

# Churchfortress - Trail

From **Viscri/Deutsch-Weißkirch**  
to **Biertan/Birthalm**

# A Project of



Funded by the Department for Interethnic Relations of the General Secretariat of the Romanian Government through the Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania and the Democratic Forum of Germans in Sibiu.

*It is distributed free of charge.*

# Content

The Project	1
<i>Stage 1:</i> From Viscri/Deutsch-Weißkirch to Grănari/Nagymoha	4
<i>Stage 2:</i> From Grănari/Nagymoha to Bărcut/Bekokten	5
<i>Stage 3:</i> From Bărcut/Bekokten to Seliștat/Seligstadt	7
<i>Stage 4:</i> From Seliștat/Seligstadt to Movile/Hundertbücheln	9
<i>Stage 5:</i> From Movile/Hundertbücheln to Iacobeni/Jakobsdorf	12
<i>Stage 6:</i> From Iacobeni/Jakobsdorf to Stejărișu/Probstdorf	14
<i>Stage 7:</i> From Stejărișu/Probstdorf to Mălâncrav/Malmkrog	17
<i>Stage 8:</i> From Mălâncrav/Malmkrog to Nou Săsec/Neudorf	19
<i>Stage 9:</i> From Nou Săsec/Neudorf to Copșa Mare/Großkopisch	20
<i>Stage 10:</i> From Copșa Mare/Großkopisch to Biertan/Birthälm	23
Arrival and departure	26
FAQ Frequently Asked Questions:	27
About the fortified churches	28

# The Project

The “Church Fortress Trail” in the heart of Transylvania is a wonderful opportunity to explore rural Romania and the cultural history of the Saxons, as well as today's village life.

Over approx. 75 km, we roam through unique landscapes, discover a high level of biodiversity, discover small villages and centuries-old fortified churches, the latter being unparalleled worldwide in terms of frequency and diversity.

The path connects the two world's cultural heritage sites Viscri (ger. Deutsch-Weißkirch) and Biertan (ger. BIRTHÄLM) over 10 small stages and is suitable for both hiking and cycling. In the individual villages, we have the opportunity to get an authentic picture of the Transylvanian cultural landscape. In addition to information on the hiking route, the guide contains selected information about the villages and churches along the way.

There is also the option of finding out about local offers such as activities, products and accommodation options and booking them online in the respective village using the QR codes for every village. You can also find all villages with their offers at:

**[www.agramonia.com/village](http://www.agramonia.com/village)**



Follow us on  
social media!

## Viscri/Deutsch-Weißkirch

### History of the village

The place is first mentioned in a document around 1400 in connection with cathedral interest payments from the Repser chapter. In 1638, large parts of the village were destroyed in a fire and rebuilt with the help of the surrounding communities. In 1999 the village center, as well as the church fortress, were added to

the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Today there are numerous projects in the village, and it is one of the largest agritourism destinations in Transylvania.

### Fortified church

In the 12th century, Szekler built a small hall church on the site of today's church at the western end of the village. At the beginning of the 13th century, the church was surrounded by an oval fortification. Additionally, the hall got extended and connected to the west tower. Work on the extension of the church fortress continued in the 18th century, when the second towerless wall was built.



**Scan this code and  
discover offers from Viscri**



**Visitation:**

Mrs. Gerhild Gross,  
Phone: +40/742/069 477

**Opening hours:**

Monday - Saturday  
10:00-13:00 and 15:00-18:00  
Sundays to registration

Stage 1:  
**From Uiscrí/Deutsch-Weißkirch  
to Gränari/Nagymoha**

🕒 4½h Walking time

We leave the fortified church at the western exit and turn left onto the paved road. We keep to the right on the main road and follow it until we reach the wooden cross at the orthodox church. Here we turn to the right and follow the path until the end of the village. We follow the curved path to the left into the forest. From now on, we stick to the white-red-white line marking.

We leave the forest behind us and come to a large meadow, which we cross to enter the next piece of forest. After walking on the forest path for a while, we reach a small clearing with a meadow on the left and a forest on the right. Here we follow the gravel road straight ahead and stay in the forest. While leaving the forest, we come across wide meadows and pastures. Now we walk right beside the fence, pass the shepherd on the left and reach a small hornbeam grove on a hill. We continue walking in the forest.

Here we meet the first blue and white marking of the “Church Fortress Trail”. From now on, we follow the triangular marks. After leaving the forest, we reach Granari on the long old village road. Our hiking trail does not run directly through the village. If you still want to visit it, you can simply follow the road into town.

## Grânari/Nagymoha

### History of the village

The Hungarian village of Grânari was founded in 1289 on a branch to the left of the Valea Mare. The German village name “Mukkendorf” was first mentioned in 1461. Today the small village is a Hungarian exclave and has an Orthodox wooden church and a Hungarian Reformed Church.



Scan this code and discover offers from Grânari



### Stage 2: From Grânari/Nagymoha to Bărcuț/Bekokten

🕒 2h Walking time

Before the entrance to Granari, we take the first junction sharply to the right and follow the ascending path. After about 1.5 km, we meet a shepherd with barking (sometimes vicious) dogs on the right side of the path. Caution is advised here. For particularly anxious people, it is advisable to bypass the area on the left side of the path.

After the shepherd, we kept left and followed the trail markings to Bekokten. As we enter the village, we turn right at the Orthodox church and follow the main road to the fortified church at the end of the village.



# Bärcut/Bekokten

## History of the village

In 1206 Barcut is mentioned in a document under the name “villa Barancuth.” In 1532 the place described as “Perkütten” is listed as the third-largest municipality in the Schenker chair.

Between the 18th and 19th centuries, the village was destroyed by several fires. Today Barcut is known as a city that offers a wide range of cultural and nature experience events, especially for children and young people.

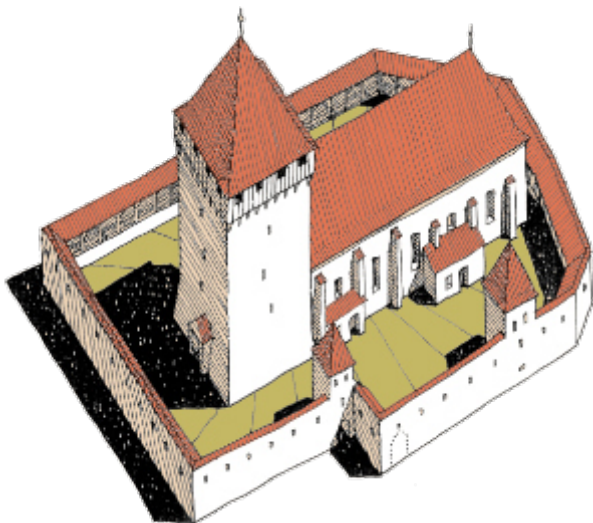


**Scan this code and  
discover offers from  
Bärcut**

## Fortified church

The fortified church still has elements of the original exemplar from the Middle Ages, including the bell tower and parts of the curtain wall. The old church was almost completely demolished in 1845, and a new one was built by 1846.

It is inaugurated in the following year. The bell tower with battlements, the curtain wall and parts of two towers that are located on the south side of the wall still bear witness to the original fortification.



**Visitation:**

Keys at Mrs. Cornelia Tache

Phone: +40/721/130 540

Contact person for  
registration:

Mrs. Irmgard Bădean

Phone: +40/721/405 851

Stage 2:  
**From Bărcuț/Bekokten  
to Seliştat/Seligstadt**

🕒 2h Walking time

After visiting the fortified church, we go back the way we have come about 100 m and turn left. We walk past the cemetery on our left, then keep left at the orchard

meadow and continue until we reach the top of the hill. Then, we follow the large metal rods with the red dot markings and turn left on the ridge until we reach a forest.

When we arrive in the forest, we continue to follow the path (redpoint on a white circle), take a left at the fork in front of the clearing, and later meet a paved road. Here we continue to the right and follow the road to Seliștat.

Following the main road, we reach a fork at which the Lukas village museum is located on the right, which is worth a visit. Then we follow the main road to the fortified church on the right

## Seliștat/Seligstadt

### History of the village

Like the next village Barcut, Seliștat is mentioned for the first

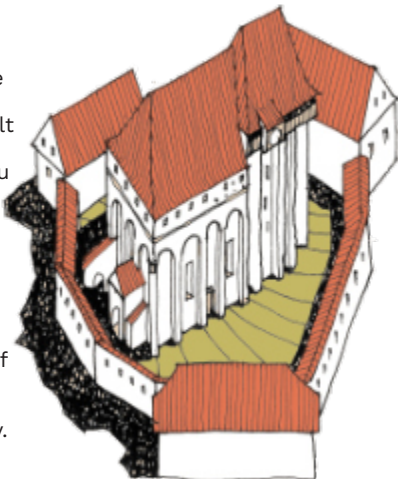
time in 1206; these villages are considered to be one of the first settlement areas of the Transylvanian Saxons. In its beginnings, the place bears the Latin name “Felix locus,” which can be translated as “happy place”. The (cultural) history of the place can be experienced today in the Erich-Lukas-Museum. Seliștat also has a youth exchange center, which is connected with the one in Barcut and accommodates both groups and individual tourists.



**Scan this code and  
discover offers from  
Seliștat**

## Fortified church

At the beginning of the 14th century, the Gothic church was built on the plateau between the Hartibaciu and Alt valleys. Due to increased attacks by the Turks, the gradual conversion of the church into a fortification began at the end of the 15th century. The exterior of the fortified church shows its original appearance to this day.



## Visitation:

Parish office Făgăraș

Phone:

+40/268/211 994

Keys are available at Mrs.  
Lucica Duicu

Phone: +40/731/430 260

## Stage 4: From Selıştat/Seligstadt to Movile/Hundertbücheln

🕒 2h Walking time

We leave the fortified church in the direction of the main road and follow it to the right in the direction until the end of the village. Once there, the path divides. We stick to the left. Following the markings, we stay on the easily recognizable dirt road until we come to a brook. Here we

recognizable dirt road until we come to a brook. Here we leave the paddock on the right and follow the path to the left. We continue along the dirt road until we reach the unique hill formation of Movile and cross it. We follow the markings to the next intersection and turn left towards the village. We meet the paved village road, turn left again and follow it to the church fortress at the slight hill.

## Movile/Hundertbücheln

### History of the village

The first German settlers settled in the area in the southern side valley of the Harbach River around 1180. Movile was first mentioned as a free part of the Schenker chair in 1355.

The place owes its German name to the unique landscape surrounding it, consisting of countless small hills, also called Bücheln in Saxon German. Today there are numerous initiatives in Movile which are mainly initiated by the association "Churchfortress e.V. Friends of Hundertbücheln



**Scan this code and  
discover offers from  
Movile**

### Fortified church

In the 13th century, a Romanesque basilica was built on the site of the current church. Then, at the end of the 15th century, the church gets expanded in the late Gothic style. Around the same time, the inner wall ring is being built, which is

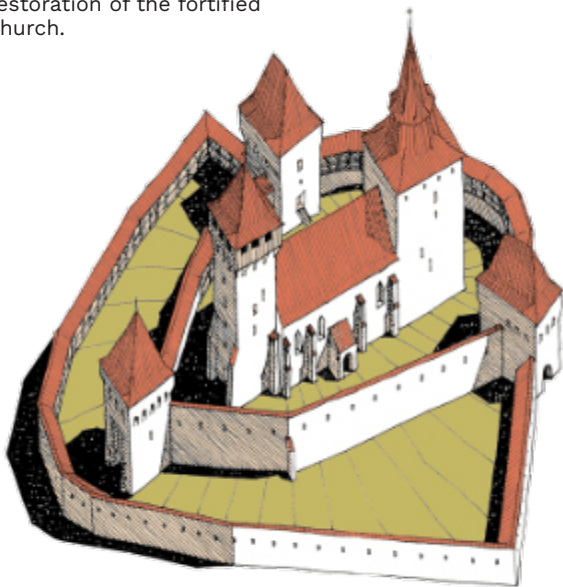
reinforced on the south-eastern side by the "port tower," which no longer exists today. In the 16th century, parts of the complex were secured by another curtain wall. Today the association "Churchfortress e.V. Friends of Hundertbücheln - Movile" is particularly committed to the preservation and restoration of the fortified church.

**Visitation:**

Keys are at Mrs. Doina Atudorei

House Nr. 213

Phone:  
+40/757/745 041



## Stage 5: From Movile/Hundertbücheln to Iacobeni/Jakobsdorf

🕒 2½h Walking time

We leave the church fortress in the direction of the stream, cross it and turn left on the other side. Then we walk to the Orthodox Church, past which we follow the path steeply to the right. We take the next junction to the left and meet the cemetery on the left of the path. Passing it, we follow the path up to the hill, from which there is a beautiful view over Seliștat, Movile, and Neudorf.

Here we turn left and stay on the path until we reach the fenced-in cow pasture on the right-hand side. We keep to the left of the fence until we see the NATO military base in the distance. From here, we walk downwards, take the lower path and walk along with the markings towards the forest. In the forest, we keep on the high path until we come to the game feeding point, where we turn right to leave the forest again. Now we cross the meadow along the waymarks and walk left along the strip of bushes. We walk through a flat valley until we can see Jakobsdorf.

Now we stay on the easily recognizable dirt road, cross the small Hartibaciu river and reach the paved road. We go straight ahead and follow the long road that leads into the village. When we arrive at the center of Jakobsdorf, we keep to the left of the stream until we reach the village shop. In front of the shop, we turn left onto the steep, rather inconspicuous path and arrive at the fortified church.

# Iacobenj/Jakobsdorf

## History of the village

Iacobenj was first mentioned in 1309 as part of the Kosder chapter.

Around 1500 Iacobenj became a free parish of the Schenker chair. Today the village is the largest in the region and the seat of the mayor's office. The place inspires with its liveliness.

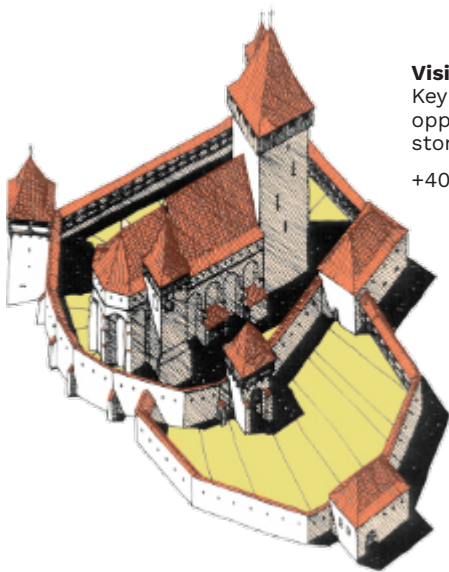
## Fortified church

The Gothic church was built in the 14th century. The hall was expanded in the following century by a late Gothic reticulated vault. At the beginning of the 16th century, the church was made defensible and surrounded by a circular wall with double loopholes. Sacristy and paintings in the church do not correspond to the original appearance and were added later by adherents of new religious beliefs.



**Scan this code and  
discover offers from  
Iacobenj**



**Visitation:**

Key at Mr. Achim,  
opposite the village  
store

+40/741/928/545

Stage 6:  
**From Iacobenj/Jakobsdorf  
to Stejărișu/Probstdorf**

🕒 1h Walking time

We leave the fortified church and walk the same way back down to the village shop, cross the stream, turn left on the other side and leave the village heading west. Here we go along the left bend, leave the fortified church on the left and walk uphill into the forest. In the forest, we stick to the markings until we reach the exit on the hill. We follow the dirt road down the valley until we come to an old drinking place for animals, walk past it and continue

into the valley until we reach a pasture fence and open it. We go uphill along the path to the forest on the hill, which we leave to our right in order to reach Stejărișu on the forest path. When we arrive in the village, we turn right onto the main road and follow it to the church fortress.

## Stejărișu/Probstdorf

### History of the village

Stejarisu is mentioned for the first time in 1223 under the name "terra Borthnik " although at that time, it was not at the current location but at a point further down the valley. Frequent floods are the reason for the resettlement of the community up the valley.

Today Stejarisu is one of the few places in Transylvania where saxon traditions are still alive. The initiators of this hiking trail lives in the rectory in Stejarisu.

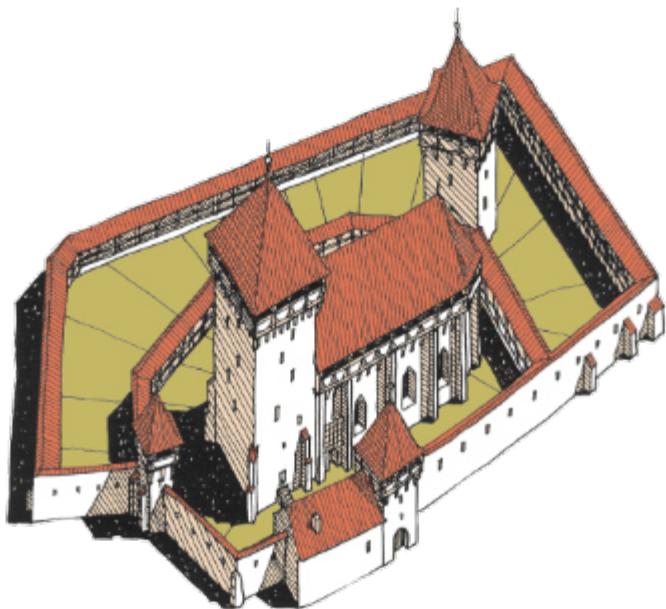
### Fortified church

The Gothic hall church was built in the 14th century and made fortified about a century later. The church is partially provided with a



**Scan this code and  
discover offers from  
Stejarisu**

double curtain wall and a defensive tower on the east side. The inner of the two walls was demolished in 1860. The Stejarisu church fortress is one of the last in all of Transylvania to have an authentically used tower where the villagers still hang their bacon.



**Visitation:**

Keys are available at Michael Gierling

Phone: +40/743/093 963

House number: 70

## Stage 7: From Stejărișu/Probstdorf to Mălâncrav/Malmkrog

### 🕒 3h Walking time

On the main street opposite the fortified church, there is a gate on which it says “Ort der Ruhe”. Here we go up until we turn right at the cemetery. At the corner of the cemetery, we continue to the left and cross the former school garden. We keep to the right and climb a path until we arrive on the high path. We follow this path, marked with a red cross, for approx. 2.5 km.

We arrive at a glade with oaks and follow the path to the ridge, where we turn left and follow the ridge path with the red cross for 1.5 km before we turn right at a bank and a sign. Here we pass a farm and follow the markings until we arrive at the outskirts of Mălâncrav. In the village, we follow the main road and stay on the left side until we reach the church fortress.

## Mălâncrav/Malmkrog

### History of the village

In 1305 Mălâncrav was mentioned for the first time. In contrast to most of the Saxon villages of Transylvania, the place is owned by the Hungarian noble family Apafi at this time. It does not belong to the free royal ground.

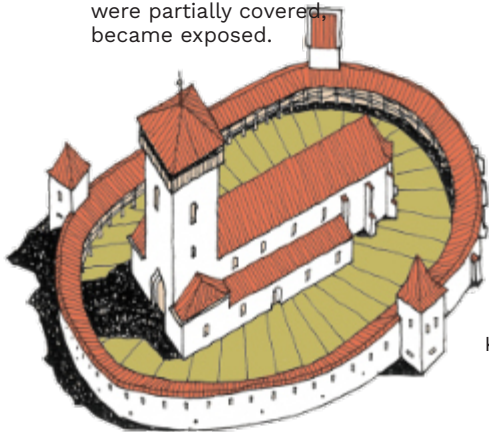
In the middle of the 18th century, Protestants, and Catholics lived in a good neighborhood in Mălâncrav. After serfdom ended in 1865, the villagers demolished large parts of Mălâncrav and built new stone houses.

## Fortified church

The Gothic basilica with a west tower was built in the 14th century. Signs of the former aristocracy can still be seen above the altar in the form of the Apafi coat of arms. Another special feature are the frescoes in the church, which are considered to be the largest surviving wall paintings in Transylvania. From 1913 to 1914 the church was renovated. During that time, the frescoes, which until they were partially covered, became exposed.



Scan this code and  
discover offers from  
**Mălâncrav**



### Visitation:

Usually possible  
between 10 and 18  
o'clock

Key at family Linzing,  
house Nr 307

Phone:  
+40/269/448 696  
or: +40/775/142 285

## Stage 8: From Mălâncrav/Malmkrog to Nou Săsesc/Neudorf

🕒 2h Walking time

Leaving the church fortress, take the road to the Apafi house, then turn right and follow the markings. We are now on Via Transilvanica, which is marked with an orange T.

The path leads to the left through the terraced orchards, leaving the church tower behind us. After about 100 m uphill on the path, a curve leads to the right afterward; we keep to the left at a small grove. Then we walk along with the multi-lane tractors. It goes on over a field up the next hill. The path leads past a drinking trough. Here we turn left. After a few hundred meters, we reach a meadow.

We cross this, keep to the right and get to the forest. We follow the markings, and after leaving the forest, we have another kilometer to go to Neudorf. At the entrance to the village on the right-hand side is the church.

## Nou Săsesc/Neudorf

### History of the village

Nou Săsesc was first mentioned in 1305, and at that time was owned by the Apafi family, just like Mălâncrav. Some sources assume that the original

settlement was not in its current location before it was first mentioned but rather further upstream. In 1658 Tatar troops destroyed the place. In the

1930s and 1940s, large natural gas deposits were discovered in the vicinity of the village. The exploitation continues into the present.

### **Fortified church**

In the east above the village stands the Gothic hall church built in the 15th century. There is a square tower a short distance from the church. The current bell tower was built between 1828 and 1832.



**Scan this code and  
discover offers from Nou  
Săsesc**

## **Stage 9: From Nou Săsesc/Neudorf to Copșa Mare/Großkopisch**

 **3 h Walking time**

From the fortified church, we walk to the main street and turn right. We cross the village until we reach its end. From the last house about 300 m away on the main road, we turn left onto a dirt road. From here, we go up about 600 m to the next forest, which leads us to a glade. We follow the meadow path downwards and keep to the right, where we reach a steep hill, which we circulate at a slight height. The dirt road leads us to a grove, where we cross a smaller stream. After walking through the next

forest, we come to a pasture area on which areas are marked out with electric fences. We bypass this on the right side and follow the sloping dirt road that crosses the orchards and reach Großkopisch after approx. 1.5 km. Having arrived on the first street in the village, we turn right to the fortified church, which appears on the right-hand side after 100 m.

## Copșa Mare/Großkopisch

### History of the village

Copșa Mare, founded at the end of the 13th century, is located 2 km east of Biertan. The village developed particularly quickly at the beginning of the 14th century due to agriculture and wine growing. However, in 1605 Szeklers ravaged the place and plundered the church. The place is picturesquely situated in the valley and is still home to some private vineyards.



**Scan this code and  
discover offers from Copșa  
Mare**

### Fortified church

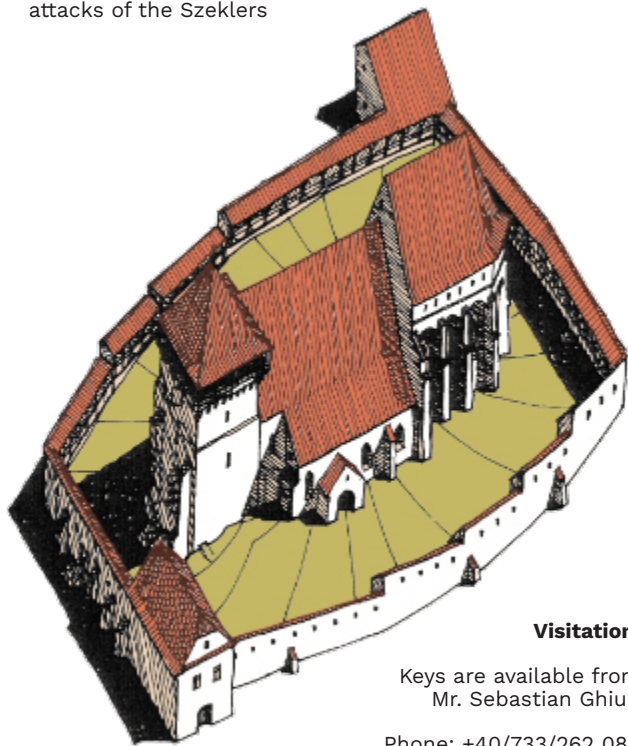
At the beginning of the 14th century a Gothic pillar basilica with three naves was built. When the church was made defensible at the end of

the 15th century, the two side aisles were demolished. In addition, the church is getting extended to the east by a new choir that protrudes over the



nave and has a fortified floor above. Also the facility will have a ring wall made of quarry stones with loopholes. In 1605 the defense system could not withstand the attacks of the Szeklers

and was taken. At the beginning of the 19th century parts of the church, facility were damaged by earthquakes. In 1977 the fortified church was restored.



**Visitation:**

Keys are available from  
Mr. Sebastian Ghiuri

Phone: +40/733/262 089

## Stage 10: From Copsa Mare/Großkopisch to Biertan/Birihalm

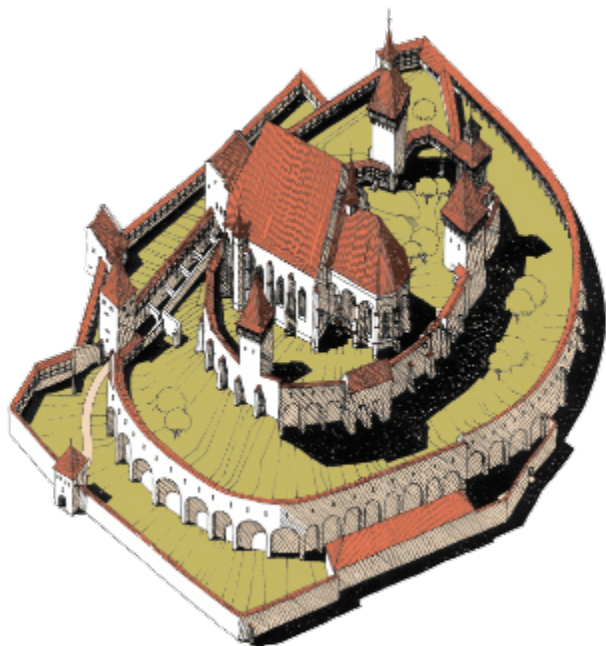
 1h Walking time

We exit the church ensemble on the path to the right, follow the path to the left until we meet the main road. We cross the road and leave the village on the dirt road on the left, which leads to a small forest before we reach the asphalt road.

After having followed the road for about 1 km, the route turns left and crosses another meadow towards the entrance of the forest. We climb up through the forest until we reach a beautiful viewpoint over Biertan. We go downhill and reach the destination of our hike via the cemetery and the Orthodox church.

When posting images from the trail, don't forget to use hashtags:

***#Churchfortresstrail #Agramonia #Rural-Romanian-Experiences***



### **Visitation:**

Mai-Sept.

10:00-13:00 o'clock

14:00-19:00 o'clock

Parish office Biertan:

+40/269/842 660

April-Oct.

10:00-13:00 o'clock

14:00-17:00 o'clock

Mrs. Erna Weinrich:

+40/749/231 199

In winter only on request

## Biertan/Birthälm

### Village History

The town of Biertan was founded in the middle of the 13th century. The village gained special importance as a marketplace at the end of the 14th century. For several centuries the place suffered from heavy indebtedness, which resulted in the departure of many citizens and the decline of the community. Biertan was the seat of the bishopric of the Evangelical Church in Transylvania from 1572 to 1867. In 1993 the place and the fortified church were added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

### Fortified church

The late Gothic church, built in the heart of the settlement at the end of the 15th century, is one of the largest in all of

Transylvania and today still shows fragments of the early Gothic basilica that was previously located in this place. The fortified church, which consists of three wall rings, six defense towers and several bastions is particularly impressive because of its extent.



**Scan this code and  
discover offers from  
Biertan**

# Arrival and Departure

## Arrival Viscri/ Deutschweiß-kirch

Rupea (ger. Reps) is a small town and has train and bus connections. You can find buses at [autogari.ro](http://autogari.ro) and trains via the website [cfr.ro](http://cfr.ro) or directly at the train station. From here you can either hitchhike or take a taxi to Viscri. The taxi ride currently costs around 50-60 lei and is organized by Cruceriu Constatin +40 745 608 941.

## Birihalm

Not far from Biertan is the city of Mediaş, which is also worth a visit. Buses from Biertan run here regularly, but currently only at 5 a.m.

You can also call a taxi from Mediaş, which costs around 80 lei. A taxi number from Mediaş would be +40 740 688 312. There is also the possibility to get to the train station in Dumbraveni and from here to take the train, which is a little cheaper. You can ask at the fortified church, as many villagers also offer transfers.

## Departure Biertan /

# FAQ

## Frequently asked questions:

### **How long is the hiking trail?**

The path extends over approx. 75 km, on which 11 villages can be discovered over 10 small stages. It is advisable to plan at least four days for the hike to get to know villages and people and get a good impression of the region and its natural landscape. We recommend planning enough time.

### **Who is the trial suitable for?**

Since the route is not technically demanding and the stages are short, it is suitable for young and old. The path over old village streets, on-field, and forest paths is not only suitable for hiking but is also easy to do with an off-road bike. However, quads and motorcycles are not allowed on the way, and severe penalties must be expected if the rules are not observed.

### **What offers are there in the villages?**

You can find out about the local offers using the QR code on each side of the village. It is important to reserve products and activities at least the day in advance so that the providers have time to provide them. It is also possible to book and reserve accommodation in the village using the code. Examples of activities would be a bread-making course or a horse-drawn carriage ride around the village.

### **How do you get to the fortified churches?**

Only the church fortresses in Viscri and Biertan have continuous opening hours. In order to visit the other churches, it is best to consult the person responsible for the key. Normally a visit is possible relatively spontaneously, whereby a call a few hours in advance is sufficient. This guide gives you free entry to all of the church fortresses along the way.

### **Are there any places to eat on the way?**

All villages along the way have a small shop and it is possible to get dinner at all guest houses. It is also possible to order local products from the village via the QR code and thus to eat locally.

## **About the fortified churches:**

Since the Transylvanian Saxons were granted the territory of today's southern Transylvania by the Hungarian King Geza II in the 12th century, they were exposed to hostile attacks from the east. In order to protect the villagers against this danger, the churches were fortified over the centuries. The peculiarity of fortified churches was that, unlike medieval castles, they did not belong to the nobility but served as a communal project for the defense and protection of the village community. The manifold fortifications of the fortified churches are still an impressive testimony of that time today.



**Download the  
Track**



**Open the  
Track**