

TouRomania10 - Meeting Notes - 19Jan10

Dear Singers and Travelers!

Wow, what a great meeting last night! Loved the energy, smiles, laughs, and just starting to know the 'characters' we'll be traveling with!

Roger thanks for handing out the music, CD, and leading us in a couple of songs... It was reassuring to realize many of us already know most of the songs... and yes, it will take extra practice to get them back up and running, but it's doable! And, for the new singers, just to mention again that you can learn the music – *it will happen* – you'll be surprised! And, please know that all of us are there to help, coach and support you!

We started the meeting with a big circle... everyone giving their name and sharing either what they most want to experience during the trip or why Romania intrigues them... Here is what was said:

- Singing
- Dancing
- Music – all of it.
- Brass band
- New culture; castles/people
- Traveling with the group
- Making new friends
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- Expanding horizons
- Planting trees/doing service
- Seeing the art
- Hiking
- Birds
- Meeting new people
- The rural landscape
- Cultural exchange
- Stepping back in time
- Food and wine
- Rural customs/lifestyle
- Traveling /singing in the bus
- Everything
- Homestays

Updates and Summaries

1. Web Page for TouRomania10

- a. <http://projects.expint.org/touromania10/>
- b. Check it out. I just updated with the following
 - i. Timeline & Deadlines
 - ii. Room Mates – Choices & Email Contacts (for all of us on the trip)
 - iii. Web Sites of interest
- c. If you have reading materials or videos or info on Romania that you think everyone would enjoy, let me know and I'll get that there also.
- d. And, if there are any other documents or info that would be useful, let me know and we'll get that there too.

2. Traveler List – Room Mates – Choices

- a. Check the TouRomania10 Web Page the updated list of travelers, email contacts, roommates, and individual choices re: home stay and group travel.
- b. Please review and let me know if any updates/changes are needed.

3. Airfare Update; Individual and Group Travel

- a. Original Estimate: \$950 - \$1700
- b. Current Airfares 19Jan10
 - i. \$1590 Lufthansa
 - ii. \$1541 Continental
 - iii. \$1449 KLM
 - iv. \$1438 AA to Bucharest + RO to Cluj
 - v. \$1696 STA Group Rate (non teacher/student)
- c. STA will have an updated Group Rate in early February. I'll email it to everyone once we have it. We will then gather those interested in traveling as a group to discuss our options.
- d. If you want to contact STA Travel for your independent travel, before and/or after our Tour, I'd suggest contacting Glenda... she is the one we're working with for Group travel and very responsive and helpful...

Glenda Harris, Travel Advisor
STA Travel North America
4311 1/2 University Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105
T: 206.632.2448 * F: 206.632.6770
E: <<mailto:ghorris@statravel.com>>ghorris@statravel.com

- e. Web Sites you might use to find/compare airfares include:
 - i. Travelocity.com
 - ii. Expedia.com
 - iii. Skyscanner.com
 - iv. Kayak.com
 - v. Travelzoo.com
 - vi. Cheapair.com
 - vii. Bing.com/travel
- f. Anne mentioned that she had found a RT flight Seattle to Istanbul; Istanbul to Cluj for just under \$1000. Ann also provided a long list of additional web sites you might consider browsing – which I've listed at the end of this summary.

4. Package Price Update - \$2195 is based on 53 Travelers

- a. Currently we have 49 and need 3 more to make the budget. As of now, we're \$162 per person short. If we fill the final three seats, then we're off by only \$50/person due to the weakening USD\$ vs. euro. The original budget in 2009 was based on the euro @ 1.38. It is now 1.43 which = ~USD\$50/person difference.
- b. Additionally, we have added one more group dinner when we changed our itinerary to allow a full day, hopefully, with the Roma. Only meals *not* included : 1 dinner & 6 lunches
- c. We have been updating everything with all contacts in Romania and I should have their final budget within two weeks.

d. Bottom line is that we're very, very close! Hopefully, we will get three additional travelers!

5. **Schedule Update – Please check out the updated *Timeline & Deadlines on the Web Page.***

- a. **Special Rehearsals AFTER 11May10 Spring Concert** – We will continue group rehearsals after our May 1st Spring Concert, every Thursday. Same time. Same place.
- b. **Group Meetings – Please mark on your calendars.** It is very important that you attend these meetings. We will be covering money, packing, culture, and many of the nuts and bolts of what we need to know and do to assure a safe, fun, and incredible trip together.
- c. **Optional Rehearsals – BEFORE 11May10 Concert**
 - i. We will be holding *optional* Tuesday evening rehearsals beginning on Tuesday February 2nd – 7pm at Jones Moles.
 - ii. These will allow us to get a jump start on learning the music that is not included in the spring concert. They will also allow us to begin to pull together as a smaller Kulshan Chorus!
 - iii. Once we've started, we can decide if we want to do them every week or every two weeks. So, if you can, please join at least for the first one.
 - iv. Sister Mary will be on the keyboard with us. THANKS!!!!
 - v. Michael Short (a groupie of all things!) – has offered to be the *initial* Music Steward for these rehearsals, opening the place, reminders, etc. Although Michael has offered, *it would be great to have a second person to help.* So, if interested, let me know. And, THANKS Michael for being our Groupie Music Steward!

6. **Insurance Update**

- a. **Travel Insurance:** We strongly encourage you to purchase Travel Insurance, the covers:
 - Emergency Medical Evacuation and Repatriation
 - Trip Cancellation
 - i. STA Travel offers one at the following cost:
 - \$50,000 of emergency medical coverage, \$500,000.00 of emergency evacuation coverage. The cost is \$58.00 for passengers age 35-59, and \$72.00 for passengers 60-69 of age.
 - If you want to include Trip Cancellation due to illness, etc, the cost increases to \$106.00 and \$159.00.
 - You can view the full policy at:
http://www.statravel.com/Statravel/travelinsurance/ti_InternationalInsurance.aspx?MenuID=5001
 - You can also call Glenda Harris at STA Travel (206.632.2448) for more information if you have questions. This policy can be ordered directly over the internet at the above web link.
 - ii. There are other carriers out there if you want. I've just found STA to be the easiest and have used them for years.
- b. **Personal Health Insurance:** We also strongly encourage you to check with your personal health insurance carrier so that you know what is/is not covered while in Romania and HOW to make a claim if needed. Your carrier might also have recommendations for Travel Insurance.

7. **Room List & Family Stay Update:** See the document: Room Mates – Choices & Emails on our web page: <http://projects.expint.org/touromania10/>
- a. We have sorted you out into rooms. This list is now posted on our web site. Please check it and let me know if anything needs updating.
 - b. We can always make room changes – but it will be hard to move someone from a double to single or single to double once we’ve made the hotel reservations. Just let me know.
 - c. We also have updated the list of people interested in the two-night Family Stay in Gura. Again, check the list to be sure we have you correctly listed.
8. **Other Updates**
- a. **Registration Forms**
 - i. If you have not handed in your Registration form, please do so no later than the end of this month. I have noted on the Room Mate-Choices-Emails document on the web page who has/has not handed it in. Pls check.
 - b. **Music Steward for Extra Rehearsals**
 - i. As noted above, Michael Short has kindly volunteered for this. However, we’d like to give him some help so; we’re still looking for ONE MORE volunteer! – Please contact Roger or Charlie if you’d be interested.
 - c. **T-Shirt Coordinator**
 - i. Anne Griffith is now our official T-Shirt Guru! Thanks Anne!
 - ii. She will come up with a design for our T Shirts and at some time in the coming months we’ll have an order form to you. Color, Style, Size, and Number requested. In past years, the cost has been about \$10-\$12 per shirt.
 - iii. For the 4 full concerts we do, we will be in full concert dress. However, all the other more informal performances, we will just wear the T Shirts... (and shorts or pants of course...)
 - iv. The cost of the T shirts is *not* included in the package price. So, I guess we just added another \$10-\$12 to the trip for you! – But hey, these are wonderful souvenirs and gifts for friends!
 - v. We will be taking a good number of extra T Shirts along as gifts... The cost for these T-shirts is already in the budget... so, nothing additional here.
 - d. **Peace Activist in our midst** – John - asked if he could bring his infamous Peace Sign on the trip. I asked Dan, our guide, and here is his response! ☺
As for the Peace Activist – I already like this guy!- no problem at all. He can wear his sign everywhere!!!The original one. Would be his option for the translation – Romanian = PACE , Hungarian = BEKE.
9. **Other Comments and Notes**
- a. **Final Payments Due 29Jan10**
 - i. Assuming you’ve been paying according to the schedule set out at the beginning, here is the summary
 1. \$500 Deposit
 2. \$848 First Payment – 27Nov09
 3. **\$847 Second Payment due 29Jan10**
 - ii. The single room supplement is: \$255 – which if not already paid, should be included in the 29Jan10 payment.

- iii. If you have questions about what you actually paid so far, send me an email and I'll get you another Customer Balance.
- b. Money in Romania**
 - i. I've emailed our contacts for their suggestions re: ATM, DEBIT, CREDIT cards, Traveler's Checks, etc... and will let you know their recommendations once I hear back
- c. Weather in June/July**
 - i. Again, I've emailed asking about what we might expect so we can pack correctly.
- d. Gifts** – What to take to families and for people we meet.
 - i. Checking on this also.
- e. Contributions to Communities - Groups**
 - i. I mentioned that in Gura, we've asked the teachers if some of the families we're staying with and/or students at their school have ever visited the local painted monasteries in their own back yard; that if possible, we'd love to invite them. Just wanted to thank you in the group for offering to pitch in a little extra to make this possible. Really appreciate it, but I think we have it already covered in the budget. I'll share with you the teacher's response.
 - ii. We will be taking several 'bags; of children/youth clothing with us to donate somewhere along the way. We're talking now with our contacts to see where would be most appropriate and needed.
- f. Face book – TouRomania10!**
 - i. Michael Short (fast competing with Heidi for the super groupie award ☺) has just set up a Face book page for us! The thought is that we can share information on travel, experiences, thoughts, reading materials, etc. there and it would be much easier than the periodic emails and postings to the web site.
 - ii. If you have face book account, just search for "touromania" – and ask to be a member. Michael or I will carefully screen you! – then accept you!
 - iii. The face book page is tagged in the "secret" category which means that when you become a member, it does not appear on your face book page; all content is available to members that have been approved; and anyone that is not a member simply won't have access to it.

OK, so much for the update!

Thanks again for such a wonderful meeting!

What a great group!

In Peace,

10. Anne's Web Sites

find flights by airline

1. [Aer Arann](#)
2. [Aer Lingus](#)
3. [Air Berlin](#)
4. [Air Southwest](#)
5. [Blu-express](#)
6. [Blue Air](#)
7. [Blue1](#)
8. [BMIBaby](#)
9. [Centralwings](#)
10. [Clickair](#)
11. [Club Air](#)
12. [Condor](#)
13. [Corendon](#)
14. [Cyprus Turkish Airlines](#)
15. [easyJet](#)
16. [Flybaboo](#)
17. [Flybe](#)
18. [FlyNordic](#)
19. [Germanwings](#)
20. [Helvetic](#)
21. [Iceland Express](#)
22. [Intersky](#)
23. [Jet2](#)
24. [Jetairfly](#)
25. [Monarch](#)
26. [MyAir](#)
27. [Niki](#)
28. [Norwegian Air Shuttle](#)
29. [Ryanair](#)
30. [SkyEurope](#)
31. [SkyExpress](#)
32. [SunExpress](#)
33. [Thomas Cook Belgium](#)
34. [Thomsonfly](#)
35. [Transavia](#)
36. [TUIfly](#)
37. [Vueling](#)
38. [WindJet](#)
39. [WizzAir](#)