

Weekend Escapes with



APUSENI EXPERIENCE

Sometimes great things come in small packages! At Apuseni Experience, we know you are busy. That's precisely the reason we designed these programs. Fortunately, sometimes a weekend is all it takes to refuel the tank and become rejuvenated.

In three days with Apuseni Experience, you'll take part in nature activities and interact with local people in the same way as in all of our other adventures. In each of our weekend escapes we have enclosed an ideal combination of adventure, culture and restful retreat.

Though the programs last only a few days, the memories will remain with you for a lifetime!



Weekend Escapes

Cris River Experience



Defileul Crisului Repede is a natural reserve which has all the ingredients that a genuine active ecotourism holiday in the Apuseni Mountains needs: limestone walls with

vertical drops reaching 200 m, waterfalls, gorges and canyons, pinnacles, caves, rare birds and flora species. Being situated only 60km from the Hungarian border and easily accessible, the area makes an ideal place for a weekend getaway with friends and family.

Day 1 Arrival in Oradea, transfer to Pestis, a settlement where we visit a 300-year old wooden church, heading afterwards to Vadu Crisului,



the village that will be our base for the next days. We will have lunch at a guesthouse, paying a visit later on in the day to one of the last white pottery workshops and attend a pottery demonstration. Here we will have the opportunity to buy some white, unenamelled, handmade pottery, extremely rare in Romania as well as in Europe. After meeting the local artisans we enjoy a calm stroll to the guesthouse. We will then show you a multimedia presentation about the **Defileul Crisului Repede** nature reserve - our target for the



following days - and we hope that dinner at the guesthouse will be a good end to your first day in the Apuseni Mountains.

Contact: Oradea, ROMANIA; 4-6, Piata 1 Decembrie, etaj 1, camera 8, 410068
Tel/Fax: +40 259/47.24.34; Email: contact@apuseniexperience.ro
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Day 2 On the second day, the adventure begins. After breakfast we start our journey through the nature reserve. We



are not to miss Vama Sarii (the Salt Customs). This is the place where, during the Austrian-Hungarian empire, rafts carrying salt from the mountains had to pay a fee in order to cross the border. Just as important is Vadu Crisului cave, one of the few caves in the country arranged for tourist access. The packed lunch, enjoyed in one of the specially arranged places within the reserve, will be a good time-out after our efforts so far.



Later on in the afternoon, our steps lead us back to the guesthouse, with only two things in mind: a shower and a tasty local cuisine experience.

Day 3 Our last day sorrow will definitely be swept away



by a visit to the Unguru Mare cave, used as a shelter by people starting with the Neolithic Age. Take some time to explore the small museum which hosts the archaeological and paleontological discoveries of the area. The cave stands out also due



to the presence of a mineral unique in the world, the *crisit*. Leaving behind the cave, we tackle the challenge of a via-ferrata route. It is a tough but safe route into an area with vertical walls and canyons, to a pinnacle where our efforts are repaid with a view over the Great Meander of Crisul Repede River. Soon after lunch, we say good-bye

to the area and head for Oradea.

Day 4 OPTIONAL! You may want to give one extra day for hiking along Misidului Gorge and up on the Zece Hotare karst plateau. Admire natural karst phenomena and traditional houses which recreate the authentic countryside landscape of the Piatra Craiului Mountains.

Price 140 Euro/person. The price includes accommodation (2 nights), all meals (starting with lunch on the first day and ending with lunch on the third day), minibus transfer from Oradea, fees for cave entrances and pottery demonstration. Price for the extra day: 32 Euro/person.

Trip length 3 days/ 2 nights

Trip activity level moderate

Trip start/end Oradea

Availability April to October

Group size minimum 5, maximum 12 people.

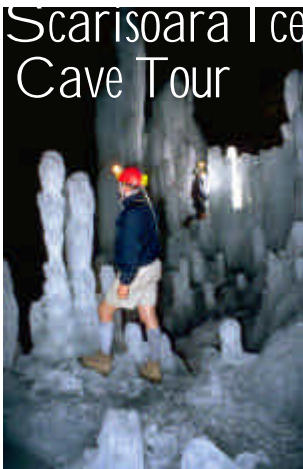
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Scarisoara Ice Cave Tour



Seen as the second "heart" of the Apuseni Natural Park, the **Country of the Moti**, covering the superior course of the Aries Valley, offers an outstanding natural and cultural experience. The area is ideal for those who are fed up with the daily crowd and urban dust and aspire to a quiet holiday in a scenic landscape, a place people seem to have been a part of since immemorial time.

Day 1 Departure from Oradea, minibus ride along the side of the Apuseni Natural Park, to the Aries Valley. We leave the mini bus and have our first direct contact with the protected area after a 40-minute hike: Groapa Ruginoasa (the Rusty Pit), the largest natural erosion phenomenon in

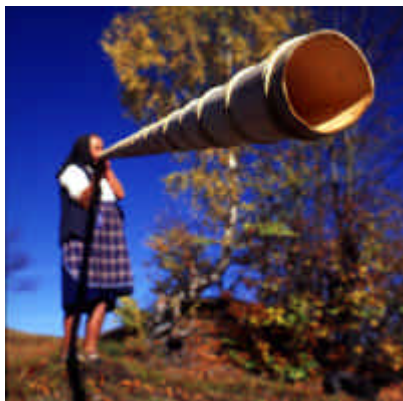
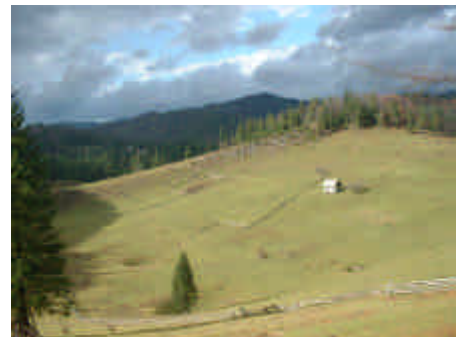
Romania. This place offers us the chance to have an impressive view over the central part of the Apuseni Natural Park.

Returning to the main road, we continue our trip towards the guesthouse where we check in and enjoy a delightful lunch.

The afternoon will find us visiting a water mill and a traditional woodcraft workshop, among the very few still left in the area.



Day 2 This is one of the few places in Europe where we can see with our own eyes and understand the natural mechanisms that continually remodel a karst system. The Ghetar Plateau, Scarisoara Ice Cave (a nature reserve which hosts the second largest underground glacier in Europe), Cotetul Dobrestilor karst spring are all parts of this complex underground universe. Up on the plateau we will enjoy our packed lunch in the Tourist Information Center. Here we can buy wooden objects, hand-made by the local artisans, thus helping support the community.



Day 3 A horse-cart ride completes our experience, helping us discover the remaining components of the karst system and the picturesque hamlet, Casa de Piatra. We return to the guesthouse where we will have our lunch and then head back to Oradea.

Day 4 OPTIONAL! Visit to Magura Cave and Cheile Sighistelului reserve (a karst valley, included in the Apuseni Natural Park, with a high density of caves and rich biodiversity).



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A PUSENI EXPERIENCE

Price 145 Euro/person (includes 2 nights, transfers to and from Oradea, all meals starting with lunch on the first day and ending with lunch on the last day, cave entrance fees). Price for the extra day: 40 Euro/person.

Trip length 3 days/2 nights

Trip activity level easy to moderate

Trip start/end Oradea

Availability April to October

Group size minimum 5, maximum 12 people.

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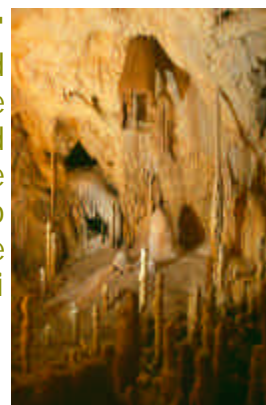
A taste of Padis



The **Padis** area, this *agora* of the Apuseni Natural Park, welcomes returning and novice travellers each year, charmed by its unmatched diversity. We have put together a 3-day active program, which will allow you to enjoy scenic hiking in the Padis area and the Apuseni Natural Park, covering:

- the breathtaking karst phenomenon Cetatile Ponorului
- Focul Viu ice cave (the second largest underground glacier in Romania)
- Pestera Ursilor (Bears' Cave - an original show-cave)
- Lumea Pierduta (Lost World) karst plateau

Day 1 Transfer from Oradea to Chiscau, where we will visit the Bears' Cave, Flutur Ethnographic museum and also enjoy our first meal together. In the afternoon we continue our trip and reach Padis. We stop for a short while in Boga, at the base of the mountain, to visit the Oselu waterfall. Later on in the day, we check in Cetatile Ponorului Chalet on the Padis Plateau.



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Day 2 We leave in the morning for the Focul Viu ice cave (the name of the cave translates as the Living Fire), to take full advantage of the early sun rays reflecting on the ice inside the cave. We will descend to Glavoi Glade and then head to one the most emblematic natural attractions of the Apuseni Mountains, Cetatile Ponorului. The evening will find us in the chalet enjoying a hot meal and a good rest after a whole day's hike.



Day 3 The final day is reserved for a short hike in the Lumea Pierduta (Lost World) karst plateau with its imposing potholes. The area still keeps the wilderness that originated its name. After enjoying our last lunch at the chalet, we say good-bye to Padis and head for Oradea, visiting on our way, Paraul Petea Nature Reserve. We take a stroll around the lake which hosts the thermal water lily (*Nymphaea lotus var. thermalis*), one of the few tertiary relics still found in Romania.

Day 4 OPTIONAL! 1 day in Oradea, tour of the city (the center of the town with its complex baroque architecture, Oradea fortress) or an extra day in the Padis area (Galbenei or Somesului Cald Gorges).

Price 148 euro/person, includes accommodation (2 nights), all transfers, all meals during the trip (starting with lunch on the first day and ending with lunch on the last day), guide assistance. For the extra days the prices are: for Oradea - 40 euro/person, for Padis - 45 euro/person.

Trip length 3 days/ 2 nights

Trip activity level moderate

Trip start/end Oradea

Availability May to October

Group size minimum 5 people, maximum 12 people



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Your friends at Apuseni Experience!

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The Apuseni Mountains

Seen from a distance, The Apuseni Mountains don't seem so much different from the other ranges that build up the great Carpathian wreath at the core of Romania. They do not impress by heights and steep rocks, but by something totally different.

Located in North-West Romania (Transylvania), within a small distance from the Hungarian border, the Apuseni Mountains are easy to reach. Once you have experienced them, they're hard to forget. The limestone forms that we call *karst*, the high-up human settlements, the deep forests and mountain streams are but a few instances of what their heritage is. It is all available to you by means of *Apuseni Experience*.

And if you are lucky enough to see the people engaged in their daily work, you'll have the chance to talk to them, eat at the same table with them, you'll discover another side of Romanian realities: hospitality, honesty and wisdom and the eternal joy of living an authentic life. You will feel simple, natural, close to Earth and Mother Nature. You'll feel at home!



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Who we are

Apuseni Experience is an ecotourism and adventure tourism program developed with pride and passion in the Apuseni Mountains, North-West Romania (Transylvania). It was initiated by the **Center for Protected Areas and Sustainable Development - Bihor**, founded in 2002, in order to provide quality authentic experiences to people who travel in the Apuseni Mountains' region.

Apuseni Experience offers 10% of its revenues to local and external initiatives of conservation and promotion of the natural and cultural patrimony of the Apuseni Mountains.



Mission To provide the best interpretive cultural and natural experiences and use responsible business to preserve the heritage of the Apuseni Mountains.

Vision At Apuseni Experience, we are committed to sharing our knowledge and love for the Apuseni Mountains, their history, culture and nature, while offering opportunities for the sustainable development of their communities

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