MULTICULTURAL TOUR IN MOLDOVA

DAY 1

Day 1: Arrival day

On arrival at Chisinau International Airport, you will be transferred to your accommodation in Chisinau. After settling in, you will have a **Chisinau walking city tour** by the guidance of a professional guide who will show you the most famous attractions in Chisinau.

DAY 2

Day 2: Time travel in Tiraspol – Back in the USSR

In the morning, you will discover the oldest medieval fort of **Tighina Fortress** located in Tighina town and built in the 15th century by the prince of Moldova, Stephen the Great. Originally built as a small wooden fort, it was later fortified in stone by the prince of Moldova, Petru Rares. Occupied by the Ottomans in 1538 (in a campaign lead by the sultan Suleiman the Magnificent), the fort was strengthened in 1541 and became the center of an Ottoman "raya" (in which were included the surrounding Moldavian villages). In the 18th century, the fort was strengthened by Moldovan craftsmen under the direct supervision of Dimitrie Cantemir. Tighina Fortress is an architectural ensemble of irregular quadrilateral plan, surrounded by wide walls, 2-3 meters thick, made of limestone and brick.

In the afternoon, you will have a **soviet-style lunch** at the local restaurant in Tiraspol.

After lunch, you will have a **panoramic tour in Tiraspol**, you will set off on a time travel. During the city tour, you will discover Vladimir Lenin’s monument and the tank left from the Second World War. The city seems to be a vestige of the Soviet past.

In the evening, you will be transferred to Chisinau where you check in at the hotel and have free time in the city.

HIGHLIGHTS: Tighina Fortress, Tiraspol city,

DAY 3

Day 3: Cricova winery - the pearl of Moldovan wine-making and Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand year-old natural amphitheater

The first stop of this day will be at **Cricova Underground Wine Galleries** – the pearl of winemaking in the Republic of Moldova and a "must" for guests visiting our country. During the excursion at Cricova winery in

the tourist electric train, at a depth of 80 m, you will discover the wonders of this place. Cricova underground galleries are formed by over seventy streets covering an area of nearly 120 km, each bearing Bacchic names: Sauvignon, Cabernet, Cahors, etc. The jewel of the underground treasure is the National Collection, including over 600 types of wine totalling about 1 million bottles. Here you will admire the oldest bottle of wine - "Jewish Easter Wine", dating from 1902. You will also visit the unique production of sparkling wine, where a professional guide will tell you about all the process of producing sparkling wines using the famous French-style Méthode Champenoise. In one of the tasting rooms, the sommelier will explain the rules of wine tasting and help you better reveal the taste and bouquet of each type of wine.

The journey will continue at **Orheiul Vechi (Old Orhei) -** a natural amphitheater revealing a territory which was first inhabited 40 000 years ago. The Cultural, Natural and Landscape Reserve Orheiul Vechi includes a series of historical and cultural monuments as well as natural landscapes in the gorge of the Raut River. Ancient fortifications, cave monasteries, monks and hermits – here you can follow the history of this region. The remnants of the first human settlements were found in the stone caverns from here. On the rocky hill, you will find the ruins of a strong Geto-Dacian fortification, which acted as a sanctuary for celebrating religious holidays and rituals in this prehistoric community. The originality of Orheiul Vechi landscape is due to the gorge of the Raut River, dug under the form of a canyon in the limestone layers of the former Sarmatian Sea, about 14 million years ago.

You will have **lunch at a guesthouse in Butuceni** village where you will taste dishes from the local cuisine.

In the evening, you will have a **traditional Moldovan dinner at Butuceni guesthouse with folk music**.

After dinner, you will check in at the guesthouse and have free time to explore the rural countrysides.

HIGHLIGHTS: Cricova Underground Wine Galleries, Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand years-old natural amphitheater, Butuceni guesthouse,

DAY 4

Day 4: Tipova - one of the Christian cave fortresses

The day will begin with excursion at the **Tipova Cave Monastery**. Situated near the Tipova village, the monastery with the same name is considered to be one of the oldest monastic establishments on the territory of our country. The heritage, which consists from 18 rooms, dug into the rock at an astounding altitude, represents an impressive museum in the open air. Tipova River, on its flow to Nistru, creates many waterfalls with the heights above 10-16 meters, which a long time ago used to move the millstones of the numerous watermills.

You will continue your journey to **Hanul lui Hanganu guesthouse**, built from natural stone, in national style, with various recreation zones - a real refuge in the peaceful environment of the countryside. From the terraces of the guesthouse, you can enjoy the fabulous beauty of the Dniester River. Hanul lui Hanganu guesthouse is the perfect choice for a quiet and full of emotions stay. Here, you will surely fall in love with some of the most popular dishes in Moldova.

During lunch, you will discover the taste of **traditional dishes** including the **smallest “sarmale”** (stuffed cabbage or vine leaves) in the country and **homemade fruit liqueurs**.

After lunch, you will go in a **Boat ride on the Dniester River** and take pictures with amazing natural landscapes.

In the evening, you will be transferred to Soroca where you check in at the hotel and have free time.

HIGHLIGHTS: Tipova Cave Monastery, Hanul lui Hanganu guesthouse,

DAY 5

Day 5: Soroca Fortress - unique historical monument of defensive constructions architecture of medieval Moldova

In the morning, you will travel to Soroca town and visit **Soroca fortress**, the “pearl of fortification art” built by the Moldovan Prince Stephen the Great in 1499. It was a unique historical monument of defensive constructions architecture of medieval Moldova composed of a huge tower holding five smaller towers surrounding it. Currently, it is an important attraction in Soroca, having preserved cultures and kept the old Soroca in the present day.

In the afternoon, you will have a **traditional lunch** at a restaurant in Soroca.

After lunch, you will visit the **Candle of Gratitude monument**, erected on a steep cliff on the bank of the Dniester River. The visitors who get here will be rewarded with picturesque and unforgettable views after climbing 600 steps that start at the Dniester River. The inscription before the way up is as follows: “Traveler, stop! There is a Candle of Gratitude on top. And if you consider thankful to someone in this life – get up, pray and continue your way!”

You will continue your trip to **Cosauti village** where you will visit the **Stone engraving manufacturer**.

In the evening, you will be transferred to Chisinau and enjoy your free time there.

HIGHLIGHTS: Soroca Fortress, Candle of Gratitude, Gypsy Hill, Stone engraving manufacturer in Cosauti village,

DAY 6

Day 6: Discovery of Gagauzia

You will start the day by travelling to **Comrat** where you will enjoy a city tour. Comrat is the capital of the autonomous region of Gagauzia, located in southwest Moldova. This is a very interesting territory since the majority of its habitants are Gagauzians. These are the only representatives of Turkic origin that affiliated with the Eastern Orthodox Church. Gagauzians migrated from Bulgaria together with ethnic Bulgarians and settled in Moldova in 19th century. You will see such attractions as the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, Museum of Gagauz Culture, Gagauz Art Gallery, Gagauz National University and Alley of Gagauz Glory.

In the afternoon, you will have the **lunch at Vinuri de Comrat winery**, which is the oldest winery of southern Moldova. Here you will discover the tastes of Vinuri de Comrat wines and the specifity of Gagauz cuisine, while tasting Gagauz dishes. For over 100 years the winemakers of Comrat are preserving and transmitting from generation to generation the classical traditions of making fresh and naturally elegant wines based on the unique winemaking technology characteristic for the south of Moldova. Vinuri de Comrat

is a modern complex processing 4 thousands tones of wine and spirits using closed-loop cycle, including production and processing of grape, production and bottling of dry, semi-sweet, desert, selected and vintage wine, production of wine spirit. Its portfolio lists more than 50 collections of wine, however, it is very famous for the Cahors wine.

Next, you will visit the **National Gagauz Museum of History and Ethnography "D. Cara-Ciobanu"** in Besalma village. The museum presents the history, culture and everyday life of the Gagauz people from ancient times until nowadays. One of the personalities of this small nation was the writer D. Cara-Ciobanu, who spent his life promoting this culture. He founded this museum, which features more than 6,000 exhibits, including works by famous writers, poets and famous artists in Gagauzia. One of the most valuable item in the museum is the collection of original films produced during the Gagauz colonization of the steppe of Bugeac.

In the evening, you will discover **Gagauz Sofrasi Ethno-Touristic Complex**. You will feel like a local from the traditional Gagauz village, you will be acquainted with the rural life, culture and traditions of the people from the south of Moldova.

HIGHLIGHTS: Comrat city , Vinuri de Comrat winery, National Gagauz Museum of History and Ethnography "D. Cara-Ciobanu", Gagauz Sofrasi guest house,

DAY 7

Day 7: Bread Museum, Prutul de Jos (Lower Prut) Nature Reserve and Beleu Lake

The first stop of the day will be at **La Gura Cuptorului guesthouse** and **Bread Museum** in Valeni village where you will enjoy an excursion and lunch with folk music. The Bread Museum is the most "delicious" museum of Moldova. This amazing museum of bread pleases its visitors with delicious "specimens" and thus has a huge success among the visitors, who promise every time to come again. Besides the tasty bread, the visitors of the museum can witness traditional ceremonies at a makeshift Moldovan wedding. The villagers of Valeni village are proud of their unique museum that holds about 20 types of bread products.

After lunch, you will have a **masterclass of making "colaci" of peace dove** - a sort of traditional bread in Moldova.

Next, you will visit **Prutul de Jos (Lower Prut) Nature Reserve and Beleu Lake**. The reserve was founded on a swampy land of a former estuary of the Prut River. It was created in 1991 to protect the flora and fauna of Beleu Lake and the Prut River surroundings. Beleu Lake occupies about one third of the Nature Reserve, and the rest of the territory is made up of a network of ponds that together form a unique ecosystem of national and international importance. Beleu Lake is a relict of the Danube – at around five to six thousand years old – and is therefore of great interest as a monument of immense scientific, cultural and aesthetic value. In the nature reserve you can find almost all the species of water plants and animals native to Moldova. Here you will see many species of birds including cormorants, white storks, swans, glossy ibises, white kingfishers, little egrets, big egrets, herons.

In the evening, you will be transferred in Chisinau and enjoy your last night in the city.

HIGHLIGHTS: La Gura Cuptorului guesthouse , Prutul de Jos (Lower Prut) Nature Reserve ,

DAY 8

Day 8: Departure day

On departure day, you will be transferred from the hotel to Chisinau International Airport. If your flight is in the afternoon, you will have the option to explore Chisinau for a while on your own in the morning and buy some souvenirs.