

# Aegean, Danube and Black Sea Explorer

13 days from €185 (Lm 79) per day Prices quoted are per person in Euro and may vary without notice. Conditions apply

**Tour Pace** - This tour is well balanced with mainly two and three-night stays. Some driving days are longer than usual, due to the terrain covered and smaller roads. However, this is off-set by the frequent stops for refreshments and photo opportunities as well as the days at leisure.

**Hotels** - Virtually all the hotels on this tour are modern or have been recently refurbished like the Intercontinental in Bucharest. The Meridian is situated in the Black Sea resort of Sunny Beach, just a few steps from the sandy shore. From the Metropolitan you can see both the Acropolis and the Aegean Sea.

**Fellow Passengers** - This new addition to Insight's portfolio of tours will attract the more adventurous traveller who wishes to explore Eastern European countries which for so long were closed to tourists. This is also a must for fans of Bram Stoker's Dracula.

**Highlights** - A tour of contrasts! Compare the Temple of Apollo built by the ancient Greeks, with Ceausescu's gargantuan Parliament Palace. Journey from the mosques of Istanbul into the Transylvanian Alps in search of Dracula and on to the Monasteries of Metéora.



Travel through the delightful resort town of Nesebar

horse and cart is still widely used. Follow the shores of the Black Sea through the resort towns of Burgas and delightful Nesebar, a delightful cluster of wooden fishing cottages and ancient churches separated from the mainland by a narrow isthmus. Stay in the nearby modern resort of Sunny Beach for the next two nights. **Hotel: Meridian. (BB,D)**

#### Day 5 – black sea at leisure.

A day to relax on the beach and perhaps enjoy lunch in one of the many sea-front restaurants. Don't miss the option of an excursion to the pretty seaside town of Balchik to visit the 'Quiet Nest', the summer palace of Queen Marie of Romania. **(BB)**

#### Day 6 – Sunny Beach – Bucharest.

Cross the Danube and head towards the Romanian capital, Bucharest. On arrival, a sightseeing tour takes in the immense Parliament Palace, University Square and former Communist headquarters. **Hotel: Intercontinental. (BB,D)**

#### Day 7 – Bran Castle Excursion.

Head north from Bucharest and follow the Prahova Valley to the elegant alpine resort of Sinaia, former summer retreat for Romania's aristocracy. As you continue into the Transylvanian Alps, imagine a horse and carriage careering up a wet mountainous road – thunder and lightning illuminating the imposing medieval castle guarding the Transylvanian border. Discover if this popular image of Dracula's castle is true or, like the vampire story itself, only a myth, as you visit Bran Castle – said to be the inspiration for Bram Stoker's book. **(BB,D)**

#### Day 8 – Bucharest – Sofia.

Cross the Danube at Ruse and continue to the one-time capital of Bulgaria, Velika Turnovo, whose houses cling to the cliffs of the river Yantra. Cross the Balkan Mountains and drive over the plains to the capital of Bulgaria, Sofia, for the next two nights. **Hotel: Hilton. (BB,D)**

#### Day 9 – Sofia.

Sightseeing takes in the St Sofia Church across the square from the golden domed St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral and the archeological complex, dominated by St George's Church. The afternoon is at leisure. Why not visit the magnificent Rila Monastery, the most important symbol of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church? **(BB)**

#### Day 10 – Sofia – Kalambaka.

Following the valley of the River Struma, head south into Greece. Cross the plains of Thessaly to Kalambaka. **Hotel: Divani Meteora. (BB,D)**

#### Day 11 – Kalambaka – Athens.

Visit the centuries-old monasteries of Metéora, with their precarious cliff-top settings, where early Christians worshipped. Drive through the centre of classical Greek civilisation with its ancient ruins and intricate mythology towards Delphi. See the dominating Temple of Apollo, site of the legendary Oracle of Antiquity, with Mount Parnassus rearing high above. Continue to Athens, 'the City of the Gods'. **Hotel: Metropolitan. (BB)**

#### Day 12 – Athens sightseeing.

A sightseeing tour delves deep into the glorious history of Athens. The main highlight is the visit to the Acropolis to admire the Parthenon, built in honour of the goddess Athena; then see the Temple of Zeus and Hadrian's Arch. The afternoon is free to explore this ancient but lively city. **(BB)**

#### Day 13 – Athens - Malta.

The tour comes to an end with a transfer to Athens airport for our flight to Malta.

#### Day 1 – Malta - Istanbul.

Meet the tour leader at Malta International Airport where we check in for our Alitalia flight to Istanbul.

#### Day 2 – Istanbul Sightseeing.

Upon arrival we are transferred to our hotel. A sightseeing day reveals the glory of the city, both ancient and modern. Visit the Blue Mosque to see its six soaring minarets and vibrant blue and green tiled interior. Continue to Topkapi Palace, where the private palaces of the Sultans have been transformed into a series of glorious museums. Conclude the tour at the Grand Bazaar, a bustling trading centre since the 15th century where there are more than 4,000 shops, cafés and tea houses. How much do you pay? Don't worry, your guide will give you a full explanation of the time-honoured ritual of bargaining! This evening enjoy a Highlight Dinner with traditional entertainment. **(BB,HD)**

#### Day 3 – Istanbul at leisure.

This morning enjoy a visit to the Cathedral of St Sophia, at one time a Cathedral and a mosque, and now a magnificent museum. The rest of the day is free to explore this exotic city! Perhaps cross the Bosphorus Bridge to visit Beylerbeyi Palace? **(BB)**

#### Day 4 – Istanbul – Sunny Beach.

Head west towards Bulgaria, travelling through rich farmland, where the

**Locally Guided Sightseeing Tour**  
A sightseeing tour takes in the immense Parliament Palace

**Travel to the border between Transylvania and Wallachia to visit Bran Castle**

**Local Orientation Tour**

**Locally Guided Sightseeing Tour**

**Local Orientation Tour**

**Visit Topkapi Palace**  
A night out in Istanbul  
Locally Guided Sightseeing Tour  
A complete guide, from a local, on how to haggle!

**Ascend the Acropolis to the Parthenon**  
Locally Guided Sightseeing Tour

**Ascend the Sacred Way to the legendary Temple of Apollo**  
Locally Guided Sightseeing Tour

**The whites washed town of Mykonos**

**Monasteries of Metéora**

**Legend:**  
 ★ CENTRAL HOTELS & NIGHTS  
 ★ SCENIC HOTELS & NIGHTS  
 ★ OVERNIGHT CRUISING

## Enjoy Your Included Tour Features

### Premium Highlights

Admire the stunning gardens, rooms, arts and treasure of the Ottoman sultans at Topkapi Palace  
 Visit Bran Castle, the legendary fortress described in Bram Stoker's Dracula  
 Explore the centuries-old monasteries of Metéora perched atop towering pinnacles of rock  
 Visit the ancient site of Delphi and ascend the Sacred Way to the Temple of Apollo  
 Climb the Acropolis to admire the Parthenon and enjoy amazing views over Athens

### Personal Insights

A complete guide, from a local, on how to haggle in the Grand Bazaar; the technique,

the pitfalls and how much to pay! Beat the shop keepers at their own game!

### Additional Excursions & Sights

Visit the Blue Mosque, Grand Bazaar and the Cathedral of St Sophia in Istanbul  
 See the ancient churches and cobbled streets of Nesebar  
 See the Parliament Palace and University Square in Bucharest  
 Visit Velika Turnovo, old capital of Bulgaria  
 See the golden dome cathedral, centuries old churches, and Soviet-era buildings of Sofia  
 Visit the ancient site of Delphi with its Temple of Apollo

See the Temple of Zeus, Temple of the Wingless Victory and Hadrian's Arch in Athens

### First Class Services

Escorted by a professional Tour Director  
 Luxury air-conditioned coach with onboard toilet  
 Hotels include all service charges, taxes and portage  
 Airline Taxes, Fuel Surcharge and Service Charge  
 Airport arrival and departure transfer

### More Included Meals

Highlight Dinner with traditional entertainment in Istanbul (HD)  
 11 Buffet Breakfasts (BB), 5 three-course table d'hôte Dinners, or Buffets, plus tea or coffee (D)

Triple	€ 2399	Lm 1032
Twin	€ 2479	Lm 1064
Single	€ 3149	Lm 1353
Child 5- 11	€ 2209	Lm 951
Youth 12-17	€ 2259	Lm 972

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