



OFF-ROAD ROMANIA THE TWO WHEEL TRAVELER'S GUIDE

Cluj-Napoca, 2018



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Partner accommodation facilities: Smida Park, Landhouse Pension, Cabana Groapa Seacă, De Oude Wilg Camping, Motocamp Cisnădioara, Cabana Moţilor, Castania Pension.

Unique download code for GPS tracks and full version of mobile application:

Details at the GPS Tracks section of our website:

www.carpathian2wheelsguide.com

This project would have not reached the 4th edition without the help of some good friends: loana Fălcuşan, Constantin Ghimbir, Alecu and Ramona (Heavy Duties), Ionuţ Batu and Irinel Marghioala (BMW Motorrad Romania), Bogdan Dănăilă (Motul), Martin Alušík ('the Crazy Rider'), Michal Hamšík (motoroute.cz), BucTrafic, Petrică Ciobanu and last but not least, Sabin Potinteu. Thank you, dear friends!

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/ Warning!

Motorcycle or bicycle trips are unpredictable and can be dangerous. The authors and collaborators made substantial efforts so that all information presented in this guidebook to be as precise as possible. The authors and collaborators cannot be held responsible for the inconveniences, events or injuries suffered as a result of advice or information presented in this guide. By using this guidebook, the readers assume all the risks incurred as a result of the completion of routes described in this guidebook.

1.1 About a dream

It took four years and three other published guidebooks in order to be able to hold the product that we originally thought of. The first and most important purpose was to promote Romania, in the way that suits her best, without any cosmetics of the modern times.

After a shy beginning, in the mountains we knew too well: the Apuseni Mountains, we went further with asphalt circuits all over Romania. Now, we publish a guide, proposing routes on unpaved and secondary roads, of over 3,000 kilometres / 1864 miles long.

1.2 About Romania

Romania is a country with plenty of wild regions, trying to adapt to modern society. In pursue of this goal, some Romanians choose not to give up the values learned from their grandparents, remembering the legends they heard of the places they visited. We want to go even further than that, to gather all the experiences we lived and share them with other travellers eager to discover this country. These travellers do not necessarily have to come from abroad, because many Romanians haven't had the opportunity to discover all corners of their country.



We hope to transform Romania into a well-known travel destination for two wheels tourists through this series of guidebooks. The complex past of the country has left very interesting marks, a lifestyle different from that of the western cultures and has developed a connection between man and nature, rarely seen in Europe. For this reason, the Romanian countryside may become a tourist attraction as interesting as the most spectacular natural landmarks.

The supreme purpose of the Carpathian 2 Wheels Guide project is to highlight the interaction with the people, visiting places of legend or tasting dishes made on the stove, in order to radically change the experience of visiting Romania.

Papers / Documents required at the border

The citizens of the European Union can enter Romania with only their ID cards. Details on visas and other documents necessary for the citizens of other countries can be found on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.mae.ro/en), section Visa and Consular Affairs.

Before entering the country, it's recommended to check the validity of car mandatory insurance and if it covers accidents on the territory of Romania.

Money

The national currency is the Leu / pl: Lei (RON).

Currently, (April 2018) the exchange rate is:

- 1 Euro (EUR) 4.65 Lei (RON)
- 1 American Dollar (USD) 3.8 Lei (RON)
- 1 Pound Sterling (GBP) 5.2 Lei (RON)

Payments with your credit card may be carried out only at large shops, where the logos of the accepted cards are displayed and ATMs are available in almost all the cities.

Mobile phones / Communication

Romania's prefix: +40

Ex: +4 0 726 000 000 (mobile network), +4 0 264 000 000 (land line)

In many places of the mountain area, there is no signal for the mobile phone network; the most prone to this situation are the deep valleys.

Language

The national language is Romanian, and in many places of Transylvania, people speak German and Hungarian. Generally, the young people also speak an international language, mostly English, followed by German and French.

Safety / Traffic rules

The permitted Blood Alcohol Level (BAC) is 0.00 (zero) to a thousand.

Speed Limits:

- 130 km/h (80 mph) on the Highway
- 100 km/h (62 mph) on European national roads, outside localities
- 90 km/h (55 mph) on national, county and village roads
- 50 km/h (30 mph) inside localities

Accidents / Emergency situations

The emergency number: 112

Mountain Rescue: 0725 826 664 (0SALVAMONT)

In case of slight collisions there is the option of establishing an amiable settlement: form of infringement settlement, filled and signed by both drivers, with the insurance details of the guilty party. If there are any injuries or more than 2 vehicles involved, the Police and the Ambulance Service must be called.

All medical services provided in emergencies are free of charge.

Other details

- The electricity network is 220 V, 50 Hz, and the plug is type C or F
- The time zone: GMT +2 (time of the Eastern Europe EET)
- It is recommended to avoid fuel supplying from small petrol stations.

2.1 Content of the guidebook Route

The purpose of this material is to help travellers discover the less-touristic and wilder areas of Romania. In order to do so, our proposed route stretches through the whole Carpathian Arch and a couple of the neighbouring regions. We have considered the city of Cluj-Napoca as a starting point, because it's the only large city of the route, it's three hours away from the western border of the country and also has an international airport.



Although we recommend a starting point and a clockwise direction, it isn't absolutely necessary to be followed. We did not mention any time reference for the track because it depends a lot on the rider's experience.

A short tour

Someş Plateau is the first major landform to be browsed, it starts before the city of Cluj-Napoca, and the river Lăpuş is the first one to meander with the route. The crossing towards Maramureş is done through Gutâi Mountains; the historic region is discovered village by village up to Borşa. The longest section of unpaved roads is through Bucovina and a welcome break can be made by visiting the Moldavian monasteries. The Mountains of Stânişoara and Mount Ceahlău are gradual

crossings to the mountain area, but not before the impressive 'gate' of Bicaz Gorge. In the Ciuc Mountains, altitude increases and slowly goes down to the Seckler Land and to another long off-road section, all the way to the accumulation lake Siriu. Changing the altitude level once again, we propose a day or more for wine tasting in the region of Dealul Mare (the Great Hill). The crest of Baiului Mountains starts the crossing toward Transylvania and after the unique landscape of

Bucegi Mountains, the fortress of Râşnov guards the 'border' to the afore-mentioned region. Since we've opened the appetite for fortresses, the next in line are those of Rupea and Sighişoara, followed by many medieval fortified churches. Făgaraş Mountains



expose their grandness from the hills of Transylvania, but can only be 'conquered' through Transfăgărăsan Roadway. The second large city worth visiting is Sibiu, after the Clough of Olt is transited on the opposite side of the national road. We quickly return to the attitude and Strategica Roadway takes the route southward, while also passing through the Gorge of Oltet. Another relaxing section includes a visit to Constantin Brâncusi's sculptures from Târqu Jiu; then returning to the mountains through the Gorge of Sohodol and toward the accumulation lake Cerna. Mehedinți Plateau is the last step before the Clough of the Danube. The high mountains are left behind, but Alpine Banat, Semenic and Anina's Mountains are going to delight the traveller with the unique views of the water mills or deserted villages. Climbing towards Tarcu Mountains is the most difficult passage of the entire guide, and Poiana Ruscă Mountains will keep the pace, but at a smaller scale and on white roads, literally. The track is almost approaching the end and straight ahead are the Apuseni Mountains, which have a lot to offer: natural bridges, unique historical regions, incredible karst phenomena and villages scattered on the hills. Everything concludes with the most beautiful viewpoint, from where the city of Cluj-Napoca can be observed: Feleac Hill.

Types of roads

You will be navigating on the following types of roads: asphalted (tarmac), unpaved and dirt roads or covered with grass. The first two categories have



reduced difficulty; only the dirt roads have difficult sections. Each chapter has a diagram, on which the proportion of each type of road is represented.

Even if it's called 'off-road', the suggested route is not entirely upon unpaved roads. These occupy 55% (41.5% gravel roads and 13.5% dirt roads); the remainder of 45% are modernised roads.

We have tried to find as many interesting routes as possible, but there have been situations in which the landform or the soils did not permit access of motorcycles on some sections. The best example is the region of Maramureş, where the high energy of the landforms, makes access very difficult for a motorcycle loaded with luggage.

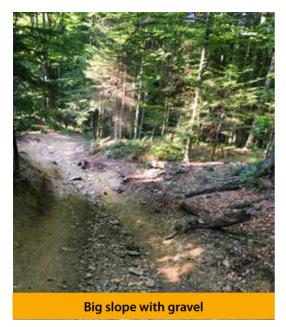
Difficulty of the routes

Also, as the purpose mentioned above, this is not a guidebook with very difficult or extreme routes. Some sections of the suggested routes are difficult for a dual-sport motorcycle with luggage even on good weather conditions, meaning without significant precipitation (liquid or solid) in the last few days. In case there is snow in the surroundings or abundant rain at higher altitude; recent precipitations or a lot of mud, these segments may become impossible to overcome. These are marked on the maps, in the texts or on the mobile app, and for each of them there is a bypassing option suggested.

We do not recommend getting through the proposed routes of this guide without adequate tires.



Examples of difficult sections:





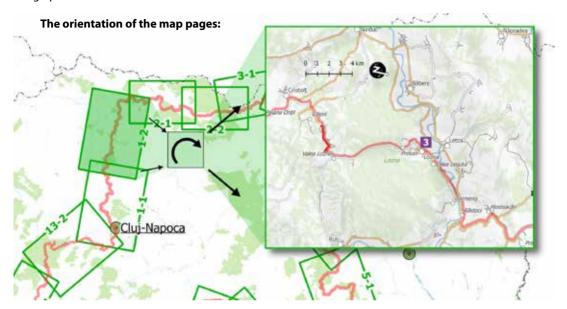






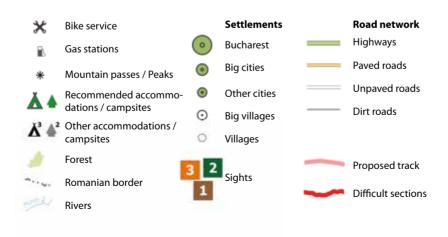
Maps

Each chapter has one or two maps with the concerned route highlighted in red. Difficult sectors have a more intense red colour. The scale of the maps varies between 1:210 000 and 1:240 000, each of them having a graphic scale expressed in kilometres. The orientation of the maps also varies in such a way so that each of them has a clockwise representation of the route. The north of each map is indicated by the symbol besides the graphic scale.

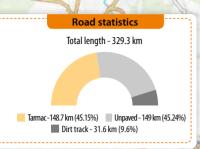


Considering the great length of the track, the map will not be able to offer at any point the information necessary for navigation. If the sense of orientation is not your strong point, we recommend that you have a device containing satellite navigation (GPS) or a smartphone with our application.

The legend of detailed maps:



4.13 APUSENI MOUNTAINS



SIGHTS

- 1. Traditional drawings
- 2. Wooden church of Birtin
- 3. Natural bridge from Grohot
- 4. "Avram lancu" memorial museum
- 5. Pişoaia waterfall

- 6. Snails Hills
- 7. Scărișoara cave glacier
- 8. Sunken church of Giurcuţa

Cristi

- de Sus
- 9. Liteni Citadel
- 10. Cluj-Napoca town

The next segment is outlined by the Apuseni Mountains (Westeners); and begins with the crossing of the Mureş river (DC 76A). This is also the last chapter, before returning to the city of Cluj-Napoca. The low-altitude of this mountain group permitted the development of many villages, scattered all over the mountains. These close-to-nature communities have a millennial history, and regions such as Moţilor Country are among the most picturesque in Romania. Adding the spectacular natural wonders, the karst phenomena in particular, the last route will be among the most impressive.

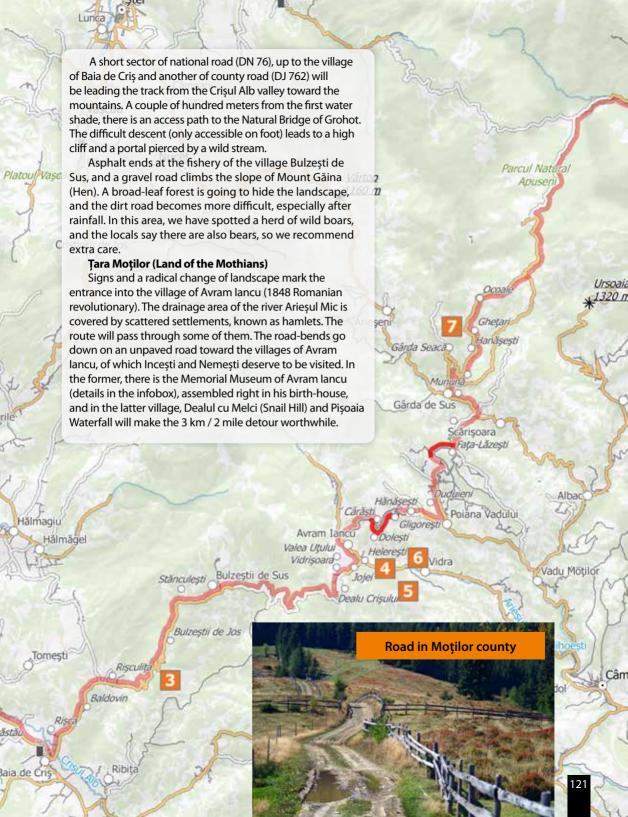
The first settlement encountered is the village of Obârşia the road leading here is unpaved at first, and then comes 7 km / 4 miles of asphalt. The remarkable part of this place consists in the graphics that appear on the fences or the households' enclosures. Most of them are

representations of proverbs, biblical verses or local crafts. The artist's house and more designs are right next to the road climbing towards the water shade (DJ 707).

A series of unpaved road-bends disclose the horizon toward the valley left behind, while going across a forest of broad-leaves on the other side. Unfortunately, the forest exploitation gave an ugly scar to the hills, visible for more than 3 km / 2 miles right from the road. 4 years ago, when we first came to these places, the forest was in place.

The first village from Crişul Alb Valley is Căzăneşti, where the modern road starts toward the center of Vaţa de Jos village. After a while, the river is followed toward the village of Birtin, on a road (DC 172) that will have a narrow unpaved section. The wooden church from the last mentioned village, built in 1690 on a hill, will certainly catch the eye.





In the second village, right on the side of the road, a worthy witness of the evolution of earth can be a admired; the marine fossils of gastropods (order Acteonella), living on the bottom of the Tethys Sea, approximately 65-70 million years ago. The paleontological reserve of Dealul cu Melci (Snail Hill). On the other side of the valley, Pişoaia waterfall offers a charming sight of water going over a threshold of limestone tuff.

Now follows a remarkable area, both historical and scenic. Țara Moților is the most renowned historic region of the Apuseni Mountains, and the identity of moţ (mothian) is kept with pride. The route will cross several hamlets to the south and to the north of the Arieş river, emphasizing the different effects that tourism can have over the area.

Difficult section - areas with mud and deep grooves. Detour: Vidra, Mihoeşti, Poiana Vadului (DJ 762. DN 75)

The paved road is left immediately after the central area of Avram lancu village, and the forest covers the first tight turns. The scattered houses will soon appear, and the quality of the road decreases gradually toward dirt state, after passing the last houses of Pătruţeşti hamlet. There is a high risk of losing the way, because of the many roads. The grass completely covers the path that ought to be followed towards the ridge and it's the same on the other side of the hill.

Warning! Nearby the first cultivated lots, you may come across wires or gates, designed to keep the animals on the enclosed pastures. They can be easily opened and should be left as they were found, after gaining passage.

Difficult section - areas with mud and deep grooves. Poiana Vadului, Vadu Moților, Scărișoara

INFOBOX



Avram lancu (1824-1872)

Avram Iancu Memorial House

In 1824, in the village of Vidra de Sus, Avram lancu, the greatest national hero of Transylvania was born in a wealthy family of moţi (inhabitants of a historical country in the Apuseni Mountains). A lawyer by profession, he tried to obtain human rights for the mountain people through both memoires and visits to the Austrian authorities (Transylvania belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire); as well as battles against the Hungarian revolutionary troops between 1848-1849.

lancu managed to mobilize a few thousands moți, and repelled the attacks of the Hungarian armies, which surrounded the Apuseni Mountains in March 1849. After all the battles he led, many financial rewards and military honors had been offered to him, but were refused, because his personal goal has not been obtained. In the last part of his life, he preferred to wander the mountains and villages of Țara Moților, often playing elegies on whistle.

He died at only 48 years old and was buried in the Orthodox churchyard of the village of Ţebea, next to 'Horea's Holm tree' (Horea was a leader of the 1784 uprising). According to certain sources, over 4000 people from all over Transylvania were present at his funeral. In his will, Avram lancu left his birth-house to the Romanian people and had been transformed into a memorial home since 1880. Here are displayed photographs, banners, family documents, the cannon, swords and lancu's whistle. In addition, the ethnographic exhibition includes: traditional Mothian costume, typical vessels of the site, tools for making wood-buckets, alpenhorns and horse-carts.

(DJ 750B, DN 75)

The asphalt appears once again in the valley, but for a short time, because the climbing to the next hill top is on a gravel road. The hamlet of Costeşti has households built around the access path and even if it appears that you have come to a dead end, the route is going to reach the ridge. Once again, please mind the wooden gates enclosing the animal pastures. The last part before the Arieş river stays on the ridge; you can admire the surrounding landscape; however, there may be some difficult areas of dirt roads, ditches and deep mud.

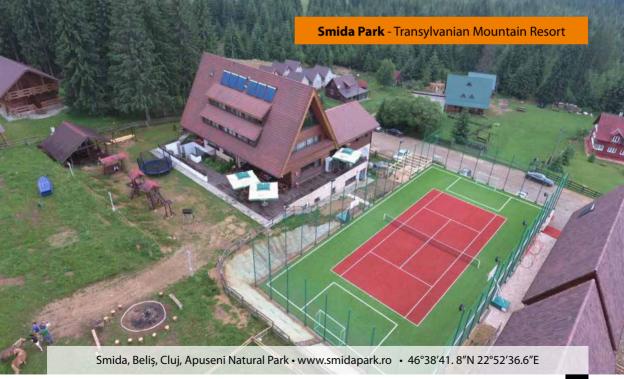
From here, you can see how these hamlets are organized and how close they are to the commonly used raw material, wood. This area is less developed, because the major tourist attractions are yet to come. The archaic construction style of the houses is still predominant.

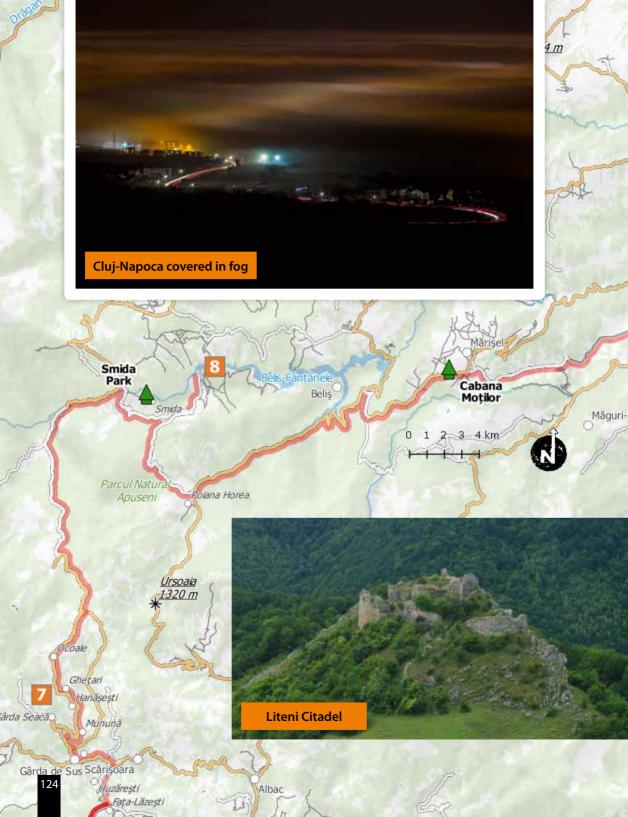
The gravel road descents to the national artery DN 75 and further on to one of the most well known and spectacular caves in Romania: Glacier of Scărișoara. DN 75 national road is only followed for 2.3 km / 1.4 miles and then, village road DC 260 is coiling through the sinkholes toward the village of Gheţari (Glaciers).

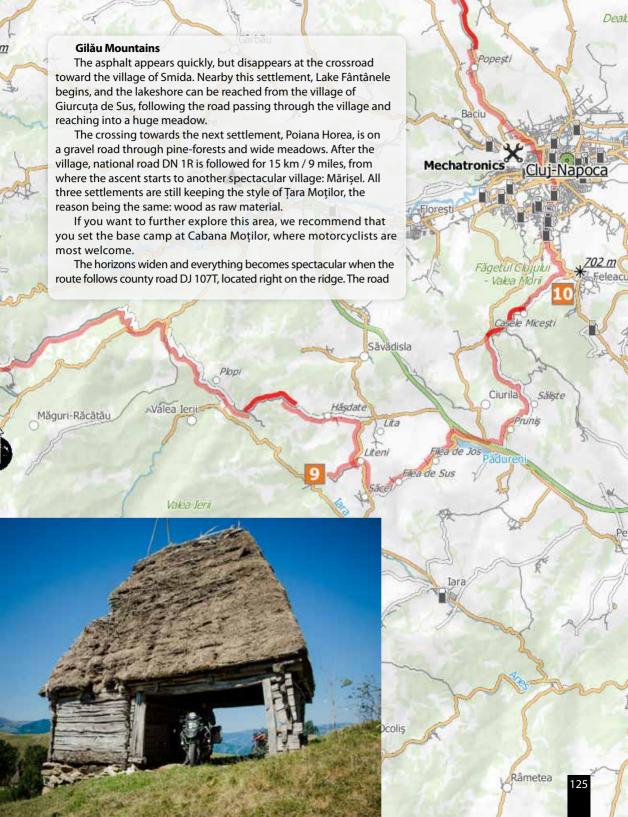
The entire region, north of Arieş river, is a vast karst complex, with the most spectacular shapes on the Padiş plateau. Unfortunately, these spectacular landmarks are isolated from roads and accessible only on foot, and for that matter, the route will go toward the hamlet of Călineasa. The road is still paved all the way to the above-mentioned settlement, but then an unpaved road descends through the village and the valley with the same name.

The households are built almost entirely out of wood and used during the summer to shelter the animals brought to the pasture. The temporary use of these settlements was very common in the Apuseni Mountains, but now only the large hamlets have this function. This landscape will be the last from the historic region of Jara Moţilor, as the route is passing into the drainage basin of Someş river and toward the village of Doda Pilii. The gravel road has a few sectors with mud, but they are unlikely to cause any problems.

If the evening catches you in the area and not only then, we recommend to stay overnight at our friends, Smida Park. The food is incredible, the facilities are in very good condition and the swimming pool is the best way to relax after a long day.









from Mărişel village is unpaved and becomes a dirt road after the last households. Here, there may also be gates intended to keep the animals on pastures. After a short forest section, a series of road-bends go down toward the river Someşul Rece through the village of Uzina (the Factory), following DJ 107S (paved road) for a little while and climbing in tight turns once again through the village of Muntele Rece (Cold Mountain), on county road DJ 107N.

These settlements scattered upon the high hillside have a typical charm, especially because of the unpaved road network connecting them. A lot of the wooden buildings are still visible, although many preferred to restore their houses with more modern materials.

Difficult section - areas with mud and deep grooves. Bypassing option: Detour: Valea Ierii, Săcel (DJ 107N, 107R)

The village of Plopi has only a few households

and a remarkable view, located on the edge of Valea lerii. The route doesn't climb down on the secondary road, instead follows the crest, passing through several meadows on a dirt road toward the village of Hăşdate. The way down toward the village is made on a road with ditches, that may cause problems after rain.

3 km / 2 m miles away lies the village of Liteni which, literally hides an impressive historical monument. The ruins of a medieval fortress, hidden after the limestone mount which can be seen on the horizon and accessible on a dirt road. After passing through the forest, valea lerii reappears and the track reaches a viewpoint spot where the fortress and the camping place can be admired. The route comes back the same way to Liteni village.

Somesan Plateau

From now on, the landform covered by the route is going to change, as the mountains are left behind. The hillside will keep you company up to the Mountains

of Maramures, but will not have lesser sights. Some of the most beautiful moments of these areas are the mornings when the valleys are covered with mist, and the sun shines over the heights.

After a visit to the ruins of the fortress, the track returns to the paved road and follows it for 2.3 km/ 1.4 miles, afterwards diverting to the village of Filea de Jos on DJ 107R county road. The first part is unpaved and after the climb, Turzii Gorge can be observed to the south. Secondary road 107L goes toward the village of Petresti de Jos. from where you can reach upstream of the spectacular gorge. Even if they're only accessible on foot, we recommend those who have come here for the first time, to give it a little while, to admire at least

Difficult section - areas with sand and mud after rain. Detour: Făgetul Clujului (DJ107R, DJ 103U)

The route is heading toward the village of Prundis, immediately after the accumulation lakes. It climbs a gravel road through the

village of Săliste, and further toward the top of Dealul Feleacului (Hill of Feleac). Afterwards it goes through the village of Casele Micesti and finally arriving at one of the most spectacular view points over the city of Cluj-Napoca. Certain portions of this section are on dirt roads or have a lot of sand. In the rainy periods they may become impracticable.







Romania holds many fairytale places, ancient traditions and legends, much more beautiful or frightening than that Dracula character. Many of them are beyond the urban environment and are not accessible by modern roads. We believe that a real journey begins after the end of the asphalt - so, we propose a tour of the Carpathian Mountains, 3000 kilometres / 1800 miles long, on unpayed roads.

Route of 3000 kilometres / 1800 miles

More than half of them are stone or ground roads, going through mountain passes, villages stuck in time, crossing rivers, cloughs and deep gorges. The paved roads only make the connection to the next wild area and provide the possibility to restore supplies. The route is divided into 13 chapters, each with one or two maps, a description and photos. The difficult sections are highlighted, along with places worth visiting and suggestions for overnight accommodation.

Touristic Attractions

Nature is uncovered on the wandering routes through the mountains, from the Danube Cauldrons to the Poiana Ruscă Mountains, from the Gorge of Bicaz to the Mountains of Nemira and from the Clough of the river Olt (unpaved road) to Strategica Roadway of Latoriței Mountains (over 2000 meters / 6500 feet high). Famous touristic attractions are not overlooked, such as the fortresses of Sighișoara, Rupea, Bran; the Monasteries of Moldavia, the wooden churches of Maramures or the fortified churches of Transylvania.

GPS tracks and Mobile App

All the routes and information presented in the guide are available in digital format. The unique code found in the guide provides access to the GPS tracks and a Mobile Application with navigation features.

