

DISCOVER ROMANIA

Welcome to Sunvil Discovery's specialist Romanian programme.

Sunvil, rather reluctantly, visited Romania in April 2006 because we did not really believe the occasional comments we were hearing that this was the most beautiful and interesting of the Eastern European states. What we saw and felt during a trip that covered half the country convinced us that Romania was quintessentially Sunvil territory – warm, welcoming and beautiful – a land that time forgot.

Our holidays feature Transylvania, Maramures and Moldavia (not to be confused with the neighbouring state of Moldova). We had to start somewhere and we felt that these areas would make the best introduction to the country.

Flexibility, with our guidance, is what we offer. We can arrange single centre and multi centre holidays. These can be guided, partly guided or we can organise fly-drive holidays with pre-booked itineraries which have been arranged following consultation with us. The itinerary can be followed by self-drive car or by taxi with guide should you not wish to drive.

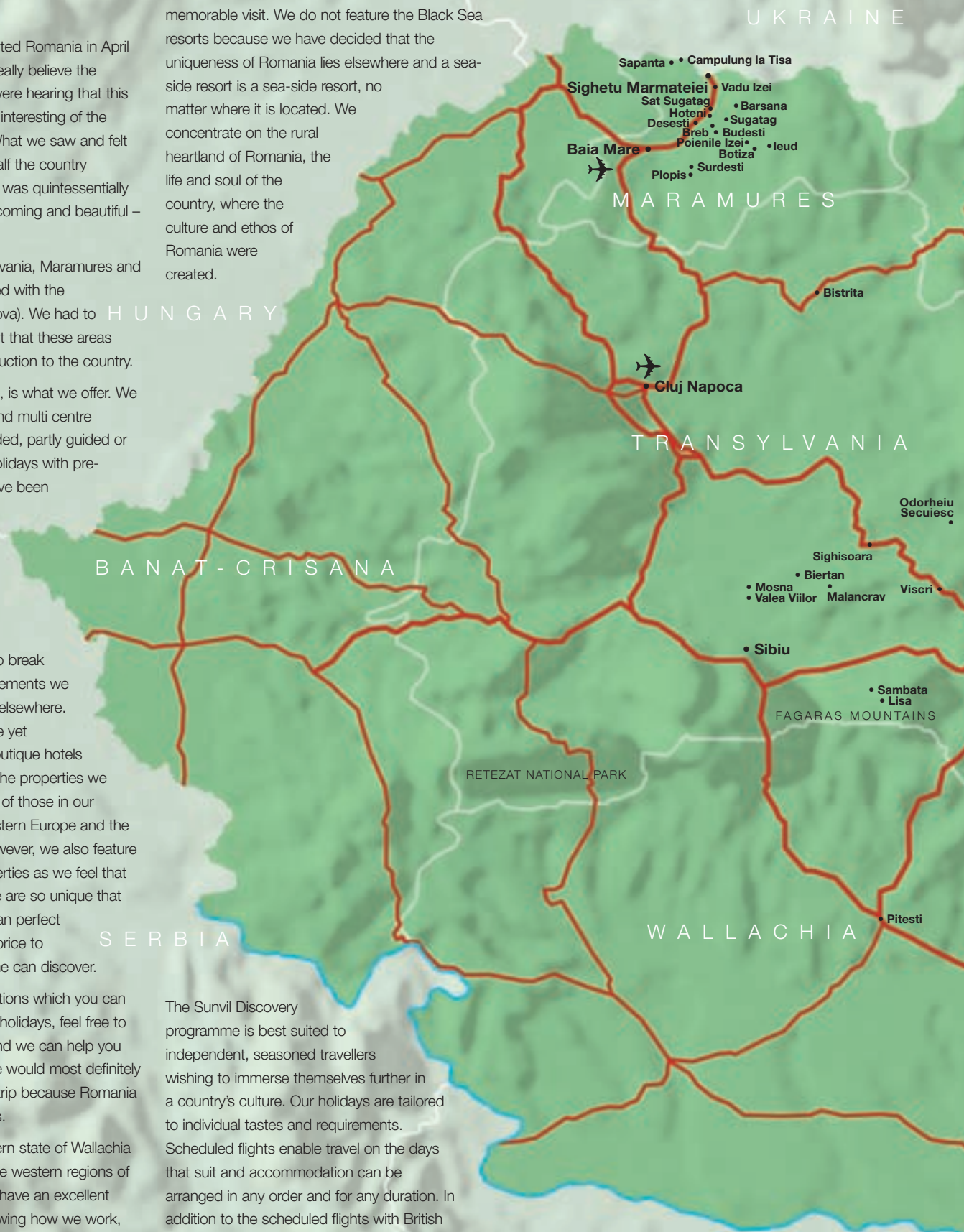
As ever, Sunvil allows you to break new ground and the arrangements we can make are not available elsewhere. Accommodation is in simple yet comfortable inns, hotels, boutique hotels and farm houses. Many of the properties we offer can compare with any of those in our brochures which cover Western Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. However, we also feature one or two very basic properties as we feel that the areas surrounding these are so unique that one or two nights in less than perfect accommodation is a small price to pay for the wonders that one can discover.

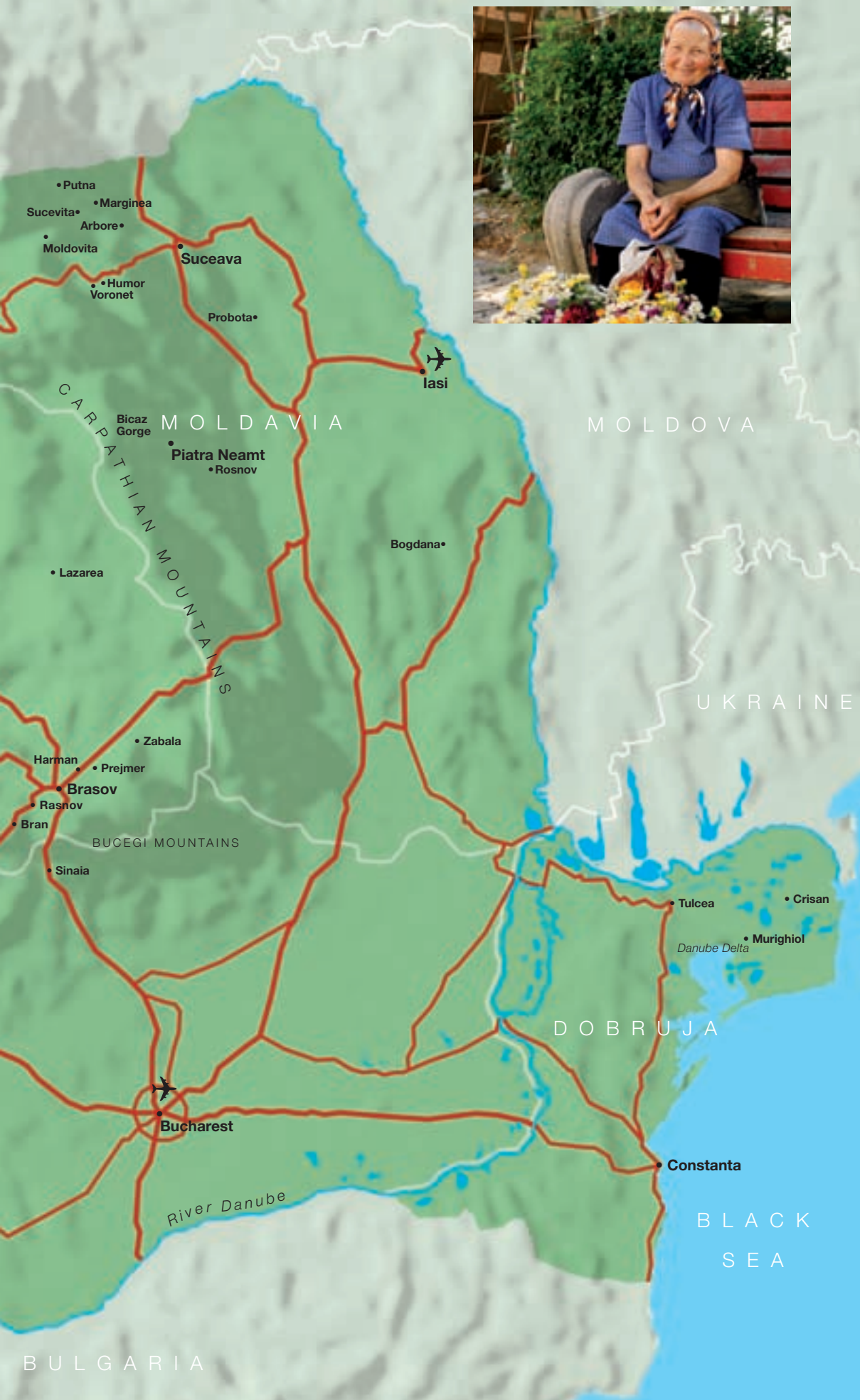
You will find various suggestions which you can follow but, as ever with our holidays, feel free to design your own itinerary and we can help you develop and fine tune it. We would most definitely recommend a multi-centre trip because Romania has such diverse attractions.

We do not know the southern state of Wallachia (apart from Bucharest) or the western regions of Crisana and Banat but, we have an excellent agent in Romania and, knowing how we work, they will be able to make arrangements in the areas which we have not as yet researched. However, the regions we have chosen will give

more than ample opportunity for a most memorable visit. We do not feature the Black Sea resorts because we have decided that the uniqueness of Romania lies elsewhere and a sea-side resort is a sea-side resort, no matter where it is located. We concentrate on the rural heartland of Romania, the life and soul of the country, where the culture and ethos of Romania were created.

The Sunvil Discovery programme is best suited to independent, seasoned travellers wishing to immerse themselves further in a country's culture. Our holidays are tailored to individual tastes and requirements. Scheduled flights enable travel on the days that suit and accommodation can be arranged in any order and for any duration. In addition to the scheduled flights with British Airways we are able to package holidays together with low cost airlines or charter flights from regional airports – flight routes permitting!





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About Sunvil

Sunvil have been operating holidays since 1970, a long time for an independent company in this volatile business. In that time our specialist programmes have become well known, largely through word of mouth – see insert for a summary. We are both retail and tour operating members of ABTA, licensed by IATA, and have a busy commercial department for business travellers. We are still owner managed and remain fiercely independent!

Over the many years that Sunvil has been trading the group has won and has been nominated for many awards. These include Guardian/Observer Newspapers, Holiday Which?, the British Travel Awards, Selling Long Haul, Travel Bulletin and Conde Naste Traveller.

Sunvil
DISCOVERY

The air holidays in this brochure are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is 808



Photography Jon Banfield



A Brief History

Romania is the size of the United Kingdom but with a population of 22 million, 45% of which are still rural village dwellers. Romanians make up 89% of the population, Hungarians 6.6%, Roma gypsies 2.5% and the balance is made up of Germans (Saxons), Ukrainians, Russians and Turks. The language is melodious and one is often excused for thinking it is Italian. The Saxons and the Germans live in Transylvania, the Russians and Ukrainians in the Danube delta and the Turks along the Black Sea coast. To understand how modern-day Romania has evolved one has to have a basic idea of its history.

Ancient Romania was inhabited by the Dacians and was conquered by the Roman emperor Trajan in AD 105-6. For the next 175 years Romania was a Roman province, became fully integrated with the Romans and had a Latin speaking peasant population. Between the 4th and 10th centuries, various peoples (Goths, Huns, Avars, Slavs, Bulgars and Hungarians swept across the region creating a heady mix of cultures which were assimilated into the village communities. From the 10th century, the Magyars (Hungarians) expanded into Transylvania and, by the 13th century, Transylvania and the Carpathians were an autonomous principality of Hungary.

To protect Hungary from the marauding Tartars, the Hungarian king encouraged German Saxons to settle in Transylvania and gave them



political autonomy (the principality was known as Wallachia) in return for their military support. The populations of these medieval principalities were predominantly peasant, ruled by the Hungarian 'Boyars' a hereditary aristocracy, who were in alliance with Saxon leaders.

Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, the Wallachians prevented the Ottoman expansion to the north and Vlad Tepes (the Impaler) was one of their cult rulers from 1456-1462.

By the 16th century, the Turks had conquered Hungary and Transylvania. Wallachia and Moldavia also came under their rule but retained their autonomy by paying dues to the sultan. Although the bulk of Hungary was conquered by the Turks, Transylvania – being under Hungarian administration – also succeeded in maintaining a kind of independence from the Ottomans by paying a tribute to them. Catholicism and Protestantism were declared official religions and Orthodoxy tolerated with the exception of Transylvania where it was not.

The late 16th and early 17th century saw various attempts by the Wallachian prince Michael Viteazul to unite the three Romanian principalities of Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia but these attempts failed as a result of various intrigues between the Habsburgs and Transylvanian nobles.

After the defeat of the Turks at Vienna in 1687, Transylvania once more came under Habsburg rule and there followed a period of political upheaval in the three states.



Brasov

The late 19th century saw the virtual civil war between the Transylvanian Romanians and Hungarians. The Hungarians subsequently ruled the area but this plunged the state into turmoil while Wallachia and Moldavia were unaffected.

In 1861 Moldavia and Wallachia united and declared independence from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire in 1877. Finally, in 1881, the kingdom of Romania was officially recognised. The First World War was the catalyst which finally united Transylvania with Romania and this new state was officially recognised in 1920 at the treaty of Trianon.

In the Second World War Romania fought on both sides with considerable loss of life before finally supporting the Allies against Germany. After the war, with backing from Moscow, the communist party grew in size and power and in November 1946, King Michael was forced to abdicate and a people's republic was proclaimed.

Latin roots in the Romanian language were obliterated, town names changed and pre-war leaders and intellectuals imprisoned or sent to hard labour camps. By 1958 however, Soviet troops withdrew, the country's Latin heritage re-established and leadership fell to two communist leaders Gheorghiu-Dej from 1952 to 1965 and Ceausescu

from 1965 to 1989. These two nationalist, communist leaders pursued their own foreign policy but remained aligned to Moscow – although they did not follow everything the Soviet Union dictated. This earned the mistaken support of the West.

Romanians suffered terribly under Ceausescu. Tens of thousands were imprisoned. Produce was exported, while his own people starved and his opponents were brutally murdered. The end came in December 1989 when Ceausescu was deposed in a popular uprising and was subsequently executed. In 1990, the National Salvation front won a democratic election under the social democracy of President Iliescu who was himself ousted in 1996 after several years of corrupt leadership.

Emil Constantinescu followed as the leader of a centre to right alliance. Romania applied to become a member of NATO and began accession negotiations with the EU. Following various financial scandals and widespread unrest and dissatisfaction with the way the country was being run, Iliescu re-took control. Currently, the social democratic party forms a minority government.

Romania, which joined the EU in 2007, has American bases on its soil and is firmly western looking.