

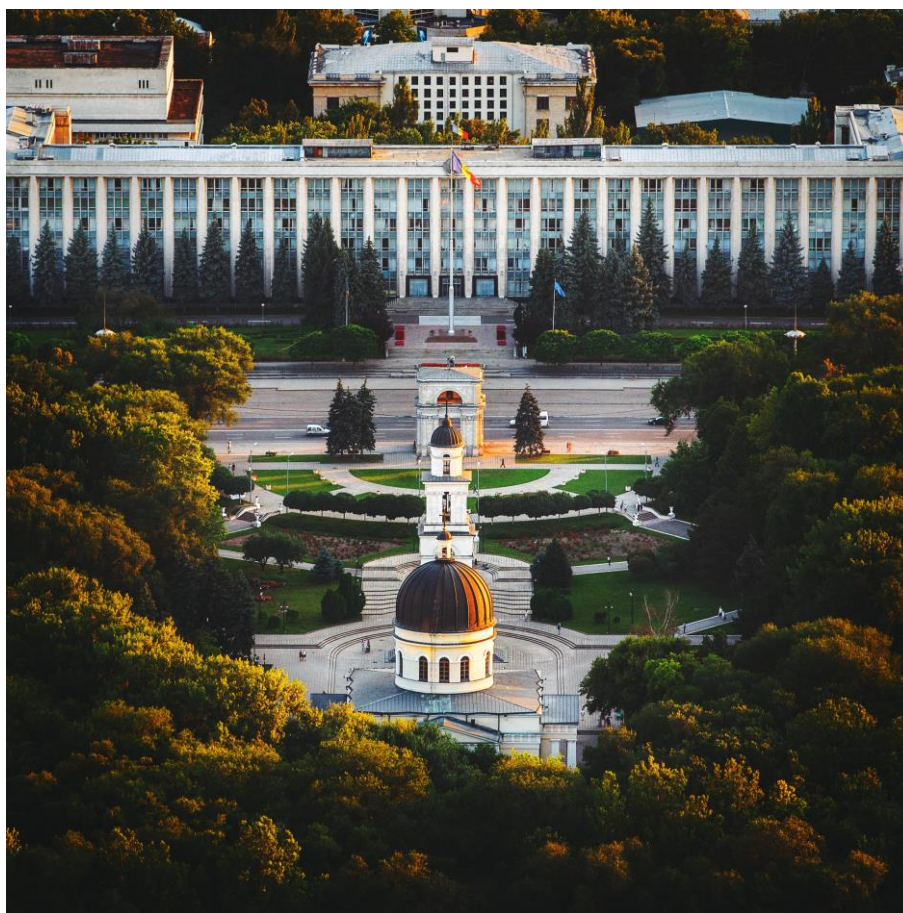


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Tour Notes

Moldova Discovery

Tour Duration – 6 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●○○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●● | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●●○ | Wildlife ○○○○○

Tour Pace

Relaxed

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Visit the little known “breakaway republic” of Transnistria.
- ✓ Contrast the vast wine cellars of Cricova with the small family run Et Cetera winery.
- ✓ Enjoy the relaxed capital of Chișinău
- ✓ Discover the autonomous region of Gagauzia.

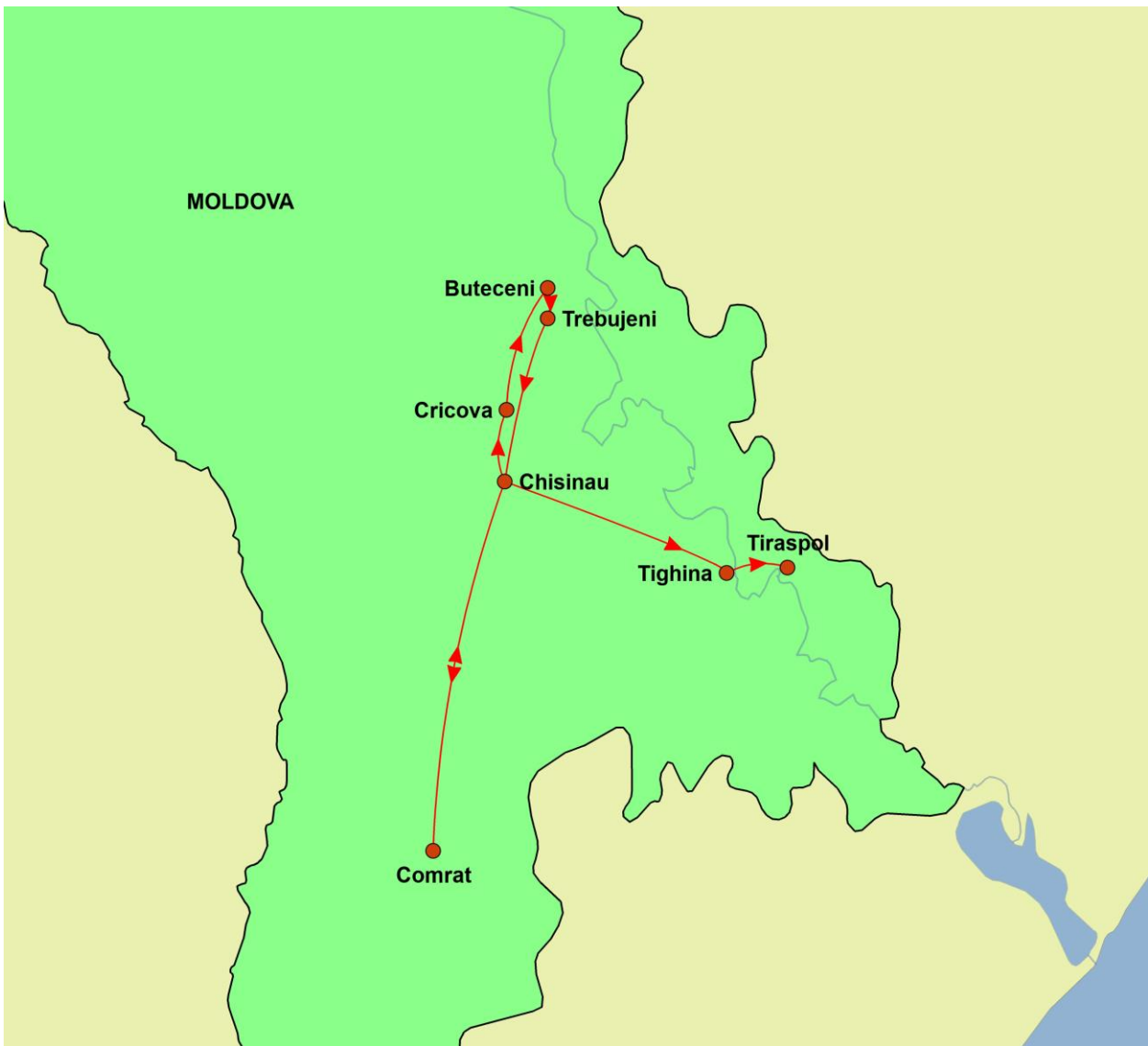




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Tour Map

Moldova Discovery



Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	Comfortable hotels
Included Meals:	Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size:	Maximum of 12
Start Point:	Chisinau
End Point:	Chisinau
Transport:	Minibuses or sedan car, depending on the group size
Country Visited:	Moldova



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Moldova Discovery

Most people are unaware that Moldova exists and are unable to locate it on a map. Sandwiched between Romania and Ukraine, this tiny country is home to one autonomous region Gagauzia, and one 'breakaway republic' Transnistria, making it one of the quirkiest in Europe. With influences ranging from the Ottoman Empire to Romania to Russia, Moldova is a fascinating melange of cultures. On this short trip we explore cave monasteries and vast underground wine cellars – with of course opportunities to sample the excellent local wines – and cross the border into Transnistria to explore its capital Tiraspol, and Bendery with its impressive 16th century fortress. 'Off the beaten track' doesn't even come close to describing this trip.

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Chisinau

Arrive in Chisinau where you will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel. Depending on your time of arrival you may have the opportunity to explore the city. Overnight at Jolly Alon Hotel or similar. No meals are included today.

Chisinau

Chisinau was founded back in the 15th century, as a small monastery village within the province of Moldavia. Falling first to the Ottoman and then the Russian Empire, the city grew over the years and played a major part in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877. Sadly it was bombed extensively during the Second World War and most of the older buildings were destroyed – the city today has been rebuilt on a typical Soviet grid system of streets. It contains one of the highest proportions of green spaces within any major European city, with many parks and lakes within its boundaries.

Day 2: Chisinau walking tour - Gagauzia- Chisinau (Driving time today is approx. 4 hours – 236km)

After breakfast we embark on a walking tour of the capital, visiting key sites including the Arc de Triomphe, the Cathedral, and the Moldovan Parliament. Continue with a visit to the National Museum of Ethnography, with its collection of archaeological treasures and old Bessarabian carpets. From here we drive to Besalma village, in the autonomous region of Gagauzia, to visit the Gagauzian Museum of History and Ethnology. It contains hundreds of exhibits of artistic and spiritual value assembled over the last two centuries. After lunch in a local restaurant with typical Gagauzian dishes we continue to Comrat, the capital of the region. We will take a tour of the town before returning to Chisinau. Overnight at Jolly Alon Hotel or similar. (BL)



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Day 3: Chisinau - Cricova - Orheiul Vechi- Butuceni- Trebujeni (Driving time today is approx. 3 hours – 130km)

After breakfast we drive to the vast underground tunnels that house the wine cellars of Cricova, and take a tour by train, with time to enjoy a tasting of some of the wines. There will be the opportunity to buy some souvenir bottles in the on-site shop. We will continue to Orheiul Vechi, an impressive 13th Century cave monastery complex set amidst dramatic scenery, and from there to the traditional village of Butuceni where we will have lunch in a rural pension, which will include Moldovan dishes and home-made wine. After lunch we will visit the village of Trebujeni, where we will be invited into a local home to drink tea with the family, before returning to Chisinau. Overnight at Jolly Alon Hotel or similar. (BL)

Orheiul Vechi

The Orheiul Vechi Monastery complex is carved into a limestone cliff, and dates back to the 13th century, although it has only recently come back into use after being abandoned in the 18th century. It contains a chapel and a sleeping area for monks, and the cliffside is dotted with small caves and places of worship, dug over thousands of years by ancient Dacian tribes. There are wonderful views of the surrounding countryside.

Day 4: Trebujeni – Republic of Transnistria - Tiraspol (Driving time today is approx. 2.5 hours– 110km)

This morning drive to the border and cross into the breakaway republic of Transnistria. We head to the city of Tighina, or Bendery, where you can explore the 16th century fortress and visit the on- site museum. We will also visit the War Memorial, before continuing onto the capital, Tiraspol. We will have lunch in a Ukrainian restaurant and afterwards embark on a walking tour of Tiraspol, where we will spend the night. Overnight at Russia Hotel or similar. (BL)

Transnistria

Transnistria is a curious entity, a self- declared republic, which is to all intents and purposes a separate state but is unrecognised by other countries. Historically it, like Moldova, formed part of the Soviet Union but unlike Moldova its population is mainly ethnic Russian which is opposed to being incorporated within Moldova. The territory was claimed by Russia following conflict with the Ottoman Empire back in the 18th century, while the rest of Moldova fell under Turkish control, leading to claims in Transnistria that it has never been part of Moldova. After the collapse of the Soviet Union Transnistria declared independence, sparking war with Moldova and although peace reigns now, there is an uneasy relationship. Transnistria has its own parliament, currency and border controls, yet few people have heard of it.

Day 5: Tiraspol - Martha and Maria Monastery - Et Cetera Winery - Chisinau (Driving time today is approx. 3 hours – 200km)

This morning we begin our return to Chisinau with a visit to the Martha and Maria Monastery, dating back to the beginning of the 20th Century, built in a fine architectural style. We then move onto the small family winery of Et Cetera established in 2003, where we will be given a tour by the winemaker himself, Alexandru Luchianov, with the opportunity to taste some of his award-winning wines. We will enjoy a traditional lunch prepared by the family, before returning to Chisinau, where the afternoon is at leisure. In the evening meet for a farewell dinner at “La Taifas”, a popular Moldovan Restaurant with local music. Overnight at Jolly Alon Hotel or similar. (BLD)

Day 6: Departure from Chisinau

The tour ends today after breakfast when airport transfers leave to meet onward flights. (B)



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Tour Inclusions / Exclusions

Inclusions:

All accommodation
Transport throughout
Return airport transfers
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

Excluded:

International flights
Any airport taxes
Travel insurance
Visas
Drinks
Items of personal expenses
Tips (Discretionary)

Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel to Moldova. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.



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Accommodation Rating

At Undiscovered Destinations we know our travellers prefer to stay in comfortable, mid-range accommodation. On this tour you can expect rooms to be en-suite, with private bathroom and your hotels will have a restaurant and/or bar.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drinks

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch and Dinner £8-10

Drinks

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer £1.30

Water £0.80

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

If your local guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. If you are travelling on our group tour, a reasonable amount would be EUR50 for the guide and EUR35 for the driver, split between the group.

Foreign Exchange

Local Currency: Moldovan Leu

ATM Availability: Available in Chisinau

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: The use of cards is limited to the better hotels and restaurants – they are not readily accepted elsewhere.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US Dollars and Euros

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you.



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Joining your Tour Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining Your Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

Most nationals, including EU, UK and US citizens do not require a visa to visit Moldova for stays of less than 90 days.

Regulations do frequently change though, so we advise that you check the current requirements with your nearest embassy.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the Immigration Authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Vaccinations & Protection

We strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A and B, Polio and Typhoid.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.



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Preparing for your tour

Climate

Moldovan winters can be very cold, with significant snowfall. The best time to visit the country is from April / May to September / October.

Clothing

Our general recommendation is to bring light clothing with a couple of fleeces or jumpers for cooler evenings. You should also bring a waterproof jacket for any days that it may rain. You should bring at least one long sleeved top for any churches that you will visit.

Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must – you should not rely on being able to find it in smaller towns in Moldova.

Insect repellent, including a bite spray will be useful to have.

Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended for sightseeing but sandals or lighter shoes will be fine for the rest of the time.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable. We advise you to travel with a rucksack or soft bag rather than a suitcase.

Electric Supply & Plugs

Generally electrical supply is 200V AC (50 Hz) and uses European two circular pin style plugs.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated on 11th May 2020.

