

## VASER VALLEY-AN IMPORTANT ECOTOURISM DESTINATION IN PROMOTING MARAMURES AREA

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*Abstract: The increase in concern for the environment coupled with the dissatisfaction offered by mass tourism has led to an increase in demand for nature-based tourism. At the same time, less developed countries have begun to realize that nature-based tourism provides the means to bring significant revenues to the external balance of payments and at the same time has less destructive effects on resources than agriculture and logging.*

**Key words:** Vaser Valey, ecotourism, Maramures Area

### INTRODUCTION

Maramures County is located in the N-NW extremity of Romania, on the border with Ukraine. Maramures has an area of 6,304 km, i.e. 2.37% of the country's area and a population of 535,000 inhabitants (2005) and stretches in the northern part of the Eastern Carpathians, where they split into two branches: Rodna and Maramures Mountains, closing the depression with same name [11].

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Maramures area is a well-known tourist destination both nationally and internationally. The benefits of this are generating income for development community (traditions, local administration, infrastructure, individual tourist investments), as well and of the locals (jobs, handicrafts, the valorization of local products) [14].

### RESEARCH RESULTS

Maramures County is located in the north-western extremity of Romania, on the border with Ukraine.

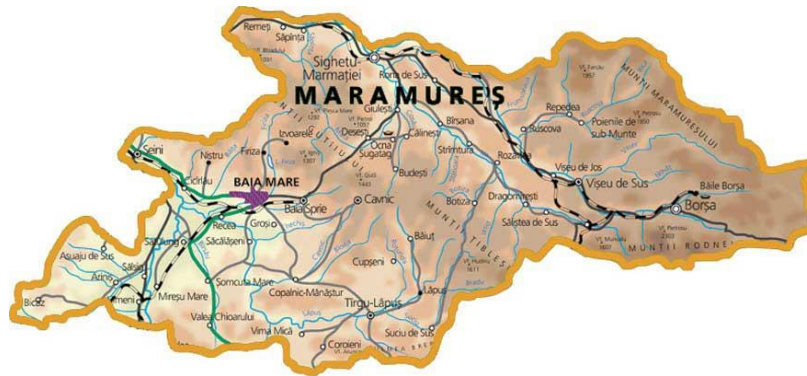
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Maramures - situated in the upper course of the river Tisza - forms in terms of topohydrography a territory closed on all sides, by large hills and high mountains, like a fortress, having as its gate the narrow place near Khust, where the Tisza leaves its birthplace

In Maramures there is only the northern part of the Rodna Mountains with Pietrosul Peak (2303m). The general characteristic of the Rodna Mountains are crystalline shale, dominated by glacial traces: moraines, cirques and glacial valleys [15].

Under the Pietrosu peak is Lake Iezer (at 1825 m). In the south, southwest unfolds the northern group of the mountain range of volcanic origin, which closes the Maramures Depression on this side.

The volcanic mountains of Maramures, between the Tisa valley and the Salauta valley, with low altitude (average 600-1000m), are in the form of plateaus with volcanic cones above. [11]



**Figure 1. Tourist map of Maramures area**

Source: [www.visitmaramures.ro](http://www.visitmaramures.ro)

The tourist attractions are [11]:

- Vaser Valley, on the narrow gauge line of the railway, which has a length of about 46 km and was put into use in 1933, on which runs a locomotive under the name of *mocaniță*;
- The monumental assembly from Moisei, which was made by sculptor Vida Geza;
- Borsa resort;
- The wooden churches of the Iza Valley;
- The Merry Cemetery from Sapanta.

**1. Vaser Valley.** From Vișeu de Sus you can climb to the wild mountains in a steam locomotive train with restaurant wagon, built in 1953. Railway lines run 41 km along the Vaser River to the village of Comanu and timber camps, which are near the border with Ukraine. Also, the Vaser valley is a good place for kayak lovers.

Maramures Mountains are considered among the best places in the region for hiking, paragliding, climbing, cave exploitation, bird watching or hunting photos.

The most important tourist routes are: Cosnea - Pietrosul Bardaului peak - Bardau (Vaser Valley); Valea Vișeuului - Bistra - Valea Tomnatic - Repedea forest caton; Vaser Valley and return by *mocanita* [15]



**Figure 2. Mocanita**

Source: <http://ecomaramures.com>



**Figure 3. Cycling in the Vaser Valley**

Source: <http://ecomaramures.com>

The Vișeu River crosses the Maramures Depression from southeast to northwest. In the east we see the Maramures Mountains, rugged mountains that are very difficult to reach. In the west you can see the friendly and lush valleys, which shelter famous villages and wooden churches. Accommodation possibilities are forest huts Cosnea, Faina, Poiana Novat, pensions and hotels in Vișeu de Sus and Borsa. The ecotourism operator is the travel agency Vaser Tour.

Partnering with niche tour operators could greatly contribute to the promotion and even success of thematic programs. Various ecotourism activities existing and suitable for protected areas in Romania could be presented.

The hike to the Horses Waterfall is done through the tourist complex in Borsa by chairlift for about 2 km for 17 minutes above the sky slope. and reaches an altitude of 1,380 m. Upstairs, paths start to Horses Waterfall, Lake Stiol and other trails.

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## 2. Moisie Monument

Located on a hill at the entrance to Moisei commune from Borsa town, it was originally built of wood in 1966 and later transposed into stone in 1972 by sculptor Vida Gheza in memory of the 29 martyrs killed on October 14, 1944 by Hungarian troops in the whirlwind of the end of World War II. [11]



**Figure 4. Moisie Monument**

*Source: www.visitmaramures.ro*

The monument from Moisei Sculptor Vida Gheza, creator of this monument from Moisei, which evokes a dramatic moment in the history of this land. The event is an inspiration for popular creation. [15]

**3. The wooden churches of the Iza Valley.** Barsana The wooden church from Barsana is dedicated to "The Entrance into the Church of the Virgin Mary". It was built on a place called "Monastery Bridges" around 1720 and later it was relocated to Jbar Hill, where you can still visit it now. It was included on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1999. [11]



**Figure 5. Barsana Monastery**

*Source: www.visitmaramures.ro*



**Figure 6. Sapanta Monastery**

*Source: www.visitmaramures.ro*

Sapanta's fame was brought by the original works of folk art, creations of craftsman Ion Stan Pătraș. Ise says "cheerful" because on the crosses artfully carved and colored by Stan Patras are rendered, in caricature drawings, painted in bright colors, the defects, as well as the good parts, capturing scenes or significant moments that characterize the life of the one who disappeared.

Some of these crosses have paintings on both sides. On one side is painted a description of the life of the one buried there, and on the other side is painted a description of the reason for death.

The wooden church in Budesti, dedicated to Saint Nicholas, was built in 1643. The paintings inside it were made in 1762 by Alexandru Pohnalschi. [14]



**Figure 7. The wooden church in Budesti**

Source: <http://ecomaramures.com>



**Figure 8. The wooden church in Desesti**

Source: <http://ecomaramures.com>

The wooden church in Desești is dedicated to St. Paraschiva, being built in 1770. In the shelter of mountains and shady valleys, the art of making things so necessary for daily living was developed from the hands of the inhabitants of Maramures. [14]

**4. Sapanta Vessel Cemetery.** The fame of Sapanta was brought by the original works of folk art, creations of master Ion Stan Patras. It is said "cheerful" because on the crosses crafted and colored by Stan Patras are rendered, in caricature drawings, painted in bright colors, the defects, as well as the good parts, capturing scenes or significant moments that characterize the life of the one who disappeared.



**Figure 9. Sapanta Vessel Cemetery**

Source: [www.visitmaramures.ro](http://www.visitmaramures.ro)

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**5. Traditional crafts.** Under the shelter of mountains and shady valleys, the art of making things so necessary for daily living was developed from the hands of the inhabitants of Maramures.

**a) Wood carving**-has a place of honor among traditional crafts, constituting an element of originality of Maramures architecture. Carved Wooden Gates

**b) Fabrics**-are colored and crafted differently, depending on the place and honor given to each. The authentic ones are painted in natural colors, colors obtained from plants or tree bark. [14]



**Figure 10. Woodcarving**

Source: [www.visitmaramures.ro](http://www.visitmaramures.ro)



**Figure 10. Fabrics**

Source: [www.visitmaramures.ro](http://www.visitmaramures.ro)

**c) Ceramics** – is similar to Dacian ceramics, either by the shape of vessels or decorative elements or working techniques. The dishes are processed on the pottery wheel, simply ornate, polished, dried, and then fired in the oven without being glazed. [11]



**Figure 11. Ceramics**

Source: [www.visitmaramures.ro](http://www.visitmaramures.ro)



**Figure 12. Masks**

Source: [www.visitmaramures.ro](http://www.visitmaramures.ro)

**d) Masks** – are made of leather, furs, cloths and even beans to which beads, ribbons, colored tassels are added. These masks have the sorcery role of lending courage and animation to the wearer. [14]

## CONCLUSIONS

Maramures is considered by many to be the soul of a typical Romanian village. With the settlements its picturesque hills, green hills or fields with wildflowers, Maramures concentrates everything what does country life mean? Visitors to these lands have the unique opportunity to go back in time, to be witnesses of simpler times and a simpler life. Rural tourism and ecotourism are broad spread in Maramures.

One of the most beautiful parts of Maramures culture is the patrimony of handicrafts, crafted by active artists in the region. These talented artisans bring history back to life with the help of ceramics, textiles and icons made of wood and glass, traditional costumes, hats and many other valuable objects.

In Maramures there are many protected objectives, including 38 protected natural areas. Pietrosul Rodnei Reserve of 3300 ha is declared by UNESCO "biosphere reserve".

Maramures abounds in natural and artisanal cultural attractions. From wooden churches and museums to village squares and the daily life of villagers.

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