

## MURFATLAR TOWN

Although barely recognized as a tourist destination, Murfatlar Town is an objective on the map of the great historical discoveries or the most famous wine-growing areas in Romania. The first name, under which Murfatlar was known, testified in written in 1855, is of Ottoman origin, subsequently changed to Basarabi and eventually returned to Murfatlar during the last century and a half. The archaeological remains in the city area attest to a much older settlement, the most famous of which is the monastic cave complex, consisting of churches, cellars, intricate galleries, graves dug into the chalk of the Tibisir Hill, possibly the most important early Christian centre on the territory of Romania. Although the site may not be visited by tourists, the cave complex can indirectly become an invaluable tourist element for cultural and religious tourism. In the following centuries, various ethnicities cohabitating in Dobrudja and Murfatlar<sup>1</sup> have created resilient communities, loaded with legends, folklore and folk art that are an attraction in themselves in this area.



With the modernization of the region, especially by building the first railway in Dobrudja<sup>2</sup> to facilitate trade and exchanges by connecting the Danube and the Black Sea, then the "Carol I" Bridge at Cernavoda, put into operation in 1895, Murfatlar was found on the Cernavoda - Constanta direction and the railway station built by the British company "Danube and Black Sea Railway Kustendje Harbour Company Limited" (DBSR) is under operation even today and can be visited. The following decades have seen important growth, leading to the development of the ancient province of Dobrudja, and Murfatlar was among the cities that had risen in a short span. The Danube-Black Sea Canal built between 1949 and 1953 and inaugurated in 1984, crosses the city, Murfatlar Harbour allows bulk cargo transit and a free port area facilitates industrial and commercial activities related to canal shipping.

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<sup>1</sup> During 2011 Census, the large majority of the population declared to be (84,3%), followed by (5,5%) and roma people (2,49%). Source: [www.recensamantromania.ro](http://www.recensamantromania.ro)

<sup>2</sup> Cernavodă - Constanța railway was the first railway in the Ottoman Empire, built between 1857 and 1860.



Throughout this time, Murfatlar's chalk hills become a resource for what will be one of the largest and most famous vineyards in Romania, the Murfatlar Vineyard, shrouded in legends with brigands. Fântânița<sup>3</sup> Murfatlar Forest is a natural reserve from 1932 and one of Murfatlar's most famous tourist attractions.



After 1990, the town of Murfatlar is being developed organically, both public and private investments are taking place in the urban and tourist infrastructure, in order to promote the city's image and the interesting tourist resources, some even unique on the territory of Romania. The town of Murfatlar is located approximately halfway north-south of Dobrudja, 18 km from Constanta, and approx. 200 km from Bucharest.

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<sup>3</sup> Small fountain



### Historic Identity

The most important archaeological discoveries testifying the dwelling of Murfatlar area are the chalk churches of Tibisir Hill since 1957. During the exploitation of the chalk quarry located on the hill, a number of rooms were observed, proved to be cave churches, galleries with tombs, dwellings. This cave ensemble was the first attestation of a settlement inhabited on the territory of the town, before 992 AD. It is only much later, since the 1800s that official documents and texts testified about the locality bearing the name of Murfatlar. The town of Murfatlar also encompasses the village of Siminoc, which name comes from the flower with the same appellation.



### **Location and natural setting**

The town of Murfatlar is situated near the Southern part of Dobrudja, about 20 kilometres from the Black Sea and the city of Constanța, on the line of one of the first railways on the current territory of Romania, Constanța - Cernavoda and at the intersection of national roads DN 3 and DN 22C connecting Bucharest, Constanta and Adamclisi / Ostrov. The town of Murfatlar also includes the village of Siminoc, located 6 km West, on the communal road DC27. Hills, mounds and valleys dominate Murfatlar area, including the village of Siminoc, the town developing on the Carasu Valley, on the chalk hills of Dobrudja, with heights of 100-105 meters. The relief and soil make of Murfatlar an eye-catching attractive place for tourists. Another key factor, which is part of Murfatlar's identity, is the millenary tradition of vine cultivation, favoured by the temperate continental climate, the limestone soil and the large number of sunny days, creating the ideal microclimate for achieving a wide variety of wines.



### **Access and transport infrastructure, public tourism infrastructure**

The privileged position of Murfatlar Town on the Bucharest - Constanța route provides multiple access variants: road access to and from the Romanian-Bulgarian border, the General Toshevo relation, Bucharest-Murfatlar and Constanța-Murfatlar road access, multiple road access to the seaside and the most relevant localities - Cernavoda, Mamaia / Navodari, Mangalia - Eforie, Ostrov / Adamclisi. Air access is provided via Mihail Kogalniceanu International Airport, Constanta County, about 40 km from Murfatlar, and railway access via the Bucharest - Constanta railway. The banks of Danube-Black Sea Canal

are equipped with a gravelled road, an important asset for the development of tourism. River access is for freight transport.

Regarding the public tourist infrastructure, the local public authority has implemented important European projects for the development of certain first concern tourist attractions. Thus, extensive tourist information and promotion panels, urban furniture, and bird-watching facilities were set in Fântânița Forest, and cycling and hiking trails were tested.

### Tourist Information Systems

The town of Murfatlar, and especially the tourists, benefit of the National Tourist Information and Promotion Centre<sup>4</sup> (CNIPT), authorised in 2017 and member of the national network of centres established under the Regional Operational Program 2007-2013. The mission of CNIPT Murfatlar is to provide free information and guidance to tourists and visitors of Murfatlar, also being involved in organizing tourist-related events. The centre includes an authorized tourist guide.

As far as signalling is concerned, tourism resources are marked by information totems located at key points, especially access-related points. Direction and minimum information on private resources are provided by indicators located in their vicinity. Moreover, on the Tibisir Hill, which dominates the whole town and is visible from the main access ways, the town's name was placed in 4-meter letters.



### . Tourist profile of Murfatlar Town and its area of influence

Murfatlar is a growing urban centre that is becoming more and more attractive due to public and private investments, as well as by absorbing European funds, and it is therefore essential to address the tourism profile from a dual perspective: urban tourism and nature-

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<sup>4</sup> <http://cniptmurfatlar.ro>

based tourism. Murfatlar can be a tourist destination based on its natural endowment, by capitalizing on the existing resources in the town: "Fântânița Murfatlar" Natural Reserve, equipped for welcoming tourists and, at the same time, with a great tourist development potential, and the unique landscape created by the chalk hills covered with vineyards and the Lake of Chalk. At town level, historical and cultural resources of local or national significance may become vectors of the urban tourism: Murfatlar Cave Complex, „*Birth of Mary the Virgin*” Orthodox Church and other places of worship, Kogalniceanu Mansion, Murfatlar Railway Station, Danube-Black Sea Canal etc. Yet, it is Murfatlar Town connection to the *Murfatlar wine*, one of the most appreciated wines in Romania, with a long history, with legends and consistent resources that makes the town’s reputation at national level and not only. This reputation can be the binding between the two types of tourism: urban and nature-related, by promoting vernacular cultural and culinary experiences specific to Murfatlar, and involve Murfatlar Entertainment Centre, „Domeniul Vlădoi” Winery, and the research centre for viticulture and wine.



### Types of tourism practicable in Murfatlar

- East of Murfatlar: cultural tourism and knowledge-based or technical tourism
- West of Murfatlar: nature-based tourism (eco-tourism) and cultural tourism at a later stage
- At town level: wine tourism and knowledge-based tourism.

The town enjoys a privileged position on the main market for its internal tourists and visitors, namely the Black Sea coast, but also the Romanian-Bulgarian border for cross-border tourism, being located on important tourist routes in Constanta County. This position is enhanced by the very easy access to and from Murfatlar, by road and rail, indirectly by air, on the most important directions: București and Constanța, Bulgaria - towards General Toshevo, within the county towards Adamclisi - Ostrov and Bulgaria - Silistra, Cernavodă - Danube banks, locally on the Danube-Black Sea Canal banks and, on private roads, on the town mounds and hills.

Once arrived at the destination in Murfatlar, tourists are welcomed with complex tourist attractions and sights: natural protected areas of European interest such as Murfatlar Fântânița Forest, and a unique cultural site in the country, the monastic cave complex. These two natural and cultural heritage peaks are nevertheless included in the urban and tourist canvas - unique places in nature, eye-catching landscapes, historical, architectural, technical and public monuments. This entire heritage is absorbed by the reputation Murfatlar has made in over a hundred years, as exceptional wine-growing centre with a long history and high-quality products of international standards. Moreover, the local community values and celebrates its multicultural identity, and the cultural and social life of the town illustrates it by countless events and references to the amalgam of ethnicity and the history of the place.

