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The Traveler's Guide on



Via
Transilvanica

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To make it easier for you to browse our guide, we've saved an interactive table of contents, which, just by selecting a title or page number, will take you to that part. You can go back to the beginning by clicking on the VT logo at the top of each page.



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INTRODUCTION

Via Transilvanica is a 1,400 km trail that reveals 2,000 years in the history of Transylvania, from Putna to Drobeta-Turnu Severin. It is a Tășuleasa Social project, which is an NGO that deals with environmental, educational, social, cultural, and more issues. The campus can be found in Piatra Fântânele, in Bistrița-Năsăud County.

This trail can be done in stages, or fully, by foot, by bike or even by horseback, depending on what works best for each traveler. This guide will provide general information about food and accommodation, places and objectives of touristic interest.

Via Transilvanica is a road that fills the generation gaps and encourages multiculturalism because it is dedicated to those people, no matter their age or experience, who are willing to limit their daily activities to just walking, as well as to reduce the number of things they pack to the bare necessities. Before anything else, this type of activity can be a source of happiness, meditation or healing. People always needed stories to give meaning to their lives. The main purpose of this road is this aspect of discovering characters, stories, as well as places, that enrich, and heal both mentally and spiritually.

Via Transilvanica is all about diversity, from the green grass at the shores of the Danube river, all the way to the mountain peaks, the scenery is as different as the people we hope will walk this road. Thus, the trail allows us to discover important elements about our country and the people who live here.

This guide was carefully written by the first people who walked on Via Transilvanica and had the opportunity to see what the needs are and how they can be fulfilled in order for the traveler to have a safe and positive experience on Via Transilvanica. You



can find information here about the trail, the road markings, food, and accommodation, geographical areas, touristic attractions, and many more.

Via Transilvanica is ever changing, therefore some of the information concerning portions of the road and even accommodation can differ every year. If you can find things that do not match the reality, please contact us.

Safe travels!

General Information

How to use the guide?

You will read at the beginning of each route a short description of a historical area, out of the seven, as they were shared by our team, e.g. Bucovina, The Highland Region, Terra Dacia etc.
























In the *Accommodation* and *Infrastructure* chapters, you will find information about the road as well as accommodation possibilities. The icons found nearby, will help you find what you are looking for a lot faster.

We mentioned the accommodation possibilities in order of their occurrence on the trail. The information regarding accommodation include the price-quality ratio, according to the facilities that are available for every hiker (washing machine, kitchen etc.), the possible changes regarding the current pricing, addresses and contact details. You should know that besides lodgings and hotels, the locals in some villages and towns, would provide the hikers with accommodation. You should keep this in mind because tourism is not so well-developed in the rural areas. The accommodation available at the locals will appear in the guide next to a phone number, where you must call beforehand (at least one day prior to your arrival) and ask for the accommodation possibilities, mentioning the number of people. One person is named explicitly for this mission.

Note – we have included a short narrative description of the trail in every chapter.

Info – it is the name of the subtitle where you can find information about the touristic, and cultural-historical objectives. In the box that contains the altitude profile map, you can find icons regarding the infrastructure, distance between the accommodations, as well as important GPS tracks. Next to every route title, you can also find the expected duration, needed for hiking that specific trail. Every route has its own map where you can follow the numbers that had been previously written next to the villages mentioned in the description (*Note*). The map is useful for those who decide to hike the old fashion way, using only the map, and the compass.

The explanation of the icons

 Guesthouse	 Bar	 Bank	 Bus	 Scenic viewpoint	 Shop/Store
 Hotel	 Drinkable water	 Doctor	 Airport	 Accommodation - household	 Police
 Restaurant	 Internet	 Post Office	 Church	 Pharmacy	 Touristic attraction
 Campside	 Information	 Train	 Mountain pass	 Souvenirs	

Infrastructure

Each village marked on the map is attributed a list of relevant information that comes in handy to the traveler. The list below shows all these points of interest. Means of public transportation are available even in the small villages, but the majority of them only pass by once a day.

The pharmacies or medical points will be available if contacted beforehand because most of them have a short-term schedule. The marked springs usually have drinkable, mountain water, and most of the time, are well arranged, however if they are not you can always ask the locals for water.



The road signaling comprises: andesite kilometer-stones, white and orange arrows, the ever present Via Transilvanica logo, crossroad and crosswalk indicator and more such indicators with other specifications.

Almost every village has its own Patron Saint, which is usually a celebration day among the locals. Furthermore, other religious commemorations are meaningful to the local people who preserve the old customs, like for example not working on a celebration day. In the small villages, during religious celebrations, the local store might be open only a few hours a day as opposed to the normal schedule. We recommend that you ask the locals for the exact store schedule.

List of celebrations / Public holidays 2025:

- January 1st, 2nd – New Year's Day
- January 6th - Epiphany
- January 7th - St. John the Baptist
- January 24th – Day of the Unification of the Romanian Principalities
- April 3th (Good Friday), - April 6th – Catholic Easter
- April 10th (Good Friday), - April 13th – Orthodox Easter
- May 1st – Labor Day
- May 24th - 25th – Catholic Pentecost/ Whit Monday
- May 31th - June 1st – Orthodox Pentecost/ Whit Monday
- June 1st – Children's Day
- August 15th – Dormition of the Mother of God
- November 30th – St. Andrew's Day
- December 1st – National Day/ Great Union
- December 25th - 26th – Christmas

In every new geographical or historical area, the culinary experiences can be various. That is why one should not miss out the opportunity, so in order to make sure that it is possible to get to taste traditional food, reservations should be made at the right time. In the mountain and lowland areas, we can often find fresh, traditional Romanian types of cheese, such as “caș” (whey cheese), and “urdă” (similar to ricotta) that the shepherds will sometimes offer to people for free, but we recommend that these will be paid for, in order to encourage the touristic development among them as well.

One will be able to get more information as they arrive in those areas.

The trail's duration

The hiking hours are mentioned in the subtitle of every new route, where you can add a margin of error of +/- 30 minutes, depending on the terrain, your physical condition and the weather.

The duration has been calculated for an average speed of 3-4km/h.

HIKING ON VT

The VT trail offers a very authentic experience that puts the traveler in new situations that cannot be experienced in any other way. What makes hiking on this trail so special is the fact that the hikers can enrich both their physical and spiritual state by means of personal experience, as well as empathy towards the stories of others, people met on the road. Culturally speaking, the hiker can experience in a unique manner, both the deep history of România and the reality people live in these days. Thus, one can fight the stereotypical views, having their minds open to how things are in reality. On top of that, experiencing nature in all its diversity, from Obcinele Bucovinei, above the Călimani Mountains, to the depressions that lead to the Danube's port, is a rare opportunity.

The traveler's guide on Via Transilvanica offers as many details as possible about the accommodation network from the areas where the trail passes through and the possibilities that they have to offer.

What is more, the trail has very good signaling/markings that offers a safe experience for every traveler and reduces the chances of getting lost outside the trail. Otherwise, we are waiting for your suggestions in the contact section on our website or Facebook page.

RIDING YOUR BIKE ON VT

Via Transilvanica is a trail that can be done by riding a bike or a horse, as well as of course, by walking. Someone that chooses to ride a mountain bike on Via Transilvanica should follow the advice that we have gathered from different experiences on Via Transilvanica the way it is now.

As Via Transilvanica is under construction, new advice and information, as well as maps and GPS tracks will be presented in the guide.

Regarding the general view of riding one's bike on Via Transilvanica, we must warn people that enjoy mountain biking that based on information gathered by the Tășuleasa Social Team, some parts of the trail are very difficult for biking. These parts require a certain level of fitness and experience from the traveler. The Bucovina region in particular requires enduro equipment, starting with an enduro bike and ending with all

the protective elements such as a helmet. The equipment should also contain a first aid kit, as well as a kit with tools that can be used to fix a broken bike (a pump, flat tyre kit etc) and the other accessories that are mandatory for any traveler such as a raincoat or mountainbiking gear. The trail in Bucovina consists of around 75% push bike, from Putna to Vatra Dornei. However, from Vatra Dornei to Lunca Ilvei, the trail becomes less difficult.

Even though the recommendations seem threatening, we still think that riding your bike on Via Transilvanica could be an unforgettable experience, a real challenge and a wonderful adventure. The people living in Bucovina are known for their hospitality so that might help the traveler get through the difficult situation. Moreover, after Bucovina, the trail gets easier and can be done by anyone that likes riding their bike.

Hiking recommendations

The ideal period for hiking on Via Transilvanica must be chosen according to weather conditions, having as much daylight as possible and the accommodation possibilities. We do not recommend hiking during winter for now, because the trail becomes more difficult in case of snow, a downside which combined with a lack of accommodation possibilities during winter time can turn out to be dangerous. The most suitable periods would be between May and October, with chilly mornings and nights, but we must not forget that in the mountain areas, the weather tends to be changing suddenly. Checking the information about the weather forecast is mandatory!

We also recommend hiking during the daytime, in the time of year when daylight lasts longer, because this way we can avoid different dangerous situations (ex: wild animals, getting lost or accidents). If you have suitable equipment, temperatures should not be a problem (see the equipment list).

For now, our suggestion would be not to hike on this trail alone, but rather find a companion or more. This is because the trail is still new and somewhat wild.

Human's best friend, the dog, can be an ideal hiking/traveling buddy except for the places where we can find sheepfolds (which are quite often). Our only recommendation is that in these cases you should have a leash for your dog (for it to be kept as close as possible to its master) and to alert the shepherds to call for their dogs and not let them get close to you. At the same time, when passing next to a sheepfold, we recommend friendly behavior towards the barking dogs and trying to communicate with them. If this is not working, you can use different expressions that work to keep them away. The most efficient ones are: "TIE LA OI!!!!" (Go back to the sheep!!!) or "CHEAMĂ-ȚI CĂNII!" (Withdraw your dogs!!!). However, for those who fear shepherd dogs, we also recommend pepper spray, ultrasound devices or other methods of driving away the animals.

Hiking is the ideal endurance sport for people of all ages and when it is practiced often, it can lead to a meditative state, which is beneficial in establishing a good mind, body and solu balance.

Planning the route

Via Transilvanica is divided in seven main regions from a historical and cultural point of view: Bucovina, The Highland, Terra Siculorum, Terra Saxonum, Terra Dacica, Terra Banatica, and Terra Romana. The trail is also divided between the ten counties that it passes through: Suceava, Bistrița-Năsăud, Mureș, Harghita, Brașov, Sibiu, Alba, Hunedoara, Caraș-Severin and Mehedinți.

People can choose to hike a region, a county or their own configured trail, by foot, by bike or even on horseback. Of course, hiking the whole trail is not excluded.

Orientation: the VT trail is marked with its specific colors: orange and white (orange arrow sign towards Drobeta-Turnu Severin and white arrow sign for the other way towards Putna). The crosswalks will be signaled with specific panels just like other signs that you will meet on the road. There will be a sculpted andesite kilometer stone (made by art students), together with the VT logo, which will show you the kilometer where you are located and that ensures you that you are on the right track.

The access to the VT trail: It can be made by plane (the closest airports are in: Suceava, Cluj-Napoca, Târgu-Mureș, Sibiu, Brașov, Timișoara), by car, train or bus, up until certain points on the trail

By foot, by bike or on horseback – this is the official description of the way of traveling. By bike, the trail is recommended for mountain biking because the traveler will pass through mountain and off-road areas. The asphalt will be present in some areas but very rarely. It is self-explanatory that by using the bike, the necessary time for completing the trail will be reduced to a half as opposed to the time needed to hike it by foot).

Ideally, the walking schedule should start at 8 am so that you do not exceed the margin of error for the hours needed to hike the trail. Moreover, in order to have the chance to admire the landscapes and get a good rest during the breaks, you must not be in a rush. It is mandatory to check out from the accommodation after one night so that the next hikers will have a place to rest and sleep. We recommend that you read every route's description before hitting the road and that you make a reservation beforehand for the accommodations and meals presented in the guide.

The cost will cover the minimum expenses for the services offered by the local micro-investors or the local hosts. The accommodation price will be approx. 100-200 lei/ person (20-40 €/person) and 30-75 lei/ person (6-15 €/person) for a meal. Most of the accommodations offer traditional breakfast and you might even be able to order dinner if order it beforehand. During lunchtime on the trip, you will be able to shop in the local stores or even have lunch in a restaurant that might be found in the bigger towns.

Equipment

Footgear, clothing and the backpack must be chosen very carefully and must be prepared beforehand. Advised by the qualified personnel in the specialized stores, you can purchase complete and suitable equipment for the road. DO NOT hit the road with brand new footwear! Pain and blisters can occur from day one. Very old footwear is also not recommended because it will be heavily used, and it can deteriorate faster than you would expect. Mountain boots with a leather interior and suitable socks are the best choice considering the Romanian climate. We really recommend trekking socks because it will keep the feet dry. Ideally, the clothing should be especially made for hiking, light and super-dry. The mountain trousers, which can be turned into short pants, are very practical and light. The backpack must be also chosen in the specialized stores because its size and shape must fit perfectly with its owner. Those who do not have any experience in long hikes, should experiment walking with their backpack full, a few weeks before hitting the road. This way, they can test the effect it has on their shoulders, wrists and legs. Thus, it will be clear what unnecessary weights can be omitted from the backpack. Ideal weight of a full backpack should be between 9 and 11 kg. The decision of using Nordic-walking/trekking sticks is at your own choice. It is well known that if

you use them the right way, with a certain rhythm and especially when ascending, they release part of the pressure from the knees and ankles.

Recommended list of equipment:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Middle-sized backpack (35-55 l) <input type="checkbox"/> Nordic-walking/trekking sticks (optional) <input type="checkbox"/> Summer sleeping bag (light) <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping pad/inflatable mattress <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof jacket+ backpack rain cover <input type="checkbox"/> Suitable clothes for a specific season (polar fleece jumper, puff jacket) <input type="checkbox"/> Super-dry T-shirts <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain trousers/zip-off trousers <input type="checkbox"/> Shorts <input type="checkbox"/> Trekking leggings <input type="checkbox"/> Trekking socks (super-dry) <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable and light footwear (for the possible walks in the villages) <input type="checkbox"/> Trekking/mountain boots <input type="checkbox"/> Flip-flops <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle (we recommend a plastic one) <input type="checkbox"/> Penknife <input type="checkbox"/> Headlight <input type="checkbox"/> Batteries <input type="checkbox"/> Charger/ Portable power bank <input type="checkbox"/> Sports towel (light) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shower gel (traveling size) <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush and toothpaste <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses, sun hat, sunscreen with high SPF <input type="checkbox"/> First-aid kit (bandages, patches, magnesium/ anti-cramp control, antihistamines, painkillers, foot cream, disinfectant and personal pills) <input type="checkbox"/> Mosquito/ insects spray <input type="checkbox"/> Pepper spray (for wild animals or dogs) <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic bag (to maintain your clothes dry in case of rain) <input type="checkbox"/> Dirty laundry bag (it should not be made of plastic, to not make too much noise) <input type="checkbox"/> Earplugs (in case you sleep in a room full of people) <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 m of clothes line rope <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing kit/ safety pins <input type="checkbox"/> Matches <input type="checkbox"/> Important documents (ID/ passport, health insurance card, emergency contact) |
|--|--|

Emergency numbers

112 – National emergency number

+40 – SALVAMONT – +40 0725 826 668 – National Mountain Rescue Dispatch

Mountain accident emergency system:

1. In case of emergency, call the following telephone numbers: 112 – Romanian General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations; +40 – SALVAMONT - National Mountain Rescue Dispatch, which is +40 725 826 668. The operator from the National Mountain Rescue Dispatch will take your call and will send a rescue team in your area.
2. The emergency call should contain:
 - Personal data about the caller
 - The nature of the accident or of the event (injured, sick, lost)
 - Identification data about the victim
 - Where and when the event occurred and how many persons were injured

After following these steps, you have to wait (in an area that has mobile phone coverage) for a call back that will verify the truthfulness of the announcement.

3. After the emergency call:

- You must remain in an area with mobile phone coverage.
- Shelter and keep the injured person warm.
- Observe the vital functions of the injured person.

The groups or the people who are lost will remain in the signal area from where the emergency call was made.

The International Code of Signals in case of an emergency:

- The emitted signals in case of any danger: light, visual and acoustic signals. You must launch six signals (a signal at every 10 seconds, for a minute, then you take a one-minute break).
- To answer you must use three signals per minute (a signal at every 20 seconds) followed by a one-minute break.
- You must continue the signaling until a rescue team comes.

Useful information

The schedule is available only for 2025 and changes might occur, especially concerning the information about accommodation, which might be only available during certain seasons.

Pharmacies: We suggest that you buy your necessary pills from the bigger villages because the rural pharmacies have a restrictive schedule and less options.

Police: There are four types of units, in România: Gendarmerie, Municipal Police, Traffic Police and National Police.

Banks/ATMs: The Romanian leu is the currency of România and has in 2022 a value of (approximately) 20 euro cents, 21 US\$ cents or 17 pence (British sterling). National Bank reference exchange rates can be found here: <https://www.bnr.ro/Exchange-rates-1224.aspx>. Credit card payment is excluded from the rural areas (at the lodgings/ locals) but in the bigger villages/ towns, you can find ATMs for cash withdrawal.

Internet: In the national mobile networks, the Internet connection is good, România being in the top 5 countries with the fastest Internet in the world. Either way, if the signal is missing, there will be no Internet connection as well. You might find WI-FI in some rural lodgings if you ask the hosts about this detail.

Telephony: România prefix for roaming or international calls is +40

The roaming follows the EU's rates, terms and conditions. You can find out more details and rates here: https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/consumers/internet-telecoms/mobile-roaming-costs/index_en.htm

In some areas there might not be phone or even GPS signal. In case of any danger, do not hesitate to look for mobile coverage in the higher areas.

Stores that one can come across are usually rural ones. Besides public or religious holidays, the stores usually have a shorter schedule and include a lunch break.

Emergency call: 112 is the international call (you can communicate in several different languages).

Blisters

Blisters are often unavoidable, however there are a few precautions one can take to prevent them: friction should be reduced by properly tightening your boots and trying to keep your feet as dry as possible. You should take your boots and socks off, while taking a break, to let the feet breathe and dry. Using a new and dry pair of socks, would be ideal in this case. The wet ones can be hung with safety pins on the backpack so that they can dry while you walk. If you are using trekking socks, they usually dry very fast. We do not recommend using wool or 100% cotton socks.

The cold mountain streams can be refreshing but be careful: a wet foot is more likely to get blisters. At the first sign of discomfort (blister) you have to put several bandages or patches on top of each other on the sensitive spot, in order to avoid extra friction. You should only pop a newly formed blister, when it prevents you from walking properly. You should use a needle or a small pair of scissors (risk of infection please disinfect it and the blister area first!) in order to make two small holes so that the liquid inside can come out. **DO NOT** tear the skin of the blister apart!!! You have to cover it with several bandages or with a special one. In all of the cases, the wound must be protected from any risk of infection and must be kept clean. The special blister Band-Aids are also very useful. If the patch keeps ripping apart, you can fix it by using several strips of bandage.

Hydration and food

Hydration is extremely important both during the trip and after finishing it. The water container will be refilled multiple times from the places marked with spring water or drinkable water (check the first part of the trail description). It is always recommended that you have more water than less of it, especially when it is very hot outside. In some areas, there are only a few villages, which means access to water is limited. You should manage your water and food supplies according to the information present in the route description.

It is recommended that you pack a light snack (energy bar, fruits, bread) when the route is longer.

You should take your daily dose of magnesium in the mornings, before starting a new route. This will prevent muscular cramps and tendinitis.

At most of the lodgings, you can serve a hot meal (breakfast/dinner) for the price of 30-60 lei/meal (4-9 €/meal) if you announce the hosts beforehand. We suggest you ask about the traditional food and try it out wherever you are. Wine and brandy are both tasty beverages, but they are not everybody's cup of tea. Either way, it can be refreshing to end a whole day of walking with a glass of wine.

WARNING

Fresh dairy products can be an authentic experience in Bucovina, straight from the bosom of nature, from the shepherds at the sheepfold, but please consume these products with great caution, especially if you have never tasted them. Milk, cheese, udder, jântuit, cream or other products with high levels of traces of protein should be consumed separately and at least one hour after eating berries or drinking water. Similarly, after

moderate consumption, do not drink water or eat berries until at least one hour after consumption. Otherwise digestive problems, abdominal pain, colic, bloating, vomiting, diarrhoea or other stomach problems may occur.

Spending the night/ Accommodation

There is not a developed accommodation network (like the ones from Camino de Santiago, from Spain) because Via Transilvanica was created in 2018. However, you might be able to sleep at some locals who are willing to offer you accommodation, as many of them have a spare room in their house that they can use to host hikers. The families from every village that Via Transilvanica passes through, are mostly very well informed with regards to what this project implies. What is more, Via Transilvanica is a great opportunity for touristic development among them.

Some of the lodgings you will come across provide accommodation in hostel-style (more people in the room). In other villages one can find parsonages that will gladly shelter hikers from all over the world. The costs at the locals (with a certain standard of cleanness and comfort) are between 100-200 lei/person and the meals (optional) will cost between 30-75 lei/meal. At the lodgings, the prices will be higher due to the higher quality facilities (such as washing machine, dryer, WI-FI etc.). The parsonages will keep the same rates. At the same time, some places do not ask for a particular remuneration so the payment becomes a form of a donation from the tourist. The accommodation conditions, in every case that has already been presented, are: a clean bed, toilet, shower and eventually traditional meals.

Phone reservations must be made beforehand in order to find spare rooms. Phone numbers can be found in the trail description.

Most of the villagers don't speak foreign languages. Therefore, in order to help out the traveller, we recommend making use of the following text messages which can be sent via mobile phone, which are standard for when one needs to ask for one night of accommodation or one night of setting up a tent on a property.

With the help of the small dictionary at the end of the introductory chapter, the travellers can also manage to change a few important sentences with the hosts, but online translations come in handy too.

Text message for a bed/place to sleep:

Bună, mă numesc ...(name)..., nu vorbesc română, sunt din ...(country)... și doresc să rezerv ...(number of beds/persons)... loc/pat la Dumneavoastră, pentru seara de ...(check in)... până la ...(check out)...Multumesc. Vă rog să îmi răspundeți cu un OK sau Ocupat!

(Translate.: Hello, my name is... , I don't speak Romanian and I am from ... I want to make a reservation for ...number... bed/room for the night of ... until...Thank you. Please answer with: OK or Busy!)

Text message for a tent place:

Bună, mă numesc ...(name)..., nu vorbesc română, sunt din ...(country)... și doresc să campez cu cortul meu la Dumneavoastră în curte, în data de ...(check in)... o noapte. Vă rog să îmi răspundeți cu un OK sau Ocupat!

(Translate: Hello, my name is..I don't speak Romanian and I am from ... I want to camp in your garden for the night of ...until... Thank you. Please answer with: OK or Busy!)

Text message for dinner and/or breakfast (in case of a positive answer from the hosts):

Aș dori să știu dacă oferiți și cină și mic dejun. Mulțumesc.

(I would like to ask if you offer dinner and breakfast too. Thank you.)

If there is no standard price for one night of accomodation, we recommend paying in a range from 40 to 60 lei, depending on the conditions. For dinner we recommend 40 lei and for breakfast 20 lei.

If the traveller is invited by the shepherds to taste the cheese, or receives fruits or vegetables from villagers and wants to pay a modic price for it, we recommend 5 lei, which is 1 euro and is going to make everyone happy, although payment is not needed only if the traveller feels like it.

DOGS AND WILD ANIMALS

On the trail you will come across domestic or wild animals at almost every step of the way, either through the traditional villages, over the grazing lands or through forests. Animals will be present, even if we do not see them.

Domestic dogs are usually tied up or in the courtyard where they will not be a danger as long as they bark at us from behind the fence and you do not invade their territory.

Generally, the dog attacks if it feels threatened, it does its duty as guardian of the house / courtyard or sheepfold by barking.

Even though Sheepdogs can be man's best friend, they can be dangerous to the unfriendly, but there are ways to defend yourself or avoid conflict with them.

One of these ways is to bypass the territory it defends, where possible. We also recommend using friendly language which often calms them down, or calling for the shepherd to call his dogs back to the sheepfold. In this guide we try to support a more friendly approach with them, in many areas learning what and how to calm them down. Sprays, firecrackers, whistles or sticks are also recommended, but our team has never had to use any of these means. But let's not forget: fear is the dog's biggest enemy!

What do we do if we meet the bear?

We need to know that no matter what happens, it is not the bear that is responsible, but the human being, because we are the ones who can plan and anticipate, therefore, you cannot treat the situation as if you are dealing with a conflict with another person.

We emphasize that man is not part in the bear's food options and man is not attacked with predatory intent, but in defense. The intention to attack is not one of food or territory, but rather an intention that is caused by the feeling of fear, it is an aggressive defense mechanism to ensure the survival of his own species or that of his cubs. At the same time, some individuals can attack due to negative external influences (disorientation, illness, injury) and can have an aggressive, unnatural attitude towards man.

Specialists have also confirmed that from the points of view mentioned above, each meeting with a bear is unique and your behavior and reaction are dependent on each individual encounter and situation.

Therefore, if a man can learn, plan and think logically when encountering a bear, he must act in consideration of the bear's right to exist and to not forget about acceptance and coexistence.

One of the best preventions is walking/hiking in groups and avoiding the thick bushes and forests. If, however, we are alone, we must let our presence be known by making noise with the help of bells, whistles, singing, etc. Hunting observatories, dens and animal carcasses should be avoided as much as possible. Under no circumstances should food remains be left on the trail because food scraps attract wild animals. This is true both for camping and for our nature breaks. The bear identifies artificial food with humans, and because of this, many conflicts occur. Bear cubs should always be avoided, even if they seem to be alone. A mother bear never leaves her cubs and if she sees us nearby, she will surely attack.

One of the basic forms of avoidance, which is effective in 95% of cases is talking and making noise while hiking. The bear will leave the area if it perceives the presence of humans.

What do we do if we see a bear?

Respect the animal, keep a distance of about 30 meters and be aware of bear's warning signs (yawning, huffing, woofing, move their ears on their backs, blow or gnash their teeth) and move away slowly.

If it stands up on two legs, what happens?

If the bear stands up on two legs, it is just curious, like a person who stands up. In this case, we can warn him that we are people through speech and slow movements. Bears have poorer eyesight than hearing, which is why it is important to speak slowly. Do not behave threateningly in any case. We are not allowed to throw stones, wood or anything at it, because it will feel threatened and the chances increase of it being aggressive. They may also feel irritated due to photographers, especially at the sound of cameras, which are unusual sounds for them. Simply be aware of the animal's behavior and move away slowly.

If you hear some sounds that you think are from a bear, what should you do?

Stay calm. Probably the bear will leave the territory if it perceives the presence of man. We must make our presence known through sounds that gradually increase in intensity but not threatening. If the noise of the bear seems close, move in the opposite direction and it will hear the sounds becoming distant and it will not follow. Keep calm because, as we mentioned before, the European bear does not consider man as prey. It's defensive or threatening behavior is caused by fear or because he feels threatened. The exceptions are individuals who have been raised by humans, injured or dying.

Can we defend ourselves from a bear?

We can use bear/animal spray as self-defense. It can also be used against sheepdogs. It is larger than a normal aerosol that can be used several times and is effective at a

distance of 6-10 meters. Its effectiveness is not guaranteed in all weather conditions or close encounters.

How to stay calm?

It is difficult to stay calm, even after ten bear encounters, but be mentally prepared according to the above is possible.

What if it attacks?

A bear only attacks if challenged. For example if it is annoyed by a dog and then the dog goes to the owner for protection. He also attacks if he is caught and pushed in a corner or if he is disturbed from feeding. It can attack and be extremely dangerous if it has previously been injured or scared by hunters. A bear attacks to protect her cubs. Besides, there are dangerous bears that are in the last phase of rabies, so they are sick and are no longer afraid of humans, these are rare cases of those that are accustomed to humans by feeding.

If the bear sees man as prey or as a danger, for various reasons, the bear will attack and injure him, as he has all the advantages. For the bear, man would be an easy prey. In some rare cases, the bear may launch a fake attack to drive the man away, but this generally does not happen through physical contact. In these cases, the most important thing is to keep calm. Never fight the bear, he will always win!!!

Slovenian experts have advised us to stay put, to lie face down with our hands on the back of our necks and to try to stay as calm as we can. Before we get up, we need to make sure the bear has left the area - there is no guarantee that this technique will work, as there are no sources who have experienced this.



Do not try to run, because that's how you only awaken the bear's hunting instinct and it's a better runner than you anyway. At long distances on flat terrain, it can run at a speed of 50kph.

Climbing a tree is a slightly better solution than running, but it is still a weak solution because the bear climbs better than you as well. Only then can you run if you only have a few steps to the car, for example.

What do we do with the dog? Shall we keep him tied up?

Keep the dog on a leash, a longer leash to have freedom of movement and control.

The dog has no chance against bears, it will just irritate and annoy them. If you let the dog go, he can even lead/ lure the bear to us.

Mosquitoes, ticks and other insects

If you are on the trail after a wetter, rainier period, you will face another unpleasant and painful problem: mosquitoes!

After a month and a half of rain in July, our team set off in extreme heat, a period that attracted millions of mosquitoes in the dark, cooler areas such as forests.

Our route often goes through grazing areas with sheepfolds, which also means that you will find ticks, especially where the sheep walk.

We recommend that in the morning, before hiking, first use a protective layer of sunscreen and then insect repellent. At the pharmacy you will find Autan for mosquitoes, ticks and other insects.

(Note that the portion described above about meeting the bear is partly a translated article from the online page of the Transindex newspaper, signed by G.L.)

Small survival dictionary:

Drinkable water - apă potabilă /'a.pə/ po'ta.bi.lə/

Non Drinkable water - apă nepotabilă /'a.pə/ ne. po'ta.bi.lə/

Blister - beșică /be'ʃi.kə/

Sanitizer - dezinfectant /de.zin.fek'tant/

Cramp - crampă /'kram.pə/

Dehydration - deshidratare /des.hi.dra'ta.re/

Diarrhea - diaree /di.a.re.e/

Headache - durere de cap /du're.re de kap/

Heatstroke - insolație /in.so'la.tsi.e/

Band-aid - leucoplast /le.u.ko.plast/

Pharmacy - farmacie /far.ma'tʃi.e/

Where is a pharmacy? - Unde este o farmacie? /'un.de/'es.te/ o / far.ma'tʃi.e/

Well - fântână /fin'ti.nə/

Spring/ stream - izvor /iz'vor/

Constipation - constipație /kon.sti'pa.tsi.e/

Magnezium - magneziu /mag'ne.zju/

Doctor - doctor /'me.dik/

Where can I find a doctor? - Unde gășesc un medic? /'un.de/ gə'sesk/ un/ 'me.dik/

I need a doctor! - Am nevoie de un doctor! /am/ ne'vo.je/ de/ un/'dok.tor/

Danger - pericol /pe'ri.kol/

Dangerous - periculos /pe.ri.ku.los/

Leg - picior /pi'tʃjor/

Earplugs - dopuri de urechi /'do.puri/ de/ u'rekij/

Tendinitis - tendinită /ten.di'ni.tə/

Patch - plasure /plas.tu.re/

Knee - genunchi /dze'nun.kij/

Sprain - entorsă /en'tor.sə/

Sling - fașă /fa.fə/

Shoes - papuci /pa'putʃj/

We are looking for a free room for three persons, tomorrow night. - Căutăm o cameră liberă pentru trei persoane, mâine seară /'kə.u.təm/ o/ 'ka.me.r/ 'li.be.rə/ 'pen.tru/ trei/ pe'r'soa.ne/ 'mij.ne/'s æ.rə/

Do you have spare rooms? - Aveți camere disponibile? /a've'tsi/ 'ka.me.re/ dis.po'ni. bi.le/



A story about the Traveler's Booklet

The Via Transilvanica road represents a journey everyone will remember in their own authentic way. This means that its story is one that rewrites itself with every new traveler that walks on this trail. However, we would like to have a common language of our recollections on Via Transilvanica, a collection of memories to highlight this road with its every region and every stage, each of them so special and unique. Thus, we would have a collection of memories that belong to all of us.

This is why we have created the Traveler's Booklet, a little book where the traveler can collect all of the Via Transilvanica stamps, specific to each stage of the trail that they manage to walk on (one stage = one day on the trail, all the days are described in this guide). These stamps are customized to the places they represent and the travelers

can go to distribution points (see stamps distribution points attached at the description of every stage) where they only have to present the booklet and they will get a stamp representing the stage they have just finished.

It's easy. This booklet will accompany the traveler in their journey, being a visual representation of all the kilometers the traveler walks and eventually a souvenir that awaits to be completed with all of the stamps, one that calls for the traveler to return on the paths he's walked before and to explore the ones they haven't seen yet.

The Traveler's Booklet can be purchased from the Official Via Transilvanica Shop shop.viatransilvanica.com

Safe travels and to many stamps acquired in your own Traveler's Booklet!

The booklet can be purchased on the website of the Official Store Via Transilvanica <https://shop.viatransilvanica.com/> and from several places along the route:

- Putna - Putna Monastery, Museum (inside the monastery) and Gamas Market (the gas station shop in front of the entrance to the Putna monastery)
- Vatra Moldoviței - Pension Alexandra
- Fundu Moldovei - Luisenthal Conac and Patiserie & Pizza Mati Cafe
- Pasul Mestecăniș - Mini-market under Restaurant Mestecaniș
- Vatra Dornei - SALVAMONT / Hotel Silva
- Tășuleasa Social (also here you will find other VT products)
- Bistrița - Copacul de Cafea and Roots Bistro & Caffe
- Toaca - Insula Argentina
- Ibănești Pădure - Vila Floarea de Colț
- Brădețelu - Pension Ovidiu & Paula
- Câmpu Cetății - Hanul Pescăresc
- Praid - Pension Moldovan
- Lupeni - Barangoló Panzió (accommodation recommendation in guide)
- Odorheiu Secuiesc - Market Helyénvaló Helyi Bolt and Pension Panorama
- Dârjiu - Parohia Unitariană Dârjiu
- Brașov, the INSPIRATIO shop at the entrance of the Biserica Neagră
- Saschiz - Lime trees 70m from the Fortified Church right on the OT
- Mălâncrav - Guest house, str. Morii nr.22
- Richiș - Casa Ani
- Nemșa - BED&WINE Nemșa
- Mediaș - Friends - Magazin and Tasting Bar Specialized Wine and Coffee
- Axente Sever - Casa de oaspeți Frauendorf
- Lodroman - Cistian Raul
- Alba Iulia - Hotel Transilvania
- Caransebeș - Limonădăria Nea Tică
- Cireșu - Nomad's Place

In this guide, the lists of places where you can find Via Transilvanica stamps are divided by region, at the end of each region.



THE HIGHLAND REGION

The transition between the two regions took place in the previous stage, where the town of Grădinița also marks the end of the Bucovina region. Here begins the Highland region, which is 207 km long (with an additional 70 km in two route variants). It then follows the way to Lunca Ilvei, which is situated in Bistrița-Năsăud county, at the side of the Rodnei Mountains.

The trail is crossing the mountains which offers an important lesson about the way the harshness of the scenery has taught the people living in this area to adapt to the natural conditions. The trail passes through a diverse scenery that changes from mountain tops to lowland forests, mild hillsides to infinite fields. This portion of the trail awaits the travelers eager to discover its natural beauties and touristic objectives while the culture that has been influenced by a variety of ethnicities, adds value to how special this region is.

Trail: average difficulty; the natural scenery can be seen until reaching the main road DN17, which must be crossed once, which requires extra care. Then, the trail follows a path a few meters away from the road, then comes an uphill portion through Mureșenii Bârgăului to Brazii Buni, which takes around 2 hours, offering many spectacular viewpoints.

Elevation difference: +545m

Critical spots: Even if the crossroad is well signaled, it is still new therefore it requires extra care when walking the road; also on the top of the mountain, at Brazii Buni, until entering the village, there are only a few places where one can protect from the rain, so check the weather forecast before going there; there are multiple sheepfolds along the way and even though the shepherds usually call for the dogs, the traveler must not fear them (simply ignoring them, talking nicely to them or even shouting are all advised);

Scenery: Until Valea Străjii, from Tășuleasa, one can admire amazing scenery, with households specific to Bârgău area where kind shepherds can provide fresh cheese. In the second part of the trail, after DN17, in around 4 kilometers, the magical view from before comes back again in a slight ascending trail, a view that you just can't get enough of.

Accommodation:

Valea Străjii: camping site, restaurants and resting places.

La căsuța din pădure, local gastronomic spot with traditional food, reservations phone +40 757 921 895 (Ileana Socina), 8 km from Tășuleasa Social towards the Străjii Valley.

Bistrița Bârgăului: Maria Bidian Local Gastronomic Point, 8 beds, garden for camping, traditional menu, breakfast, lunch and dinner on request, Bistrița Bârgăului, no. 24, reservations by phone +40 753 422 321;

Guest house, Near milestone no 184, 6 places, shared bathroom, lunch and dinner on request, reservations by phone +40 745 840 317 (Tatiana Rusu);

Guest house, nr. 609b, 2 bedrooms, 4-6 places, breakfast and dinner on request, transport, reservations by phone +40 774 964 240 (Nick Gavan);

La Căsuța din Deal, camping, more than 15 places, we also have tents, charming place, secluded, in the heart of nature, access to toilet and kitchen, 4 places in the caravan, dinner and breakfast on request, reservations at +40 735 083 411 (Radu Trifan);

Traditional bread workshop, authentic wood-oven bread-making demonstrations, camping in a natural setting, reservations on tel. +40 748 916 333 (Ioana);

Pension Rareș, 9 places, shops nearby, booking tel. +40 745 686 301 (Oana Ștețco).

Infrastructure: Valea Străjii: 

Bistrița Bârgăului: 

Note:

Leaving Tășuleasa Social (1), following the Roman Road, Via Transilvanica turns left towards Zâmbroaia mountain and the trail continues behind the mountain. The view feels surreal, surrounded by thick spruce trees. From the highest point of the mountain, after passing by some traditional households, the improvised paved road seems to be

melting in a smaller one that is ending downhill and on the right in a sudden curve. Going straight on that path, one can notice the majestic mountain Căsar, with almost feminine curves. By the side of the path there are sheepfolds and meadows but as one goes on, the households begin to come into signs more and more often, giving the impression of a mountain village, with no name, hidden from the heavy street traffic on DN17. After a descent on the left, among typical houses, for 3 kilometers, next comes a slight downhill portion on an unpaved road, which leads to a crossroad that passes the street. The path turns right, parallel to the road, but at a safe distance from the main road. The path crosses two streams through a thin forest and then the well-known "Valea Străjii" (2) appears in sight, where one can have a hot meal, like the famous tripe soup, and rest for a while. The path goes through Bârgău River Valley, not changing direction, right into the camping site with the same name, which also has some resting places. For around 2 kilometers, the valley is not very spectacular and chances to find some shade from the sun are very small until Blajului Bridge. Then comes an ascent on the left side of the bridge, on the road that is already situated in Mureșenii Bârgăului village. The road signaling lead through yet another small part of the village which includes around 30 meters of asphalt, on the road from where one must turn left, on an unpaved road that goes slightly uphill, slowly getting above the village. Households become less and less frequent and the road turns into a smaller path, people in the area are more curious by nature as the path reaches the top of the hill, at Brazii Buni. From then on, one has 4 more km of slight descent into Bistrița Bârgăului (3) village. On the road, one can admire the lazy settlement that stretches until it touches the mountain that separates it from Colibița Dam.

Info:

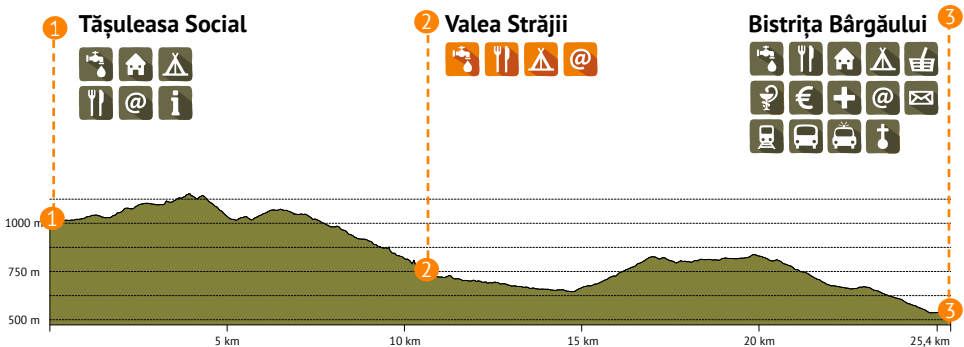
Colibița Dam – Colibița Dam has created the reservoir lake Colibița where one can find an impressive recreation area. The dam built between the 1977 and 1991 for hydropower purposes. Lake Colibița has a surface of 270 hectares, 13km in length and the volume of water reaches 65 million cubic meters and it is situated at 900 m of altitude. The building of the lake is still a subject of controversy, especially in this side of the county, where people are known for believing in superstitions. Before the 80s, the area was

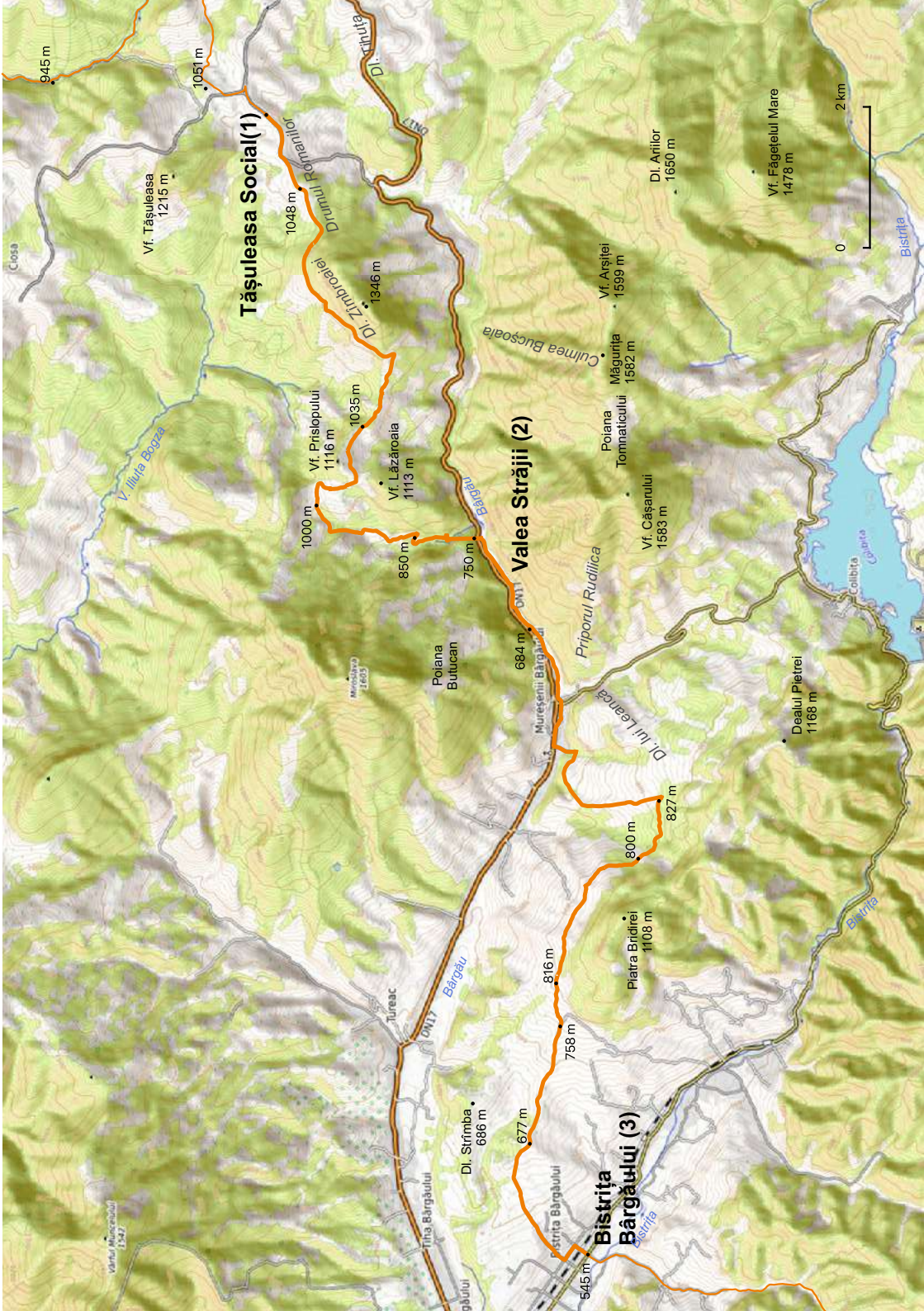




known for its high concentration of ozone and iodine ions, recommended in treating pulmonary and heart diseases. Building the dam led to flooding the village, so it gave birth to a popular legend according to which the lake is cursed, and every year it chooses a person from the swimmers as a victim.

Maria Theresia Road – Via Maria Theresia is a historic road situated in the Călimani Mountains, built hundreds of years ago, to provide the military troops at the frontier of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with ammunition and food. Nowadays, this road connects Bistrița-Năsăud County to Suceava County, but few people know that long ago, it was a frontier road between Transylvania and Bucovina. Besides the historical value, the road also has beautiful natural scenery. Tășuleasa Social has revived 42 kilometers of this road in 2014, properly signaling it for hikers to come all year round. Moreover, Tășuleasa organizes a trail running competition every summer. The trail unfolds beautiful natural and wild views. It proves as well that massive deforestations in our country are a real problem.





WARNING: due to the lack of large towns up to this point of the route, two options are available for the next section, one with and the second without the possibility of passing through a town, namely Bistrița. Thus, Variant A is: **Bistrița Bârgăului - Dorolea - Bistrița - Jeica** and Variant B is: **Bistrița Bârgăului - Petriș - Jeica**.

3

BISTRIȚA BÂRGĂULUI - DOROLEA ROUTE VARIANT A

17 km
4.5 h

Trail: easy

Elevation difference: +490 m

Critical spots: The water supply is important, because for several kilometres, there will be no spring in the way. The trail that separates from Variant B, will also be a more critical one, on which we do not recommend walking at night, due to the danger of wild animals (bears, wild boars). Sun protection and insect repellent is required. Possible encounters of sheep herds with dangerous dogs.

Scenery: From Bistrița Bârgăului, you walk along the Blidăreasa river, uphill, on a gravel road and then on a paved road, among the houses of the locals, until you get out of their shadow in some clearings where landscapes from a picturesque past can be admired. A few dilapidated huts rest in the middle of pastures whose expanse is beyond your sight, the road climbing up the hill to the thick, cool forest. The exit to the hills with mild ascents and descents. Dorolea, a Saxon village with its own charm.

Accommodation:

Dorolea: Elis Pension, 6 beds, access to the kitchen, reservation by phone +40 744 658 148 (Daniela Dumitru), <https://pensiunea-elis.ro>;

Edelweiss Chalet, 5 double rooms, access to kitchen, terrace, reservations by phone +40 735 900 735 (Tea Andreica).

KleinBistritzer Hof, 5 beds, camping place, access to kitchen and toilets, shop nearby. Reservations on tel. +40 744 505 920 (Toni Pal);

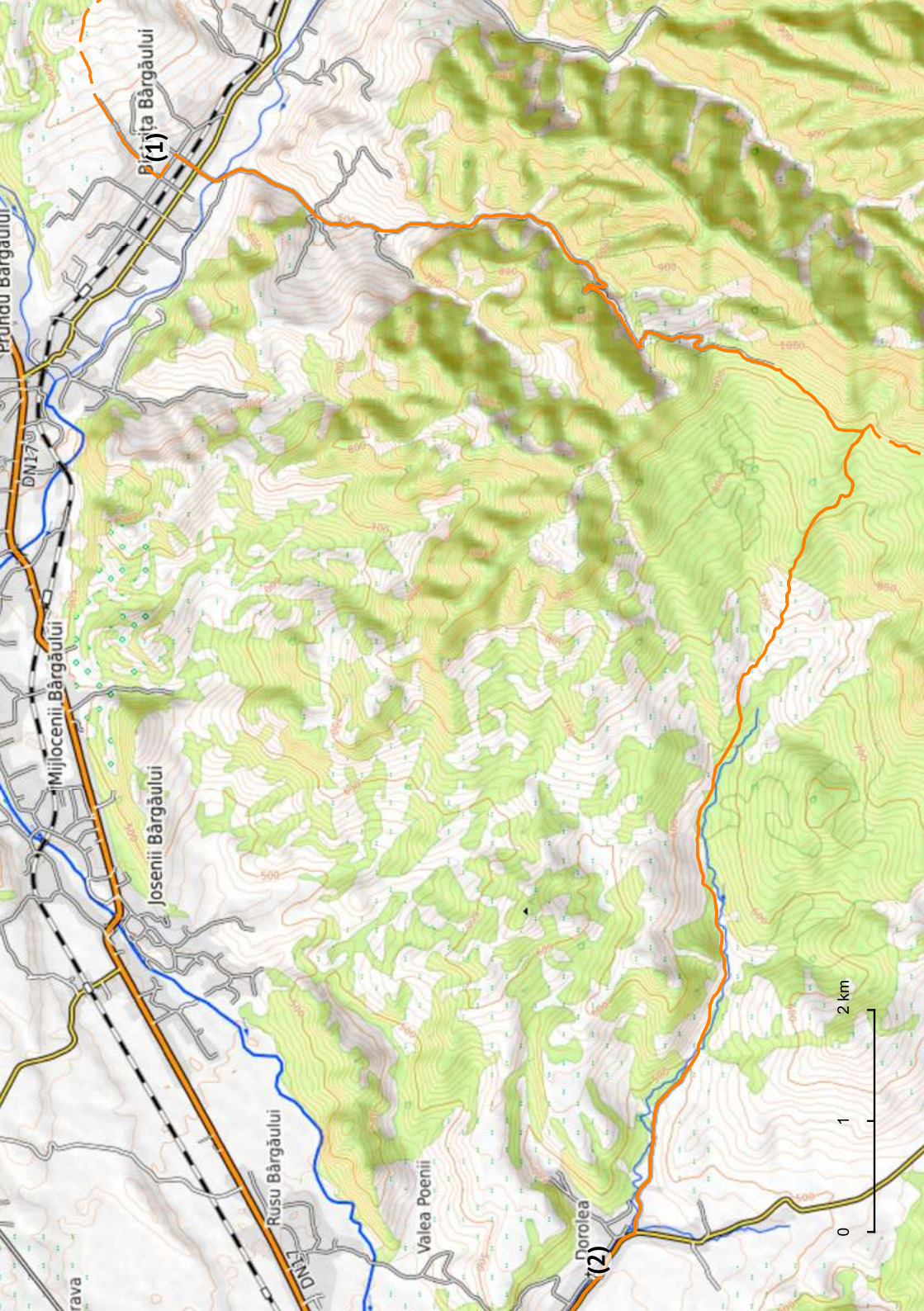
Pension Poiana Corbilor, 50 accommodation accommodations, restaurant, swimming pool, phone +40 745 309 549 (Adrian Zagrai);

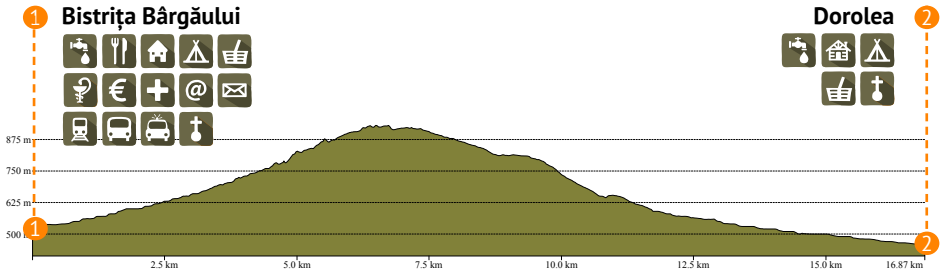
Conacul lui Horia, 12 beds, dinner and breakfast on request, camping space, car transportation on request, reservations on +40 740 238 811 (Bogdan Cifor) and +40 752 713 747 (Laura Cifor).

Infrastructure: **Dorolea:**     

Note:

From Bistrița Bârgăului (1), from the point where the route reaches the village, cross the main road and head towards Blidăreasa, on the bank of the Blidăreasa river for several km, in a slight climb. After leaving the inhabited area, the road passes through some picturesque pas-tures, then enters a thick, cool beech forest. At the entrance to this forest, route B splits off from Variant A, and following the signpost and arrow, turns right down the forest road. Following the road, go through the forest for about a kilometre, then making a right turn, to a resting spot and a hut, a place that seems to be set up for tourists to go out for a barbecue. You can see all the necessary tools and the place





specially prepared for this leisure activity. If this spot is on the left side, a barrier can be seen in front, closed, but the route takes a left turn between the barrier and the barbecue hut. Following the markings, you descend gently down the path and then onto the dirt road, through scraggly trees that look like part of an orchard, but are oak or beech trees planted perhaps to shade the animals. After a few hundred metres, a cow farm comes into view ahead, and the trail takes a right turn above the barn. The farm's dogs are tethered and other loose animals are not dangerous, you can see donkeys or horses tethered. Then you exit back onto the dirt road and descend to the right into the valley, the bend then going slightly left. The road turns into a nice path, down which one descends gently, towards the valley, surrounded by hills with young forest or scraggly trees, flower meadows and fat grass. Continue on the road with caution, for after a while, and a few bends, a small herd of sheep may come our way. The sheep are few, but the dogs are mean, the shepherd keeps them under control, but they can scare the walkers a little.

Then, going further downhill, among hills and bushes, we will slowly approach the valley that will accompany us on the left side. After a while walking parallel to it, you will have to cross, with caution, even if the water level is very low. This is the area where the herd is grazing, but it is not far to the entrance to the village. The cowherd can ask us a few questions, be friendly and curious, a short break to chat and briefly hydrate can only be welcome.

Then the trail continues on the same dusty road, and descends towards the village, slowly, through fields of moorland, flowers and scrappy trees, of intense and exciting colour, all the way to the village entrance. Here it is best to pay close attention to the old Saxon houses, Dorolea (2) being one of the best preserved in Bistrița-Năsăud County. With a welcome break for supplies at the shop in the centre of the village, continue on asphalt to the two recommended accommodation points, one of which is at the end of Dorolea.

Info:

Dorolea - Dorolea (in Saxon Băstărz, in German Klein-Bistritz, Kleinbistritz, in Hungarian Aszúbeszterce, Kisbeszterce) is a village in the commune of Livezile, in Bistrița-Năsăud county, Transylvania, Romania. This "little Bistrița" is a typical Saxon settlement, with houses on the road, close to each other, still reminiscent of the life of the Saxons, long gone from the village. It is the most picturesque and enlightening rural Saxon

settlement in the region. In the middle of the village, on a small promontory, stands the parish church, now an Orthodox parish church, built after the middle of the 19th century (1858-1861) in classicist style. The village is part of a group of three villages with the same structure and historical development and is a good example of what a frontier village of the Empire was like. The archaeological site is located 1km from the village and can be visited for tourist purposes.



Trail: easy to medium, gravel roads, hill climbs and asphalt. The length of the climb and the asphalt riding may be the reason why this trail has medium difficulty.

Elevation difference: +339m

Critical spots: lack of water on the trail, despite being a short trail, there is a fairly long climb and a short and difficult descent

Scenery: from Dorolea you climb a hill from where the scenery is extremely beautiful, then you walk through the cool forest to the Cocoș (translation: Rooster) slope where there is another spectacular viewpoint and a short steep descent to the outskirts of town, here asphalt to the town.

Accommodation:

Bistrița: Camping Lacul Unirea, 12 beds in wooden cottages, each with its own bathroom, camping site with access to toilets and showers, terrace, swimming pool, fishing, restaurant nearby, open from June to September. Reservations at tel. +40 747 036 978 (Iuga Daniel).

Hotel Bistrița, 100 places, restaurant, reservations on tel. +40 730 660 837 and +40 263 231 154;

Pension & SPA Casa EMA, 30 places, restaurant, spa, booking tel. +40 773 330 968, Kaula SPA, located in the premises of **Casa EMA**, massage and body treatments, booking tel. +40 745.678.609;

Roots Bistro & Caffè, restaurant, tel. 0755 670 099 or 0747 589 553 (Bogdan);

Amaretto Caffè, restaurant, tel. +40 730 277 181.

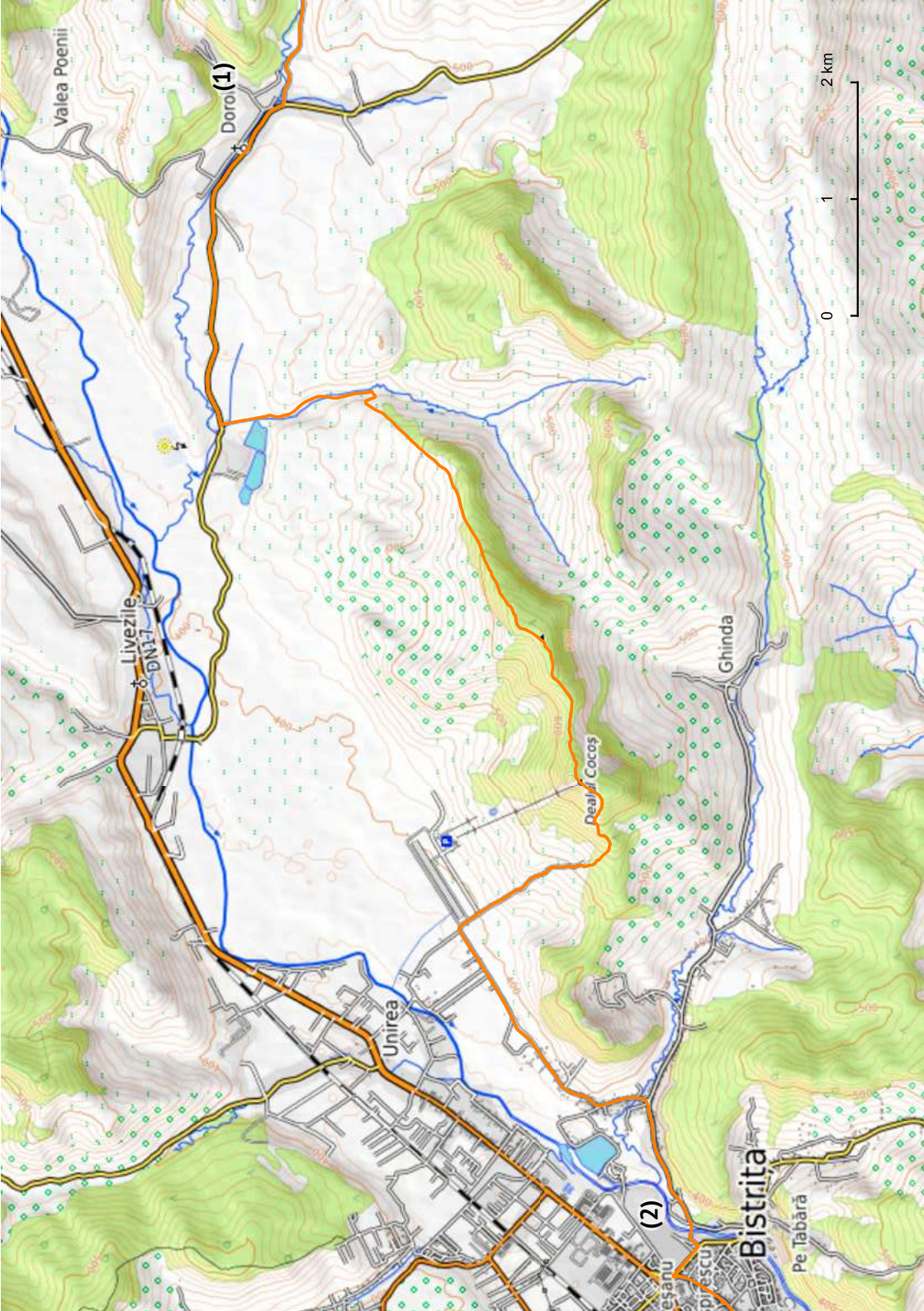
Infrastructure:

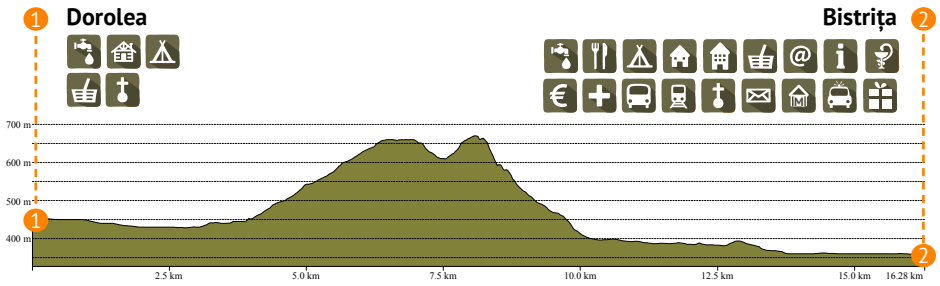
Bistrița: 

Note:

Leaving Dorolea (1) you walk a few kilometers on asphalt with caution, the traffic being quite in-tense and merciless, passing the last houses of the inhabitants and a Monastery with its build-ings under construction. Walk for about 2 kilometres, then cross the road and turn left onto a dusty road still ahead, passing a reservoir, called Lake Dorolea, which remains on the right-hand side. Walking along this road for a while, the lake ends on the right-hand side and slowly a valley opens up, and a hill rises in front, which the trail soon climbs. So, going slightly right, there follows a climb up the hill, still higher and slightly right, towards the cool forest in the distance. Behind, you can see many villages in the Bârgăului Valley, if the visibility is good you can see the whole chain of the Rodnei Mountains and the Țibleș. If we pay attention, we can also see Dorolea and Livezile at the foot of the hill. We walk about a kilometre and a half on the edge of the forest, looking for pleasant shade on hot days, keeping right all the time, in fact following the signs and the path leading into the forest.

Entering the forest, the shade envelops the hiker's heated skin, making the pores turn the skin into goosebumps. The well-defined ridges, the stillness of the forest and the





coolness of the not-too-thick, not-too-frequent foliage offer a calm and respite from the long climb. After a few hundred metres, the trail reaches a plateau, or hilltop, still in the forest, from where it's not too long to the next highlight.

Then it goes on to a new climb, which lasts around 700 metres, until it comes out in the clear-ing with the Cocoș Slope, where the view is awe-inspiring to anyone. This is a place where winter sports are practiced, and in summer cycling, mountain biking, ktm and running through the forest. An off-road cycling track can be seen through the surrounding forest, which is used for various competitions.

On one of those trails will be the descent of our route, a very steep and dangerous descent, being the only way out of the trail. Walking sticks can be very useful at this point, and extreme caution will be required in the rain. The descent takes about 500 metres until you reach a fence with an entrance on the right, towards the Bistrita Lions Club Century-Old Pear Trees Park. Here you cross the park with centuries-old pear trees, you can also take a break at the specially arranged benches and tables, and then descend, always to the left, towards the shepherds' hut at the foot of the hill. Pass in front of it, and then go forward, still straight ahead, with the large building on the right-hand side, to the asphalt road. From here, to the left, for about 4 kilometres, on the marked path, you reach the centre of Bistrița (2), a town that has much to offer to the hikers who wish to discover its treasures.

Info:

Parcul cu peri seculari Lions (translation: The Lions Club Park with century-old Pear Trees)

- The Century-old Pear Trees Park is a very special place. The Park was created thanks to a custom of the Saxons of Unirea, who each had to work four days a year to tend and plant the trees. Lions volunteers together with their partners - Harta Verde Romania and Ruralis Association have redeveloped the place, surveyed the surroundings and continue to take care of the park. They say the pear trees are so old that of the 28 varieties found here, only three could be accurately identified. Our friend Eng. Mihai Bilegan explained "There are so many things to study about these pear trees, you can never go home...". Surely hikers on the Via Transilvanica will find this a perfect place for a well-deserved break!

Bistrița - Bistrița, one of the seven Saxon fortresses in Transylvania, is a charming town with an interesting history, which can still be read from the architectural style of many buildings and complexes, still preserved intact.

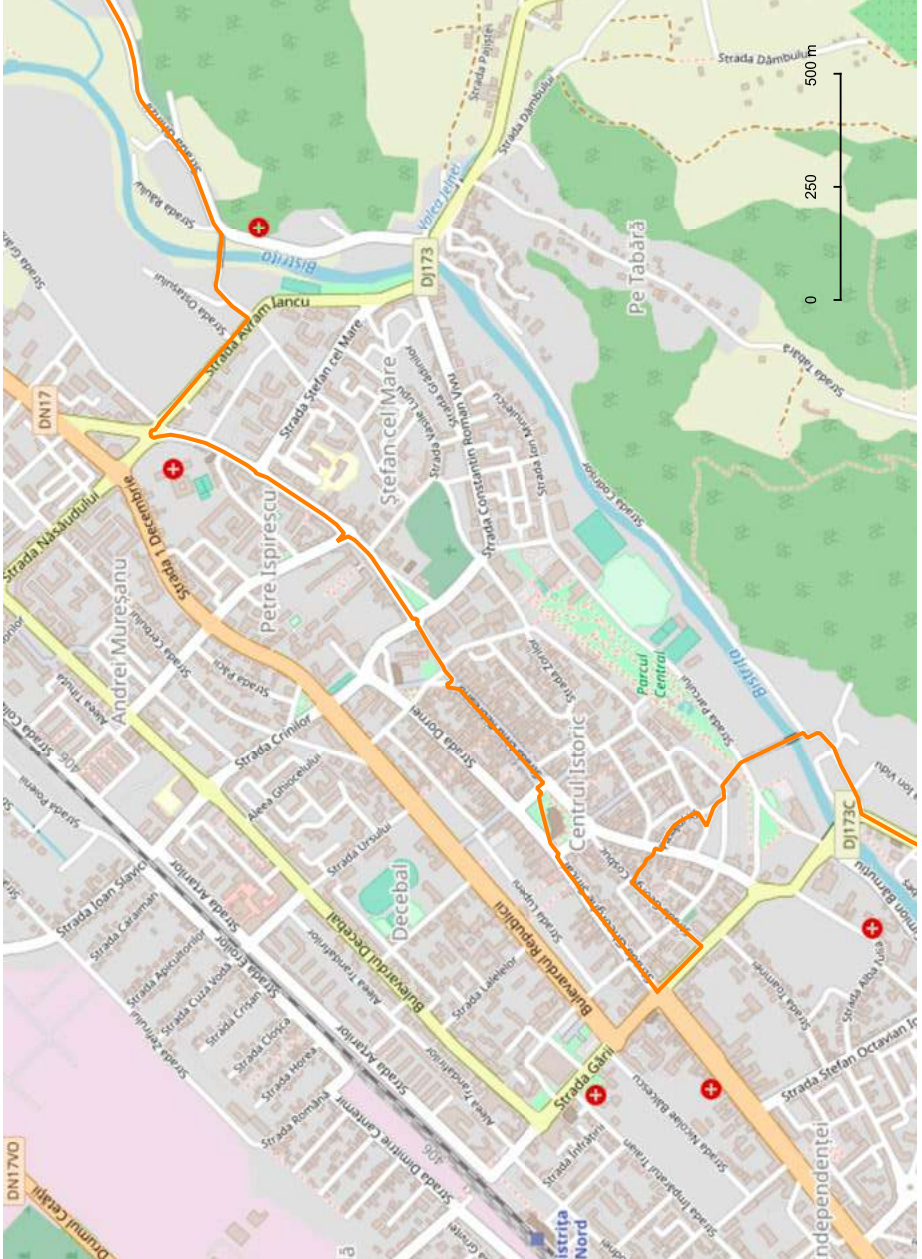
The Evangelical Church - an emblem of Bistrița, located in the centre of the town, is an architectural monument representative of the transition from the Gothic to the Renaissance style in Transylvania. The 75m high church tower is the tallest medieval



tower in Romania, slightly taller than the tower of the Evangelical Cathedral in Sibiu. The visitor can go up to the church tower by elevator (visiting hours: Wednesday - Friday: 13.00 - 16.00, Saturday: 10.00 - 16.00, Sunday: 12.00 - 16.00) and admire the panorama of Bistrița.

Sugăletele - Opposite the church, the hiker can walk under the Sugălete complex, where once was the heart of trade in the old village. The historic monument in the central square has housed merchants from all over Europe over the years, with separate rooms for each guild, covered by a vaulted ceiling that has become a symbol of the medieval town.

Dogar's Tower - Equally interesting to see is the Dogars Tower, another representative place for Bistrița. The Dogars Tower (in German Fassbinderturm) in Bistrița is part of the fortifications of the medieval fortress of Bistrița, being the only one that has survived of the 18 towers that formed the fortress. In the past, it was used as a hospital for the mentally ill, but also as a place of detention for prostitutes, who were put in chains before being held at the pillar of infamy in the central square, where the city's goatherds would whip them with whips before being chased out of the fortress with brooms by the venerable women of the city. Later, the tower also served other purposes, functioning as a headquarters for the Bistrița scouts and then as a night asylum. At present, the Dogars' Tower houses a unique gallery of puppets and masks including about 700 exhibits created by Baron Alexandru Misiuga. Bistrița is a pleasant city, inviting you to stroll through the old centre, through narrow and mysterious passages, through the ingeniously landscaped central park and along the quiet streets or boulevards shaded by lime trees. Bistrița is a lively little town, there is always something going on, a medieval festival, a concert in the courtyard of the Dogars' Tower, a film screening or a craft fair in the old centre.



Casa Argintarului - The Silver House is an architectural monument in Bistrița from the early Renaissance. An architectural monument from the early 16th century, it was the former home of a great jeweller who embellished its façade (between 1560-1563) with stone Renaissance-style frames by the Swiss architect Petrus Italus. The Silversmith's House is located at number 5 Dornei Street.

Andrei Mureșanu - Andrei Mureșanu is one of the most famous personalities of Bistrița. He was born in 1818 and died in 1863 in Brasov. He was a great Romanian poet, writer

and philosopher, who studied in Blaj. He is best known as the author of the lyrics of the national anthem "Deșteaptă-te române", whose music was composed by Anton Pann.

Andrei Mureșanu Memorial House - The city of Bistrita is known as the city of the national anthem. The Memorial House is the place where the author spent his childhood, being a house inherited from his grandparents. The building is quite old, dating back to the beginning of the 19th century, following the classical Romanian construction model. It is the kind of architecture that perfectly complements the structure and architecture of the town as it was conceived at that time. Since 1984, a library has been housed inside this house. The house is located at 19 Andrei Mureșanu Street and can be visited. (Visiting hours: Monday - Friday: 08:00 - 16:00, Saturday - Sunday: Closed).

The Bistrita-Nasaud Museum Complex - County Museum is located at 19 Grigore Balan Street. The current location is the former Habsburg barracks built at the end of the 19th century and used as a castle building. The building was built in the same style as the building of the County Museum of the Border Regiment in Caransebeș, in the same period, the two being sister buildings, but the one in Bistrita was renovated and maintained in a much better state. The space is generous and houses valuable and interesting collections for any history enthusiast. Moreover, in the courtyard of the museum there is an old wooden church from the 17th century. The museum also has two houses representative of the vernacular architecture of the region, one from the mountain area, from Șanț, and another representative of the plain area, from Archiud. In the museum you can see collections ranging from archaeology to contemporary art, not to mention the rich collection of ethnography. Visiting hours are as follows: Mondays are closed all the time, and the rest of the days are closed according to the season, October-March: 9am-5pm April-September: 10am-6pm.

Bistrița Synagogue - The Bistrița Synagogue is a Jewish place of worship in Bistrița, located at 10 General Grigore Bălan Street. It was built in 1856 and in 2015 it was declared a historical monument. According to the 1930 census, the mosaic community in Bistrița numbered 2,198 believers, representing 15.55% of the city's total population. After the deportation of the Jews to the Nazi extermination camps in May 1944, but also as a result of the massive emigration to the USA and Israel during the communist regime, the synagogue fell into disrepair. Later it was restored and is now one of the important places in the city for cultural events, among which the Bistrița Poetry Festival is worth mentioning. This festival happens every year, usually in July, and brings together poets from the country and beyond, who meet in Bistrița for a few days with and about poetry. There is a large (and happy) concentration of good and internationally known writers in the county. Among them, we mention Dan Coman, Marin Mălaicu-Hondrari, Ioana Nicolae, Alexandru Uiuuiu, Ion Mureșan etc.

Ada Milea - We don't think there is anyone in our country who hasn't enjoyed listening to an Ada Milea concert, or who hasn't gone to one of the plays for which Ada composed the music: Sânziana and Pepelea, Chirița in Concert or Svejka. Ada Milea is one of the oldest and best friends of our organisation Tășuleasa Social and has been taking part in our actions since the beginning. Ada Milea is a singer, songwriter and actress, known for her unique style. She graduated from high school at the "Liviu Rebreanu" National College in Bistrița. She has released memorable albums: Absurdistan, Apolodor, Nasul, Quijote, Insula, etc, which have delighted people over the years! Everyone loves Ada Milea! Starting with us at Tășuleasa Social.