












A person is seen from behind, crouching in a field of tall grass. They are holding a camera mounted on a tripod. The background is a misty, golden-hued landscape with several trees visible in the distance. The overall atmosphere is serene and ethereal.

**FEEL THE REAL
ROMANIA**

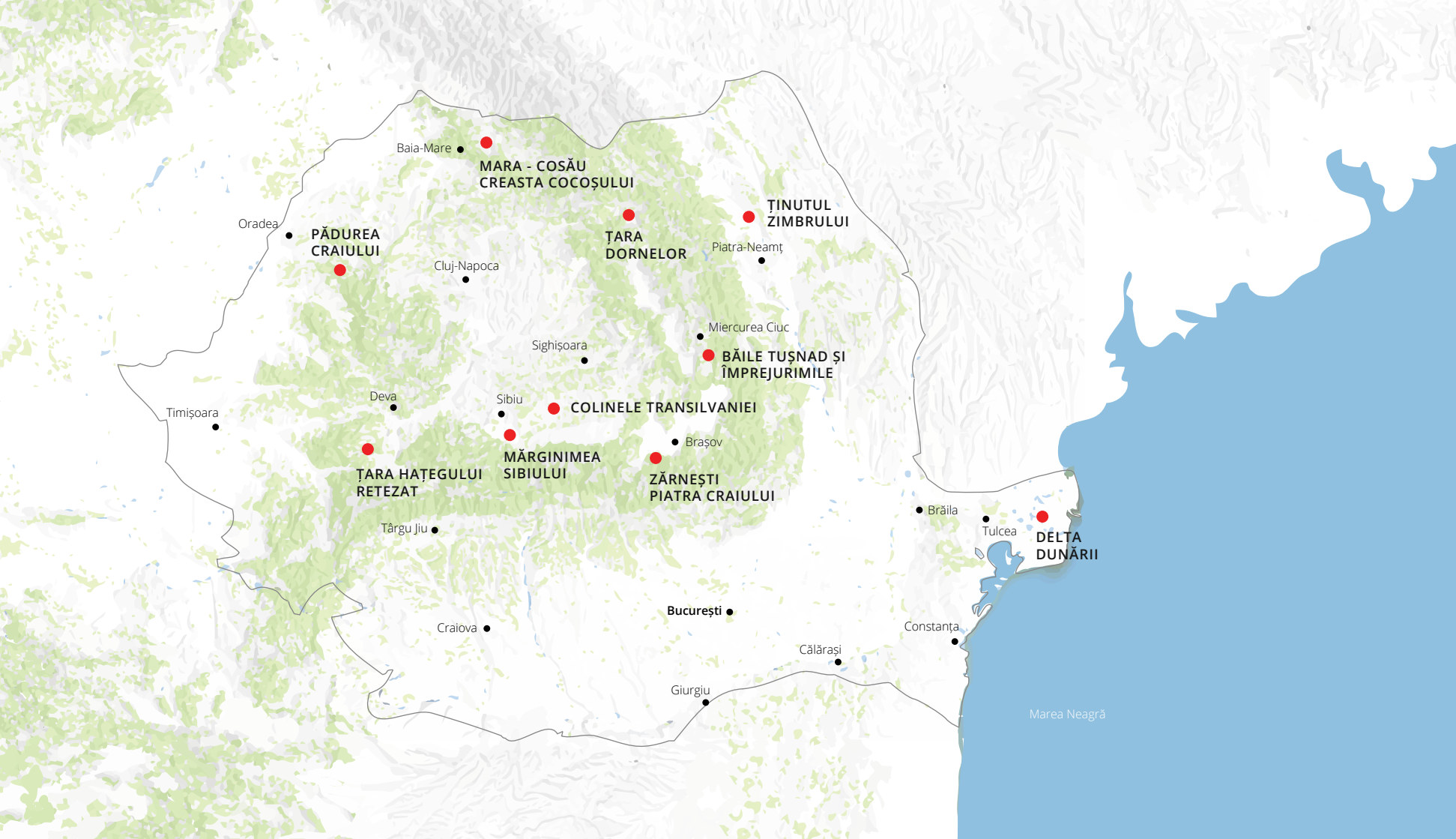


ICONS

-  Hiking - Trekking
-  Caving
-  Horse riding
-  Water activities
-  Cycling - Mountain biking
-  Winter activities
-  Bird watching
-  Wildlife watching
-  Food activities
-  Photo tours
-  Rural culture

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10 DESTINATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM

There are spectacular areas of Romania that are well worth discovering! Visiting them, you feel great surrounded by nature, you are introduced to the local culture - still vibrant with vitality, and you find high-quality local services and products. Your vacation becomes a small “investment” in a local economy that is starting to work by integrating nature conservation and local culture into the economic equation, through ecotourism.

The Association of Ecotourism in Romania and its partners invite you to discover 10 destinations where ecotourism becomes the engine for development. These destinations use the innovative concept of ecotourism, combining the attraction of protected areas (e.g. national parks, nature parks or Nature-2000 sites), with the enjoyment of discovering the real lives of traditional local communities. These communities are encouraged to develop family businesses in tourism (e.g. guesthouses and guiding) and to use local products. In this way, the destinations begin to develop a unified tourism identity, using images of nature and the local communities. Thus respect for nature and the local people becomes the essential value of local development, both for the business sector and for the local administration.

The status of Ecotourism Destination is officially granted by the Ministry of Tourism following an evaluation according to criteria developed on the basis of international expertise in the field of ecotourism. For 10 years, the Association of Ecotourism in Romania has been supporting the development and promotion of various micro-regions in Romania, by applying the ecotourism destination model. Five destinations are already officially recognised by the Ministry of Tourism, and the others are currently undergoing the necessary measures in order to fulfil the requirements for nomination as Ecotourism Destinations.



ACTIVITIES



ONLY HERE

- Visit the only crystal show cave in the country.
- Admire the white pottery from Vadu Crișului.
- Walk through landscapes carved in limestone.

LOCATION

Pădurea Craiului Mountains occupy the north-west part of the Apuseni Mountains, close to Oradea.



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PĂDUREA CRAIULUI

Pădurea Craiului Mountains are a land of caves, spectacular gorges and waterfalls.

Extensive forests, wildflower meadows, narrow and steep-sided valleys - they all lead you to incredible underground worlds. The caves from Pădurea Craiului hide traces of human life that date from the most ancient times. Old wooden churches, water mills and traditional households form an idyllic scenery.

The plum brandy, the pies filled with cheese, cream, garlic or dill and baked according to local recipes, plus the exceptional hot chilli chutney, make it an unbeatable offer.



ACTIVITIES



ONLY HERE

- Watch the spectacle of birds through the seasons.
- Taste the fish soup prepared by fishermen themselves.
- Find out the story of dozens of Olympic and world champions from the heart of the Danube Delta, in Mila 23.

LOCATION

Covering the area where the Danube flows into the Black Sea, it has the town of Tulcea as the main gateway.



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DANUBE DELTA

A land forever young, forever changing, the Danube Delta is a magic place, unique in Europe.

Here you can admire the sight of migrating bird colonies and the rare oak, ash and alder forests hidden among sand dunes and vast expanses of water.

Floating along channels, fishing in a small boat, you will come across the most spectacular birds (over 300 species): common pelican, white pelican, red-breasted goose.

It is from here that generations of sports people went into the world to become Olympic and world champions.

The hospitality and determination of the local people - a mosaic of ethnic groups - to preserve their traditions make the Danube Delta an unforgettable destination.



ACTIVITIES



ONLY HERE

- Set off on an adventure on Creasta Cocoşului (Rooster's Crest).
- Stroll or cycle through villages and meadows in the heart of Maramureş.
- Discover the wood culture of Maramureş.

LOCATION

Part of the historic Maramureş, the area lies in the foothills of the Gutâi Mountains.



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ECO MARAMUREŞ

Between the valleys of Mara and Cosău rivers, bordered to the south by volcanic mountains, there is an island of authentic traditional life, part of the historic Maramureş, which still amazes ethnographers and philologists.

The mosaic-like landscapes with alpine meadows, hay meadows, streams, orchards and secular forests stretch harmoniously along areas of wilderness, home to the brown bear, lynx, wild boar and wolf.

People know what a perfect host is like. Breb village is such an example of "a home away from home", the place you always come back to, the happy and warm faces and the quiet intelligence and balance of the people.

Here wood takes shape in the hands of local craftsmen and its magic sound charms the soul.

Since 2014, Eco Maramureş has been an ecotourism destination.



ACTIVITIES



ONLY HERE

- *Walk in wonder through the "Copper Forests" and "Silver Wood", as they are known in our literature.*
- *Visit piously the monastic villages Agapia and Văratec, unique in Europe.*
- *Watch European bison roaming free.*

LOCATION

The area is located in the heart of Moldova, east of the Eastern Carpathians, close to the town of Piatra Neamț.



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BISON LAND

Situated at the border between reality and fairy tale, this land is home to a priceless spiritual and natural wealth.

The reintroduction of European bison, after years of efforts, is like a dream come true.

The monastic community here is the largest in Europe (after that from Mount Athos), the monastic villages are unique in Europe and the Neamț Fortress is truly one of the national symbols.

The Rural culture value of the area is enhanced by the staying or passing through of famous Romanian literary and artistic figures such as Ion Creangă, Mihai Eminescu, Mihail Sadoveanu and Nicolae Grigorescu. The secular forests, wild flower meadows and traditional food add value to an exceptional destination.

The area has been officially recognised as an ecotourism destination since 2016, and from 2017 it has been included in the Top 100 Sustainable Destinations Worldwide.



ACTIVITIES



ONLY HERE

- *Step inside fortified churches to uncover the secrets of Transylvania's history.*
- *Savour delicious dishes and sample local culture at the famous "Transylvanian Brunches".*
- *Walk or cycle to discover the last medieval landscape in Europe.*

LOCATION

Situated in the centre of the country, the area is bordered by three landmarks: Braşov, Sibiu and Sighişoara.



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TRANSYLVANIAN HIGHLANDS

Green hills with a mosaic of agriRural culture crops, meadows and forests, Saxon villages and fortified churches all form the set of a genuine fairy tale.

Remember, while gently strolling through, to feel the spirit of the place and to breathe in the scents of nature: you are surrounded by wonders.

Some of the old buildings, steeped in history, are on the UNESCO World Heritage List (the fortified churches in Viscri, Saschiz and Biertan), forming "the last truly medieval landscape in Europe".

The biodiversity and traditional lifestyle are the result of centuries of development in full harmony with nature, creating a unique feel about this place, of balance and peace.

Enjoy the harmony in the gentle spirit of Transylvania.



ACTIVITIES



ONLY HERE

- Taste the famous authentic dairy products from Sibiu.
- Admire the glass icons in the Sibiul Museum.
- Travel along the Royal Road (Săliște-Novaci), the most picturesque in the Romanian Carpathians.

LOCATION

The 18 villages in the area lie in the foothills of Cindrel and Lotru mountains, nearby the town of Sibiu.



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MĂRGINIMEA SIBIULUI

Along the roads of transhumance, in keeping with the shepherds and their flocks, you will identify yourself with this pastoral world where footpaths carry you from the heart of the village to the sheep camps in the Cindrel and Lotrului mountains.

The local people have relied on their mountains and waters and have managed to work with nature for prosperity. The tradition of pastoralism shaped the local food production and so here you will find the best specialist cheese-making artisans.

You will surely leave full of delicious foods. So, whether you are walking or cycling, you will discover here a land labelled "European Destination of Excellence" in 2015.



ACTIVITIES



ONLY HERE

- Find the tracks of the only dwarf dinosaurs in the world.
- Understand the sculpted secrets of ancient and medieval vestiges of Sarmizegetusa.
- Capture the beauty of Retezat, the charming mountain with blue eyes.

LOCATION

In the Central Carpathians, the area is at the crossroads of three historic regions: Transylvania, Oltenia and Banat.



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ȚARA HAȚEGULUI - RETEZAT

A real amphitheatre surrounded by mountains, Hațeg Country is like a fairy tale that never ceases to surprise you: hay meadows and pastures that draw your eyes in, a myriad of flowers and butterflies, and far away, towards the south, Retezat Mountain towers proudly like a snow-capped giant.

Everywhere you look you will come across traces of a rich historic past: from the Stone Age, from the Dacian-Roman period (Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa), fortresses, medieval towers (Colț Fortress) and age-old churches (Densuș Church).

Besides, the Hațeg UNESCO Global Geopark invites you to travel through the history of the Earth to a lost world of dwarf dinosaurs and giant flying reptiles.

The area has been officially recognised as an ecotourism destination since 2016.



ACTIVITIES



ONLY HERE

- Discover wolf, lynx and bear tracks with the best specialised guides.
- Watch the friendly chamois on the ridge of Piatra Craiului.
- Participate in the oldest mountain running contest in the country, the Piatra Craiului Marathon.

LOCATION

East of the Central Carpathians, this area lies in the nearby vicinity of Braşov City.



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ZĂRNEȘTI - PIATRA CRAIULUI

A castle of limestone and forest, the spectacular Piatra Craiului massif invites mountain lovers on tracks secured with chains, along potholes, through caves and deceptive scree.

On the way they come across chamois, endemic pink flowers (*Dianthus callizonus*) or edelweiss (*Leontopodium alpinum*) and the wonderful surprise from the ridge always leaves them breathless.

The juniper and fir trees accompany them through steep-sided valleys until reaching the sparse mountain villages where people are always happy to have guests. Măgura, Peștera and Zărnești are the most important places where one can stop and rest, where fresh local produce are part of daily meals.

There are mountain biking and hiking trails to be enjoyed here, as well as perfect places for photography, or simply for a break to take it all in and wonder at its beauty.

The area has been an official ecotourism destination in Romania since 2014.



ACTIVITIES



ONLY HERE

- Cool down with some of the most famous mineral waters in Romania.
- Take in the landscape of northern Romania Carpathians on horseback, on skis or by boat.
- Adventure on a hike around the largest volcanic crater in Romania.

LOCATION

In the north of Moldova, this area lies at the confluence of the rivers Dorna and Bistrița, in the heart of the Eastern Carpathians.



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ȚARA DORNELOR

The magic land surrounded by mountains, situated on the border of old empires, has impressive features: its nature and traditional lifestyle have retained their purity and original charm.

The mountains tell stories from millions of years ago, written on lava formations, and have landscapes rarely found in our country: the Twelve Apostles or the Red Rocks.

Always ready for a chat, the hosts will lay delicious food on the table: smoked trout wrapped in fir tree, stew à la Bucovina, dolma with cottage cheese or "tocine!" [cheesy fried potato shavings] with sour cream, as well as the famous blueberry or raspberry liqueur.



ACTIVITIES



ONLY HERE

- Relax on the shore of the only volcanic lake in Romania.
- Recharge your batteries in the healing thermal springs.
- Understand local culture through traditional crafts.

LOCATION

Situated in the Szekler Land, the area is at the border between Harghita and Covasna counties and is crossed by Olt river.



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BĂILE TUȘNAD AND SURROUNDINGS

This ideal destination for rejuvenating the body and soul "bathes" in mineral waters with healing powers.

Add to it the richly ionised air and the subalpine climate and you will turn into the fairy tale hero who recovers his strength overnight.












You can explore the area on foot or on bicycle, under cool fir trees, until you reach the only volcanic lake in the country (St. Ana Lake) or small fortified citadels, manor houses and medieval noble houses, and delight your senses with culinary Szekler delicacies.

The surrounding mountains guarantee unique sights: Harghita - a volcanic mountain with its depths heated by lava - and Bodoc Mountains with gentle slopes, covered in beech forests.

Choose a special souvenir: choose the Corund pottery in elegant nuances of green and blue.

DESTINAȚII												WEBSITE	PHONE	PAGE
Pădurea Craiului	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	padureacraiului.ro	+40 359 410 556	7
Danube Delta				✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	ecodeltadunarii.ro	+40 213 123 835	9
Eco Maramureș	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	ecomaramures.com	+40 745 332 022	11
Bison Land	✓		✓	✓							✓	tinutulzimbrului.ro	+40 741 195 664	13
Transylvanian Highlands	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	transylvanian-highlands.com	+40 721 656 416	15
Mărginimea Sibiului	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	sibiu-turism.ro	+40 269 218 121	17
Țara Hațegului - Retezat	✓	✓	✓					✓			✓	turismretezat.ro	+40 747 779 769	19
Zărnești - Piatra Craiului	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	eco-romania.ro	+40 728 974 801	21
Țara Dornelor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	taradornelor.ro	+40 744 571 889	23
Băile Tușnad and surroundings	✓	✓	✓			✓					✓	bailetusnad.eco	+40 723 357 650	25

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-  Food activities
-  Photo tours
-  Rural culture

ABOUT ASSOCIATION OF ECOTOURISM IN ROMANIA

The Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER) brings together in an innovative way the public and the private sector in a partnership for nature conservation and sustainable tourism development. AER contributes to the improvement of the quality of ecotourism services and promotes nature as an essential element of Romania's image as a tourist destination. AER aims to improve the quality of ecotourism services and to develop the infrastructure in the ecotourism destinations, to contribute to nature conservation and sustainable development in Romania.

What does AER do?

AER's mission is the development and promotion of *real* ecotourism in Romania. AER members participate in international tourism promotion fairs in Europe, promote ecotourism activities and promote Romania as an ecotourism destination. Currently AER is in the process of establishing a series of ecotourism destinations in Romania, supports the development of local services and products, contributes to the maintenance of high quality standards in tourism and supports the local and national nature conservation efforts.

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