

## Importance and Impact of Tourist Resources and Attractions on Tourist Destinations

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### Abstract

*A destination generates tourism flows and monetary flows if there are resources and attractions that can be exploited for tourism. Tourism potential plays a determining role in the development of a tourist destination and the forms of tourism that occur in that destination.*

*Tourism resources and attractions determine the emergence of the technical and material basis for tourism, the emergence and development of tourist services and facilities needed to exploit these tourism resources. The image of a tourist destination plays an important role in attracting tourists and in generating tourist demand.*

*In Romania, the analysis of tourist resources and attractions provides important information on tourist and monetary flows, the number of tourists and the forms of tourism practiced by exploiting these resources and tourist attractions. Therefore, this paper aims to highlight the importance of tourism resources and attractions for Romania as a tourist destination.*

**Key words:** tourist resources, tourist attractions, tourist destinations

**J.E.L. classification:** L80, L83

### 1. Introduction

Whatever form tourism resources and attractions take, they play a determining role for a tourist destination. Tourist motivation is what makes tourists travel from their place of residence to consume the tourist resources and attractions of a tourist destination. However, it should be borne in mind that in reality tourist services and facilities are consumed as a result of the introduction into the tourist circuit of these resources which have become tourist attractions.

### 2. Theoretical background

In order to define a tourist destination, the notions of tourist resources and attractions must first be addressed. The term tourist resource includes, in addition to the tourist attractions that can be visited, the natural and man-made elements that can be directly exploited in tourist activity (Neacsu *et al*, 2011, p.21). In *Lexicon of Tourism Terms*, tourism resources are "the set of natural and man-made elements that can be exploited in tourism activity, but also include other categories of resources, such as economic activity, labour and capital, which are the basis for tourism activity" (Stanciulescu *et al*, 2002, p.154-155).

Attractions are natural locations, objects, or constructed facilities that have a special appeal to both tourists and local visitors (Cook *et al*, 2010, p.207). A tourist attraction is a natural or man-made element that attracts and incites to travel and that can be arranged for tourists to come and visit it (Stanciulescu *et al*, 2002, p.25).

We note that tourism resources have a wider scope than tourist attractions and that there is a whole to part relationship. At the same time, tourism resources can be seen as a system that is made up of a multitude of elements that constitute tourist attractions and together determine the tourist destination status attributed to a country, area or locality.

Tourism patrimony remains at the stage of tourism potential or natural and man-made tourism resource if it is not exploited through tourism development (Candea *et al*, 2012, p.13). In other words, if investments are not made for the creation of tourist infrastructure and the employment of workforce to provide tourist services, the resources are not exploited from a tourist point of view, they do not constitute tourist attractions and a tourist destination cannot be contoured and developed to generate tourist flows and revenues from the tourist activity in that destination.

Tourism amenity plays a key role in the development of tourist resources and attractions, and the standard unit is the tourist resort. In this sense, a tourist resort is a locality that has a set of attractions and is equipped with tourist accommodation units (Erdeli *et al*, 2006, p.47).

Accordingly, a tourist destination can be "a country, a region within a country, a city, town, village, resort or other area whose economy is dependent on significant growth in tourist receipts" (Neacsu *et al*, 2011, p.25). The tourist offer is concentrated on the world tourist market in certain destinations, called tourist offer basins and located in relation to the specific tourist resources of the respective areas (Glavan, V., 2010, p.121).

### 3. Research methodology

For a tourist destination, tourist resources and attractions are the defining elements. Therefore, the analysis of different concepts related to these notions, together with the analysis and interpretation of statistical data on Romania as a tourist destination, are the main research tools related to this issue.

### 4. Findings

From the point of view of resources and tourist attractions Romania is one of the countries with a high potential, which can generate important tourist flows but also high revenues from tourism.

In order to observe the importance and the role of tourist resources and attractions in the tourist areas of Romania, we observe, in table number 1, the arrivals of Romanian and foreign tourists according to the forms of tourism generated by the exploitation of these tourist resources and attractions, namely: spa tourism, coastal tourism, mountain tourism, ecotourism and rural tourism, cultural and religious tourism, knowledge tourism and itinerant tourism.

Table no. 1 Arrivals in tourist accommodation establishments by tourist areas in Romania in 2022

Tourist areas	Total tourists		Of which			
	Number (thousands)	%	Romanian tourists		Foreign tourists	
			Number (thousands)	%	Number (thousands)	%
All tourist areas	11299.1	100	9718.1	86.0	1581.0	14.0
Spa resorts	1067.4	100	1041.5	97.6	25.9	2.4
Coastal resorts	1106.2	100	1081.1	97.7	25.1	2.3
Mountain resorts	2062.1	100	1971.0	95.6	91.1	4.4
Danube Delta Area	106.8	100	97.2	91.0	9.6	9.0
Bucharest and cities of county residence	5020.0	100	3783.7	75.4	1236.3	24.6
Other localities and tourist routes	1936.4	100	1743.5	90.0	192.9	10.0

Sources: (National Institute of Statistics in Romania, Tourism Statistics Series, 2023, www.insse.ro )

Thus, the following points emerge:

- Table 1 shows that in 2022, 11299.1 thousand tourists arrived in Romania, of which 86% were Romanian tourists and 14% were foreign tourists. This indicates that Romania is a more attractive destination for domestic tourists than for foreign tourists
- in terms of the form of tourism, the first place is held by urban tourism, represented by Bucharest and the cities of county capitals, which holds a share of 44.4% of the total number of tourists who had Romania as a tourist destination. Urban tourism, which also includes cultural and knowledge tourism, is generated by the cultural, historical, architectural and entertainment resources and attractions of these cities. This type of tourism also had the highest share of foreign tourists (24.6%),

which indicates an increased interest in knowing and visiting Romania's cultural and urban heritage

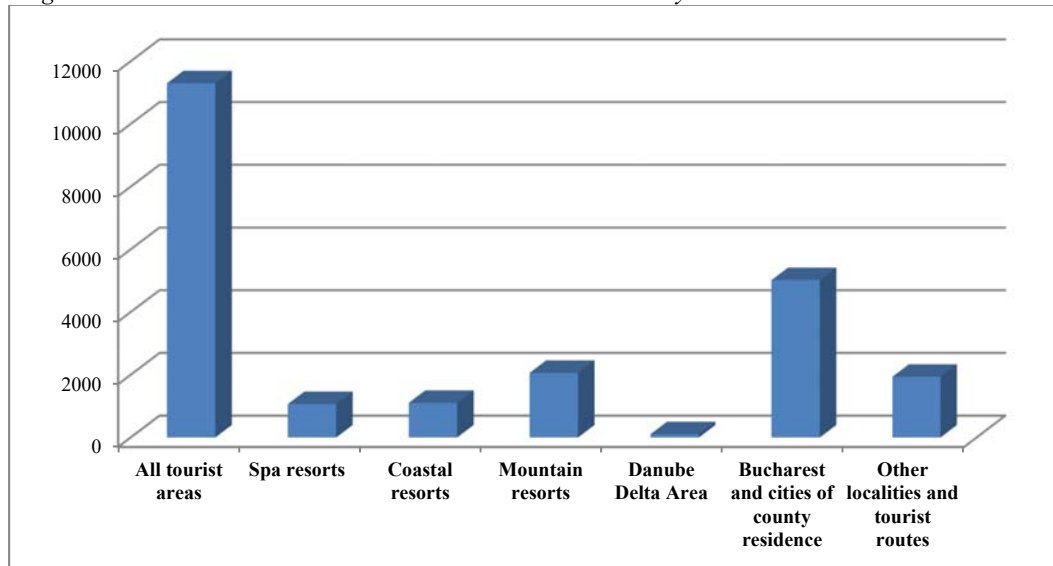
- in second place as a tourist destination are mountain resorts with 18.3%, followed by other localities and tourist routes with 17.3%
- tourism in mountain tourist destinations and itinerant tourism is determined by the natural resources and attractions of the mountain area, such as picturesque landscapes, national parks and nature reserves, climatic and sports resorts, mountain villages that preserve Romanian traditions and customs, as well as ski slopes that allow the practice of white tourism, and the numerous routes and itineraries that satisfy the tourist motivations of tourists during the summer tourist season
- mountain tourism is preferred especially by Romanian tourists (95.6%), who seek relaxation, recreation and health in a natural environment
- in third place is seaside tourism, with 9.79% of total tourist arrivals in Romanian tourist areas. This type of tourism is stimulated by Romania's coastal resources and attractions, such as sandy beaches, the Black Sea, modern and varied resorts offering "sun tourism", as well as leisure and entertainment tourism. Tourism in the Romanian resorts on the Black Sea is particularly appreciated by Romanian tourists (97.7%), who spend their summer holidays by the sea
- the fourth place is occupied by spa tourism, with 9.44% of total tourist arrivals in Romania as a tourist destination. This type of tourism is supported by Romania's spa resources and attractions, such as mineral and thermal waters, therapeutic and sapropelic muds, salt lakes and clean air. Spa tourism is mainly used by Romanian tourists (97.6%), who benefit from medical treatments and health care in spas
- It can be observed that, although Romania has a rich potential of balneary tourism and seaside resources, nevertheless balneary tourism and seaside tourism occupy lower places in tourists' preferences, which highlights either the seasonal nature of these tourist resources or the low attractiveness of these tourist destinations due to the outdated technical and tourist material base, worn-out treatment facilities and low investments in the exploitation of these tourist resources at high standards, which leads tourists to turn to other tourist destinations and other forms of tourism (see also figure 1)
- The last place is taken by ecotourism and rural tourism in the Danube Delta tourist area, which accounts for about 1% of all tourist arrivals in tourist areas in Romania. These forms of tourism are generated by rural and ecological resources and attractions in Romania, such as traditional villages, ethnographic and folkloric monuments, agro-tourism and gastronomic products, rural traditions and customs. The Danube Delta is a protected area and the low number of visitors does not indicate an undervaluation of this tourist destination, but indicates a control of tourist flows to ensure the protection of these resources and tourist attractions and to ensure a sustainable tourism development

If we consider the typology of tourists and their preferences towards tourist areas in Romania, we find the following:

- the order of preferences of Romanian tourists in exploiting tourist resources and attractions in Romania, by tourist areas that also determine the forms of tourism practiced is as follows: coastal tourism (97.7%), balneary tourism (97.6%), mountain tourism (95.6%) and tourism in the Danube Delta (91%), followed by itinerant tourism (90%) and urban tourism (75.4%)
- In the case of foreign tourists, it can be seen that they account for only 14% of all tourists by tourist area, and their preferences were directed primarily towards urban tourism (24.6%), then tourism in other localities and itinerant tourism, which highlights their preferences for cultural and knowledge tourism
- at the same time, it can be observed that unlike Romanian tourists, tourism in the Danube Delta tourist area shows high values in the preferences of foreign tourists, as they place great emphasis on ecotourism and rural tourism as the main forms of sustainable tourism. The high degree of industrialization, pollution and urbanization in their countries, as well as the urbanization of the rural environment and the destruction of rural customs and traditions, make foreign tourists turn to these tourist areas in Romania and appreciate them at their true value
- the lowest percentage of foreign tourists was registered on the Romanian Black Sea coast (2.3% of all tourists who visited this destination), which highlights the low preference of these tourists to consume these tourist resources. Of course, it may also be an ineffective promotion of Romania's image as a tourist destination on the international tourism market. As a consequence, a better tourism

promotion of Romania at the international level should be carried out, in order to encourage foreign tourists to choose and consume Romanian tourism products.

Figure no. 1. Arrivals in tourist accommodation establishments by tourist areas in Romania in 2022



Source: Table no.1, National Institute of Statistics in Romania, [www.insse.ro](http://www.insse.ro)

## 5. Conclusions

The analysis shows that Romania can be a top tourist destination on the international tourism market. Even if tourist resources and attractions are better exploited among Romanian tourists, Romania has a rich natural, cultural and artificial potential that can be exploited on the international tourism market, thus generating a positive economic impact.

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