COMBINED TOUR MOLDOVA - ROMANIA (IASI CITY)

DAY 1

Day 1: Arrival in Chisinau, Moldova

Chisinau

On arrival at Chisinau International Airport, you will be transferred to your accommodation in Chisinau. After settling in, you can have a walk through downtown and explore the city centre on your own.

DAY 2

Day 2: Chisinau city tour and discovery of Cricova winery - the pearl of Moldovan wine-making

Chisinau – Cricova – Chisinau

In the morning, you will enjoy a **city tour of Chisinau** that 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, the City Hall, etc.

After Chisinau city tour, you will be able to see the “millenary smile” of the nicest deinotherium of Moldova. You will find it at the **National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History**, next to other famous archaeological treasures, carpets, national costumes and other valuable exhibits. The museum was built in 1905 in the oriental style, thus being a unique building of this kind in Moldova.

During the lunch at the restaurant, you will enjoy Moldovan traditional dishes.

You will continue your trip by exploring a new city, this time an underground city. During the excursion at **Cricova winery** in the tourist 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. The jewel of the underground treasure is the National Collection, including over 600 types of wine totaling about 1 million bottles. Here you can admire the oldest bottle of wine - "Jewish Easter Wine", dating from 1902 and discover the tastes of Cricova wines.

HIGHLIGHTS: Chisinau city, National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History, Cricova Underground Wine Galleries,

DAY 3

Day 3: Curchi Monastery, Château Vartely winery and Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand year-old natural amphitheater

Chisinau – Curchi – Orhei – Butuceni – Orheiul Vechi – Chisinau

The first stop of this day will be at **Curchi Monastery**. The monastery is surrounded by a high wall of stone, set with towers at each corner, creating the impression of a fortress. The Nativity of Virgin Mary Church built in 1775 by Iordache Curchi is an example of neo-byzantine style, while St. Nicholas Church has monumental forms built in classicism style with baroque elements.

Next, you will visit **Château Vartely winery** in Orhei town. Château Vartely is a modern complex, which comprises 4 hotel-type houses, 2 restaurants, 3 tasting rooms, and a huge inner yard. In the cellars and then in tasting rooms you will be acquainted with the particularities of Château Vartely wines, you will learn how they are made, kept and served and you will have the opportunity to taste some of them.

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

After lunch, 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 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.

HIGHLIGHTS: Curchi Monastery, Château Vartely winery, Traditional dishes at Butuceni guesthouse , Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand years-old natural amphitheater,

DAY 4

Day 4: Time travel in Tiraspol – Back in the USSR

Chisinau – Tighina – Tiraspol – Chisinau

In the morning, you will discover **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 **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. Nevertheless, you will be amazed by the contrasts, one of which is the football complex „Sheriff” - a pearl of contemporary architecture.
In the afternoon, you will have lunch at a restaurant in Tiraspol.

After lunch, you will visit **Kvint wine and brandy factory** where harmony, refinement and tradition underlie the oldest and most genuine spirits. Here you will be acquainted with the taste of Kvint, Doina, Tiras, Nistru and Surprise spirits.

HIGHLIGHTS: Tighina Fortress, Tiraspol city, Kvint wine and brandy Factory,

DAY 5

Day 5: Discovery of Iasi city in Romania and departure

Iasi

In the morning, you will depart to **Iasi city**, named Open Air Museum or the Cultural Centre of Moldova region in Romania.

Once arrived in Iasi, you will have lunch at the restaurant where you will enjoy Romanian traditional dishes.

During the city tour, you will see the **Palace of Culture**, one of the most remarkable buildings and a true symbol of the city's past. The Palace was built between 1906 and 1925 on the location of the former prince's palace and is a happy blend of several architectural styles: neo-gothic, romantic and neo-baroque. The **Three Holy Hierarchs Monastery** is another important attraction of Iasi included in the city tour, distinguished by its unusual quality of being completely dressed in engravings and decoration elements. The walls of this church are the reason why it is among the most valuable architectural monuments of the country.

After the city tour, you will be transferred to Iasi International Airport.

HIGHLIGHTS: Iasi city,