

The Red Ravine

Tags: rural landscapes, by car, hiking, wildlife, The Red Ravine, Râpa Roşie

Helpful information

- ◆ From Raven's Nest: 2 hours and 30 min car ride / 114 km trip
- ◆ It is located in Alba county, near the city of Sebeş city (4 km north).
- ◆ 3 kilometers hike, but you can also go up by car
- ◆ The road isn't fully marked on GPS or maps

Description

When most people think about Transylvania, they probably think about Dracula and castles. But there is one spot, just outside Sebeş, that looks like Dracula itself lived here for a while, because of the "red anomaly" - The Red Ravine.

Râpa Roşia (Romania's Little Canyon) is a geological natural reservation located near Sebeş, Alba county, in Transylvania. Positioned on Secaşelor Plateau, in a breathtaking landscape, the Red Ravine is extended on a land spanning over 10 ha.

About 4 kilometers from Sebeş, in Daia Romana village, the rocky appearance with peculiar aspect rises from the ground. A huge wall, almost vertical, gives the impression of a ruined ancestral monument. The geological prominence has been called a natural wonder. Over the last 60 million years, water has carved deep into the gravel, sandstone, and quartz of the plateau's sublayer, creating unusual natural spiked towers and pyramid shapes in the red clay.

You will discover an outstanding scenery when the rain falls and the water becomes red as blood, seeping through cracks and rocks making a sinister roaring noise.

Hikers will definitely not be disappointed if they wish to visit The Red Ravine during summer. The appealing and bright colors of red alternate green. Red rocks and flanges are covered with green meadows splashed with trees, thus the reddish spots seem almost unreal.

The height of the rocky walls exceeds sometimes 100 meters and the entire structure stretches over 800 meters in length. The strange storied columns separated through ravines form a microrelief which geographers call 'badlands' (the term was first used in South Dakota, US). The alternation of rocks and the overflow processes are here the determinants of the Red Ravine's spectacular relief evolution.

The Coţofeni culture was an Early Bronze Age archaeological culture that existed between 3500 and 2500 BC. in the mid-Danube area of south-eastern Central Europe. The first report of a Coţofeni find was made by Fr. Schuster in 1865 from the Râpa Roşie.

Studies showed there are many rare and endemic plants in the area: *Cotoneaster Integerrimus*, *Ephedra Distachya*, *Centaurea Atropurpurea*, *Dianthus Serotinus*, *Cephalaria Radiate*, and *Asplenium Nigrum*.

On the sloping lands in the East, there is *Dianthus serotinus* and in the valley, there is steppe with *Salvia nutans*, *Salvia transilvanica*, and rare specimens of oak (*Quercus pubescens*).

Some of them are rather unusual presences here in Transylvania, being characteristic of the southern steppes instead.

In 1950, the reservation was declared a natural monument for its beauty and uniqueness. The Rad Ravine (Râpa Roşie) is not only one of the major tourist attractions in Alba County, but one of the most notable natural monuments in Romania and a European rarity.

Fun fact: A new flying reptile fossil was discovered near the Red Ravine, adding to the unusual population of large pterosaurs that once stalked Romania. You can read more on the subject here: <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/05/new-species-pterosaur-fossil-transylvania-paleontology-science/>