

THE PRESENCE OF TOURIST SIGHTS FROM CARAŞ-SEVERIN COUNTY IN TOURIST PRODUCTS OFFERED BY TRAVEL AGENCIES

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Abstract

Caras-Severin County is one of the counties with high tourist potential because it has many natural and anthropic tourist resources with a national and international value. The main forms of tourism practiced in Caraş-Severin County are sports tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, cycling tourism, hunting tourism and sport fishing, spa tourism and ecotourism.

The article presents the tourist resources on the territory of Caraş-Severin county and aims to identify in the offers of travel agencies the tourist packages that contain tourist objectives, points of tourist attraction in Caraş-Severin county. In this regard, the authors turned their attention to the offers of travel agencies in Caraş-Severin and Timiş counties in order to observe whether or not they sell tourist products that include tourist objectives in Caraş-Severin county, using observation as a method of research and observation sheet as a research tool. The selection of the travel agencies under study was made on the basis of their turnover and popularity.

Key words: Caraş-Severin County, resources, tourism, tourist products

INTRODUCTION

The tourist product can be seen as an "amalgam" that includes a multitude of elements, such as transportation to places of destination, accommodation in a tourist reception facility, meals at catering establishments, tourist attractions, etc. (Băltăreţu, 2016, Bucur-Sabo, 2006, Coroş, 2015, Cristea, 2018, Koutoulas, 2004, Niţă, Niţă, 2008, Prokopets, Kondrashov, 2020)

Tourist resources fall into two broad categories: natural tourist resources and anthropic tourist resources. Natural tourist resources are components of the environment that by their nature, quality and specificity are recognized by tourism and capitalized by it: geomorphological, climatological, hydrological, floristic and faunal elements, landscapes, spa minerals and other factors. Anthropic tourism resources represent human

creation and are the result of technical, economic and cultural efforts combined with nature. (Benea, Petroman, 2006, Petroman, Petroman, 2014, Pîrvu, 2015)

Geographically, Caraş-Severin County has all three classic steps, but predominating the mountainous relief that occupies 65% of the territory, being represented by Banat Mountains, Țarcu Mountains, Godeanu Mountains and Cerna Mountains. For this reason, Caras-Severin County can be considered a mountain county. The mountainous relief increases in altitude from west to east, culminating in the Godeanu Mountains, with their heights of 1,600-2,200 m, rises well above the southern part of the Poiana Ruscă Mountains and the Semenice, Almăj, Locvei, Anina and Dogneca Mountains, which have heights between 600 and 1,400 m. These mountains are separated by the Bistra and Timiș-Cerna depression corridors. To the west part lie Oravița, Doclinului and Sacoș-Zagujeni Hills, as well as a small part of the Timiș Plain. The lowest altitude of the county is in the area of Drencova, being approx. 76 m and the maximum is recorded in Gugu Peak in the Godeanu Mountains at 2,291 m.

The caves are an attraction of Caraş-Severin County. Comarnic Cave is located at 440 m altitude, considered the longest cave in Banat (4,040 m) is declared a natural monument. Buhui Cave is over 3,200 m long and is located on the left side of the Buhui Valley, in the Anina Mountains, at 600 m altitude, it includes one of the longest underground courses in Romania, the Buhui brook. (Tamas et al, 2016) Other caves from Caraş-Severin County are: Popovăț Cave, at 421 m altitude, Liliecilor Cave, Hoților Cave, Voinii Cave, Little Cave, Big Cave, located in the Cheile Nerei - Beușnița Reservation.¹ Also, the depressions of Almăj, Brebu Nou-Gârâna and the Timiș-Cerna corridors, the Danube gorge can be real objects of interest and interest in order to develop tourism.

The relief can be seen as a form of independent tourist attraction, but also as a support for the other elements of tourist potential. The relief of Caraş-Severin County supports the practice of hiking, mountaineering, rest, recreation, ecotourism, cycling and speotourism.

The tourist attractiveness of Caraş-Severin County is enhanced by the multitude of waterfalls (Bigăr, Beușnița, La Văioaga, Moceriș, Șușara, Cârșă, Vânturătoarea, Waterfall from Piatra Moale, Șucu, Roset, Valea Mare, Prigor). (Sîrbu, 2018)

The climate is continental-moderate with Mediterranean influences during the summer. The average annual temperature varies depending on the altitude, registering 10-11 degrees Celsius in the hilly and plain area and 4-9 degrees Celsius in the mountains. Precipitation increases from 700 mm /

¹ Peșteri și avene turistice în Caraş-Severin

sqm in the low areas to 1,400 mm / sqm in the Tarcu and Godeanu Mountains.

In Caraș-Severin County there are resorts such as: Băile Herculane, Trei Ape, Semenice, Crivaia. Protected areas occupy a significant area of the county (21%). At the level of Caraș-Severin county there are 52 protected areas, of which 51 are of national interest (4 national parks: Cheile Nerei-Beușnița, Cheile Carașului – Semenice, Domogled-Valea Cernei, Retezat, 1 natural park: Porțile de Fier, 47 of nature reserves, of which 22 nature reserves located within national parks and 25 outside them - botanical, zoological, geological, scientific, swampy areas).^{2,3,4,5} (Nicolin et al, 2014)

Caraș-Severin County also offers a wide variety of anthropic objectives, from ancient times: Geto-Dacian and Roman remains (in the localities Bocșa, Colțan, Ocna de Fier, Oravița, Mehadia, Teregova, Moldova Veche), medieval (in the localities of Mehadia, Caransebeș), various religious monuments (in the localities of Caransebeș, Oravița, Băile Herculane, Bocșa and Anina), various museums and memorial houses (in the localities of Reșița, Caransebeș, Oravița, Ocna de Fier, Anina, Moldova Nouă). (Brad et al, 2015)

The natural and anthropic tourist resources ensure to Caraș-Severin County a high tourist potential, which is not yet fully exploited. (Brad et al, 2015, Manciu, Demyen, 2021)

The purpose of this paper is to explore the tourist resources found in Caraș-Severin County and study the offers of travel agencies in the western part of the country to see if their offers include tourist packages that include destinations, tourist attractions in Caraș-Severin County.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In order to achieve the proposed goal, the following steps were taken:

- establishing the research area and the aspects that will be researched;
- choosing the research method and tool;
- selection of a number of 30 travel agencies from the western part of Romania;
- designing observation sheets;
- accessing the websites of the selected travel agencies;
- completing the observation sheet;
- centralization of information;
- interpretation of the data obtained.

² Aree naturale protejate – prezentare generală

³ Hartă Parcurile Naționale și Naturale din Caraș-Severin

⁴ Lista rezervațiilor naturale din România

⁵ Parcuri naționale și naturale administrate de regia națională a pădurilor ROMSILVA.

- drawing conclusions.

The research area was established as the territory of Caraș-Severin County, aiming to identify the natural and anthropic resources and their presence in the tourist packages of the travel agencies. The information comes from various sources: specialized publications, websites, statistics.

The analysis of the offers of the travel agencies was done by observation, and as a tool the observation sheet was used. Thus, it was decided to study the websites of travel agencies and complete an observation sheet. The observation sheet was drawn up in the form of a table containing information on the existence in the offers of travel agencies of tourist products containing places, tourist attractions, tourist attractions in Caraș-Severin County, the type of tourist products, services included and their availability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The selection of the 30 travel agencies was made based on the economic results obtained by them in 2019, but also on the local popularity. Travel agencies from Caraș-Severin and Timiș counties were chosen because most of the tourists visiting Caraș-Severin County come from these counties.

A number of 20 travel agencies from Caraș-Severin and Timiș counties were chosen based on the turnover registered in 2019, the information being taken from the sectorial study "Activități ale agențiilor turistice și a tur-operatorilor".

Table 1 contains information on the 20 travel agencies selected for the study according to turnover (10 travel agencies in Caraș-Severin County and 10 travel agencies in Timiș County).

Table 1

Financial data of travel agencies selected for the study, 2019

Travel agency	Turn over (lei)	Profit (lei)	Number of employees	Sales per employee (lei/employee)
1	1,794,174	-78,604	9	199,353
2	1,478,019	103,051	3	492,673
3	783,033	208,597	8	97,879
4	654,527	316,798	8	81,816
5	301,100	47,398	1	301,100
6	282,628	-19,997	1	282,628
7	247,798	122,838	3	82,599
8	215,674	58,483	4	53,919
9	143,309	24,644	2	71,655
10	121,390	5,938	2	60,695
11	12,189,227	591,322	3	4,036,076
12	9,028,459	218,977	11	820,769
13	6,320,765	14,567	6	1,053,461
14	6,178,162	257,058	1	6,178,162
15	5,385,731	592,645	33	163,204
16	4,027,160	562,987	6	671,193
17	3,271,716	697,700	13	251,670

18	2,769,211	373,011	19	145,748
19	2,370,751	91,317	14	169,339
20	1,971,588	10,174	3	657,196

Source: Activități ale agențiilor turistice și a tur-operatorilor. Studiu Sectorial disponibil pe www.risco.ro

Studying the offers of the 20 travel agencies involved consulting the websites, and observing whether their offers include tourist packages containing tourist attractions, tourist attractions in the area of Caraș-Severin County. The results obtained from the consultation of the websites can be found in table 2.

Table 2

Results obtained after studying the offers of the travel agencies that registered the highest turnover at the level of Caraș-Severin and Timiș Counties

TA	Travel agency offer tourist products which includes touristic sights from Caraș-Severin County	Type of tourist product	Services included	Tourist sights	Availability
1	NO	-	-	-	-
2	NO	-	-	-	-
3	NO	-	-	-	-
4	YES	Circuit	accomm./ transport by bus BB/4 days/ tourist guide	Orșova – Eșelnița – Cazanele Dunării – Băile Herculane – Timișoara - Lugoj - Cheile Nerei – Bigăr Waterfall – Oravița – Anina – Water mills from Rudăria – Drobeta Turnu Severin	September October
5	NO	-	-	-	-
6	NO	-	-	-	-
7	NO	-	-	-	-
8	NO	-	-	-	-
9	NO	-	-	-	-
10	YES	Circuit	accomm./ transport/7 days/ tourist guide	Traveling by train from Oravița to Anina, Water mills from Rudăria, Oravița (Montanist Pharmacy Museum, Imperial Mint Museum), Cheile Nerei-Beușnița, Danube Gorge (Baziaș).	March-June
11	NO	-	-	-	-
12	YES	Circuit	transport by bus/ Transport by train (mocănița)/ tourist program	Timișoara- Oravița- Anina Waterfall- Bigăr- Eftimie Murgu- Water mills from Rudăria -Piatra Scrisă- Timișoara	1.1.1 March April May
13	NO	-	-	-	-
14	NO	-	-	-	-
15	NO	-	-	-	-
16	YES	trip (1 day)	accomm./transport/ tourist guide	Foeroaga Mare, Beu Bridge, Văioaga Waterfall, Ochiul Bei Lake, Beușnița Waterfall	March-November
17	NO	-	-	-	-
18	NO	-	-	-	-

19	YES	Stay	BB/accomm. Hotel 2,3,4*/ Pension	Băile Herculane Spa Resort	All year
20	YES	Stay	BB/accomm. Hotel 2,3,4*/ Pension	Băile Herculane Spa Resort	All year

Source: own research

After studying the offers of the 20 travel agencies, it can be seen that only 6 travel agencies offer tourist packages that include places / objectives / tourist attractions in Caraș-Severin County, 2 agencies being from Caraș-Severin County and 4 from Timis County. The tourist products offered are circuit and stay type tourist products. Circuit type tourist products include visiting places, tourist attractions, tourist attractions such as: Băile Herculane Spa Resort, Danube Gorge, Eftimie Murgu Mulinological Complex, Oravița (Museum of Montanistic Pharmacy, Museum of Imperial Mint), Cheile Nerei, Beușnița Waterfall, Ochiul Beului Lake, Văioaga Waterfall, traveling by train from Oravița to Anina, and even Piatra Scrisă, Foeroaga Mare, Beu Bridge. Stay products include accommodation and catering services at 2,3,4 * guesthouses or hotels from Băile Herculane Spa Resort. In addition to consulting the tourist offers of the agencies that recorded the highest turnover in 2019 in the counties of Caraș-Sevein and Timiș, 10 popular travel agencies in the 2 counties were also chosen for study. Thus were chosen those travel agencies that appeared in a simple search on the Internet, with the help of a frequently used search engine (Google) or agencies that are visible through the advertising they do.

Table 3

Results obtained after studying the offers of the most popular travel agencies in Caraș-Severin and Timiș Counties

TA	Travel agency offer tourist products which includes touristic sights from Caraș-Severin County	Type of tourist product	Services included	Tourist sights	Availability
1	YES	stay	BB/Accommod. Hotel 3,4*	Băile Herculane Spa Resort	All year
2	YES	stay	BB/Accommod. Hotel 3,4*	Băile Herculane Spa Resort	All year
3	YES	stay	BB/Accommod. Hotel 3,4*	Băile Herculane Spa Resort	All year
4	YES	stay	BB/Accommod. Hotel 4*	Muntele Mic	All year
5	YES	stay	BB/Accommod. Hotel 2,3,4*/Pension	Băile Herculane Spa Resort	All year
6	YES	stay	BB/Accommod. Hotel 2,3,4*/Pension	Băile Herculane Spa Resort	All year
7	YES	stay	BB/Accommod. Hotel 2,3,4*/ Pension	Băile Herculane Spa Resort	All year
8	NO	-	-	-	-
9	YES	circuit	Transport by bus, 1 night	Horezu - Tg. Jiu - Tismana	July/August/September/October

			accommodation with BB, tourist guide	Monastery- Bigăr Waterfall- Orșova – Danube Gorge – Drobeta Tr. Severin	
10	NO	-	-	-	-

Source: own research

From the 10 selected agencies, it can be seen that 8 agencies offer circuit and stay type tourist packages, packages that include tourist objectives from the researched area.

Therefore, it can be said that Caraș-Severin County, through its tourist objectives, is not very well represented in the offers of travel agencies in the top 10 at county level by turnover, but is present in the offers of popular travel agencies locally. Where there are tourist packages that include tourist attractions in the researched area, they are in the form of tourist products such as circuit and stay.

CONCLUSIONS

Caraș-Severin County is an extremely offerful county in terms of tourist resources, both natural and anthropogenic, but tourism is not yet experiencing a development in line with the tourist potential.

After studying the offers of the selected travel agencies, it is observed that some travel agencies offer tourist packages that have in their composition places / objectives / points of tourist attraction in Caraș-Severin county.

The tourist products made available to tourists are of the tour and stay type and include in their program some tourist objectives such as: Băile Herculane Spa Resort, Danube Gorge, Water mills from Rudăria, Oravița, Cheile Nerei, Beușnița Waterfalls, Ochiul Beiului, Văioaga Waterfalls, traveling by train from Oravița to Anina. Stay products include accommodation and catering services at guesthouses or hotels in Băile Herculane Spa Resort and Muntele Mic.

Along with the infrastructure and tourism promotion, it is necessary to develop tourist products attractive to tourists, products that can be found in the offers of travel agencies and that benefit from a tailor-made promotion.

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