

RURAL TOURISM POTENTIAL OF NORTH CRISANA

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Abstract: *Crișana region is made up of most of the Arad county, north of Hunedoara county, Bihor county and west half Salaj county. We believe that the northern region format of the Bihor county and Salaj side.*

The main forms of rural tourism with great potential in northern Crisana, which were analyzed in this work are: cultural-historical tourism, curative and recreational tourism and religious rural tourism.

North Crisana has a valuable and diversified tourism potential areas. It is spectacular character and special scientific value of the natural, historical remains of national importance in the admirable elements ethnographic and folklore in popular architectural works and others.

Keywords: *tourism, rural, potential, Crisana region*

INTRODUCTION

Crișana region is made up of most of the Arad county, north of Hunedoara county, Bihor county and west half Salaj county. We believe that the northern region format of the Bihor county and Salaj side.

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Cities full of history, dozens of churches and architectural monuments, vast forests, fast rivers, impressive caves, typical mountain villages, people who keep an authentic life, in short, northern Crisana has a heritage dating back over 2000 years, supported by a quiet and peaceful nature.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For analysis of several aspects of rural tourism research was conducted by scientific reading, organization and systematization of information and ultimately benchmarking data, performed both in theory and in practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. About Crisana region

Northern area Crisana is located in western Romania, being crossed by the parallel of latitude 47° N and 22° meridian of longitude E. At north bordering the Satu Mare county, to the east, Salaj and Cluj, on the south by county Arad on west with Hungary [2,7].

This region is placed between 1849 m, the maximum height from the Bihor Mountains and 90 m, the minimum altitude from the Lower Cris Plain, consisting of all three levels of relief: mountain stage takes approx. 25%, hills and valleys approx. 30% and

plain approx. 45%.

In figure 1 we can see the main roads that cross the region are [6]: from east to west, national road DN1, linking Cluj-Napoca and Oradea and further crossing point Bors, towards Hungary, part of European route E60, from V to SE, national road DN76 that links Deva and Oradea, part of European route E79, from S to N, national road DN79 that connects Arad and Oradea and further Satu Mare, part of European route E671 and also from E to V, but to the north of the region, DN19B, linking Simleul Silvaniei, Marghita and Săcuieni.



Fig. 1. Physical Geographical Map of North Crisana
 Source: processed after [www.celendo.ro / maps-romania](http://www.celendo.ro/maps-romania).

Relief. The region has a complex terrain, forming steps descending from east, Curcubăta Mare Peak, 1849 m, in the Bihor Mountains, towards west, 90 m in the Lower Cris Plain. The unit includes the highest mountain of Bihor Mountains, the highest altitude of the Carpathians Apuseni and Vladeasa Mountains from where Codru-Moma mountains, Padurea Craiului mountains and Plopis mountains are detached, which are separated by depressions Beius and Vad-Borod.

The hill side represents a step between the mountain and the plain, piedmont hills Crișene with modest altitudes between 200-450 m: Plopisului Hill, Padurii Craiului Hill, Bihor Hill, Codrului Hill and Moma Hill [7].

The plain descends from about 200 m absolute altitude, near the hills, to 90 m in the low plains. It consists of high plains, Calacei Plains, Miersig, Biharia, Tășnad, Carei sandy plain and lower units, smooth with moisture excess, Cris and Eriului Plains [7].

Climate. The area is under the influence of the western circulation which is carrying wet oceanic air masses. The natural setting and the local particularities determine the existence of various shades of the temperate continental moderate climate. Annual average air temperature has ranged between 10-11° C in the lowlands, 7-10° C in the hills and low mountains and 2-7° C in the mountains. The highest temperature [2], 40.2° C was

recorded on 15 august 1952 and absolute minimum temperature of -30.5° C, January 24, 1942.

Waters. Rivers within the north Crișana region belong to the Cris basin: Barcau (68 km in Bihor County and 50 km in Salaj county) Eriul, Crisul Repede (101 km on Bihor county), Crisul Negru (136 km on Bihor county) and their tributaries. Natural lakes: Petea, with an area of approximately 4200 m², Serpilor Lake, Crasna Lake, lake with reed near Salonta, Taul Mare Lake in the Bihor Mountains, etc. Of artificial lakes, stands out the dam lakes (Lesu Lake on Valley Leșu is the most important) and ponds in the plains, developed for fisheries: Cefa (598 ha), Tămașda (200 ha), Homorog (95 ha), Inand (30 ha) [2].

Vegetation. Is represented by the forest steppe in the plains (grasslands alternating with patches of oak) most occupied by crops, secondary pastures, acacia plantations, the deciduous forests consisting of oak forests with hornbeam forests and sessile, alternating with secondary grassland and crops, deciduous forest (up to 1000 m), represented by oak forests, the sky with oak, common oak and hornbeam, elm, ash, beech forests hornbeam, beech, beech and spruce, coniferous (1000-1700 m), composed of spruce forests. Many species of valuable plants are protected: blood brave's, variegated tulip, lily thermal, grapes of bears [2].

Fauna. In steppe stand out the rodents and the forests are inhabited by deers, boars, bears, squirrels, lynxs, martens, pheasants etc. Mountain waters are the trout waters, in the hill waters we can find the grayling, chub and broad snout and in the lowland, carp and perch [2].

2.The main forms of rural tourism with great potential in northern Crisana

North Crisana has a valuable and diversified rural tourism potential. It consists in the spectacular character and the scientific value of the natural cadre, in the historical vestiges of national importance, in the admirable ethnographic and folklore and in the popular architectural works [3].

Northern Crisana presents a multiple and diverse range of resources and tourist attractions generally related to the natural environment, cultural and historical heritage of the area and specific infrastructure.

In the Bihor part of the region we meet resorts of national interest, Felix Baths and local (1 Mai Baths, Tinca Baths and Stana de Vale Resort Spa).

The special natural heritage is marked especially by the existence of forested karst and a large number of caves of national and international importance. Also included are the plain areas with their specific vegetation and tradition, generally located near the hungarian border therefore being cross-border interest areas [2].

In the area of north Crisana we distinguish several folk areas, separated by valleys of major rivers: Black Cris, Fast Cris, Barcau and Eriul. These ethnographic areas are Cris White, Beius, Fast Cris and Barcau-Crasna. These areas have come to distinguish gradually by specific folk, by personalized testimonials (costumes, furniture, ceramics, wood pieces and not only domestic purpose etc.) by households configuration, given that the latter are conditioned in their existence belonging to mountain villages, hills or plains, the architecture of houses and annexes, by interior organizing, with a different decoration, and by ethnic composition [11].

This combination of nature, natural heritage and an important cultural legacy and a geographic and ethnographic diversity offers the region a chance to develop as an important touristic destination for the western part of Romania.

In this paper we will analyze the potential of cultural and historical tourism, the spa-curative recreational potential and the religious rural touristic potential.

2.1.Cultural and historical tourism potential

Crișana region belongs to a geographical area situated at the confluence of two great civilizations, East and West, which over the first and the second millenniums marked the destiny of political, religious, economic, social and cultural European society.

On the northern territory of Crisana we meet a number of castles which by their appearance and accompanying history will always be attractions for tourists and components of leisure programs for those who spend their vacations or holidays in the countryside.

We recall the following castles [4]: Castle Batthyanyi Aleșd, built in 1830, Czaky Castle from Marghita, built in the eighteenth century, Castle Ghiorac from Ghiorac, Castle Sanmartin from Sanmartin, built in the eighteenth century, Castle Tetchea from Tetchea, built in the nineteenth century, Castle Moskovits from Arpasel, Teleki Castle from Tileagd built before 1848 year and Zichy Castle, built in 1840 year, Count Dominic Zichy Mansion in town Lugasu de Jos and Castle Bánffy from Nușfalău.

We must also note the Degenfeld Schönburg Castle [8], built in 1896 in the town of Balc. It is a tourist attraction with a special architecture that has been preserved in a very good condition. The castle was built around 1484 by the Bishop of Oradea, Pruisz Janos. In 1896 it was rebuilt by Countess Emma Degenfeld Schönburg. In 1920 it was bought by the banker Pincas Joseph, brother in law of Prince Ghica. In 1944 the castle passes into the Forestry Industry Administration Ministry. In 1958 it passes to the Ministry of Health. The Arboretum surrounding the castle covers an area of 15.97 hectares, 763 species of trees in coniferous species and 1108 in the deciduous species. In 1967 it became a monument protected by law.

In this area it can be found several museums and memorial houses [9], Museum of Cris being integrated into the international circuit. These places have a important role in the prolongation of stay of tourists, integrated with other tourism products.

The plain region offers varied tourism experiences as each plain portion is different and we can encounter ancient cities from Rosiori, Salacea and Salard (bronze age) and the city of Adrian in Salard (XIII century), the ruins on the chair city of ruler Menumorut (IV century) in the Biharia village and the Reformed Church (1609 year) from Diosig.

The ethnography and folk traditions are highlighted in museums: the Ethnographic Museum from Chișcău village - (Pietrioasa town), the museum of history and ethnography - Beius, an original attraction being the home of oddities of Nicolae Suci - Susti village (Lunca).

2.2.Spa tourism, curative and recreational potential

As mentioned above, in the Bihor side of the region we meet resorts of national interest (Felix baths) and local interest (1 May Baths, Tinca Baths and Stana de Vale Resort Spa).

We want to point out that the mere vacations or holidays to spa treatment is not a real rural tourism.

Felix Baths Spa [10] are located in the north-western Romania, Bihor county, at a distance of 9 km from Oradea and 22 km from the border crossing point Bors. Located in the Cris Plains at an altitude of 150 m, the resort has a moderate continental climate plain, with mild winters and temperate summers with Mediterranean influence, ideal for tourism.

The tourists can visit the resort the whole year and it offers relaxation conditions, vacation, rest and recovery.

Discovered from ancient times, the geothermal water springs at high temperatures has curative properties certified as oligometallic, bicarbonate, calcium and sodium and have properties sapropelic muds (colloidal iron rich hydrosulfuric).

Felix Baths have an excellent base treatment which includes: hot tub installations, installations of hot mud and paraffin, thermal pools, underwater elongation installations, electro and hydrotherapy, sauna, indoor and outdoor gyms health.

The leisure resort features indoor and outdoor pools, slot machines, sports areas, cinema, disco, etc.

Climate with mild winters and moderate summers favors the existence of large deciduous forests, which gives the resort an ideal atmosphere for every season, making it suitable for relaxation and therapy, so rain or cold winter is not a hindrance to a water bath outdoor spa.

2.3. Religious rural tourism potential

Even if the 2nd millennium religious mutations occurred, the emergence of new denominations, Reformed (XVI century), Greek Catholic (XVIII century) that makes its presence felt in a Jewish faith zone (XVIII-XIX century) still remains valid plenary manifestation of the two areas of civilization, whose main representatives are the Romanians and Hungarians in the region Crișana.

Monuments in Bihor offer to tourists many Orthodox monasteries and churches that are the same in the plan, facade and painting with the Byzantium churches: Monastery from Voivozi [1] (XI-XII century), where is preserved a plan of a small room-church with a semicircular apse churches, specific system even before the year 1000; Remetea (XIII century), today reformed church, originally being an orthodox church, is another example of the relationship with the Byzantine world from the point of view of the apse, semicircular internally and polygonal externally, but also Byzantine painting, one of the oldest in Romania), belonging to the fourteenth century, demonstrating the age of the specific events in Bihor and elsewhere [12].

Other monasteries and hermitages of the Diocese of Oradea and Salaj [5], in rural areas: Hermitage Pentecost in Baile Felix, Izbuca Monastery in the Calugari village dedicated "Assumption", Monastery Saint Apostles Peter and Paul in Stana de Vale resort, St. Elias Hermitage from Baraju-Leșu, Hermitage Huta in the Finis village dedicated "Saint John the Baptist" Monastery of Rulers in the Popești village, St. Elias Hermitage from Poiana Florilor, Holy Trinity Monastery in the Bic village, Simleul Silvaniei town, and Stana in Vale Monastery.

Most of Crisana wooden churches were built or rebuilt over the centuries XVIII and XIX, respectively in a time when local people, together with representatives of the Romanian churches of the time, Greek Orthodox and Catholic, have consistently held building initiatives in this regard. Wooden churches can be considered examples of a classic formula of old existence, attested from the end of the first Millennium.

In Bihor, at the beginning of the third millennium, there are still 61 wooden churches all declared monuments of architecture and thus protected under Romanian rule. Some of them are for worship, others are preserved, keeping the quality of the testimony of a Romanian spiritual life and its specific

CONCLUSIONS

North Crisana has a valuable and diversified tourism potential areas. It is spectacular character and special scientific value of the natural, historical remains of national importance in the admirable elements ethnographic and folklore in popular architectural works and others.

From personal experience, following visits, during some trips for business or for spending holidays in this region, we can say that the delicious traditional cuisine, people who are always happy to have guests and guides who are proudly representing their region, hotels, restaurants, hostels and professional travel agents waiting to offer their services, are strengths of this region to be a great rural tourist destination.

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