

Analysis of the Current Valuation of the Tourist Potential in Gorj County

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Abstract

In this article we will present the natural and anthropic potential of Gorj County. The studied area has a diversified tourist potential which is represented by a picturesque natural setting, by monuments of architecture and art of great artistic value, some of them of international interest, but also by a valuable folklore and ethnographic heritage. The present paper aims to stimulate interest and draw attention to the existing tourist attractions in Gorj County and highlights the fact that tourism represents an important lever for the local development of urban and rural localities.

Keywords: tourism, Gorj county, natural and anthropic potential, tourist attractions.

1. Introduction

Gorj County has been attested since the Middle Paleolithic and is located in the southwestern part of Romania, on the course of the Jiu River. It is limited by the counties: Dolj (southeast), Mehedinți (southwest), Caraș-Severin (northwest), Hunedoara (north) and Vâlcea (east). The total area of the county is 5,602 km², occupying 2.34% of the country's territory, having in its composition 7 cities (Târgu Cărbunești, Țicleni, Tismana, Turceni, Novaci, Rovinari, Bumbești-Jiu), 2 municipal towns (Târgu Jiu and Motru) and 61 municipalities. [1,2]

Gorj County is located in the southwestern part of Romania, along the Jiu River. The relief of Gorj county is varied and can be divided into three physical-geographical units. These are: the Southern Carpathians, represented by the Godeanu, Vâlcan and Parâng mountains, the Getic Subcarpathians between the Motru and Olteț

rivers, the southern hills that stretch along the Getic Plateau. [4] The climate is moderate temperate-continental with Mediterranean influences. The climate is differentiated according to relief steps, due to the configuration of the relief. [5]

As for the county's hydrography, it is represented by the rivers: Jiu, Gilort and their tributaries, the Olteț and Cerna rivers. In the studied area we also find several glacial lakes, among which: Gâlcescu, Tăuri, Slaveiul, Mija, Pasărea and Godeanu.

Determined by the evolution of the relief forms, the natural resources of Gorj county are found underground in the form of sedimentary deposits. The most important resources are: lignite, anthracite, graphite, natural gas, oil, construction materials (granite for construction, refractory clay, limestone). Also, Gorj county is also known for its mineral water springs that have important therapeutic properties, they are located in Țicleni and Săcelu or Glogova and Bălănești, still unexploited. [5]

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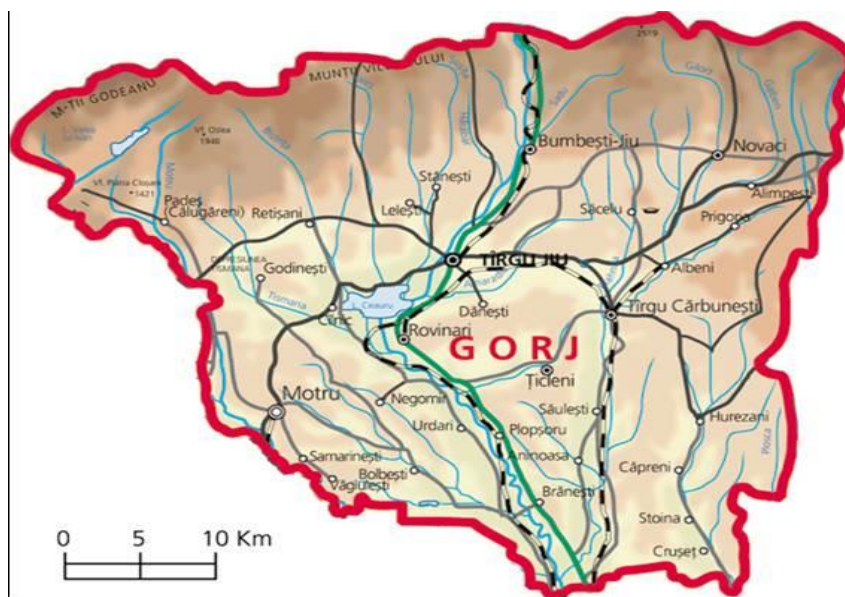


Figure 1. Map of Gorj County [3]

Climatic and bioclimatic resources are of great importance in the development of tourism on the territory of Gorj county. The knowledge of these types of resources determines their valorization in the promotion of leisure, recreation or rest tourism. [6]

2. Materials and methods

The area studied in this article is located at the foot of the Carpathian mountains. Those who arrive in the area can observe the picturesque natural setting and visit the monuments of art and architecture with a great historical charge. [7]

Gorj County is located in the southwestern part of the country, along the Jiu River, with a varied relief, with altitudes ranging between 2,518 m (in the Parângu Mare Mountains) and 100 m (in the Jiu Valley). This county is rich in natural resources and has great tourist potential, thanks to its picturesque landscapes, art and architecture monuments, of great value. [8]

For the creation of this article, data was obtained from various websites, bibliographic sources and field investigations. They were analyzed, processed and interpreted, allowing us to draw the most important conclusions regarding the tourism potential of Gorj County.

3. Results and discussion

With a diversified tourist potential, Gorj county is represented by a picturesque natural setting,

monuments of art and architecture of great artistic value (many works being of international interest), representing an important folklore and ethnographic heritage, these settlements and places presenting their history from ancient times until today. [9]

These settlements and places present their history from ancient times to the present day. The relief of Gorj county presents a rare harmony and beauty that attracts the attention of any traveler. In the northern part, the Godeanu, Vâlcău and Parâng Mountains rise, with the Parângu Mare peak at 2519 m, whose slopes gradually descend into subcarpathian depressions. The most spectacular natural tourist attractions are the gorges and caves located on the southern border of the Carpathians, at the contact with the Subcarpathians. [10]

Figure 2 shows a static map with the main objectives and points of interest in Gorj county (European road routes, balneoclimatic resorts, springs and mineral waters, tourist stops, inns, cabins, natural monuments, folk art, reserves, historical monuments, castles, historical vestiges, ruins, fortresses, museums, memorial houses, quays), as well as its neighbors.

Gorj offers more than 25 mountain tourist routes for walking, including two long-term European tourist routes (E3 and E7), three areas for climbing (Sohodolului Gorge - Runcu, Galbenului Gorge - Baia de Fier, Oltețului Gorge – Polovragi), five speleological areas that constitute the largest speleological potential in Romania, a ski resort

(Rânca) and hunting and fishing areas that attract a large number of tourists every year. [12]

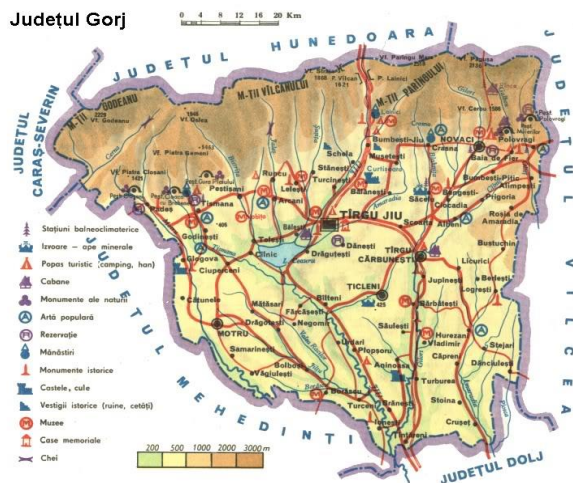


Figure 2. Tourist map of Gorj county [11]

Next, we will present the most important tourist attractions and points of interest in Gorj County. Among the anthropological sites, the Constantin Brâncuși sculptural ensemble from Târgu-Jiu includes 4 monuments of great artistic value, internationally renowned: the Kissing Gate, the Column of Infinity, the Table of Silence and the Alley of Chairs.



Figure 3. The works of Constantin Brâncuși [13]

The Constantin Brâncuși sculptural ensemble from Târgu-Jiu, also known as the monumental ensemble from Târgu-Jiu, is a tribute to the fallen heroes during the First World War. The three monumental sculptural components, the only ones of the artist's entire creation located in the open air

- the Table of Silence, the Kissing Gate and the Endless Column, are arranged on the same axis, oriented from west to east, with a total length of 1,275 m. The table of silence, carved in limestone, represents the table before the confrontation in the battle in which the combatants are to participate. Time is present, being represented by 12 hourglass chairs, which measure it. Everything proceeds in silence.

The Kissing Gate, built of travertine, looks like a triumphal arch, symbolizing the triumph of life over death or the transition to another life. The entire work is arranged on a steel shaft embedded in a concrete foundation with a side of 5 m.

The Infinity Column represents ascension. Inaugurated on October 27, 1938, the Column has a height of 29.35 meters and is composed of 15 octahedral modules, and was dedicated to the Romanian soldiers of the First World War who fell in 1916 in the battles on the banks of the Jiu. [10]

The Transalpina or "King of the Road" is the highest road in the country, stretching over a road of 137 km. Transalpina starts from Gorj (the town of Novaci), and then passes through the counties of Vâlcea and Sibiu until it reaches Alba (the town of Sebeș).



Figure 4. Transalpina

Also, the Transalpina crosses a mountain range consisting of: the Parâng Mountains, the Cindrel Mountains, the Lotrului Mountains, the Șureanu Mountains, connecting Oltenia and Transylvania. [14] The reason why Transalpina is in the top tourist attractions is the view.

The Sohodol gorges are located on the northern border of Gorj county with Hunedoara county, in the Valcan Mountains (a group belonging to the

Retezat-Godeanu mountain range in the Southern Carpathians), in the northern part of Runcu village, Runcu commune.

The Sohodol gorges represent one of the most impressive karst landscapes in Romania, a landscape stretching for approximately 12 kilometers inside the Vulcan Mountains. Also, here we find over 300 species of plants specific to these places.



Figure 5. Keys of Sohodol

The keys Olteț are part of a nature reserve in Gorj County, one of the most beautiful tourist attractions in the area, and have extraordinary landscapes to show, with waterfalls, bare rocks, caves dug into the top of the mountain and meadows surrounded by various types of trees , from deciduous to conifers.

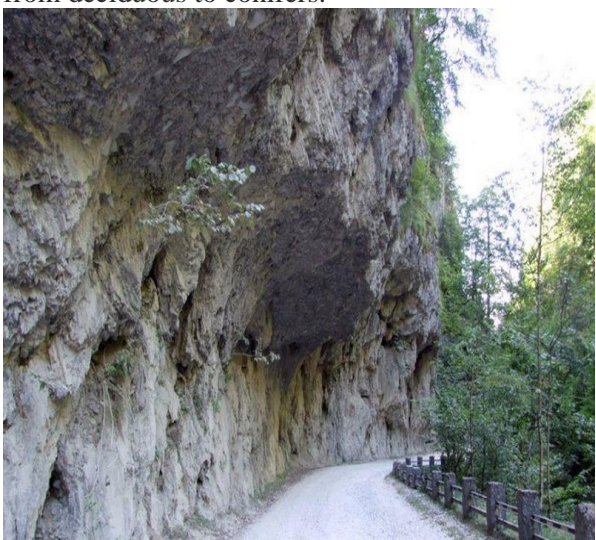


Figure 6. The Olteț Keys

Muierii Cave is located in Baia de Fier commune, Gorj County, on the territory of the Getic Depression of Oltenia.

The cave was carved in the Mesozoic limestones on the southern edge of the Parâng Massif, by the Galbenul river. With a very rich history, the cave in ancient times housed children and women during wars, when men went off to fight, hence its name. It is the first electrified cave in Romania. The cave has a length of approximately 7,000 meters arranged in 4 levels.



Figure 7. Cave Muierii

The real attractions of the cave are the Little Dome, which looks like a Gothic dome formed by the millennial precipitation of calcite, the Hall of the Altar, the Wave of the Altar, the Pulpit, the Great Candelabrum and the image of the Bloody Rock – named because of the iron oxide leaks.

The Tismana monastery was founded by Saint Nicodemus, being the oldest monastic settlement in Wallachia.



Figure 8. Monastery Tismana

The first church was built of yew wood, which is where the name of the monastery comes from.

Here was established the first school of calligraphers and copyists of church books who made translations into various languages. [7]

The Râncă resort is located at the foot of the Păpușa peak and crossed by the Transalpina, it has two slopes equipped with ski lifts and night facilities, being the most famous ski resort in the Oltenia Carpathians. Being declared as having the greatest untapped winter tourist potential in Romania, the resort has a very large ski area, located between altitudes of 1600 m and up to 2100 m.

The Ecaterina Teodoroiu Memorial House dates from 1884 and is located in the town of Târgu Jiu. The house was built at the end of the 19th century. Ecaterina Teodoroiu is considered a heroine, because she volunteered in the battles that took place in the First World War, being part of the platoon from Mărășești and died for her country there, on August 22, 1917.

If so far we have presented the most important tourist attractions, in the following we will analyze the evolution of tourist accommodation structures, accommodation capacity and the number of tourists in the studied area.

Table 1. The evolution of the tourist reception structure with accommodation functions

Specification	2010	2015	2020	2021	2022
Total	61	85	176	180	176
Hotels	11	16	17	18	15
Hostels	5	4	5	4	5
Motels	4	6	8	8	8
Tourist villas	1	3	9	10	10
Tourist chalets	6	7	6	7	7
Tourist stops	1	1	1	1	1
Tourist houses	-	-	1	1	1
Tourist guesthouses	14	22	32	34	34
Agrotourism guesthouses	19	26	97	97	95

- number -

Source: <http://statistici.insse.ro> [15]

From table 1, it can be seen that the number of tourist accommodation structures has grown significantly in recent years compared to 2010 where we had 61 units.

In the last three years, a new tourist reception structure appeared, namely the tourist lodge, and if

we carefully analyze the evolution of tourist guesthouses, they have increased significantly throughout the analyzed period, from 19 units in 2010 to 95 units in 2022.

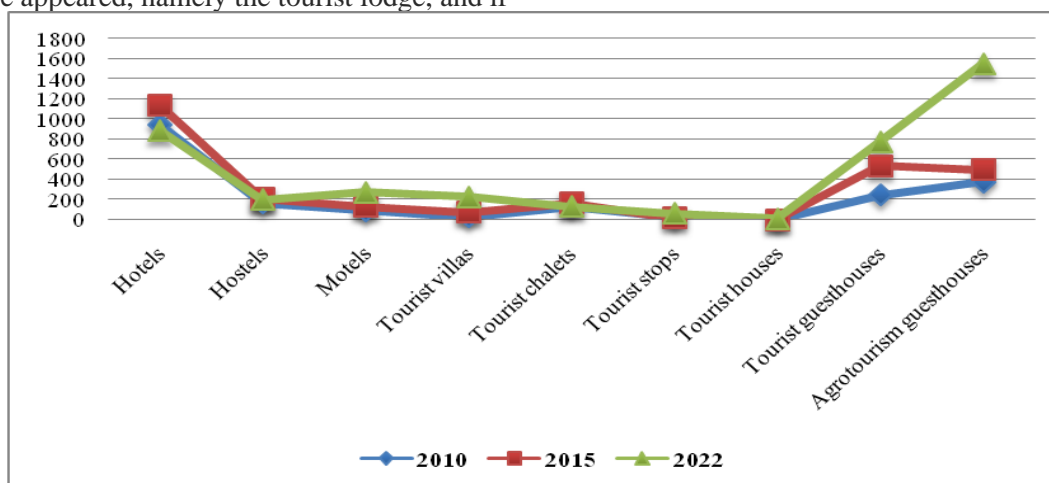


Figure 9. Evolution of tourist accommodation capacity in the period 2010-2022 [15]

Figure 9 shows the evolution of tourist accommodation capacity, in the period 2010-2022, in the area under study.

Regarding the total number of tourists arriving in tourist reception structures in Gorj county, during the analyzed period, it increased from one year to the next.

The year 2022 totaled a number of 123,599 tourists, of which 120,372 Romanian tourists and 3227 foreign tourists, as can be seen in the figure below.

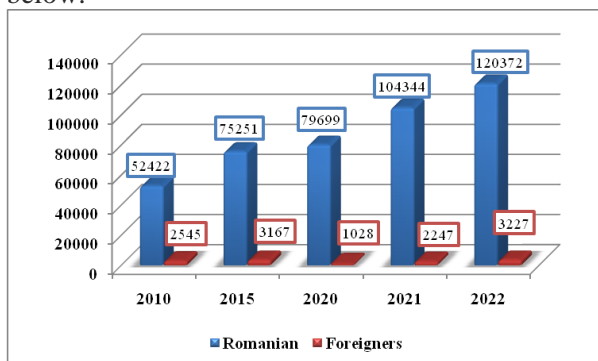


Figure 10. The evolution of the number of tourists arriving in Gorj County, 2010-2022 [15]

Regarding the accommodation of tourists, they preferred to stay in hotels, agritourism guesthouses and tourist guesthouses, and on their last in their preferences are tourist stops and tourist villas.

In order to attract tourists to the studied area, we believe that the main directions of development will have to aim at increasing the quality of tourist services, developing and diversifying the tourist offer and aggressively promoting the county as a tourist destination.

4. Conclusions

Gorj County has a diversified tourist potential which is represented by a picturesque natural setting, by art and architectural monuments of inestimable value, as well as by a valuable ethnographic and folkloric heritage.

The Constantin Brâncuși sculptural ensemble from Târgu-Jiu represents an attractive tourist objective of national and international interest, which offers the possibility of developing tourism in the area, a

sector that constitutes a source of economic growth for the entire area in the coming years.

The Sohodol Gorges represent one of the most impressive karst landscapes in Romania, a landscape stretching for approximately 12 kilometers inside the Vâlcan Mountains, between the town of Runcu and Poiana Contului.

The Oltețu gorges are considered the narrowest karst formations in Europe and are located in the northeastern part of Gorj county. The canyon stretches for about 30 kilometers, offering spectacular views, from narrow portions of a few meters to green oases guarded by imposing ridges. A point of great interest is the Transalpina, the highest road in Romania, which is said to reach the clouds, in fact, an old road, used since the time of the Dacians and Romans by sheep for transhumance. The view offered by this route is spectacular.

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