

THE SÂNPETRU BIOARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL, ROMANIA

Program Information

PROGRAM SPECIFIC FIELD CONDITIONS

What are the average weather conditions during the time of the field school? (average temperature, humidity levels, amount of rain, wind, variation between day and night, etc.)

Summer in Romania is generally mild to hot, with average temperatures between 25°C/77° F and 35°C/95° F. Students should plan accordingly by bringing clothes and sun protection suitable for hot and sunny weather, but should also consider the possibility of wet, colder days and thus bring waterproof, layered clothing. Sturdy footwear is recommended, preferably hiking or work boots. Although the working conditions in the field are by no means difficult, students must be aware that excavation entails considerable strenuous physical activity and a lot of energy and effort (both physical and mental) go into carrying out both excavation and lab activities.

Please describe the site(s) where the students will work, for example, outside and/or inside; in a city, town or rural area; shady or sunny, etc.

The excavation site is located in the village of Sanpetru (north of Brasov), a very short bus or taxi drive away from the city. This makes it a quiet place not far from the buzz of the urban centre. Archaeological fieldwork will take place in the courtyard of the Reformed Evangelical church, an architectural and historical landmark in Sanpetru. Lectures and labs take place inside, while for all outside activities we have tents to provide further shade when it gets too hot.

Are there special features of the program site, for example, nearby important cultural areas, ambiance or scenery, interaction with staff, access to unique infrastructure, techniques or objects?

Both Sanpetru and nearby villages are places full of history. From hiking routes to medieval fortified churches (some of which are included in the Unesco Heritage list), the students will not be short of places to visit and discover (mostly with us). Excavating in Sanpetru is a privilege and a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity, even for the directors and staff! Furthermore, while post-ex processing finds and skeletal remains, the students have access to artefacts ranging from Prehistory to the modern period, and to one of the largest assemblages discovered in Romania.

Will there be other people onsite with the field school or working in the same area? For example, other researchers, staff, or community volunteers?

The parish priest normally interacts with staff and students, coming to receive research updates and check if everything is ok. The excavation and lecture/lab areas are generally accessible only to the field school staff and students. Because the church is in constant renovations or repairs, there might be workers, architects and engineers occasionally - we are told about these in

advance, and the students are asked to be respectful and be careful if they see activities other than our own taking place. There will be guest speakers, temporary staff, visiting researchers and students, visitors from the local and international community.

What does an average week look like (working times, lecture/discussion times, free time, weekends)?

A detailed schedule of working times is provided in the syllabus. Work starts at 8 am sharp, so students must be on the bus (privately rented to take them from the accommodation to the site) on time. Our schedule includes a balanced amount of lectures, seminars, workshops and fieldwork. It is flexible because we mold it around the weather and progress with fieldwork. We finish work at 4 pm and students are back to their accommodation before 5 pm, which means they can relax and spend quality time together before and after dinner. We will occasionally ask them to do group discussions for the day after. Weekends will be dedicated to additional cultural and heritage activities - with either Saturday or Sunday devoted to group activities such as visits to heritage sites or cultural events. Students will be given plenty of suggestions and itineraries for their independent trips.

What are the options for students to access money? Are there ATMs nearby? Should students plan to bring a certain amount of cash?

As of January 2025, there is an ATM in Sanpetru. There is also an ATM in Prejmer and plenty in Brasov. The students should exchange or withdraw some money at the airport - it is always good to have cash. However, a lot of transactions are now made with cards. There are corner shops right next to the church, where students can buy food/drink (sodas and icecream on a hot day!) and other items, but some do not accept cards because they are very small. There are also a supermarket, a pharmacy and a lovely bakery only a minute away from the site.

ACTIVITY LEVEL & ACCESSIBILITY

Please provide information about the physical requirements of the program.

Excavation during this program entails moderately strenuous physical activities—lifting, bending, kneeling, crouching, carrying. Students are provided guidance on how to safely perform movements with or without tools and how to protect themselves from harm when handling excavation tools.

Please comment how accessible your site is for people with mobility challenges. Would someone using a wheelchair be able to participate? Someone who uses crutches or other assistive walking devices?

Although the site could be accessible to people with mobility challenges, it would be very hard for someone using, for example, a wheelchair to perform some of the most important activities, especially excavating because the trenches are well below walking level and stair ladders are used to come in and out of them.

PROGRAM COUNTRY & CULTURAL INFORMATION

What do you love about the country and area you work in? What do you think students will be most excited to discover?

Transylvania (and more broadly Romania) are a fascinating place, steeped in history and with one of the most beautiful natural landscapes in Europe. Our field trips are devised to introduce the students to various aspects of Transylvanian archaeology and history. Furthermore, during the summer there are many folk, music and food festivals that the students will be able to attend, all a short distance away from both the accommodation and the site.

How large is the community where students will be staying? Will students have opportunities to interact casually with local residents? Please describe.

Both Sanpetru and Prejmer are small villages. The students will be able to interact with people immediately related to the project and occasionally other locals.

Primary languages spoken by people in the area:

Romanian is the national language, English is widely spoken especially by the younger generation. In Sanpetru the Saxon minority speaks German, while other languages spoken will be Hungarian and Russian.

What are some things students may find surprising about the local culture?

Students will discover many socio-cultural differences, as Romania is, like many other Eastern European countries, a place full of contradictions. They might also, however, find common ground by being open to new traditions and ideas and they will find Romanians hospitable and warm.

Are there cultural aspects that students should be aware of before they come, particularly behaviors that could be offensive or misinterpreted (for example, eye contact, dress, gestures)?

These are small communities, so tourists and people from a different ancestral background might 'jump out' and receive a bit more eye contact than they wish. Nothing to worry about, this is absolutely normal and harmless! However, if anything feels too odd or out of the norm, students are encouraged to immediately inform directors, staff or the accommodation owner.

What cultural enrichment opportunities are students likely to have outside of the program? For example, are there museums, parks, coffee shops in the area, or will there be festivals or events nearby during the program period?

Many of our students go to Brasov over the weekend to explore the city on their own and the many eateries, coffee shops and other shops. There will be lots of music and food festivals over the summer.

Will students have opportunities to explore other areas of the country? If so, what options are available to them (such as available transportation or unscheduled time for exploration).

Students can travel independently by train, bus or Uber/Bolt on unscheduled time. We will provide timetables and advice.

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

Please describe student accommodations, including the type of accommodation (tent, hostel, hotel, etc.) and a brief description of the accommodation itself, including number of students to a room or tent, access to toilets and showers, and common areas.

Students will stay in a guesthouse/hotel in the village of Prejmer, Braşov County. Rooms are simple, airy and all have en-suite bathrooms; they will be occupied by two to three students. The accommodation is equipped with all essential amenities (Wi-Fi, kitchen, laundry facilities, communal areas) and offers ample outdoor spaces (garden, tables, pool) where the students will be able to relax, read, study, eat and socialize on hot summer evenings.

Please describe how/how often students can do laundry.

Students can do their laundry using the washing machines available at the accommodation for a very small fee.

How are room assignments made? If rooms are assigned according to gender, how will you assign rooms for non-binary, trans and queer students?

We generally let the students decide whom they want to share a room with, or, as the students themselves asked last year, we assign them randomly. If there are special requests for non-binary, trans and queer students, we expect the student to let us know what their preference is and we will make sure they are happy with the option provided.

Are there options for single rooms? Would there be an additional charge (and approximate cost)?

There might be an option for a single room but it depends on student numbers.

Will the program provide meals? If not all meals, please specify which meals students will be responsible for, and what facilities are available for them to get groceries and prepare meals.

Breakfast and dinner will be served in the common dining room, while lunches will consist of sandwiches and field food prepared by students themselves from foods provided at the hotel each morning. Accommodations for vegetarian/vegan diets may be made, although as food is prepared communally, specific dietary restrictions such as severe allergies and kosher or halal meals will not be feasible. The directors will try, however, to accommodate all needs as much as possible. Both in Prejmer and Sanpetru there are several grocery shops and fruit/vegetable vendors where students can buy any additional items they desire.

Please describe typical meals that are offered by the program.

The program offers breakfast with a variety of drinks and food, all organic and locally produced. From the breakfast buffet the students can prepare their own packed lunch. Dinner is normally soup and a main, or a main and dessert. We ask the students to make sure to express their preferences and to let us know they are happy with portion size.

If the program can accommodate different dietary needs, please indicate:

Vegetarian (dairy OK) - YES

Vegan	- YES
Gluten free	- YES, but not celiac or severe intolerance
Kosher	- NO
Halal	- NO

VISA AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Indicate the visa requirements, if any, for US citizens. If there is a visa requirement, what type of visa should students apply for?

Students must hold a passport valid for at least six months on entry to Romania. Citizens of the US and Canada can stay in Romania without a visa for up to 90 days over a period of 6 months.

Citizens not from the USA are asked to check the Romanian embassy website page in their home country for specific visa requirements.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

If students will fly, what airport should they fly into?

Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and various other factors may force the cancellation or alteration of a field school. IFR recommends students only purchase airline tickets that are fully refundable and consider travel insurance in case a program or travel plans must change for any reason. General information for this program is below, but keep in mind we will discuss any updated travel information and regulations during the required program orientation, which could affect travel plans.

Students can fly into several airports in Romania. Flying to the capital (Bucharest Otopeni International airport) might be, obviously, an option for most. From Bucharest Otopeni International airport, students must reach Bucharest central station (Gara de Nord), from where they will be able to catch a train to Braşov. Detailed itineraries, timetables, alternative options and travel info will be provided on orientation day and the directors will be available for help and clarification with each student on the days of traveling.

If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text or email the field school director immediately. A local emergency mobile phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

Where will you meet students? If not at a primary arrival point, like an airport, how should students get to the meeting point?

Our meeting point is the train station in Braşov, from where students will be taken by the directors or the program staff to their accommodation in the village of Prejmer.

If the field site is not close to student accommodations, how will students get there? How long does it take?

A private transport company will provide transport for the students to and from the site. The drive is about 20 minutes.

EQUIPMENT LIST

- A four-inch pointed archaeology trowel, for example a Marshalltown type trowel or WHS trowel

PACKING LIST

Students are required to bring

- Identification/passport
- Travel documents
- Credit/Debit card
- Extra glasses/contacts if worn
- Sturdy, waterproof hiking boots
- Hats/bandanas
- Sunscreen
- Backpack
- Any prescription medication you need for the duration of the field school along with a written prescription for the medication
- Water bottle
- A rain jacket and a warm jacket
- Layers and clothes suitable for outdoor work and all types of weather
- Long work trousers
- Personal protective equipment such as gardening/work gloves

Students are also recommended to bring their own:

- Laptop/tablet

Packing considerations:

- **Will students need formal or nicer clothes?** No, unless they plan to go to specific events independently
- **Are there items that are hard to get locally, such as tampons or sunscreen?** Not at all, they can find everything in local shops - sunscreen will be provided by us on site for everyone
- **Shower shoes or indoor shoes?** Only if they wish - the accommodation communal and room premises are cleaned daily
- **Hiking boots/socks?** YES
- **Swimwear?** YES, for the pool at the guesthouse
- **How often can students do laundry?** Whenever they wish
- **Items they should not bring?** Towels, bed linen

MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Please provide your instagram account, if you have one, and any project related websites

[The Braşov Bioarchaeology Project \(@brasovbioarchaeologyproject\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

[The Brasov Bioarchaeology Project](#)