

## Chapter 1 : Start exploring Transylvania in Valea Verde

*Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Villages with Fortified Churches in Transylvania are seven villages (six Saxon and one Székely) founded by the Transylvanian Saxons. They are dominated by fortified churches and characterized by a specific settlement pattern that has been preserved since the late Middle Ages.*

The name of this village is Viscri and it went directly to the heard of Prince Charles of Wales. This summer we decided to stay in Viscri for one weekend. One weekend in a medieval village that lays in the middle of Romania, in Transylvania, rounded by green hills, meadows, beech and oak forests just like in a fairy-tale. The history of this village goes back in time to when Germanic refugees settled here and formed a small village, around a fortified church. The main activity of the peasants was agriculture. The beauty of this place, untouched nature, traditions and people that still live here like in the old days, make anyone fall in love with this place

**How to reach Viscri** Being a small village in the middle of Transylvania, reaching here will not just be a walk in the park. The distance between Bucharest and Viscri is about 150 km. Reach Bucharest by plane Henry Coanda is an international airport so it is easy to be reached by plane. Rent a car You will have the possibility to rent a car and the cost will be somewhere between Euro depending of the brand. We arrived in Viscri Friday night, about mid night. The village was shrouded in silence and we went directly to our magic house. Where to sleep There are no hotels here, only the refurbished old houses that can be rented. So you will have the possibility to sleep in an old authentic Transylvanian house. We spent our weekend in Viscri , a house full of interesting stories of the past. Which we found it very interesting. The restaurant was actually an old barn transformed by blending original wooden structure with modern elements that create a warm and comfortable atmosphere. The restaurant also has a generous deck facing the intensely green backyards and the vegetable garden. Here the food was wow.. The bread was made in house and all the ingredients were grown here, so you can imagine how fresh and natural the food was. What to eat Everything! The food is made by using fresh products that were grown locally. People are cooking like in the old days, sometimes using medieval recipes. I m sure you will love it. So, the next morning we woke up and had a lovely breakfast in the garden and then we rented some bikes. We were eager to discover the biking and trekking trails that lay on the hill and through the forests. After riding for about two hours, we stopped at an old house. Here the owner just set a table in the middle of his backyard and cooked for us a very simple, fresh and delicious meal. After the lunch we continued our trail through the deep forest and climbed and descended like in a dream land. Riding so many hours especially when you are a beginner was difficult as hell but it was worth the effort. Things to do in Viscri Take part in an unique experiences and be ready to enjoy a vacation like no other. From forest adventures looking for truffles, to culinary sessions and many more. Visit the fortified church and the museum recreating the Saxon way of life; Viscri is best known for its highly fortified church, originally built around AD 1200 by the Szecklers. Visit to the local blacksmith to see him working; Go on a mountain biking or trekking trail linking two of the neighboring Saxon villages Crit and Mesendorf to Viscri over the hills and through the forests; Join a local family to see a traditional hay stacking session available in July. Admire the astonishing diversity of wildflowers, including many of the species that are extinct in the rest of Europe; Simply stroll through Viscri and admire the pastel facades of the houses. An interesting thing to see in the evening is when cows are coming back from the nearby meadows. Bake traditional bread and put your strength to the test in kneading the dough and then put it into the outdoor clay oven. Go truffle hunting in the surrounding woods available between September and December or just Chill.

**Chapter 2 : Vacation House in Viisoara - rural retreat**

*A young German entrepreneur visits the Transylvanian village where his father runs a charity. What he finds is joie de vivre and culture, relaxation and rejuvenation.*

The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed. Transylvania or Ardeal, Hung. Economically and culturally one of the most advanced regions of Romania, Transylvania is rich in mineral resources, notably lignite, iron, lead, manganese, gold, copper, natural gas, salt, and sulfur. There are large iron and steel, chemical, and textile industries. Stock raising, agriculture, wine production, and fruit growing are important occupations. Timber is another valuable resource. After the withdrawal AD of the Romans from the region it was overrun, between the 3d and 10th cent. The Magyar tribes first entered the region in the 5th cent. It is not known, however, whether they came into Transylvania with or before the Magyars. In the 12th and 13th cent. The German influence became more marked when, early in the 13th cent. Large numbers of Romanians, called Vlachs or Walachians, were in the region by , although the exact date that their penetration began is disputed. Originally seminomadic shepherds, the Vlachs soon settled down to agriculture. The administration of Transylvania was in the hands of a royal governor, or voivode, who by the midth cent. These "nations," however, corresponded to social rather than strictly ethnic divisions. A few Vlachs, notably John Hunyadi , hero of the Turkish wars, joined the ranks of the nobility. After the suppression of a peasant revolt the three "nations" solemnly renewed their union; the rebels were cruelly repressed, and serfdom became more firmly entrenched than ever. As John I he was elected king of Hungary, while another party recognized Ferdinand. Hungary was now divided into three sections: W Hungary, under Austrian rule; central Hungary, under Turkish rule; and semi-independent Transylvania, where Austrian and Turkish influences vied for supremacy for nearly two centuries. The Hungarian magnates of Transylvania resorted to a policy of duplicity in order to preserve independence. In , Stephen Bocskay led a rebellion against Austrian rule, and in he was recognized by the emperor as prince of Transylvania. The principality was the chief center of Hungarian culture and humanism, the main bulwark of Protestantism in E Europe, and the only European country where Roman Catholics, Calvinists, Lutherans, and Unitarians lived in mutual tolerance. Orthodox Romanians, however, were denied equal rights. In , Austrian control was definitely established over all Hungary and Transylvania, and the princes of Transylvania were replaced by Austrian governors. The proclamation of Transylvania as a grand principality was a mere formality. The pressure of Austrian bureaucratic rule gradually eroded the traditional independence of Transylvania. In the Romanians petitioned Leopold II of Austria for recognition as the fourth "nation" of Transylvania and for religious equality. The Transylvanian diet rejected their demands, restoring the Romanians to their old status. In the Magyars proclaimed the union of Transylvania with Hungary, promising the Romanians abolition of serfdom in return for their support against Austria. The Romanians rejected the offer and instead rose against the Magyar national state. In the fighting that followed between the Hungarians and the Austro-Russian forces supported by the Romanians and most of the Saxons , the Hungarian republic of Louis Kossuth was suppressed. The ensuing period of Austrian military government 1860 was disastrous for the Magyars but greatly benefited the Romanian peasants, who were given land and otherwise favored by the Austrian authorities. However, in the compromise Ausgleich of , which established the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy , Transylvania became an integral part of Hungary, and the Romanians, having tasted equality, were once more subjected to Magyar domination. Transylvania was then seized by Romania and was formally ceded by Hungary in the Treaty of Trianon The expropriation of the estates of Magyar magnates, the distribution of the lands to the Romanian peasants, and the policy of cultural Romanianization that followed were major causes of friction between Hungary and Romania. It was now the turn of the Magyar and German nationalists to complain of Romanian oppression. Many of the Saxons of Transylvania fled to Germany before the arrival of the Soviet army, and most of the remaining Saxons followed after the fall of the Communist government in History and Reality Cite this article Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

### Chapter 3 : Viscri " The Transylvanian village that charmed Prince Charles " Stamps on the passport

*Transylvanian Villagers: Three Centuries of Political, Economic, and Ethnic Change [Katherine Verdery] on calendrierdelascience.com \*FREE\* shipping on qualifying offers. What determines the shape and texture of life in small communities in Eastern Europe?*

Tom Hughes , Alina Hughes , and James Koranyi 26 August The interest in preservation and conservation of old, yet changed Saxon villages throughout Transylvania, often clashes with the interests of the present Gypsies and Romanians that live there today. In recent years, German and Saxon heritage in Transylvania has received much attention in the West. Media outlets such as openDemocracy or the Guardian have given voice to conservationist concerns regarding the future of the Transylvanian Saxon villages. In light of this increasing interest in the region and its German cultural heritage, it is necessary to offer a different view to what is often a romanticised image of these villages and to the role that conservationism can play. To do so, it is imperative to understand the historical development of the villages and the complexity of their current situation. Bartizan on the walls of the Transylvanian Saxon citadel in Cincsor, Romania. There has been a tendency to portray Saxon villages as the embodiment of years of untouched tradition and architectural heritage. There are, however, several aspects pointing towards a different reading of history. First of all, the Saxon communities experienced around years of instability during Tatar and Turkish raids. It is only from the late eighteenth century that a period of stability brought about the current village fabric. Yet even in this period of stability, change and adaptation were constant and fundamental features. Materials, building methods, the effects of the extreme climate and fashion all contributed towards the changing appearance of these villages. In the twentieth century, this was developed by the introduction of cement - the use of which is now frowned upon by prominent conservationist organisations such as the Mihai Eminescu Trust MET , who advocate cement-free facades as the purist Saxon approach. Furthermore, due to the extreme continental climate -hot summers, cold winters - the plaster deteriorated rapidly and annual maintenance was required, which provided an opportunity for Saxons to respond to the latest decorative fashions. It is thus clear that what we are looking at is not an authentic representation from the medieval period, but an expression of constant change and renewal. Moreover, the prominence of the date on these buildings indicates that being fashionable was also of great importance to the Saxons. Our research suggests that this process of change may have continued had political and economic upheavals from the s on not intervened. Indeed, post a number of remaining and returning Saxons have changed their houses to reflect current architectural trends. As for the wider context, portrayals of the Transylvanian Saxons are in somewhat skewed. They have been depicted as a "dislocated tribe" until a sudden mass exodus in However, even before World War Two, educational visits, trade, travel, and political contact with the German Lands was not uncommon. Under the Schmidt government, an agreement was reached in whereby approximately 11, - 12, Germans Transylvanian Saxons and Banat Swabians were allowed to leave the country annually in exchange for a set fee. Emigration then continued to gather pace towards the end of the Cold War. Whilst some claim that the year witnessed the sudden exodus of half a million Saxons, in reality the period between and was the culmination of an ongoing process, which saw around , Germans again: Saxons and Swabians leave the country. To be sure, these were dramatic processes, but in developing strategies for the future of these Saxons villages, it is crucial to understand the true nature of the changes that have occurred. What this demonstrates is that conservation practices are often based on an imposed memory of a romanticised past. What is being preserved in Saxon villages is typically a late-nineteenth, early twentieth century image of the villages, and more importantly it is an image as perceived by outsiders. This is in itself not a problem, as conservationism in Transylvania has had some positive impact. But one ought to be careful when mythologizing a past, as this can lead to problematic hierarchies of cultures in Transylvania as is the case today. Jenkins outlined this danger, yet fallen into this trap as well. Of course organisations that have pooled money into conserving and indeed rebuilding houses, streets, and churches are to be applauded for their efforts, but this is often done with the tacit acceptance that the vanishing culture of Saxons has a higher value than the culture and needs of the current communities of Romanians and Gypsies.

The implication in all of this is that Gypsies and to a lesser extent Romanians are too unsophisticated, too culturally uneducated to be trusted with maintaining these villages. To be sure, money is needed in these villages, but this should not be made available on the condition of submitting to a different and diminishing culture. As tragic as the "collective suicide" of Transylvanian Saxons is, it is still imperative to strike the right balance between conserving this unique culture and acknowledging the needs of the current inhabitants. Alina Hughes teaches architecture at Nottingham Trent University. Dr James Koranyi teaches history at the University of Durham.

### Chapter 4 : Transylvanian villages with fortified churches - ABC Travel Romania

*Village visit in Over two days, the bread is prepared. The final result is THE most delightful bread one could ever hope to taste. A real treat.*

In , the settlement and land around it became the property of the Apafi family, a family which ruled Transylvania up until the 17th century. The last owner of the village was the countess Susanne Haller. During this time, there was only one brick house outside the noble residency, the rest of the houses being wood or clay. This led to the destruction of more than two-thirds of the village in a terrible fire, forcing the people to rebuild their houses out of bricks. The twenty-meter fresco in the central nave is the largest and most thematically complete Gothic fresco in Transylvania. Fifty-three images are grouped in four rows and in the spaces between the arched passageways. Despite their small number, there are weekly gatherings of all ages, and the community remains an active one. The Apafi mansion is a history-filled guest house situated above the village, beside the church and orchard. In the 18th century, when the Apafi family line came to an end, the mansion was taken over by the Bethlen family, rulers of Transylvania during that era. In , the mansion became the property of the community; it was transformed into a cultural center, then it was confiscated by the Communist regime in . The Mihai Eminescu Trust took over the mansion in ; after five years of restoration it was returned to its former beauty. The Apafi mansion is now a unique guest house with five spacious rooms, a balcony, a library, a magnificent central drawing room, and a restored garden with a fountain whose tumbling waters echo sounds of a distant era, memories from long ago. In , the MET took over turning the orchard into an ecologically certified plantation. The local culinary specialty, as you might guess, is an apple-based soup. Gallery What to do Activities: Transybike - cycling tour 18 saxon villages seen in a 5 days bike tour. Passing through the pleasant countryside and through beautiful forests, like the Breite Ancient Oak Tree Reserve, you will visit old fortified churches, part of UNESCO World Heritage and local craftsmen still using traditional techniques. Transybike - cycling tour 5 days If you choose cycling in Transylvania, Saxonland is a must. We will cycle through beautiful valleys, rolling hills, chilly forests. Villages of gingerbread houses, fortified churches rest on our route.

### Chapter 5 : Transylvanian Saxons - Wikipedia

*The place is first mentioned in a document from around under the name "Alba Ecclesia". The Latin form of the name corresponds to the old name Vyskirch.*

These villages are characterized by the way their land is cultivated, the settlement pattern and organization of farms, preserved since the Middle Ages. With nearly buildings at the beginning of the XXI century, the fortified churches in Transylvania form one of the densest, well preserved, medieval fortification system on the European continent. Like any Saxon settlement, Biertan had an urban organization with lined houses arranged around a central square, overlooked by the imposing church-fortress. The impressive monument of worship harmoniously blends the Gothic style and Renaissance style; the church was defended by three walls with towers and medieval bastions. The first site of the city is attributed to the XII century, when probably the first church was built St. The present church was built in in late-Gothic style. In that small room with a small table and a single bed, Saxons provide one plate, one dish and one cup water. It is said that, in those circumstances, only one pair remained steadfast in the original judgment of divorce, all other couples coming out reconciled without resorting to justice. Interestingly enough, is not it? What do you think should be the percentage today? The Saxon name of the village is Kelling and comes from the first master, Kelling noble family. The fortified church was initially based on a dwelling tower, a chapel and an oval enceinte, its walls being fitted with two towers. The old dwelling tower was transformed into a defensive tower. At Calnic, prehistorical material and vague medieval traces of the XI-XII centuries were discovered, but the actual medieval settlement dates back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The church is unique by the fact that within its walls there are supply rooms, where the villagers keep their food, why it is also called the city of bacon. Prejmer The fortified ensemble consists of a fortified evangelical church, fortified interior with its defense road, two towers, two bastions and a gate tower. Prejmer is the best preserved and most powerful medieval fortified church in Eastern Europe. The fortress, built in the shape of circles, had meters thick walls and 12 meters high towers with gates and iron bridges which rose. A watch guarder road was used to supply the crenels. In addition to the fire mouths fixed on the walls, the city had an unusual battle device: Consisting of more weapons stacked together, firing all at once, produced great panic and heavy losses to the enemy. The massive church, built out of stone in Gothic style is a room-type church and reinforced with 22 buttresses. The room is very wide and long, and the chorus is closed on three sides. The Saxon fortification has high walls up to 9 m. Even on the site of the fortified church there was evidence of an old Roman basilica that can be seen under the floor of the sacristy. The church is surrounded by a single oval enclosure, that has a vaulted passage located in the west as the entrance. There are still three bastions on the wings, in the four cardinal points. Viscri In Viscri endures, well preserved, one of the most scenic and spectacular Saxon peasant fortress, its walls holding a XIII century Roman hall church. The settlement particularities have attracted even Prince Charles, who has renovated several houses in the village church and gave them back some of their initial brightness with the help of the Mihai Eminescu Trust.

### Chapter 6 : Village of Crit, Transylvania, close to Viscri

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