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Transylvania

LOCATION Romania **START/FINISH** Copșa Mare/
Viscri **DISTANCE** 130 km (80 miles) **TIME** 4 days
DIFFICULTY Moderate; regular climbs and descents
INFORMATION www.romaniatourism.com

Transylvania isn't all about Dracula; this in-the-saddle adventure bypasses the mythology and explores the reality of this remarkable Romanian region, which is home not to vampires, but time-worn villages.

Set off in autumn and wheel along this scenic route, sweeping past village after village swaddled in a blanket of yellows, browns and oranges. Starting in tiny Copșa Mare, the path climbs up to a series of forested ridges, before diving back down into Mălâncrav – home to the largest Saxon population in Transylvania. Gold-hued haystacks, fruit-filled apple trees and quaint slope-roofed houses suggest a world little changed since the 14th century.

The path climbs skywards once more, through ancient oak forests towards the mist-covered medieval walled city of Sighișoara, a sea of implausibly pretty – and impeccably preserved – pastel-shaded buildings. From here, the trail flees the “big city” – first along flat tree-lined streets, then up through thickly forested hilltop trails – for sleepy Saschiz, a little village with a UNESCO-listed fortified church. Sweeping, sheep-dotted slopes mark the final stretch into the spectacularly beautiful Saxon village of Viscri. With hundreds of historic, renovated buildings ringed by rolling countryside, it is the perfect end to this traditional Transylvanian tour.

The stone buildings and fortified church at the centre of the medieval village of Copșa Mare

