# EXPLORE MOLDOVA IN MAY

### DAY 1

## Day 1: Arrival day

**Chisinau**

On arrival at Chisinau International Airport, you will arrange your own transfer to the hotel in Chisinau (optional private transfer upon request). After settling in, you can have a walk through downtown and explore the city centre on your own.

### DAY 2

## Day 2: First Spring Picnic “Mai Vin” at Asconi winery

**Chisinau – Tighina – Tiraspol – Puhoi – Chisinau**

In the morning, you will discover **Tighina Fortress** located in Tighina town and built in the 15th century. 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). 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. You will attend the national holiday "Labor Day", which is celebrated with music, national exhibitions, etc.

In the afternoon, you will have lunch at a restaurant in Tiraspol where you will taste local traditional dishes.

After lunch, you will travel to **Asconi family winery** in rustic style located in Puhoi village, where you will participate in the **first spring picnic “Mai Vin”**. The winery achieved a lot due to modern wine making technologies. Nowadays at Asconi estate European varieties are grown, but special attention is paid to indigenous varieties such as Rara Neagra, Feteasca, etc. At “Mai Vin” you will enjoy the atmosphere of celebration, authentic gastronomy and tasty wines. Everyone will have the opportunity to taste red, white, dry and sweet wines, even ice wine guided by a sommelier that will treat the story of each wine in a skillful way.

In the evening, you will be transferred from Puhoi to Chisinau.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Tighina Fortress, Tiraspol city, "Labor Day" in Tiraspol , Asconi winery, First Spring Picnic "Mai Vin" at Asconi winery ,

**DAY 3**

# Day 3: Discovery of Château Vartely and Cricova wineries

**Chisinau – Orhei – Orheiul Vechi – Butuceni – Cricova – Chisinau**

The first stop of the day will be at **Château Vartely winery** in Orhei town. Château Vartely is a modern complex, which comprises hotel-type houses, restaurants, tasting rooms and a huge inner yard. In the cellars and then in the tasting rooms you will be acquainted with the particularities of Château Vartely wines made from grapes from own vineyards, you will learn how they are made, kept and served and you will have the opportunity to taste some of them.

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 afternoon, you will have lunch at **Butuceni guesthouse** in Butuceni village where you will taste dishes from the slow local cuisine. You will have free time to walk around Butuceni village where you can see the beautiful gates of the houses.

You will continue your trip at **Cricova underground winery**. During the excursion at the winery in the tourist train, at a depth of 80 m, you will discover the underground galleries formed by over seventy streets covering an area of nearly 120 km, each bearing Bacchic names: Sauvignon, Cabernet, Cahors.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Château Vartely winery, Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand years-old natural amphitheater, Traditional dishes at Butuceni guesthouse , Cricova Underground Wine Galleries,

**DAY 4**

# Day 4: Lunch at Poiana winery with amazing views of the vineyards

**Chisinau – Dolna – Capriana – Ulmu – Chisinau**

This day will begin with an excursion at **Zamfir Ralli Arbore Manor**. The Rally family, a family of Greeks by origin, came to Moldova in the 18th century. Zamfirachi Ralli Boyar had a large family, who lived in Chisinau for a year, only the holidays they spent in Dolna in a villa. Here, in the summer they organized balls and parties with violinists and gypsies. It was here that the library operated, then the music school, and only in the 1970s the museum was opened with a few changes, which today operates as a branch of the Puskin Museum in Chisinau.

Next, you will travel to **Capriana Monastery**, founded in medieval Moldova, which is one of the oldest monasteries in the country. It is located in Capriana in a picturesque forested area once called Codrii Lapusnei. During a long period, Capriana Monastery acted as the residence of the Moldovan archbishop.

In the afternoon, you will travel to in Ulmu village where you will discover **Poiana winery** – a modern

enterprise with a picturesque landscape of the vineyards and the lake. Here, you will enjoy tasting delicious wines and a copious lunch. You will also have free time at Poiana winery to enjoy beautiful views or engage in active forms of tourism such hiking or riding a bicycle.

In the evening, you will be transferred to Chisinau.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Zamfir Ralli Arbore Manor , Capriana Monastery, Poiana winery,

**DAY 5**

# Day 5: Departure day

**Chisinau**

On departure day, you will arrange your own transfer from the hotel to Chisinau International Airport (optional private transfer upon request). 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.