

STUDY ON TOURISM POTENTIAL IN BIHOR COUNTY

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Abstract: The tourist potential plays an important role in the development and diversification of tourist activities in a country, region or county. Therefore, the purpose of this work is to highlight the tourist potential of Bihor County and how it could lead to the growth of as many tourists as possible. The diversified tourist potential: the Apuseni Mountains, the spa resources at its disposal, the diversity of traditions and cultural events, position Bihor County as an extremely attractive tourist destination for tourists.

Key words: *tourist potential, tourism, tourists, Bihor County*

INTRODUCTION

The tourist potential of a territory represents the set of natural, economic, cultural and historical elements and presents certain possibilities of tourist exploitation, giving a certain functionality to tourism which is an important element for the development of tourist activity [3].

This is why some authors consider that the development of tourism presupposes the existence of a tourism potential which, through its attractiveness, ensures the integration of a region or area with a tourist vocation into domestic and international tourist circuits and allows tourists the easiest possible access through appropriate facilities [1,2,4,5].

Bihor County has a considerable tourism potential, both in terms of natural and anthropogenic resources. The combination of natural heritage and an important cultural heritage, namely geographical and ethnographic diversity, gives Bihor County the opportunity to exploit a diversity of attractions that can be developed as tourism products and can position Bihor County as a very important tourist destination for the north-western part of Romania [9].

Bihor is a delightful tourist destination for tourists eager to discover spectacular natural landscapes, rich history and authentic traditions. With an impressive variety of sights, Bihor County attracts visitors from all corners of our country and beyond, offering memorable experiences and exciting adventures [10].

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In order to achieve the research objectives, we consulted various sources of information such as: consultation of literature, various websites in the field, as well as data obtained from the studied area. The data was collected, processed and interpreted, and we managed to highlight the tourism potential of Bihor County.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Situated in the western part of Romania, in the Crișana region, Bihor County borders Hungary to the west and north, Sălaj and Cluj to the east and Arad to the south. It is a county known for its spectacular landscapes and its historical heritage [18].

Bihor County has a rich natural setting characterized by a varied relief, containing all forms: plains, hills and depressions and mountains. The mountain ranges in the county are part of the Western Carpathians, more precisely of the Apuseni Mountains group, being represented by the Bihor, Vlădeasa, Plopișului, Pădurea Craiului and Codru-Moma

making it a gateway to the West. In Oradea there are over 21 five-star, four-star and three-star hotels, over 20 guesthouses and other tourist accommodation [22]. Oradea is the cultural heart of the city, the place to come to relax and enjoy an amazing diversity of experiences, such as film evenings, craft workshops, medieval races, premium restaurants, wine tastings, permanent exhibitions, concerts and other events.

The Fortress of Oradea is an architectural monument in Romania, one of the few fortresses still in use today. It is said that the fortress could not be conquered because of its vast underground network of links to the outside world. The moat of the fortress was filled in case of siege with thermal water from the river Peța. The fortress is home to a Roman Catholic church, a construction dating from the period of Austrian rule and the plans of architect Lodovico Marini. The church was built in the effort to rebuild the fortress between 1775 and 1777 and is a continuation of the wing given by the C-Block of the Princely Palace [16,22].



The Black Eagle Palace is the most representative building of the Secession style in Transylvania and can be found in the central area of Oradea, built at the beginning of the 20th century, between 1907-1908. The name comes from the existence of a stained-glass window in the passageway, where an eagle is represented, which is also the symbol of the palace. This passage was built after the famous Vittorio Emanuele Gallery in Milan. Also, the walkway that opens onto three streets is in



the shape of a letter Y and an eagle's beak at the same time. The palace was built in a grandiose style, with four storeys, and is divided into two buildings. Today it houses a hotel, a restaurant, a bank and several rows of shops (shopping area in the passage) and clubs. The exterior of the palace is enriched by the presence of details specific to the Secession style [17,23].

Băile Felix is a spa resort located in the north-western part of Romania, about 9 km from the Municipality of Oradea and about 20 km from the border crossing point Boroș, border with Hungary. The resort is loved by both the elderly and the young, due to the numerous leisure facilities and the multitude of procedures for various diseases of the locomotor system and beyond. Here you can enjoy spa and balneological treatments, thermal pools and many other recreational facilities as well as national and international restaurants. It is the largest permanent spa resort in Romania, ranking second after the Black Sea coast in terms of the number of accommodation places in Romania [21]. You

can visit here lakes with water lilies and lotuses where live different species of exotic fish and turtles, thermal water spas, karst relief in the area or the nature reserve Peța stream in Băile 1 Mai, where are protected endemic species in Romania (not found anywhere else in the world) Thermal water lily, Racovița's red fish [11].

Poiana Florilor Castle is located 15 km from Alesd, in the middle of beech forests and is on the list of cultural heritage of Bihor County. It was built in 1894 by the grove owner Zichy as a gift for his wife, but the castle failed to impress her, probably because of its isolation. Today the monastery of the nuns of St. Elijah is located here, but there is also a small wooden church brought from Alba county. The church is dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and is also a heritage monument. Access is via a forest road, and tourists have the possibility to stay in 20 accommodation places [20].



The Bears' Cave was discovered in 1975 during a blasting operation at a marble quarry in the area. It is one of the main tourist attractions of the Apuseni Mountains,



located near the village of Chișcău, at an altitude of 482 m. The interior is distinguished by the diversity of stalactite and stalagmite formations, as well as by the impressive amount of traces and fossils of the cave bear, which disappeared 15,000 years ago.

The name of the cave comes from the abundance of cave bear fossils (an extinct species), as well as fossils of black goat, lion and cave hyena. It is divided into two levels, the second of which is reserved for scientific research. The upper gallery, however, is open to the public and is

appropriately furnished. Measuring 488 m out of the 1,500 m of the cave, the level is divided into 3 galleries: the Bear, Candle and Emil Racovița Galleries [11,24].

The Padiș Karst Plateau is a protected area of national interest corresponding to IUCN category IV (flora and landscape nature reserve), located in the north-west of Transylvania, on the territory of Bihor county. The nature reserve covers an area of 39 hectares and overlaps with the special protection area for birds - Apuseni Mountains - Vlădeasa. [25]

The Padiș Plateau is a very popular destination among mountain lovers. Its relief is karst, which is one of the reasons for its popularity. The average altitude of



the plateau is 1,200 metres and it is surrounded by steep cliffs, where you can see gorges, canyons, valleys and rushing waters. The plateau is also made up of ponds, sinkholes, ponores, lapiezuri, springs, caves and avene. The caves on the Padiș Plateau are numerous and very interesting, tourists being fascinated by their stalactites and stalagmites, but also by the draperies and canopies formed [12].



mountains and nature will be delighted by the wildness of the area and the beauty of the landscape.

Lake Vida is located near Luncasprrie and is an artificial reservoir. It is formed by the construction of a 10 m high and about 70 m long rock dam. The main attraction is the funnel-shaped spillway in the lake, designed to reduce the flow of the lake when it rains.

Lake Vida has an area of 6 hectares and a length of 2 kilometres. The construction of the reservoir on the rivers Videi and Toplitei, in Dobroesti, lasted until 1967 and was mainly built for the bauxite mines in the region. The colours of the lake - once a fisherman's paradise - are almost exotic. However, the charm of Lake Vida is enhanced by the caves, springs and gorges in the Rosia Valley: the Vacii Cave, the Uraciosii Cave, the Horse Cave, the Babii Cave, the Crucii Cave, the Valaului Cave, the Ciur Ponor Cave, the Ciur Izbuc Cave and the Albioarei Gorges. The best known are the Farcu Crystal Cave and Meziad Cave. Then the Videi gorges impress with their beauty and length, being the longest gorges in the Apuseni [7].

Meziad Cave is a protected natural area and a unique natural monument in Romania. The uniqueness of the cave is given by the impressive dimensions of the portal (16 m high and 10 m wide) as well as the interior, along with large colonies of nationally and internationally protected bats and endemic microscopic organisms (living only in Meziad

The canyon and the Oșelu waterfall are located in the Oșel valley, in a particularly wild and beautiful natural setting. Its route requires technical knowledge of rope descent and equipment used for canyoning. The limestone walls are split on one side by a deep cut with vertical jumps of tens of metres over which the waters of the Oșelu stream rush.

Located in the valley of the same name, close to the confluence with the Boga Valley, a tributary of the Bulz Valley, the Oșelu Waterfall has an almost vertical drop (5 steps) and a height of about 10 m [14]. The Oșelu waterfall is actually a succession of seven waterfalls [6]. It is worth visiting as it is one of the most important tourist attractions in the area. Tourists who love



Cave) and particularly beautiful formations (stalactites, stalagmites, columns, draperies). In addition to the deposit of bones belonging to the cave bear, discovered in the Hall of the Bears, traces of the existence of prehistoric man have also been identified in the Meziad Cave [15].

Meziad Cave is located in a particularly beautiful natural setting, in the Pădurea Craiului Mountains on the Meziad valley, near Meziad and Roșia.

Stâna de Vale resort is located at an altitude of 1100 meters, right on the Iadului Valley, in the Vlădeasa Massif, and is sought by many tourists more for relaxation and for its ferruginous and oligomineral waters [13].



The picturesque natural setting offered by the forests of fir trees and huge ferns, the meadows and meadows in the surroundings of the Bihor Mountains are the main points of attraction for tourists. Soil and vegetation factors create optimal conditions for treating respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases and neuroses. The resort benefits from numerous tourist attractions: Iadolina Waterfall, Bear Caves, Meziad, Padiș, Boga, Padiș Karst Plateau, Valley of Hell, Ponor Fortresses, and in winter there is a ski slope with ski lifts. Another important attraction is the

Miraculous Spring, which is said to have the purest spring water in our country, which also has a healing role, according to legend [8].

In addition to these sights presented in this paper, Bihor County has a lot more to offer, from impressive historical buildings, numerous Orthodox and Greek-Catholic monasteries, to cultural and sports activities and events and themed festivals. As well as sightseeing, tourists can also learn the art of pottery in Vadu Crișului or the technique of making baskets in the Beiuș area [19].

In conclusion, Bihor County has been blessed with undisputed natural beauties, spectacular gorges, visitable caves and trekking trails with different degrees of difficulty. Man has also set up Via Ferrata trails, ski slopes and thermal spas that attract more and more tourists every year.

CONCLUSIONS

By what is presented during the paper, we can affirm that Bihor county has a great tourist potential, represented by the beauty of natural resources and man-made resources.

The natural resources category includes, besides the dream landscapes, also the balneoclimatic benefits of the area, given by the thermal springs of the Băile Felix balneoclimatic resort.

The anthropic resources represented by various historical monuments and religious monuments highlight the particular style and culture of the area, which is waiting to be discovered by tourists who love mystery and not only.

Thus we can say that Bihor County, with its natural and anthropic elements well combined and highlighted, Bihor County represents a special land worth visiting and listening to its stories.

Bihor, with an impressive variety of sights, attracts visitors from all over our country, but also from outside, all year round, offering memorable experiences and

adventures.

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