

Welcome to Casa Maria!

We are so happy to welcome you to Casa Maria! We wish you a great stay. Would you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us at our home or by phone:

Mobile phone Lili: + 40 723 541 369

Formalities

Would you be so kind to leave 2 (!) forms before you leave to make our local authorities happy?

- 1) The form with some basic information on who you are
- 2) The form where you agree with our privacy policy (which basically says we won't use your information in any way)

Review

After your departure, we would love to get your review on Airbnb or Travlocals. We would appreciate that so much. We experience that your review is important to many people orientating to Casa Maria. Thank you so much in advance!

WIFI

The password information you'll find at the back of the router.

Drinking water

We don't recommend to drink the water from the tap. Instead we warmly recommend you to get the best quality drinking water from the local source in Dealu Negru. Back on on the main asphalt road (Huedin-Belis) you turn to the left direction Huedin. Passed the 2 dirt roads on your right side, you find on your left side a parking place. It's a few hundred metres before you drive out of the town Dealu Negru on the left side (coming from Casa Maria). Many people from the town collect here their drinking water. Bring your own bottle(s) and fill them up here.

- The water in this area is scarce. Please don't shower too long or use too much water unnecessary, be conscious of using water. We have a 1000 reserve water tank, incase the local authorities don't have a water supply any longer. That reserve should be enough for quite a while if you are using the water careful, only what is really necessary. Thank you!

Heating – make sure you have a comfortable temperature in the house

In the springtime, autumn or summer, when you feel a little cold, we would advice you to use one or two electrical radiators. One is in the bathroom, the other one you'll find in the cellar.

In the winter, or at very cold days during the year, you can use the terra cotta fire place. Under the home you'll find all you need to make starters to start a fire, as well as wood to burn and get warm. Please take the wood from behind the home, there's a large wood-house. We like to keep the wood along side the house where it is. Thank you!

This fire place is like a diesel. It takes a few hours to really get warm, after it can warm the house up to 24 hours. On really cold days we mostly burn 2 to 3 times with a full load of wood. After you cannot touch your hand to the terracotta, because it's so hot, you can stop putting more wood on the fire.

- Please empty the ashes in between, you can put them in the bucket outside on the veranda.
- When starting the fire, don't forget to put the little door half open, so the air can flow and start the fire very well (about 15 to 20 minutes), and after close the door fully.

Garbage

BIO – please use the compost container, you can empty it on the composting place behind the family house.

Other – it would be nice and much appreciated if try to minimize your garbage out of respect for nature. Thank you so much!

Electricity

Sometimes, welcome to the mountains of Transylvania, the electricity disappears. You can always check the main electricity box near the entrance (close to the green fence on your way in/out).

Dogs

3 friendly dogs live on site, Bobby (blonde), Bobby (brown one from Alex) & Pufa (the small one). They love guests and are happy to welcome you. They also appreciate you to spoil them with some tasty dog food. We do appreciate you share your love and care for the dogs. They protect you and Casa Maria and love the guests from Casa Maria. In the night, we feed the dogs and provide them a warm spot in the cellar of the family house, so they (you and us) can have a silent and comfortable night.

Any problems?

General: whatsapp or call Lili: + 40 723 541 369

Information, maps etc.

In the upper drawers of the white mirror table in the living room, you'll find a lot of maps and information on the area. Via de app Avenza Maps, you can download a digital map of the area. Quite handy for walking, cycling or horse riding. You can find the link to the local map here: <https://www.avenzamaps.com/maps/703557>

Local food markets and shopping (ATM)

Every Sunday morning (9-11 am): gathering of local farmers with the best food, cheese etc. in BELIS.

Every Tuesday morning (8 – 12 am) in HUEDIN large gathering of local farmers with the best stuff to eat and use.

In Belis there are two general stores where you can buy all the necessary daily need food and things. In Huedin there are 3 supermarkets. In Cluj Napoca you can buy all what you need (2 shopping malls and a very cosy, historic centre with shops).

The closest ATM-machines are in Huedin.

Body & Soul Journey Massage

You can always experience an unique massage by Lili. She will use massage oil made from the Arnica flowers on this ground. She has a healing hand that already helped many people to relax deeply and often discover some answers on important life questions. Feel free to make an appointment with Lili!

Walking

There are many possibilities for a short or long walk. In the upper drawer of the little white cabinet in the kitchen, you'll also find a detailed walking map for the region (Gilaului Muntele Mare). You even could download an app (Muntii Nosri) to get the walking trails on your GPS. Behind the main house on the ground, you'll find a little wooden gate towards the forest ... also the start of a beautiful stroll around the place.

Cycling

Pension Alpin in Belis (www.visalpin.ro) offers rental (mountain)bikes. The daily rate is 50 lei per bike. Telephone: +40 (0)374 079 680 or +40 (0)374 079 681.

Recommended Restaurant

Pensiunea Doru (great homemade food by an Italian Chef)
Balcesti Nr 40, Com Belis, Jud Cluj, Romania, Beliș 407076
www.pensiunea-doru.ro

- If you have a dinner at Doru, please mention you come from Casa Maria, and they will have a surprise for you!

Horse riding

In Calata is a horse riding school. Bea & Isztvan offer the possibility to make tours in the amazing nature of Kalotaszeg. After an instruction on the horse for about 15 minutes, you drive with a guide through nature on very silent horses. Ideal also for unexperienced horse riders. You choose yourself the time you like to be out, an hour, 2 hours, 1 tot 7 days ... Ask Lili to contact Bea for making an appointment. Reservation is necessary as often a number of the 40+horses need to get from their free roaming place far away from the riding school.

Trampoline

Near the Family house of Lili & Ivo is a trampoline. Feel free to use it! It's healthy and fun!

Cooking/grilling on the fire

You are welcome to use our large boiling pot or grill to cook on the fire! We have a special place to make fire near the home of Lili & Ivo. In the basement of Casa Maria, you'll often find coal to support the fire under the grill.

Swimming

On about 5 km distance is a large artificial lake (lac Fantanele) with excellent swimming opportunities. You can also choose to rent a little boat. Make sure you swim close to the shore, in the middle of the lake there sometimes are dangerous vortices in the water. Near the shore, all is very safe to swim.

An indoor swimming pool, you can find at Pension Doru on a distance of only 10 minutes drive. Pension Doru: www.pensiunea-doru.ro

A few suggestions for (half-)day tours

Marisel

You drive via Belis down towards Statiunea Fantanele (you can rent little boats to enjoy the lake). Over the dam you drive direction Poiana Horea and take the first turn to the left (a dirt road good accessible for all cars). This road takes you up the hill direction Marisel. A heavy storm recently made many trees fall down. Up the hill is an open space (Crucea Ianului) where local farmers roam their animals in the summer. You can walk or drive to the monastery (a nunnery), just opened and built with their own hands. Many walking possibilities from here. You can also drive further through Marisel. At a certain moment you'll find Restaurant Cabana Motilor (www.cabanamotilor.ro). Ideal spot to relax and enjoy a drink or a delicious meal. If you keep driving from Cabana Motilor, at the point where the main road goes to the left towards CLUJ NAPOCA, you can choose to drive straight towards the old town of Marisel. Driving through this little town (on the right the old church) you get on a dirt road. Try to drive as far as you can (the road get worse and worse) and decide where to step out of the car to enjoy an amazing walk).

Rachitelle Waterfall ('Bridal Veil')

The Rachitelle Waterfall is a beautiful spot to visit. It's about a 30 to 40 minutes distance from Casa Maria by car. Via Belis you drive to Balcest. In Balcest you turn right at the church towards Dealu Botii. You pass Pensiuina Doru (nice, simple and cheap meals plus indoor swimming pool) on your left side. On the highest point of the mountain pass you can enjoy a beautiful view over Apuseni National Park. At the end of the mountain pass, a T-crossing, you turn right towards Rachitele. In Rachitele, somewhere in the beginning of the town, you will see a sign to the 'CASCADA VALUL MIRESEI' to the left (over the bridge).

On the way back, you could choose not to take the same road, instead to turn left after the little bridge and drive via Margau, Calata to Calatele and Dealu Negru.

Manastereni

A beautiful village with one of the oldest reformed churches in Transylvania. From Manastereni try to find (or to ask anyone) the road to BICA. One of the best kept secrets in the area. On the road to BICA at a certain moment you'll reach the highest point and 'suddenly' notice a stunning mountain view. At that point, park your car, and walk ... you'll find another 360 degrees panorama at each other hill point. Truly stunning views!

Botanical Gardens

Cluj Napoca: The garden placed on the southern part of the city was founded by the academic Alexandru Borza in 1920. On a surface of 14 hectares there are living more than 10 000 plants the most beautiful species of all the continents. The garden is crossed by the Gipsy stream.

Jibou: The **Jibou Botanical Garden**, named after its founder, Vssile Fati (1932-2007), is situated in the north-east side of Jibou, on the second bank of the Somes River. The Botanical Garden has a surface of 25 acres (10 ha) and has been arranged inside the architectural ensemble at the Wesselenyi residence beginning with the year 1968.

Last but not least: Nationaal Park Apuseni

To see the best parts you should have a 4 x 4 car.

Some 4 x 4 Tracks

- Apuseni National Park
- Stana (wild horses, Varjúvár House, authentic Hungarian town, the center of this town is also accessible with a normal non 4 x 4 car!)
- Kalotaszeg gebied
- Cătușul Zapodie - Muntele Mare (2 uur rijden vanaf Casa Maria)

Cluj Napoca ('the Best City You've Never Heard Of')

On about 45 minutes drive by car. Beautiful historical town, warm atmosphere and lots of culture and city life. Also nice to go by train from Huedin railway station.

Oradea

On a distance of about 2 hour drive (or by train from Huedin). Lovely city with many beautiful things to do and to see.

The Golden Circle: a regional network of movers & shakers

We are part of a regional network of like-minded people. We do our best, everyone in his or her own way, also through cooperation and mutual support, to protect nature, and the local economy. You are welcome to visit our partners of this network to discover what's going on in the field of protecting one of Europe's last largest biodiversity areas. Please make an appointment before your visit the place. They also might be open to deliver you an unforgettable learning experience. You can always ask Lili & Ivo more information and details.

In **Alunisu**: Lars en Robyn Veraart with PROVISION:

www.provisiontransylvania.com

Not too far from the waterfall in **Rachitele** you'll find Roger & Zsuzsi from the Organic Art Ranch: www.organicarttranch.org

In **Tranisu** Eelke Wiersma en Carmen Todita work actively on their Careel House

www.careeladvisum.nl

Love Made Visible

www.lovemadevisible.eu

Ivo collected 800+ examples of people and organisations making #love visible in their work. In business, education, health or whatever field of economy. You can find them on the website Love Made Visible. On this website you also could order Ivo's English book "Pure Life". This book is about how more and more people dare to trust the power of love in all aspects of life, without judgement or expectations. They share one dream: to be restored back to their original state of being, freed from all illusions and lack of freedom. They are the movers and shakers who are creating a new society where love becomes the legal tender. They are heart people who seek win-win in heart economics. They include superconscious business people, scientists, journalists, doctors, teachers, lawyers, politicians, bankers and many others. They are people forging organizations with the fire of Love, inspired by the Force of Life moving them toward a next step in human consciousness.

Share your impressions on social media

We love to hear how you experience Casa Maria and your stay in the mountains of Transylvania. You are welcome to share your pictures/movies or other impressions on our Facebook page: <https://web.facebook.com/transilvaniaretreatcenter> or Instagram). https://www.instagram.com/transilvania_retreat_center/. You can also leave a review on the booking site AirBnb or Travlocals.com - thank you so much in advance! There's much more to share, much more to do and to experience, do not hesitate to ask us for what you are looking for! We wish you a lovely stay at Casa Maria!

Upcoming Festivals

International Kalotaszeg Folk Music and Dance Camp : 31 July – 7 August 2022

<https://www.kalotaszeg-davincze.ro>

Mera WorldMusic Festival : 4 – 7 August 2022

<https://www.meraworldmusic.com>

Ivo Valkenburg

Liliana Valkenburg-Baumann

January 2022

www.transilvania.ro

<https://www.facebook.com/transilvaniaretreatcenter>

https://www.instagram.com/transilvania_retreat_center/

[linkedin.com/in/ivovalkenburg](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ivovalkenburg)

[linkedin.com/in/liliana-valkenburg-baumann-58420267](https://www.linkedin.com/in/liliana-valkenburg-baumann-58420267)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwJxddaY1TIAgL6YSHNio5A>