

Romania

DANUBE DELTA & BLACK SEA

LIMOSA HOLIDAYS | TOUR INFO PACK



Paddyfield Warbler, photographed on our May tour to the Danube Delta © Stephen Daly, Daly Wildlife

2017 **NEW DATES! Sunday 3rd - Monday 11th September (9 days)**
LEADERS **Richard Thaxton & Zoli Baczó**

2018 **Saturday 5th - Sunday 13th May (9 days)**
LEADERS **Robin Chittenden & Zoli Baczó**

Our spring and autumn birdwatching tours to Romania feature three nights aboard a comfortable hotel-boat exploring the Danube Delta, plus a choice of two exciting and differing itineraries within Europe's greatest wetland wilderness - getting you close to some of the continent's rarest breeding birds. White Pelican, Pallas's Gull and Paddyfield Warbler head an all-star cast on a trip that also visits Romania's bird-rich Black Sea coast and Macin Mountains - and is superb for migrants at either season!

- The Danube Delta - Europe's greatest wetland wilderness
- Choice of two exciting and different Danube Delta itineraries, according to season
- Huge numbers of pelicans, Glossy Ibis, Pygmy Cormorant, Squacco, Night and Purple Herons
- A host of eastern specialities on the Black Sea coast and Macin Mountains National Park
- Levant Sparrowhawk, Paddyfield Warbler, Pied and Isabelline Wheatears
- Springtime or autumn, bird migration in full flow
- Led by an expert Limosa guide and our Romania specialist Zoli Baczó

What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader
- English-speaking Romanian bird tour guide
- Flights - London Heathrow to Bucharest, nonstop with British Airways
- 5 nights staying in comfortable hotel accommodation in Romania
- Plus 3 nights exploring the Delta aboard a superior *ponton* or 'floating hotel'
- All main meals included - with water provided during the day
- All local travel, entry fees, tour based tips and taxes

LIMOSA HOLIDAYS, West End Farmhouse, Chapelfield, Stalham, Norfolk NR12 9EJ (UK)

TEL: +44 (0) 1692 580623 | 580624 • EMAIL: info@limosaholidays.co.uk • WEB: limosaholidays.co.uk



A ponton or 'hotel-boat' provides the only real way to explore the immense Danube delta - Europe's largest wetland wilderness, encompassing more than 2000 square miles © Zoli Bazzo, Limosa Holidays

Outline Itinerary

- Day 1:** Fly London Heathrow-Bucharest. Transfer east to the Danube River. Night Calarasi.
- Days 2-4:** The bird-rich Black Sea coastal wetlands, woods and steppe. Sinoe (3 nts)
- Days 5:** We visit Babadag Forest and Macin Mountain National Park. Night Tulcea
- Days 6-8:** Exploring the vast Danube Delta onboard our floating hotel boat or 'ponton'. Danube Delta (3 nts)
- Day 9:** We disembark the ponton and return by road to Bucharest. Fly Bucharest-London Heathrow

Tour Overview

For its serene beauty and richness of birds, the immense Danube Delta is perhaps Europe's greatest natural treasure. The largest reedbeds in the world are here and from May through September, the Delta provides one of the

continent's major bird spectacles. It is worth coming to see the pelicans alone, as they plane across the skies like undulating plumes of smoke.

Even today, this whole region remains difficult of access, for few roads threaten this peaceful haven. Indeed, much of the birding here is possible only by water and the centrepiece of Limosa's wonderful birdwatching holiday to Romania will be an exploration of the Danube Delta's vast swamps aboard one of the region's unique hotel-boats or 'pontons'. We spend three nights afloat, using a superior vessel with all cabins en suite and an upper deck that affords unrivalled views of the Delta and its birdlife.

Whether your preference is to travel in May or September, both are excellent months to visit Romania. The sheer number and variety of birds present then is impressive: colourful Rollers and Bee-eaters are frequently seen beside the roads, wetland birds are abundant, large numbers of migrants are passing through - and the flights of White Pelicans in choreographed flocks above the Delta are a sight not to be missed.

Our tour begins with an easy drive east from the capital Bucharest and an overnight stop beside the River Danube, followed by three nights at a hotel on the bird-rich Black Sea coast. The scenic province of Dobrogea is a region of forested valleys hidden below a plateau of rolling arable land, the domain of Lesser Spotted Eagle, Levant Sparrowhawk and Red-footed Falcon. There are some excellent wetlands too, thronged by waders and waterfowl, herons and marsh terns.

As we head north towards the Delta, the opportunity to visit Macin Mountains National Park is an exciting addition to our May and September tours. Outstanding for breeding birds in spring and a migratory route for birds of prey in autumn, this tucked away and scenic northern corner of Dobrogea is home to Long-legged Buzzard, Short-toed Snake Eagle, Rock Thrush and Ortolan Bunting.

The itineraries for our spring and autumn cruises in the Danube Delta are different. Our spring visit focuses on the sheltered lakes of the northern delta, where most of the breeding takes place; while in autumn we head further south to Sacaline Island, a sandy peninsula on the Black Sea coast - and a fantastic place for migrants!

In May, the breeding season will be in full swing. Waves of Glossy Ibises, Spoonbills and Pygmy Cormorants pass across the Delta's skies and specialities to be found include Dalmatian Pelican, Pallas's Gull, Paddyfield Warbler, and Pied and Isabelline Wheatears.

Birds can be even more numerous in September, when young families are about. Hobbies hawk for dragonflies, and both months can be superb for migrants with a host of raptors, waders, storks and passerines on the move.

Our September trip will be Richard Thaxton's second tour to Romania, while the May 2018 tour will be Robin Chittenden's seventh visit there. With the expertise of our resident English-speaking Romanian wildlife guide Zoli Baczó, plus the experience of well over twenty previous Limosa tours to Romania behind us, why not join us - springtime or autumn - for some of the best birding Europe has to offer?



The furtive Thrush Nightingale breeds in the Danube Delta
© Stephen Daly, Daly Wildlife

Tour Itineraries

Please note: *The itineraries for our spring and autumn cruises within the Danube Delta are different. On the **May tour**, we start our cruise at the Danube port of Tulcea and travel along the Sulina Channel to access the sheltered bays and lakes of the northern part of delta, where most of the breeding takes place. In **September**, we embark at the port of Murighiol and travel the St Gheorge Channel, in the southern part of the delta, out to Sacaline Island, a 20km sand bar jutting out into the Black Sea. This area is generally better for wetland birds in autumn - and is a hot spot for passage migrants!*

Day 1

TO BUCHAREST & THE DANUBE RIVER

Our birdwatching tours to Romania begin with British Airways morning flight from London Heathrow to Bucharest. Afternoon arrival in the Romanian capital, where we'll be met by our specialist local guide Zoli and travel east across the plains towards Calarasi. We should arrive in time for dinner at our hotel, which stands on the banks of the River Danube, looking across to Bulgaria and midway between Bucharest and Romania's Black Sea coast. *Night Calarasi*

Day 2

CALARASI TO BLACK SEA LAGOONS

Calarasi is an excellent place to start our tour due to its strategic position beside the river en route to the coast. The meandering Danube

valley comprises a patchwork of parks, wetlands and woods, where Little Bitterns, Little Crakes and Whiskered Terns breed. Purple Herons, Garganey and Ferruginous Duck are also about, brightly coloured Golden Orioles frequent the poplars and woodpeckers to be found include Black, Syrian and Grey-headed.

On our way to the coast today, we cross the River Danube by ferry and take the 'old road', travelling east through an attractive landscape devoted largely to vineyards. We may pause along the way to admire a roadside colony of Bee-eaters near the village of Ostrov, where Balkan Wall Lizards can often be seen sunning themselves, before continuing on to Lake Bugeac and chances of Ruddy Shelduck.

From the lake, it's only a short distance to Canaraua Fetei, whose forests of oak and false acacia conceal a valley of limestone cliffs. Honey Buzzards may be seen soaring and other species to watch for here include Short-toed and Booted Eagles, Icterine Warbler and possibly Red-rumped Swallow - the latter a rare bird in Romania.

Lying to the south of the Danube Delta, and close to the historic ancient Greek and later Roman colonies of Histria on Romania's Black Sea coast, Sinoe will be our base for the next three nights. *Night Sinoe*

Day 3

WOLF PENINSULA & HISTRIA

Histria is perhaps the richest birding location along the Black Sea Coast, noted for its colony of Collared Pratincoles and as one of the best sites to look for the localised Paddyfield Warbler - one of several rare breeding species that find the westernmost limit of their range in this tucked away corner of Europe. We shall spend the best part of the day here, moving just south in the afternoon to the coast at Navodari and Midia in search of more waders and migrants.

The Wolf Peninsula is another superb spot, lying close to Histria. In the past, Wolves did live here but today only Golden Jackals and Raccoon Dogs remain. The shallow, ephemeral saline lakes offer excellent habitats for waders, terns, gulls and pratincoles. The Delta's only breeding

colony of Dalmatian Pelicans is situated at nearby Lake Sinoe and this rare and endangered species is often to be seen in the vicinity. A unique and well-known local landmark, also well worth a look, is a most impressive White Stork nest built of a heap of harvested reed 15m high!

Both spring and autumn can be outstanding for migrants along the shores of the Black Sea - at Sinoe we are superbly placed to watch for these as they arrive off the sea. On a good day, waves of herons, ibises, pratincoles, 'marsh terns' and waders may be seen passing overhead. Catch migration on the right day in this part of the world and we could be in for some of the most exciting birdwatching in Europe! *Night Sinoe*

Day 4

VADU WETLANDS & SITORMAN

We begin our birding today by exploring the coast at Vadu, a famous and remarkable wetland site where a mix of small lakes - including the remote Sinoe lagoon, seashore and *Salicornia* steppe - can provide a wonderful selection of birds. Waders, raptors and migrants are likely to be on the menu here!

In the afternoon, we visit the Gura Dobrogei steppe valley and an abandoned stone quarry at Sitorman. Greater Short-toed and Calandra Larks display overhead and Stone-curlew nest in the quarry. But the star breeding birds here are Pied and Isabelline Wheatears - two more species at the westernmost limit of their range here. This is also an excellent site for raptors and we could see Marsh, Montagu's and maybe even Pallid Harriers, Honey Buzzard and Red-footed Falcon plus localised breeders such as Lesser Spotted, Booted and Short-toed Eagles, Levant Sparrowhawk and Long-legged Buzzard.

Small patches of woodland and bushy scrub in the middle of the steppe are a favoured haunt of breeding and migrating passerines, among them Red-backed and Lesser Grey Shrikes, Barred Warbler, Roller and Golden Oriole. Rarities such as Woodchat Shrike can sometimes be seen.

After another exciting day of birding, we return to our hotel in Sinoe for dinner and our third and final night's stay there. *Night Sinoe*

Day 5**BABADAG FOREST & MACIN MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK**

Leaving Sinoe, we travel an hour or so across Dobrogea to reach the extensive deciduous forests of the northern part of the province. We will spend some time this morning in Babadag Forest, looking for Black and Middle Spotted Woodpeckers, Icterine and Wood Warblers, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Sombre Tit and Hawfinch. We might be lucky to find Wryneck.

After lunch at an excellent roadside restaurant, we head to the Macin Mountains National Park. Rising to a little over 450m (1500ft), this chain of low, granite hills are the oldest in Romania and rich in wildlife. Isabelline Wheatears nest in the grassy foothills, while Rock Thrush and Pied, Northern and Eastern Black-eared Wheatears occupy the higher slopes. Areas of fine earth are much burrowed into by breeding Bee-eaters, and patrolling Lesser Spotted, Short-toed and Booted Eagles scan the ground below for European Souseliks, lizards and snakes.

Our destination this evening is a hotel at Tulcea, a river port on the banks of the Danube at the western edge of the vast Danube delta. *Night Tulcea*

Days 6 - 8**EXPLORING THE DANUBE DELTA BY BOAT**

We may spend a little more time this morning birding on *terra firma* before transferring to our hotel-boat - known locally as a 'pontoon' - to begin our discovery of the Danube delta. The comfortable pontoon will be our home for the next three nights of the holiday. [Please bear in mind that our planned itineraries for the boat are subject to possible change due to water levels and other local conditions at the time.]

Our spring and autumn cruises follow different routes, with our ports of embarkation being Tulcea (May) and Murighiol (September) - **please see separate cruise itineraries below.**

Whichever trip you choose however, typical Delta species soon begin to appear: chevrons of Glossy Ibises trailing across the sky; buff-plumed Squacco Herons standing motionless

along the banks as we pass; graceful Whiskered Terns flickering over the water; and noisy 'eastern' Greylag Geese with their distinctive rosy-pink bills.

Using our hotel boat as a base, we have the remainder of day 6 plus the following two days to experience a selection of the best locations within the immense Danube Delta, seeing birds and places that are impossible to reach any other way.

The Delta extends over an immense area - more than 2000 sq. miles - so please note that the itinerary and route we follow may vary from year to year, being dependent upon a variety of factors including the advice of our local guide on current bird activity and the whereabouts of key species at the time of our visit; changing seasonable access to the maze of waterways and channels due to weather conditions, vegetation, water levels and other local factors; plus of course the advice of our captain at the time. Please be aware that there are limited opportunities to go ashore within the Delta itself (and landing isn't always possible, even where *terra firma* exists), but we will endeavour to take them whenever we can. During our cruise, we will be making several excursions by smaller, faster boats to reach localities where the larger, slow-moving pontoon cannot go.

SPRING CRUISE (MAY)

Our May visit focuses on the northern part of the Delta, along the Sulina channel. The patchwork of lakes, channels, immense reedbeds and stands of willow here provide ideal breeding habitat for many birds. At this time of year, the breeding season for many Delta birds will be at its height.

We will aim to visit lakes along the Sontea channel, such as Nebunu, Sireasa, Fortuna, Ligheanca and Baclanesti, where Great and Little Egrets, Grey, Purple and Squacco Herons, Black-crowned Night Herons, Eurasian Spoonbills, Glossy Ibises, and Great and Pygmy Cormorants are frequently seen as they move to and fro between the breeding colonies and favoured feeding grounds. The lakes also support good numbers of Red-necked Grebes as well as nesting Black-necked and Great Crested Grebes, and we should see Ferruginous Duck,

Common Tern and Caspian Gull, too. With luck, we will also encounter the monster Pallas's Gull, a relatively new arrival here from further east, which has recently started to breed in the Delta.

The uncommon White-tailed Eagle regularly perches in the willows that fringe the channels and lakes, sometimes affording close views from the boat as we pass. Hobbies skim low over the reedbeds in pursuit of the delta's abundant dragonflies and we'll check for a migrant Red-footed Falcon, another agile predator with a penchant for catching flying insects on the wing. Other species to watch and listen out for in the willows as we pass include nesting Grey-headed and Black Woodpeckers, colourful Rollers and Golden Orioles, Thrush Nightingale, Redstart, Garden Warbler and Penduline Tit.

Europe's biggest breeding colony of Great White Pelicans - more than 2000 pairs - is also located within the northern part of the Delta. Although the colony itself is not accessible to visitors, the undulating flocks of pelicans are a daily attraction as they move out from the breeding colony to the Delta's lakes to feed.

In May, we will aim to spend our first night onboard the ponton moored in the heart of the delta, near the isolated village of Crisan. Next morning, if conditions are suitable, we may visit Musura Bay, which lies closer to the Black Sea coast, travelling there by smaller, faster boats. Returning to the pontoon in the afternoon, and if time allows, we move to the lakes around Mila 23, where we tie up for the second night. We may return to Tulcea by way of lakes along the Sontea channel and Canal 36. Our third and final night onboard the ponton will be spent moored close to Tulcea, ready to disembark after breakfast next morning. *Three nights aboard our ponton in the Delta*

AUTUMN CRUISE (SEPTEMBER)

Our September visit explores the southern part of the Delta, sailing from Murighiol (about 25 miles southeast of Tulcea), along the Sfantu Gheorghe channel and focusing mainly on the mouth of the delta, where we'll visit impressive Sacaline Island. This 20km long sandbar jutting out into the Black Sea can be a superb place for migrants in autumn - one of the hottest spots in

Europe, in fact! With the breeding season over, our September cruise will focus on the essence of migration and, in the southern part of the Delta, we should see large numbers of northern and eastern European birds making their way south.

In the shallow waters we can expect a plethora of pelicans, herons, waders, gulls and terns. In autumn, bushes along the seashore can also hold large number of passerine migrants, with an ever-changing set of species day by day. At the time of our visit in early September, Red-breasted Flycatchers, Willow, Wood and Garden Warblers, Blackcaps, Red-backed Shrikes, Robins, redstarts, thrushes and tits should all be on the move. In the skies above, raptors and storks will also be migrating south and likely species to watch for now include Honey and Common Buzzards, Levant Sparrowhawk, Marsh Harrier, Hobby and Red-footed Falcon.

Alongside the migrants, we should encounter many of the resident or special birds of the Delta region, including grebes, herons, cormorants, and Great White and Dalmatian Pelicans. With luck, we might even come across some local rarities too - perhaps a party of Lesser Kestrels heading south, scarce passage waders such as Broad-billed and Terek Sandpipers, or some magnificent Pallas's Gulls loafing on the shore.

On our way back to port at Murighiol, we will aim to visit some classic Delta habitats where, among the channels and lakes of the Erenciuc, we have further chances to see grebes, herons, cormorants, pelicans and other waterbirds. We may also find the majestic White-tailed Eagle, perched prominently in the fringing willow and alder trees.

On our September tour, our final night in the Delta will spent on board the ponton moored in Murighiol, ready to disembark after breakfast next morning. *Three nights aboard our ponton in the Delta*

Day 9

DANUBE DELTA TO BUCHAREST

After breakfast onboard the ponton, we return to *terra firma* and reluctantly turn our backs on the delta for the drive to Bucharest. Flight schedules

permitting, we usually have time for short birding stop just before we cross the Danube River, followed by a final picnic lunch at a convenient halt along the motorway.

Our birding over, we complete the journey to Bucharest and check-in for the British Airways afternoon flight to London Heathrow, where our birding tour to Romania concludes this evening.

Trip Information

Group Limit 12 participants & 2 leaders

Birds 160-190 species

Mammals 5-10 species

Butterflies 10 species

Accommodation 8 nights in Romania, with 5 nights spent at comfortable hotels followed by 3 nights afloat aboard a 'pontoon' (hotel boat) exploring the Danube Delta.

A hotel beside the River Danube at Calarasi conveniently breaks the journey to the coast and offers some great birding nearby, making it an ideal stopover for dinner and overnight on the first evening. At the Black Sea coast, we spend three nights at a comfortable private pension in rural Sinoe, well away from the hubbub and development of Romania's burgeoning seaside resorts. For our overnight stop at Tulcea, on the western fringe of the Danube delta, we stay at a comfortable hotel. All rooms at hotels en suite.

We conclude our tour with three nights aboard one of the region's comfortable hotel-boats - known locally as a 'pontoon'; all cabins en suite (*see below*).

Meals All main meals are included in the tour price, commencing with dinner on Day 1 and concluding with lunch on Day 9. Food is good (unlike our first visit to the Danube Delta almost 30 years ago, when 'Turkish-style' coffee made with cold sparkling mineral water and fried '*Picnicbog*' (a local variant of spam) were the order of the day!)

Walking Easy, with short walks. Because of the nature of the terrain and in order to visit a cross-section of key habitats, most of our birding within the Delta itself must be done by boat, with only limited opportunity for occasional short walks where and when landing on *terra firma* is possible.

On the **autumn tour**, please note that the landing at Sacaline Island is a 'wet landing' and it is usually necessary to 'wade' the last 10-15m through shallow water to reach the shore. Take note that the seed pods of the water chestnuts here have sharp spikes so barefoot is not recommended for this or once ashore; instead, we recommend you don some old trainers, sandals or flip flops when visiting Sacaline.

Weather Romania enjoys a continental climate, predominantly sunny and warm in spring and autumn, with temperatures ranging from 11-25C (52-77F). Chance of thundery summer downpours.

Flights We fly from London Heathrow to Bucharest, nonstop with British Airways.

Ground Transport By midi/minibus with local driver. In the delta itself, we endeavour to explore as wide a variety of habitats as possible using a combination of the 'pontoon' and smaller, fast motorboats; if water levels are low, we may switch to rowing boats (manned by the crew!).

'Hotel Boat' In the Danube Delta, we spend three nights sleeping onboard a comfortable, two- or three-storey 'hotel boat' (according to our final group size). Known locally as a "pontoon", a typical three-storey boat is equipped with 9 or 10 small twin-bedded or double guest rooms (these being situated on the lower deck of the pontoon), each with private facilities.

[In the case of a small group, we may switch to a smaller but equally comfortable two-storey pontoon equipped with 5-6 small twin-bedded or double guest rooms (also situated on the lower deck of the pontoon), each with private facilities.]

A limited number of cabins are available for single occupancy onboard - let us know as soon as possible if you wish to be assigned a single.

Although neither spacious nor luxurious, the pontons we use on our tours are of superior quality (and best available here), offering clean and comfortable accommodation of a standard that's on a par with many 4-star Romanian hotels. The upper deck/s house an air-conditioned dining room and bar, plus an open sundeck with seating. Meals on board the ponton are good and freshly prepared by the vessel's own cook.

Power onboard is provided by the ponton's own generator. Please note that pontons do not have an engine and so are towed behind a smaller launch or tug.

Photos Good incidental photo opportunities - especially wetland birds in the Delta.

Tour Cost

2017 (Sep, 9 days): £1995
(inc flights from London)
Land only cost: £1745
Deposit: £300
Single Supp: £165

2018 (May, 9 days): £1995 ^{*1}
(inc flights from London)
Land only cost: £1745 ^{*1}
Deposit: £300 ^{*1}
Single Supp: £165 ^{*1}

Cost includes

Services of our expert guides; flights London Heathrow-Bucharest with British Airways; 8 nights accommodation in Romania, including 3 nights aboard a 'hotel boat' within the Danube Delta; all main meals (with water provided); local transport; all entry fees, tour-based tips and airport taxes; map & Limosa checklist of birds.

Cost excludes

Insurance, drinks, airport meals/snacks and other items of a personal nature.

^{*1} 2018 prices provisional, TBC summer 2017

What You Say

"Greatly enjoyed the holiday... Ponton superb in every way, food delicious and all staff thoughtful and courteous."

JW, Danube Delta - Romania tour

"Thank you very much indeed for a really wonderful trip to Romania. I enjoyed it enormously. The delta is a magical and never to be forgotten place, I feel."

AL, Danube Delta - Romania tour

"Overall a superb trip, surpassing everything I expected. Good leaders, good accommodation and good food."

PD, Danube Delta - Romania tour

"Quite a magical holiday! So many moments to remember, from Little Bittern to White-tailed Eagle and wonderful starry nights and sunrises."

PK, Danube Delta - Romania tour

About Your Guides

Robin Chittenden Robin is a principal Limosa guide who lives in Norfolk with his wife and young family. He is an excellent ornithologist and all-round naturalist with a wide-ranging repertoire of tours. Well known as a top wildlife photographer, Robin is photographic consultant for British Birds magazine and one of the wildlife photographers for Natural England. When he's not busy guiding for Limosa or out and about with his camera, he runs Birdline East Anglia, the regional information service for birdwatchers. Robin's travels for Limosa have taken him everywhere from Trinidad & Tobago to Gambia and Sri Lanka, and he has visited eastern Europe many times for us, with personal favourites being tours to Bulgaria and Romania.

Richard Thaxton Richard is a principal Limosa guide who joined us in the early 'noughties' at the urging of our American

friends Field Guides - who clearly know a good thing when they see one! Recently retired as warden at the RSPB's Loch Garten reserve, where he worked for 30 years, Richard was charged with the welfare of some of Speyside's rarest inhabitants, including Capercaillies and the world famous Ospreys. He is a first-rate bird tour guide with exceptional people skills and regularly leads our trips to the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania, as well as those to the Caribbean and Latin America - including Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador. Richard also has good experience of Southeast Asia, having travelled throughout the region, including Thailand, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

Zoltán Baczó 'Zoli' is our expert, English-speaking Romanian bird tour guide working for our specialist destination management company in Hungary and Romania. Born and raised in Transylvania, he has been interested in birds since an early age and went on to graduate at the university in his hometown of Odorheiu Secuiesc. During his studies there, he worked on wildlife and nature conservation projects within the Harghita Mountains and various wetland sites in Transylvania. Zoli has been guiding visiting birding groups in Transylvania and the Danube Delta area since his late teens. He is one of the authors of the current Romanian national bird checklist and has travelled and birded extensively in the Western Palearctic. He's also a passionate bird and wildlife photographer and has been at the helm of Limosa's Romania tours for nine years now.

Financial Security

Limosa Holidays is a fully bonded Tour Operator and a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO). We hold an ATOL (Air Tour Operators Licence) granted by the CAA, providing for your protection in the event of Limosa Holidays' insolvency. Our licence number is ATOL 2950.

For tours not including the cost of a flight from the UK or for holidays booked by you as 'Land Only', all payments made to us are fully bonded through the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT). Our ABTOT membership number is 5230. For

details please see our brochure or website: <http://www.limosaholidays.co.uk/financial-protection>

Limosa Loyalty Discount

We are proud of the number of loyal customers who travel regularly with us. As our way of saying 'thank you', we offer a **Frequent Travel Discount**. Under the scheme, everyone who takes four trips with us is entitled to claim a 5% discount on their 5th trip*¹. Remember to request your discount at time of booking!

*¹ *Please note: This offer applies to the basic tour cost only and excludes certain commission-based trips, extras such as additional flights, private extensions and cancellations. Discounts cannot be given in lieu of tour deposits or off the cost of single room supplements.*

How To Book

Check availability on our website or with our office. We are happy to hold Provisional Reservations for up to 7 days. After this, we do require a Booking Form and deposit to confirm your place on tour. Any unconfirmed space will be released.

Book Online, by Phone or by Post

You can book and pay the deposit simply and securely **Online** via our website, using the '**Book This Tour**' button on the relevant tour page or the **Booking** tab at the top of the page.

Telephone bookings must be confirmed in writing by completion of a Booking Form (there's one tucked inside every brochure or as a PDF download from our website), which can be mailed to us in the time honoured way.

Be sure to read our **Booking Conditions** and **General Information** (found at the back of our brochure, on our website or available from our office on request) prior to booking.

When to Book

Early booking is advised since flights and accommodation are much more easily secured well in advance. To encourage early booking, we are pleased to offer an **Early Bird Discount** - see our current brochure or website for details.

Our tours are limited to small group sizes. So they can fill up quickly - sometimes even before our new brochure comes out! Single rooms in particular can often be in short supply and among the first to go, so do try to plan well ahead if you definitely require one of these.

Last-minute Bookings: We inevitably receive a few unexpected cancellations over the course of a season so it is always worth enquiring about vacancies on any tour - even for those departing in just a few weeks!

Payments

The amount of **booking deposit** per person is shown alongside every tour. We accept deposit payments by **debit card, cheque** (payable to Limosa Holidays and drawn on a UK bank in GB Pounds Sterling) and **BACS** (please ask for our bank details). We also accept Visa and MasterCard **credit cards**, with no transaction charge on payment of tour deposits.

Full payment of the **balance** is due not later than 12 weeks prior to departure (20 weeks in the case of certain tours such as cruises or those involving rail travel). We will send you an invoice before the balance is due.

We accept payment for balances (and interim payments) by **cheque, BACS or UK debit card**. We also accept balances (and interim payments) by **credit card or overseas debit card** but with a charge of 2.5% of the transaction amount to help offset card company charges. [Note we do not retain your card details, which are destroyed once used. This means we may need to phone you again for details for subsequent payments.]

Payment by **overseas customers** must be in GB Pounds Sterling and may be made by transfer to our bank (please ask for our bank details), or by overseas debit or credit card with a 2.5% transaction charge. Please note we do not accept cheques on US Banks in US Dollars, or cheques in Euros or Eurocheques.

Late Booking Payments: In order for us to guarantee your airline seats, hotels etc., full payment is required at time of booking for all

late bookings (*i.e. bookings made within 12 weeks of departure*).

Other Things You Need To Know

Passports & Visas

For UK passport holders, your **passport** must be valid for the proposed duration of your stay.

Although you do not need any additional period of validity on your passport beyond this, when travelling anywhere overseas we **always recommend** your passport has a minimum of 6 months left to run after your intended date of return home, in case of unforeseen delay.

• **VISA NOT REQUIRED by British citizens** to enter Romania.

Holders of non-UK passports should contact the nearest Romanian embassy or consulate to enquire whether or not they require a visa. If a visa is required, you need to apply locally. If the embassy or consulate requires you to provide a letter confirming that you are booked on an all-inclusive tour, please contact our office and we will be happy to provide one.

Health & Vaccinations

Compulsory vaccinations: None.

Recommended vaccinations: For travel everywhere (even within the UK), we recommend you check you are up-to-date with protection against tetanus, polio and hepatitis A. Check with your doctor for current advice about typhoid, diphtheria and hepatitis B, which may occasionally be recommended in some circumstances.

Ticks occur in grassy, forested and wetland areas below 1400m during the summer months across most of continental Europe, including Romania. If you are at all concerned by this, you may wish to seek advice about inoculations and other measures to prevent tick-related problems prior to travel.

The above information, together with that contained within our Travel Information sheets (sent to everyone who books), outlines health requirements for this tour. **Please note that these details are given for guidance only - and are only for certain diseases - and you must consult your doctor in good time prior to travel as to what immunisations (if any) are needed for your chosen holiday.**

For full and up-to-date health information we **urge everyone to consult The National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) website www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk prior to booking any overseas holiday.** NaTHNaC is funded by the UK Government's Health Protection Agency and provides health information for both health professionals and travellers, with information compiled by its own clinical and scientific team. You can search for individual country requirements, which are updated regularly.

Your Safety & Travel Advice

An unavoidable aspect of travelling abroad nowadays is the risk it may pose to your safety and security. The best advice on current risks is provided by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO). In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination we **strongly recommended** that you refer to the relevant FCO Travel Advice - both prior to booking and regularly before you travel. See www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

It is standard Limosa policy for our office to send a copy of the relevant FCO Travel Advice about the tour to all participants along with their Final Letter (ca. 2-3 weeks prior to the trip).

'**Travel Aware**' - staying safe and healthy abroad - is a travel safety campaign run by the FCO, and another useful resource. Go to: <https://www.gov.uk/travelaware>

Travel Insurance

Good travel insurance is **essential** before setting off on any overseas trip. In common with all responsible tour operators, **it is a condition of booking** that all clients are fully and adequately insured before travelling overseas with us.

Your travel insurance should cover against cancellation, curtailment, missed departure, delay, personal accident, death, loss of baggage and valuables (see note below), personal liability and legal expenses. Most importantly, your insurance must cover you fully in respect of medical care and repatriation should you become too ill to continue with the tour, including the cost of emergency evacuation by helicopter or air ambulance should this be necessary. Note that passenger liability insurance covering the transportation that we hire may be inadequate; it is therefore important that your insurance cover includes sufficient provision for your dependents in the event of an accident.

We recommend that you obtain travel insurance as soon as possible after booking your holiday to ensure you are protected right from the word go in the event of unexpected cancellation prior to departure due to accident or illness. You must inform your insurers of any pre-existing medical conditions (including those of persons not necessarily travelling but upon whom your holiday may depend) that may require treatment during a period of overseas travel or might cause you to cancel the trip.

Once you have arranged your insurance, please be sure to send us the following essential details: name and contact details of your insurance provider, your policy number, expiry date and your insurers 24hr Emergency Assistance number.

Important Things to Note about Insurance

Travel Insurance does **not** normally provide sufficient cover for valuable optical equipment, which is often best protected under your own household insurance policy. If in doubt ask your insurers for advice prior to travel.

Most travel insurance policies limit the amount of cover, typically up to a maximum tour cost of £5000 per person. If the tour you are booking exceeds this amount, additional cover can usually be provided upon payment of additional premium. **We recommend all travellers** check their individual policy limit to ensure the full cost of their holiday is covered.

Arranging Your Insurance: due to UK Government legislation, under Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulations, we are not allowed to offer or recommend travel related insurance to customers. Premiums can vary widely according to your age, needs, health, choice of destination and other factors, while many people nowadays have Annual Travel Insurance cover. For these reasons, we leave you free to shop around and pick your own policy, one best suited to your own individual needs.

General Information

www.limosaholidays.co.uk

Our website gives easy access to detailed tour itineraries (Tour Info Packs), trip reports, trip photos and the latest Limosa News.

Special Diets & Other Requests

We pass on all such requests to the airlines, hotels and other suppliers, and do our best to ensure (but of course cannot guarantee) that your needs will be met. Please be sure to tell us about these (in as much detail as possible) at the time of booking, to allow good time to make the necessary arrangements.

Smoking

Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. For the enjoyment and comfort of all, we ask that smokers refrain from smoking in proximity to the group and respect our NO SMOKING policy in the vehicle, at meal times and when watching wildlife.

Any Questions?

If you have any questions at any time, you'll find our office staff friendly, efficient, approachable - and just a phone call away, eager to assist you in every way. Our office is open 09.00-17.00 hrs Mon-Fri, and can also be reached by fax and email. In the event we are unable to take your call, please leave a message on our answerphone (24 hrs) and our office will contact you as soon as we can.

Thank you for your interest in our tours. We do hope that you will be able to join us - and we look forward to hearing from you again!

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