MOLDOVA WOVEN IN SYMBOLS AND STORIES

DAY 1

Day 1: Arrival & A Creative Wine Experience at Asconi Winery

Upon arrival at Chi?in?u International Airport, your Moldovan journey begins with a transfer to Puhoi, where you will visit **Asconi Winery** and step into the heart of Moldova's wine culture. It is a family winery, whose foundation is a long-standing tradition and experience in the production of Moldovan wine. The wines they produce are from European grape varieties – Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet-Sauvignon, Malbec as well as local varieties such as Feteasca Alba and Feteasca Neagra. Visitors love this winery for its rustic style and village atmosphere, for its excellent wines and traditional Moldovan food, prepared from local products by the village's most skilled cooks.

You will enjoy a guided winery experience and wine tasting, followed by a **unique wine painting experience**, where wine becomes your artistic medium, that will leave you with a series of special and unforgettable emotions. The Asconi winery offers this experience to its visitors, who are guided throughout the session by a specialist. You will discover a new side of wine with paintbrush and brush. It is a creative and memorable introduction to Moldova — where wine is not only tasted, but also transformed into art.

After the wine painting experience comes to an end, you will check in at Asconi Winery and overnight there.

HIGHLIGHTS: Asconi winery, Wine painting at Asconi Winery,

DAY 2

Day 2: Discover the Iconic Moldovan blouse "Ia" at Casa Cristea & Create Your Own Home Fragrance at Viorica Cosmetics Factory

The day will begin with a **Chisinau walking city tour** - the main administrative, scientific and cultural centre of Moldova. During the tour, you will discover most famous monuments and buildings in Chisinau, such as Bell Tower, Arch of Triumph, Stephen the Great Monument, the Parliament, Presidency of the Republic of Moldova, Chisinau City Hall and Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ's Nativity.

The excursion will continue with a visit to the **Casa Cristea** - the place where the iconic Moldovan blouse "IA", included in the UNESCO immaterial cultural heritage, is handcrafted. Here, you will admire the traditional symbols, beautifully embroidered into each blouse, each carrying a story of family, protection, and continuity. Also you might capture unforgettable Instagram-worthy photos while wearing authentic traditional costumes—the very same ones worn on stage by some of Moldova's most celebrated folk artists.

In the afternoon, you will enjoy a **lunch at the local restaurant** in Chisinau.

The journey will continue with an **Excursion** and **a Home Fragrance Workshop at Viorica Cosmetics Factory**. You will discover the world of aromatherapy in a creative, hands-on experience. Guided by experts, you will explore essential oils and create your own signature scent for a cozy and harmonious home. During

the workshop, each participant will craft three personalized products:
- A scented sachet with dried herbs, flowers, and spices;
- A 50 ml room spray for home and textiles;
- A natural beeswax candle infused with essential oils.

After the workshop, you will be transferred at the hotel in Chisinau, where you will settle in and spend the night in the heart of Moldova's capital.

HIGHLIGHTS: Chisinau city, Casa Cristea Craft Workshop, Viorica Cosmetics Museum,

DAY 3

Day 3: Visit of Kozy Goat Village, liquor tasting at Buket Moldavii factory and cheese tasting at Gastro Farm Pohrebea

The first stop of this day will be at **Buket Moldavii factory** where Vermouths, aromatized and sparkling wines, liqueurs, bitters, balsams, strong drinks, brandy and divins are made according to the original and unique recipe that is famous from Sovietic times till present. There, you will enjoy a liquor tasting and have the opportunity to visit an herb garden where local people grow plants used in the production of traditional liqueurs.

In the afternoon, you will have **lunch at Kozy Goat Village** - the world's first goat village, located in Moldova. There, goats are the main residents and visitors can interact directly with them, feed them special treats, milk them and enjoy time in the picturesque village of Pohrebea.

The trip will continue with **excursion and cheese tasting at Gastro Farm Pohrebea** that offers authentic rural experiences and bring together local gastronomy, traditions, and a warm countryside atmosphere. Guests can enjoy a curated tasting package featuring a variety of artisanal cheeses paired with carefully selected wine, along with insights into the production and aging process and expert pairing recommendations.

After cheese tasting, you will be transferred to Chisinau and have free time for dinner.

HIGHLIGHTS: Buket Moldavii factory, Kozy Goat Village, Gastro Farm Pohrebea,

DAY 4

Day 4: Discover Moldova's Symbolic Heritage at Butuceni & Wine Tasting in Cricova's Underground Galleries

Today, you will travel to **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.

After wine tasting at Cricova Cellars, you will be transferred at Eco Resort Butuceni guesthouse, nestled in the picturesque Orheiul Vechi landscape. Upon arrival at Eco Resort Butuceni, you will continue di**scovering Moldova's symbolic heritage**. Traditional motifs can be found throughout the guesthouse's design — **from wooden elements and handmade decorations to folk details** — each reflecting stories of nature, family, and local traditions. These authentic touches create a warm atmosphere where the past and present meet.

In the afternoon, you will enjoy a **culinary masterclass** during which you will learn how to cook **traditional "placinte" (pies) with sour cherries**. At lunch you will taste traditional Moldovan dishes such as "zeama" (chicken soup with homemade egg noodles), "mamaliga" and "scrob", along with traditional pastry and a glass of wine.

Next, you will set off on a time travel to **Orheiul Vechi (Old Orhei)** to see 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 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 the evening, you will settle into a traditional guesthouse at Butuceni Eco Resort and spend the night surrounded by the peaceful atmosphere and authentic charm of the Moldovan countryside.

HIGHLIGHTS: Cricova Underground Wine Galleries, Culinary masterclass of making "placinte" at Butuceni Guest House, Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand years-old natural amphitheater, Butuceni Eco Resort guesthouse,

DAY 5

Day 5: Explore Woven Heritage at Rustic Art, Ancentral Houses at Poarta Neamului & Taste Honey at Conacul Mierii

You will start the day with an excursion at **Rustic Art Handicraft Complex of Moldovan Carpets** - an artisanal complex that holds the largest collection of Bessarabian carpets, recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage. During the visit, entrepreneur Ecaterina Popescu will guide the tour of the carpet collection, presenting the history and craftsmanship behind these unique pieces. The tour will also include a showcase of traditional costumes and other handcrafted objects, offering visitors an authentic insight into the cultural heritage of the region.
You will have the opportunity to participate in a **masterclass** on one of the following: **a spiral bracelet for the wrist, a butterfly for the chest, or a headband for the forehead.**
In the afternoon, you will enjoy the **lunch at traditional ancestral house – Poarta Neamului**.
During the visit, you will have the opportunity to speak with the owner, Zinaida Turcanu, a member of the family, about the history of the house, the family's heritage, and the restoration process. You will also discover traditional elements and symbols preserved in the architecture, decorations, and handmade objects, reflecting the values, beliefs, and identity of Moldovan rural life.
Next, you will travel to Micleuseni village that will offer you the chance to discover the "sweet" pension named **"Conacul Mierii"** where actually, in a small bees' kingdom, with a bunch of beehives in the garden, and the house being transformed in a honey shop, the householder will disclose with patience all the secrets

of a bee's family. Here you will also have the opportunity to **taste 3 types of honey** with herbal tea and traditional cheese pastries made by Ana Ciorici, the owner of this kingdom.

In the evening, you will be transferred to Chisinau and have free time for dinner.

DAY 6

Day 6: Time travel in Tiraspol – Back in the USSR

In the morning, you will travel to **Tiraspol** where you will have the opportunity to travel in time back to USSR. You will start the panoramic city tour by visiting the monument of Vladimir Lenin, the Saint George`s Chapel and tanks
left from the Second World War. The city seems to be a ghost of the Soviet past.

In the afternoon, you will step into the warm and welcoming atmosphere of **Karaman House**, where you will enjoy a traditional lunch prepared with local flavours and authentic recipes.
After lunch, you will discover the story and character of this charming place during a guided visit at Karaman House, a traditional rustic guesthouse with a history of around 100 years, passed down from generation to generation while preserving the authenticity of the early twentieth century. Victoria and Angela Cazac have set themselves the goal of transforming their grandparents' home into a place where visitors can discover the spiritual and material heritage of the region. During your visit, your hosts will warmly welcome you into their old home and share stories about their family, their way of life, local traditions, and what it is like to live in this region today, offering an authentic insight into everyday life. Here you will see and experience how one of the region's traditional dishes—chickpeas with duck cooked in a cauldron—is prepared.

The journey will continue to 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 evening, you will return to Chisinau, where the rest of the evening is yours to enjoy at your own pace.

HIGHLIGHTS: Tiraspol city, Tighina Fortress, Karaman House,

DAY 7

Day 7: Gagauzia – Discovering Its Cultural Symbols

You will start the day with a panoramic **city tour of Comrat** - the capital of the autonomous region of Gagauzia, located in southwest Moldova. It is one of Moldova's most fascinating cultural regions, home to the Gagauz people, a Turkic-speaking community with a unique identity shaped by centuries of history and traditions. What makes their heritage particularly intriguing is the combination of Turkic roots and Eastern Orthodox faith — a rare cultural blend that sets Gagauzia apart.

The Gagauz arrived in Bessarabia during the 19th century, migrating from the territory of present-day Bulgaria alongside Bulgarian settlers. Over generations, they preserved their distinctive language, customs, traditions and symbols, creating a cultural heritage that can still be experienced today.

Next, you will immerse yourself in the authentic culture and traditions of Gagauzia with a visit to Congaz, one of the region's largest and most representative villages. Your experience will unfold at the welcoming **Gagauz Sofrasi guesthouse**, where local hospitality, heritage and cuisine come together.

You will discover the stories and traditions of the Gagauz people through a visit to a small family museum, then step into the kitchen for a hands-on **culinary experience**. You will **learn how to prepare gözleme** - a traditional Gagauz pie, using recipes passed down through generations.

In the afternoon, you will enjoy a **homemade traditional lunch** at Gagauz Sofrasi guesthouse and savour the flavours of Gagauzia in the warm atmosphere of a local family home.

After lunch, you will take a leisurely **walk through Congaz village** and **connect with local residents** while discovering the traditions, symbols and everyday life of the Gagauz community. You will visit the local House of Culture and Orthodox Church where you will **uncover traditional symbols**, architectural elements, and cultural details that reflect the history, beliefs, and identity of this region.

Following the walking tour of Congaz, you will spend **meaningful time at Gagauz Sofrasi** in the company of its owner, Mrs. Statova, who will warmly introduce you to the history, customs, traditions, and culinary heritage of the Gagauz people, offering visitors a deeper understanding of this unique ethnic community.

In the evening, you will check in at Gagauz Sofrasi guesthouse and enjoy some free time to relax and soak up the authentic village atmosphere.

HIGHLIGHTS: Comrat city , Gagauz Sofrasi guest house, Culinary masterclass of making ”gozleme”,

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 can visit **Chisinau Central Market**, where you will have the opportunity to taste and buy high-quality organic products directly from local farmers and producers: walnuts, almonds, honey, various herbs, fruits, and vegetables grown in the most natural and eco-friendly conditions.

HIGHLIGHTS: Central Market in Chisinau ,