ROMANIA

Carpathians to Danube Delta

22 Days

15 Sep - 06 Oct , 2027

Guided Self Drive Adventure



Experience Romania's wild heart on a transformative self drive expedition where conservation, culture, and adventure converge.

From tracking European bison in the Southern Carpathians alongside Rewilding Europe practitioners to navigating the hidden wildlife sanctuaries of the Danube Delta, this journey offers rare, behind-the-scenes access to Europe's most vital landscapes.

Along the way, immerse yourself in the storybook heritage of Transylvania's medieval citadels and royal castles, staying in handpicked retreats that celebrate local flavours and traditional livelihoods. This is more than a road trip; it is an immersive invitation to witness the powerful harmony of restored wilderness and living history.

Self Drive ADVENTURES
GUIDED TAGALONG TOURS

www.selfdriveadventures.com



The Route

This itinerary has been planned and operated with Rewilding Europe. This is a pioneering non-profit organisation dedicated to making the continent a wilder place by restoring natural processes, supporting the comeback of keystone species, and fostering a nature-based economy that benefits both wildlife and local communities. Expect approximately 70% is paved road and 30% will be gravel / rough roads. The distance will be approximately 2,200km.

Your adventure price includes a EUR500 per person contribution that directly supports Rewilding Europe operations in Romania.

Highlights Include...

- **Rewilding immersion:** Meet local teams, learn restoration tactics, and track free-roaming European bison in the Țarcu Mountains.
- **Danube Delta deep-dive:** UNESCO biosphere wetlands, specialist-led hide sessions, and hands-on monitoring activities or rare, behind-the-scenes insight into one of Europe's great wetlands.
- **Travel with purpose:** Discover how Rewilding Europe grows nature-based tourism and community benefits across Romania's flagship wild areas.
- **Culture & history:** Between wild encounters and historic ramparts, slow down in Saxon villages and fortified churches, savour farm-to-table cuisine and local wines, and unwind in handpicked stays that keep remote landscapes accessible without rushing.
- **Transylvania's medieval legacy:** Sighișoara's citadel, Bran's (Dracula) fortress lore, and the royal splendour of Peleș.
- **Self-drive freedom**: Curated backroads from alpine ridges and gorges to reed-fringed channels.



The Itinerary

1-2 Timișoara - The Little Vienna



Day 1: You will be collected from the airport and transferred to your hotel in Timișoara. Afternoon briefing and welcome dinner.

Day 2: Guided immersion into Romanian history and culture, centred on Timișoara's role in the anti-communist Revolution that began in December 1989. After the tour, enjoy a leisurely afternoon to unwind and explore the city at your own pace.



3 Țarcu Mountains

Collect our vehicles and set out on a two-hour drive into the Țarcu Mountains, part of the Southern Carpathians Rewilding landscape. Here you'll arrive in the heart of Romania's rewilding efforts and the flagship European bison reintroduction area.
In the afternoon, meet members of the local Rewilding team, enjoy regional gastronomy, and hear how bison recovery and habitat restoration are benefiting nature and nearby communities. Settle in for the evening and get ready for tomorrow's field adventures in the wild Southern Carpathians.

4 Bison Tracking Day

Today is dedicated to bison tracking. Set out at first light with your local wildlife guide, head into the Țarcu Mountains and follow tracks and signs to seek European bison in their natural habitat. Along the way, learn how their successful reintroduction is restoring ecosystems and supporting nearby communities. If the hike is too long for you, other activities can be arranged today.





5 Local Community Impact

Today focuses on community: journey through mountain villages, meet locals, and immerse yourself in traditions to better understand everyday life in the Țarcu foothills.
Along the way, see how Rewilding fuels a nature-based economy, supporting local enterprises and skills while safeguarding the landscape.

6 Cernei Mountains - Deoartyre to Retezat

The rewilding journey continues as we drive into a new part of the landscape, following the picturesque Cerna Valley roads through the Cernei Mountains.
Around Domogled–Valea Cernei National Park, you'll reach the area selected for Romania's first griffon vulture reintroduction, a milestone for restoring a key scavenger to the Southern Carpathians.
Along the way, take in sweeping valleys, limestone gorges, and quiet countryside routes that showcase the wild character of this region.





7 Retezat Mountains - Hiking Day

The Retezat Mountains are the gateway to Rewilding Romania's Southern Carpathians operations from its Hațeg base and home to one of Romania's most hidden gems. We spend the day exploring on foot.

8 Retezat Mountains - Castles & Dacian Fortresses

After Breakfast, we begin with a visit to Corvin Castle in Hunedoara, a Gothic castle steeped in legends, secret passages, and centuries of history. Continue to Sarmizegetusa Regia, the UNESCO-listed Dacian fortress, to explore ancient sanctuaries and uncover the heart of the former Dacian kingdom.





9 Remote Villages

A day devoted to the Ținutul Pădurenilor: wind through hillside villages, like Alun, along country roads and marble pathways, pausing at viewpoints for some of the county's most stunning vistas.

10 Off to TransFagarasan

We'll drive east to the Danube Delta along one of Romania's premier alpine routes, the Transfagarasan. This is a roadway carved through the mountains for strategic purposes during Ceaușescu's rule. The road has been also featured on the TV show Top Gear, and was also mentioned that it might be the best driving road in the world.





11 Danube Delta

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a birdwatcher's paradise. It's also the focus of Romania's newest rewilding initiatives. Here you'll learn about restoration efforts and take part in hands-on activities.

12 Bird Monitoring Workshop

Today, the Danube Delta adventure begins with a hands-on bird monitoring workshop across our concession area.
Led by the Rewilding team, you'll gain behind-the-scenes insight into active restoration plans and how monitoring guides conservation plans.





13 Hide Experience

Today centres on the Hide Experience: enter dedicated wildlife hides to observe Danube Delta species up close while learning about how these ecosystems function and why they matter.
Guided by rewilding experts, you'll gain practical insights into monitoring and restoration, with exclusive, behind-the-scenes context from active projects in the reserve.

14 Danube Delta boat Trip

Spend your last day on a full-day boat excursion across the Delta's channels and lakes, tasting traditional dishes and learning firsthand about the lives and traditions of local communities.





15 Departure to Transilvania

We farewell the Danube Delta start the day with the 2.5 hour boat ride back to the cars. We continue with a five-hour drive into Transylvania via scenic mountain roads. There will be brief scenic photo and leg-stretch stops en route to Sinaia.

16 Transylvania - Peles Castle

Today we explore the Sphinx of Bucegi and Peleș Castle in Sinaia. It is a Neo-Renaissance masterpiece that looks as though it were lifted straight from the pages of a fairy tale. Built between 1873 and 1914 as a summer retreat for King Carol I, the castle is renowned for its intricate wood carvings, stained-glass windows, and opulent interior themes. Surrounded by lush forests and manicured gardens, its striking spires and detailed frescoes make it one of the most stunning royal residences in Europe, offering visitors a profound glimpse into Romania's regal history and architectural grandeur.





17 Transylvania - Bran Castle

Today unfolds at Bran Castle, the dramatic hilltop fortress long associated with Dracula lore, where winding staircases, turreted towers, and atmospheric courtyards set the stage for a deep dive into history and myth alike. You'll also uncover the truth behind the Dracula legend—Bram Stoker never visited Romania and Vlad III (the Impaler) almost certainly never lived here, yet the castle's imposing silhouette helped cement its place in popular imagination.

18 Viscri & Saschiz

Today we shift into a gentler rhythm, exploring Transylvania's Saxon villages celebrated for their distinctive architecture and living traditions. In Viscri, renowned for its connection to the British Royal Family, with King Charles's frequent visits and restored heritage properties. We'll stroll quiet lanes and soak up village life. Expect scenic hillside backroads, tastings of local cuisine, and flexible, weather-dependent activities.



19 Sighisoara

Today we will explore a lesser-known corner of Transylvania centred on Sighișoara, a beautifully preserved, living medieval citadel. We'll meander through cobbled lanes and hilltop viewpoints, then roam the gentle surrounding countryside to visit local estates, sample regional cuisine, and enjoy a curated wine tasting featuring renowned Romanian varietals.





20 Alba-Iulia

Today we will explore Alba-Iulia and its magnificent Alba Carolina Citadel, one of Romania's most historically profound cities and the monumental site of both the national union and the coronation of King Ferdinand I. In the afternoon we have the opportunity to track wild beavers in their natural habitat.

21 Timisoara

We'll drive back to Timișoara, hand over the vehicles, and spend a little time in select coffee shops and enjoy a farewell dinner.



22 Departure

Transfer to the airport after breakfast.

Please Note:

Itinerary Subject to Change.

Guide decides on final route as per current conditions on day of travel.



Prices, Dates...

Dates...

15 Sep - 06 Oct 2027 **EXPLORATORY**

Prices...

Your adventure price includes a EUR500 per person contribution that directly supports Rewilding Europe operations in Romania.

2027 is an exploratory adventure. It is the first time we have operated this tour so the mindset required is one of patience and flexibility.
3 cars - EUR13,595*per person double/twin share
4 cars - EUR12,015*per person double/twin share
5+ cars - EUR10,915*per person double/twin share
2027 prices are based on 2 people per 4x4 on a double/twin share basis
3rd and 4th passengers: we can provide pricing if you have more than 2 people per 4x4
*Prices assume a minimum of 3 vehicles and a maximum of 7 vehicles (plus support vehicles). Prices are subject to exchange rate fluctuations – please see booking form for all terms and conditions.
2028 pricing available approximately October 2027.

Please do not book flights nor pay for travel insurance until you have been advised that we have received deposits from the minimum number of participants for this adventure.

Inclusions...

Arrival and departure transfers, vehicle hire, vehicle insurance (full insurance), two-way radio in vehicle, first aid equipment in support vehicle, all hotels, guide vehicle and local English-speaking tour guide. There will be a Self Drive Adventures escort travelling with the local guide.
Meals included: Daily breakfast, 11 lunches, 14 dinners
Activities included:

- Day 2 – guided tour of Timișoara
- Days 3 & 4 - Bison trekking and village visits
- Day 12 – bird monitoring workshop
- Day 13 - hide experience
- Day 14 – boat trip
- Day 8 - guided tour of Corvin Castle and Sarmizegetusa Regia
- Day 9 - guided tour through the villages of "Tinutul Padurenilor" Day 16 - guided tour of Peles Castle
- Day 17 - guided tour of Bran Castle
- Day 18 - guided tour of Viscri and Saschiz villages
- Day 19 - guided tour of Sighișoara
- Day 20 - guided tour of Alba-Iulia
- Entrance fees to sites we visit included

Exclusions...

Airfares to Timisoara, alcoholic drinks and other meals not included (approx. 600 euros per person for extra meals), fuel approx. 500 euros per vehicle for 2,200km route, local tips, travel insurance, visas and immunisations.



Other Information

Exploratory Adventure...

Although thoroughly researched and designed with help from Rewilding Europe, this tour is an exploratory adventure. All participants need to remain flexible and be prepared to "go with the flow" and expect the unexpected.

Driving Ability & Conditions...

The skills required are a driver's licence and a good dollop of common sense. Dirt/gravel road experience is useful. Much of the route will be on paved roads, but there will be sections when we will travel on forest roads, or alpine environments. Expect approximately 70% is paved road and 30% will be gravel / rough roads.

Vehicles...

AWD Dacia Duster or similar. The rental supply conditions in Europe often changes. Car upgrades are not possible for the trip. Expect all the cars to have manual transmission.

Flights...

Before booking flights and other arrangements it is your responsibility to confirm with us that we have the minimum number of cars required for this adventure to depart.

Convoy Size...

The minimum number of cars in our convoy is 3 and the maximum is 7. This excludes support vehicles. Most vehicles tend to have just two guests, however, up to four can be accommodated. The convoy does travel together for most of the journey, so you need to be willing to be flexible to fit in with the determined start time each day, stops for breaks etc. We try to allow breaks for photos, toilet stops, sightseeing, activities, wildlife viewing, lunch, morning and afternoon tea.

Accommodation...

This is not a 5-star holiday. It is an adventure. We will be staying in comfortable hotels, with ensuite bathrooms. In some areas the choice of hotels is limited, and we will take the best that is available. If you'd like arrive a day or two early to acclimatise and get over a long flight or stay longer, we can arrange additional nights in the same hotel. Prices to be advised closer to the date.











Guide & Support Team...

On this adventure you will be guided by local Rewilding Europe guides who speak English. The decision of the local guides is final on all matters likely to affect the safety or well-being of any person participating in the trip. A Self Drive Adventures escort will also accompany the group.



Activity Level...

We do recommend a good level of fitness to be able to participate in all the activities during the adventure. We will do out best to organise alternative activities if you are unable to participate in any of the more strenuous activities (like the full day bison trekking). There are many days where we do have walking tours, hikes, boat trips or activities outside of the cars.



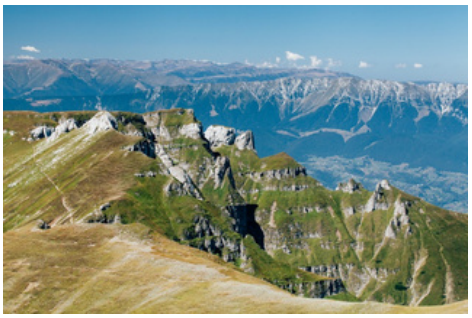
Food & Drinks...

See the itinerary inclusions for meals that are included. In general, the food is excellent in quality and variety. Breakfast will be included in the accommodation each morning. Most lunches will be at local restaurants or picnic-style, depending on the day's program. Dinners will usually be at the accommodation restaurant or somewhere nearby.



Weather...

Mid-September to early October in Romania brings a beautiful transition into autumn, starting with pleasantly warm, mild days (15–22°C / 59–72°F) that gradually cool down as October approaches. Nights quickly become crisp and chilly (5–10°C / 41–50°F), particularly in the Transylvanian highlands and mountainous areas. You will experience a mix of bright sunshine, passing clouds, and occasional light rain.



Risks & Health...

By participating you acknowledge that the nature of the trip is adventurous, and participation involves a degree of personal risk. You should discuss the risks with your doctor before agreeing to join this trip.

Danube Delta border with Ukraine situation: This text is from Rewilding Europe: "Although Romania is a NATO member state and not directly involved in the war in Ukraine, the Danube Delta's geographical proximity to the border means that, during your stay at Ultima Frontiera, you might hear sounds associated with a conflict zone, originating from across the Danube, on Ukrainian territory. Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, there have been no incidents that compromised safety in the area; our staff, along with groups of tourists, have been present there for most of the year, just as in the previous year. Nevertheless, it is worth noting the possibility of hearing such sounds from across the Danube, so that you are informed and do not become unnecessarily alarmed should you hear anything characteristic of a war zone. Furthermore, please be aware that while it has not been necessary, nor do we anticipate it becoming so, safety measures have been established regarding evacuation capabilities, should the need arise.

In our view, there is no danger, especially considering that the main conflict zones in Ukraine are over 300 km away, in a straight line but as you might hear events taking place across the border, we believe it is important for you to be aware of this so that you can make an informed decision regarding your participation."