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BMW Motorrad International GS Trophy 2026 Romania. **A look back at the GS adventure.**

Colțești, Romania. The stages in detail.

Day 1: Twelve hours, 310 kilometres and the first real test.

The first day of riding began with the Welcome Trial, providing an early competitive opening to the route. On an exposed mountain plateau, riders had to negotiate wet grass, off-camber slopes and a steep ascent and descent. Putting a foot down, stopping or leaving the marked course incurred penalty points, while the time taken also counted towards the standings. This first Special already demanded precise bike control and a carefully judged line.

The route then covered 310 kilometres, around 150 of them on unpaved mountain and forest tracks through the Carpathians. Long climbs, technically demanding descents and narrow secondary roads shaped the remainder of the stage. Romania's scenic and cultural diversity provided the backdrop to a day that demanded endurance and concentration in equal measure.

The Akrapovič Riverbed Challenge took the riders through a riverbed, across embankments and over soft alluvial terrain and fine gravel. Combining technical precision with the pressure of the clock, the test underlined the distinctive competitive character of the GS Trophy: outright speed was not the decisive factor; controlled riding, confident line choice and consistent teamwork were.

By late afternoon, the teams still had 120 kilometres ahead of them, around half of which were on technically demanding tracks. It was shortly after 18:30 when the participants finally reached Sighișoara –

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almost twelve hours after setting off. The opening day therefore immediately established the benchmark for the physical and mental demands of the stages to come.

Day 2: Fog, cold and demanding forest sections.

The second day of riding began in dense fog and temperatures of 6°C. A long forest stage featuring sandy and muddy sections, tight hairpins and deeply rutted tracks demanded intense concentration for more than eleven hours. Three consecutive climbs formed one of the day's most technically demanding passages. At the summit, the teams were rewarded with views across the Carpathians and towards the 22.5-metre stainless-steel statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The section near Valea Zălanului followed flowing forest tracks and included several river crossings as well as alternating gravel and grass passages across the river's floodplain. The rapid changes in terrain placed considerable demands on rhythm, balance and line choice. The BMW R 12 G/S impressed with its powerful delivery, agile handling and high degree of controllability.

Day 3: The longest Navigation Challenge of the week.

Day three also began in low temperatures and dense fog. Damp riding gear and limited recovery time placed additional demands on personal organisation. Once again, the itinerary exceeded 300 kilometres, including around 170 kilometres off-road. It was already the teams' third consecutive riding day lasting between eleven and twelve hours.

The route led into the Tătaru Mountains and, above the tree line, across the high pastures of Tabla Buții. In the Middle Ages, this historically significant ridge route marked a national border; during

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the First World War, it was the scene of fierce fighting. Today, flocks of sheep and their shepherds shape this remote landscape, through which the participants travelled on demanding mountain tracks.

The riding highlight of the day was the Metzeler Enduro Navigation Challenge near Zărnești. The eight-kilometre Special followed a GPS track through demanding forest terrain. Narrow single trails, difficult-to-spot junctions and extremely steep embankments required maximum precision despite mounting fatigue. It ranked among the most technically challenging sections of the entire event.

On the final kilometres of the stage, the participants passed Bran Castle. Closely associated in the public imagination with the Dracula legend, the medieval fortress provided a striking cultural highlight at the end of the third day.

Day 4: Shorter distance, uncompromising climbs.

After three exceptionally long stages, the shortened 180-kilometre route on day four initially suggested a lighter workload. As the day unfolded, however, it became clear that the technical demands remained undiminished.

The night at camp had already underscored the close proximity to nature: guard dogs belonging to nearby shepherds kept potential wildlife away from the grounds and repeatedly disturbed the peace around the tents.

In the morning, a Trial on a wet, steeply sloping grass field opened the competition. The route then initially flowed more freely towards the Transfăgărașan. The shorter distance gave the teams only temporary respite.

Late in the morning, a long off-road section presented two demanding climbs. The first required precise use of lean angle and



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the embankments within a confined space. The second followed a deeply rutted double track along the mountainside and called for consistent traction control.

The day concluded with the Lotru Riding Challenge. This comparatively fast Special ran through rock fields and deep fine gravel in the Lotru River. After the test ended at 16:30, the participants used the remaining time to recover and connect with fellow competitors from around the world.

Day 5: Strategica – the queen stage.

On day five, the route covered more than 300 kilometres back to base camp in Colțești. The centrepiece was the Strategica Mountain Road, a military road built during the First World War. With its steep, technically demanding climbs, this long high-altitude route placed exceptional demands on both rider and machine. Failed attempts required complex recovery operations. The subsequent descent proved even more challenging: a narrow, exposed mountain trail called for maximum concentration, precise bike control and rigorous risk management.

Further high-altitude tracks with demanding climbs and steep descents eventually brought the participants to the Transalpina. With its exceptionally winding course, the internationally renowned mountain pass provided a striking transition from unpaved mountain tracks to asphalt. From there, the route descended into the valley and continued along further tracks back to base camp – ready for the decisive final day.

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Day 6: A rain-soaked finale, decided in the final metres.

On the morning of the sixth day, the participants completed a final 120-kilometre loop, split equally between paved roads and unpaved tracks running along several mountain ridges. After the preceding stages, the teams were familiar with the characteristic conditions of the Romanian routes; nevertheless, the constantly changing surfaces demanded full concentration to the very end.

Following an interruption caused by the event's first spell of heavier rain, the route once again headed into the mountains. On increasingly wet ground, the participants had to tackle several climbs before reaching the final Special. The two-part course began with a fast passage across off-camber grassland and led into a tight, technically demanding section featuring steep embankments and rock steps. The outcome of a competition that had remained open until the very end was thus decided only in the final metres.

Romania – the host country.

The tenth edition took place in Romania. The choice of host country was driven to a significant extent by GS Trophy Marshal Matei Albulescu, who knew that his homeland offered ideal conditions for an exceptional GS Trophy experience – complemented by a unique wealth of cultural diversity.

This diversity is reflected in the country's architecture, agriculture and ways of life, some of which have endured for centuries, as well as in the modern transformation of its cities. It is precisely these contrasts that make Romania so fascinating.

Against this backdrop, the motto of the tenth edition takes on particular significance: "Back to Basics". The BMW R 12 G/S combines pared-back aesthetics and intuitive operation with modern technology. The competition itself also remains deliberately analogue:

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the Marshals assess the Specials using pen and paper, calculate the results by hand and update the leaderboard each evening. At its heart are personal encounters, discovering new cultures, immersing oneself in nature and sharing extraordinary experiences – always in the spirit of MAKE LIFE A RIDE.

This is my country.

Matei Albulesco. As already mentioned, Matei is both a GS Trophy Marshal and a native of this year's host country. In a very special sense, this was "his" GS Trophy: these were routes he knew, and he negotiated with landowners and authorities to secure the necessary permits.

"Together with Chris Zimmerman and Tom Weinmayr, I carried out the scouting and put everything together. Some of the tracks are among my personal favourites, including Tabla Buții and Strategica, the military road, with their magnificent scenery."

"And you saw how friendly the people were, how warmly they welcomed us and waved to us. That was a wonderful feeling. Yes, I was proud of Romania this week."

International harmony.

The GS Trophy is a celebration of adventure motorcycling – a movement that BMW Motorrad played a decisive role in shaping with the GS model range after the R 80 G/S first ignited the spark in 1980. The competitive element adds excitement to the days, creates focus and fosters healthy ambition, yet it represents only a small part of the GS Trophy experience. Most of each day is devoted to exploring the region and enjoying its natural and cultural richness from the unique perspective of an adventure motorcycle. The route follows roads and trails away from the beaten track into rarely seen



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hinterland. More importantly still, it brings together people from around the world and across cultures, united by their shared passion.

Press material on BMW motorcycles is available from the BMW Group PressClub at www.press.bmwgroup.com.

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The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial services. The BMW Group production network comprises more than 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

Die BMW Group ist mit ihren Marken BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce und BMW Motorrad der weltweit führende Premium-Hersteller von Automobilen und Motorrädern und Anbieter von Premium-Finanzdienstleistungen. Das BMW Group Produktionsnetzwerk umfasst über 30 Produktionsstandorte weltweit; das Unternehmen verfügt über ein globales Vertriebsnetzwerk mit Vertretungen in über 140 Ländern.

In 2025, the BMW Group sold 2.46 million passenger vehicles and more than 202,500 motorcycles worldwide. Profit before tax in the financial year 2025 was €10.2 billion on revenues amounting to €133.5 billion. As at 31 December 2025, the BMW Group had a workforce of 154,540 employees.

Im Jahr 2025 erzielte die BMW Group einen weltweiten Absatz von 2,46 Mio. Automobilen und über 202.500 Motorrädern. Das Ergebnis vor Steuern im Geschäftsjahr 2025 belief sich auf 10,2 Mrd. €, der Umsatz auf 133,5 Mrd. €. Zum 31. Dezember 2025 beschäftigte das Unternehmen weltweit 154.540 Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter.



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The economic success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. Sustainability is a key element of the BMW Group's corporate strategy and encompasses the entire product lifecycle, from the supply chain and production through to the end of the use phase.

Seit jeher sind langfristiges Denken und verantwortungsvolles Handeln die Grundlage des wirtschaftlichen Erfolges der BMW Group. Nachhaltigkeit ist ein wichtiger Bestandteil der Unternehmensstrategie der BMW Group, von der Lieferkette über die Produktion bis zum Ende der Nutzungsphase aller Produkte.

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