MOLDOVA - UKRAINE TOUR (ODESSA CITY)

DAY 1

Day 1: Arrival in Chisinau, Moldova

Chisinau

On arrival at Chisinau International Airport, you will be transferred to your accommodation in the city.

After settling in, you will enjoy a **city tour of Chisinau** which 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 have **dinner at a traditional restaurant** in Chisinau where during dinner, you will discover the taste of Moldovan traditional dishes and of course enjoy the traditional live music show – the special flavor of the restaurant.

HIGHLIGHTS: Chisinau city,

DAY 2

Day 2: Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand year-old natural amphitheater and Cricova winery – one of the largest wineries in the world

Chisinau - Curchi - Orheiul Vechi - Butuceni - Cricova - 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 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.

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

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.

In the evening, you will have dinner at the hotel.

HIGHLIGHTS: Curchi Monastery, Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand years-old natural amphitheater, Traditional dishes at Butuceni guesthouse , Cricova Underground Wine Galleries,

DAY 3

Day 3: Travel to Ukraine and discovery of Odessa city – the pearl of the Black Sea

Chisinau - Odessa

In the morning, you will be transferred to Odessa city, known as the pearl of the Black Sea.

Once arrived in Odessa, you will have lunch at a local restaurant where you will enjoy Ukrainian traditional dishes.

During the **city tour** you will discover the varied architecture of urban development which will allow you to take a journey through all the old epochs and styles. You will see such architectural pearls as the Opera and Ballet Theater, undoubtedly one of the most beautiful buildings in the city, Potemkin Stairs, considered the city's flagship, the Seaside Boulevard and the Derybasov Street serving as a meeting place for locals and tourists. In addition, you will discover the Port of Odessa and its extraordinary history and see the statue of Duke De Richelieu, the founder of the city.

In the evening, you will have dinner at the restaurant of the hotel.

HIGHLIGHTS: Odessa city,

DAY 4

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

Odessa - Tiraspol - Tighina - Puhoi - Chisinau

In the morning, you will be transferred from Odessa to Tiraspol, where you will have lunch at a local restaurant.
After lunch, you will enjoy a city tour of Tiraspol and 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.

Next, 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.

The journey will continue at **Asconi winery** founded in 1994 and located in Puhoi village. 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. One of the features of Asconi winery is that they pick up the grapes mechanically at night when the grapes are still cold. During the excursion and wine tasting at the winery you will be able to discover the wonders of this place, whereas during dinner you will enjoy local cuisine dishes.

After dinner, you will be transferred to the hotel in Chisinau.

HIGHLIGHTS: Tiraspol city, Tighina Fortress, Asconi winery,

DAY 5

Day 5: Departure day

Chisinau

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.