RURAL EXPERIENCE 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 centre on your own.

In the evening, you will enjoy a **Welcome dinner in a rustic style restaurant with folk music**.

DAY 2

Day 2: Discovery of Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand year-old natural amphitheater and Butuceni Guesthouse

The day will begin with **Chisinau city tour**, where you will explore 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.

You will continue the day at **Orheiul Vechi (Old Orhei)** - 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 a **Traditional Moldovan lunch** at the Butuceni guesthouse in Butuceni. Here you will experience local specialties, as “zeama”, “mamaliga”, and “scrob”, along with traditional pastry and a glass of wine.

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.
In the evening, you will check in at the Butuceni guesthouse and have free time to explore the rural countrysides.

HIGHLIGHTS: Chisinau city, Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand years-old natural amphitheater, Butuceni guesthouse,

DAY 3

Day 3: Excursion to Hanul lui Hanganu Guesthouse and Tipova Monasteries – an unusual landscape with many waterfalls

In the morning, you will visit a rustic-style guesthouse on the Nistru river - **Hanul lui Hanganu**. The guesthouse, built from natural stone, in national style, with various recreation zones is a real refuge in the peaceful environment of the countryside. From the terraces of the guesthouse, you can enjoy the fabulous beauty of the Dniester River. 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.

In the afternoon, you will have a **homemade lunch from local products** at Hanul lui Hanganu guesthouse.

After lunch, you will discover **Tipova Cave Monastery**. Located near Tipova village, the monastery with the same name is considered one of the oldest monastic establishments on the territory of Moldova. The heritage, which consists of 18 rooms, dug into the rock at an astounding altitude, represents an impressive museum in the open air. The Tipova River, on its flow to the Dniester, creates many waterfalls with the height above 10-16 meters, which a long time ago used to move the millstones of the numerous watermills.

In the evening, you will check in at Hanul lui Hanganu guesthouse and have free time to soak in the rural atmosphere.

HIGHLIGHTS: Hanul lui Hanganu guesthouse, Tipova Cave Monastery,

DAY 4

Day 4: Walking to Socola and Vadul-Rascov village

The day will begin with a hiking tour from **Socola** to Vadul-Rascov village. You will enjoy a scenic walk through Moldova’s countryside, passing traditional villages and soaking in the peaceful rural atmosphere. It is more than a path through the countryside — it is a journey through the soul of Moldova, where nature, tradition, and simplicity weave together in perfect harmony.

In the afternoon, you will have lunch break at the family guesthouse.

The trip will continue with visiting the main tourist attractions from **Vadul lui Rascov village**. There is one of the most impressive **Jewish cemeteries** from Eastern Europe. There are a few hundred gravestones located on a hill sloping to the banks of the Dniester River.

In the evening, you will transferred from Vadul lui Rascov to Lalova where you will overnight at Hanul lui Hanganu guesthouse.

HIGHLIGHTS: Socola village, Vadul-Rascov ,

DAY 5

Day 5: Discovery of Rustic Art Handicraft Complex and Conacul Mierii - a small bees kingdom

The first stop of this day will be at **Rustic Art Handicraft 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.
The day will continue with an excursion, honey tasting and lunch at **Conacul Mierii guesthouse.** Micleuseni village will offer you the chance to discover the "sweet" pension, 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.

After lunch, you will be transferred to **Camping "Pe Toloaca"** from Cazimir - Milesti landscape reservation. Up on the hill, above the village of Milesti, it is a place surrounded by forests, fragrant with flowers and green grass, with breathtakingly beautiful sunsets.

You will check in at the guesthouse. There you will have the possibility to go on forest excursions, bike tours or chat around a campfire.

HIGHLIGHTS: "Rustic Art" Crafts Complex, Conacul Mierii guesthouse , Camping "Pe Toloaca",

DAY 6

Day 6: Discovering the highest point in Moldova and explore a traditional ancentral house

The day will begin with a hiking tour from Camping "Pe Toloaca" to **Balanesti Hill** - the highest point in Moldova, 429 m. above sea level. You will enjoy panoramic views of rolling hills, lush forests, and picturesque villages along the way, immersing yourself in the natural beauty and serene atmosphere of the Moldovan countryside.
In the afternoon, you will have a lunch break at the top of Balanesti Hill.

After lunch, you will visit a traditional ancentral house - **Poarta Neamului guesthouse** and taste homemade wine. Poarta Neamului is a museum to share with visitors the local cultural traditions and stories, from one generation to the next.

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

HIGHLIGHTS: Balanesti Hill, Temeleuti village, Poarta Neamului Guesthouse,

DAY 7

Day 7: Time travel in Tiraspol – Rural Soviet Atmosphere

In the morning, you will discover the oldest medieval fort of **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 the afternoon, you will have a soviet-style lunch at the local restaurant in Tiraspol.

After lunch, you will have a **panoramic tour 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.

The journey will continue with excursion and wine tasting at **Kislov family winery** that develop its traditional terroir on Suvorov Mountain near the city of Bender. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc varieties are grown here. The hereditary winemaker creates varietal and blended wines in small batches.

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

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.