ROMANIA

Transylvania Winter Wilderness Trek







ACTIVITY	ACCOMMODATION	CHALLENGE FACTORS	DURATION:	GRADE
Trek	Hotel	Cold	5 days	

This short but spectacular snowshoe-trek takes us to the snowy forests and mountains of wild Transylvania, where we discover a pristine winter wonderland.

Snowshoes allow us to negotiate the deep snow of the sheltered lower slopes as we follow paths through silent forest and, in sharp contrast, head high above the tree-line into the frozen mountain wilderness surrounding Lake Balea (2034m). Sleeping here in the Hotel of Ice – a remarkable construction beside the frozen lake – is a real highlight, and a truly unforgettable experience.

This is a remote region of the Carpathians and you are unlikely to meet more than a handful of other trekkers. For a unique adventure in untouched natural wilderness, look no further!

This trip generates around **51 kg of CO_2 per person.** Because of our commitment to responsible travel, **we offset 100% of these emissions**, including flights booked with us.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly London to Sibiu

We fly into Sibiu, in central Romania, and transfer the short distance to our hotel. Night hotel.

Day 2: Sibiu – Lake Balea

After breakfast, we leave Sibiu and drive through farmland and villages with colourfully-painted houses. Before

long we can see the Tranfagarasan ridge of the Carpathians looming; on a clear day these snow-covered peaks look spectacular. We join the Transfagarasan Road – Romania's highest pass and dubbed 'best road in the world' by *Top Gear* – as it climbs through pine forest on increasingly dramatic hairpin-bends. In winter the upper reaches are closed; we take it as far as the cable-car station.

These lower slopes are perfect for our snow-shoe introduction! Thick powdery snow covers the valley tracks, and we weave between snow-laden boughs as we explore this winter wonderland. The tranquility is broken only by the crunching of unspoiled snow; we are unlikely to meet other people. Back at the cable-car station, a 15-minute ride takes us above the treeline and through the open, exposed snow fields of this glacier-sculpted valley to Lake Balea. The lake itself is covered in thick ice and snow, and indistinguishable from the rest of this beautiful valley basin.

There will be time to check out the chapel and hotel, constructed every year from ice from the lake and, depending on time, explore the lake's surroundings. We have dinner in the hotel of ice (and perhaps a warming glass of tuica, the local plum brandy) before bedding down for the night in our rooms carved out of thick ice – an incredible experience. Night hotel.

Drive approx. 1.5 hours; Trek / snowshoe approx. 3-4 hours

NB: Weather conditions will dictate snow-shoeing routes and locations, and may affect the night spent in the hotel of ice.

Day 3: Lake Balea – Rasinari

We emerge from our unique accommodation and prepare for another day of exploring this winter wilderness. There are plenty of options and, after assessing the weather and conditions, our experienced guides will lead us through this harsh but beautiful landscape. We then take the cable car back down the mountain; looking down onto the thick carpet of snow-covered trees is truly magical. Look out for agile chamois on the dramatic rocky ridges above; their tracks can often be seen in the wide saddle above the treeline. We meet our vehicles and drive south to Rasinari village, at the foot of the Cindrel Mountains. Time permitting, we can explore the narrow winding streets and distinctive colourfully-painted buildings. Night guesthouse.

Trek / snowshoe approx 3-4 hours; Drive approx. 2 hours

Day 4: Snow-shoeing Cindrel Mountains

A short drive takes us to a small mountain resort, where we glide silently on ski-lifts above the thickly-forested conifer slopes. These perfect Christmas-card landscapes are perfect for snow-shoeing, with plenty of trails covering the gentle hills. Although the open slopes are popular with skiers and snowboarders, the forest is still and peaceful and it feels as though we have the world to ourselves. Our route will depend on the conditions, but we aim to take in one of the many peaks for unsurpassed views, before descending to the lower slopes, sheltering in one of the many shepherd's huts for lunch. Back in picturesque Rasinari, we celebrate the end of our winter adventure. Night guesthouse/hotel.

Snowshoe approx 5-6 hours

Day 5: Rasinari - Sibiu - Flight departs

We drive the short distance (approx 30 mins) back to Sibiu. An attractive riverside city with much of its medieval fortifications still intact, and a beautiful historic centre, Sibiu is justifiably proud of its culture and arts. It's a wonderful place to explore, and we make the most of our time before transferring to the airport for our flight home.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London to Romania
- Transfers as part of itinerary
- All accommodation - on twin share basis
- All meals except where specified
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependent on group size)
- Local mountain guide & driver
- Vehicle support and back-up equipment
- Entry to any sites visited as part of the itinerary
- Airline taxes
- **We offset 100% of the carbon emissions from your trip, including flights booked with us**

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Travel insurance
- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Tips for the local guides and support crew
- Inbound airport departure tax (no tax applied at the time of writing)
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | ORANGE

All our trips are designed to provide a challenge. Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors. Trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account. Some sections will feel more challenging than others, but the grade reflects the overall trip. Unusual weather conditions can also have a significant impact.

The Accommodation icon indicates the living conditions while trekking/cycling. While there are usually several factors

that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

Trip grading explained

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local lifestyles. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely. In some destinations we work together as a team with local guides to help set up or break camp, or prepare meals. Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something!

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with appropriate communication devices (eg phones, radios), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick but may also depart from regional airports, and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination and low cost airlines may be used for short

haul flights. If you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details.

By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

We stay in a variety of hotels/lodges ranging from quite simple, friendly guesthouse-style to more international-style hotels in larger towns or cities. Standards are generally good, in great locations, but there may be a night or two where facilities are more basic, as you'd expect in very remote, untouristed or rural areas.

During the trek, a night will be spent in the Hotel of Ice, in a twin room. If the winter is unseasonably warm and the lake hasn't frozen over, it is not always possible to build the Hotel of Ice and therefore a stay there isn't guaranteed. In this instance, the group will stay at the Balea Lac Chalet, situated besides the lake.

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis, usually twin-share. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation.
You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that both people complete the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.
If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Single Supplements

In most standard hotels, we can usually offer a limited number of single rooms. This is upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis, and additional charges apply. In more communal accommodation, single rooms are rarely an option. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary

experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Grading

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Trip grading explained

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's

limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Terrain

We will be snow-shoeing up to 6 hours each day, over gentle slopes and hills. For the most part we trek over deep, fresh snow. Distances vary depending on weather conditions, but even short distances can feel like a marathon. Snow-shoeing provides more of a full-body work-out than you might think. The weather and cold temperatures will make everything more difficult and will add to tiredness; general fitness is key to this challenge.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the FCO's advice on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you will all necessary information 6 weeks prior to depature to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check the NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro website for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8

months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click here.

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - Passenger Portal Log in.





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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 17 Nov 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.