

Visiting “**Salina Turda**” {Turda Salt Mine}

Salina Turda is situated in Turda in the area called **Durgau-Valea Sarata**. Access to Turda is the same as described in “Trip to Cheile Turzii”. This time we turn left at the circular service in the centre of the town, then we continue up on the winding road; on the top of the hill we turn left again until we reach the new entrance to the Salt Mine. The address is Str. Salinelor nb.54/B, GPS coordinates.

The first document about extracting salt in Turda is from 1271. The mine was closed in 1932. At present it is on the list of Historical Monuments of Cluj County. Between 2008 and 2010 the Mine was modernized.

Structure of the Mine: The Rudolf Mine in which at present there are: a concert hall, a sports ground, bowling, mini golf and a gondola. Since the mine is 40 m deep, there is also a lift to make access into the mine easier. Here, as well as in the Ghizela Mine the salty air is used for the treatment of respiratory diseases. The Terezia Mine is a bell type mine, 90 m deep, in which a 5-8m deep underground lake with a diameter of 70 m had been formed. Recently a landing place for boats was arranged here for visitors.

The Franz Joseph Gallery is a horizontal gallery used for the transportation of the salt out of the mine. In the mine there is also a Museum of the history of salt mining in Transylvania.

Visiting hours: daily, from 9-15 (last entry).



Trip to “**Cheile Turzii**” (The Gorge of Turda)

Cheile Turzii, a natural monument, is at 44km southward from Cluj in the, northern part of the Trascau Mountain.

We start from the centre of the town (near the Romanian Opera) southward towards Turda. After going up on a winding road 6km we arrive at the top of Feleacu hill. Passing through the villages Fefeacu, Valcele, Martinesti and Tureni, at 28km from Cluj, we reach the town Turda, which not a long time ago was still an important industrial town. From the centre of the town we can visit the other touristic objective of the town, the salt mine. In the very centre of the town there are two churches, historical monuments from the Middle Ages. Leaving the centre of the town we follow the guide post towards Alba Iulia and Campeni, and after we have crossed over the Aries river at the next cross road we follow the guide post towards Campeni. We soon enter the village Mihai Viteazu, and on leaving it (after 1km) we turn right towards the village Cheia, still on an asphalt road. We pass again over the river Aries and only after 3.5 more km we arrive at a parking plateau; from here the stately rocks of the gorge can be seen. One can drive down to the tourist chalet where in summertime several buffet booths are open.

We can only walk through the gorge – paying a small fee – on a footpath and over several footbridges. Owing to its special beauty and also to the fact that it can be easily accessed without any special effort, Cheile Turzii is one of the most favourite touristic objectives of Transylvania. The length of the gorge is 1800 m, and the height of its vertical walls varies between 100 and 200 m. It is a real paradise for mountain climbers with over 120 mountaineering routes up to the 7th degree of difficulty.

The special scientific value of Cheile Turzii is its extremely rich flora including about one thousand species which are not to be found elsewhere. The existence of this rich flora can be explained by the setting of the gorge and by a very different micro climate. A botanical rarity is the wild garlic which only grows in the Ural mountain area (tertiary relict). Some ice relics are also to be found here. The flora of the gorge had been studied by botanists both in the country and abroad. The best of them was the academician Ereasmus Nyarady.

A little more complicated route is walking along the bottom of the gorge and returning on the top along the red dot marking.

Genesis of Cheile Turzii(very briefly): Following some greater tectonic movement fissures in the limestone block of the massif were formed through which later a small rivulet pervaded (the Hasdat River today) which first formed a cave by corrosion and erosion and later collapsed due to more tectonic movement. More than 30 smaller and larger caves are to be found here.



Trip to **Rimetea and Coltesti**

Rimetea and Coltesti can also be reached via Turda (on the itinerary: Cluj, Feleacu, Valcele, Martinesti, Tureni). From Turda we follow the signpost to Campeni (as in the case of the trip to Cheile Turzii}but after leaving the village Mihai Viteazu we continue our way forward {SW}, pass through the village Cornesti, and after 3 km we pass over the Aries river and continue our way along the river upstream (on DN 75). After 5 km we turn left and follow the signpost to Aiud. We arrive at the village Buru, pass by two monasteries built after 1990, and at 8 km from the Aries river we arrive at the village Rimetea.



On the east side of the village the picturesque rocks of the mountain Piatra Secuiului (1129 m) are standing out opposed on the west side by the limestone towers of the Ardascheia mountain (250 m).

Today's village was an important town in the Middle Ages being well known as an important centre of mining and iron processing preceding modern industry. Both for the sake of mining and for introducing iron forging craftsmen were brought in from Austria. Their influence is present in the style of the houses and in the national costumes of the local people, which is considered to be one of the most beautiful in Transylvania.

The forging workshops we built by the river to use the power of the water in the forging process. A part of the population was working in the mines and in the forging workshops, another part ensured the charcoal necessary for heating the iron, and a third part was engaged in selling the quite large variety of forged goods. This industrial character of the locality continued until the end of the 18th century when the modern large combined works appeared.

The ethnographical museum of the village is worth visiting where not only beautiful pieces of national costumes are exhibited, but the industrial past of the village and a large number of products from the past are also presented.

If we continue our way southward from Rimetea we arrive after 4 km at Coltesti, where the main touristic objective is the ruins of a medieval fortress. The population both of Rimetea and Coltesti is Hungarian, their majority being of Unitarian religion (a protestant religion specific in Transylvania).



At Coltesti a great 19th century scientist, Brassai Samuel was born, a man of encyclopedic knowledge who taught 11 subject matters and spoke 8 languages.

From Coltesti the road continues passing through the village Cheile Vaisoarei to Aiud (on DN1) where there is a medieval fortress.