PILGRIMAGE TOUR IN MOLDOVA

DAY 1

Day 1: Arrival at Chisinau, excursion to Capriana Monastery and honey tasting at ”Conacul Mierii” Apery

On arrival at Chisinau International Airport, you will be transferred to your accommodation in Chisinau. After settling in, you will have excursion 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. The first significant reference dates from a document issued in 1429 that gave Capriana the status of royal monastery on behalf of Alexander the Good. During a long period, Capriana Monastery acted as the residence of the Moldovan archbishop. Being closed and devastated in the post-war years, it was one of the first monasteries that reopened in 1989, becoming soon the symbol of national revival.

Next, you will 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 museum, the householder will disclose with patience all the secrets of a bee’s family. Here you will taste 3 types of honey and enjoy a delicious lunch.

After lunch, you will be transferred to Butuceni Eco Resort and overnight there.

In the evening, you will enjoy the Welcome dinner at the Guest House.

HIGHLIGHTS: Capriana Monastery, Conacul Mierii guesthouse ,

DAY 2

Day 2: Discovery of Curchi Monastery, Orheiul Vechi - natural amphitheater and ”Rustic Art” Crafts Complex

The day will begin with excursion at **Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand year-old natural amphitheater**. The Orheiul Vechi Complex, is a unique ancient site, carved into limestone cliffs along the R?ut River, features the Cave Monastery, a 13th-century sanctuary dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The monastery's serene, cave-like chambers invite deep reflection and prayer, preserving the legacy of early Christian hermits. Atop the cliffs stands the Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God, offering breathtaking views and a profound sense of spiritual elevation. The complex’s many crosses, chapels, and sacred spaces create an environment rich in history and devotion, making Orheiul Vechi a powerful destination for anyone seeking spiritual renewal and a closer connection to their faith.

The trip will continue with visit and lunch at **Curchi Monastery** - one of the most important architectural monuments of Bessarabia, and it is also considered to be one of the most beautiful and famous monasteries of the region. The complex of the Curchi Monastery is surrounded by a high stone wall endowed with towers at each corner, creating the image of a fortress.

After lunch, you will travel to **"Rustic Art" Crafts Complex** - a museum that holds the largest collection of the Bessarabian carpets, that are recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage. At the museum a brief tour of carpet collection showcase of carpets, traditional costumes, and other handicrafts objects will be organized. Each carpet has its own history, a very interesting past, which will be revealed to you there.

In the evening, you will be transferred to Eco Resort Butuceni, have dinner and overnight at the Guest House.

HIGHLIGHTS: Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand years-old natural amphitheater, Curchi Monastery, "Rustic Art" Crafts Complex,

DAY 3

Day 3: Visit of Hincu and Frumoasa Monastery and wine tasting at Chateau Vartely Winery

The first stop of this day will be at **Hincu Monastery** that started its activity in 1678, in a picturesque and quiet place, named after the patron saint of Moldavia - Saint Pious Parascheva. Initially, the Hîncu monastery, dedicated to the Reverend Parascheva, was founded as a hermitage by nuns, with a clergyman. Between 1956-1990 the monastery was closed by the Soviet authorities and in 1990, at the request of the locals from the neighboring villages, the Hancu monastery was reopened, soon becoming one of the best arranged and visited by tourists in the monastic community.
Near the monastery there are several springs rich in water with increased mineralization.

In the afternoon, you will explore and have lunch at **Frumoasa Monastery.** The translation of Moldavian word "frumoasa" is "beautiful". Monastery got this name because of the nature beauty that surrounds it. It is placed on a hill slope and goes down to the Ikel river. It is surrounded by vineyards, gardens and forests. Nowadays it is a female monastery though it was planned as a male one. It was founded in 1804 and suffered a lot of changes and reconstructions. The monastery is represented by summer and winter churches. The architecture of them saves the imprint of Moldavian national style with elements of both classical and baroque styles.

The journey will continue with excursion, wine tasting and dinner at **Chateau Vartely Winery** - the first winery in Moldova that focused on Terroir, for white wines. Located only 45 kilometers from Chisinau, Château Vartely has a special architecture and presents a real landscape delight, being located on a hill from where a dizzying view opens. For those who love to take pictures, Chateau Vartely has created for the first time a fascinating projection of augmented reality that reproduces, through special effects, the history of the winery. The story is projected on a screen made of real barrels, the ones where the wine rests before being bottled, and then it expands and occupies the entire surface of the cellar with spectators.

In the evening, you will be transferred to Eco Resort Butuceni Guest House and overnight there.

HIGHLIGHTS: Hincu Monastery, Frumoasa Monastery, Château Vartely winery,

DAY 4

Day 4: Visit of Ciuflea, Horesti Monastery and wine tasting at Milestii Mici Winery

After breakfast, you will travel to Chisinau where you will have an **walking city tour. Chisinau** - the capital of Moldova, offers a serene and spiritually enriching experience. Start at the Mazarache Church, the oldest in Chi?in?u, for its historical significance and peaceful ambiance. Visit the Nativity Cathedral, a symbol of the city's religious heritage with its beautiful frescoes and serene park, and St. Panteleimon Church - a notable landmark known for its spiritual significance and architectural beauty.
You will continue your journey with an excursion to **Ciuflea Monastery** - a tranquil retreat known for its golden domes and welcoming atmosphere.
In the afternoon, you will enjoy a delicious lunch at the local restaurant from Chisinau.

After lunch, you will visit **Horesti Monastery** - a two-storey building with a bell even ordered its shaft, surmounted by a cupola. The abbot of the monastery is now Archimandrite Nektarios (Herman), dedicated to St. Prince Vladimir. The monastery has an icon, which will soon take the place of honor in architecture iconostasis, the icon of the patron.

Next, you will discover **Milestii Mici Winery** - one of the largest underground wine galleries in the world, with a length of 200 km. There is a hidden room where wines were secretly stored during the "Gorbachev Prohibition Law". Today, in this room are the collection wines, the oldest found wine from 1969. The "Golden Collection" of Milestii Mici was recognized by Guinness World Records, in August, 2005, as the largest collection of wines in the world and numbering approximately 1.5 million. of bottles. Also in the same year, it was declared "National Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Moldova" by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova.

In the evening, you will be transferred to Chisinau and check in at the hotel.

HIGHLIGHTS: Chisinau city, Milestii Mici winery,

DAY 5

Day 5: Excursion to the "Assumption of the Virgin Mary" Church, Noul Neamt, Marta & Maria Monastery

In the morning, you will discover the **"Assumption of the Virgin Mary" Church from Causeni** - the only church in Moldova with wall frescos and candidate to UNESCO heritage. Its actual shape dates from the reconstruction made between 1763 and 1767. Its interior is rich in wall painted frescos of the specific style of the late Romanian Hurez school. An interesting fact is that the church is half buried in the ground. The explanation is found in a legend from the Tartar period, which says, that the Tatars allowed the building of Christian churches, which did not exceed the height of a soldier on horseback.

Next, you will explore **Noul Neamt Monastery** from Chitcani and have lunch there. The tour will take you to the outstanding picturesque landscape to be admired from the upper level of the highest bell tower in Moldova (64 m.). The monastery museum will be highly appreciated by those who are fond of history of religion. The museum houses icons dating from the 18th-20th centuries, as well as crosses, books, priest

gowns and old pictures.

After lunch, you will visit **Marta and Maria Monastery** that is a haven of spiritual tranquility and architectural beauty. Unlike many ancient monasteries, Marta si Maria is a relatively new establishment, founded in the early 21st century. This gives it a contemporary perspective while still adhering to traditional Orthodox practices. Surrounded by picturesque landscapes, it features a stunning church adorned with intricate frescoes and a peaceful garden perfect for contemplation.

In the evening, you will be transferred in Chisinau and have dinner at La Taifas restaurant.

HIGHLIGHTS: “Assumption of the Virgin Mary” Church from Causeni, Noul Neamt Monastery, Marta and Maria Monastery,

DAY 6

Day 6: Departure day

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.