

Romanian Adventures

Exactly five years ago I landed in Romania for the first time in Bucharest and was quickly drawn down an entirely new and unexpected path. This first experience in Romania opened and expanded my mind in surprising ways. The information I gained led to my deeper understanding of how we can restore our immunity with the right tools and lifestyle.

In 2013, it was my heart that spoke when I requested an opportunity to study with Dr. Sorina Soescu of Constanta, Romania. Dr. Soescu had made quite a name for herself across the country sharing her passion for natural healing using both Gemmotherapy and a diet of plant-based foods. She had published a series of books and ran a bustling family oriented practice. I knew if I wanted to learn more about these extracts she would be the one to teach me. Sitting in her practice day after day, observing her work and hearing the repetitive success stories shared first hand by mothers was life-changing for me. I knew I wanted to offer my clients not only this same level of success but also to empower them to make dietary choices that would support their health and wellbeing.

It was Sorina that led me to Plant Extrakt as a possible source for Gemmotherapy extracts, and within in a few months I was returning to Romania once again. This time I arrived in the university city of Cluj and after a morning-long meeting at Plant Extrakt the idea of a private label extract for my practice was born. But my travels to Romania did not end there as Joachim and I returned together in 2014 to Bucharest for my presentation at their national conference, and Sebastian joined us in Timisoara in 2015 when I presented once again.

With each visit, I not only learned more about Gemmotherapy but I also learned about Romania through my interactions and observations. Not surprisingly, I've come to appreciate the

many simple heartwarming gestures of Romanian hospitality. I had the opportunity to observe in each city the remarkable juxtaposition of ancient and modern times – often viewed in a single glimpse. I have been impressed by the deep pride Romanians have of their history and culture and listened with deep interest to first-hand accounts of the revolution of the last century. And then there is the food... surprisingly I have enjoyed excellent meals in more vegan restaurants in Romania than anywhere I've traveled!

This summer's trip offered a remarkable opportunity for me to team teach with my mentor, Dr. Soescu. Over the course of two days, we shared our passion for restoring immunity with diet and Gemmotherapy with over 60 participants who had traveled to Cluj from across Romania. In a stunning lecture room with floor to ceiling windows, we discussed natural healing with a backdrop of the terraced farmlands of the Center for Biodiversity. Built so it was integrated with the existing monastery ruins, the energy of the space was remarkable.

While the participants were primarily physicians, this enthusiastic group also included a Veterinarian from Hungary, an Integrative health coach and her husband both from Cluj, a few pharmacists and several others who came to learn for personal reasons due to health challenges.

For the most part, the room was filled with professional health practitioners and for that very reason I chose to turn the table and proposed that they must each be their own first patient and listen for themselves and their own health challenges this weekend. Going further with this concept, on the second morning, I invited them into my practice as if they had arrived for an intake session. With my prompting of questions, each participant completed a checklist on themselves. When teaching practitioners it is my desire to challenge them to learn through their own body first. In order to more deeply connect with the restorative process and be authentic in our work, we must fully experience the effects of

dietary changes and extracts in our own lives.

This morning I sit with my hotel room windows wide open over the cathedral square listening to the harmonizing of church bells and orthodox chanting across the city. Only a few hours remain to take in the Cluj and today this view is preferable to a morning walk through the busy streets. I've enjoyed my plate of the best melon only August can deliver and a cup of green tea. I savor these moments of solitude and stillness, appreciating them all the more knowing that the coming week will be a blur of activity as we embark on the long journey back to Texas by way of Germany. And so I will stay and just enjoy this moment and all it offers.

Ahead for me is a return to family in Germany. A few days filled with goodbyes until next summer, and then the adventure continues because it truly never ends. We will be returning to Austin on Friday to our furnished rental which we will call home for the coming months. As we began our *work from anywhere* experiment this summer the word *home* has taken on a new meaning. Be sure to check in with me next week when I'll be sharing some further thoughts on home that I believe will challenge you to consider your own definition.