

## Romania Small Group Walking Tour for Seniors

### Reading List

#### **Never Mind the Balkans, Here's Romania**

by Mike Ormsby

'Never Mind the Balkans, Here's Romania' has been described as one of the best guide books on Romania. If you want to discover Romania with someone who knows it well, Mike Ormsby's travel writing is for you.

Whilst the average Romania travel guide provides details of places to visit, this writer takes a different approach. Ormsby gets up close and personal, blending journalistic objectivity with dry wit to craft true-life stories about the people who live in Romania: from friendly hikers and shepherds in Transylvania, to exasperated taxi drivers and bossy bureaucrats in Bucharest.

Ormsby's bittersweet short stories are a quick and easy read yet offer fascinating glimpses of an enthralling land that Vlad 'The Impaler' Tepes - real life inspiration for gothic legend Dracula - once ruled with an iron fist.

Mike Ormsby's first visited Romania in spring 1994 as a BBC reporter. Touched by the hospitality and wry humour of the local people, he soon returned to teach journalism at BBC World Service School in Bucharest, and remained in that post for several years, writing in his spare time.

Published in 2008, 'Never Mind the Balkans, Here's Romania', was well received by Romania's literary critics, several of whom dubbed Ormsby 'The British Caragiale', in deference to their beloved fin-de-siècle satirist and playwright. Ion Luca Caragiale shone a humorous and affectionate light on Romania in his era, and Mike Ormsby does the same in ours.

Numerous expats and visitors have also welcomed the book as a unique and modern variation on the more conventional Romania travel guide.

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#### **A Concise History of Romania**

by Keith Hitchins

Spanning a period of 2000 years from the Roman conquest of Dacia to the present day, A Concise History of Romania traces the development of a unique nation situated on the border between East and West. In this illuminating new history, Keith Hitchins explores Romania's struggle to find its place amidst two diverse societies: one governed by Eastern orthodox tradition, spirituality and

agriculture and the other by Western rationalism, experimentation and capitalism. The book charts Romania's advancement through five significant phases of its history: medieval, early modern, modern and finally the nation's 'return to Europe'; evaluating all the while Romania's part in European politics, economic and social change, intellectual and cultural renewals and international entanglements. This is a fascinating history of an East European nation; one which sheds new light on the complex evolution of the Romanians and the identity they have successfully crafted from a unique synthesis of traditions.

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### **Romania since the Second World War: A Political, Social and Economic History**

by Florin Abraham

Romania since the Second World War is the first book about Romania designed to chart the progress of the nation under the communist regime as well as the transition period that followed, providing detailed analysis of the aspects of continuity and change that can be identified over the period as a whole.

The book begins with Romania's involvement in the Second World War, looking at the communist regime in depth. It examines how communism took hold and the elimination of traditional elites took place, before discussing the impact of Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceausescu, the two most important leaders of the communist era. The following chapters cover the main social and economic changes during the communist regime. The second part of the book explores the transition period following the end of communism in 1989, with special attention given to international relations and Romania's drive for inclusion in NATO and the EU. Romania since the Second World War assesses socio-demographic trends across the postwar period before concluding with some thoughts on the nation's development during this time.

The book includes a useful appendix covering the key figures in Romania's recent history and a helpful bibliography, making this a key text for anyone interested in the modern history of Eastern Europe.

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### **Along the Enchanted Way: A Story of Love and Life in Romania**

by William Blacker

Change is now coming to rural Romania, and William Blacker's adventures will soon be part of its history. From his early carefree days tramping the hills of Transylvania to the book's poignant ending, 'Along the Enchanted Way' transports us back to a magical world most of us thought had vanished long ago.

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