



The Land of Bran between the wheels

Difficulty level: intermediate

Activities: cross-country mountain biking, sightseeing, visiting natural objectives, hiking.

Sights: Breathtaking panorama of Piatra Craiului Mountain,
Visiting a local sheepfold
The "Lilieciilor" Cave (Bat Cave),
Dambovicioara Cave.
The Rasnov Citadel, The notorious Bran Castel,
Bran's traditional rural villages together with its specific sausages and cheese dishes.



Overview:

A young and travelling light adventure takes us through one of Romania's renowned countryside: The Land of Bran. Famous for its history through the presence of one of the best preserved castle in the country, it also binds us emotionally with the breathtaking natural beauty of the surroundings, the limestone architecture of The Lord of the Land: The MonteCrai. Get ready for action packed trails, blazing single tracks, sweat and dirt combined with the ever tranquility of Bran's scenario.

Day by day description:

Day 1: (by train) Bucuresti-Predeal (by train) – 3 Brazi Chalet- Secuilor's Clearing – Rasnoavei's Gorge – Rasnov – Zarnesti – Magura – Toanches – Casa Folea (by bike).

Day 2: (by bike) Casa Folea – Toanches – Magura – Zarnestiului's Chasms – Curmatura Chalet – La Table – Casa Folea.

Day 3: (by bike) Casa Folea – Vatafului's Cross – Brusturet Lodge – Dambovicioara

Day 4: (by bike) Dambovicioara – Sirnea – Pestera – Moeciul de jos

Day 5: (by bike) Moeciul de jos – Bran – Rasnov; (by train) Brasov – Bucuresti.





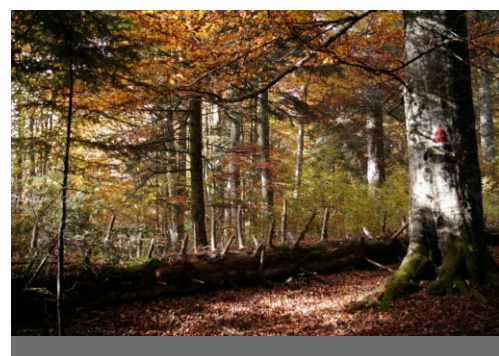
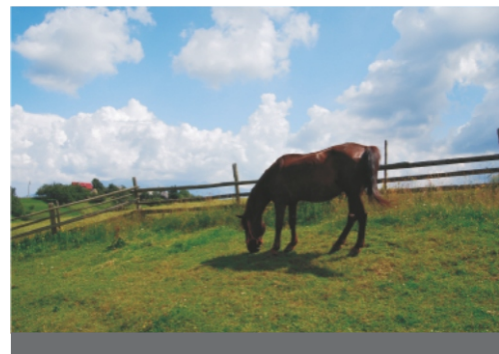
Description per day:

Day 1: (by train) Bucuresti-Predeal; (By bike) 3 Brazi Chalet- Secuilor's Clearing – Rasnoavei's Gorge – Rasnov – Zarnesti – Magura – Toanches – Casa Folea (accommodation in a boarding house)

We depart from Bucharest's Northern Train Station at 7:32 AM, by train, with Predeal as our first stop of the day. In Predeal we'll make a quick refill with water and sweets and head out for **3 Brazi Chalet**. As we reach the lodge we continue our journey towards **Secuilor's Clearing** by entering the first of the off-road segments of our trip. A fast and refreshing single track descent awaits until we reach **Rasnoavei's Gorge** where we can take a deep breath and admire the massive limestone walls. As we exit the gorge, we leave the forest road and head out on DN72a towards Rasnov where we will visit **The Rasnov Citadel**. The road takes us further west towards Zarnesti and our lunch stop at **Gura Raului Chalet**. Afterwards, we enter another off-road segment, a series of mountain roads that pass the **villages of Magura and Toaches** along the way to our resting place for the night: Casa Folea. In the evening we will witness the process of making cheese and having a traditional outdoor dinner at a **local sheepfold**.

Day 2: (by bike) Casa Folea – Toanches – Magura – Zarnestiului's Chasms – Curmatura Chalet – La Table – Casa Folea (accommodation in a boarding house)

After a healthy breakfast provided by the Folea Family, we mount our bikes and pedal towards **Zarnestiului's Chasms**. After passing this air-cooled sanctuary behind, the road leads further into the mountain to the highest point of the trip: **Curmatura Chalet (1,438m)**. The climb is very demanding; therefore a good meal is in order here, on the terrace, with a nice cup of tea and the solitude of the Prince himself. The return path takes us through wooden trails, a bit of push-bike, but only to find ourselves descending technical tracks in our quest for **La Table**.





Trails die down once we pass through **Dragoslovenilor Valley** and as we pedal towards **Casa Folea**, our resting place for this night also, we should stop and look over our shoulder, and admire the stone prince gently going to sleep.

Day 3: (by bike) Casa Folea – Vatafului's Cross – Brusturet Lodge – Dambovicioara (accommodation in a boarding house)

We leave behind **Casa Folea**, after another amazing breakfast, and hit the trails towards **Vatafu's Cross** and make our way to **Brusturet Chalet**, guarded by more limestone walls. Lunch awaits us here, together with stories of last day's adventure. After leaving **Brusturet**, we arrive shortly in **Dambovicioara**, our resting place for the night. But we are not going to end the day yet. After checking in, we can make a visit at **Dambovicioarei's Cave**, where local children act as guides telling us some amazing stories passed on from generation to generation.



Day 4: (by bike) Dambovicioara – Sirnea – Pestera – Moeciul de jos (accommodation in a boarding house)

With **Dambovicioara** at our rudder, we leave for **Sirnea village**. The morning breeze and the mountain landscape come in perfect harmony with human settlements giving the eye images to remember. After reaching **Sirnea village**, we will stop at a local store for a refill and we pedal our way towards the village of **Pestera** on a consistent mountain path. Once we reach **Pestera**, we can stop for a visit at a local landmark: the "**Lilieilor**" cave. We now find ourselves on a descent once more and stopping in **Moeciul de Jos** where we will check in for the night.

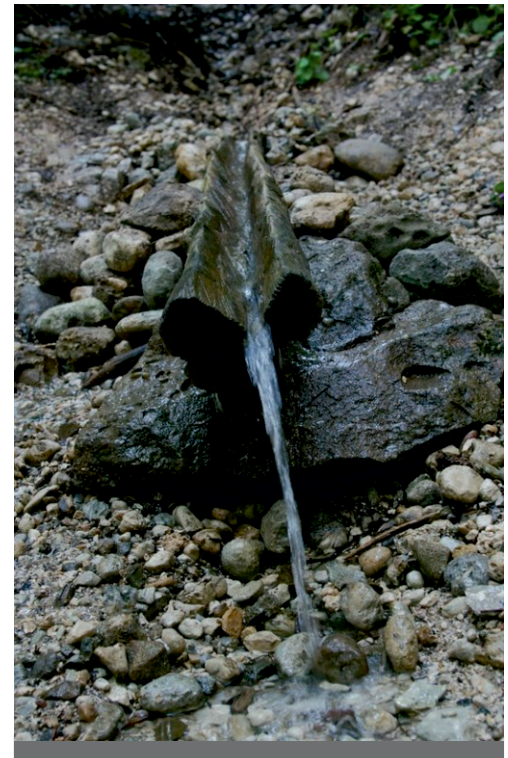
Day 5: (by bike) Moeciul de jos – Bran – Rasnov; (by train) Brasov – Bucuresti.

The last day of our trip is mainly on road travel, and being in a soft state of descent, we can take it slow and admire the core of the **Bran countryside** and the mighty **Bran Castle**.





First documented in 1377, the castle is renowned especially during the reign of Vlad Tepes (1431-1476), also known as **Vlad the Impaler**, for the unique and grotesque ways of punishing outlaws. He's reign was one of fear, but respect. After humbling saying good-bye to the Bran fairy-tale, we set our feet in cruising mode towards **Brasov**, where we'll grab a meal and visit the historic center and later on end our adventure by hopping on a train back to Bucharest.



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