

Discover Transylvania

Mysterious Transylvania is located in the center of Romania. This mysterious region is well worth a visit for the bounty of beauties it holds: its colourful autumn countryside, its picturesque villages clinging to the hillsides, its small towns with their wide squares, its marketplaces and – last but not least – its castles telling of the past. The Carpathians, the mountain range surrounding the whole Region, are the natural frame to this beautiful land.

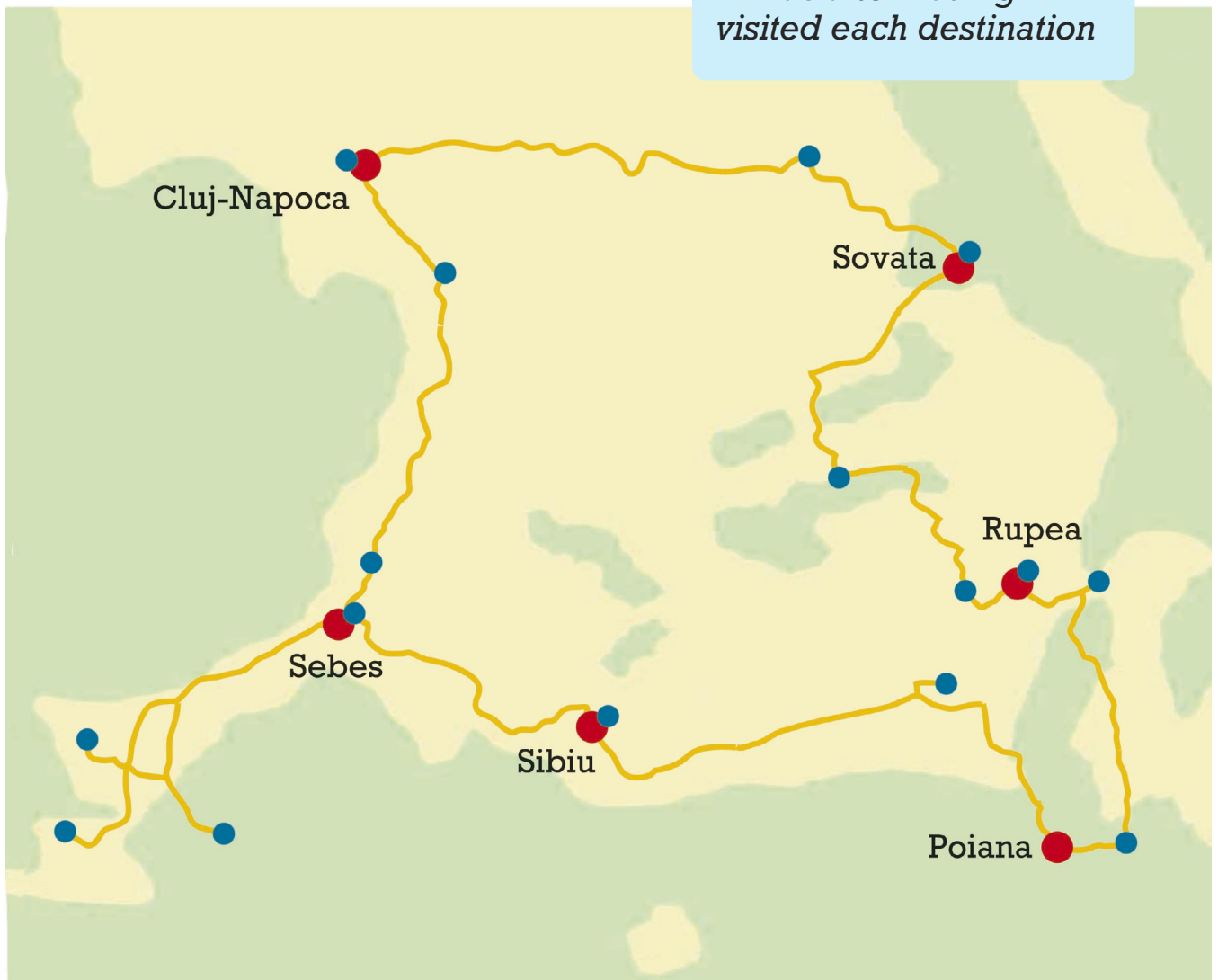


We were there in the autumn but its wonders will strike you any time of the year. You can get plenty of good, healthy food anywhere at a surprisingly moderate price.

Romania. This is the travel map in Transylvania:



All the itineraries are handcrafted by us after having visited each destination



What to see in Cluj-Napoca



We have chosen for you

Hoia-Baciu Forest

Hoia Baciu Forest is close to Cluj-Napoca: it covers an area of 250 hectares and it is often nicknamed “The Bermuda Triangle”, because of a number of strange events and spottings. In fact, this thick forest became of particular interest in the 60’s when the biologist A. Sift took a few pictures of a U.F.O. hovering in the sky. In 1968, also a military technician, Emil Barnea, took a photo of a flying saucer above the forest. Since 1970, the spottings have intensified, including the appearance of mysterious lights of some sort.

On top of that, rumour has it that some of the people who have been into the forest, no longer remember the time they spent inside.

The attention was drawn by a clearing where vegetation is absent. It’s an almost perfect circle: the analysis of soil samples does not give any evidence in favour of the absence of vegetation.

To get there, park as close as possible to the ‘Poiana Rotunda’ and then continue on foot following Google Maps.

Moreover, the trees there have quite bizarre shapes: they grow unnaturally contorted. If you are brave enough, then visit the Hoia-Baciu Forest and discover it in person!

www.hoiabaciuforest.com



The Botanical Garden

Strada Republicii 42

The Botanical Garden – It hosts herbs, plants and trees from all the world’s climatic zones, both in the open and in greenhouses, adding up to approximately 10,000 species.



Central Park

Parcul Central Simion Bărnuțiu

Central Park is a fantastic, large urban park in the town centre meant for the whole family. There, you will find dedicated areas for outdoor sports activities and a lake with flamingo-shaped pedalos. If you need some refreshments or long to sip a good beer, a small restaurant will welcome you.

Cluj-Napoca – Reghin – Sovata



From Cluj-Napoca to Sovata stopping at Reghin

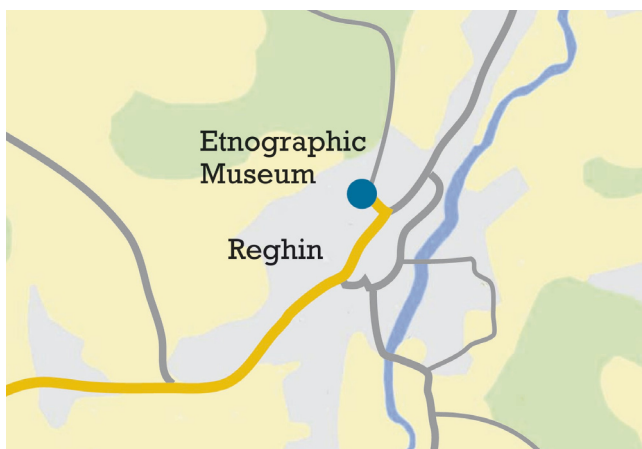
147 kms/ 2hrs 40 mins.

Driving towards Reghin you will be bewitched by the wonderful countryside stretching for 100 kms. Vast fields of sunflowers and corn extend as far as the eye can see. Shepherds lead their flocks, chased by sheepdogs, up and down surprisingly multicoloured hills.



Ethnographic museum of Reghin

In this colourful small town, the Ethnographic Museum shows people's customs and daily life in the past, displaying their typical costumes for every occasion and their fishing and hunting equipments. The outdoor exhibition hosts some original dwellings, together with some others that have undergone refurbishment. A mill and a wine press tell us of people's toils in the past.



The thermal lake of Sovata

Sovata, Lacul Ursu

Along the road flanked by endless rows of walnut trees, you'll pass by small villages and go through thick woodlands inhabited by wild boars and brown bears. Once you get in Sovata, you'll find "Lacul Ursu" (Bear's Lake), which goes by this name because it resembles a bear's hide. The lake is 18 metres deep, it has a surface of 40,000m² and an incredible average salinity of 250 grams per litre. The water is nice and warm and, of course, you can float – no need to swim. Tourists from all over bathe in these thermal waters, which are ideal to treat rheumatic and cardiovascular problems. A thick vegetation with well marked paths surrounds the lake. On the spot, you can find, cafés, restaurants a number of shops and hotels.



From Sovata to Rupea



From Sovata to Rupea stopping at Sighișoara and Viscri

124 kms/ 2hrs.

We leave Sovata behind and we reach:

Ancient citadel of Sighișoara

This ancient stronghold, which can boast a perfectly preserved historic centre with its characteristic architecture, has been listed among the World Heritage Sites.

No doubt, Sighișoara is one of the very few walled cities still inhabited.

Some buildings in the town centre are of particular interest since they are one with the craftsmen's houses, their workshops and their original tools.

The 64-metre-tall Clock Tower, the "Church on the Hill" with its frescoes and the Weapons Museum are among the other attractions.

Now a restaurant, Count Dracula's birthplace is recognisable by a plaque at the entrance. As a matter of fact, Count Dracula is the name Count Vlad III of Wallachia (the Impaler) has always gone by since his father nicknamed him "Dracul" (the drake). The Irish novelist Bram Stoker drew inspiration from this legendary figure for lots of his gothic novels.



The village of Viscri

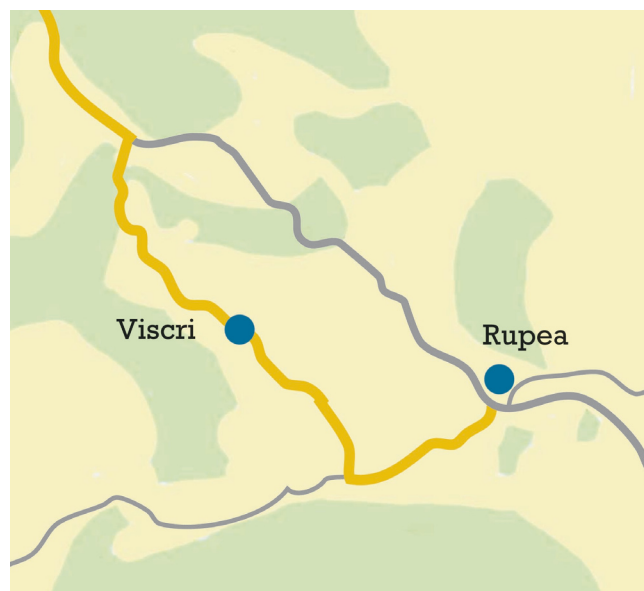
To the discovery of this mythical village not far from Brasov (Romania).

Viscrist is a place where, beyond any doubt, time has been standing still. Peasants move along dirt roads on horse-drawn carts, geese and cows roam freely here and there.

Under a couple of pergolas the ladies who own the place will serve you a delicious "ciorbă", the typical soup with meat balls and vegetables.

Before leaving this unusual, fascinating place, head to the village oven, where you can savour tasty, crunchy loaves of bread.

Let's drive on towards Rupea.



From Rupea to Braşov



From Rupea to Braşov stopping at Racoş Volcano

87 kms/ 1hr 25 mins.

The fortified citadel of Rupea

Rupea's Citadel (the castle on the rock) is well worth a visit. It's one of the oldest archeological castle in entire Transylvania: in the beginning, it was a military construction; later it became a refuge from the plague first, then against the Turks.

An unmissable 360-degree view extends and widens as far as the eye can see. The three concentric walls correspond to three different phases of construction.

Once lost its defensive role, the citadel's upkeeping was handed over to the community. Thanks to European funds, in the years 2011-2013, the site underwent extensive restorations, which brought it back to life.

Racoş Volcano

Vulcanul Racoş

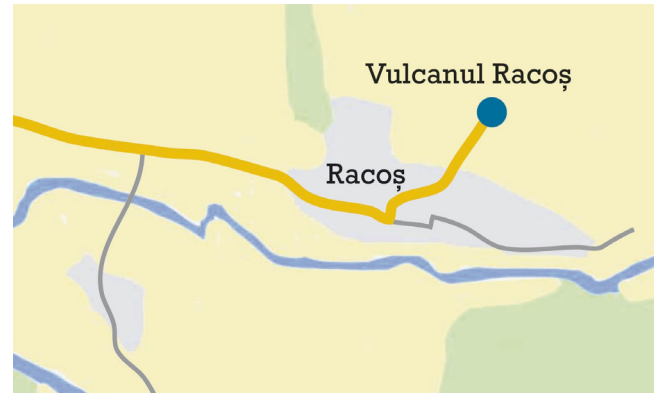
We drive across Racoş village on a still partially unpaved road to reach the parking area.

On a trail map we can read the indications for an optional hike. At a short distance, we come across a crater: it's an almost moonlike landscape, the result of volcanic activities that took place in the East Carpathians 10,000 years ago, with beautiful colours ranging from different hues of red to lava-black.

You'll marvel at the vegetation that has managed to push through with all its strength inside the chasm.

If you keep on following the path, you'll reach the 10 to 15-metre-high basalt columns which formed a million years ago. These two hotspots become highly picturesque at sunset, when the rocks seem to light up, leaving you breathless.

On the way back, you come across a turquoise lake, which formed in a former basalt quarry.



Braşov

The town centre is picturesque, thanks to its vast square, the multicoloured buildings and the rather peculiar decorations covering them. You can't miss the "Black Church", named like that after it was blackened by a fire set by the invading Habsburgs in 1689. Also in this area of Romania you are never short of restaurants and shops.

Just 15 minutes uphill from Brasov, you will reach Poiana Brasov, a skiing resort surrounded by pinewoods, where you can sleep peacefully all year round.



From Braşov to Sibiu



From Braşov to Sibiu stopping at Sona Pyramids

160 km / 2h 46'

Sona Pyramids

Movilele de la Şona

We leave Brasov heading to Sibiu. On our way, we stop to visit these mysterious mounds. Sona Pyramids can be reached only either by four-wheel-drive or on foot (2kms from the nearest village).

Arranged in two rows of four and reaching up to a maximum of 30 metres, they dominate the village below.

Their origin remains wrapped in mystery, although ceramic remains, dating back to the Late Bronze Age, were found on site.

Legend has it that a giant, shaking his muddy boots, created these mounds.



The historic center of Sibiu

Transylvania never ceases to surprise.

Sibiu historic center is a large walled town of its own, a crossroads of people and cultures. If you look up, you can admire wide eyes on the roofs, which seem to be scanning all around. There are three squares hosting markets and all sorts of events. You can't miss a visit to the Clock Tower both to enjoy the most beautiful view of the surrounding countryside and to take highly panoramic photos.

Walking down towards the lower town, you come across a wrought-iron overpass, called "The Bridge of Lies", since – they say – dishonest merchants were thrown down from there in the past.

Not far from the town centre a large fruit and vegetables market welcomes you with its beautiful colours.



From Sibiu to Hunedoara



From Sibiu to Hunedoara stopping at Sarmizegetusa Regia, Saint Nicholas' Church at Densuș and Corvinilor Castle (Romania).

185 kms/ 2hrs 50mins.

Sarmizegetusa Regia

Once the capital of the Dacian Kingdom, the town was erected on top of a 1200-metre-high mountain, and entirely walled by huge stone blocks.

The site can be reached by a rather difficult long and winding road. After parking, follow a path in the wood for a short stretch.

You'll reach a large clearing surrounded by vegetation where you can admire the remains of megalithic artifacts, whose origin and purpose still lack a well-grounded explanation.

It's a mysterious place for its structure and layout, which will leave you astonished.



Corvinilor Castle in Hunedoara

An imposing drawbridge leads inside this huge castle in Hunedoara.

A number of rooms open onto the vast inner court of this massive construction, which has a fascination of its own, since each single room recounts a 4-century-long story.

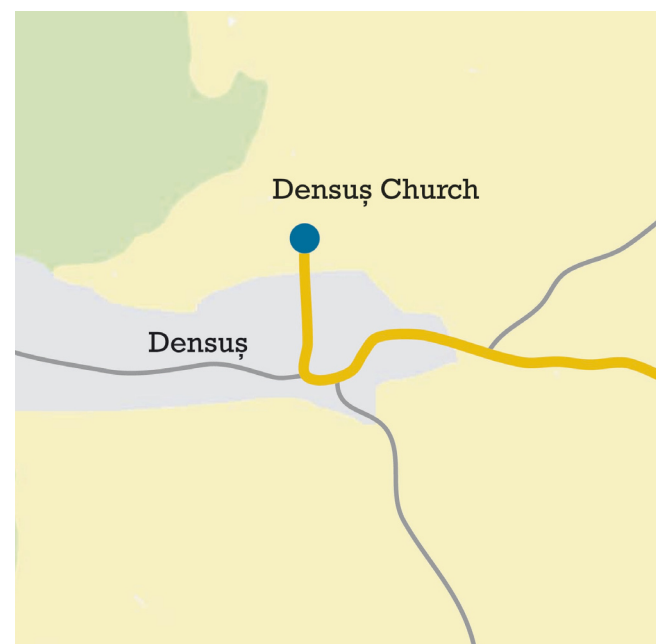
The site is really worth a visit.

Saint Nicholas' Church at Densuș

If you are in the area, the little church of Saint Nicholas is a must.

You can spot the bell tower from afar, since the church is right on top of a hillock. It can boast to be the oldest Church in both entire Romania and southeastern Europe. Religious ceremonies are still held there three times a week. The structure incorporates lots of architectural elements retrieved from other archeological sites, such as headstones and tombstones, columns, capitals and marble lions.

That's why Saint Nicholas', one of a kind, is amazing for its beauty.



Alba Iulia and Salina Turda



From Hunedoara to Cluj-Napoca, stopping at Râpa Roşie, Alba Iulia and Salina Turda

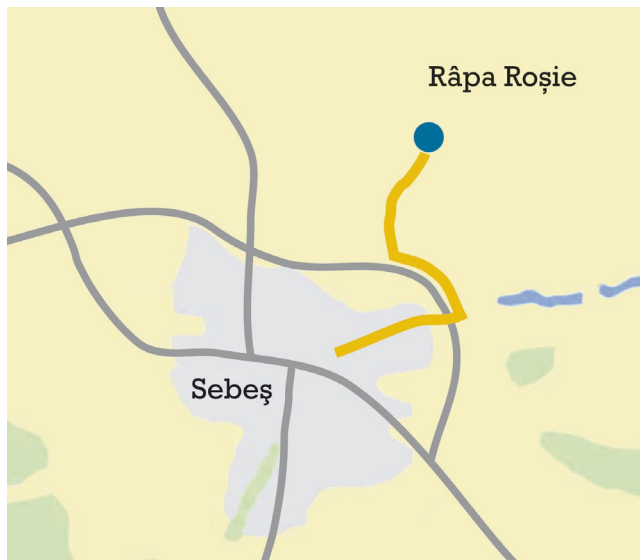
185 kms / 2hrs 50mins.

The rocks of Râpa Roşie

(red ravine in Romanian) is five kilometres away from Sebeş. A dirt road leads to this nature reserve.

The reddish hue of this weirdly-shaped rock formations utterly contrasts with the colour of the surrounding vegetation. They stretch for 800 metres and range from 50 to 125 metres in height.

They are really quaint and even more picturesque at sunset.



Alba Iulia

This star-shaped citadel would be really worth a picture from above. Alba Iulia has a very nice historic centre and is surrounded by imposing walls, in the style of fortified cities. Extensive restoration works, partly financed by European funds, have been recently carried out.

During the summer, the town hosts a number of festivals and, every Sunday, a very nice military tattoo takes place. You can park your car along the walls.

Salina Turda

This salt mine, opened to the public in 1992, was used first as an air raid shelter, then for cheese storage.

Since you go deep into the mine, it is advisable to wear something warm – the deeper you walk, the colder.

As with almost all attractions in Romania, the entrance ticket to Salina Turda is convenient. High salt walls, streaked as if they were painted, lead to different tunnels: one wonders how, back then, people could dig so deep in such unfavourable conditions.

It's a unique opportunity for those who have not yet had the chance to visit a mine.



To know

Though the Romanian Government targeted the date of January 1st 2019 for euro adoption, “leu” (meaning “lion”) is still the official currency.

No matter where you end up, the locals are always friendly and extrovert and welcome visitors on all occasions.

Sibiu and Cluj-Napoca airports guarantee scheduled international flights on a daily basis. We usually start from Cluj-Napoca (we could easily start from Sibiu, though).

The 7 itineraries we are suggesting here below are quite intense: we strongly recommend you to allow yourselves a couple of weeks – maybe just 10 days – if the weather is fine in order to better savour them.

We picked up those places that appeared to be more mysterious and intriguing to us and since some of them are really off the beaten track, it would be advisable to get hold of a four-wheel-drive.



Hôtel



All the itineraries are handcrafted by us after having visited each destination

Book with us the best hotels and rent a car throughout Europe for wonderful holidays

