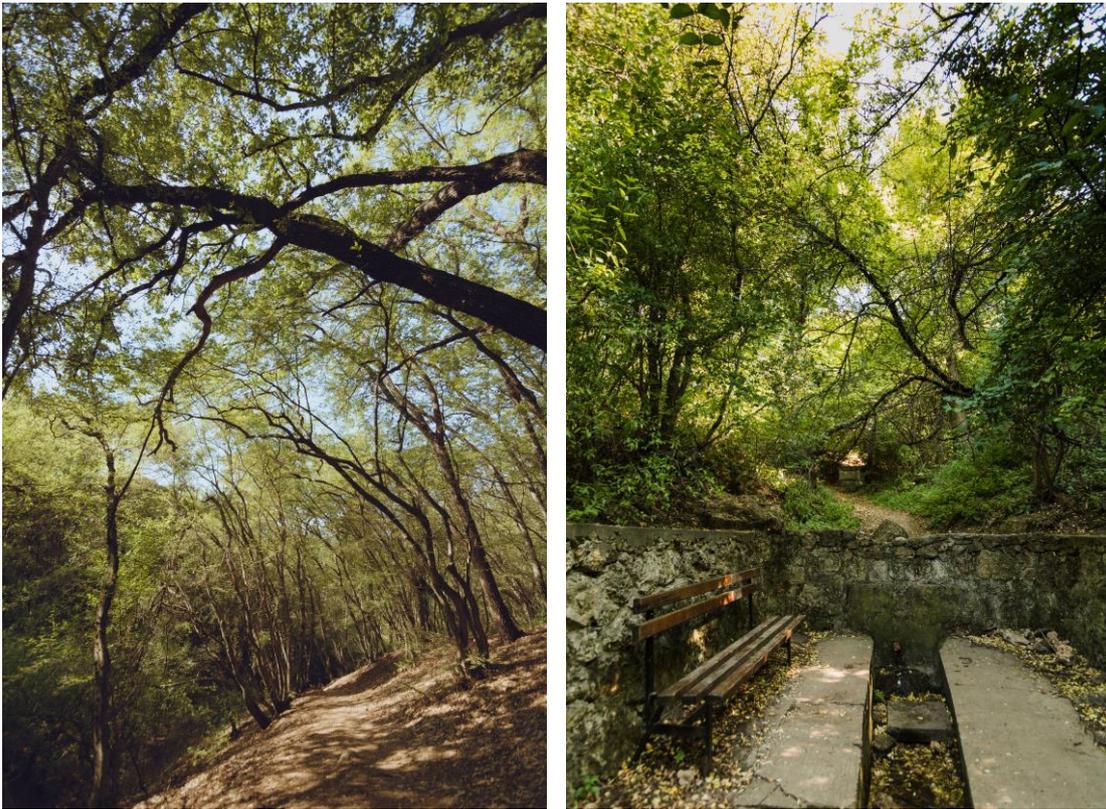


TOURIST RESOURCES OF MURFATLAR TOWN

Description of natural tourist resources

Murfatlar's great natural tourist attractiveness resources can be a very valuable basis for expanding local and cross-border tourism activities and ecotourism, respectively.

Fântânița Murfatlar Reserve and “Fântânița Murfatlar Forest” Natural Reserve



Fântânița Murfatlar Reserve is a site of Community importance within the Natura 2000 Network, which overlaps a protected natural area of national interest, both protecting a forest of high botanical and zoological value, Fântânița Forest. The reserve is located South of the town, while the access to the protected area is uncomplicated, namely at the cross-roads of the 22C National Road connecting Constanta de Murfatlar with Constanta - Ostrov road - the National Road DN 3. The name “Fântânița” refers to the only permanent spring in the protected area. The reserve covers a relatively steep coast of the hill and a plateau at heights of about 90 m above sea level. The area is crossed by narrow and shallow valleys and its base is limited by a wide valley, adjacent to the former Basarabi - Negru Voda irrigation channel. The biogeographic region is the steppe, with limestone slopes and the hill plateau of Sarmatian age covered with a layer of chernozem. The climate is temperate continental, with influences of the marine climate.

The reserve accommodates over 500 species of plants, characteristic of the Southern area of Dobrudja, predominantly pontic elements, followed by Balkan, continental, submediterranean and Eurasian ones. The fauna contains numerous species of animals, characteristic of the Dobrudja steppe areas. The rare species that are listed in Annex II to Council Directive 92/43 / EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of

wild fauna and flora include mammals - the European ground squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus*), the Southern birch mouse (*Sicista subtilis*) and the marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*), amphibians and reptiles - the tortoise of Dobrudja (The Greek tortoise) (*Testudo graeca*) and the four-lined snake (*Elaphe quatuorlineata*), as well as numerous invertebrate species. As regards the plants mentioned by the above annex, two species are to be found the reserve, red-flowered viper's grass (*Echium russicum*) and *Pulsatilla grandis*. To this list, another 69 important plant species found in the reserve are to be added.

Within the reserve the tourist infrastructure is relatively developed, including accommodation, public catering and minimal recreation facilities as well as hiking trails and paths. At this time, the reservation is the most important natural site of the town and the Murfatlar area, a heritage site in a wider area of touristic interest.

The Lake of Chalk



The Lake of Chalk is very little known and, at the same time, unique and extremely accessible in the landscape. The clear blue-turquoise clear lake was formed into the basin of an abandoned limestone and chalk quarry. The white, chalk walls that surround it, and the little steppe vegetation give it a strange picturesque landscape. The legend of the place says the water of the lake changes its colour after the season. The lake is located about 1.5 km South of the centre of the town and 300 meters South of the Murfatlar cave complex, being partly accessible by car from Constanta - Ostrov - National Road 3 (DN 3) on a gravel rough road.

Chalk Hills covered in vineyards



Mounds and hills with low heights of 100-105 m are located in South of Murfatlar Town, forming a varied and attractive relief. The hills are made up of white chalk layers alternating with thin layers of gray clay¹. These hills have excellent soil for the vineyards that dominate the landscape.

Description of anthropic tourism resources

The town of Murfatlar consists of two localities, the Murfatlar urban locality and the village of Siminoc. The town territory is brutally cut by the Danube-Black Sea Canal, East-Northeast being the largest part of the city, its administrative and community centre, while in the West of the canal, the industrial area, a residential district and the village Siminoc are to be found.

Archaeological and architectural monuments

Murfatlar Cave Complex

About 1 km East of Murfatlar town centre, on the Southern bank of the Danube-Black Sea Canal, lays Murfatlar-Basarabi archaeological site, a unique monument on the Romanian territory. The archaeological ensemble, discovered in 1957, is a complex of monuments which, for the Romanian medieval art, represents the oldest known architectural and pictorial document, whose elements link to the Cappadocian vestiges². The Christian religious site of the sec. X-XI consists of churches, cells, crypts and graves, labyrinth

¹ Management Plan for ROSCI 0083 Fântânița Murfatlar Reserve, available at http://www.mmediu.ro/app/webroot/uploads/files/2016-05-12_PM_Fantanita_Murfatlar.pdf

² *Art of Bisantine Tradition in Romania*. Author: Monahia Atanasia (Adela Vaetisi), Printing House Noi Print, 2008

galleries and dwellings dug in the chalk, currently protected by law and classified as a national monument³.

The monument may not be visited by tourists, as the actual conservation works being minimal and not designed to ensure visitors' protection. The cultural and spiritual value of this monument, however, allows its indirect capitalization for tourists and visitors who do not need the immediate contact with the object of their interest.



The total area of the site is about 3500 square meters, the most spectacular elements being six churches⁴ carved in the chalk cliff of the Tibisir Hill. The walls are decorated with cross-shaped and geometric signs, crosses of different motifs and sizes, human or animal images. There are also runic inscriptions, undecoded, and inscriptions in Paleoslav or Greek characters. The decoded inscriptions are of religious-commemorative nature. On one of the churches, an inscription in Cyrillic letters may be read as "year 6500" - 6500 years from the Genesis, which means 992 d. Chr. The year is considered a reference moment in time for dating the cave complex. These inscriptions and motifs are of exceptional value for the cultural research of the epoch which stands for the crystallization of the Romanian people⁵.

³ Ministry of Culture and National Identity, List of Historic Monuments 2015, available at <http://www.cultura.ro/lista-monumentelor-istorice>

⁴ *Tourist Routes in Cultural and Religious Areas*, project „Tourist Promotion of Ostrov-Adamclisi Area” financed under the Regional Operational Programme 2003-2007, November 2012, available at <http://traseeostrovadamclisi.judetul-constantina.ro/trasee>

⁵ *Murfatlar Cave Complex*. Authors Oana Damian, Mihai Opreanu, communication with zentată Architecture Restoration Archaeology Association (A.R.A.), 4 April 2003, available at http://www.simpara.ro/ara4/a4_02_06.htm

Murfatlar Railway Station



Murfatlar Railway Station is part of the first railway infrastructure built in Dobrudja and, at the same time, throughout the Ottoman Empire - Dobrudja being at that time under Ottoman domination⁶. The architectural complex of the train station consists of two main buildings, the Murfatlar station and the water tower serving the steam locomotives at the beginning of the 20th century, as well as the tower water pumps. Both the train station and the tower are historical monuments protected by law⁷.

Kogălniceanu Mansion

Kogălniceanu Mansion is one of the few Romanian mansions from the modern age preserved in Dobrudja until nowadays, being declared a historical monument of national interest. The monument is built in eclectic style, in the second half of the nineteenth century. The building features details of Western architecture of the 19th century, as well as elements of Moorish influence. Nowadays, the Kogălniceanu Mansion houses a kindergarten, which withdraws it from the tourist routes.

Murfatlar's built heritage includes a number of houses dating from the end of the 19th century - early 20th century, such as the Stamatopolus House (1899), Omer Bechir Bey House, and other houses considered valuable to the local community.

⁶ *History and Identity of Turcs in Dobrudja*, coordinator Adriana Cupcea and Kozak Gyula, Institute for Research of National Minorities Issues, Cluj, 2017

⁷ Ministry of Culture and National Identity, List of Historic Monuments 2015, available at <http://www.cultura.ro/lista-monumentelor-istorice>



Religious edifices: the „*Birth of Mary the Virgin*” Orthodox Church is located on Matei Corvin Street, number 3, and is over 100 years old, being included on the list of protected historical monuments of national interest. The “Saint Teotim” Monastery is a recent religious site, dating back to 2001, and is built on Tibisir Hill, above the Murfatlar Cave Complex. Other places of worship raised during the recent period include the New Church “St. Emperors Constantine and Helen” in Murfatlar, “St. Hierarch Nicholas” in the village of Siminoc, “Maranata” Pentecostal Church, “Betania” Christian Baptist Church and the Mosque in Murfatlar.

Old Town of Murfatlar

The old centre is the administrative centre of the city, where protected heritage buildings from the end of the 19th century - the beginning of the 20th century are located: the Stamatopolus House (1899), the Kogalniceanu Mansion, the Omer Bechir Bey House, the „*Birth of Mary the Virgin*” Orthodox Church (1903-1906), as well as the railway station and heritage buildings of local value, such as the Town Hall building.

Vineyards and wineries

Murfatlar Vineyard

One of the most famous and old vineyards in Romania, the Murfatlar Vineyard, lies on the hills that overlook the town, on an area of about 3000 hectares. The history of the vineyard⁸ dates back to ancient times - many religious and secular monuments in the area display mythical characters crowned with vine springs and grapes, and refer to the cult of Dionysus (Bacchus), and it capitalizes, as now, the soils formed on limestone Sarmatic

⁸ *Annals of Dobrudja „Dobrudja - Fifty years of Romanian history 1878 - 1928”*. Publication occasioned by the celebration of fifty years after the reunion of Dobrudja and Romania. National Culture, București, 1928.

deposits and the favourable exposure of the flowing cultivated hillsides. After the devastating invasion of blight at the end of the sec. XIX, the cultivation of the vine resumed with grafted varieties and foreign varieties - mainly French, yet preserving some old Romanian varieties. The vineyard grew and developed as a result of research and investment, as well as due to its associated reputation after being named “Royal Vineyard” as King Carol II’s recognition of its wine quality by 1939⁹. At present, the Murfatlar Vineyard, totally private, includes 3000 hectares of vineyards, and a Tourist Entertainment Centre that animates the vineyard with typical oenological tourism events.



The Murfatlar Viticulture and Wine Research and Development Centre

This research centre with a long history, set up in 1887¹⁰ on 4.8 hectares, is considered the core of the current Murfatlar wine-growing area. The initial activity of the resort was the nursery of shrubs and vine with the role of diminishing the effects of the drought in Dobrudja. Currently, the resort hosts tasting events that can be integrated into a larger project promoting oenological tourism in the Murfatlar area.

“Domeniul Vlădoi”¹¹ Winery

“Domeniul Vlădoi” Winery is located in the village of Siminoc, which belongs to the town of Murfatlar, about 5 kilometres away central-Murfatlar. The cultivated vine varieties are both autochthonous and international, for white wines - Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc, Muscat Ottonel, Chardonnay, Romanian Tămâioasă, Royal Fetească, Italian Riesling, and for red wines - Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Black Fetească, Syrah. “Domain Vlădoi” Winery hosts wine tastings and visits of the wine cellars and vineyards are organised for tourists.

⁹ Murfatlar - Basarabi, a locality in Dobrudja. Monography. June 2012

¹⁰ Murfatlar Viticulture and Wine Research and Development Center, www.statiuneamurfatlar.ro

¹¹ Vlădoi Estate

Public Monuments

Murfatlar Heroes Monument was constructed in 1995 in memory of the heroes who fought and sacrificed in the First World War (1916-1918).



The

Monument of Straja, the highest monument in Romania, is located at a distance of 9 kilometres in the South of Murfatlar. The access to the monument can be done either on foot, by bicycle or by car, on a gravelled road. The monument has the shape of an angel, being raised in the area of the former village of Straja, thus bearing its name. The village was destroyed during the communist period in order to build the Danube-Black Sea Canal. The monument is an angel without wings and was made at the initiative of the Communist Youth Union as a testimony of the work and sacrifice of the people during the construction of the canal.

Industrial Monuments

Danube-Black Sea Canal

Danube-Black Sea Canal is one of the longest artificial waterways in the world. The canal links up Cernavoda Port on the Danube, with Constanta and Midia Năvodari ports from the Black Sea, shortening the Danube distance from Cernavoda to Constanța by about 400 km. The canal is the collective work of 30 research and design institutes, covering over 33,500 detailed estimation and construction projects signed by over 1,000 specialists¹². Nevertheless, the overwhelming efforts, the unimaginable resources, the human sacrifices

¹² Administration of the Navigable Canals, History of Danube-Black Sea Canal

and the martyrdom that made this project come to life, which included the period of 1948 and 1952 as a labour camp, make the Danube-Black Sea Canal one of the most controversial achievements of the communist regime.



Events with tourist potential

The annual program of events commemorating heroes, of cultural and religious nature organized in Murfatlar and Siminoc highlights both the interest of the local community in organizing, participating and maintaining events that reunite the community and ensure its identity. Also, it stresses the availability of local authorities and institutions to organize and co-finance events. Both aspects are essential for the development and promotion of local and cross-border tourism.

Murfatlar Town Identity Elements

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.

Cultural, ethnic and religious identity

Dobrudja, as a whole, is a confluence area of religions, traditions and nationalities, within a true multicultural and interethnic cradle based on understanding and respect. This ethnic, religious and cultural communion determines the attractiveness of Wanderlust-type tourist products in Constanta County, based on the richness of historical and cultural heritage and beyond the main attraction of the seaside, the beach.

