



LEGENDS OF EUROPE

Bitesize

Using aircraft, of all sizes, to connect places of interest around the world is the dominant principle of Escorted Journeys by Air. Traditionally, these tend to be trips of 3 to 4 week duration which doesn't always fit everyone's plans. So we have introduced our innovative Bitesize collection.

The Bitesize collection includes all the benefits of a privately chartered aircraft in flexibility, choice and peace of mind but also considers trip duration, and to some extent destinations, as a deciding factor. A Bitesize journey is from 3-9 days long and is typically suited to smaller groups of up to 16 people as well as larger groups of 50 guests. The program can also be sold as a total package for a family or a group of friends, alternatively seats can be sold individually. Accommodation will consist of handpicked first class hotels and lodges.

Destinations are unlimited, we suggest to combine remote destinations as well as including interesting experiences. Have a look at our sample itineraries but bear in mind, the world's your oyster when curating itineraries and we would love to help.

Legends of Europe

Europe is an incredible combination of cultures and destinations in one. The path well-trodden includes some of the most enchanting cities of the world as well as the spectacular natural formation whether inland or on the coast. Within all of this are the true legends that have become part of the European folklore and we will explore some.

The story of Dracula is one most of us have grown up with and the first stop on our trip will be the historical region of Transylvania in Romania and specifically Bran Castle. From there we journey on to Matera in Italy where as recently as 1952 people were living in caves. The last stop is Carcassonne in Cathar country, the Cathar movement and the Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars were two of the most important events in European history - with many, often surprising, world-wide resonances even today, eight centuries later.



Day 1 | Fly to Brasov, Romania

This morning we join our privately chartered aircraft at our private Terminal at London Stansted airport to fly to Brasov in Romania. Enjoy lunch on-board prior to arrival at the recently opened airport at Brasov. We undertake a brief city tour before we arrive at the Kronwell Brasov Hotel. The remainder of the afternoon is free for you to explore the pretty old town. Brasov is home to one of the narrowest streets in Europe. The Rope Street (Strada Sforii) is approximately four feet wide it connects Strada Cerbului with Strada Poarta Schei. This street was initially used as an access route by firefighters. Dinner at Albert Bistro this evening.

Day 2 | The Legend of Dracula

Count Dracula, a fictional character in the Dracula novel, was inspired by one of the best-known figures of Romanian history, Vlad Dracula, nicknamed Vlad Tepes (Vlad the Impaler), who was the ruler of Wallachia at various times from 1456-1462. Today we travel south of Brasov to visit Bran Castle the mythical castle of Count Dracula. Apart from the castle the surrounding countryside is of immense beauty. Author Bram Stoker wrote his fictional tale of Dracula without ever visiting the area however his depiction of the castle was incredibly accurate. In the villages near Bran, there is a belief in the existence of evil spirits called ghosts. Until half a century ago, it was believed that there existed certain living people – “strigoi” – who were leading a normal life during the day but at night, during their sleep, their souls left their bodies and haunted the village tormenting people in their sleep.

Day 3 | Fly to Bari

Appropriately “frightened” we leave Brasov on our private aircraft for the journey to Bari in the southern part of Italy to explore the peculiarity of Matera where, until 1952, people lived in caves. As the capital of the province of Matera, its original settlement lies in two canyons carved by the Gravina River. This area, the Sassi di Matera, is a complex of cave dwellings carved into the ancient river canyon, often cited as "one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world."

After arrival in Bari we are transferred Borgobianco Resort, Borgobianco Resort & Spa MGallery Hotel compliments its rural surroundings with local artwork and spectacular views. Bright white walls, vaulted ceilings and a traditional central courtyard combine to breathe life into large sun-drenched spaces. Enjoy exquisite Italian cuisine in the hotel restaurant.



Day 4 | Matera and the Sassi (Ancient Town)

Though scholars continue to debate the date the dwellings were first occupied in Matera, and the continuity of their subsequent occupation, the area of what is now Matera is believed to have been settled since the Palaeolithic (10th millennium BC).

This makes it potentially one of the oldest continually inhabited settlements in the world. Our guides will take us to Matera for a guided exploration of this fascinating European settlement.

Until the late 1980s the Sassi, Ancient Town, was still considered an area of poverty, since its dwellings were, and in most cases still are, uninhabitable and dangerous. The present local administration, however, has become more tourism-orientated, and it has promoted the regeneration of the Sassi as a picturesque touristic attraction with the aid of the Italian government and UNESCO.

After an impressive day of exploration we return to the calm of the resort where we enjoy an Italian style BBQ at the pool.

Day 5 | Journey to Cathar Country

After a leisurely morning we join our private aircraft for the flight to Carcassonne, the gateway to Cathar country. Our lunch time flight takes us across the Mediterranean before landing at Carcassonne our final stay on this trip. Carcassonne is famous for its medieval citadel, La Cité, with numerous watchtowers and double-walled fortifications. The first walls were built in Gallo-Roman times, with major additions made in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Hotel La Cite is our home for the next two nights. Take the time to walk the streets of La Cite before we meet for dinner this evening.



Day 6 | Cathar Country

The myth and legend of this part of France has often been the topic of books and movies and today we will try and separate fact from fiction with our local guides. We travel south to Rennes-le-Château like Carcassonne it was once a great Visigoth city. The area overflows with legends of subterranean passageways and hidden treasure. Understanding the way the Cathars followed their beliefs and how it impacted religious thinking is fundamental to be able place Catharism in the context of the ancient as well as our current world.

Lunch is at a local winery before we return to Carcassonne where the remainder of the afternoon is free. Dinner is at the hotel this evening.

Day 7 | Returning home

Your morning is at leisure for some further sightseeing of perhaps some last minute shopping before we board our private aircraft to return to the UK. Full of memories and experiences of some places of legend, folklore and believe.

The detail

- Travel by private jet including fine meals and a complimentary bar service.
- Departure from our private terminal at Stansted London airport
- All meals including drinks with dinner.
- Accommodation in 5 star hotels on twin-share basis, best available in Brasov.
- All sightseeing with experienced English speaking guides and entry fees.
- Transfers and transportation
- Prices from £9,050 to £18,575 for a smaller group

