

RESEARCH ON THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF TIMIȘ COUNTY

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Abstract: *Tourism is a continuous activity of modern man, having implications on several levels, from economic to political, social, cultural and natural. In this paper, the authors present the tourist potential of Timis County by analyzing the following indicators: operational and existing tourist accommodation capacity, number of overnight stays, number of tourists arrivals, number of tourism units, as well as natural and anthropic resources. In Timis County, tourism is represented by a layered and diversified natural potential, from the bald peaks of the Poiana Ruscai mountains to the Timis Plain and the variety of flora and fauna. Also here we can mention the picturesque mountain area, the thermal and springs water, the hunting and fishing background, as well as the variety of architectural, folklore and art craft elements that provide tourism on the taste of each tourist.*

Key words: *tourism, Timis county, tourist potential, tourists, tourist attractions, tourist units*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a complex human activity known and developed with the development of human society. Its action manifests itself on several levels: social, economic, cultural and political. Economically, the direct role of tourism is highlighted by increasing national revenues, gross domestic product, balancing the trade balance of payments and capitalizing on local resources [11]. Also, tourism has a social role by creating new jobs, but also politically by promoting cooperation between different countries.

The tourist activity has a complex content, and the tourist product is in fact the organic unit of effects, resources, goods and services. [2,3,4,5,6,8] Some of the defining features of tourism would be: dynamism, mobility, ability to adapt to the requirements of each tourist consumer. Therefore, we can say with certainty that tourist services are presented as a set of activities that aim to meet all the needs of the tourist during the period in which he travels and in connection with it [1].

In the last period of time, tourism is one of the activities that suffers the most due to the current pandemic and financial-economic crisis. [7].

Although the tourist, natural and anthropic potential of Timiș County is extremely valuable, in very few places it is fully exploited, so this paper aims to make an assessment of the possibilities of tourism in the analyzed area and the tourist resources that it disposes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this paper, the authors used as a methodology statistical research, observation, analysis and interpretation of data, information obtained from various bibliographic sources and from the National Institute of Statistics.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Timiș County is located in the west of the country and borders Serbia and Hungary to the west, Hunedoara County to the east, Caraș-Severin County to the southeast, and Arad County to the north [12].

Timis owns 3.65% of the Romanian territory with a total surface of 8 696.7 km², occupying the first place in the country in terms of both agricultural and arable land [13]. It

has an agricultural area of 693,034 ha, of which 530,808 ha arable area, 8,503 ha fruit plantations, 3,803 ha vineyards, 121,814 ha pastures, 28,106 ha hayfields [14].

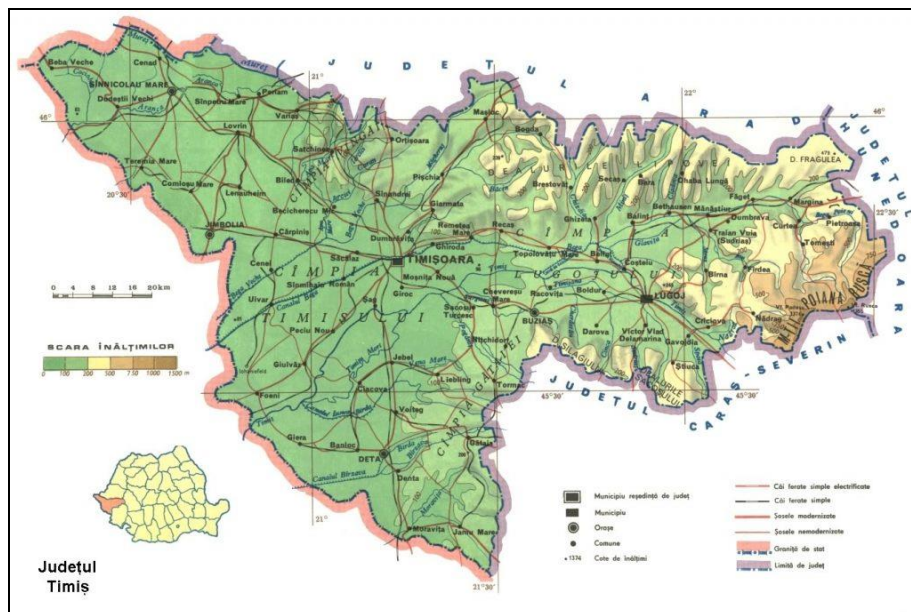


Figure 1. Map of Timiș County

Source: <https://pe-harta.ro/timis/> [15]

The variety of landforms, the presence of mineral and thermal waters, the rich hunting and fishing background, the natural reserves, to which is added the ethnic and cultural heritage, offer Timiș County a high tourist potential.

The territory of Timiș County includes all the forms of relief, with altitudes that start from 75 m in Lunca Timișului and reach 1,384 m in the Padeș peak from Poiana Ruscă Mountains.

Timiș county it is presented today as dynamic, multicultural, modern and innovative, keeping alive the memory of past times, through a rich historical, architectural and cultural heritage.

Increasingly developed, Timiș County has many tourist attractions, with a rich history, and surprising places [16]. Timisoara, the capital of historic Banat is the county seat and its main tourist attraction. Some of the city's attractions are Baroque buildings, such as the Maria Theresia Bastion, the Catholic Dome, the Baroque Palace or the early twentieth-century buildings, built in the "1900s style", especially Art Nouveau or Secession, which we find in the urban ensembles of the historical neighborhoods Cetate, Iosefin and Fabric [14].

Buziaș resort, famous for its thermal waters, with many houses built in a unique Byzantine style, is very visited by millions of tourists, who also choose the restaurant in the shape of a plane, and another resort equally beneficial to health is the one from Calacea Baths.

Another destination in this county can be the castle in Banloc, in a special style, as well as the one in Sânnicolau Român, famous for the number of rooms, the huge library and the park that houses trees with rare essence.

Like the wonders of nature, tourists can choose the Romanian cave, where even concerts are organized, and the Satchinez swamps, a natural ornithological reservation[17].

The cultural-historical tourism at the level of Timiș County includes numerous objectives in historical and archeological sites, historical and architectural monuments, churches and museums. In the last 30 years, cultural tourism has registered a

diversification of themes and forms of practice due to the pressure of consumer demand and the refinement of their tastes [9].

Among the monastery ensembles are the wooden churches from Pietroasa, Dragomirești, Poieni, Margina, Curtea, Lucareț, Hezeriș, Românești and Zolt. In the village Partos is Partoș Monastery, which dates from 14 th century, la Cebza is a wooden church built in 1759, and near Șemlacu Mic is Poor Monastery, declared a historical monument.

On the territory of Timiș County there are 86 funds hunting and 30 funds offishing. Recreation area a Lake Surduc, arranged between 1972–1978, in a setting with a high landscape value, determined the creation of a microclimate with a recreational function: recreation, water sports, fishing and Strand [18].

Green tourism and agrotourism are represented by traditional rural households, monastic areas and hunting lodges.

In Timiș County, the practice of rural tourism, agrotourism and ecotourism is extremely low. Although during the last 10 years, in the county, a significant number of pensions and agro-pensions were put into operation in the rural area, they did not perform enough because they did not develop tourist packages specific to this type of tourism, they did not respect the architecture local and were not promoted much.

Most of the accommodation structures in the county are located in Timișoara, Buzias and Logoj. Therefore, further on, we will analyze the existing and operational tourist accommodation capacity in the studied area.

Table 1.

Existing tourist accommodation capacity in Timiș County

-places-

Specification	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	8025	7876	8080	7998	7746	7487
Hotels	5142	4974	4810	4937	4772	4500
Hostels	524	506	576	598	618	609
Apartment hotels	50	50	50	50	50	50
Motels	166	166	168	168	106	106
Tourist villas	73	62	73	176	146	146
Tourist chalets	32	:	50	50	:	:
Bungalows	:	:	54	:	30	:
campgrounds	260	260	260	260	260	260
Tourist stops	:	:	:	:	20	20
Tourist houses	:	:	10	10	54	54
Camps for students and preschoolers	138	131	131	131	100	131
Tourist pensions	1200	1284	1244	1100	1089	1105
Agrotourism pensions	440	443	654	518	501	506

Source: Processing after Tempo online, 2021, [10, 19]

In table 1 we presented the evolution of the existing tourist accommodation capacity, in the period 2015-2020, where it can be seen that it has had a downward trend since 2018 and until now, in some categories completely missing in 2020.

In the table below we analyzed the evolution of the tourist accommodation capacity in operation, in the period 2015-2020.

Table 2.
Tourist accommodation capacity in operation in Timiș County, 2015-2020
-places-days-

Specification	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	2562359	2585238	2728628	2568282	2449344	1807169
Hotels	1712199	1717951	1739208	1598616	1532618	1182422
Hostels	159134	178681	205479	206390	198038	158787
Apartment hotels	18200	18300	18200	18250	20790	24385
Motels	24982	24104	35591	42281	37304	23680
Tourist villas	52727	62173	49708	53817	49725	28295
Tourist chalets	5020	14708	15840	20690	:	:
Bungalows	:	:	6090	2430	3350	930
campgrounds	31720	:	55640	47840	31720	:
Tourist stops	:	:	:	1220	7330	1200
Tourist houses	:	:	1530	2140	4220	950
Camps for students and preschoolers	51465	41529	47684	47875	36500	6000
Tourist pensions	392243	405070	384843	380747	360466	261559
Agrotourism pensions	114669	122722	168815	145986	167283	118961

Source: Processing after Tempo online, 2021 [10, 19]

The accommodation capacity in operation has also experienced a downward trend, in recent years, in most tourist accommodation structures. An upward trend, during the analyzed period, can be observed in apartment hotels and agritourism pensions, but at the same time, there are several categories that disappeared in 2020, such as: tourist cabins and campsites.

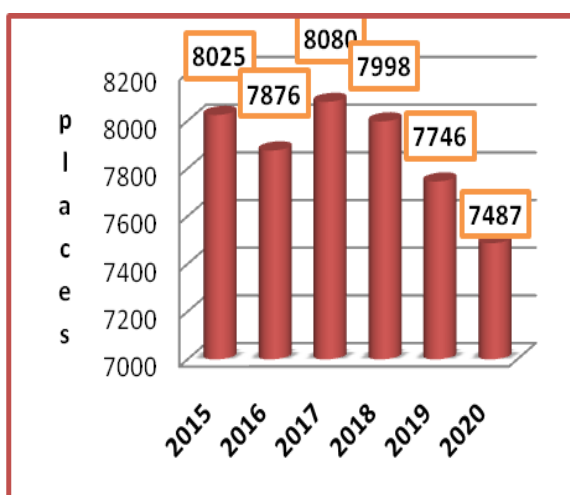


Figure 2. Existing tourist accommodation capacity, 2015-2020

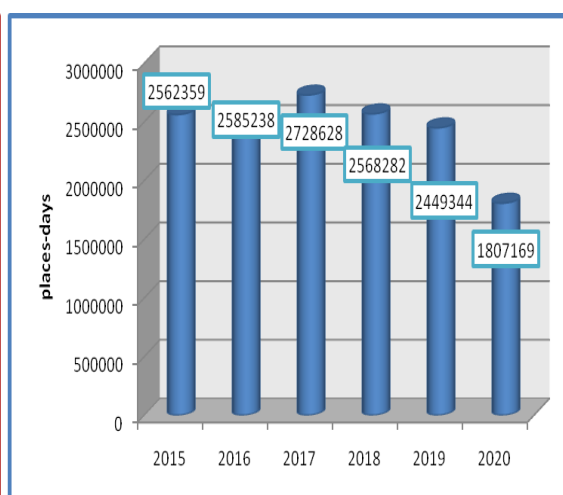


Figure 3. Tourist accommodation capacity in operation, 2015-2020

Regarding the evolution of the tourist reception structures, in the analyzed period, there is a slight decrease compared to previous years, a situation due to the epidemiological crisis caused by the spread of COVID-19.

Table 3.
The evolution of the tourist reception structures in Timiș County, 2015-2020

Specification	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	168	157	172	175	169	161
Hotels	64	63	59	60	56	56
Hostels	13	12	14	14	14	14
Apartment hotels	1	1	1	1	1	1
Motels	2	2	2	2	2	2
Tourist villas	3	3	3	14	4	4
Tourist chalets	1	:	1	1	:	:
Bungalows	:	:	1	:	10	:
campgrounds	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tourist stops	:	:	:	:	1	1
Tourist houses	:	:	1	1	2	2
Camps for students and preschoolers	3	3	3	3	2	3
Tourist pensions	52	54	54	52	49	50
Agrotourism pensions	28	18	32	26	27	27

Source: Processing after Tempo online, 2021, [10, 19]

The effects of the pandemic on Romanian tourism can also be seen in table 4, where we presented the evolution of the arrivals of Romanian and foreign tourists in the tourist reception structures in Timiș County, during 2015-2020.

Table 4.
Arrivals of tourists in accommodation units in Timiș County

Specification	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	338238	375221	399368	379084	396644	159277
Romanian	246772	274173	274274	261665	275894	130816
foreigners	91466	101048	125094	117419	120750	28461

Source: Processing after Tempo online, 2021, [10, 19]

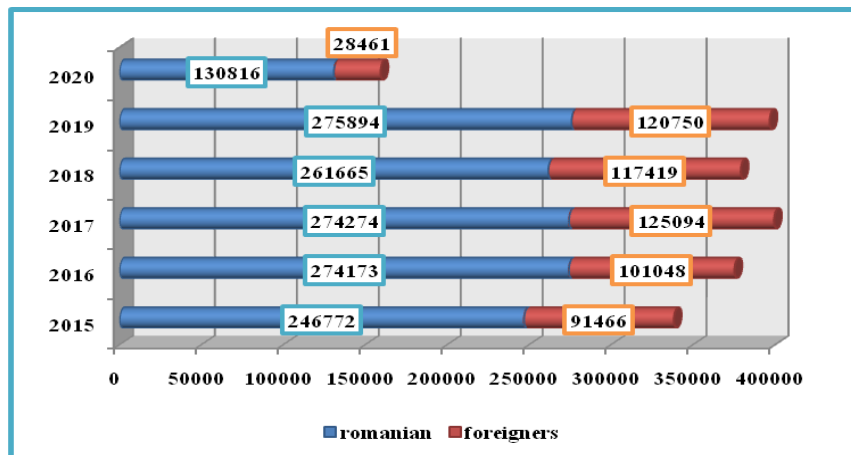


Figure 4. Evolution of the number of tourists accommodated in the tourist reception structures in Timiș County, 2015-2020

The evolution of the total number of tourists arriving in Timiș County, in the analyzed period, shows a significant decrease, if in 2015 the total number of tourists

arriving in the county was 338238, in 2020 their number was 159277. If we analyze carefully the table above, we can see that the number of foreign tourists in 2020 has decreased dramatically, from 120,750 tourists in 2019 to 28,461 tourists in 2020.

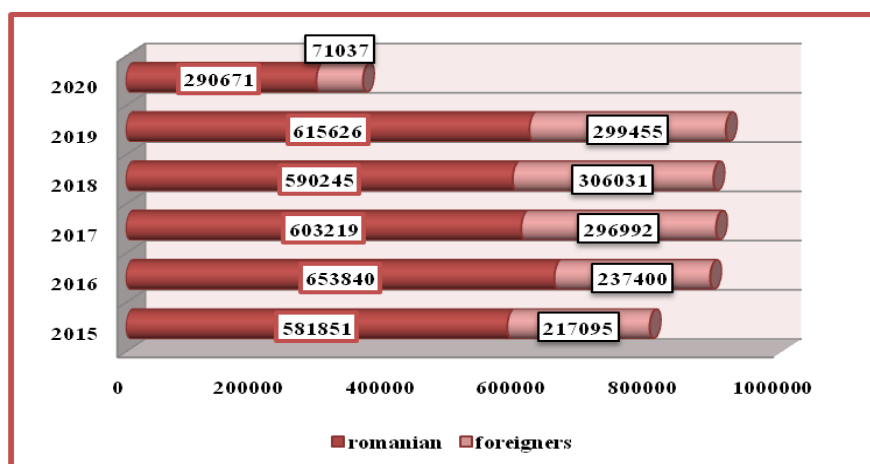


Figure 5. Evolution of the number of overnight stays of tourists in Timiș County, 2015-2020

The number of overnight stays of tourists in the accommodation spaces follows the trend of tourist arrivals in the reception structures with tourist accommodation functions, so it shows a decreasing trend. This drastic decrease in the number of overnight stays of foreign and Romanian tourists is due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly affected the Romanian tourism sector.

Following the analyzes undertaken by us, we can say with certainty that in addition to business and transit tourism, Timiș County can also develop balneoclimateric and recovery tourism, which are increasingly sought after lately. Regarding recreational sports tourism and taking into account the geography of Timiș County, tourist packages can be prepared for hiking, biking, boating, skydiving and hot air ballooning, golf, swimming and horseback riding. Therefore, the owners of boarding houses must pay attention to the wishes of tourists and offer tourist packages according to their needs and requirements. Tourism is also trying to return to normal, a normalcy as far as the COVID-19 pandemic allows us.

CONCLUSIONS

The future of Banat tourism depends directly on the capacity of economic agents to capitalize on the great potential we have, to adapt to the growing demands of tourism demand and to raise the quality of tourism in all aspects, ie to organize and achieve a modern and competitive tourism.

The variety of landforms, the presence of mineral and thermal waters, the rich hunting and fishing background, the natural reserves, to which is added the ethnic and cultural heritage, offer Timiș County a high tourist potential.

The types of tourism practiced in the county are especially transit and business tourism, urban tourism, cultural-historical tourism, medical tourism, but also spa and recreation tourism and hunting and fishing tourism.

The Poiana Ruscai Mountains, with an altitude of over 600 m, represent an area with a special tourist potential, given the value of the special natural and landscape setting, the area being suitable for recreation and hiking.

In Timiș County there are numerous nature reserves that house a large number of species of plants and rare animals, protected by law. Near Satchinez, 25 km northeast of

Timisoara, is the most important ornithological reservation - Satchinez Swamps, again at Bazoș there is a arboretum containing a wide variety of arboreal species. Other tourist attractions are the caves, among which we mention: Cave from Românești, Blue Cave-next Pietroasa, Water Cave and "Florian's Rock" Cave – near Tomești.

The tourism industry is one of the most affected by the coronavirus epidemic, due to the restrictions imposed the number of tourists has decreased greatly, therefore revenues in this sector have fallen sharply.

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