

Sinaia – Romania

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinaia>

Sinaia is a town and a mountain resort in Prahova County, Romania. The town was named after Sinaia Monastery, around which it was built; the monastery in turn is named after the Biblical Mount Sinai. King Carol I of Romania built his summer home, Peleş Castle, near the town.

Sinaia is about 60 km northwest of Ploieşti and 50 km south of Braşov, in a mountainous area on the Prahova River valley, just east of the Bucegi Mountains. The altitude varies between 767m and 860m.

The city is a popular destination for hiking and winter sports, especially downhill skiing. Among the tourist landmarks, the most important are Peleş Castle, Pelişor Castle, Sinaia Monastery, Sinaia Casino, Sinaia train station, and the Franz Joseph and Saint Anne Cliffs. Sinaia was also the summer residence of the Romanian composer George Enescu, who stayed at the Luminiş villa.

In 1690 a Wallachian nobleman, MihailCantacuzino, built a small monastery on the upper Prahovariver and (inspired by his voyage to Mount Sinai) named it *Sinaia*; a village developed around it. In the 1860's, attracted by the area's wild beauty, Romania's first king, Charles of Hohenzollern, decided to build here a summer residence, which would become Peles Castle (inaugurated in 1883). Soon the place became the favorite resort of the Romania upper class, who started raising their own luxurious holiday villas in the area. Impressive hotels, casinos, modern restaurants and shops followed, which, by the end of the 19th century, turned Sinaia from an obscure village into Romania's unofficial summer capital.

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Getting to Sinaia is made easy by train, since it is on the main line between Bucharest and Brasov. All trains that go to Hungary pass Sinaia, as to those that service Oradea, Brasov and Cluj-Napoca. There are also many trains to and from Sighisoara, Timisoara, Iasi and Arad.

Note however that there are few trains on the Bucharest-Brasov line. Although there was meant to be many InterCity trains on this line, one will find that most of these trains have been cancelled. Trains usually depart Bucharest's Gara de Nord every 2-3 hours at best.

Sinaia is also accessible by intercity coach from Brasov, but train is the better option.

The closest airport to Sinaia is Bucharest.

The climate

The climate is a characteristic of low-altitude mountain passes. Annual average temperature: 8°C; Average temperature in June: 15°C; Average temperature in January: -4°C.

Summers are bracing and very rainy in the beginning of the season. Winters are relatively mild, with heavy snow. Average annual rainfall is 900mm. The maximum monthly registered rainfall was in June (173mm). The minimum rainfall was recorded in September (55mm) and February (40mm).

A uniform layer of snow is deposited usually in November and it melts from March to April, sometimes at the beginning of May. The thickness of the snow layer varies between 20 centimeters and 3 meters in higher elevations.

In recent years, Sinaia has felt the effects of global climate change – change that has meant shorter summers, with temperatures frequently over 30°C, a slight reduction in the length of spring and autumn, and relatively longer winters (end of October – beginning of May), colder winters with entire weeks dominated by frost (-19°C to -25°C) and numerous blizzards.

Natural cure factors

Proponents claim that Sinaia has a refreshing and stimulating climate that is beneficial to the human body. There are also some mineral springs in Căinelui Valley that have sulphur-ferric mineral water and contain other soluble minerals.

Nature preservation

In the town of Sinaia and its surroundings restrictions are in place regarding cutting down or picking up flora. The felling of trees is not allowed. It is forbidden to pick up any alpine plants. Severe punishment may be in store for those who gather these plants: the Mountain Peony (*Rhododendron Kotsky*), Edelweiss (*Leontopodiumalpinum*), and the Yellow Gentiana (*Gentianalutea*). Tourist camping is only authorized in designated places, following necessary and compulsory protection standards.

The mountainous area in which Sinaia is located is in the Bucegi Natural Park region. The Park covers a total area of 326.63 square kilometres, of which 58.05 square kilometres are under strict protection and shelter natural monuments. The Bucegi Natural Preserve area includes all the abrupt areas of the mountains Vârful cu Dor, Furnica, and Piatra Arsă. The mountainous area is continuously patrolled by mountain rescue patrols as well as by members of the Mountain Police.

At the entrance to the Cumpătu district, one can find the “Sinaia alder-tree grove” botanical reservation placed under the protection of the Romanian Academy and the Bucharest Biology Institute. In the same district, there is also another ecological research station under the patronage of UNESCO – Jacques-Yves Cousteau, belonging to the University of Bucharest, which also includes a museum of Bucegi Mountains fauna in a laboratory for nature protection.



Peles Castle



Pelisor Castle right next to Peles castle

During the Conference program will be organized a trip to Dracula’s Castle (Bran Castle), a tourist attraction in Transylvania. Also will be visited Peles and Pelisor castles.



Drakula Castle (Bran_Castle)