

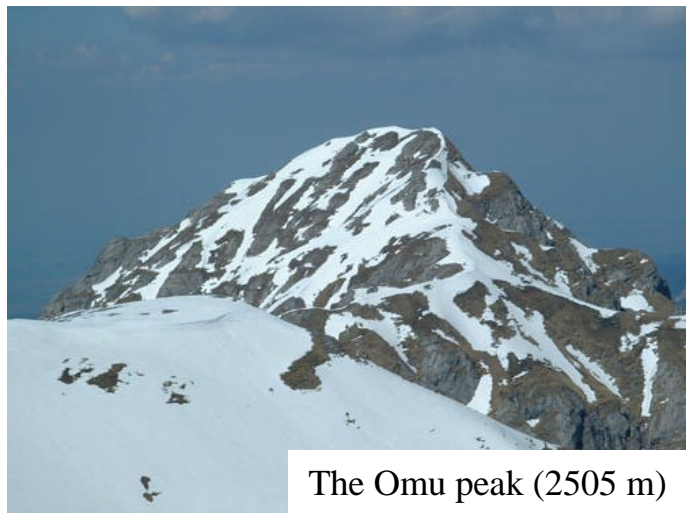
THE PRAHOVA VALLEY

MOUNTAINS

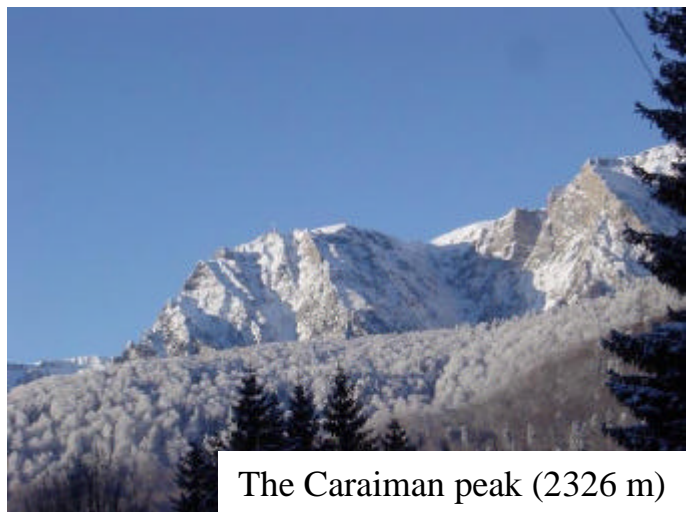
The Bucegi Massif - great part of it is situated on the territory of Prahova county, between Prahova Vally at the east and the Leota Mountains, at the west. Because of its height and massiveness, it is the most grandiose mountain of this part of the country; through its extremely spectacular and various forms of relief (located on a relatively small territory), it became one of the regions where most of the tourists come to visit. The Bucegi Massif has several peaks higher than 2,000 m: Omu Peak (2,505 m), Costila Peak (2,498 m), Caraiman Peak (2,326 m). The Bucegi Massif was declared National Park and includes several complex natural preserves. These preserves have: impressive abrupt precipices, pointed crests, glacial basins and valleys, karst relief and torrential valleys, specific forms of relief (natural agents shaping the rocks for a long time and transforming them into curious forms: the Sphinx, The Old Women, the Lonely Stones). The splendor of this landscape is increased by the rich alpine vegetation (with shades extremely various from one season to the other); many species of plants are declared nature's monuments, such as: edelweiss, Carthusian pink, orchid. A lot of tourist paths pass through these preserves, which is a great opportunity to admire the natural background, the vegetation and some times the fauna of this place. All these beauties of the Bucegi explain why a lot of tourists come to this place. Besides, the massif has hospitable chalets, numerous marked paths, ski slopes having different degrees of difficulty; it is possible to reach the plateau by car or by funicular (from Sinaia or Busteni). The Ciucas Massif is also an interesting and complex mountain regions in the Curvature Carpathians, having a well-deserved tourist rename. It consists of calm landscape and smooth peaks, but also wild crests showing original and spectacular things. The outlines of these mountains similar to those of ruined towers impress the tourists, but they are also impressed by the strange forms they can see here (Bratocea's Old Women, The Fangs of the Frying-pans, Devil's Hand), by the vegetation's polychromy (in summer) or the heavy snow falls (in winter, offering the skiers beautiful moments of relaxation). Because of the particular value of the landscape in this region, as well as the rarity of the elements composing it, some parts of the massif have been declared complex natural preserves. Here there are a few reasons that made the tourists go hiking on the paths of Ciucas.

VALLEYS AND WATERFALLS

Prahova Valley - collecting its waters from the springs under Piatra Mare, the Prahova river separates the Bucegi Massif from the Garbova Massif, flowing to the south and living behind, between Predeal (Brasov county) and Campina, one of the most charming Romanian narrow passes. The striking contrast between Prahova valley and the Bucegi



<<< Prahova Valley



east mountainside, abrupt and rocky, (the difference of altitude being of 1,000 m) adds to the splendor of this valley's landscape. In this grandiose landscape the tourists can find a string of picturesque resorts: Predeal (Brasov county), Azuga, Busteni, Poiana Tapului, Sinaia. The friendly relaxing atmosphere, the mountains greatness, the facilities and the extremely complex and modern accommodations are the incentives making thousands of tourists come year after year to Prahova county;

- The Valley of the Stag;
- Teleajenul Valley;
- Urlatoarea Waterfall-(one hour from Busteni).



The Ciucas Mountains - Bratocea

PRESERVES AND MONUMENTS OF NATURE

The Salt Mountain - Slanic Prahova, having several tens of meters height, this mountain in miniature impresses the visitors. The rainwater has shaped on its surface thousands of waves and little ditches; the salt crystals seem to be thousands of ice pins shining in the sunlight. Within the perimeter of this mountain (declared a monument of nature) there is a karst saline lake with a maximum depth of 32 m, according to the legend a miserable bride has thrown herself into the lake, which is called "The Bride's Cave";

- Glodeasa Forest-forest preserve which preserves a secular beech and resinous forest, especially fur-trees, the trees have impressive heights and diameters;
- Arinisul from Sinaia-forest preserve represented by a small, but interesting deciduous tree forest;

SPAS AND RESORTS

Sinaia

([#](http://www.infosinaia.ro/modules.php?name=tur_virtual)) - (at 62 km of Ploiesi and 45 km of Brasov), deserves, with no reservation, to be called "a pearl of the Carpathians"; situated in the superior basin of Prahova river-at an average altitude of 850 m-near the protective eye of the Garbova Massif and situated on the last slopes of the Furnica Mountain, the resort

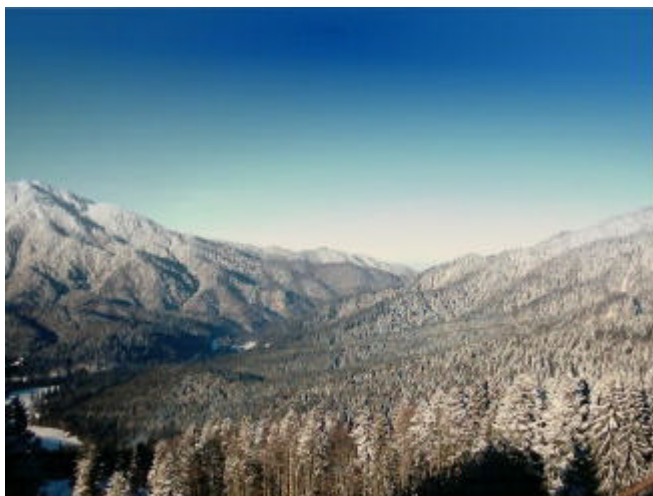


benefits from natural endowment to which the man has added appropriate arrangements. Famous resort and spa, Sinaia offers the tourists a pleasant atmosphere. The winters are mild due to the mountainsides that shelter it (average temperature in January is -3.50C; average annual temperature is 5.50-6.50C). In winter it snows heavily, it begins to snow at the end of September and the snow layer melts away at the end of March (the average thickness is 50 cm). The persons fond of winter sports can find: ski slopes with different degrees of difficulty, sledge slopes, bob-sledge track, ski training (for children, beginners and advance skiers), centers to borrow ski equipment, cable transport means (different kinds of funiculars, ski-lift, baby ski). In summer, a lot of marked paths invite the tourists to wander around and to make trips in the Bucegi. Amusing parties, folkloric programs, carnivals are being organized for the guests to enjoy themselves. The access ways are as follows: railway-Sinaia railway station is on Bucharest-Brasov railway line; by road- DN 1 = E15, from Bucharest or Brasov;

- **Busteni** - (at 75 km north-west of Ploiesti and at 130 km north-west of Bucharest), a spa and resort situated at an altitude of 882 m, at the foot of Caraiman, whose sides descend astoundingly from 2,000 m height, conferring the landscape a wild grandeur. The resort has a wonderful position, being denominated "Bucegi gateway" because it offers different ways of access to this massif, cradle of mountain tourism and Romanian mountaineering. In Busteni more than in any other parts, the tourist can see the unrivalled beauty of the Bucegi Mountains: Piatra Arsa, Jepii Mari and Jepii Mici (adorned with pointed peaks), Caraiman (with its monument for the dead heroes of the First World War), Costila (named "the paradise of the mountaineers"). Busteni is linked with Bucegi's plateau by funicular (this funicular line is the longest in Romania and the third in Europe). The sub-alpine climate is tonic, stimulant, the air is pure, ozonized. In winter, the resort offers the possibility of practicing ski (numerous ski slopes with different degrees of difficulty). The access ways are as follows: railway- Busteni railway station is on Bucharest-Brasov railway line, by road-DN 1 = E15, from Bucharest or Brasov, DN 71 from Targoviste to Sinaia, then DN 1 to the resort;



- **Predeal** Mountain Resort is situated in Transylvania-Romania, 25 km from Brasov, 147km (100miles) from Bucharest. The resort altitude is 1033 m, being Romania's highest town. Nestled between Bucegi Mountains, Predeal is a good base for mountain trails hike and, in winter, for skiing down the Clabucet and Cioplea slopes. All-season holiday resort of national importance, Predeal has summer average temperature 16°C and winter average temperature 1°C. The snow blanket lasts from late November to early March. The clean air, rich in ozone and the relatively low pressure are the main cure factors recommended in the treatment of astheric neurosis, weakly conditions,



physical and intellectual overexertion, certain endocrine disorders. The various ski runs (Clabucet - lighted at night, Teleschi, Cioplea, a.o.) have chair-lift and skilift. Predeal has low price ski schools having highly qualified ski trainers speaking english, german, french.

- **Slanic Prahova** - (at 44 km north of Ploiesti), the watering spa is open all over the year, is situated at an altitude of 400 m, is surrounded by hills with oak trees and orchards. This town is

famous, in the first place, for having an important salt mine (this mine is one of the biggest in Europe). In the spa there are a lot of springs with chloro-sodium waters. Some of them have formed lakes in the holes of the former salt mines (Baia Baciului Lake, Baia Verde Lake, Baia Rosie Lake), used for treatment, but also as swimming pools. The climate is influenced by the hills and hillocks, it has pleasant summers (average temperature of July is 19°C) and relatively mild winters (average temperature in January is -3.5°C). It can be visited the Salt's Mountain and Unirea salt mine (where there can be seen the busts of Burebista, Trajan, Decebal, Eminescu and the statue of Michael the Brave sculptured in salt). The access ways are as follows: railway-Slanic railway station is on Ploiesti South-Slanic railway line, by road-DN 1 A from Ploiesti or Brasov, deviation at Gura Vitiorei;

- **Cheia** - resort for relaxation, at 871 m height, at 61 km north of Ploiesti; it offers different forms of tourism: mountain hiking, mountaineering, winter sports, trips around the resort, the main point of attraction is the Ciucas Massif;

- **Breaza** - resort situated in Prahova's Sub-Carpathians, at 450 m height, at 43 km north-west of Ploiesti;

- **Azuga** - it is a resort (at 60 km north of Ploiesti, at 950 m height), tourist center and starting point for the chalets in Bucegi Mountains; Olympic ski slope, installations for cable transport;



- **Rasnov** (Rosenau to the Saxon inhabitants) was founded around 1225 by German Teutonic Knights. Rasnov's impressive fortress was built in the 14th century to protect the people of Rasnov and surrounding villages from the numerous visits by people who thought this area would make a nice battleground. Although most buildings in the fortress lie in ruins, the views from the top of the fortress over the plains and mountains are magnificent, and the lack of busloads of tourists make the place feel much more authentic than Bran's touristy castle. To reach the fortress, climb up the steps from the square immediately below the fortress, or be lazy and drive up the road towards Poiana Brasov and turn left up a steep gravel road at the Cetate restaurant.



- **Bran** This fortified medieval castle, often referred to as Dracula's Castle, was built in 1377 to protect nearby Brasov from invaders. It also served as a customs station. The castle's rooms and towers surround an inner courtyard. Some rooms are connected through underground passages to the inner court. In 1920, the people of Brasov who owned the castle offered it as a gift to Queen Maria of Romania, and the castle soon became her favorite residence. Bran is home to a rich collection of Romanian and foreign furniture and art items from the 14th-19th Centuries. The castle sits high atop a 200 ft. tall rock overlooking the picturesque village of Bran. On the grounds below there is an open-air ethnographic museum of old village buildings with exhibits of furniture, household objects and costumes.



HISTORICAL VESTIGES

• **Peles Castle** - Sinaia, former residence of the king, nowadays became a museum, Sinaia's main point of attraction and one of the valuable architectonic monuments of Romania. It was built during 1875-1883, there can be recognized different architectonic styles, German Renaissance elements prevail and also Gothic style. The architects have used everything to give splendor and content to the construction, wood decoration is in abundance in the interior and also exterior to confer to the castle a special air. Situated in a beautiful park with gorgeous terraces, Peles Castle has 160 rooms and halls where there can be seen different ornamental objects, Oriental carpets, fine ivory sculptures, tapestries, furniture, weapon collections (15th-19th centuries), paintings. The most impressive rooms are: the hall of honor, the large weapon room (with objects from India, Persia, Turkey, Arabia), the council room (Swiss colored glass window, 16th-17th centuries), the music room, the Florentine room, the mirror room, the Moorish room (with a collection inspired by the Spanish Alahambra Palace), the Turkish drawing-room, the theatre room;



- **Palace of Culture** - Ploiesti, a beautiful monument of architecture built at the beginning of the 20th century, in Neo-classic style, currently more than 200 rooms of the palace are museums;



- **Hasdeu Castle** - Campina (1893-1896);
- **Cantacuzino Palace** - Filipestii de Targ, built by the voivode's marshal Constantin Cantacuzino during 1633-1656, now in ruin;
- **Pelisor Castle-Museum** - Sinaia.

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

- **Monastery-Sinaia**, (<http://manastireasinaia.3x.ro/>) built during 1690-1695 by the voivode's sword bearer Mihai Cantacuzino, after returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Sinai Peninsula which gave the name of the monastery and of the resort. The indoor painting was made by the famous painter Parvu Mutu in 1694, one of the paintings draws the attention, it is situated at the entrance and it depicts the founder and his family. In some of the monks' former rooms it has been arranged a museum exhibiting historical paintings, outfits of the past centuries, an interesting collection of engravings, cult objects;



- **Zamfira Monastery** - Lipanesti, founded by Lady Zamfira, completed in 1743, with a new church built in 1857, preserving the paintings made by Nicolae Grigorescu when he was 18 years old;

- **Wooden Church** - Valea Orlei, (14th century), it was buried here Stanca, the wife of voivode Constantin Mavrocordat;

- **Varbila Monastery** (1539)-there are remarkable wood and stone sculptures;

- **Lespezi Hermitage-Posada**, next to Comarnic, 1661;

- **Royal Church** - Ploiesti, one of the oldest monuments of the town, founded by the ruler Matei Basarab in 1639;

- **Brebu Monastery** - the construction works began in 1650 on the request of Matei Basarab and were completed in 1690, during the reign of Constantin Brancoveanu;

- **"Three Hierarches" Church** - Filipesti de Padure (1688), the wall paintings made by the famous Parvu Mutu in 1692;

- **Monastery Church** - Valenii de Munte, built at the end of 17th century, it is famous for its indoor wall paintings;

CULTURAL BUILDINGS

- **Museum of History and Archeology Prahova** - Ploiesti, a prestigious cultural institution of this county. The permanent exhibition "Archeology in Prahova county" presents irrefutable proofs on the continuity of the flourishing Gaeto-Dacian civilization in this region. The permanent exhibition "Mihai the Valiant and the Town of Ploiest" (opened on September 26th, 1997) comprises the most valuable documentary proofs following the most recent research made by the museum's specialists on Ploiesti's history-town founded by Michael the Brave;

- **Nicolae Iorga Memorial Museum** - Valenii de Munte, it presents the visitors the genial man's taste for native popular creation. The exhibits: massive wood furniture, the paintings, personal objects of the scholar give authenticity to the setting where Nicolae Iorga has pondered and created a vast masterpiece. The articles and documents exhibited prove the huge contribution of the scholar to the assertion of Romanian culture in the country and abroad;

- **"Nicolae Simarche" Clock Museum** - Ploiesti, a unique museum in Romania, it offers the visitors the opportunity to follow the evolution of the time measuring devices from the first "clocks"-sun dials, burning clocks, clocks with water or sand to the "ancient" mechanical clocks and the modern ones;

- **"B. P. Hasdeu" Memorial Museum** - Campina, it is a castle, built by the great scholar in memory of his daughter, who died prematurely when 19 years old. There are exhibited



paintings, furniture belonging to the family of the linguist, historian and writer, one of the outstanding personalities of our culture'

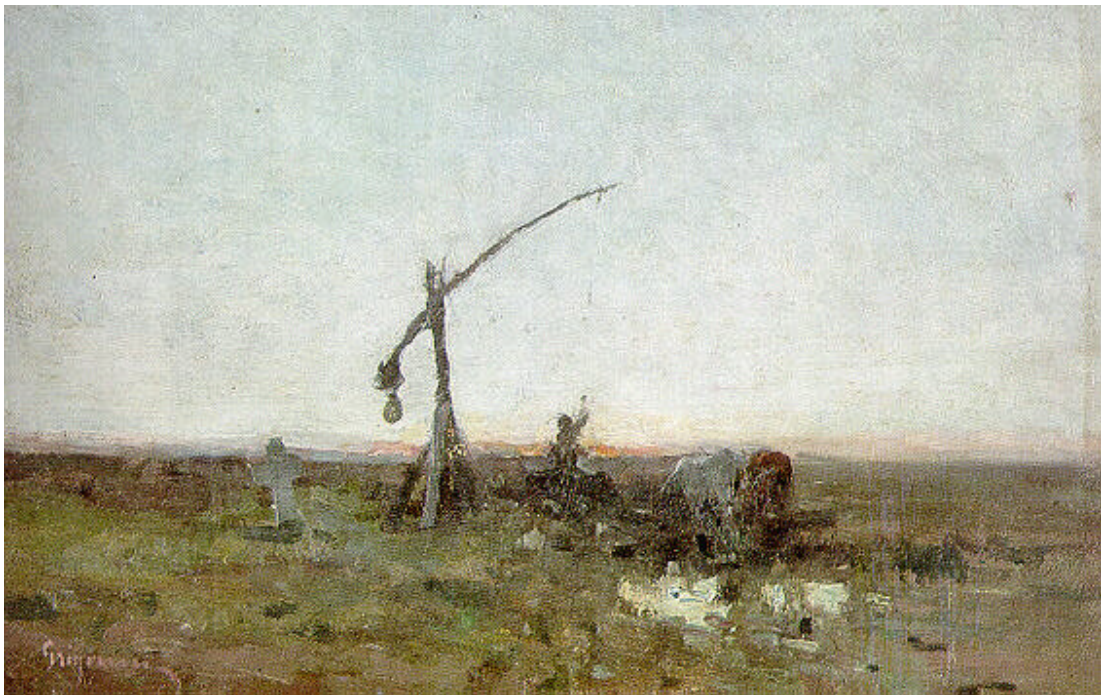
- **"I. L. Caragiale" Memorial Museum** - Ploiesti, in a house of the 18th century, it presents important aspects in the life of the great playwright, who spent his childhood and youth in Ploiesti; ✍

- **Royal House** - Brebu, the building was founded by Matei Basarab in 1641, now it is a museum which offers the visitors fond of medieval art a rich presentation of Romanian old letters, outfits worn by court people, weapons, cult objects, jewelry;

- **"Cezar Petrescu" Memorial Museum** - Busteni, it conserves the formerly atmosphere in which the writer has created most of his novels;

- **Oil National Museum** - Ploiesti, unique in the country and also quite rare in the world;

- **"Nicolae Grigorescu" Memorial Museum** - Campina, here are exhibited original paintings, carpets, objects related to the great painter's life (1838-1907);



- **Ethnography Museum of Teleajenul Valley** - Vălenii de Munte.

Poiana Brasov is a modern and renowned winter resort in Romania. It is situated at the foot of the Postavaru massif (1964 m altitude), on whose forest slopes, facing the resort, the great majority of ski and bobsleigh tracks are going down. The pyramid of Postavaru massif hides the glades from wind and fog, leaving it sunny for most of the days of the years. This natural protection avoids avalanches on the tracks and helps quiet fairylike snowfalls. The tracks, which are levelled and marked out , are usually

covered with a uniform snow layer 15-80 cm thick, lasting from December till March. In periods with scarce precipitations the snow-layer stays still and good for skiing on the tracks on the heights of Postavaru (from 1500 m altitude upward), where one may reach by cable car, cable gondola and ski-lift. The long distance tracks are 5-10 km. long, small level differences, crossing open areas and beautiful leafy forests. In Poiana Brasov there is a famous school for skiing with remarkable results for many years, internationally reckoned. There are also sports outfit hiring centres, workshops for repairing sports outfit.



Altitude: 1030 m (in the resort), 1100-1700 m (ski tracks).

Subalpine climate with ozonised air in a large sunny clearing; winter average temperature, -3 Celsius degrees; average snow layer, 50-60 cm (December - March).

Access: from Brasov (13 km), from Rasnov (12 km).

In the past, traditional place for Romanian pastoral festivals and fairs. The first tourist chalet was built in 1907, the first ski competition was organised in 1909. The resort hosted in 1951 the World University Winter Games.



BRASOV is an old medieval city. The buildings of Brasov can tell you a lot about the evolution of the city throughout different ages. Also known as Kronstadt or Corona, Brasov was the home of some of the best craftsmen, jewelers, and traders living in Transylvania. Located in the heart of Romania, at a distance of 170 km northwest of the capital Bucharest, the city of Brasov is the administrative centre of a county with the same name. The county nestles in the region of Transylvania, which has been a hub of tourist-related activities for a long time. The vast Transylvanian plateau, which spreads across a large part of central Romania, is famous for its quiet valleys, sprawling meadows and grasslands. The charming rustic ambience of this county is



interspersed by medieval towns, historic castles and winter resorts. The city of Brasov boasts of a rich historic heritage. It was founded in AD 1211 by the order of the Teutonic knights. It was an important centre of resistance against foreign invaders during the turbulent medieval period. The entire county of Brasov is dotted with a number of monuments that reflect the cultural as well as historical importance of the place.



Brasov general view – the Black Church and the old city