



Above left to right: Some riders have already found out the secret. » Great local fare. » Great local.

## A great Transylvanian ride

The seven-day tour starts from the ancient Roman town of Cluj Napoca and then heads to the breathtaking Carpathian mountains, considered the loveliest part of Romania. This is enduro bike heaven, but you can ride a roadbike on many of the roads, too.

Next comes the unfortunately named but lovely Roman town of Turda, where you visit a huge salt mine, sample local cheeses and, for a change of pace, put your hand up for an optional Ritual Killing of the Living Dead ceremony performed in a cellar.

Sibiu, the capital, has a very special heritage museum. Then comes, wait for it, one of the best experiences you will probably ever get: a ride through the 6800ft-high Transfagarasan Pass. This challenging series of switchbacks and curves will be just your kind of road.

Next on the route, Bran Castle has become the symbol of Transylvania. This former fortress was turned into a summer residence by Queen Mary, niece of Queen Victoria of Great Britain. You can get a helicopter ride to see it in its glory.

Even more evocative is Dracula's Castle on Borgo Pass between Transylvania and Moldavia. The castle, built according to Bram Stoker's vision, is now a hotel and you get to stay there. Apparently, the Transylvanians didn't know much about vampires until Abraham "Bram" Stoker wrote his 1897 gothic novel.

Turning from the Dark Side, you will ride to the Maramures region, famous for its art, woodcarving and pottery, and then to lovely Barsana Nunnery sited by the Iza River. The tour finishes in Baia Mare, at the foot of the Eastern Carpathians, and it's time to say "Naroc!" That's "Cheers!" in Transylvanian.

and historic sights, lead you to the tastiest Romanian grub, invite you into the local culture and accommodate you in comfortable hotels, too. (Alternatively, you can opt for a self-guided tour.)

You can choose from rental BMW F650, GS, F800 and GS 1200 models, with top boxes. Total distance covered in the 7-Day Essence of Transylvania tour is about 1485km (210km a day), so there's a good mix of riding and sightseeing. Yes, yes ... you get to see Dracula's castle (a testament to Bram Stoker's muddled mind) and you can test your nerve by visiting Dracula's coffin in the castle dungeon.

You'll also visit Sighisoara where the real Vlad the Impaler was born, but this trip is not only about the fascinating legends; it could be the European riding holiday you'll be talking about for a lifetime — provided you don't let sumvone kees your lily-vite nick. **ARR**



Clockwise from above:

- » Peles Castle — no, not the footballer's retirement home.
- » Beautiful historic towns.
- » Spectacular scenery.
- » Castles are everywhere.
- » The major city of Sibiu.
- » Scenic surprises at every turn.

## Want to know more?

■ A Best of Transylvania Tour can be booked by calling 02 8005 7337. Find out more at: <http://www.romania-tour.com/motorcycle-tour-europe/transylvania-best-motorcycle.html>