Phi Mu Foundation presents

Easter Trip to the South of Bulgaria

April 16 - 25, 2011

Sofia • Koprivshtitza • Kazanluk • Stara Zagora
Plovdiv • Velingrad • Bansko • Gotze Delchev • Pirin
Melnik • Rila Monastery • Sapareva Banya

plus - A Taste of Romania

April 25 - May 1, 2011

Bucharest • Sinaia • Brasov • Bran • Viscri • Sighisoara • Biertan • Richis
Malancrav • Sibiel • Sibiu • Olt Valley • Hurez Monastery • Curtea de Arges

Reservation please by January 6!

Travel Concepts International, Inc.
Cultural Tours to Better Understand the World and its People
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The Seven Wonders of Bulgaria

By Rossitza Ohridska-Olson
Written exclusively for the patrons of Serious Traveler

Seven monuments and churches, preserving the spirit of a millennia history on the lands of Bulgaria, are included in the UNESCO Cultural Heritage list. They are part of a larger legacy encompassing several civilizations and cultures with significant importance for the humanity. Witnesses of the Thracian, Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, and Bulgarian past, these seven wonders stand as pillars of artistic continuity between history and present.

The Ivanovo Monasteries
The rock-cut monasteries of Ivanovo are an integral part of the large monastery complex of “St. Michael the Archangel”, an exceptional spiritual and literary center of Bulgarian medieval art. Carved high in the rocks above the Lom River gorge, this cluster of churches, chapels and monasteries shines with beautifully painted frescos dating back to the 12th through the 17th centuries. The Ivanovo monasteries once had 40 churches and housed more than 300 monks in cave-like monastic cells. Now the complex is a cultural monument preserving unique examples of 14th century Bulgarian and Byzantine art.

The Thracian Tomb of Sveshtari
With its unique architecture and lavish decoration, the Sveshtari tomb is among the most prominent Thracian tombs ever built. It was discovered in 1982 as part of an ancient religious center erected by the Thracians in 4th century BC. Along the walls of the main chamber, there are ten sculptured female figures (caryatids) with raised hands, wearing dresses in the form of inverted lotus flowers. The half-moon shaped space (lunette) at the back wall is decorated with a fresco depicting a rider looking at a goddess offering him a crown. This unfinished mural scene is interpreted as heroization or investiture and highlights the royal character of the Sveshtari Tomb.

The Madara Rider
The Madara Rider (Horseman) is a unique bas-relief dating back to the early middle ages. Carved into the rock onto an almost vertical cliff during the early 8th century, the monument depicts a majestic horse and a rider. The rider is thrusting a spear into a lion lying at his horse’s feet. A dog is running behind the horse. This incredible rock carving is a wonderful example of medieval art in Bulgaria. The scene symbolically depicts a military triumph during the times of the First Bulgarian Empire. Art historians also connect the relief with the ancient tradition of portraying the Thracian Horseman.

The Ancient City of Nessebar
Nessebar is one of the smallest towns on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast, but at the same time one of the most beautiful and charming ones. Originally a Thracian settlement known as Menepria, founded in the 2nd millennium BC, the town was colonized by Dorian from Megara at the beginning of the 6th century BC. Remains from the Hellenistic period include an acropolis, a temple of Apollo, and an agora. The walls that formed part of the Greek fortifications can still be seen.

From the 5th century onwards Nessebar was one of the most important strongholds of the Byzantine Empire. The Bulgarian ruler Khan Krum captured the city in 812. Between the 9th and the 14th centuries, Nessebar often altered its adherence to Bulgaria or Byzantium, without loosing its affluence. Unfortunately, these centuries of prosperity ended with the Crusaders’ conquest in 1366.

The Boyana Church
The Boyana Church, built in three periods (10th, 13th and 19th centuries) owes its world fame mainly to its frescoes painted in 1259. These frescoes form a second layer over paintings from earlier centuries and represent one of the most complete and well-preserved examples of the Veliko Turnovo Art School.

The portraits of the patrons of the church, Sebastocrator Kaloyan and his wife Desislava, are considered as precursors of the Renaissance art that emerged in Italy a century later. The frescoes are an artistic bridge between Byzantine Art and the Italian Quattrocento.
Dear Phi Mu Sisters, Families and Invited Friends of Phi Mu,

We are presenting two carefully designed tours for Phi Mu travelers this spring, which allow you the option of taking one or both. We have operated trips to both Bulgaria and Romania in the past and we enthusiastically offer these two itineraries. Of course any of your family, young and of a certain age, are welcome. You may make your own air arrangements or we can assist.

I’m fully aware that this is late notice, but we hope you’ll be able to adjust your schedule and participate in this unique Easter experience.

We are asking for reservations by January 6th so we know if we have the minimum required to operate the trip. We hope to be able to add more later. We’ll be in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria for Palm Sunday and tour for 10 days through quaint villages and millennia old cities such as Roman Plovdiv, visiting UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the Valley of Roses, and learning about the Thracians and local customs.

We’ll enjoy private concerts and special events. A highlight will be Easter Midnight Mass at Rila Monastery. Together we’ll discover the enchanting land of Orpheus (the magical musician of antiquity), Dionysus (the God of Wine), and the rebellious Spartacus. With this trip, we’ll have the pleasure of immersing ourselves in these well- and lesser-known cultures. Forget the myth that former communist states are gray and drab. The country fairly bursts with color.

Our tour connects us with the modern Bulgarian people’s peaceful, balanced and joyful lifestyle. You’ll have a chance to meet them at Easter festivities and in restaurants, museums and numerous sidewalk cafes. (Incidentally, the San Francisco Chronicle notes there are more coffee shops in Sofia than in Paris!) The Bulgarians invariably find a friendly way to share their culture with us. We can always learn something new and exciting from one another.

We hope you’ll also continue to Romania. In fact, if you can’t make Bulgaria, maybe you could join us for just Romania.

Please help us spread the word. Sarah and I look forward to welcoming you and preparing you for another Phi Mu adventure.

Gwen Erwood
Phi Mu, Delta Epsilon Chapter, Purdue University
Easter in Bulgaria
April 16 - 25, 2011

We Will Get You There
What's best for you is best for us! We are more than happy to arrange air transportation for you. You may also use frequent flyer mileage instead, or take advantage of a low internet specials.

Traveling Solo?
If you plan to travel alone, let us try to match you with a suitable roommate to avoid the single supplement. In fact, with 25 travelers in Bulgaria, we will guarantee a room share. An early deposit will better assure you of a share. Roommates will be assigned shortly before departure in case a friend decides to accompany those under deposit. For those who prefer to room alone, a single supplement will apply.

Dates & Rates
Easter in Bulgaria Tour
April 16 - 25, 2011 • 10 Days
$2760 per person double occupancy
Beginning and ending in Sofia, Bulgaria
Single Supplement: $560

A Taste of Romania Tour
April 25 - May 1, 2011 • 7 Days
$1990 per person double occupancy
Beginning and ending in Bucharest, Romania
Single supplement: $570

Airfare additional

We Will Get You There
What’s best for you is best for us! We are more than happy to arrange air transportation for you. You may also use frequent flyer mileage instead, or take advantage of a low internet specials.

Pretrip study material plus flight bag, luggage strap and document holder are our gifts to you.
Today we explore the town of Plovdiv. Our tour starts in the Old Town at the Roman theater, and continues to the Houses of the Hindlian and Balabanov’s families, wealthy merchants of the 19th century. Enjoy browsing through the numerous galleries and antique shops located in Old Town. Stop for a coffee break at one of the elegant restaurants in a beautifully restored home before departing to Bachkovo monastery in the afternoon. Lunch near the monastery. It can be in a private home of Efrosina or at the famous monastery’s restaurant. Before we return to Plovdiv we have the opportunity to taste local wine at one of boutique private wine cellars of the region. Overnight in Plovdiv. (B,L)

Hotel Trimontium****

April 21  Plovdiv – Velingrad

Thursday Bansko

We leave the fertile Thracian Plain to enjoy the views of the scenic road across the Rhodopes Mountains. Stop in the spa center—the town of Velingrad. Here we join local people to paint and dye Easter eggs and listen to a concert by a group of local gentleman. We continue to the town of Bansko, located at the foothills of Pirin Mountain just below the marble Vihren peak (9,563 feet). The town has preserved its old central part, but is now surrounded by a winter-mountain sport center. Dine tonight at a private tavern in the old town. Drive 115 miles total today and overnight in Bansko. (B,L)

Hotel TBA****

April 22  Bansko

Holy Friday

Gotze Delchev

Village of Pirin

Melnik

Before leaving Bansko we visit the church of The Holly Trinity and participate in the ritual of passing under the table with Jesus Christ’s symbolic shroud.

We drive further southward to reach the town of Gotze Delchev and then crossing the lower parts of Pirin Mountain, we will arrive at the smallest town in Bulgaria—Melnik.

The area of Melnik is famous for its wine, beautiful sand-stone formations and typical architecture dating back to the late Ottoman period. Drive 56 miles total today and overnight in Melnik. (B,L,D)

Hotel TBA***

April 23  All day in Melnik

Saturday

Today we explore the town of Melnik and its surroundings. See the old houses, the fabulous sand-stone formations and the Rozhen Monastery. This is the day women are expected to bake the traditional Easter bread (and there may be enough for lunch). We learn how to make it according to the old recipes of Melnik, when we visit a family. Our hosts are young, but the tradition is still well kept in their home.

After lunch we drive to the famous Rila Monastery. We will try to book rooms in the monastery for overnight or will stay at little hotel nearby. Dinner in nearby restaurant with the optional opportunity to participate in Midnight mass at Rila Monastery’s main church. Both accommodations are extremely simple, just a bed in the room, no TV, no radio, but the serenity of being there at that magic night is a unique once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The exquisite Monastery of Rila (pictured on page 1 of this brochure) is situated deep in the heart of Rila Mountain at an altitude of 3766 feet above the sea level. It is a virtual outdoor museum. Prepared with warm clothes, shoes, gloves and a hat, we can enjoy the celebration that takes place in the monastery courtyard. (B,D)

Rila Monastery or nearby hotel

We’ll Be in Excellent Hands

We will have the pleasure and the honor to be guided by the same charming lady who accompanies the most prestigious VIPs and diplomats coming to Bulgaria. Consultant for books and scientific studies about Bulgaria, Luba Boyanin thoroughly knows her country to the smallest detail and will be proud to share the secrets of its history, archaeology and cuisine with us.

Her 19+ years of experience as a tour guide for the most demanding travelers to Bulgaria taught her how to make this unknown destination friendly and accessible for many Americans, Brits and visitors from around the world. Self-taught as a tour guide, after a brilliant career as an engineer, she passes on to her guests the same enthusiasm for knowing Bulgaria as she has for her homeland.

With raving reviews of her work as a tour guide and with hundreds of “thank you for the great experience” letters, she is one of the best guides we could dream of, when it comes to touring Bulgaria.
A Taste of Romania

April 25 - May 1, 2011

This tour may be taken as an extension of the Bulgaria tour, in which case a flight is required from Sofia to Bucharest. Please included this with your international air routing. If arriving from the U.S., you will most likely need to depart Sunday, April 24 in order to arrive Monday, April 25.

April 25
Monday
Arrive Bucharest
Welcome to Romania! Check in to our well-located hotel and stroll around in Lipscani area. Dinner is at our hotel. (Optional performance at the Athenaeum, subject to scheduling.) (D)

**** Ramada Majestic Hotel

Hotel TBA

April 26
Tuesday
Bucharest - Sinaia Brasov
We start the morning with a visit to the Parliament House, the megalomaniacal project of the communist dictator Ceausescu. Leaving Bucharest, we head towards Ploiesti; its history and today’s activity are related to refineries and the petroleum industry. But not far from the city, hectares of vineyards fill the hills. The area lies on the 45th degree parallel, the same latitude as the French area of Bordeaux. As we are in the wine country, we enjoy a lunch in a winery and, of course, have a taste of wine.

After lunch, we continue to Sinaia, to visit Peles Castle – a royal palace built as a summer residence for the first king of Romania, Carol I. The castle was constructed between 1875 and 1883 in a German Renaissance style. In the evening, we arrive to Brasov for overnight accommodation in the center. Brasov (Kronstadt) was originally a medieval town of Sighisoara for an overnight accommodation right in the old center. (B,L)

**** Casa Wagner ***

April 27
Wednesday
Sighisoara
We drive 30 km southwest of Brasov to visit the famous Bran castle, built in 1377. In 1920 the castle became the summer residence of Queen Marie of Romania, the granddaughter of Queen Victoria of England. The castle is strangely linked to Count Dracula even though it is doubtful that Vlad the Impaler ever spent the night here. Continue our drive to Viscri, located in a remote hidden valley in the heart of Transylvania. Here, an English-Romanian foundation called Mihai Eminescu Trust, has restored part of the church and at least 50 facades in the beautifully preserved village. The white fortified church that gives the village its Saxon name, Deutschweisskirch, is UNESCO-designated. Have a look inside accompanied by a local Saxon guide. The town of Viscri was visited twice by HRH Prince Charles of Wales, who also owns a house here. Enjoy a private lunch with a Saxon family in the village. We head to the fascinating medieval town of Sighisoara for an overnight accommodation right in the old center. (B,L)

March 28
Thursday
Sighisoara - Bierțan - Malancrav
Sighisoara is considered to be the most beautiful and complete medieval architectural ensemble in Romania and the most beautiful inhabited citadel throughout Europe. The medieval citadel is perched on a hillock and is fortified with a 14th century wall. The rooftop views from the Clock Tower museum are not to be missed! We
make an excursion 18 miles west to Biertan, where we find the largest Saxon defensive fortress. With its three surrounding walls, Biertan is considered to be among the most fantastic structure of the Saxon heritage in Transylvania. The fortified church is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Not far from Biertan, hidden in the valley, we find Richis and its beautiful Gothic church, unique in Romania for its stone carvings and the green men. Decrypt the secrets of the church with the Saxon gentleman who opens it for you, Mr. Schass. Then have a private lunch in Richis with a local family in a fine restored Saxon house. We make one more stop in Malancrav to admire the 15th century frescoes of the church, the widest frescoes which remain in a Lutheran church. Outside the church lies the very well restored Apafi Manor. Return to Sighisoara for overnight accommodation. (B,L)

**April 29**

**Friday**

**Sighisoara**

**Sibiel - Sibiu**

Crossing the Transylvanian Plateau, we head closer to the Middle Carpathians. In the mountain foothills we visit the Glass Icons Museum in Sibiel (the largest one in Europe), and then we enjoy a lunch with a view over the village. There is time to explore Sibiu in the afternoon, the first town in Romania that in 2007 bore the title European Capital of Culture together with its twin town in western Europe, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Sibiu has gathered together nearly 80 hectares of old architecture; it is one of the best-preserved medieval towns in southeastern Europe. Dinner is at a traditional restaurant. (B,L,D)

**Ramada Sibiu Hotel ****

April 30  Olt Valley

**Saturday**

**Hurez Monastery**

**Curtea de Arges**

**Bucharest**

We drive south along Olt valley to Bucharest, again passing the Carpathians. We make small detours to visit Hurez monastery and Curtea de Arges. Hurez monastery was built by Prince Brancoveanu in 17th century, while Curtea de Arges is the place where the kings of Romania are buried. Have lunch with the nuns in Hurez monastery. Continue to the capital city. Bucharest’s first documentary attestation dates back to 1459 (only six years after the tragedy of Christianity- the fall of Constantinople), when a princely residence and military citadel were established under the chancellery of Prince Vlad Tepes. The oldest settlement in Bucharest is the Old Princely Court (Curtea Veche), built by Vlad the Impaler as the official residence of the Walachian princes. You can still see its ruins today. Overnight accommodation is in Bucharest at the same hotel as first night. Dinner is at a traditional restaurant with live folk music. (B,L,D)

**Ramada Majestic Hotel ****

May 1  Bucharest

**Sunday**

In the morning transfer to the airport. (B)
The Thracian Civilization

By Rossitza Ohridska-Olson
Written exclusively for the patrons of Serious Traveler

During the last few years extraordinary archeological discoveries in Bulgaria attracted the attention of the world. Exquisite treasures, mystic burial sites and monumental temples have been brought to light. Gold weapons, created with technology unknown to the rest of the world, made international headlines. Precious jewelry amazed scientists around the globe. Religious complexes, serving thousands of pilgrims, and built before the Athenian temples, caused the rethinking of history time lines. All these findings attracted the attention to the forgotten European civilization of the Thracians.

The Thracian civilization appeared roughly around the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 4th millennium BC. Thrace was a unifying name for the people living on the territory of modern day Bulgaria, Northern Greece, Western Turkey, Romania, Moldova, South Ukraine, the Former Republic of Macedonia and Serbia.

The first written record about the Thracians comes from Homer, who described in the Iliad the arrival of the Thracian King Rhesus (Latin: “Rex”, English: “Royal”): “His chariot is arrayed with silver and gold, and he has brought his marvelous golden armour, of the rarest workmanship - too splendid for any mortal man to carry, and meant only for the gods”.

Herodotus wrote: “The Thracians are the most numerous people after the Indians. They are differently named in each region but the manners and customs of the whole nationality remain just the same everywhere.” Plato mentioned the Thracians in “The Republic” as passionate and spiritual, claiming that their religious processions for Bendis were more beautiful than the Athenian ones.

During your journey in Bulgaria you will visit the ruins of several Thracian sanctuaries and cult sites. The Thracians had their own religion, Thracian Orphism. They believed that the life cycle began and never ended – birth and death were followed unconditionally by the afterlife. The Thracian kings, warrior-priests of the Orphic cult, were consecrated through mystical rituals. During those ceremonies they used magnificent artifacts, now displayed at many museums of Bulgaria. Perceived by us as gold, silver and sometimes gilt silver treasures, those objects are the ritual relics of man’s aspiration for immortality.

The Thracians were in constant contacts with the Sumerians, Egyptians, Greeks, Persians, Phoenicians, and later on with the Romans. In the course of these interchanges they transferred some of their religious beliefs to other peoples in the Mediterranean region. Dionysus, the god of wine and the patron of the theater (Bacchus for the Romans), and the goddess Bendis (Artemis for the Greeks, Diana for the Romans) came from the Thracian Pantheon. Orpheus, “the father of songs”, was a symbolic representation of the Thracian king-priests. Through the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, he later became a figure of Greek mythology.

The Thracians were also famous in the ancient world for their superb craftsmanship and advanced weaponry. Engaged in constant military conflicts (on the side of the Trojans during the Trojan War, on the side of the Athenians during the Persian Wars), the Thracians mastered the art of war to perfection. Spartacus, the legendary gladiator and slave, turned rebel against the Roman Empire, was born in the Roman province of Thrace.

Thracian priestesses and women-warriors became part of legends and myths surviving until today in folk tales across South Eastern Europe. While visiting Bulgaria, don’t be fouled by the naivety of a village “granny” or a bubbly maiden: they probably still go to collect healing herbs on the night of the summer Equinox. Or they might still dance on the burning coals through the night on May 21st. Those dances, called Anestinaria (Nestinary), are the incarnation of an ancient tradition believed to be part of the Dionysus mysteries.

No matter where you go in Bulgaria, you will always see traces of the Thracian civilization – in archeological museums, architectural monuments and gold treasures. Christians transformed the Thracian God Rider (Thracian Hero) into St. George fighting the dragon. You will see his icons almost in every church in Bulgaria. Dionysus is still very much alive in modern Bulgaria through the appreciation of wine and the people’s Epicurean lifestyle.

Most of the Thracian civilization is still waiting to be discovered by archeologists. In ancient times, the Thracian civilization had served as an intermediary of ideas, technologies and artistic traditions between the East and the West. Moreover, the Thracians contributed further to the continuity between antiquity and modern ages, making their civilization relevant to all of us. Explore this ancient civilization in your delightful trip to Bulgaria!
Important Traveler Information

As of 3/26/2010

TOUR PRICE
Bulgaria tour price based on double occupancy is $2760
Romania tour price based on double occupancy is $1990
Bulgaria single supplement is $560
Romania single supplement is $570

RESERVATIONS AND PAYMENT
Please send required deposit of $300 per person for Bulgaria and an additional $300 for Romania (total $600), by January 6. Notification of trip status on January 11. Should we be unable to confirm space, the deposit will be refunded in full. Final payment is due January 21. Payments by cheque, payable to Travel Concepts International or by credit card, American Express, MasterCard or Visa.

TRAVELING SOLO?
Bulgaria single supplement rate: $560
Romania single supplement rate: $570
Single rooms are subject to availability and may be smaller than twin and double rooms. Traveling alone? If you don’t have a travel companion, let us try to match you with another Phi Mu to avoid the single supplement. An early reservation will better assure you of a share. Roommates will be assigned shortly before departure, in case a friend wants to accompany someone under deposit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS
What’s best for you is best for us. There are many discounted airfares available, you may avail yourself of these and make your own arrangements from your home city. Please check with your travel agent or search via the internet for comparable fares before contacting TCI. If you decided to have us handle your air, please note that we will do so only once we have the minimum needed to operate the tour. Here is how the process will work from there:

1. Tell us the itinerary you want including dates. (Remember you must depart the U.S. on April 15 in order to arrive Sofia on April 16.)
2. We book the flights if possible and revert back to you with a schedule and rate.
3. You will then carefully check the dates and airports.
4. Understanding there are significant cancellation and change penalties once ticketed, you okay the flights and rate or you don’t.
5. If you approve of the itinerary and rate, we will need to ticket immediately. Sarah will ask you to approve the charge on your credit card to us.
6. When you approve, your credit card will charged.
7. The tickets will be issued and sent with final documents (by FedEx two-day delivery)

The problem working with consolidators is that we can only book what is available at the time and the tickets must be issued in 48 hours (sometimes up to a week). So we hope you understand and are willing to cooperate with us to secure the flights you want.

Since the air is going to be charged to your credit card, please put the credit card number and expiration date in writing so we have it on file. That way once you authorize the airline tickets, we will have what we need on hand.

Again, if you want to use frequent flyer mileage or other means of securing your tickets, that is perfectly fine with us. This is why we priced the tour as a land-only tour. However, please DO NOT make final purchase of your tickets until after January 26 or until you have received notice that we have reached the minimum of number of participants needed to operate the tour. Flight schedules are always subject to change.

TOUR INFORMATION
On receipt of deposit, Travel Concepts International will send confirmation of space and information on optional travel insurance. Updates will be sent from time to time. After final payment is received, study material and a letter will be sent with information regarding luggage allowance, weather, packing, shopping and money. About 14 days prior to departure, we will send final documents via Federal Express. They...
will consist of your airline tickets (if we book them), hotel and participant/rooming lists, emergency numbers and any last-minute notes. Participants will be notified prior to mailing, but must advise TCI in advance if any other address than that given on the Reservation Form is to be used. Rerouting charges will be billed to the client. All tour members must meet payment and document submittal deadlines to insure timely processing of air tickets, and other tour material.

**CUSTOMS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

A passport with validity through April 2011 for Bulgaria and May 2011 for Romania is required. No visas are required for U.S. citizens traveling to Bulgaria nor Romania. In the section for visas/entries and departures your passport should have space for entry and exit stamps (excluding those marked amendments.) If passport needs to be renewed or pages need to be added, please use their Expedited Service and overnight mail for processing (this takes about two weeks). If not a U.S. citizen, passenger is responsible for obtaining whatever documentation is necessary for entry into countries to be visited. Regulations are subject to change, and we will try to inform you of the latest changes.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE**

If we cancel the trip for any reason, your money is refunded in full. Situations may arise, voluntarily or involuntarily, in which the traveler cancels. Traveler is advised that insurance is available covering trip cancellation, lost or damaged baggage, medical needs, and certain travel-related accidents. We highly recommend trip-cancellation insurance. You will be sent an application upon receipt of deposit. Most insurance companies now have a clause which invalidates the insurance if there is a “pre-existing condition.” If you have such a medical problem yourself, or a situation in the family, which could very well cause you to cancel (such as an ill elderly parent), please consider taking the insurance soon after receiving confirmation. The insurance companies now offer to drop the “pre-existing exclusion” when insurance is purchased within 14 days of the initial trip deposit. Call or write to us if you need an advance copy of the insurance application, or visit our website and click on “Purchase Travel Protection.” If you purchase insurance and TCI cancels the trip, we will provide a letter for the insurance company so you can request a full refund of your premium less their service charge of $8.

**GROUP SIZE AND COMPOSITION**

Price of the Bulgaria tour is based on 25 participants; and on the Romania tour, 15 participants. On the trip status date of January 11, all participants under deposit will be contacted by TCI. If fewer than 25 travelers are under deposit for Bulgaria as of that date, you will have the opportunity to continue with a smaller group, at an additional cost. If there is an increase, you may cancel your reservation without penalty. We will operate the tour with 20 to 24 participants at an additional charge of $90, $2830 per person, hosted locally throughout. We will operate the tour with 15 to 19 participants at an additional charge of $220, $2980 per person, hosted locally throughout. We will operate the tour with 10 to 15 participants at an additional charge of $390, $3150 per person, hosted locally throughout.

If fewer than 15 travelers are under deposit for Romania as of that date, you will have the opportunity to continue with a smaller group, at an additional cost. If there is an increase, you may cancel your reservation without penalty. We will operate the tour with 9 to 14 participants at an additional charge of $390, $2380 per person, hosted locally throughout. We will operate the tour with 6 to 8 participants at an additional charge of $660, $2650 per person, hosted locally throughout.

Our Phi Mu groups are composed of men and women of all ages and school-aged children interested in other cultures are welcome as well. Our Phi Mu trips, we have had three generations traveling together.

**A WORD ON TIPS and TAXES**

All local and government taxes on hotels, meals, and services are included, as are normal gratuities to porters, waiters, and drivers. A reasonable tip is also included for our guide with 25 participants in Bulgaria and 15 participants in Romania. The local departure tax, if any (currently $20.34 from Bulgaria) must be paid by every tour member in the local currency at the time of departure. U.S. departure taxes and applicable fuel surcharges in effect at time of ticketing (if we book your air) are billed separately and due with final payment.

**ALL THIS IS INCLUDED**

Price is per person, based on double occupancy beginning in Sofia, Bulgaria. Airfare is additional. Comprehensive sightseeing program, including the services of English speaking guides and entrance fees to attractions are included. All transportation within the tour is by private motor coach; baggage handling for one piece of luggage per person; accommodations, two twin beds to a room at hotels listed (limited singles available at stated supplement); full breakfast daily, other meals as indicated in the itinerary B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner, bottled water on coaches and tea/coffee and all included meals (in Bulgaria).

**ARE THERE ITEMS NOT INCLUDED?**

Yes, a few: cost of round-trip air transportation to Sofia, Bulgaria and from Sofia, Bulgaria or Bucharest, Romania; transportation between Sofia and Bucharest if combining tours; passport; any items of purely personal nature, such as laundry, faxes, calls, food and beverages not included in meals provided; meals not specified as part of the program; optional performances and excursions not mentioned in the itinerary; transfers between airports and hotels; airfare and U.S. departure taxes; departure tax from Bulgaria and/or Romania based on rates in effect at the time, and paid in local currency (currently from Bulgaria $20.34); and optional insurance.

**WEATHER**

Springtime weather is variable as it is worldwide. So, it is wise to be prepared for temperature variations throughout the tour. The average high/low temperatures in Fahrenheit according to weatherbase.com are 58/41 in Sofia, 64/45 in Plovdiv, 62/42 in Bucharest, 32/20 in Brasov and 59/39 in Sibiu. Bulgaria and Romania both see a fair amount of precipitation (1.5 – 2.5 inches of rain for each month), so we’ll enjoy the countryside as it awakens from its winter slumber.

**LUGGAGE**

The tour provides for luggage handling of one large sturdy piece of luggage only. Hand-sided luggage is the safest, and should have built-in wheels for moving through customs. One piece of hand luggage, small enough to fit under an airline seat, is allowable and most convenient. The hand luggage may also double as a day bag during excursions. If a person wishes to take a larger hand piece, they must be able to lift the bag themselves into the overhead storage area of aircraft and manage it through customs and airports in addition to their larger suitcase. Hand luggage will not be portered and will be kept inside the coach with the owner. A person may
pack another foldable bag inside their luggage, or purchase an additional bag during the tour in order to bring home purchases, but additional luggage handling will be charged. Excess baggage weight, beyond that which is allowable by the airlines, may also be charged at the airports. Travel Concepts International accepts no liability for loss of or damage to luggage. We recommend baggage insurance as an additional precaution. All luggage must be clearly identified with the owner’s name.

**HOTELS**

We have made every effort to select hotels that are centrally located and among the best available. Hotels are subject to change. If necessary, a hotel of same category will be substituted. Rates include taxes and service charges. In general, hotel rooms in Bulgaria and Romania are usually smaller than those in the United States, and it is not unusual for one room to differ from the next. Hotels may not match the usual standards of American and Western European hotels. It is standard policy that hotel rooms are not usually available before 2:00 PM. Normal hotel checkout time is usually before 12:00 noon.

**Crystal Palace ******

With its 63 beautifully appointed, spacious rooms and suites Crystal Palace Hotel offers superior service of a boutique hotel in the heart of downtown Sofia, steps away from Alexander Nevski Cathedral, St. Kliment Ohridski University and St. Kiril and Metodii National Library.

**Trimontium Hotel****

This is Plovdiv’s most emblematic hotel since 1956, built in pseudo-classical Stalin style. It is a monumental 4-storey building, located in the center of the city near the old part of the town and at the beginning of a charming pedestrian street. Completely renovated, it has all the facilities of a superior class hotel.

**The Ramada Majestic Hotel*****

boasts comfort, intimacy and its location in the business, financial, cultural and shopping center of Bucharest. www.ramadamajestic.ro

The Aro-Palace Hotel***** is settled in the historical center and is the only five stars hotel in Brasov, being a standard in refinement, in neatness and in professionalism. www.aro-palace.ro

**Casa Wagner***

welcomes you in a unique historic setting on the main square of the citadel where hospitality is at its best. The 400 years old buildings of the complex are on the list of historic monuments of the UNESCO World heritage. www.casa-wagner.com

The Ramada Sibiu***** is a new modern building located in the city center with a panoramic elevator that overlooks the city below. www.ramadasibiu.ro

**MEALS**

Meals will be provided at hotels and local restaurants as indicated in the itinerary. Please advise us in advance of food restrictions so we may better prepare for you.

**TOUR MANAGERS AND GUIDES**

Although Luba is confirmed in Bulgaria and Ramona and her assistant in Romania as our Tour Managers and both are very excited to be leading us on this remarkable journey, there is always the possibility that an unexpected and unavoidable situation could occur, such as illness or a family emergency. In that unlikely instance, a qualified replacement will be hand-selected.

**GROUND TRANSPORTATION**

We will travel throughout Bulgaria and Romania in comfortable, air-conditioned coaches. Smoking is NOT permitted on the coaches. Seating will be rotated. Bottled water will be available in the coaches.

**HEALTH REGULATIONS**

No inoculations are required. Please see the CDC’s website for recommendations: www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO. We suggest you check with your doctor for medical advice regarding the trip and your health. It is also suggested you discuss updating your tetanus and diphtheria booster. Please note the elevation of Brasov, Romania is 8215 feet above sea level. To get the most out of a tour, a traveler should be in good physical and mental health, able and willing to walk, climb steps, and participate in group events. This trip requires moderate walking, sometimes over uneven or cobbled streets or paths. If assistance is needed, a participant should travel with a companion. Sightseeing will be at a leisurely pace and provision will be made for those who cannot walk quickly or very far. You must also be able to carry your own hand luggage, so please go light! Large bags will be portered, but you must be able to carry or pull your suitcase through customs. Any physical or mental disability requiring special help or assistance must be noted in writing on the reservation form. Travel Concepts International, Inc. (TCI) reserves the right not to accept or retain as a tour passenger any person whose condition or general deportment impedes the operation of the tour or affects the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of other passengers. A refund for unused tour services is the limit of TCI’s liability if such person is required to leave the tour.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVENTURE**

This tour is designed for those interested in learning about the history, culture, and natural areas of Bulgaria and Romania. This is a moderately active program (soft adventure). Since some of the travel will be in rural areas, travel participants need to be flexible concerning time schedules, food and weather. Roads may be bumpy. Don’t expect to find things exactly as they are at home! If that were the case, why travel? Occasionally, we may experience delays, alterations in the plans, some discomforts and inconveniences. But we will also experience a different culture and our minds and souls will be expanded! A spirit of adventure and tolerance is absolutely fundamental to participation in this trip.

**WANDERING POLICY**

We encourage everyone to partake in all of the sightseeing and special activities. We’ve spent months researching and preparing a full and exciting program. However, if you would like to venture out on your own, or take personal time for rest or shopping, you may do so. This is your trip! We only ask that you alert our group leader and guide when you will be separating and rejoining the group. Please take extra security precautions with your belongings.

**CHANGES IN ITINERARY**

Every effort will be made to operate this tour in accordance with the itinerary shown, including all features as advertised. Museums and features are subject to scheduling. Occasionally, changes are made to improve an itinerary or enhance a certain feature. Unforeseen local conditions beyond our control may prevent the completion of an itinerary or require alterations in an
itinerary. These local conditions can include inclement weather, seasonal variations in climate, changes in airline schedules and equipment, government appropriation of hotel space, and other events beyond our control that would jeopardize the traveler’s comfort, safety, health, or enjoyment. In these cases, the right is reserved to substitute hotels, and to alter the itinerary for the comfort and safety of the travelers. The right is also reserved to cancel the tour prior to departure.

RATES
Please be assured that we do everything possible to avoid raising prices. However, we have heard from our travelers that many prefer to make travel plans six months or more in advance. We understand that enjoyment of your trip begins many months before departure when you immerse yourself in the culture you are about to experience. Unfortunately, in some instances, our air and land suppliers are not able to guarantee prices this far in advance of our trips. When this is the case, we work with our suppliers to estimate as closely as possible what the price will be and feel confident that if any fluctuations do occur, they will be very minor. Having said that, please be advised that prices are subject to change if we are faced with increased costs, taxes, fuel surcharges and/or currency fluctuations over which we have no control.

As of the printing of this brochure, March 26, 2010, the exchange rate for one Euro is 1.37 USD. If there is a significant decrease in the value of the dollar at the time final payment is due a modest supplement will be added to the billing.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS
Should TCI cancel a departure for any reason whatsoever, including insufficient number of participants, full refund of all monies paid will be made. On the participant’s part, cancellation or change of date will result in a per person cancellation fee of $100, irrespective of reason up until December 23. Cancellation December 24 and January 15 will result in a cancellation fee of $300. Thereafter, refunds will only be in the amount recoverable from the land operators and airlines. Should your cancellation cause the number of participants to fall below the required number to operate the trip, and a replacement not be found, the full land portion of the trip will be forfeited. Air tickets once ticketed are nonrefundable.

Trip cancellation insurance, which reimburses you for cancellation penalties, is strongly recommended and an application will be sent upon receipt of deposit. Once the tour begins, no refund may be claimed for all or any part of the tour fee. Unused or changed hotel accommodations, transportation, or other services or features of the tour are neither refundable nor exchangeable. Cancellations will only be accepted in writing, addressed to Travel Concepts International, Inc., 5500 Bucks Bar Road, Placerville, CA 95667. The date such letter is received will determine the cancellation date.

RESPONSIBILITY
Travel Concepts International, Inc. acts only as the agent for the owners or contractors providing the means of transportation, hotels, and other services. No responsibility or liability is assumed for any act, error, omission, or for any injury, damage, loss accident, delay, or irregularity, which may be occasioned by reason of any defect in any vehicle, or through neglect or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger, or for any hotel proprietor, or for any other person engaged in carrying out the purpose for which tickets or vouchers are issued. Airlines and other carriers are not responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not aboard their planes or conveyances. Travel Concepts International, Inc. and or the passenger-associated companies accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delays or changes in flights or other services; sickness, weather, strikes, war, quarantine, accident, or other causes. Additional expense, if any, shall be borne by the passenger.

SELLER OF TRAVEL
In compliance with the State of California Department of Justice, Travel Concepts International, Inc. has registered with the Attorney General’s Office as a Seller of Travel. The number we have been assigned is 2005743-40, but this registration does not constitute approval by the State of California. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. Travel Concepts International deposits client’s funds into a trust account. All sales transactions with customers located in California provide a right of the California consumer to make a claim on the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. In the event of Travel Concepts International, Inc. default, you may be eligible for a refund of up to $15,000 from the California Restitution Fund. If you are located in California at the time of your purchase, you have a right to make a claim against the Fund for a refund of any money paid to Travel Concepts International, Inc. that is due because of Travel Concepts International Inc.’s bankruptcy, insolvency, cessation of operations, or material failure to provide services sold. All payments for transportation or travel service not provided to the passenger shall be promptly refunded, in accordance with the agreed-to-terms and conditions, unless the passenger otherwise instructs the seller of travel in writing. The claim must be filed within 60 days (or in some limited circumstances, within one year) after you become aware of your loss. For a claim form and additional information, write to:
Travel Consumer Restitution Corporation
P.O. Box 6001
Larkspur, CA 94977-6001

For all sales transactions with customers located outside of California: the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund does not cover this transaction. You are not eligible to file a claim against that Fund in the event of Travel Concepts International, Inc.’s default.
Please reserve my (our) space on the Phi Mu Foundation tour. Enclosed is the deposit per person. Payment by cheque should be payable to Travel Concepts International, Inc. Please complete section below for payment by credit card.

☐ Please book me (us) on both the South of Bulgaria with A Taste of Romania tour April 16 - 25, 2011 ($600 deposit)
☐ Please book me (us) on only the South of Bulgaria tour April 16 - 25, 2011 ($300 deposit, per person)
☐ Please book me (us) on only the Taste of Romania tour April 25 - May 1, 2011 ($300 deposit, per person)

Name(s) as on passport ____________________________________________________________

Name(s) for name badges __________________________________________________________

Mailing Address _________________________________________________________________

Physical Address (for Federal Express, if different than mailing address) __________________________

Home telephone # ____________________________ Work telephone # ____________________________

Fax # ____________________________ Email Address ____________________________ Receive PDF? (Y/N) _____

Please note with a √, the preferred contact method above.

Room share with __________________ Share request (Y/N) ___ Prefer to have single room & pay supplement (Y/N) ____

For couples: Two twin beds _________ One double bed _________

Special Dietary Requirements ____________________

☐ I will book my (our) own flights to Sofia/Bucharest
☐ Yes, please book my (our) airfare from (city/airport) _____________________

Seat preferences on airlines (for trans-Atlantic flights only) ________________

Passport Information exactly as on passport, first person:

Passport # _______________________________________________________________________

Date of Issue (day/month/year) ____________ Place of Issue/Authority ______________

Valid until (day/month/year) _______________ Nationality _________________________

Date of Birth (day/month/year) _______________ Place of Birth _______________________

Passport Information exactly as on passport, second person:

Passport # _______________________________________________________________________

Date of Issue (day/month/year) ____________ Place of Issue/Authority ______________

Valid until (day/month/year) _______________ Nationality _________________________

Date of Birth (day/month/year) _______________ Place of Birth _______________________

Phi Mu (Y/N) ___ Collegiate Chapter ________________ Alumnae Chapter ________________ Friend of ________________

Occupation (if retired, former occupation) ____________________________________________

Emergency contact(s) while traveling (name & relationship) ____________________________________________

Address, Telephone #s and Email address

___________________________________________ ____________________________ ____________
Credit Card Billing Address: Address City State Zip

I authorize TCI to charge my credit card for deposit (Y/N) ______

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

As gifts to our travelers, we provide a Travel Concepts International flight bag and luggage strap free of charge. Clients who have traveled with us before may wish not to receive another. Please circle all the item(s) you would like to receive:

Flight bag Luggage strap

I/We have carefully read the Important Information section of this brochure __________________________ ____________

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

Rev 3/26/2010

Allow me to be the first to welcome you to the tour! - [Signature]