

# **THE OTTOMAN EXPLORER RAILTOUR**

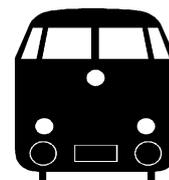
*(AN EIGHT-DAY TOUR BY RAIL)*

Saturday 14th to Saturday 21st September 2019



*All Inclusive Fare - Only £504.70*

Hotel Single Room Supplement £155.00 (optional)



A minimum deposit of £130.00 will secure your seat on this tour, and the balance must be paid by 1st August

**Interrail Bulgaria First Class £167 Second Class £129 - 4 days in one Month (optional)**

**Interrail Romania First Class £115 Second Class £107 - 3 days in one Month (optional)**

**7 Day First Class Global InterRail Ticket - £405.00 (optional)**

**7 Day Standard Class Global InterRail Ticket - £305.00 (optional)**

*NOTE. InterRail prices are 2018 rates and may have risen by the time the tour runs. Nearer the time we will check to ensure this is the cheapest form of travelling and not individual tickets.*

This tour will start in Sofia in Bulgaria and finish in the Romanian capital city of Bucureşti. Both of these cities have airports where flight options to and from a good number of UK airports can be made and for those who prefer “overland” transport journeys through Hungary etc. are available.

We are pleased to be going into Bulgaria again on the back of our successful tour there in 2017. It is time to visit new depots not seen since the 2010 Tour and ‘unfinished business’ in the capital Sofia. Those who were with us last time around will be pleased to know we will be visiting Express Service, a modern private repair facility in Ruse where the welcome added to the enjoyment of the tour. We then sweep into Romania over the Danube after spending a night in Ruse to revisit a country not seen by STARS for many years. Mainly concentrated close to the capital, we hope bring you a wide and varied tour in this country neglected by many – but cheap travel and food beckon – and much to see in the way of BIG engines in Romania. And finally, we have avoided the hottest months – it would be fair to say July in Bulgaria was a ‘warming’ experience!

*Please note: Over the course of the tour we will need to take taxis to some more remote locations away from stations. These taxis are not included in the cost of the tour.*

*Permit charges are made in both Countries and at the time of publication the exact amount is not known but likely to be in the region of £150 GBP per person. We will also explore the possibility of a formal photographic pass during our stay in Bulgaria. Both of these will be an additional cost.*

## **ITINERARY**

### **Arrival Day – Friday 13th September**

Our hotel is a short walk from Sofia station. No visits are planned for today but you should arrange to rendezvous in our hotel early evening for a briefing.

### **Overnight (Fri 13th / Sat 14th) - Hotel Budapest Sofia**

### **Day One – Saturday 14th September**

We head south today to **Dupnica Depot** and re-acquaint ourselves with the friendly greeting by staff from last time. From last tour we will skip Pernik on the return (nothing much to note there) and head back to Sofia where we will have a visit to **Sofia Central Depot** (was Vail Markov). The last visit of the day (probably by taxi move there and back to hotel) will be to **Podujane Depot** which through circumstances we were unable to visit last time around. Arrival back in our hotel will be early evening.

## Day Two – Sunday 15th September

Our move this morning will necessitate taking breakfast with us as we catch a train through to Burgas. At the time of writing this the train leaves at 0710. As we move eastwards across the Country we will have time to note what will be many numbers down and take photographs of locomotives at **Pirdop SP** in the yard and at the station. Please note though, we are not able to stop off as we must continue on the same train. Upon arrival at Burgas we will check into our hotel and make a move via the main station to Vladimir Pavlov to visit **Burgas Depot**. This visit concludes the day and you are free to explore the surrounding area or simply go back to the hotel for a well-deserved beer and food.

### Overnight (Sun 15th / Mon 16th) - Hotel Burgas, Burgas

## Day Three – Monday 16th September

An early start of 0640 from Burgas this morning (breakfast on the run again!). We pass through and view **Karnobat** and **Jambol** depots on route to the splendid **Stara Zagora Depot** where it will be ensured we will have a full and varied visit. On our return we will pass **Jambol Depot** again and stop off and visit **Karnobat Depot**.

We seek to arrive back in Burgas in the afternoon in sufficient time to visit various private depots that are situated in the area – but this will necessitate taxi moves.

## Day Four – Tuesday 17th September

Starting around seven in the morning sees us move hotel locations once more to Ruse but not before visiting two depots on the way. First up is the expansive **Varna Depot** reached just before midday. After completing what will be a fine visit with much to see we move and take in **Kaspichan SP** before finally reaching Ruse and our hotel early evening.

### Overnight - Grande Hotel Riga, Ruse

## Day Five – Wednesday 18th September

A relaxed start to the day sees us check-out of our hotel (but leave our luggage). Taxis will take us to the big **Ruse Depot** and **Workshops** plus **SPs** where steam locos will be seen. Again, the mode of transport will be taxis to and from **Express Service OOD** where will be assured a friendly greeting and a chance to see old friends! On return to the hotel, we will pick up our belongings and head to the station for our service into Romania which will be around four in the afternoon.

On our way into Romania over the Danube we will view **Giurgiu Depot** before arriving into București around seven in the evening and checking into our hotel which will now be our base until the end of the tour.

### Overnight (Wed 18th to Sat 21st inclusive) - Hotel Ibis București Gara de Nord

## Day Six – Thursday 19th September

The order of the day will be to make our move to the north east eventually hitting Galati and the banks once more of the River Danube and near to the border with Ukraine and Moldova - surely countries to visit for STARS in the future!

First up will be a view of **Brazi Depot** right by the station followed by a full visit to **Ploiesti Depot** where many locomotives are expected. We then carry on in the north east direction and pass through **Braila** where you will see a plinthead locomotive at the station along with the **Depot** on the right-hand side.

We arrive at Galati station midday and access **Galati Depot** off the platform for a full visit where again it is expected that there will be large numbers present. We now retrace our steps and pass through Braila towards Buzău. Here we make a full visit to **Buzău Depot** before heading back to our hotel at București.

### **Day Seven – Friday 20th September**

A later start today sees us head east towards the coast and the Black Sea. A journey of several hours will enable us to see much in the way of freight traffic and enjoy the wonderful countryside. Around nine thirty sees us arrive at Constanța. We will have a full visit at the big Cargo depot - **Constanța Palas Depot**. This will require a taxi to and from the depot. If time is with us we will also attempt to visit the separate **Constanța Dock Depot** and possibly the private depot **Euroest**. Moving back to the capital sees us stop off at **Medgidia Depot** before our final visit of the day at **Fetești Cargo Depot**. We return into București early evening for a well-deserved rest.

Please note: At the time of writing, Medgidia Depot is known to have closed but is used as a store. It could be we elect to spend more time at Constanța to visit locations there as time will be against us.

### **Day Eight – Saturday 21st September**

***This is the Capital day! Local transport will be used throughout today and not included in the price of the tour.***

We will visit **București Triaj**, **București Atori** and lastly **București Nord**.