



Whoever has heard of the Land of Lăpuș has learned about the Țibles Mountains and the spectacular Lăpuș Gorge, about the legendary outlaw Pinteia the Brave, about Grigore Lese and his “long horas”, the monastery at Rohia and the blue-painted houses. However, there might be fewer people who know that the gentle slopes of the old Terra Lapusensis, the slightly more dashing mountains and the villages nestled at their feet provide great tracks for those who enjoy journeys on two wheels. When travelling by bicycle, you will be able to discover a lot more than if you were speeding through in a car: solitary churches and monasteries, lakes, woods and meadows, country roads and traditional homes.

THE BLUE TRACK

Ranging as average in terms of difficulty, the Blue Track crosses through diverse landscapes and is generously marked with the “C” symbol, painted in blue, as well as the houses specific to this area.

Târgu Lăpuș is the “capital” of the Land of Lăpuș and the starting point for several tourist itineraries in this area. Our track starts in the centre of the town, heading towards Baia Mare. After idly pedalling for 5 minutes on the asphalt, upon reaching the first junction we turn right, on the road towards Dumbrava, climb up for about 300 m, then climb down towards the Dobricu Bridge. Leaving the town, we head towards the first junction with a gravelled road (macadam), well fitted with road signs.

As we turn right, we pass below a high voltage power line and, upon reaching the next crossroad, we choose to go right and then we begin the first more difficult climb. Having successfully overcome this first obstacle, our road continues over a well-defined foot of the hill, where the landscape is such as rewards our effort. At one point, we leave the “macadam” and, bypassing, as we climb up, the road interruption, when we return to the gravelled road we are again, taken aback by a photogenic view, permanently watched over by the Satra Mountain (or Satra Pintii, as the locals call it), the forest-laden trapeze that breaks out of the chain of the Lapus Mountains, whose peak (the Satra Peak V - 1041m) separates the Land of Lăpuș from the Land of Chioar.

Our bike speeds up and within 2-3 minutes we reach the end of the Lintiu Forest (Pădurea Lințului), where adventure lovers may go to the Dobricelul Lake. To do that, we will leave the marked road that climbs down westward, and after a micro downhill, we will reach the lake’s embankment. Keep a very attentive eye on marks and signs! At one point the slope breaks suddenly, in an abrupt and stony collapse, which needs to be bypassed by turning left. Once we are close to the lake, the same blue marks take us to a cold-water spring, perfect for a refreshing refill.

From the spring, there are two ways we may return to our track: by going back on the same road or by taking a detour around the lake, on a small path that’s partially marked and then, from the far end of the lake, climbing up to the SE, we may return to the marked track. A few white-and-blue arrows will point us to the right way.

If we wish to be more cautious and choose not to take the lake itinerary, we will move towards the NW, taking a detour northwards, and after approximately 250 meters we will reach the end of the gravelled road, where we can find a shadowy wood and a great site for catching landscapes (the 466 m level). From this point on we take the ATV path, which takes us towards the Satra Mountain, over gentle slopes and descents, though clearings, meadows and wood groups.



It takes us about one hour of pedalling to reach the Șatra Road. The arrows indicate that we turn left and, after approximately 200 m, we reach a wide clearing (Hagău’ Inăului), a good place to stop and rest. (in case of rainy weather we suggest you chose the Dumbrava option, with an asphalted road down to the Store, from which point the macadam road near the Dobritin Valley takes us to the same clearing).

After some well deserved rest, we get back on our bikes and pedal our way to the monastery, through the forest. Coming next is the most difficult part of the track, however, a smashing descent always needs to come after a difficult ascent. Five kilometres of intense effort take us to the gates of this holy building built in the ‘90, not too lively and with an air of ruin about it, but nicely set in a clearing located at an altitude of 770 m, below the Satra Peak. Because, in the past, the outlaw Pinteia the Brave (1670-1703) and his men set up camp (“satra”) on this mountain, many of the toponyms here are a reminder of the man who was “terror to the rich and pity to the poor”. Thus, this area includes the Satra Pintii Peak (Vârful Șatra Pintii), the Satra Pintii Convent (Schitul Șatra Pintii), Pinteia’ Well (Fântâna Pintii), Pinteia’s Cave (Grota lui Pinteia)(man-made) etc, which are, however, sites that our blue track doesn’t reach.

Just like the outlaw riding his fantastic horse, we will climb our bikes and push the pedals so that they take us along the itinerary that becomes increasingly awe-worthy. Following the blue signs that we have already become familiar with, we ride on macadam again (about 3-3.5 km) towards the Izvorul Setrei Creek (Pârâul Izvorul Șetrii). Soon we will pass through the most savage part of the track, which has impressive cliffs on the right of the road and boulder scree to the left. Before we change direction again, we will pass three springs (amongst which the last one is also marked), all of which have drinkable water. Having reached the Setrita Clearing (Poiana Șetrița), near the Cornu Setrei Peak, instead of heading towards the Izvoarele village (west), we turn right (east). This is where we begin the downhill (descent), at first over gentler slopes, then the bike speeds up, so each of us will “release” the breaks according to their own descent technique. Because this area is used by sheep “camps” and we might encounter shepherd dogs, it is recommended to descend at reduced speed. After approximately 4-5 minutes we are crossing the Izvorul Setrei Creek, which also guides us to the Creek Mouth (Gura Pârâului), because the track takes us downstream over a tractor road parallel to the valley. The bottom part of the creek is quite difficult, as it is “paved” with stones, which accounts for the name of “rodeo” that was assigned to this part of the track.

Location: Land of Lăpuș (Maramureș County)

Marks: blue “C”

Starting point: Târgu Lăpuș (51 km from Baia Mare, the capital city of Maramureș)

Track items: Târgu Lăpuș - Șatra Mountain - Cupșeni Valley - Cupșeni - Libotin - Rogoz - Dămăcușeni - Târgu Lăpuș

Distance: 46 km

Maximum altitude: 815 m

Minimum altitude: 331 m

Google Earth: <http://bit.ly/tatlkms>

GPX: <http://bit.ly/tatlgpx>

Track creator & marker :

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Partners: Town-hall of Târgu Lăpuș, Town-hall of Cupșeni

Photo: Rada Pavel, Andrei Giurgiu, Janos Rusiczki

Design: mixAD.ro





Once we reach the Creek Mouth (Rastignire), we turn 90 degrees to the right and, after about 4 km through the Cupseni Valley (which is scattered with isolated wood houses and small homes), we reach the middle of the Cupseni commune. From this point on we will only be pedalling on asphalt until the end of the track. In Cupseni it is worth stopping to take pictures of several wood constructions, amongst which the most remarkable are two old churches, both built in 1730. The church we encounter on our way has Saints Michael and Gabriel as patrons, and it was relocated here from the Peteritea village. The other one, located on a hill, is remarkable due to the balance of proportions and its tower adorned with four small towers at the bottom of the helmet.

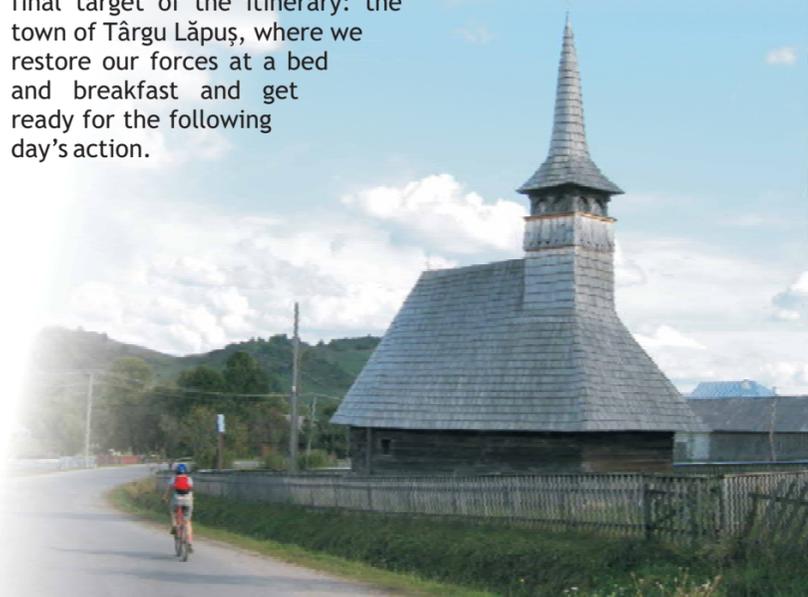


When leaving Cupseni, we pass by the Costeni Junction and, after a few minutes of idle descent, we leave the Ungureni Junction behind us too and approach Libotin, a village that shows a picturesque view due to its terraces and forest-laden hills. A village of hospitable people and old wood houses, specific to the Land of Lăpuș, Libotin also has a wooden church relocated here from Remetea Chioarului in 1811.

The bike then takes us to Rogoz, the village that hosts two old wooden churches, one of which is protected as UNESCO monument. Made of elm wood, the “Saint Michael and Gabriel” church is remarkable due to its side entry and asymmetrical roof. The paintings were made by the painters Radu Munteanu and Nicolae Man. Rogoz is also home to the wood craftsman Nicolae Serban, who makes sculptures (icons, seal engravers, spindles, masks, small statues and furniture items) in a workshop that’s located right on the road to church. Also in Rogoz, before crossing the Lăpuș River, there is a mineral water spring (on the right side of the road), but we would need a local’s help to get the water out of the “hole”.

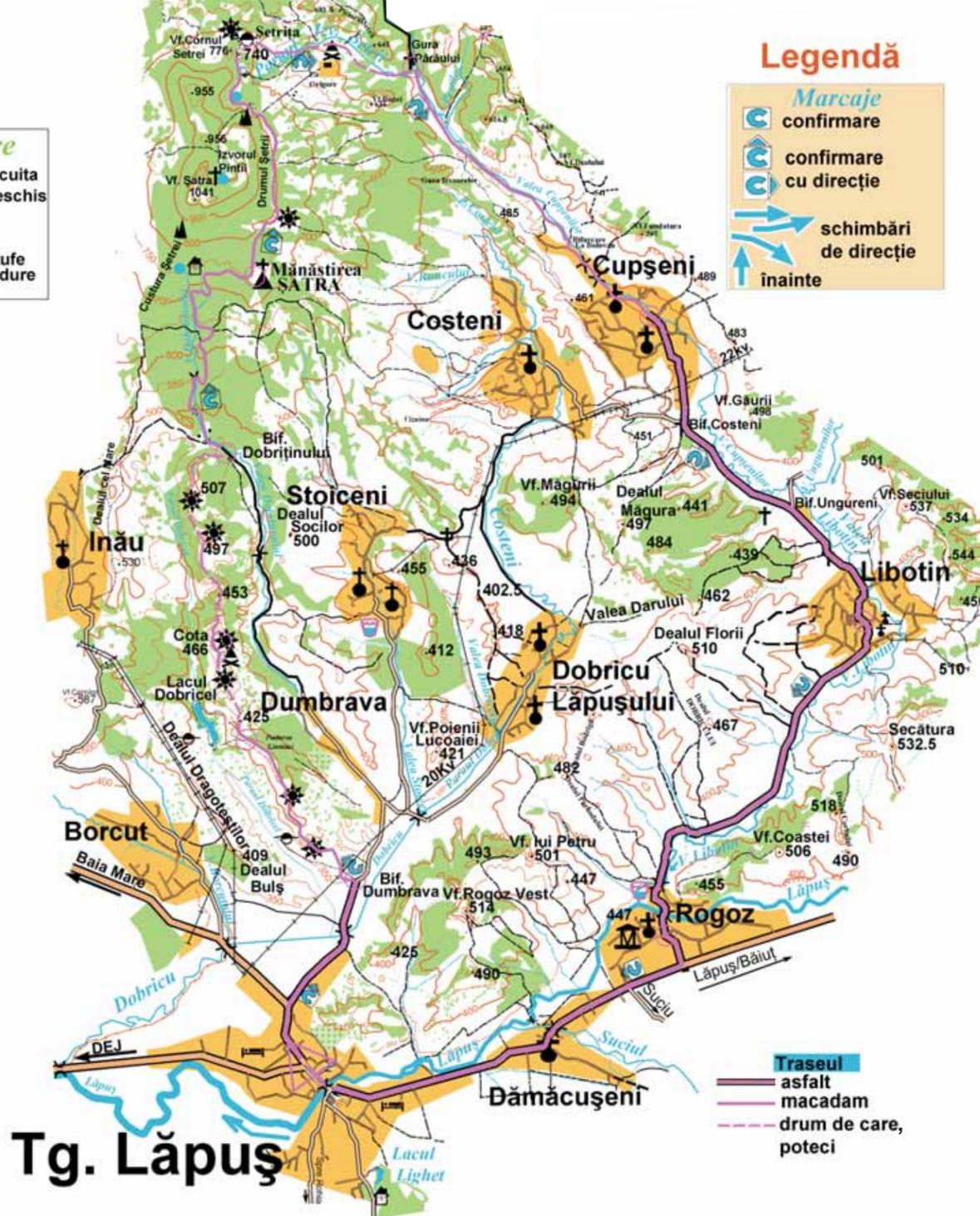
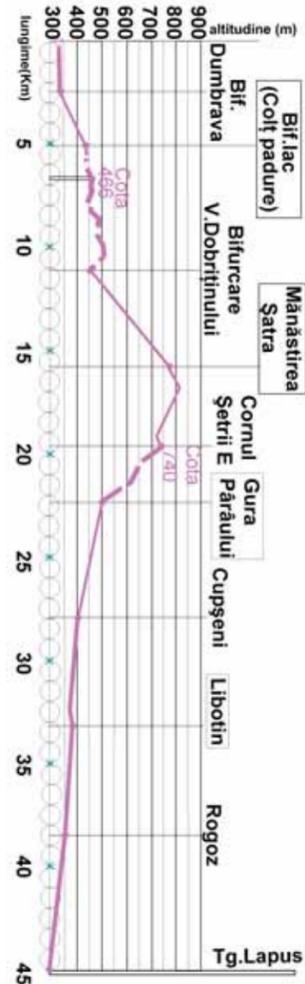
As soon as we leave Rogoz, we say goodbye to traffic-free roads, as our track continues on a district road, more crowded, which means we need to pay more attention to cars! We will soon reach Dămăcușeni, a place famous for its vegetables and flowers. The protestant church in the middle of the village, which towers over the “town-influenced” architecture of the area, was built around 1700.

The asphalt belt then takes us to the final target of the itinerary: the town of Târgu Lăpuș, where we restore our forces at a bed and breakfast and get ready for the following day’s action.



- ▲ Mănăstire
- ✚ Biserica de lemn
- 🏛️ Muzeu
- 🏠 Cazare
- 🏠 Cabană
- ✳️ Belvedere
- ▲ Loc de popas
- 🌊 Apă minerală
- 🌊 Izvor
- 📍 Adăpost
- 🏠 Stână
- ▲ Stâncării

- Acoperire**
- 🟡 Zona locuita
 - 🟢 Teren deschis
 - 🟢 Padure
 - 🟢 Livada
 - 🟢 Copaci, tufe
 - 🟢 palc de padure



a bike ride through the Land of Lăpuș



THE BLUE TRACK