HIKING TOUR IN MOLDOVA

DAY 1

Day 1: Arrival day

On arrival at Chisinau International Airport, you will enjoy a city tour. Chisinau is the main administrative, scientific and cultural centre of Moldova. During the tour, you will discover pieces of history and culture of the city such as the Nativity of Christ Cathedral, the Bell Tower, the Arch of Triumph, the Monument of Stephen the Great, etc.

After the city tour, you will be transferred to Bahmut, where you will have dinner at a local guesthouse and stay overnight.

DAY 2

Day 2: Hike at Plaiul Fagului Scientific Reserve

This day you will hike from Bahmut to Plaiul Fagului Scientific Reserve (~10 km). Plaiul Fagului Scientific Reserve that is located on an area of 5642 hectares in the northwestern part of Moldova. The vegetation of the reserve is represented by forests with trees such as beech, oak, ash, maple. A special place has the beech trees that reach a height of 30-40 m, an average diameter of 80-100 cm and an age of 80-150 years. The flora of the reserve includes more than 680 plant species, of which 77 species are rare and endangered plant species.

After having lunch at the reserve, you will be transferred to Duruitoarea where you will have dinner at a local guesthouse and spend the night.

HIGHLIGHTS: Plaiul Fagului Scientific Reserve ,

DAY 3

Day 3: Discovery of A Hundred Mounds Landscape Reserve

The day will begin with a hike from Duruitoarea to Cheile Butesti (~27 km) following the itinerary: Duruitoarea – A Hundred Mounds Landscape Reserve – Cheile Butesti Gorge.

Following the road from the Prut Valley from Duruitoarea village, near Varatic, you will walk near Costesti lake and will find the landscape reserve named “Suta de Movile” (A Hundred Mounds). This is a unique phenomenon in the space between Prut and Dniester rivers. The mounds are much more than 100, as there are over 3500. Their heights range between 1,5 m and 30,5 m. Dimitrie Cantemir, who named in his book «Descriptio Moldoviae» this geological phenomenon as «Centum Monticulli», completed its first documentary attestation in 1716.

You will have a lunch break (lunch box) near Costesti lake.

Cheile Butesti gorge is dug by the Camenca River in a reef with a length of over 2 km and a width of 125 m, located in the south of Butesti village, Glodeni district. The coral limestone reef was formed 15-20 million years ago from corals, mollusks, clams, algae, cattle and marine organisms that populated the warm waters of the Sarmatian and Tortonic Seas covering northern Moldova at that time.

You will be transferred from Cheile Butesti to Balti, where you will have dinner at the hotel.

HIGHLIGHTS: Duruitoarea gorge, A Hundred Mounds Landscape Reserve,

DAY 4

Day 4: Discovery of Japca Monastery

In the morning, you will be transferred from Balti to Japca. You will hike from Japca Monastery to Socola (~26 km) following the itinerary: Japca Monastery – Vadul lui Rascov – Socola.

You will start our journey at Japca Monastery. The monastery has an exceptionally beautiful location. The rocks above the monastery, the meandering Dniester River, which can be seen in the distance, and the gardens that surround it, create a special beauty. Next to the interesting sightseeing of this place there is the Geo-paleonthological monument “Japca Rock”, a mineral water spring, landscape reservoir Rascov and paleolitical stations at Socola and Rascov.

In Vadul lui Rascov there is one of the most impressive Jewish cemeteries from Eastern Europe. There are a few hundred gravestones located on a hill sloping to the banks of the Dniester River.

In the afternoon, you will have a lunch break in Vadul lui Rascov and enjoy the meal from your lunch boxes. You will be transferred from Socola to Lalova where you will check in and have dinner at a local guesthouse.

HIGHLIGHTS: Japca Monastery,

DAY 5

Day 5: Discovery of Tipova and Saharna Monasteries – an unusual landscape with many waterfalls

In the morning, you will hike from Lalova to Tipova (~10 km) where you will visit Tipova Cave Monastery. Located near Tipova village, the monastery with the same name is considered one of the oldest monastic establishments on the territory of Moldova. The heritage, which consists of 18 rooms, dug into the rock at an astounding altitude, represents an impressive museum in the open air. The Tipova River, on its flow to the Dniester, creates many waterfalls with the height above 10-16 meters, which a long time ago used to move the millstones of the numerous watermills.

In the afternoon, you will have lunch at Tipova Monastery.

After lunch, you will hike from Tipova to Saharna (~12 km) where you will discover Saharna Monastery -

one of the oldest monasteries in the country. The monastic complex is composed of a cave monastery (the Annunciation) and a stone monastery (the St. Trinity). The complex is located in a picturesque valley on the right bank of the Dniester River, near Saharna village. It is surrounded by rocks covered by forest. The legend says that the Virgin Mary left her footprint on the highest rock, named Grimidon. The history of the monastery is little known. The first prior of the holy place is considered the monk Bartholomew (1776-1790) who settled in a deep gorge, built a church, a few cells and enclosed the monastery with a stone wall. In Saharna you will enjoy the beautiful landscape created by the waterfalls. The Saharna River has 22 waterfalls on its way. The biggest waterfall is 4.5 m high.

Then, you will be transferred to Riscova where you will check in at the hotel and have some free time.

HIGHLIGHTS: Tipova Cave Monastery, Saharna Monastery,

DAY 6

Day 6: Discovery of Orheiul Vechi – a 40 thousand year-old natural amphitheater

The day will begin with a hike from Riscova to Trebujeni (~14 km) following the itinerary: Riscova – Butuceni – Trebujeni.

During the hike from Trebujeni to Butuceni you will discover 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.

In Trebujeni village you will enjoy a culinary masterclass and have a Moldovan traditional lunch at a local guesthouse.

After lunch, you will be transferred from Trebujeni to Chisinau, where you will check in at the hotel and have some free time.

HIGHLIGHTS: Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand years-old natural amphitheater, Casa de sub Stinca guesthouse,

DAY 7

Day 7: 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.