

# Roșia Montană

Tags: historical sites, by car, Roșia Montană, rural landscape, UNESCO heritage

## *Helpful information*

- ◆ From Raven's nest: 1h 20 min drive / approx. 57 km by car
- ◆ Access from Beiuș > Arieșeni > Câmpeni - after Câmpeni turn right on DN74 towards Abrud Roșia Montană.
- ◆ Access from Turda > Ocoliș > Salciua de Jos - before Câmpeni turn left on DN74 towards Abrud Roșia Montană.
- ◆ There is a minimum of 5 persons required for a visit. We suggest calling before the visit to affiliate to a group – 0258 783 165 (keep in mind that the guide only speaks Romanian so bring a friend who can translate).
- ◆ Visiting hours – both the Roman mines and the museum – the ensemble can be visited Monday-Friday between 9 AM. to 2 PM (8:00-14:00).
- ◆ Pricing – 10 RON per ticket for adults and 5 RON for children

## *Description*

Roșia Montană is located north-east of Abrud City in the Detunatelor Mountains, a subunit of the Metaliferi Mountains. Roșia Montană won't be the most beautiful village you've ever visited. Like many ghost towns, this town was born in a gold rush. Although it lives on top of more than 300 tons of gold, the small community is struggling with poverty. But the surroundings, the unique heritage and the fact that it's one of the oldest human settlements in Europe with a tradition in the exploitation of precious metals, definitely make it worth a visit.

The town (with a peculiar cultural and architectural patrimony) was mentioned even before the Romans in the scriptural sources of Herodot, Pliniu and Titus Livius as a settlement with a tradition in mining precious metals. Roșia Montană was first attested in the documents back in 131 AD when it was named Alburnus Maior. The specific activity of the area was gold mining, which started in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D., during the Roman occupation.

The Roșia river flows right through the Roșia Valley, where the Roșia Montană's gold mines have been exploited centuries before Roman occupancy. In modern times, the extraction of gold was one of the main occupations of the moți, an ethnicity found in Western Romania.

The Alburnus Maior site attests an exceptional exploitation system preserved throughout the 7 km of Roman galleries, plus over 80 km of medieval galleries.

## **The gold-mining museum**

Established between 1970 and 1979, inside the former gold mines, the museum offers three different parts, equally novelty, presenting technical treasures collected over decades of conservation and excavations.

The roman galleries are the only one in the world that can be visited in their natural environment. Their excellent preservation is due to the natural ventilation and underground walls pitch that allowed self-support labyrinth of galleries, of which 150 m are arranged to be visited by tourists.

Output from the mine can visit a large yard, that includes stoning represented by the lithic collection of stones, carved and engraved, and an exhibition of technical equipment for gold and silver ore processing.

This showcase includes 25 wax tablets about Roman law and wood fragments dating from antiquity discovered in mine galleries. You can also visit the exhibition of documentary photographs, the layout of galleries and objects that reflect the town's mining tradition.

When you will visit the mine, you will descend 157 steps of about 30 m elevation difference. The length of the Roman galleries that you will visit is about 200 m.

### **Roșia Montană at the center of a long-running debate in Romania**

Mining projects in this area have started great controversies in the past few years as numerous organizations have been militating against exploitation. After a series of nationwide protests, the area was classified as a historic site of national importance, industrial activity was prohibited and Roșia Montană was proposed for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

But the UNESCO committee has decided to postpone the listing of Roșia Montană “due to ongoing international arbitration”, as a result of a request by the Romanian Government to remove the listing of Roșia Montană.