GOURMET 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 can have a walk through downtown and explore the city center on your own.

In the evening, you will have **Traditional Moldovan dinner** in a rustic style restaurant with folk music. During dinner at the restaurant, you will be enveloped in the traditional atmosphere, created by the traditional style of the restaurant, the traditional dishes and of course the traditional live music show – the special flavor of the restaurant.

DAY 2

Day 2: Gastronomic experience including edible pictures and fabulous dinner at Asconi winery

The day will begin with **Walking city tour of Chisinau** - 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.

Next, you will visit the **Eco Local Farmers Market** where you will have the opportunity to try and buy high-quality biological products directly from local farmers and producers such as nuts, almonds, honey, greens of various kinds, fruits and vegetables grown in the most ecological conditions.

In the afternoon, you will have lunch at the restaurant with authentic cuisine in Chisinau.

After lunch, you will visit **Bucuria chocolate factory shop** - Moldova's national chocolate factory shop that offers a variety of sweets from candies, chocolate, marmalade, jellies, etc.

The last stop of the day will be at **Asconi family-owned winery**. 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.
During the excursion and wine tasting at the winery you will be able to discover the wonders of this place. Asconi is famous for its most delicate stewed rabbit served with vegetables from the fire and during dinner, you will be able to taste this fabulous dish.

HIGHLIGHTS: Chisinau city, EcoLocal Farmer's Market , Bucuria chocolate factory shop, Asconi winery,

DAY 3

Day 3: “Placinte” making masterclass in Butuceni village and wine experience at Cricova winery

In the morning, 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. This region is famous for its natural, rustic food and endless hospitality. In every home, you will be welcomed as the dearest guest.

The day will continue at Butuceni guesthouse, where you will enjoy a **culinary masterclass** during which you will learn how to cook traditional “placinte” (pies) with sour cherries and roll-ups with rose petal jam. 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 discover **Cricova Underground Wine Galleries** – the only wine enterprise that was awarded the highest state prize “The Order of the Republic” and has been declared by law a national cultural heritage. 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, 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 discovering Cricova wines you will be transferred to Chisinau and have free time in the city.

HIGHLIGHTS: Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand years-old natural amphitheater, "Placinte" or bisquits with rose petal jam masterclass at Butuceni guesthouse , Traditional dishes at Butuceni guesthouse , Cricova Underground Wine Galleries,

DAY 4

Day 4: Discovery of popular Moldovan dishes in Lalova village

The day will begin with the visit of **“Arta Rustica” Handicraft Complex** in Clisova Noua village. The handmade carpets in Clisova Noua are of amazing interest and beauty. The traditional Moldovan carpets have been included in UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage. The creation of only one canvas takes several months. Every carpet is a work of art. The craftsmen of Clisova Noua village put their whole soul and free time into their craft. They restore unique carpets according to old photographs. They uses only natural materials and authentic technique during the weaving process.

Then, you will travel to Lalova village where you will visit **Hanul lui Hanganu guesthouse** and have a culinary **masterclass on cooking traditional Moldovan "sarmale"** - vine or cabbage leaves stuffed with rice and vegetables. The particularity of "sarmale" made here consists in the fact that they are very small and you will surely have a nice experience preparing them. 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 delicious dishes cooked following a recipe containing secrets passed down from generation to generation.

After lunch, you will be transferred to Chisinau and have free time there.

HIGHLIGHTS: "Rustic Art" Crafts Complex, Hanul lui Hanganu guesthouse, Culinary masterclass at Hanul lui Hanganu guesthouse ,

DAY 5

Day 5: Caviar tasting and brandy and chocolate pairing in Tiraspol

In the morning, you will set off on a time travel in Transnistria. During a **city tour of Tiraspol,** 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 the soviet style restaurant** in Tiraspol where you will taste Ukranian cuisine dishes.

After lunch, you will discover a real treasure – **Aquatir Sturgeon Complex**, one of the largest hatcheries in Europe. The complex is equipped with the latest technologies and the fish can reach the size of a man. You will get the chance to taste one of the most expensive culinary delights – caviar accompanied with a glass of sparkling wine or vodka.

Next stop of the day will be **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 10-30 years old spirits such as Surprise, Tiraspol, Kvint Solnechny, Victoria and Jubilee. Chocolate products will accompany the brandy tasting, as they make a perfect combination. For each brandy type, the guests will be offered different types of chocolate, and a professional sommelier and specialist in quality of Kvint factory will lead the delicate process.

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

HIGHLIGHTS: Tiraspol city, Aquatir Sturgeon Farm, Kvint wine and brandy Factory,

DAY 6

Day 6: Discovery of Gagauzia and tasting of Gagauz dishes

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.

The day will continue with a **Traditional Gagauz lunch at Karagani winery** – a family winery with a specific emphasis on the Gagauz origins of the Cerven family, who owns the company. Located in Vulcanesti, in the southern part of Moldova, this small family enterprise is engaged in grape cultivation and wine production. Karagani wines are produced by original technology from selected grapes of European and national varieties, grown on its own vineyards. On this land, you will discover the tastes of Karagani wines and the specificity of Gagauz cuisine, while tasting Gagauz dishes such as gozleme, bulgur with lamb, shorpa, etc.).

After lunch, you will visit **Vinuri de Comrat** - the winery with a history of over 120 years also boasts its oldest cellar from 1895. But, in addition to unusual wines such as Saperavi, Detox Cabernet-Sauvignon, or Plai Merlot Syrah, it is a place that attracts its visitors with traditional Gagauz gastronomy: gozleme and shurpa which is a soup made from young lamb, are their national specialties.

After visiting Vinuri de Comrat winery, you will return to Chisinau.

HIGHLIGHTS: Comrat city , Karagani winery, Vinuri de Comrat winery,

DAY 7

Day 7: Wine tasting directly from the tank at Et Cetera winery and discovery of “baba neagra” local dessert at Castel Mimi winery

In the morning, you will visit **Et Cetera family winery**- departure to the south of Moldova, one of Moldova’s finest family run-wineries. This winery produces wine only from its own grapes, varieties such as: Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Cabernet Frank, Feteasc? Neagr?, Saperavi, Pinot Noir and others.
You will learn how to prepare a special kind of **“placinta” – “Placinta Miresei”** (Bride’s pie). This is an old tradition passed from generation to generation in the southern region, the Bride’s Pie being prepared and served at the main family holidays.

In the afternoon, you will have lunch at Et Cetera family winery where you will taste their local delicious food.

Next stop will be at **Castel Mimi winery** located in Bulboaca village - a destination of interest unique in Moldova. Castel Mimi is currently listed among the most beautiful architectural masterpieces in the world of wine. The story of the castle begins at the end of 1893, when Constantin Mimi, the last governor of Bessarabia, plants the first grape vines on the place that would become legend over the years. Here, you will taste Castel Mimi wines and have dinner at Castel Mimi restaurant that will culminate with “baba neagra” - a local dessert of Moldovan cuisine representing a cake garnished with vanilla cooked in some regions of the country.

After dinner, you will be transferred to Chisinau and enjoy the last night in the city.

HIGHLIGHTS: Et Cetera winery, "Placinta miresei" masterclass at Et Cetera winery, Castel Mimi winery, "Baba neagra" local dessert at Castel Mimi winery,

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 Handicraft Souvenir Market, Central Market of Chisinau or some shops with traditional Moldovan products, like: wine, chocolate, dried fruits, walnuts and honey.