



# Green Tourism Education:

Innovative way to Develop Rural  
Areas

2016-1-HU01-KA202-022999

## GREEN TOUR Thematic Booklet (O4)



### Brief description of our Project

GREEN TOUR is a European project implemented within the framework of Erasmus+ Programme, funded by the Hungarian National Agency. The GREEN TOUR's main objective is to transfer an innovative training approach and the respective tools developed by "Nature Tourism as an Empowerment Tool – NATUR", coordinated by one of the consortium partner, AidLearn from Portugal and apply it in the field of sustainable and green tourism.

The project with the development of a training material is a good motivational factor for training and education of people employed in the tourism sector, towards strengthening the number and quality of local jobs created/supported by tourism – increased demand for tourist services is not always followed by increased number of qualified people. Although qualified professionals in tourism exist, there is a lack of tourism staff with competencies and skills to meet customer demand and labour market needs. The project will increase the knowledge and the quality of the services giving good example and guidance for other tourism sectors. The knowledge-specific education and the promotion of local cooperation are the best ways to increase the ecotourism sector in the countries of the European Union.

The GREEN TOUR consortium consists 5 partners among which are a foundation, two universities, a consulting enterprise and a VET provider, all of them having expertise related with the tourism sector and relevant experience in developing transnational projects.

The main GREEN TOUR project task is to underline the importance of cooperation between tourism and ecology, as tourism is a key important sector of the economy.

Tourism is a sensitive sector, constantly changing, where rejuvenation is essential. To keep this favourable position in the Tourism Sector Europe has to develop and improve the quality of the tourism services and follow the new trends and needs.

Tourism can have strong negative effects on the environment, such as: excessive water consumption, discharge of untreated water, the generation of waste, the damage to local terrestrial and marine biodiversity and the threats to the survival of local cultures, built heritage and traditions.

More than a third of the travellers are found to favour environmentally-friendly tourism. Tourists are demanding the greening of tourism and Europe's tourism should embrace this challenge and become more environmentally friendly and sustainable!

### Brief description of this Booklet

In this booklet you will find good examples on how to plan, develop, maintain and manage an ecocenter/visitor center.

The aim of this Booklet is to create a green tourism product about thematic tours in each partner country and to develop the cooperation between local organisations, stakeholders, municipalities and entrepreneurs.

The 8th learning module underlines the importance of cooperation between local organisations. Green tourism attractions can be more familiar if they cooperate with each other and if they create comprehensive marketing strategy. This way they can amplify the effect on potential visitors.

As a good practice we show 2 tours/partner countries.

The booklet sketches some popular routes for cultural, historical, religious and art tourism. In this way the potential and the attractiveness of thematic tours can be brought out beside mass tourism.



## Tartalom

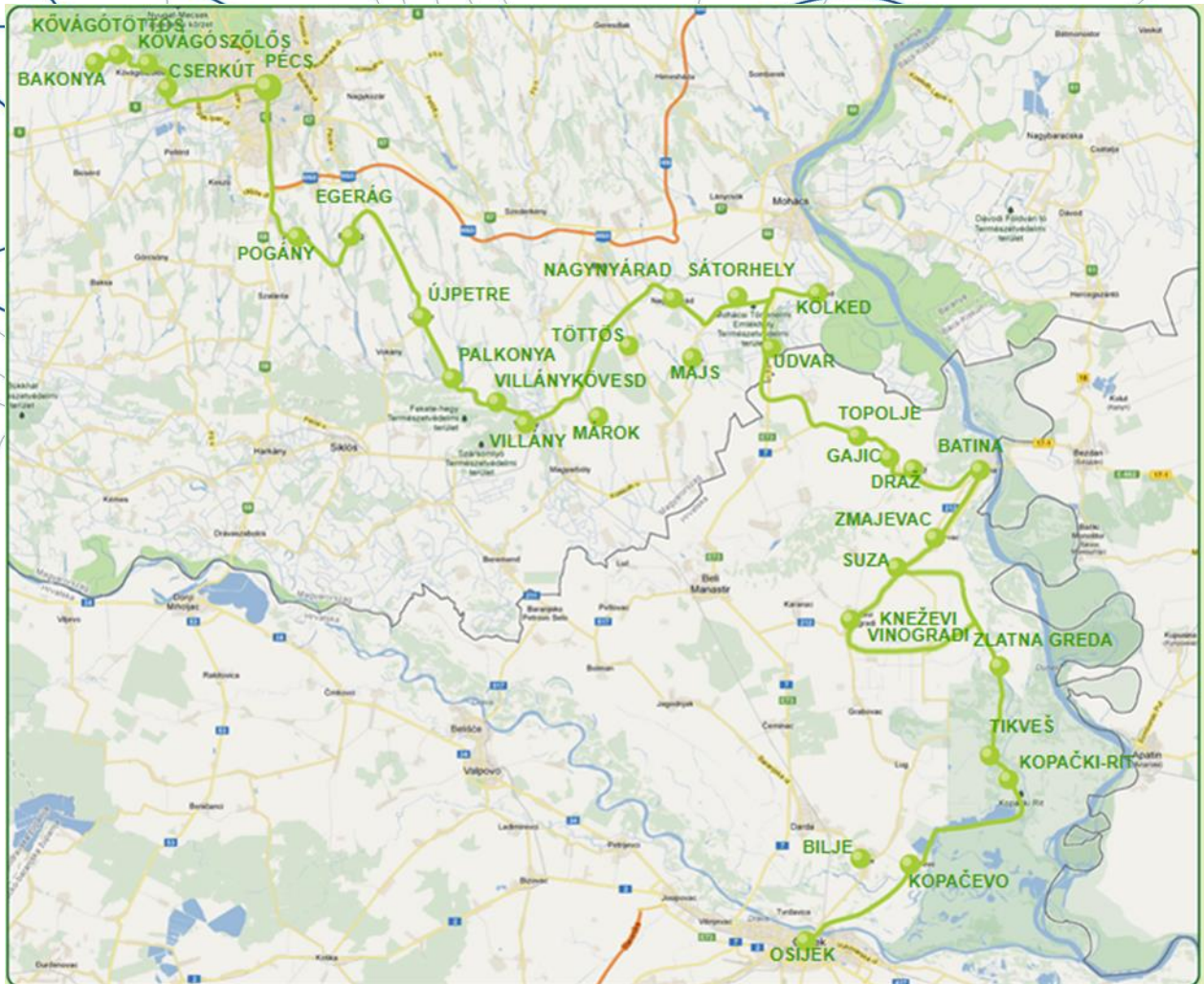
HUNGARY .....	7
Baranya greenway .....	7
Brief description of the tour .....	7
Objectives of the tour .....	8
Target group of the tour.....	9
Partners/service providers of the tour.....	9
Interview.....	10
Attractions .....	12
News.....	14
INTRODUCING LAKE TISZA ECOCENTER in POROSZLÓ, HUNGARY .....	15
Brief description of the thematic tour .....	16
Objectives of the tour .....	19
Target group of the tour.....	20
Partners/service providers of the tour.....	21
Interview.....	24
Attractions .....	30
News.....	32
BULGARIA .....	34
Introduction .....	35
Thematic tour 1: Orthodox monasteries in the North Balkan .....	35
Brief description of the tour .....	35
Objectives of the tour .....	36
Target group of the tour.....	37
Attractions .....	37
Thematic tour 2: The Bulgarian rose in the South Balkan .....	41
Brief description .....	41
Objectives.....	42
Target group .....	42
Attractions .....	43
Partners/service providers of both tours .....	47
Interview.....	48
News.....	50
ITALY .....	52
Thematic tour 1: Apulia and the legend of Cristalda and Pizzomunno.....	52
Brief description of the tour .....	52

Objectives of the tour .....	52
Target group of the tour.....	54
Attractions .....	55
Thematic tour 2: ETNA Natural Park .....	61
Brief description of the tour .....	61
Objectives of the tour .....	62
Target group of the tour.....	64
Attractions .....	65
PORTUGAL.....	70
GEPARK NATURTEJO:.....	70
Description of the Tour .....	70
ORVALHO'S GEOROUTE: Objectives of the Tour .....	72
ORVALHO'S GEOROUTE: Target Group of the Tour.....	73
ORVALHO'S GEOROUTE: Partners / Service Providers of the Tour.....	73
ORVALHO'S GEOROUTE: Interview .....	74
ORVALHO'S GEOROUTE: Attractions.....	76
GEPARK NATURTEJO: News.....	77
AZORES TRAILS: .....	77
Description of the Tour .....	77
MATA DO CANÁRIO - SETE CIDADES - SÃO MIGUEL: Objectives of the Tour .....	78
Target Group of the Tour .....	78
Partners / Service Providers of the Tour.....	78
Interview.....	79
Attractions .....	81
News.....	81
Summary .....	82

# HUNGARY

## Baranya greenway

### Brief description of the tour



The current map presents the Baranya Greenway. It has parts in Hungary and in Croatia as well. In this booklet we will show you the Hungarian parts in details.

It lies in Baranya county. Baranya County lies in southern Hungary, in the Baranya region, on the border with Croatia. The River Drava forms part of its southern border. It is bounded by the Hungarian counties Somogy to the west, Tolna to the north, and Bács-Kiskun to the east. The capital of Baranya county is Pécs. Baranya county has a total area of 4,430 km<sup>2</sup> (1,710 sq mi). It is the most sparsely populated part of Hungary, with neighbouring

Somogy county. Besides the Hungarian majority, the main minorities are the Germans, Roma, Croats, and Serbs. The north-western part of Baranya county is a mountain area with large forests, the Mecsek Mountains. The climate is semi-Mediterranean, with a high number of sunshine hours. The pleasant climate has helped to plant plants that are rare in other parts of the country. Grain growing takes place on the flat parts, while the high number of hills overlooking the south and the high number of sunshine hours favor peaches, plums, sour cherries, grapes and vegetables growing. For decades, there has been significant uranium ore and coal mining in the area. There are also plenty of thermal and mineral waters.

The Hungarian Baranya Greenway parts are the following: Udvar, Duna-Dráva National Park – Béda-Karapanca Region, Kölked, Mohács Historical Site, Nagynyárád, Bóly, Villány, Szársomlyó, Nagyharsány Sculpture Park, Villánykövesd, Palkonya, Újpetre, Pécs and Mecsek Parkerdő, Cserkút, Kővágószőlős, Kővágótöttös, Bakonya.

The greenway route was designated, information boards, maps and direction arrows have been placed out to help visitors' orientation.

Next to tourist attractions art and summer camps are organised which offer fun activities, games, outings that teach about nature and the principles of environmentally conscious lifestyle. Eco-festivals with diverse programs are also organised as an interactive platform for the dissemination of the values and principles of sustainability and environmental awareness.

People can rent bicycles and yurts along the route.

### Objectives of the tour

The purpose of creating the greenway was to create thematic routes, tourist routes that would introduce the visitors to the destination's natural, historical (local) and cultural traditions. It was also an important aspect during creating the greenway that tourists could gain as much experience as possible as one of the main determinants of tourism trends in recent years is the need for activity, which is greatly influenced by the level of search for experience. The Baranya Greenway not only enriches the experience but also orients towards responsibility.

The long-term goal of Baranya Greenway is to stand up for the saving and preservation of natural assets, to review cultural heritage, to encourage cooperation, more



efficient communication and responsible operation between the population and service providers along the route.

Local assets can only be saved from destruction by the conservation work and tradition of the local population. The objectives are to be proud of the local values and traditions, strengthen local identity, culture and increase local tourism and economy.

#### Target group of the tour

The Baranya Greenway aims at luring more target groups, regardless of age, gender, field of interest or income positions.

The youth can take part in camps.

Young adults are curious about the novelties, the newest tendencies. They are eager to take part in eco-festivals and bicycle tours.

Explorers are also curious about the novelties. They tend to visit ecotourist sites.

Excursionists and hikers usually choose where to go based on an idea or theme. Hence Baranya Greenway interest them. They like to travel on foot or by bicycle.

For families with children it is important to get to know the cultural heritages. Their biggest motivation is valuable entertainment. Therefore, the most attractive tours for them are rural tourism and eco-festivals.

Elder tourists are interested in the environment.

Young artists are also interested as arts camps are organised.

#### Partners/service providers of the tour

Baranya Greenway was established by Gyeregyalog.hu Association, which was founded in 2009. Its aim is to promote the environmentally conscious behaviour of people working in the South Transdanubian region (Somogy, Tolna, Baranya), to participate in extra-curricular environmental education, to promote forest education, to promote the united action of individuals, organizations and service providers interested in this topic and actively promoting sustainable environmental development. We believe in a practical approach beyond the textbook, in our own experience-based learning, to bring to life the knowledge of nature and our environment, to begin educating a healthy lifestyle in time to be able to respect nature.

The Village Tourism Association of Baranya County was established in the South Transdanubian region as a federation of those involved in rural tourism. The aim of the Rural Tourism Association of Baranya County is to promote the development of rural tourism in the South Transdanubian region, to familiarize with the natural, cultural heritage, folk and gastronomic traditions of the South Transdanubian villages to preserve and pass on the long-forgotten values of rural life. As part of its versatile activities, it carries out tourism promotion and marketing tasks. With their facilitates and service providers its membership maintains their competitiveness through training and sharing of national and international examples of good practice and develops the market position of the region through coordinated rural tourism product development, supports village initiatives in organizing their traditional heritage events.

Bakonya is located in the Western Mecsek, at the foot of the Jakab Hill, just 15 km from Pécs, in a picturesque village, famous for its Árpád-age church. The majority of its population labored in agriculture until the 1950s. After that, they were mostly working in the uranium mine nearby. After the mine was closed in 1989 the village fell into recession, causing economic and social tensions. The primary goal of the Municipality of Bakonya is to improve the quality of life of the local community. Alongside this goal, it strives to preserve the local village image, nurture the still living traditions and seek new ways for a cheerful and encouraging vision. The favourable location of the settlement (the natural environment of the “Mecsek”) gives opportunity for active and rural tourism. The Municipality wants to take advantage of this by joining the Baranya Greenway and developing the Ecotourism Demonstration Center, which they hope will stimulate the local economy by generating tourist traffic, strengthen the community, and contribute to a healthy and sustainable lifestyle and, through their synergies, will have a beneficial effect on the image of the settlement as a whole.

### Interview

#### **What was the main target group at the beginning?**

Selecting a target group is a very important step in the beginning. People who like nature, love to move around, not just walking, but also cycling or canoeing. So we turned to larger communities such as kindergartens, schools, entrepreneurs, tourists who are interested in movement.

**What is it now?**

More or less we are looking for the same target group, expanding to everyone who likes nature, regardless of age.

**How many tour operators are there?**

Well, we do not have an exact data for this, but every tour must be led by at least one person.

**Are they qualified tour guides?**

The tour operator must always maintain a good personal relationship with the passengers. We work with knowledgeable and trained tour guides who are presenting the target area and who are an important part of planned roads as well.

**Do you have any requirements about the appearance?**

We have no particular requirements for the appearance. It is important to have a sporty outfit as they walk a lot, so comfort is important and warm clothing is essential as they pass through the rivers, through the woods along the rivers.

**What is the basis for the thematic tour's theme?**

The aim of the Greenway was to create thematic routes and tourist routes that would introduce the visitors to the natural, historical (local) and cultural traditions of the destination. Nevertheless, the green road was an important aspect tourists to get the best out of their trail.

**How is a thematic tour route organised?**

Green roads are already existing roads, pedestrian paths and abandoned railways. Green roads connecting historic sites and attractions reinforce the locals' relationship with the heritage, so these routes also serve to enhance cultural identity.

**What is it up to how often is the tour launched?**

These tours are held several times a year at several venues. It is possible to take a great stroll in Baranya and the Danube-Drava National Park.

**On which languages the thematic tour is available?**

The tour guide usually speaks Hungarian, but he can provide information to guests in foreign languages as well.

**With how many people can the tour start?**

In order to avoid mass tourism, we maximize the number of participants in the programs. It depends on the point of the tour and the difficulty of it.

**Which age group is the most frequent participant of the thematic tour?**

All ages follow the trails but mostly the active age group of 20-45.

**Which gender visits the thematic tour in larger number?**

I think men mostly.

**Does the cooling weather have an effect on the number of the participants?**

Of course. No one likes to freeze in the forest or it is hard to move in several layers.

**Are there any returning visitors?**

Yes, if they had a good time, they will return to our other tour. They bring their families, couples or their friends. In this case, we know what we do is good.

**On which platforms do you promote the thematic tour?**

We advertise mostly on facebook, but more information can be found on our website.

**Do you have an office where the visitors can go?**

In every biggest point we have an office for example in Pécs or near the Croatian border.

**Approximately how much does it take to go through the thematic tour?**

I think it is achievable in 2-4 hours but it depends on the person's weight, age and his/her level of fitness.

Attractions

There are numerous backwaters and lakes in the area of Baranya, such as Boki-Danube, Outer Béda, Inner Béda, Lake Riha. It provides a fabulous sight when we sit on a canoe, grab a paddle and go on a journey to the home of fairy water lures, waterballs, and egrets. With the help of a guide, canoeing can be traversed by the zigzag exterior of Béda. With little luck we can observe the colorful bird world for example the brown kite, the gray boom, the kingfisher, and the water pipe. These tours are organized by the Danube-Drava National Park. You can also get an insight into the fishing site of Boki-Danube. At the end of the day, preparing and consuming the prey catches our time here.

The exploration of Miklós Zrínyi's demolished medieval university in Pécs began in 1985. Researchers found Roman remains columns, sculptures and among other things, gothic and renaissance memories and carvings. After the excavation they started to restore the building, as a result the building of the first university in Hungary became accessible. The Medieval University can be visited by a guide so we can get some information about the formation and the architectural story.

There are also 10 “E-learning trails” in the area of the Danube-Drava National Park, which can be seen by the visitors. Each of the trails includes a precise description of the accessibility, approach, route and general description of the study trail.

Those who love walking in the nature can find a perfect location in the southernmost mountainous region of Hungary, the highest block of Villány Mountains in Szársomlyó. There are 75 protected plant species on the mountain, of which 4 species can be found only in this area. Here the Danube-Drava National Park Directorate runs guided tour of the Villány Sculpture Park five times a week.

In nice weather, near Pécs, you have a beautiful view of the city and to the Mecsek line when you visit the top of the 197 meter Tv Tower. The open circular viewer is 80 meters from the ground so you can watch the Misina roof with 615 meters above sea level.



One of the other attractions is the Statue Park of Nagyharsány, which history dates back to 1967. In the early years domestic artists were invited and later foreign sculptors joined the creative work. For contemporary artists this place was a great place to build relationships and improve their knowledge. Among the creative artists we can find prominent masters like Gyula Bocz, István Bencsik and Wladislaw Tumkiewicz. The works from the area, made in the broadest possible studio, under the open sky, almost come to life in the sculpture park. Most of the sculptures are non-figurative: lonely arrays, twisted columns, strange idols, gemstone-like stones. Some are named by visitors, such as Villány's Venus, Columbus's egg.

The Mohács Historical Memorial Site, which was established at the site of Battle of Mohács 1526, commemorates the most memorable battle of Hungarian history and the fallen heroes. There is a reception center in its area, which has four levels for exhibitions and a café. From the dome-shaped upper level, guests have the opportunity to view the flower garden-shaped tombstone from the height. Visitors can also try archery.

A short sightseeing of the local historical collection of Bakonya, in a porch farmhouse with



typical folk architecture features is must to see. The collection presents contemporary consumer goods and furniture through furnished rooms.

## News

1. The Busó Festival is a traditional festival which is held in every spring. It starts on the last day of February and ends on the first week of March. This holiday is a winter farewell and a spring welcome. More information can be found on the website: [www.mohacsbusojaras.hu](http://www.mohacsbusojaras.hu)



2. There is a hiking movement in Baranya. Guided walks can only be performed on foot or running. Participants should avoid loud noise because of the protected animals. It is strictly forbidden to collect anything within the protected areas.

3. A weekend when everything is about bread in Palkonya. Everything you need to know about bread. Taste and follow the scent of bread. You can learn how to make bread from the best. Exciting workshops, star guests and family programs are waiting for you.



4. You can watch exciting run competition through the vineyards while tasting the specialties of the Villány wines. Of course the route can be reached on foot and by hiking, but it isn't so easy. You can find the information about the entry here:



[www.dulofutas.hu](http://www.dulofutas.hu). If you have more questions, you can write to this email address: [info@dulofutas.hu](mailto:info@dulofutas.hu).

## INTRODUCING LAKE TISZA ECOCENTER in POROSZLÓ, HUNGARY

- *thematic tour where you can enjoy the natural way of entertainment*



## Brief description of the thematic tour

## Map of Hungary



In Hungary we have a river called Tisza and also a lake called Tisza. Lake Tisza (Hungarian: Tisza-tó), also known as Kisköre Reservoir is the largest artificial lake in Hungary in the northern east part of Hungary (see map).

As part of the ongoing Tisza River flood control project, the Tisza Dam was built in 1973. Its filling was finished in the 1990s, resulting in a 127 km<sup>2</sup> lake. The lake is 27 km in length, with an average depth of 1.3 m and a maximum depth of 17 m; it contains 43 km<sup>2</sup> of small islands.

Following the reservoir's completion, Hungarians began to flock to the site for holidays, since it compared favorably with the crowded and expensive Lake Balaton, the traditional holiday site. As a result, tourist infrastructure has been developed on the reservoir - renamed Lake Tisza- and the government has designated it an official tourism destination.





*River Tisza*



*Lake Tisza*

The basic concept of the Ecocenter was provided by a study carried out by a reserachers' group following the cyanide-spill on Tisza Lake. The 2000 Baia Mare cyanide spill was a leak of cyanide near Baia Mare, Romania, into the Someş River by the gold mining company Aurul, a joint-venture of the Australian company Esmeralda Exploration and the Romanian government. The polluted waters eventually reached the Tisza in Hungary and then the Danube, killing numbers of fish in Hungary and Romania. Wildlife was particularly affected on the Tisza. According to the then new, on a stretch, virtually all living things were killed, and further south, in the Serbian section, 80% of the aquatic life was killed. 200 tons of it was the fish in these rivers.

The Ecocenter in Poroszló as an operation unit is a completely unique solution in Hungary and there is not a single recipe regarding its technical content or its operational content as all the ideas and solutions applied were unique and customized to the attributions and specialities of the given location.

The main aim of the management of the Ecocenter was to create a visitor center, which is very rare not only in Hungary but all over Europe, where it is possible to connect tourism and nature conservation. Further goals were to increase the role of Lake Tisza and its surroundings in the field of tourism, to create a positive territory, a positive place to live for people living in the area and also to increase the number of workplaces in order to provide suitable conditions for possible investors and for responsible tourists who wanted to conserve

and protect nature with all its values and heritage. The Ecocenter was an investment of 2.2 billion (where 1.9 billion was from the European Union) and it was finished by 2012.

The present thematic tour can be made around Lake Tisza, which is the second largest lake in Hungary on the Great Hungarian Plain in the eastern part of the country. Its total surface is 127 km<sup>2</sup> and consists of a variety of large open water surfaces and shallow water, countless dead-end channels and islands. Lake Tisza belongs to Hortobágy National Park, thus it is part of the UNESCO World Heritage programme since 1999. In 2010 Lake Tisza was awarded the title European Destination of Excellence by the European Commission.

Lake Tisza offers a choice of recreational activities such as hiking, swimming or enjoying any water sports. You can enjoy beach life on any of the 6 public beaches along the shore, relax in the spas of Tiszafüred or try extreme water sports during the day then have fun in the busy nightlife. As the water level ranges from deep to shallow, the native species of fish change accordingly. Fishing is allowed if all relevant rules are kept. The lake has an exceptional wildlife attracting nature-lovers in every season. Visitors can also go bird-watching on some of the small islands and they can study local birds in their own nests without disturbing them. Our tour will guide you to the Ecocenter in Poroszló.





### Objectives of the tour

The EcoCenter was opened on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2012. The EU wanted the management of the EcoCenter to accomplish certain indicators. There were 11 main indicators altogether. One indicator for example was creating workplaces. In the plan it was 20 new workplaces to be created, but when the management started to calculate, it was suddenly 35 and the managing director together with the lord mayor of Poroszló agreed on employing 35 people. Even in 2018, 6 years after the launch of the EcoCenter, they still had 35 employees, which means that they outperformed their plan. Another indicator of the EU project was the number of visitors. The plan was to have 200.000 visitors annually. After 3 years the EcoCenter reached the desired number of visitors and in the fourth year they even outperformed that number, because in the first year the number of visitors was 155.000, then it was 162.000, and in the next 3 years the number of visitors were more than 200.000.

The objective of building the EcoCenter was first of all regional development, developing touristic attractions and making workplaces for the local people. The management of the visitor center considers cooperation with the local people very important.

The main objective of the tour they provide is to present the flora and fauna living around Lake Tisza to the visitors and let them explore the surrounding green environment themselves. The key concepts are nature conservation and sustainability and they want to draw the attention of the visitors to behave responsibly in nature, to be proud of our natural heritage and to preserve it as much as we can by giving them good examples.





### Target group of the tour

The target group of the EcoCenter was and it is still the families. According to the managing director of the EcoCenter the ideal is when there is a mother, a father and 2 children between the age 6 and 14 because the majority of the attractions are developed for that age group. Of course it is also good if there is a father and one child, or it is also good if there are more children, but if they are older than 14, probably they won't visit for example the playroom, because it would be too boring for them. A very young child who is between 3 and 6 can be tired very soon and maybe wants to leave early. But a retired couple can also enjoy their time here, and they might want to take their grandchildren the next time with them. The idea of the target audience did not change since the beginning, so the ideal target audience is the family with at least 1 child.

As the managing director conceived it, the website of the EcoCenter is connected with Google-analytics service and he believes that searching on the net somehow shows the reality. 30-33 % of the Hungarian visitors (which is 92-93% of the total) are from Budapest, he knows it from the questionnaire they carried out in 2017. So basically one-third of the Hungarian visitors come from Budapest, and then the second biggest group is from the big cities around Poroszló, such as Eger, Miskolc, Debrecen and Szolnok. The third group comes from East-Hungary, such as Békéscsaba, then from the North part of the Danube, such as Tatabánya, Győr, because it is comfortable from there on the motorway. Unfortunately from Pécs and Kaposvár region they have the fewest visitors.



### Partners/service providers of the tour

Soon after the opening of the Ecocenter, several village houses were turned into guesthouses and shortly afterwards their number increased. As the managing director of the Ecocenter put it “if there are 100 guesthouses, it means there are 100 different qualities, ranging from poor to excellent, because village tourism always means private properties”. The different qualities caused problems, therefore the Touristic Service in Poroszló had to do something to solve it. Thus, the Ecocenter as a member of the Service elaborated a system to rank the quality of the guesthouses. Every two years an expert on tourism visits the houses that want to get the quality rank and he then decides if they can get it or not. Any houses can apply for this quality badge, and if they meet the requirements, they will get a certificate that they can put on their houses. At present there are approximately 30-32 houses with this quality certificate.

The village people are always very proud of having a certificate like that. And, what is more, they can put their advertisements in Ecocenter’s papers/publications for lower money, thus advertising is cheaper for them. There are 3000 people living in Poroszló and at present they have 100-110 small guesthouses, which can accommodate 4-6 people. In case tourists want to stay in a hotel, they have to travel 8-10 kms to the nearest one because there are no big hotels in Poroszló. But what they have in Poroszló is not village tourism – according to the managing director, because for him village tourism is not simply renting a guesthouse and giving the key to the tourists, but rather it involves introducing the animals and farm life to the visitors.



Other services of the visitor center include a buffet and a gift-shop. Both of them are open during the whole year. They are not run by the Ecocenter, because both of them are operated by outsider enterprises. They rent the place from the Ecocenter and they sell whatever they want to sell. The Ecocenter does not have a word in what they offer.

They also have a coin-machine for souvenir coins, which visitors like so much. The company who brought the machine there said that in Poroszló more coins are made by the visitors than in Buda castle in Budapest.

The following map shows you all the places/services you can find in the Ecocenter.



- 1 Főbejárat, pénztár  
Main entrance, cassa
- 2 Kalandjászóter  
Adventure playing ground
- 3 Ökocentrum főépület, ÓRIASAKVÁRIUM  
Ecocentre main building, GIANT AQUARIUM
- 4 Kormorános-tó  
Cormorants' Lake
- 5 Vidrák külső medencéje  
Otters' outdoor pool
- 6 Madárröpdé  
Birds' aviary
- 7 Mocsári teknősök  
European pond turtles

- 8 Ragadozómadár röpdé  
Birds' aviary
- 9 Ékszerteknősök  
Pondsliders
- 10 Sarkantus teknős  
African spurred tortoise
- 11 Kismadarak röpdéje  
Small birds' aviary
- 12 Vörösörökák  
Red foxes
- 13 Aranykakólok  
Golden jackals
- 14 Borz  
European badger

- 15 Állatsimogató  
Petting zoo
- 16 Juhfiélek bemutatója  
Display of traditional sheep
- 17 Madárpark  
Birds' Park
- 18 Tisza-tó gát felőli (3.sz.) kapu, pénztár  
Gate No3 (entrance/exit), cassa
- 19 Tisza-tó kikötő: GPS-es csónak-tűrék, kishalás kirándulások  
Lake Tisza Pier
- 20 Rönkjászóter  
Log playground
- 21 Pelikános-tó  
Pelicans' pond

- 22 Nyuszijudvar  
Rabbit run
- 23 Hagyományörző baromfiudvar  
Traditional poultry run
- 24 Poroszlói Tájház  
Village Museum
- 25 Halászkazán  
Fishermen's tools display
- 26 Fácánok  
Pheasants
- 27 Dámszarvasok  
Fallow deer
- 28 Európai őz  
Floe deer

- 29 Sportpálya  
Sport court
- 30 Tutajos-tó vízi játszóter  
Wooden rafts water playground
- 31 Bala figurák  
Straw bale figures
- 32 Sövénylabirintus  
Hedge labyrinth
- 33 Rendezvénytéri (2.sz.) kapu  
Gate No2 (entrance/exit), cassa
- 34 Rendezvénytér  
Festival arena
- 35 Akadálymentes horgászhelyek  
Fishing platforms for disabled



As far as other services of the EcoCenter are concerned, try organize different concerts and events on certain occasions. In the activity plan of the EcoCenter it was stated that they would operate as destination managers, which means that they would be responsible for organizing events for the village people as they have the proper capacity for that. There are two events where they are only partners, but regarding all the other events they are responsible for organizing and financing them. Programs include concerts, for example they recently had a Wellhello (popular Hungarian band, established in 2014) concert for 6 million HUF, and the concert was free for anybody.

If we look out of the glass windows of the EcoCenter on the first floor, we can see the place where they usually hold concerts or other outdoor events, although the place itself is not in the ownership of the EcoCenter as there is a fence, but they can organize different events there. Usually there are 4-5000 people on such concerts.

Another similar place for example is the beach, which is also free for the visitors. The managing director of the EcoCenter told me one of his childhood stories, which is the following: He remembers when he was a child -he used to live in a small village, called Egercsehi-, there were great singers and performers (György Korda and Judit Szűcs) invited to the village on special occasions, such as Easter festive or harvest, etc, and the village could pay for them because they had a mine. But when the mine was closed, there was nobody to finance such events. In Poroszló, they have the EcoCenter now, which attracts Hungarian and foreign tourists as well and almost every week there are programs for the visitors from all age-groups. These programs can be found on their website and they also have a booklet, which gives details about where to go and what to do at the weekend in Poroszló.

Last but not least it is worth mentioning that the entrance ticket to the EcoCenter is not just a simple entrance ticket, but it is also a card for certain discounts, which means that the visitors can have lunch on discount prices with the ticket at the local restaurants. Furthermore, the EcoCenter gives vouchers to people who provide accommodation for visitors for at least one night and with that voucher the visitors can buy the entrance ticket to the EcoCenter on discount price. For school classes the EcoCenter offers a special program-package in cooperation with a company providing touristic services, which is a kind of tie-in-sale issue and school classes can get a really reduced price with the so-called EGYÜTT (TOGETHER) program.

## Interview

The following interview was made with Mr János Kiss, the managing director of Lake Tisza Ecocenter on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

In the following you can read the summary of the interview.

*-Can you please summarize the history and the development of the Ecocenter briefly? What was the basic concept of developing this visitor center?*

The history of the Ecocenter goes back to 2000 when there was the cyanide pollution. The volume of cyanide pollution of the river was 7%. The cyanide can be visualized as a comet, which is quite solid and swims down the river. The river is connected to Lake Tisza with channels, where there are flood-gates, and the engineers were informed about the pollution in time, thus they had enough time to close the gates. The 7% pollution of the river was not as huge as the wave, which was created by the media. It is also important to note that the lake itself was not polluted. Sensationism and the media enlarged the problem very much and for weeks only dead and suffering fish could be seen on TV. This had a negative effect on tourism and less people wanted to visit this region. However, they were constantly telling the press and the journalists to come and see it themselves, they rather insisted on writing about the dead fish. As a consequence of this, the investors stopped being active in the region unfortunately. But I, as an experienced professional in tourism was asked by the then government to elaborate an action-plan to help tourism recover as soon as possible. Our task was to find out what could be done in order to recover the ruined respect urgently. So we immediately started working in a team to collect all the useful ideas and at the same time we had to calculate how much it would cost. Finally we came out with a plan and handed it to the government, but we did not get any money for the realization of our plans. No help and no financial support arrived from them. Nature cured itself slowly, which means that we were right when we said that the cyanide pollution was not that dangerous. The fish supply was substituted and tourists started to come again. 2 years after the pollution only the bad memories of the event remained. But we still had the drawings and our plans with our ideas, among which there was the plan of a huge visitor center, museum, exhibition, boating, etc....so we planned something which can be a great attraction in this village. The lord mayor of Poroszló became the leader of our initiative and supported us in everything. Around 2002-2003, slowly, but with enthusiasm we began to work.



The development of the Water Promenade was the so-called button for the coat, which means we created something small first in order to make a bigger project. So the button for the coat was implemented for 100 million HUF. Then, we wanted a complex, big building near the Water Promenade, which was the first phase. It was opened in 2006 and approximately 30.000 people visited it annually. When Hungary joined the EU in 2004 and the EU funds were available, we were sure to open a Zoo and aquarium as part of the regional development plan. There were 3 attractions at that time in the North-Hungarian region applying for the fund, and our plan was one of them. We were lucky to get the EU fund for touristic attraction development. The cost of the project was 2.2 billion HUF totally and 1.9 billion was given by the government. The building started in January 2011 and was finished in April 2012.

*-How many employees does the Ecocenter have?*

We have 35 employees. In winter we have less, around 25 people working for us, but it is normal, as we have less work to do in winter.

*-Do you provide any training for your employees?*

There are trainings for tour-guides, but only limited number of employees has finished such trainings. I offer trainings for those who really work hard and if I am sure that he/she wants to stay at our company for long time. I don't want anybody to finish the training and then work for another company later. And rarely, but we provide trainings for our employees about visitor-management, visitor's-psychology, etc.

*-Who are your employees? Are they from Poroszló?*

Yes, it was very important for us to employ only local people, people who live in Poroszló and only 2 employees are coming from nearby villages, and the majority are from Poroszló. I could have taken an already skilled professional staff from Eger with me, but our idea was to have Poroszló residents only. I myself moved to Poroszló from Eger. And of course the lord mayor of Poroszló insisted on employing residents only. But of course we did not want to discriminate anybody in a negative way, as you know the EU has its principles about it, which means for example that we cannot discriminate people simply because they come from let's say Békéscsaba. We had to find the best workers.

*-Were your employees given methodological training then?*

Yes, because unfortunately there were very few skilled people among the Poroszló residents, and I remember on the very first training I had to tell them that the very first thing

they have to do is to greet the visitors and some of them asked me “really?” You see, I had a lot to do then. We had to put a lot of energy into human resources, the employees were given different trainings about how to behave, what to wear and many others. But now I am happy to say that the tiring work was worth doing, because everything was returned.

*-How many tour operators do you have? Are they qualified tour guides?*

We have just a couple of tour guides who already have their certificate.

*-Do you have a marketing team?*

Hah... (laugh), yes, we are 3 in the team, Edit, Andrea and me. We three sit down and do brainstorming. We are the big team.

*-Where do you get money from for organizing the events?*

From nobody. There is not a single forint coming from the government, from ministries or from anywhere else. We never asked money from anybody. We are like a private company. We only have money from the visitors' buying the entrance ticket. I know if I had to ask money for the operation of the EcoCenter, then I would have to be devoted to this side or to that side and I would have to do certain things I would not like to do. I don't need the politicians; I just need the visitors who buy the entrance ticket. Every year I make a business plan, I calculate the income and the expenses.

*-Do you have foreign visitors?*

Yes, the majority of the foreign tourists are from Poland. You might have seen that our website can also be found in Polish language as well. 7-8% is the proportion of the foreign tourists visiting us. We have a lot of Belgian, Danish tourists and also from Estonia a lot. The majority of them come with their families or in big companies.

*-Do you advertise in Poland as well?*

Yes, we have partners, tourist agencies there and we buy platform to advertise in their papers or on their websites. In Slovakia for example we have made a huge billboard campaign recently.

*-Do you spend a lot of money on advertising? How do you reach your visitors?*

Well, according to the scientific views, it is advised to spend approximately 5% of the total budget on marketing and this amount is 20 million forint in our case, which is not a big money in tourism sector. In Hungary for example we do a huge billboard campaign every May in 30-35 Hungarian cities. Furthermore we have a so-called media-package, which means that we are given appearance on this or on that channel, plus we appear in certain

magazines. We are in contact with some agencies and they always tell us about their newest offers. We have our website, I write the news on the website in the evenings, and we also have a Facebook site. And what is also important for us is the word of mouth, because people realize that we are a correct company, and the price-value ratio is also proper, so they will talk about us to their friends and other family members, and this is what matters. And there is something else: as we are very new and very unique -in terms of the underwater world- there are several TV channels coming to us to shoot a video about the center. We never ask money from them, and I am very happy that they bring our fame back to their hometowns.

*-How did and how do you make the prices? Do the prices change in winter?*

For 5 years we did not change the amount of the entrance fees. And after 5 years we increased the prices a little bit, but we also offered more. So I ask more for the entrance fee only if I offer more services for the visitors. But in some cases the entrance fee went down, for example in case of the winter fees, or group fees, or fees for retired people. We have different prices in winter as usually there is 'life' on Lake Tisza until 23 October and after that there is nothing, but of course we do not close. After 23 October you cannot go on a boat-trip, and I also have to close places where there is no heating. Or there are some animals, which hide during winter time, so it is absolutely understandable to have a so-called 'summer-operation' and "winter-operation" in the Ecocenter. The winter period lasts until the end of the next March. And in winter it is impossible to attract as many people as in summer, so I think it is correct to give the entrance-tickets for lower money in case I offer less service.

*-Do you need fewer employees in winter?*

Yes, there are some employees who finish working with us in October and if they want, they can return in March. For example in winter I have just one cash-desk, but in summer I have 3. 10-12 people have temporary contract with us.

*-Are you in contact with the visitors anyhow?*

Yes, we play with them. There are games and exercises we offer for them to play with us, exercises like finding the names of certain animals from the given letters. And of course the exercises can be played in English language as well, so all the foreigners can have this form of fun with us as well. They fill in the form, give it to the receptionist when they leave, and every month there is draw and the winner will be given a present, like a book or any objects. You know, people like getting presents. And this is another way how I get

information about where our visitors come from. I don't do statistics about it, because GDPR does not allow it.

*-Would you offer your EcoCenter for team-building events?*

Well, we have a big conference room which can seat 100-120 people, and there is a small one for 10-12 people. But it is difficult to organize conferences in Poroszló, because there is no hotel here, not to mention a thermal spa. Although we tried to organize conferences, but it did not really work. If somebody wants to organize a conference around the Lake Tisza, they will do it in Balneum Hotel in Tiszafüred, because the accommodation, the spa and the food is at the same place. They won't come here, because we can only give them the place. We tried offering our place for team-building activities, but we don't have good experience about it.

*-So do you use the conference room for something else?*

Yes, on one wall of the conference room, there is a temporary exhibition, and the other wall is covered with nature photographs. On 20-21 October for example we organize a lego-festival in the conference room. The event is called: Cube-fest MINI. They use the Hungarian version of Lego, which is called KLIKK and there is no additional fee for participating on the lego-festival. So the visitors just have to buy the entrance fee to the EcoCenter and all day they can play in the conference room as well. This means combining leisure with pleasure. And usually the village has its Christmas celebration here, because it is warm in here, there is heating, etc.

*- How active are the visitors during the tours? How much do they ask, etc?*

Yes, of course they can ask. For example you have the information desk at the entrance. There are always 2 ladies sitting there. And those ladies can answer the questions about where to find the toilet, and they can also answer the questions about how the owl lives in its natural environment. They can give general information about almost anything or if they don't know the answer, then they for sure know the person who knows the answer. We wanted to have this information desk, so our visitors can feel secure and feel comfortable here. And further information about the animals can be read on the boards next to them, in Hungarian and in English as well. Moreover, we have a booklet of course and the main information about us can be found there. We also have an audio-guide, where there is a material, which is longer than an hour and visitors can ask for it at the information desk.

*-Do the visitors go through the whole visitor-center or do they finish their tour earlier?*

Well, it is very interesting. The majority of the visitors consider us as an entertaining center or something like that, where there are natural things and they are in green environment. They are not really interested in the animals, they just pass by, want to know the name of them, take a photo and go on. But it is very OK for us, we don't want to push it to a direction where we give tons of information about the animals, I am sure we would lose visitors. We are not a nature park, you know. People don't want to digest too much information. But I have to tell you that we are prepared for having visitors who are more enthusiastic about the details and want to know more about nature and animals, but we really don't have much demand for that. We have a mini-lab as well, but it is not much visited. We are like a "nature shopping-center" or a "shopping-center in nature", where the visitors just want to stroll, there is music, and birds and other animals are here and there. They don't want to deepen in that; they are completely satisfied with what we offer for them. And this refers to approximately 90-95% of the visitors.

We have a 3D cinema, where we have a 12-minute long film about us; the title is "4 seasons at Lake Tisza". It is a kind of advertisement for the lake of course, which is here, 100 meters from us. We asked a video-company and for one year they were coming to us to shoot the film and they prepared this 12-minute long video for us. There are 50 chairs in the cinema, and every hour and half hour we start the film, which means that we can show the film 17 times one day.

*-Well, your visitor center offers a lot for the guests.*

Yes, but officially we are a Zoo, just like the Budapest Zoo or the zoo in Nyíregyháza. There isn't a term like visitor center in legal terms. It is just the marketing. So what it means for us is that the well-being of the animals is of top priority. But while our history goes back to 6 years only, the history of the Budapest Zoo is older than 100 years, so there is a big difference. We are like kindergarten kids, we are young, we need more experience, but that is natural.

*-Do you get feedback from your visitors?*

Yes, we have a guestbook and they can share their experience or ideas with us. And we are always very happy to get feedback. From the more than 200.000 visitors usually there are 10 who complain about something. So, yearly we have about 10 comments, complaints in the guestbook. About what? Well, there was somebody who wrote that the rabbits were not given enough water and there was too much direct sun for them. We examined the case of

course on that day and we saw that in one rabbit-cage the drinking-trough was turned upside down. So we stabilized the drinking-trough and took a photo of it and sent it to the person who wrote that comment.

*-Thank you very much for the interview.*

### Attractions

#### 1 Europe's largest fresh-water aquarium system

One of the many popular attractions in the Ecocenter is the amazing underwater world, which is the largest fresh-water aquarium system of Europe with a capacity of over 735.000 litres. The inner aquariums are directly connected to an artificial lake next to the building, so they form a complex of huge freshwater system. There are more than 40 native Hungarian fish species, among them pikes, wels catfish or carps. Probably the most spectacular inhabitants are the fishes of sturgeon family: European, diamond and starry sturgeons. A



popular entertainment programme is offered to the guests 3 times daily: the feeding of the otters quickly became a funny "theatre show". Thanks to the solutions of the

3D technics the audience will feel like being part of the events shown on the screen and experience a boat-trip on Lake Tisza on a bright autumn day. The boat takes viewers through untouched jungles of rustling reeds, goes around the Bird Reserve to glance into the life of rare and protected birds like great white egrets, herons, common coots, black-tailed godwits and show the annual mayfly swarming. If there are foreign visitors, they can ask for the version with English narration at the central information desk after arrival. There is a permanent exhibition: A "night in the forest" exhibition, which shows Hungary's amphibians and reptiles in terrariums on the ground floor.

## 2 Macroworld Earthinfo room

If visitors want to discover the smallest creatures of nature and secrets of miniature world, they can enter the world of them through microscope's lenses on the first floor.

## 3 Recreation Park

The main building of Lake Tisza Ecocenter is surrounded by a leisure park of more than 7 hectares. It was designed in the spirit of 'exploring nature'. It is not only a relaxing promenade or a zoo where visitors can closely observe animals but also an amusement park with challenging playgrounds - a real fun for families. As the Local Village Museum of Poroszló also belongs to these gardens, together with a traditional poultry run and a display of old fishing tools you may participate in a short symbolic trip back to the 19th century.

There is an artificial lake behind the main building with cormorants and mallards - playing grounds - pelicans - fallow deer - roe deer - pheasants - a display of old fishing tools - rabbit run - traditional poultry run - - funnyboating on wooden rafts - straw bale figures - hedge labyrinth and many more.



tour routes are available at a reasonable price.

## 4 Boat-tours on the Lake

A small pier on the Lake right next to Ecocenter provides a starting point for romantic ship tours. You may from here take off for a boat tour supported by GPS navigation: the choice is yours, 12 different

## News

WHAT TO SEE  
AND WHERE TO FIND?  
**A local itinerary**



Lake Tisza  
Ecocentre  
POROSZLÓ

### 1 Free printed guide for the foreign tourists

If the tourists would happen to feel lost on arrival to the Ecocenter, there is a free printed local guide to assist them in English and in German to find everything comfortably during their stay.

### 2 Programs for autumn and winter

13-14 October: Lake Tisza Birds Weekend, focus on birds: exhibition and fair



20 October: Saturday of outdoor ovens: tasting of traditional oven-made dishes







27 October: Halloween- beauty contest of carved pumpkins

### 3 Entrance Ticket = Discount Card

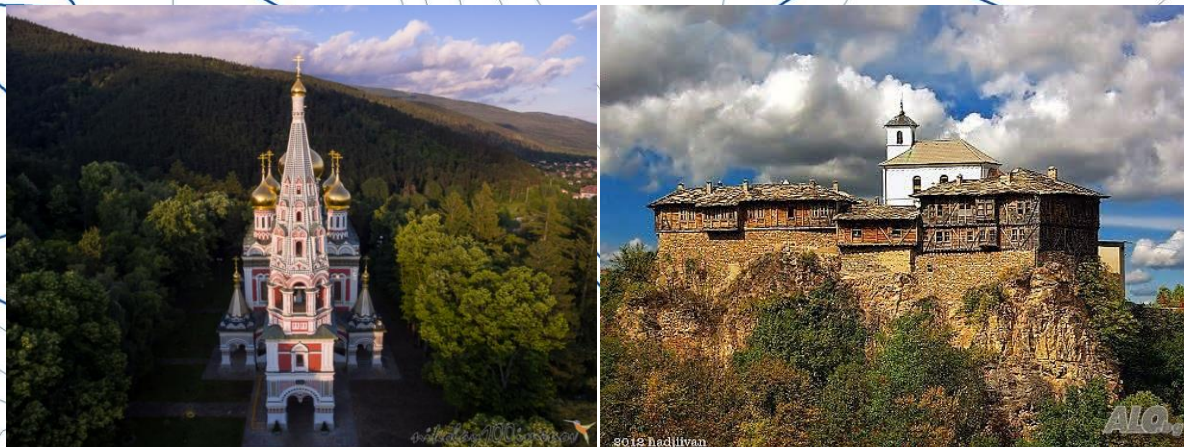
Several touristic businesses in Poroszló provide discount prices to Ecocenter's visitors in case you show your ticket. The website of the Ecocenter gives more info about it.



## BULGARIA

### STARA PLANINA (BALKAN MOUNTAIN) – THE SPINE OF BULGARIA

Thematic tour 1: Orthodox monasteries in the North Balkan;



Thematic tour 2: The Bulgarian rose in the South Balkan



## Introduction

The current booklet presents the Balkan Mountain (Stara planina) in Bulgaria, which extends from the Timok River valley near the Serbian border, spreading out eastward for about 330 miles (530 km) into several spurs, rising to 2,376 m. at [Botev](#) peak, and breaking off abruptly at Cape Emine on the [Black Sea](#).

The Balkan Mountain forms the major divide between the [Danube River](#) (north) and the [Maritsa River](#) (south) and is crossed by about 20 passes (notably Shipka Pass), by several railway lines, and by the [Iskŭr River](#). For this reason, it is also called “the spine of Bulgaria” dividing the country in half. It is a mountain range which offers everything: even green meadows, venerable oak forests, tender fir trees, 1000 metres deep abyss, numerous waterfalls, population of bears, goats, studs of pasturing stallions etc.



### Thematic tour 1: Orthodox monasteries in the North Balkan

#### Brief description of the tour

The current thematic tour aims at presenting The Balkan Mountain Range which is known as the "spine" of Bulgaria. The landscape is a combination of large high mountain meadows, two thousand meters high peaks which rise from the plains on both sides and steep

impassable canyons on their slopes. There are no lakes in these mountains, but it is compensated by a number of waterfalls. Most of the territory of the Central Balkan is a protected area – Central Balkan National Park, one of the tree national parks in Bulgaria. More than half of the Bulgaria's flora has been identified within the Park, and of these, 10 species and 2 subspecies are endemic, and are found nowhere else in the world. Over 130 higher plants and animals encountered in the Central Balkan National Park are listed in the Bulgarian and the World Red Book of Endangered Species. The area is inhabited by most of Europe's large mammals – bears, boars, deer, wolf, chamois.



The Balkan region includes two main types of terrain that define various types of tourist sites and it can be divided into two areas: Predbalkan and Podbalkan.

Predbalkan includes the northern foothills of the mountain, the name of the area literally means front-of-the-Balkan and this region

presents the first thematic tour “Orthodox monasteries of the North Balkan”. The area includes towns such as Gabrovo, Elena, Troyan, Tryavna. Those towns are central to Bulgarian Revival as focal points for the development of art, crafts, architecture, education and the culture of the period as a whole. Here are located some of the biggest and most magnificent monasteries which are top tourist destinations. So the first thematic tour is related to religious and pilgrimage tourism.

### Objectives of the tour

The first thematic tour aims at presenting some of the biggest and most visited Bulgarian monasteries, which date back for centuries. They present the Eastern Orthodox Christianity and are holy places for many pilgrims. Travelers would also explore the nature diversity – steep slopes northward and lowlands and valleys southward.

In addition, the longest, oldest and most famous hiking trail in Bulgaria follows the main ridge of the Balkan Mountains. Kom–Emine, known during the socialist era as the Friendship Route, begins at Kom Peak (2,016 m) in the west near the border with Serbia,

continues east for some 650 km (400 mi) until it reaches the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast at Cape Emine.

Due to its length and altitude, Kom–Emine counts among Europe's longest uninterrupted high-mountain trails; it is Bulgaria's longest, oldest and most famous hiking trail. Kom–Emine forms part of the wider E3 European long distance path. The trail's average elevation is 735 m (2,411 ft). The middle section, Kom–Emine's highest, coincides with the Central Balkan National Park and regularly rises above 2,000 m.

### Target group of the tour

Because of the many different attractions the Balkan mountain range can be a top destination for all kinds of tourism. Hiking and climbing are among the most popular sports in the area.

Religious and pilgrimage tourism is becoming more popular worldwide, for which Bulgaria can be extremely grateful because of the many notable temples and monasteries. The outstanding diversity in cultural, natural and architectural aspects that it can offer its visitors is undeniable. Balkan range monasteries gather pilgrims at different ages. In the last few years there has been an increase of 7-10% in pilgrimage tourism which makes this thematic tour an important attraction on national level. In addition to the Bulgarian citizens, the monastery also witnessed high interest in foreign visitors - mainly from Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia.

### Attractions

The great influence of the mountain in Bulgarian history has a strong impact on the large number of monasteries especially in the northern slopes of Balkan mountain range. Most Bulgarian monasteries emerged far from big cities, usually in mountainous areas, where monks made copies of religious books and established schools dedicated to Christian and Slavonic literature and art in a peaceful and quiet atmosphere. The Bulgarians chose beautiful spots for their monasteries. Those places offer wonderful view and according to some beliefs, they are closer to God. So the first thematic tour begins.

#### 1. The Glozhene Monastery

This is the first tourist destination of the thematic tour. It is an Eastern Orthodox monastery situated on one stone edge in the



western part of the Balkan Mountain range, near the village of Glozhene.

Glozhene Monastery “St. George the Victorious” was established in the middle of 13th century by the Ukrainian prince Glozh. He built there a monastery dedicated to the icon “St. George the Victorious”, which he carried with him all the way from the land of Ukraine. The legends says how the icon constantly disappeared from the holy cloister and later on it was found by the monks on a hill near the village where the present day monastery is situated.

Monks interpreted those mystique disappearances of the icon as a sign of God and for that reason they built a new monastery on the hills where it lies today. Actually, two monasteries (in the village and on the hill) have existed for a short period of time in parallel and they were connected with a tunnel, carved into a rock.

The tunnel is the only one which has remained from the time when the monastery was established and only through it the terrace of the monastery is accessible. This tunnel was used many times by the Apostle of Freedom, Vassil Levski as an escape route when he was pursued by Ottoman troops. Unfortunately, the tunnel was filled up during an earthquake in 1928.



During the Ottoman invasion Glozhene Monastery continued to function, but it faced financial difficulties, because it lost its ownership of the villages Malak Izvor and Glozhene, which had been bestowed by the prince Glozh. In the beginning of 18th century a new monastery was built, it was called “St. George the Victorious”. In order to escape from the violation of Turks, the monks established their cloister on a high, inaccessible rock terrace.

In the 18th and 19th century monks from Glozhene Monastery contributed to the development of school teaching. A monastery school was opened in the 17th century.

The hiding place of Vassil Levski is still preserved in the tunnel. The first revolutionary committee was established near the monastery in the village of Golyam Izvor. This additionally attracts many visitors intested in history.

The monastery is functional and it consists of a church and two-storey residential



building which form a closed yard around the church, which makes the monastery looks like a real castle. Glozhene Monastery offers accommodation for 20 visitors and has a monastery restaurant.

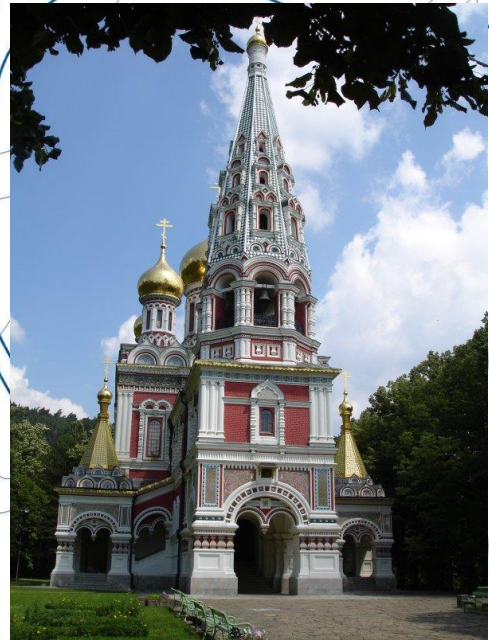
## 2. The Memorial Temple of the Birth of Christ

Better known as the Shipka Memorial Church or Shipka Monastery, The Memorial Temple of the Birth of Christ is the next stop of the religious route. The Bulgarian Orthodox church was built near the town of Shipka in Stara Planina between 1885 and 1902. The church has a cruciform dome, a rectilinear nave, and three apses.

The monastery church is very impressive. It is a real masterpiece of architecture and was declared as a monument of culture. The golden domes and crosses are shining far from the distance and the versicolored inlays are like alive.

The Shipka Monastery is also a functioning one. Its annual celebration is on December 25. The monastery does not offer overnight accommodations. There are informative brochures and souvenirs for sale on the premises.

The monastery is located in the immediate vicinity of the city Shipka, 13 km from Kazanlak. There are many signs along the road providing directions. The closest Tourist Information Centre is in Kazanlak city.



### 3. Sokolski monastery

The Sokolski Monastery is a Bulgarian Orthodox monastery founded in 1833 and named after its founder Yosif Sokolski. It is located 15 km southwest of Gabrovo on the northern slopes of the Balkan Mountains in the Bulgarka Nature Park and is close to the Sokolovo cave.

The monastery has a big yard surrounded by residential and utility buildings. In the centre of the yard, in 1865 the famous Bulgarian master Kolyu Ficheto constructed a big stone fountain with eight taps. The whole monastery was built during the Bulgarian National Revival with the strong support of the people of Gabrovo and the local villages.

In a short period of time during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 the monastery was a hospital.

The monastery was inhabited only by monks until the mid-20th century, when, in 1959, the nuns from the Convent of Gabrovo moved there. Since then, Sokolski Monastery has been functioning as a convent. The nuns brought valuable icons and documents with them when they moved to the monastery.



One can reach Sokolski Monastery driving along the road to Gabrovo and then take the turn to the village of Charkovo and ethnographic complex “Etura”. Bus transport is available as well.





The monastery offers accommodation and it has at its disposal rooms with either a shared bath on the floor or a private one. Just outside the monastery visitors can have a meal at a small restaurant.

## Thematic tour 2: The Bulgarian rose in the South Balkan

### Brief description



Podbalkan which is the second type of terrain in the Balkan mountain range includes the southern foothills of the Balkan forming a valley between the mighty mountain and Sredna gora; the name of the area can be literally translated as under-the-Balkan. It includes the towns of Sliven, Karlovo, Sopot, Kazanlak which are home towns of some of the most prominent freedom-fighters during the Ottoman rule until 1878. The area is also called the Rose Valley because of the specialization in the growing of roses and the production of rose oil.

The Shipka pass is a scenic mountain pass through the Balkan Mountains in Bulgaria. The pass connects the towns of Gabrovo and Kazanlak where to the south, at the foot of the mountain, is located the Rose Valley – the place where some of the most fragrant roses in the world are grown. So the second thematic tour begins.



### Objectives

It is believed that the best rose oil in the world comes from the shrub *Rosa damascena* (Damask rose) that, its name notwithstanding, grows best in the Valley of Roses near the Bulgarian town of Kazanlak. Bulgaria also produces around a ton and a half of the precious liquid each year, or close to 70% of the rose oil produced in the world. That's why the region is worth visiting especially when the roses bloom. Tourists would explore the path of the rose oil production.

Bulgarians also celebrate their deep connection to the *Rosa Damascena* – the Bulgarian oil-bearing rose and all the gifts it has blessed the Rose Valley with for centuries on the Rose Festival in Kazanlak. Cultural, dance, music, artistic, social and sports events happen across the town and the surrounding villages in May-June. Attend concerts, workshops, expos, parades and other activities for all individual tastes with the Festival parade and the Rose Queen coronation being the culmination of the events.

### Target group

The rose valley is a top destination for foreign tourists, especially from Japan, China, South Korea, India, France, Russia, Algeria and Turkey. They really appreciate the quality of the Bulgarian rose oil and rose products. They are also interested of the methods for rose oil production. That's why the Rose museum in Kazanlak is one of the most visited places in the country.





### Attractions

#### 1. The Rose Valley and the Rose Festival in Kazanlak

Bulgaria is one of the biggest producers of rose oil in the world. The Rose is the Symbol of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian roses are inheritors of the so called Damascena rose which was brought to our lands during the 17th century. The Rose valley of Bulgaria includes Karlovo and Kazanlak fields with area about 3,300 square kilometers - extending more than 130 km along the Stara Planina Mountain, surrounded by two mountains, which helps creating a specific climate.

The festival of the Rose was held for the first time in 1903 organized by the citizens of Kazanlak and was dedicated to the beauty and charity. The rose cultivation and rose industry have been kept by generations of enterprising people from the valley. Every year, during the first weekend of June, local community organizes the annual Festival of Roses. Today the Rose Festival is an international event, visited and enjoyed by thousands of tourists and guests of Kazanlak. Nowadays the Rose Festival in the unique Valley of the Roses has come to be a symbolic reflection of the lifestyle, the spirit and the cultural patterns, typical for Kazanlak region.





The festival program includes the traditional rose-picking ritual and rose - distillation that gives you a true feeling of authenticity and the coronation of Queen Rose. The festival ends with a street procession in which the main role is allotted for the participants of the International Folklore Festival. There are other interesting events, taking place during the festival weekend - choir a cappella and folklore concerts, art shows, exhibitions, wine-tasting, and shows.



## 2. Museum of the Rose, Kazanlak

Part of the larger historical museum in Kazanlak, Bulgaria, the Rose Museum started out as a temporary exhibition staged to honor the region's relationship with the oil-producing flower.

Rose production and even the greater part the trading with the rose oil became one of the most attractive visit cards on Kazanlak region and the Bulgarian agriculture. Half a century ago it was said: Rose culture in Bulgaria whose purpose is extraction of rose oil, is not only the oldest and the most charming industry in our country but also exceptionally and specific in the region.

Different types of Bulgarian rose oil are produced through a few different extraction methods. The steam distillation process allows for intermediate cooling and produces oil called attar of roses, while a process of solvent extraction produces rose absolute, and supercritical carbon dioxide extraction produces an essential oil referred to as absolute or as a CO<sub>2</sub> extract, which is the type most often used in perfumery.



The Museum of Roses has a rich collection of objects, pictures and documents that

reveal the history of Bulgarian oleaginous-roses growing. These



exhibits are

located in three halls. Inside the museum one can see instruments used for processing rose gardens, utensils for storage and export of rose oil and rose water. There is also a reproduction of a rose-oil depot and of the first



rose-oil examination laboratory established in 1907 by Hristo Yaramov, a chemistry teacher in the Kazanlak School. The laboratory was aimed at analyzing the rose oil and started issuing certificates for the purity of oil that was to be exported abroad. The period back then was hard for Bulgarian rose-growing as the so called ‘tereshe’, or fake rose oil, emerged. Threatened by deterioration of the Bulgarian rose oil’s reputation as the world’s best, Hristo Yaramov’s laboratory was a successful attempt to spoil this wrongful practice.

### 3. Ethnographic Complex “Damascena”

Hidden outside of the populated areas, the complex offers an exceptionally beautiful view of Sredna Gora Mountain with a scent of the Bulgarian roses.

“Damascena” is the first private distillery in Bulgaria. It was established in 1991 as a family firm, producing rose oil. The production capacity is increasing every year. The complex includes a rose garden, an ethnographic museum, a small park, an outdoor restaurant with a garden area, and a distillery.

The rose garden is most attractive in May and June when the roses are aromatic.

The ethnographic museum is the place where you can see the Bulgarian lifestyle of the 19th century. There are presented original vessels and tools for the cultivation of the land, harvesting, storage, and consumption of agricultural produce.

There are also recreated living rooms typical of this area and a period of time. In some Bulgarian houses in the villages, such type of rooms can still be found.

The distillery is beautifully painted with frescoes. Here you have the opportunity to observe the process of rose leaves processing and the production of rose oil and rose water in



the traditional way, as it has been done over the years back and in the modern way based on the technology we currently have.

In the restaurant, you can taste giulovitsa /rose rakia/, rose honey, and the famous in this region baklava with rose syrup.

#### Partners/service providers of both tours

Accommodation: Numerous small resorts are offering perfect conditions for relaxing holidays and active vacations in the mountain. The whole region is famous with the unique hospitable attitude of local people towards visitors and sustainable tourists. If you ever give “Stara planina” a try, do not miss the delicious local cuisine in one of those mehanas in traditional folklore style. Perfect service, great food and wide range of selected drinks will enchant you.



Bulgaria is a very welcoming country towards foreigners, providing a wide range of accommodation options for all budgets. But before settling here, you are advised to inquire on its different cities and their neighborhoods, as well as on the rental market's conditions, so as to determine what would best suit your needs. You should also make sure to compare rent prices before choosing as these can be higher in some regions compared to others.

You can choose among apartments, studios, houses, among others, according to your family situation and financial means. You are likely to find furnished and unfurnished housing units. Some of these may be equipped with the minimum appliances while others may include a stove, a refrigerator, a bed, a wardrobe and other basic accessories.

Indeed, real estate agencies have a better understanding of the rental market's trends and will be able to advise you in this regard. These will also help you negotiate with the

owner, especially if you do not understand Bulgarian language. International real estate agencies, on the other hand, will provide you with a translation of the lease agreement so as to avoid any misunderstanding.

Those in search of remote and peaceful places will be delighted by the charm of Bulgarian monasteries. They offer accommodation to all sorts of travelers (tourists & pilgrims) at very affordable prices. The comfort will be very basic but it's more than enough for a good night of sleep and to share a moment of peace and tranquility with the monks. This kind of accommodations is very famous here.

Transport: Rail transport in the region is readily accessible and generally comfortable, and the rail network serves all the larger populated places in Bulgaria. Narrow-gauge railways have been constructed to reach the less accessible places in the country and to serve destinations with a smaller number of passengers. Tickets can be purchased at railway stations, at transport offices in cities, and at the tourist agencies. International tickets are issued at the offices, agencies and international desks at the station of embarkation.

The road network in the country consists of limited access highways, first-class roads, second-class roads, and third-class roads. Bus transport is well developed. There are express buses serving most of the large towns and cities in the country.

Cuisine: In the Balkan mountain range there are small family hotels and guest houses with restaurants where you can eat traditional food which often incorporates salads as appetizers and is also noted for the prominence of dairy products, wines and other alcoholic drinks such as rakia. The cuisine also features a variety of soups, such as the cold soup tarator, and pastries, such as the filo doughbased banitsa, pita and the various types of börek. Similarly to other Balkan cultures the per capita consumption of yogurt (Bulgarian: кисело мляко, kiselo mlyako, lit. "sour milk") among Bulgarians is traditionally higher than the rest of Europe. The whole country and especially the Balkan region is notable as the historical namesake for *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, a microorganism chiefly responsible for the local variety of the dairy product.

### Interview

The following interview was made with the mayor of the city of Kazanlak – Mrs. Galina Stoyanova with a reporter from the Bulgarian National Radio. In the interview she talks about the traditional rose festival, which is part of the second thematic tour.



*When the festival was held for the first time?*

The tradition in Kazanlak began in 1903 as a celebration of charity and flowers. It is now grown into a rose festival, which lasts for a month and is recognizable all over the world. This is also the oldest celebration day dedicated to the fragrant flower that still takes place.

*When does the rose festival usually take place?*

The celebrations for the blossom of the roses there take place in the first week of June. The whole week is filled with different attractions every day. That week is also interesting, because there is a beauty contest and on the last day of the celebrations, the most beautiful girl in the city is chosen. We call her "The Queen of Roses".

*How many people usually participate in the festival and how many tourists come in the town for the celebration?*

About 4500 participants join the traditional carnival, while more than 100,000 tourists are expected to visit Kazanlak.

It is good for Kazanlak to offer a high-class hotel accommodation because this is what tourists are looking for. For this reason the municipality made this three-day holiday to last at least a month in order to attract more tourists. During the Rose Festival and within the International Competition Kazanlak is visited by more than 100 diplomats - representatives of the Member States of the European Union.



*Tell us more about the first International Luthier Festival in Bulgaria.*

Kazanlak has a 100-years tradition in the luthier craftsmanship and for the first time in 2018 the city hosted the International Luthier Festival. This is also the first time when the festival was held outside Italy. This was possible with the help of our honorable citizen Edrio Edrev, a famous luthier and the first Bulgarian, who graduated from the famous school in Cremona, Italy. In addition, unique musical instruments were exhibited and connoisseurs from around the world attended including a former culture minister of China, who is part of the jury of the competition.

*The city of Seoul is a twin town of Kazanlak, please tell us the story about that partnership.*

When I asked the mayor of Seoul why they chose our city, he explained that the oldest festival is in Kazanlak, and they have been looking for festivals with a history to learn from. In Seoul there is also a rose festival, but it takes place for only 3 years.

*How do you think the Rose festival can be improved?*

Every year we choose the Queen of roses and there is a desire for these ladies to create their association Queens of roses of Kazanlak and to carry out and participate in projects related to charity in order to return to the roots of the holiday.

*What is the total amount of investment in tourism in Kazanlak?*

Nearly 5 million leva (2.5 m. euro) is the total investment in tourist infrastructure over the past year and a half.

*What do you plan for the festival in 2019?*

For the next year the main focus will be on the rose production and the perfume industry. It is important for tour operators to foresee the tourist flow in the end of May and the beginning of June.

*Thank you!*



## News

1. The rose museum in Kazanlak offers a guided tour for foreign tourists in English, Russian and French.

Entrance:

- Adults - 6.00 lv
- Students - 2.00 lv
- Children under 7 years of age: free
- Guided tour in Bulgarian language - 10.00 lv
- Guided tour in English, Russian or French - 20.00 lv

Opening hours: every day from 9:00 to 17:30.

2. In Kazanlak you can buy a “phical”

A phial (“muskal” in Bulgarian) is a measurement unit of rose oil, equal to 4.810 grams. Until World War I, the oil was measured in phials (as gold is weighed in carats). One phial of pure rose oil was considered equal to 24 carats of gold.

### 3. Kom-Emine guidebook

In 2016 “Oilaripi” Trekking Association published the first up-to-date guide to the legendary long-distance hiking route in the Balkan Mountains translated in English. The guidebook describes the passing of the route, the peaks, the fountains, the accommodation places, and the important points for the mountain hiker. The information you need is exactly where you would look for it as we know where the difficult places are and where you would need orienteering. The book can now be found on the publisher’s website as well as in many



of the specialized bookstores around Europe.

4. All the outside events of the Rose Festival in Kazanlak apart from the rose-picking rituals are free to enter.

Tickets for the rose-picking rituals cost 10-20 levs (5-10 euro) depending on which date and location you choose. There are various packages (20-50 levs) which include visiting museums, rose-picking ritual, Kazanlak Thracian tomb, Festival Parade and others.



## ITALY

### **Thematic tour 1: Apulia and the legend of Cristalda and Pizzomunno**

#### Brief description of the tour

An interesting case about an example of marketing application and local valorization is the case of Vieste with its legend of Cristalda and Pizzomunno that represents an important cultural occasion that gives prestige to Puglia in a global context. The image of Puglia and the power of love of Cristalda and Pizzomunno are making Vieste and the Gargano famous places.

Cristalda and Pizzomunno is a beautiful legend, mirror of the soul, of art, culture, beauty and myth that represent the essence not only of our country but also of our Gargano and our Puglia. This is why the Puglia Region has decided to support this wonderful event.

#### Objectives of the tour

The legend of Cristalda and Pizzomunno is at the center of Vieste's enhancement and development activities. The municipal administration of Vieste and the Puglia Region have decided to implement a marketing plan to promote the town of Gargano starting from this ancient history of the sea of the Apulian tradition, which has become a very successful song. Therefore, in the strategic activity could not miss Max Gazzè, author and interpreter of the legend of Cristalda and Pizzomunno song presented at the San Remo Festival.

A song with a strong identity component that has enchanted for its love story and increased the charm of the famous tourist resort, against the backdrop of which the mythological story takes place.

It is becoming the occasion to valorize a place as Vieste with its history, its legends, its beauty and its people.





With this project, the Region and the Municipality are betting on the story of Vieste breathtaking landscape but also from the wonderful stories that have crossed it. Because those stories add an important piece of emotion for tourists who are increasingly looking, not a hit and run vacation, but a unique and magical experience. In this sense, the spell of a legend like that of Cristalda and Pizzomunno that today spreads thanks to the song of great artists.



The intuition of the municipal administration and of the Puglia Region to promote Vieste, among the most beautiful places in our region, through the legend of Cristalda and Pizzomunno, adheres to the vocation of the Pugliese Public Theater.





Vocation that leads us to create cultural paths that express the maximum potential of our region with tangible and tangible effects on the territory. The Vieste enhancement project represents a good practice, an intelligent project that puts identity at the center of the development of the territory and of the community. A project that we are particularly pleased to accompany in constant synergy with the Puglia Region.

#### Target group of the tour

Because of the many different attractions, the particular geographic and climatic conditions formed a unique ecosystem a symbiotic rapport developing different agricultural and gastronomical activities.

Enhancing one of the most important attractions of the area through live entertainment, allows at the same time to light a beacon on the city and then to stimulate arrivals and presences on the territory, as well as to use an immaterial identity how the legend of Cristalda and Pizzomunno is configured, as an instrument to arouse interest and make unique the experience that a territory can bring to life. The organized concert event will therefore be the central point of a strategy that will involve different segments of the tourist and cultural sector of the territory and will develop in the medium to long term to ensure that Vieste is recognized and experienced not only for its natural beauties but also for the "magic atmosphere" that gives with its history. It fills with pride to see the city of Vieste appear alongside the most suggestive locations in Italy, to places symbol of international culture.

## Attractions

PugliaPromozione seized this wonderful initiative of Vieste because it is essential that Puglia give your own coordinated image that pushes our successful destinations even more and higher. I remember that Vieste is our first tourist destination in Puglia, therefore, with this initiative we are focusing on a destination that is at the top of the presences and that constitutes a real spearhead. Singers become the testimonials of a promotional campaign that provides for the creation of photos and videos with the presence of the artist in some of the most fascinating places in the town of Gargano. The initiative is part of a wider territorial promotion operation linked to the legend of Cristalda and Pizzomunno which includes the creation of postcards and a philatelic cancellation in collaboration with Poste Italiane. Also planned the creation of calendars, t-shirts and gadgets. In program also, a series of promotional activities carried out by PugliaPromozione aimed at giving maximum visibility to the strategy and activities planned. The regional agency has long involved a series of artists to interpret in an unconventional way the identity of Apulia as a tourist destination, and to give it back to the public in new languages and experimental features. For Vieste, it is the legend of Cristalda and Pizzomunno that inspired the work of a painter, who makes the public fall in love with a complex concept, like the imaginative and decadent one of the unhappy loves of popular history. The blue of the sea and the depths of the canvas will convey the brand not only on canvas but also through a tangible, desirable, and repeatable tool: as a t-shirt or local gadgets. Visual storytelling will have to unveil the territory evoking it, speaking to the emotions with strong and immediate images recreating that alchemical dimension that follows tours and festivals.

### 1. The Rock of Vieste

This incredible, giant white limestone cliff is located in Vieste (province of Foggia), along one of the most beautiful coasts on earth and inside Gargano National Park. It's a limestone monolith that is the product of natural erosion. Vieste has about thirteen thousand residents, a warm climate almost all of the year, and of course, spectacular beaches that attract tourists from all over the world.



A town of Greek-Byzantine origin that became grand under Angevin rule, Vieste seems to have frozen in time. With its lovely historic centre nestled in its heart, with its alleys and milky-white houses, and its view of the spectacular sea, Vieste has it all. There's so much to see: the Co-Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin (18th century), the Swabian Castle from the time of Frederick II, the Gothic arch of the Porta di Alt which was once the main entrance through the medieval walls.



The Arco di San Felice is another arch that was carved in the white limestone by the same erosion process that created the many sea caves of the local coast and also the monolith of Pizzomunno. Pizzomunno is tied to the legend of the tragic love between the fisherman





Pizzomunno and the young Cristalda (according to some versions, also named “Viesta”, hence the name of the city). As the story goes- sirens try to kidnap Pizzomunno, but he remains loyal to his beloved Cristalda. The sirens eventually kidnap Cristalda instead and drown her in the sea. Devastated, Pizzomunno is transformed into stone and remains so today- still waiting for his love’s embrace who returns every summer with high tide.

## 2. Pizzomunno’s legend and Gargano National Park

Pizzomunno is a monolith about 25 meters high at the beginning of the beach called the Castle. It stands at the beginning of the coastal road that leads to Vieste Pugnochiuso. Pizzomunno was a fisherman who loved beautiful Cristalda; every day was out at sea alone with his boat and every day the Sirens were waiting to sing their sweet but deadly bewitching songs.

One day the Sirens did not just sing as they themselves enchanted by the beauty of the fisherman. The Sirens wanted Pizzomunno as their king and offered him immortality if he had agreed to become one. But Pizzomunno loved Cristalda.



So here one evening while waiting Cristalda his beloved on a small island in front of the sea, the Sirens emerged from the sea, attacked the girl and dragged her into the deep. The next day the fishermen found themselves Pizzomunno petrified with grief over a white rock that since then bears his name.



The legend does not specify what happened to Cristalda as well, but it is said that every hundred years for one night the beautiful Cristalda date back from the abyss and rejoins his beloved Pizzomunno.

Gargano is a sub-region in the province of Foggia in the region of Puglia in Italy. The Gargano Promontory offers a complete vacation environment with many interesting things to see and do. In one place you have the sea with many good beaches, the Foresta Umbra National Park with many hiking trails, lakes, medieval towns with picturesque historic centers, important religious pilgrimage sites, and fantastic food. Except in the forest, much of the Gargano is covered with citrus groves and olive trees.

The Gargano is quite large, and one could easily spend a week or longer here. The Gargano Promontory juts out into the Adriatic Sea in the northeast of the Puglia region, in Foggia province (see Puglia Map). While Puglia is often called the heel of the boot, Gargano is referred to as the boot's spur. To make it easier for you Gargano is the literal spur on the boot that is Italy.



This part of Italy was once the main beach destination for vacationing but in recent years it has become more and more popular with tourists from around the world. The area is a mix of beaches and resorts and small hilltop towns and villages near the ocean. Here you will find the UNESCO site Sanctuary of Monte Sant' Angelo, the Umbra forest filled with ancient oak trees as old as 500 years and so much more.

The coast of Gargano is scattered with small hillside towns and villages full of history. I highly recommend you spend a day or at the very least an afternoon exploring at least one of them.



### 3. The Umbra Forest

The green of the Umbra Forest, inside Gargano promontory, in the area of the National Park, surrounds the municipalities of Vico del Gargano, Vieste and Monte Sant'Angelo.

The Forest is the last part of the ancient "Nemus Garganicum", which used to cover the whole promontory and it is one of the most extended areas with broad-leaved plants in Italy, of the largest in Europe.

It has a surface of almost 10.500 hectares and covers the North-east side of Gargano and, from 832 metres above sea level of Monte Iacotenente, goes down to 165 metres above sea level in the area of Caritate.

The turf boasts beech trees, Turkey oaks, oaks, maples and holm oaks. Among them, stands the holm oak of Vico del Gargano, 50 metres high, with a diameter of 5. It stands in front of a Franciscan convent and probably was planted there by the friar Nicola da Vico, died in 1719.



The visitor Centre, instead, offers a path where one can admire the diorama of Gargano, display boards, stone tools, the Xylotheque and the reconstruction of a station of charcoal burners. Since 2017, the Umbra Forest Beech became a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



The Umbra Forest extends over a surface of over 10 thousand hectares and, although the name may appear to refer to the Umbria region, the Forest is actually a completely Pugliese patrimony. Its name comes from its many dark and shadowy areas, due to the extremely dense millenary vegetation which hardly lets sun rays through at all, thus creating a perfect natural habitat for a multitude of animal and vegetable species. A protected area within the Gargano National Park, the Forest extends up to an altitude of 830 meters and descends into large beech woods 270 meters below the level of the sea, thanks to particular climatic conditions which make it a unique environment in the world.



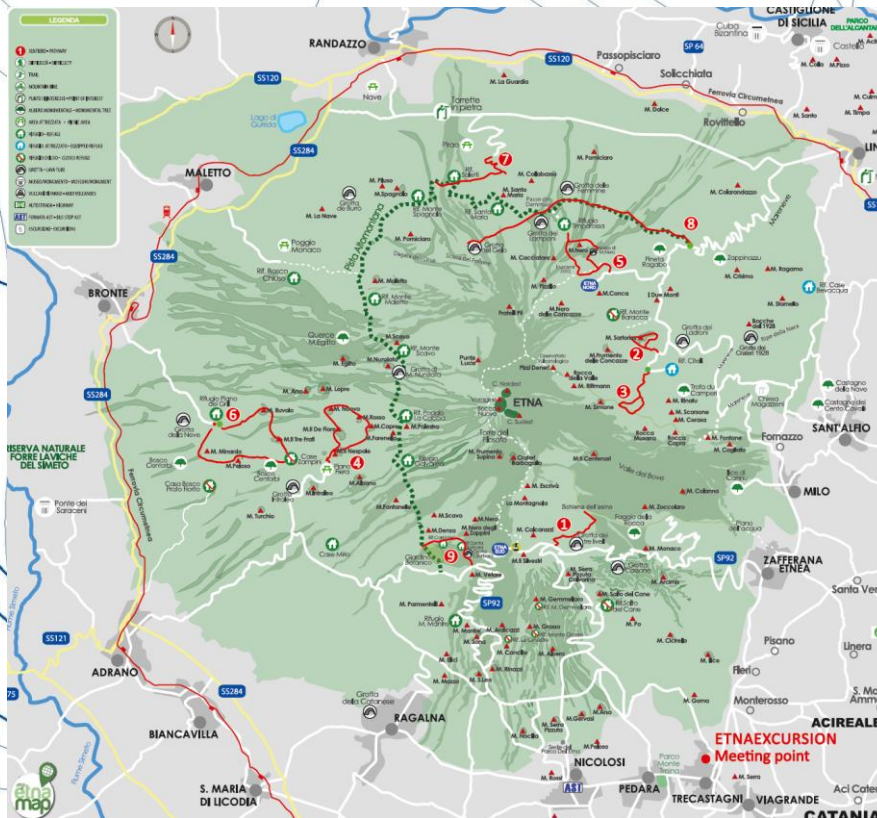
Visiting the Umbra Forest is certainly a unique and suggestive experience: nature lovers will certainly enjoy the many naturalistic paths, 14 of which were developed by the State Forestry Department. These paths, which you can walk or ride your bicycle on, lead to many discoveries, including various centuries-old turkey oaks, dispersed over the park's territory.

The undergrowth of the Umbra Forest is the ideal habitat for numerous varieties of orchids, a phenomenon which attracts tourists from all around the globe, as do the Forest's anemones, violets and cyclamens. The karst nature of this area located on Italy's spur has led to the formation of a series of landslides and slopes covered by rich vegetation: these natural formations are known as Dolines. Among these, we must mention the Dolina Pozzatina, considered one of the most important karstification phenomena of Europe with its 600-meter diameter and depth of 100 meters.

## **Thematic tour 2: ETNA Natural Park**

### Brief description of the tour

The current thematic tour aims at presenting Mount Etna, that is one of the most active volcanoes in the world. It is certainly also between the most charming. His geographic position in the middle of Mediterranean Sea, as well as his extension from the sea at about 3330 mt makes ideal conditions to develop an unbelievable variety of landscapes. Whose imagine the volcano as a desert land, made of bare and raw volcanic rock, it is wrong. For this place were collected info and suggestions to visit in the best way the volcano, but we want also to recommend sticking to guided excursion for many reasons. Indeed, thanks to expert guides you'll discover the most beautiful places, the history and the culture of Etna regional park, appointed UNESCO site since 21 June 2013 for his geological peculiarity.



### Objectives of the tour

This thematic tour aims at presenting one of the biggest and most visited green tour place regarding vegetation, animals and other natural aspects.

Those who expect only lunar and harsh landscapes will be pleasantly disappointed, in fact the volcanic soil is very fertile thanks to the wealth of minerals. Mount Etna offers in fact different vegetal landscapes in function of the morphology of the soil, microclimates (that vary between the slopes) and altitude. Already on recent scoriaceous lava flows, apparently without life, musk and lichens as well as different pioneers' plants begin to colonize the lava. Between these the first is Aetnean Brooms that here can reach sometimes 10 meters end that between the end of May and July colours in yellow the lavas.



On more ancient grounds, where rocks are eroded and formed the soil, are present very rich woods of chestnuts, oaks, Aetnean pines and beeches. Between the spontaneous arboreal species more particular we find certainly: Aetnean Birch with his characteristic white cortex and Black Pines. Mount Etna claim also 2 vegetal monuments of big interest: Il Castagna dei 100 Cavalli (the oldest chestnut of the world) and the Illice di Carlino (an Oak of 800 years old. See the map). Higher than 2000 meters the woods gone away, and we have presence of shrubbery and pioneer vegetation. In spring and summer time you can admire in succession the violet (April/May), the soapwort (photo), Astragalus and the Senecio (between June and

July) and August the chickweed that colour on white the lava sand. Some plants can grow up also at 3000 meters such as Daisy of Etna and Rumex.



The presence of animals is conditioned from different factors, first of all the presence of the man and absence of rivers in exception of some cases in down altitude. The human activity has meant hat many species of animals become extinct. Common wild animals present into the park are: foxes, rabbits and hares, much rarer is to see a wild cat. Are present also porcupines, hedgehogs and weasels. Into the caves found refuge different species of bat. There is no shortage of reptiles among which non-poisonous snakes such as the dark rat snake and the most fearsome viper, poisonous but often non-mortal. The avifauna is much more varied, at the top of which we find the golden eagle (we say there are two couples) and many other diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey.

#### Target group of the tour

Because of the many different attractions, the Mount Etna is considered one of the best destinations for green tourism. Rock climbing, mounting and eating are considered the most popular activities in the area.

The particular geographic and climatic conditions created a unique ecosystem, inside it man from millenniums created a symbiotic rapport developing different agricultural and gastronomical activities and pastoral thanks to richness of the soil.





For this reason, Mount Etna is considered from people that live around it a mother figure that give presents. It is not accidental if among the many names prevails the dialectal exception used from people from Etna Muntagna that remind the ancient arab roman Mongibello (Mons Gebel = The mountain between the mountains.) Dry walls, terracing, pagghiari, casudde elements of rural architecture strictly made of lavastone, are visible throughout the territory.

### Attractions

It is easy to reach the touristic locality of Etna South or Etna North (about 2000 mt.) where are visible the eruptive theatre of 2001 and 2002. We recommend devoting at only one part of the volcano. The south part (Nicolosi) that is the most touristic with cableway of Etna. On site a walk on Silvestri's craters and a few kilometres of car it is possible to reach the panoramic point of Valle del Bove (Valley of the Oxen) from locality Monte Pomiciaro.





The North side (Linguaglossa) instead is less touristic but give very fashionable landscape, but also the vision of North East crater, higher point of the volcano and also the most outdoor activities. In trekking: for those that loves to walk it is absolutely recommended this activity to visit the less touristic places. Idem regarding the typical products tasting, always accompanied of interesting explanations from local people.

Mount Etna offers programs designed for people with disabilities along with wheel-accessible activities and amenities. So, before you set out on your great outdoor adventure, plan your trip by checking out these helpful tips on accessibility in the national park. Disabilities can include physical, mental, or sensory impairment. To receive a free access pass, the disability must be permanent and limit one or more major life activities.



### 1. Altomontana trail

This path covers a distance of about 40 km and bypasses the volcano on 3 sides excluding the only eastern slope that is almost totally affected by the Valle del Bove. The path that was in origin featured from volcanic red soil (now almost completely extinct) allows you to enjoy breath taking and little-known landscapes of Etna. Along the way there are several bivouacs (see "are there shelters inside the park?") to organize one or more overnight stays and divide the excursion.



### 2. Geology

The begin of Etna volcanism is done to the collision between the African and Euro-Asiatic plates that has generated magma thrusts from the mantle to the earth's crust. All started 500.000 years ago where today arise the famous Acitrezza's Faraglioni, witness of first submarine eruptions.

For the first 400 thousand years there was a long phase of "fissural" eruptions of more fluid lavas, first then submarines then superficial, which formed a "shield" volcano, a building wider than high. From 130 thousand years ago, a change in volcanism occurred with the transition to a central activity that developed several eruptive centers where today the Valle del Bove is located. Today many of those volcanic structures are partially existing or completely collapsed.



The last phase, the one that identifies Etna as a stratovolcano or a building with more steeper slopes composed of multiple and heterogeneous eruptive products, began 60000 years ago with the development of the Cratere Ellittico, whose summit is estimated to be close to 4000 meters and which exploded 15 thousand years ago forming a large 4 km Caldera. Only about 15000 years ago began the formation of the current building called Mongibello.

Today Etna is one of the most active volcanoes in the world, manifesting its power alternating eruptions from the summit craters, usually more explosive and shorter, to flank eruptions of the often-effusive kind of long duration.

### 3. Lateral craters

On Mount Etna we count other than 300 monogenetic craters, result of single eruptive activity on flank of volcano to different altitudes.

Some of this erupting in down altitude done origin to eruption that reached the villages and the sea, such the case of eruption of Catania of 1669 originated from Monti Rossi. For this reason, the lateral eruptions are the most feared.





## PORTUGAL

### GEOPARK NATURTEJO:

#### Description of the Tour

Born of the spirit of union and shared objectives, Naturtejo is the entity that promotes the "Geopark Naturtejo da Meseta Meridional (of southern upland)", which integrates the municipalities of Castelo Branco, Idanha-a-Nova, Nisa, Oleiros, Penamacor, Proença-a-Nova and Vila Velha de Ródão. From the region "Raia" to "Beira Interior", through Pinhal Interior to Alto Alentejo, this is an area of high tourism potential and numerous attraction factors. Due to its vast and homogeneous region Geopark Naturtejo offers a wide range of tourism products, having in common as an added value the nature and the excellent infrastructures. All to satisfy the needs and demands of every kind of visitors. Boasting an excellent location and access, Naturtejo Geopark opens up new horizons and offers more than 4,600 km<sup>2</sup> of land to discover.

A geopark is a territory with well-defined limits and with an area sufficiently wide to allow a socio-economic development, cultural and environmentally sustainable. The "Geopark Naturtejo da Meseta Meridional (of Southern upland)", the first Portuguese Geopark, joined the European Network and Global Geoparks, in 2006 under the auspices of UNESCO, developing a territory of 4616 km<sup>2</sup>, in the municipalities of Castelo Branco, Idanha-a-Nova, Proença -a-Nova, Nisa, Oleiros e Vila Velha de Ródão. In this territory the geoconservation, education and geotourism are the priority, all grounded in a geological heritage of reference. In a region of great cultural heterogeneity, the geology is a unifying element of the territory and is used as a strategy for sustainable development on a large scale.

The Geopark Naturtejo aims to enhance the places that act as key witnesses of Earth's history, boosting employment and promoting regional economic development. The vast geomorphological, geological, paleontological, and germinating heritage features elements of national and international relevance, examples of which are the ichnofossils from Penha Garcia, the river canyons of Penha Garcia, Portas de Ródão and Almourão, the Roman gold mine named Conhal do Arneiro and the granites morphologies of the Serra da Gardunha and Monsanto. In addition to geosites Naturtejo Geopark has the Tejo International Natural Park and protected areas within the Natura Network 2000 (Gardunha sites, Nisa and S. Mamede)

and Important Bird Areas (Penha Garcia - Toulões and quartzite ridges the Ródão) that bear witness to their ecological wealth.

The millenary history of this region has given it many castles, churches and palaces, reaching diversity rare in Portugal. The ruins of the Civitas Egítania in Idanha-a-Velha, the Palaeolithic stations and the Tejo rock art as well as megalithic regions of Nisa and Rosmaninhal are important poles of archaeological interest. The ancestral practices, living witnesses of the multiple singularities of culture, has strong roots in the landscape. The status of "Aldeia mais portuguesa de Portugal" (the most Portuguese village of Portugal), given to Monsanto, and the "Aldeias de Xisto" (Schist Villages), scattered throughout the Naturtejo Geopark are symbols of this ethnographic wealth still very well preserved.

The Geopark Naturtejo has one of the densest networks of footpaths of the country. These facilities, for the discovery of the territory, correspond to the unifier mesh of the multiple poles of attraction for a tourism asset. The "Rota dos Fósseis" (Route of the Fossils) in Penha Garcia, the "Rota das Minas" (Route of the Mines), in Segura, the "Rota dos Barrocais", in Monsanto, and the "Trilhos do Conhal" (Tracks of Conhal), in Santana, find themselves homologated under the theme of geology. For beyond the routes marked, the Geopark Naturtejo presents annually a calendar of original thematic pathways, always with a strong multidisciplinary component. "Rota dos Fósseis" (Route of the Fossils), (Penha Garcia) and "Rota das Invasões" (Route of Invasions), (Vila Velha de Ródão) you can find rock-climbing schools, which guarantee adrenaline to the maximum in its activities, ranging from the sport climbing to the slide in the quartzites, and paintball and TT in the mountains of Ródão to the equine tours, in the routes of smuggling that intersect the Synclinal, in Penha Garcia.

The twists of the water in the bowels of the Earth may be quietly enjoyed and better understood in the splendid "Termas de Monfortinho", Idanha-a-Nova, and in the "Termas da Fadagosa", in Nisa. The calm waters of the River Tejo allows the realization of boat trips that go to the discovery of the geomorphology of Ródão ports, of the colonies of vultures and of the Rock Art of the Tejo.

The Tejo International Natural Park is one of the most important wildlife sanctuaries in Europe and the geotouristic activities that unfold there are in parallel with a wide and unique offer of quality tourism products ranging from gastronomy to the historical heritage and from sport events to the traditional religious festivities.

The Geopark Naturtejo presents, then, a vast number of options for thematic tours, we will select one of them to explore further but please keep in mind that you can find a world of Green Tourism Activities in this geopark.

### ORVALHO'S GEOROUTE: Objectives of the Tour

The Orvalho's Geo Route is roughly 09 kilometres long which amounts to a nice 3 hours and 30 minutes hike of average (3 out of 5) difficulty.

The itinerary of this route presents a set of noble spaces where the landscape and silence allied with the knowledge to receive from the locals, are a great tonic to escape the stress of the urban areas. Inserting itself in the territory of the Geopark Naturtejo, this tour contemplates the passage through the geomonumentos classified by UNESCO that exist in the parish of Orvalho. Tradition and culture are allied here in communion with Nature. Exceptional rocky outcrops, passing through emblematic sites, are just the motto for the discovery of magical sanctuaries. Through the middle, one can witness the flow of the crystalline waters of the streams and mountain springs, confused with the melodious songs of the birds, intoxicated by the untouchable purity of the places. The tour thus invites to the purest reunion with Nature.

Among the exceptional geological monuments, the region's unmistakable beauty, painted by a mixture of divine colours where the green of the vegetation mixes with the earth's tones, leaves no one indifferent. The monocultures of *Pinus pinaster* and some spots of olive trees (*Olea europaea*) are evident along the steep slopes, which reveal the olive-growing tradition that marked this rurality. It is also frequent to find some specimens of *arbutus* (*Arbutus unedo*), and the holm oak (*Quercus rotundifolia*), as well as cork oak (*Quercus suber*) that can also be scattered. The serpentine valley of the Fragosas appears in a curve of the road, soon after passing the conical head of the Lady of Confidence. Alongside the natural fountains by the road, a natural viewpoint allows the admiration of the quartzite wall that rises from a dense forest where the Alta Agua stream disappears. From the strong sound of falling water, it is possible to assume the waterfalls of Fraga da Água d Alta. There are 25 m of unevenness overcome by a succession of three veils of turbulent and crackling water. It is worth going down the marked path where a local herb (*Viburnum tinus*) abounds and where the azereiro (*Prunus lusitanica*) marks its presence as well. The morphological inheritance of this region resulted in the quartzite mountain range of Moradal overlooking a depressed area



in the schist and *grauvaques* smudge, where the Mesocenozoic erosion was most felt. At the top of Cabeço do Mosqueiro, the viewpoint that exists there evidences not only the rocky outcrops, but also the shrub vegetation. It is constituted mainly by heliophilous scrublands, of which the stems (*Cistus ladanifer*), the carqueja (*Chamaespartum tridentatum*) and the gorse (*Ulex* sp) stand out. Some specimens of *Teucrium salvastrum* have also been identified, a protected species commonly known as *téucium*.

To participate in this tour there are 8 rules to follow – keep to the signposted tracks; avoid making unnecessary noise; observe wildlife without disturbing it; do not damage the flora; do not leave rubbish or other traces of your passage; do not make fires; do not collect plant or rock samples; be nice to people you meet on your tour.

#### ORVALHO'S GEOROUTE: Target Group of the Tour

The target group for this Tour can be generalized to anyone interested in participating in green tourism activities, specifically:

Entrepreneurs and/or future entrepreneurs who want to develop businesses in the green tourism sector;

Local development promoters/agents who define policies and strategies related to the green tourism sector;

Technicians and professionals of the tourism sector who want to develop or increase their know-how and skills in the green tourism sector.

#### ORVALHO'S GEOROUTE: Partners / Service Providers of the Tour





<https://www.naturtejo.com/en/>

### ORVALHO'S GEOROUTE: Interview

1. What was the main target group at the beginning?

Everyone who shows an interest in the environment and is keen to preserve and enjoy it as we are.

2. What is it now?

The same.

3. How many members does this cooperation have?

I cannot say at this time.

4. How many tour operators are there?

We have many partners, depending on the tour of the geopark. For this particular tour we have a main operator.

5. Are they qualified tour guides?

The guides are people who know and love the park but there is no qualified and recognised training.

6. If not do they get methodological training?

Yes, all guides have taken the tour many times and have a deep understanding of the park.

7. Do you have any requirements about the appearance?

We recommend visitors to bring appropriate gear for trekking and water to keep hydrated.

8. What is the basis for the thematic tour's theme?

As all our tours, the base is the preservation of the environment and our beautiful park!

9. How is a thematic tour route organised?

There is a map and defined treks to follow, if you chose to have a guide they will inform the visitors at the beginning of how the tour will go. Each guide has their own way of carrying out the tour.

10. What is it up to how often is the tour launched?

This particular tour has had a steady affluence.

11. On which languages the thematic tour is available?

Portuguese, English, Spanish.

12. How many percent of the thematic tour is in national language/in other languages?

Our sings and information are in Portuguese, but the guides can give the tour in English.

13. With how many people can the tour start?

One can go on the tour on their own. In order to have a guide we try to gather a group of at least 10 people, but this is not a rigid number.

14. What is the most popular part of the thematic tour?

Definitely the geological monuments!

15. Which age group is the most frequent participant of the thematic tour?

Young adults, 20-30 years old.

16. Which gender visits the thematic tour in larger number?

Men tend to visit more, but it is not a significantly larger number than women.

17. How often does supply change?

Our tours are mostly the same, we try to maintain the already recognized quality of the park.

18. Are there seasonal tours by month / season / occasion?

Most tours are always available with different recommendations being made depending on the season.

19. Does the cooling weather have an effect on the number of the participants?

Yes, the tours are most active in fairer weather but there are always some visitors who like venture in the cold to experience the park in a different way.

20. How active are the visitors during the tours? How much do they ask,etc?

Visitors usually prefer to explore on their own but when a guide is asked for they are usually very talkative and ask many questions.

21. Are there any returning visitors?

Many of our visitors return after going on one tour, to further explore our other options offered.

22. What is the basis for pricing?

We do not wish to share this information.

23. On which platforms do you promote the thematic tour?

Mainly on the website and Facebook of the park.

24. Have you ever participated in a community mobilisation?

No.

25. Which is the most effective way to reach the visitors?

Word to mouth from previous visitors is the most effective way of reaching new visitors. Previous visitors also have the chance to leave us their email for further contact.

26. Do you have an office where the visitors can go?

Yes, there are two offices, one in Castelo Branco, and one in Idanha-a-Nova.

27. What means of transportation are available throughout the tour?

This is a walking/trekking tour.

28. Approximately, how much does it take to go through the thematic tour?

It takes about three and a half hours, four if you like to take your time.

29. Would you suggest this thematic tour for a company's teambuilding event? Why?

This could be an interesting experience for a teambuilding event because of the shared experience and exploration of a beautiful landscape and trekking paths.

### ORVALHO'S GEOROUTE: Attractions

There are 6 main attractions in this Tour, besides the trek itself, the fauna and the flora:

The main church of Orvalho (Igreja Matriz de Orvalho),

The Fraga de Água d'Alta waterfall,

The Otter Lagoon (Lagoa das Lontras),

The Roman Stone Path (Calçada Romana),

The Moors' Oven (Forno das Mouras),

The Mosqueiro Meal Park (Parque de Merendas do Mosqueiro).

### GEPARK NATURTEJO: News

You can find the most current events related to this Tour by following the Naturtejo Geopark Facebook page.



<https://www.facebook.com/naturtejogeopark/>

### AZORES TRAILS:

#### Description of the Tour

The Walking Trails in the Azores, a Network of Walks Classified by the Regional Government of the Azores, guaranteeing safety and reassurance to walkers.

In the Azores, for centuries, the easiest way to travel from one place to another within the same island was by sea; in fact there were not many paths and few were suitable for carriages or oxcarts. There were mainly footpaths, which the islanders used in their daily toil, accompanied by horses, donkeys and mules, of course. The paths were also used to take cattle to or from the pasturelands. The locals also used these paths for festivities in the vicinity, and for transporting agricultural produce, fish, charcoal and other merchandise to trade. Anything larger was transported by boat.

It is this network of footpaths that has been restored and made accessible to all so that they can enjoy the landscape of the Azores. Indeed, each of these footpaths goes through exceptionally beautiful areas, linking almost all of the corners of each of the islands, both along the coastlines and in the uplands.

### MATA DO CANÁRIO - SETE CIDADES - SÃO MIGUEL :Objectives of the Tour

The Mata Do Canário - Sete Cidades - São Miguel Trail is roughly 11 kilometres long which amounts to more or less a 3 hours hike of medium (3 out of 5) difficulty.

This route starts near the Canário Woods in the western part of the island. Visitors start by going down the dirt road to the tarmac road. Turn left and continue for 300m along an aqueduct until they reach the Nine Windows Wall. Then they should turn left at the dirt road lined with Japanese cedar trees. Shortly after, going uphill until they will reach the first viewpoint over the Seven Cities Lakes at the hill Pico da Cruz. From here on, visitors should follow the path that skirts the Blue Lake. After 8 km they will find a diversion sign indicating that Seven Cities is 1,2km away. On this part of the route, extra caution is advised due to the slippery surface and the significant steepness.

On arrival at Seven Cities, turning right at the bridge and walking for 500m until they reach the church, will be the end of this route.

### Target Group of the Tour

The target group for this Tour can be generalized to anyone interested in participating in green tourism activities, specifically:

Entrepreneurs and/or future entrepreneurs who want to develop businesses in the green tourism sector;

Local development promoters/agents who define policies and strategies related to the green tourism sector;

Technicians and professionals of the tourism sector who want to develop or increase their know-how and skills in the green tourism sector

### Partners / Service Providers of the Tour



<http://trails.visitazores.com/en/trails-azores/sao-miguel/mata-do-canario-sete-cidades>

### Interview

1. What was the main target group at the beginning?

Trail enthusiasts who wish to experience the most beautiful trails of our islands.

2. What is it now?

The same.

3. How many members does this cooperation have?

I can't give you a precise number.

4. How many tour operators are there?

Only through the Azores Trails – Official Tourism Website can you book our amazing tours.

5. Are they qualified tour guides?

The guides are people who are very knowledgeable of the trails but they are not qualified tour guides.

6. If not do they get methodological training?

No, most of the guides are involved in the organizing of the trails but have no predefined training.

7. Do you have any requirements about the appearance?

We recommend visitors to bring appropriate gear for trekking and water to keep hydrated.

8. What is the basis for the thematic tour's theme?

As all our trails, the base is to appreciate the Azores natural beauty.

9. How is a thematic tour route organised?

There is a map and defined treks to follow, guides are usually not an option for this type of tour as the adventure is best lived at the visitors own pace.

10. What is it up to how often is the tour launched?

This is one of our most booked trails all year round.

11. On which languages the thematic tour is available?

Portuguese and English.

12. How many percent of the thematic tour is in national language/in other languages?

90% Portuguese.

13. With how many people can the tour start?

As I said before, the trail is best travelled at the visitors own pace so it is possible to go alone.

14. What is the most popular part of the thematic tour?

The view to the Seven Cities Lakes from Pico da Cruz is fantastic.

15. Which age group is the most frequent participant of the thematic tour?

People of all ages follow our trails, but since this one has a medium difficulty younger adults tend to participate more.

16. Which gender visits the thematic tour in larger number?

There is no gender distinction on the visitors participation.

17. How often does supply change?

The trails are always the same.

18. Are there seasonal tours by month / season / occasion?

The trails are always open, although we recommend to take the weather into account before starting them.

19. Does the cooling weather have an effect on the number of the participants?

Yes, in the winter very few visitors go on the trail.

20. How active are the visitors during the tours? How much do they ask, etc?



Visitors hardly opt for a tour guide.

21. Are there any returning visitors?

Yes, people who came to us once tend to return even if they don't go for the same trail.

22. What is the basis for pricing?

I am not at liberty to give specifics on this matter.

23. On which platforms do you promote the thematic tour?

The Visit Azores Facebook is our most active promotion tool.

### Attractions

There are 5 main attractions in this Tour:

São Miguel Natural Park,

View to the Lakes,

View to Santiago Lake,

Casa do Parque (Park House),

Muro das Nove Janelas Aqueduct.

### News

You can find the most current events related to this Tour by following the Visit Azores Facebook page.



<https://www.facebook.com/VisitAzores.travel/>

## Summary

This thematic tour booklet represents the practical application of the framework provided in Module 8 of the training content.

The Booklet will be available on the website and will also be distributed among stakeholders electronically or on discs/ USBs as a practical example and also popularizing the local sights listed and described in the thematic tours for each country on national and international level and thus contributing to the improvement of rural tourism in partner countries.

The aim of the creation of the thematic tour booklet is to increase the cooperation between local entrepreneurs, municipalities, manufacturer and other stakeholders with green tourism potential. These complex tourism packages will generate further cooperation in the related areas.

All partners researched 2 thematic tours/countries.

In this brochure you will find firstly the Hungarian parts: The first tour we chose is the Baranya greenway, which lays in the north-western part of Baranya county. It is a mountain area with large forests, the Mecsek Mountains. The climate is semi-Mediterranean, with a high number of sunshine hours. The greenway route was designated, information boards, maps and direction arrows have been placed out to help visitors' orientation. The purpose of creating the greenway was to create thematic routes, tourist routes that would introduce the visitors to the destination's natural, historical (local) and cultural traditions. The Baranya Greenway not only enriches the experience but also orients towards responsibility communication and responsible operation between the population and service providers along the route. This booklet has also presented you from Hungary the Lake Tisza Ecocenter in Poroszló. The Ecocenter is 136 kms from Budapest. However it is also worth taking your bikes to Poroszló. The excellent asphalt road on the 2-3-metre-high dam takes you all around the lake. It is part of the Eurovelo 11 International Trail crossing Europe from Norway to Greece. You can choose between the short trail (70 kilometres) and the long trail (120 kilometres) and enjoy the lovely scenery: the water surface, the islands and the flooded woodland. The Ecocenter is open every day from 9 AM to 6 PM, and closed on public holidays. The Ecocenter has a booklet with pictures of animals for the visitors, which can be bought in the gift shop. There are pictures and small description of the animals, plus there is

information about different events organized by the Ecocenter in the future. Visit the Ecocenter in Poroszló if you want to enjoy the natural way of entertainment.

The Bulgarian tourist destinations in the current booklet are easily accessible. The first thematic tour is related to religious and pilgrimage tourism. The Predbalkan's towns are central to Bulgarian Revival as focal points for the development of art, crafts, architecture, education and the culture of the period as a whole. Here are located some of the biggest and most magnificent monasteries. Travelers would also explore the nature diversity – steep slopes northward and lowlands and valleys southward. In addition, the longest, oldest and most famous hiking trail in Bulgaria follows the main ridge of the Balkan Mountains. Podbalkan includes the southern foothills of the Balkan forming a valley between the mighty mountain and Sredna gora; the name of the area can be literally translated as under-the-Balkan. The area is also called the Rose Valley because of the specialization in the growing of roses and the production of rose oil. If you want to visit the Rose valley as a day trip, it's better to start off early in the morning because the trip takes three hours. Any time you chose to follow the path of the current thematic tours you would be impressed by the historical landmarks, the four-season shades of nature and the hospitality of local people.

There are many sights and famous places in Puglia Region in Italy thanks for the legend of Cristalda and Pizzomunno that represents an important cultural occasion. Because these stories give important emotions to the more and more searching tourists, it is not a hit and running holiday, but a unique and magical experience. Because of the various attractions, the geographic and climatic conditions have created a unique ecosystem that develops various agricultural and gastronomic activities. The organized event will therefore be the centerpiece of a strategy that will encompass different segments of the tourism and cultural sector in the area and will develop in the medium and long term to ensure that Vieste is not only recognised as one of its natural beauties, but also as one of the most important monuments. Mount Etna is one of the most active volcanoes in the world. Thanks to expert guides you'll discover the most beautiful places, the history and the culture of Etna regional park, appointed UNESCO site since 21 June 2013 for his geological peculiarity. It is one of the biggest and most visited green tour places in Italy regarding vegetation, animals and other natural aspects. Rock climbing, mounting and eating are considered the most popular activities in the area.

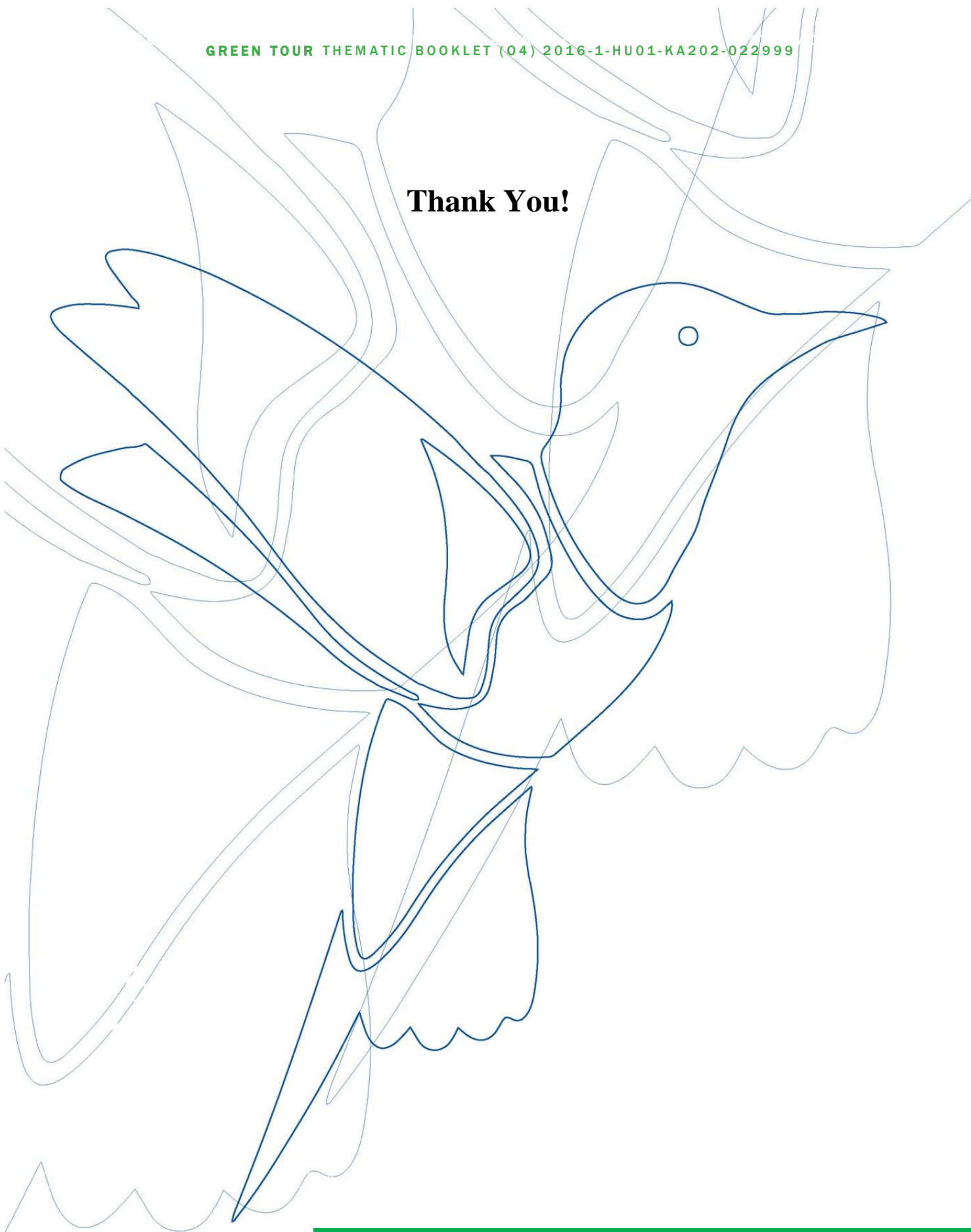
The Orvalho Geo Route in Portugal is about 9 kilometers long, which is a 3-hour and 30-minute average. This route is surrounded by fabulous scenery and silence and there you

can avoid the noise of the city. Inserting itself in the territory of the Geopark Naturtejo, this tour contemplates the passage through the geomonumentos classified by UNESCO that exist in the parish of Orvalho. Tradition and culture are allied here in communion with Nature. We can observe the flow of rivers and mountain springs and, if we pay more attention we can hear the chirping of birds as well. During the tour you can become one with nature. The target group for this Tour can be generalized to anyone interested in participating in green tourism activities. The Walking Trails in the Azores, a Network of Walks Classified by the Regional Government of the Azores, guaranteeing safety and reassurance to walkers. The footpaths go through exceptionally beautiful areas, linking almost all of the corners of each of the islands, both along the coastlines and in the uplands.

For more information please read the full booklet.



**Thank You!**



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