

## PROPOSING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "IRON ROAD" ON THE SEGHEdin-KIKINDA-JIMBOLIA-TIMISOARA ROUTE

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**Abstract.** *By implementing this route on the old path of oxen and diligence, a new form of cultural tourism will be promoted with the genuine niche agritourism through rediscovering the antique trains and putting in value of the natural and anthropic resources by stopping in the rural stations for visiting within 3-5 days of places with historical significance, old households and mansions that capitalize the authentic and traditional cuisine. The first goods and passenger transport was realized since 1857, the distance of the route being 112 km. The route begins with departure from the Szeged locality on the Tisza River in southeastern Hungary at the confluence with the Mures River, the connecting railway junction with Szolnok and Budapest, heading north through the Serbian Plain to Chichinda Mare from where it changes direction through the west and enters in the Banat Plain, in the small craft and agricultural settlement Jimbolia, continuing to Timisoara with many cultural tourism points of interest.*

**Key words:** *cultural tourism, agritourism, route, iron road*

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important agent of change in social, economic and natural plan, assuming a multiple effect on the community by changing the internal structure of the community. In the entire local economy of tourism, rural tourism and agritourism are defined as forms of capitalization of rural area through: [1, 5, 6, 9, 18, 20]

- Sustainable local development, as an adequate response to the recreation needs from modern society, in a new city-village social cohesion;
- Exploitation of anthropogenic resources, rural buildings, agricultural products, traditions and crafts;
- Illustrative brand products for regional ethnographic identity covering consumer needs regarding recreational, food, entertainment, reception activities.

On November 15, 1857, the Seghedin-Kikinda-Jimbolia-Timisoara railway line is being operated with the following stations and halts on the current area from Romania. From Jimbolia to Timisoara, the length of the route is 39 km with 7 stations and halts some of them abolished, to which it can be given an agritourist utility by the use of vintage trains. Because until 1924 Jimbolia was not part of Romania, we present in the table below the stations and halts and some technical data provided by the Banat-Ripensis Micro-Region Association. [3, 4, 7, 16, 17, 22]

162 years ago, the railway has left from Szeged:

- settlement located in Southeastern Hungary on the Tisa River;
- at the confluence with Mures;
- connecting railway junction with Szolnok and Budapest;
- locality in the old historical Banat;
- old cultural and commercial center. [2, 8, 12, 13, 19]

Table 1

**Stations and halts on the Seghedin-Timisoara route**

No.	Station name	Kilometric position	Date of establishment	Lines of circulation			
				At setting up		1955	
				Number of lines	Length (m)	Number of lines	Length (m)
1	Szeged	0+000	04.03.1854	On the territory of Hungary			
2	The State Border	-	15.04.1924	-	-	-	-
3	Jimbolia	613-029	15.1.1857	8	400	8	1206
4	H Clarii Vii	606-500	15.11.1857	-	-	-	-
5	The State Border	-	01.01.1919	-	-	-	-
6	Carpinis	598+261	15.11.1857	2	320	3	668
7	Beregsau	590+221	15.11.1857	2	380	2	770
8	Elisabeta	-	15.11.1857	Disbanded after 1940			
9	Sacalaz	582+750	15.11.1857	4	300	4	819
10	Timisoara Nord	574+356	15.11.1857	5	1100	11	808

*Source: processing after various sources*

The railroad reaches Kikinda on the current territory of Serbia:

- craftsmanship locality;
- agricultural locality;
- old cultural center in Plain Banat. [10,11, 14, 15, 21]

**MATERIAL AND METHOD**

In this scientific approach, on the Szeged-Timisoara route on the old route of the iron road, analyzing the natural and anthropic resources, we propose to implement a new authentic cultural tourism route, the road to be, using old trains that can stay in the old stations and tourists to receive accommodation in localities that have resources. By implementing this iron road route will highlight the traditions and customs of the area, thus contributing to the development of local economies and the sustainable development of rural and urban areas on this route.

**RESEARCH RESULTS**

The route called Iron Road has as starting point station from the historic Banat, Szeged, Seghedin, Segedin, locality, the fourth largest city from Hungary, the capital of Csongrád County. The town has many anthropic resources, the same architects who designed at Timisoara the Subotica. After the end of the First World War, Hungary lost a large part of the territory of the historic Banat in favor of Romania, when Sighhedine became a very border town, and its importance fell as a railway junction. The climate is temperate in this area, with sunny summers, temperatures varying between 25 and 35° C, and mild winters. The average annual temperature is 11° C.

The train station respects the architectural features of the main railway stations in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Arad respectively Timisoara (Domnita Elena) until the bombardment. The city has accommodation and food infrastructure and can be a starting point on the route proposed by us due to its anthropogenic and natural resources that can be used for practicing new forms of niche cultural tourism. For tourists using the train according to the duration of their stay, routes will be proposed in the locality and surroundings according to their wishes and needs.



**Szeged Railway Station**

2. Kikinda's second city from the Iron Route (in Serbian language with Cyrillic letters: Кикинда) is a city and a municipality located in Serbia in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. This is the administrative center of North Banat district.

The modern city was founded in the 18th century, from 1774 until 1874 Kikinda was the headquarters of the Velika Kikinda district, an autonomous administrative unit of the Habsburg monarchy. In 1893 Kikinda was granted the status of city. The territory of Vojvodina became part of the Kingdom of Serbia in 1918, Kikinda was used to be a very powerful economic and industrial center of Yugoslavia and Serbia. In 1996, were discovered well-preserved archaeological remains of a half mammoth after excavations on the outskirts of the city. The mammal called "Kika" has become one of the symbols of the city, today the mammoth is exposed in the Kikinda National Museum, being the symbol of the city alongside the steam locomotive in front of the station.



**The Kika Mammoth**

The name Kikinda is found for the first time at the beginning of the 15th century as Kokenyd, and most probably, along with the name Ecehida, a number of small localities, for example Estates, primarily belonging to Hungary and later to Serbian local leadership. The city's name appears for the first time on a 1718 map as the "Kikinda Load", indicating an uninhabited area or landscape, and not a locality. The adjective Gross, Nagy or Velika (all meaning "great") in German, Hungarian and Serbian versions were officially used as the city's name by the end of 1947.

The modern history of Kikinda can be traced further, so between 1751 and 1752, the area where the city is currently located, has been established. The first settlers were Serbs and Habsburg border military units protected the Turkish border against the Moris and Tisza rivers, as the chronicles show.

About twenty years after the establishment of the town, on 12 November 1774, the Empress of Austria, Maria Tereza, through a special decree, formed the Velikokikindski

District Regio-privilegiatus Districtus Magnokikindiensis as a governmental feudal administrative unit with headquarters at Kikinda. During this period, the inhabitants of these places had substantial economic, even political, privileges within the Habsburg monarchy. The district operated, with some interruptions, until 1876 when it was abolished.

Between 1849 and 1860, Kikinda was part of the Transylvanian Voivodeship of Serbia and Banat Timis, which was a land separate from the Austrian crown. In 1860, this crown land was abolished, and Kikinda was included in Torontal County. At the end of the 19th century Kikinda was the most densely populated place from Torontal, with 22,000 inhabitants. The rail station which link Szeged, Kikinda and Timisoara was built in 1857 and is the oldest railway on the current territory of Serbia.



**Kikinda Railway Station**

The period from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the First World War was a quiet and fruitful period in the history of Kikinda and was marked by a strong economic and urban development of the city. In addition, the picturesque center of the city, which was and still is a beautiful part of Kikinda, is still preserved as a valuable anthropic resource for the niche tourism proposed by us, the iron road.

A tourist attraction point in Kikinda is the old steam train locomotive in front of the railway station, which reminds us that the first transports were carried out with steam-powered cars, why not on the route of the iron road proposed by us, using as fuel the coal exploited from the mines of Banat.

3. The city of Jimbolia is situated in the western part of our country Romania, at:
  - 572,000 km away from Bucharest by railroad;
  - 600,000 km on the road;
  - 39,000 km from Timisoara on the railway line.

The city is crossed by the meridian of 20°38 'east longitude and the parallel of 45°46' north latitude, located at the western extremity of the Timis County. The massive building of the railway station dates back to the year 1900, but even since 1857 the second railroad was built on the present territory of Romania. From the press we find that in 1877 a locomotive draw was established at Jimbolia that operated until 1960.



**The Railways Station from Jimbolia**

The locality has road links with Timisoara on 59A county road and the railway linking the city of Kikinda (Serbia) with Jimbolia and Timisoara.

The first documentary certification of the city dates back to 1332 and until the colonies in 1766 it was called Chumbul, Chombol, Csomboly, Zsomboly. Along with the German colonies, the locality will be called Hatzfeld, and from 1924, Jimbolia. In 1857, Jimbolia is linked to Timisoara by one of the first railways from the territory of Romania. The first industrial unit was founded in 1864 - the "Bohn & Co" Tile Factory (the future "Ceramica"). The second half of the eighteenth century is characterized by impetuous urban development. The architectural dynasty of the city is enriched with special refinements such as: Csito Castle (1863), Administrative Palace (1878), Statue of St. Florian (1866) becoming an important industrial center. A historical cultural route proposed for tourists moving on the iron road will include in this border town:

Statue of St. Florian. It was built in 1866 (some historians propose an even older one), in honor of Florian the Saint, patron of the city and saint from the Catholic calendar, protector against fires and floods - catastrophes that affected the settlement countless times during the colonization of the Swabians. The monumental construction was made of gray sandstone and has three basic elements: the base, the supporting pillar and the statue itself. All the construction has a height of 6.76 m, of which 1.75 m - the post, in the form of octagon. The sculpture base, which is the 2.6 m pole, is square and has an ornamental cubic base. On this pole stands the statue itself, which has a height of 2.41 m, of which 2.2 m represents the figure of the saint, which has in the left hand an inverted amphora from which flows water, a symbol of the extinction of the fire, the Saint being "Firefighter patron"[73,116].

The Roman Catholic Church. The first Roman Catholic settlement dates from 1766, from the beginnings of the German colonization, the original church was much smaller and soon became crowded. That is why in 1870 it was enlarged and renovated on the whole.

In 1911, the tower of the church would be overcrowded from 39 m to 53.5 m, and today it is the highest building of the city. The main elements of architecture fall into the neo-roman style. Selected interior is dominated by the main altar selected painted in oil (1877), the on canvas (300x180 cm), copy of the Sistine Madonna by Raphael and dedicated to St. Vendelin, the patron of the church. The origins of the painting are in Dresden - Germany. The other four side altars and from the entrance come from the castle of "Csito" chapel of Count Csekronics and were brought here after the castle demolition in 1937. The frescoes, paintings on the walls and ceiling of the church were made by the painter Geza Ulrich from Arad and the Jimbolian Schnur Paul in 1929. This year, the old orga was replaced with one of Wegenstein type with pedal, 27 rattle registers and 1796 tubes. From the four bells of the church, the largest one weighs 0.6 tons [73].

Both the Park and the Town Hall were part of Count Csekonic's domain, which marked the city's urban and economic development (General Josef von Csekonic 1757-1824 bought the Zsomloly domains from the Vienna Chamber of Commerce in 1781). The important role he played in the city life materialized in several buildings of special refinement, but especially in the construction of railways. The most beautiful buildings belonging to the Csekonic family are the castle of Mrs. Csekonic (today the Town Hall building) and the "Csito" castle that was demolished. Today, the City Hall also impresses with the refinement of its architecture.



**The Csekonic Palace-today's administrative building**

In recent years, a number of service units have been developed in the city, as well as some public utilities such as water and canal and the establishment of five museums, one unique in Europe, the Museum of the Press - Sever Bocu, established by the writer Petru Stoica.

At the 150th anniversary of the inauguration of the "Iron Road" on the Szeged-Kikinda-Jimbolia-Timisoara route a Railway Museum was inaugurated, housing specific artifacts, CFR vestiges, telephones, and a tower for powering the locomotives with water in the town of Jimbolia.

4. The Clara Vii Halt was established on 15.11.1857 as a station serving the Count Klary and Claria locality, 2 km away from the railway line. The locality is located on the territory of Serbia. Today the commercial importance of the stop has fallen, but the train still stops today in this location, located in the full plains of Banat.

5. Carpinis. The following locality on the route proposed by us "The Iron Road" is the town of Carpinis, which was documented in 1377 under the name of Gyertyamus. It is colonized with German families brought from Westphalia or other German-speaking settlements. In 1906 the local community commanded to the painter Stefan Jager to perform the "Colonization of the Swabians". It is a monumental work, which begins in 1906 and which we find from the monument of Carpinis, that it was three meters. The appreciation of the local people led to the idea that the port of the characters should be changed, and the community helped the painter to go on a study trip.

The railway station in Carpinis was established on November 15, 1857 with two lines on a length of 320 meters, and in 1955 it will have 3 lines with the length of 668 meters.



**The Railway Station from Carpinis**

The railway station was also a border point set up on 01.01.1919 until 15.04.1924 when Jimbolia passes to Romania and becomes a railway crossing point. The railway station is also a railway hub connecting with Iohanesfeld on the Checea-Cenei-Uivar-Otelec-Iohanesfeld-Jasa Tomic route.

6. Beregsau. The locality was documentary attested in 1335, and rehearsed by a heraldic medieval record, the diploma awarded by Iancu of Hunedoara to Petru of Beregsau [38].

As authentic points of tourist interest we propose: Vidrighin Castle located in the yard of the former pig breeding and fattening complex no. 6 Beregsau, built in neoclassical style for the implementation of a new form of tourism "industrial type" for knowledge of the production of pork meat; the Orthodox church from Beregsau, the crypt of Sava Vucovics in the churchyard, the Carabas House and the Zbegan House.

Stan Vidrighin was a real magnate, who designed and led the sewerage works of Timisoara and the Minister of Railway Stations after the Great Union, that is why the Timis authorities introduced him among the great personalities of Banat and dedicated a bust on the Alley of the Personalities from the Central Park on Timisoara.

The Beregsau railway station at its establishment had 2 lines of 380 meters long reaching the peak during the operation of the Combinations for Growing and Fattening of Swine (COMTIM)



**The Railway Station from Beregsau**

Because the railway station has accommodation spaces and no longer works as a train station, we propose by this scientific approach that the "Iron Road" service on this route to be done in this location because it also has a train line for the train of the epoch.

7. Elisabeth. Settlement established in 1903 at west of Sacalaz, although the halt is

in existence since 1857, continued until 1944 despite the floods made by Bega Veche and the poor soil, when the inhabitants were compensated by the state, some of them, settled in Sacalaz or Sanmihaiul German.

The Beregsau Mare city hall held talks with the landlord with the intention to increase the border and extend the grazing to the border of Beregsaul Mare, but because of the high price demanded by Sava Vucovics, this action did not materialize by resorting to the approval of the establishment of a new locality and guaranteeing the sale of the entire land. The buildable area was 900 parcels for the construction of 96 homes. In 1908 the village church was finished, then a school. Administratively the locality was subordinated to Beregsau-Mare city hall.

The locality had a German population, and today only one cross is preserved by a lilac and eagle bats situated on the site of the church. It is a living testimony of living in these lands, which urges us to meditate, is, after all, a place to remind us of a forced displacement made in recent times. We believe that this place should be promoted, as an area of silence for those who want to know their roots, many emigrating to Germany as a form of genealogical tourism in areas where misfortunes, calamities and displacements have occurred, especially in the vicinity an agritourist farm providing accommodation and meals, and on the "Day of the Dead" (1 November) those who emigrated and return for this holiday can light candles at the existing cross for those who have sacrificed to build this locality, the cemetery not lying around of the former church.

8. Sacalaz. Sacalaz was first mentioned in 1392 as belonging to the Peterdi family, under the name of Zakalhaza. There were three estates here to conclude from the documents of the time that the locality was populated with Romanian citizens belonging to Cenad County.

As the route proposed by us is called the "iron road", we consider it important to specify some data regarding the Sacalaz railway station, which had 4 lines with the length of 300 meters in the year of its foundation (15.11.1857) - being established put into use with the vast majority of railway stations on our proposed route.



**The Railway Station from Sacalaz**

Although there are many accommodation capacities in Timisoara and Sacalaz is far from the town, for authenticity (authentic agritourism) we propose that the train station be staying at this location and the accommodation and meals will be made at the guesthouses from the area.

As a tourist attraction points in this locality we can mention: The school building, that appears in the documents of the time, built in 1766, the chapels built at different

moments of the community life, the Roman Catholic Church with the two monuments in front: the trot and the heroes monument, the white cross that is inscribed in 4 languages as well as a large diversity of Swabian houses of different sizes and architecture specific to the Banat rural baroque.

The "Iron Road" route ends with Timisoara, which has a significant number of natural and anthropogenic resources adapted to the most varied forms of historical cultural tourism.

## CONCLUSIONS

By implementing the "Iron Route" on the Szeged-Kikinda-Jimbolia-Timisoara route, the natural and anthropogenic resources existing in the old historical Banat can be highlighted by the diversification of the niche tourism forms with favorable effects on the social and economic development of the localities of railway stations and which are not exploited to their true value. Existing resources on the old railroad route may be capitalized through rural cultural tourism and agritourism and can contribute to the sustainable development of this territory by developing new forms of niche tourism and increasing the local economy, diversifying the tourist offer and making the general and technical-urban infrastructure, accommodation, food, leisure and rehearsal, contributing to the integration of new forms of niche tourism into regional, national or international development strategies by preserving urban, rural, natural, cultural and social diversity, the sustainable use of tourism resources and supporting local economies.

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