6 villages share the same woods (hatod = “one sixth”). You will follow a quiet forest track, alongside which bear tracks are sometimes to be found. A picnic lunch en route. Descend on gentle grassy slopes to the Batanii villages (“Big Bacon and Little Bacon”) to reach the lovely “Little Bacon”. Accommodation is again simple, with families in the village, and again bathrooms will have to be shared. The villagers here are known to be especially hospitable and friendly, and before dinner will take pride in showing you their still functioning watermill and traditional looms. About 4 hours riding. Dinner and night at Batanii Mici. (B,L,D)

Day 4 - Breakfast and head northwest again, through the village of Herculian (Magyarhermany), then through forests and farmland, to climb up to Szep Arca (“Pretty Face”) hill on the southern slopes of the Hargita Range. Wide views open out on distant Barot and Olt Valley. You descend northwest into the Kormos (“Sooty”) valley, where Romania’s ex-dictator Ceausescu had his private hunting villa. There are wild boar and bears in the forest close by and the water meadows have beautiful wild flowers. The horses are left in Filia / Erdofule and about a 15 minute drive takes you to Ceausescu’s villa, now the ‘Kormos’ hunting lodge where you will spend the night. About 3 hours riding. Dinner and night at Kormos (B,L,D) (NB-Rooms in the hunting villa have double beds - not twins).

Day 5 - Set off riding, turning south down the Kormos Valley on a long ride along the lower slopes of the hills, passing the villages of Filia / Erdofule (“Forest’s Ear”) and Biborteni / Bibarcfalva where you will stop for a refreshing sip of sparkling mineral water which is bottled there. Continue along the gentler slopes, which offer good chances for canter, and into the valley of the river Olt to reach Miklósvár, your destination for the night. About 5 hours riding. The village of Miklósvár was part of the Kálnoky family estate and the old hunting manor is on the edge of the village. The area was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire but became Romanian during the 1st World War. A couple of the traditional houses in the village have been carefully restored in order to preserve their original Transylvanian charm and character and accommodation is in these guesthouses. The guesthouses are situated within spacious gardens, with storks nesting on nearby rooftops. Dinner and night at Miklósvár. (B,L,D)

Day 6 - Breakfast and set off riding from Miklósvár, back to the stables at Korospatak riding through forested hills, crossing valleys and streams, stopping for a picnic at Prince Charles’s property at Zalánpatak. This route was common place for many generations of the Kálnoky family who often had to ride between these two villages, where their two estates were situated. This part of the region is particularly rich in wildlife as there are no roads or villages for 25km. Arriving at Korospatak, you will be transferred back to Miklósvár by car for your last night. About 5 to 6 hours riding. Farewell dinner and night at Miklósvár. (B,L,D)

Day 7 - Breakfast [and then drive about 4 hours to Bucharest airport in time for your flight home]. (B)

NB - There is a possibility, which needs to be agreed by the whole group at the time of booking, to extend the ride for one night. In this case riders would remain at Zalánpatak after lunch on day 6, continuing to Korospatak the next day, arriving early afternoon. You would then be a cultural visit arranged, visiting an interesting village or fortified church for instance, before transfer back to Miklósvár. The extra cost for this is 180 Euros per person. Please enquire.

General visa and health information (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

Visas If you hold a full British Passport and are visiting Romania for a holiday only and staying less than a month you do not need to arrange a visa in advance.

Health No inoculations are legally required for Romania but Tetanus and Hepatitis A are recommended.

(DRAFT 27/01/12)

