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# Use of Natural Heritage for Rural Tourism



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Bulgaria

## Rural tourism in Bulgaria



**Rural tourism is the fastest growing sector** in the country. In the years before the pandemic the growth of the rural tourism is about 15% per year. The growth in the rural tourism remains sustainable mainly due to the **richness of natural, architectural and historical landmarks**, as well as due to the additionally offered services in the fields of active recreation. Rural tourism is the best way to get to know the traditions in Bulgaria.

Each of the visitors can immerse themselves in the rural life and try different specialties of traditional Bulgarian cuisine. Usually the tourists are welcomed in authentic houses built in the 19th or 20th century, and part of the experience is the food prepared by the hosts. The virtual map of tourist sites and landmarks developed by the Official Tourism Portal of Bulgaria again does not show any destination for rural tourism in Bulgaria. It is hard for Bulgarian tour operators to sell packages for rural tourism in our country. Mostly foreigners are interested in it. Bulgarian tourist organizes his trip by himself. On average, about 80% of the tourists in the villages are Bulgarians, and in recent years there has been an increase in guests from Romania, Russia, Germany and France...

## Rural tourism in Bulgaria

Rural municipalities in Bulgaria comprise 81% from its territory and scope 42% of its population. It is obvious a disproportion in the development of the urban and rural areas both in terms of economic development and educational level, demographic condition, access to basic services. More than 80% of the rural municipalities determinate that **tourism as a priority**.

Considering the rural tourism as interbranch economic sector – rural, forest and water economy, tourism, food industry, etc. allow the identification of the market and entrepreneur niches which satisfy part of the **governmental strategical goals** for development of the rural areas and confirm that the rural tourism is a **beneficial business in Bulgaria**.

Almost half of the national territory offers opportunities for development of **attractive tourist products**. Regardless of the huge potential for development of the rural tourism, it is not developed enough. It is concentrated in a small number of areas, mainly in western and central Stara Planina mountains and Rodopi mountains. Recently the villages along the sea resorts offer rural tourism products, mainly one-day visit. Regardless the small number of tour operators who offer rural tourism they consider that the sector is growing up. Most of the tourist objects are being visited by Bulgarian tourists during the vacations, days off and national holidays, some rural tourism products are offered to the international markets.



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Slovenia

## Zasavje region

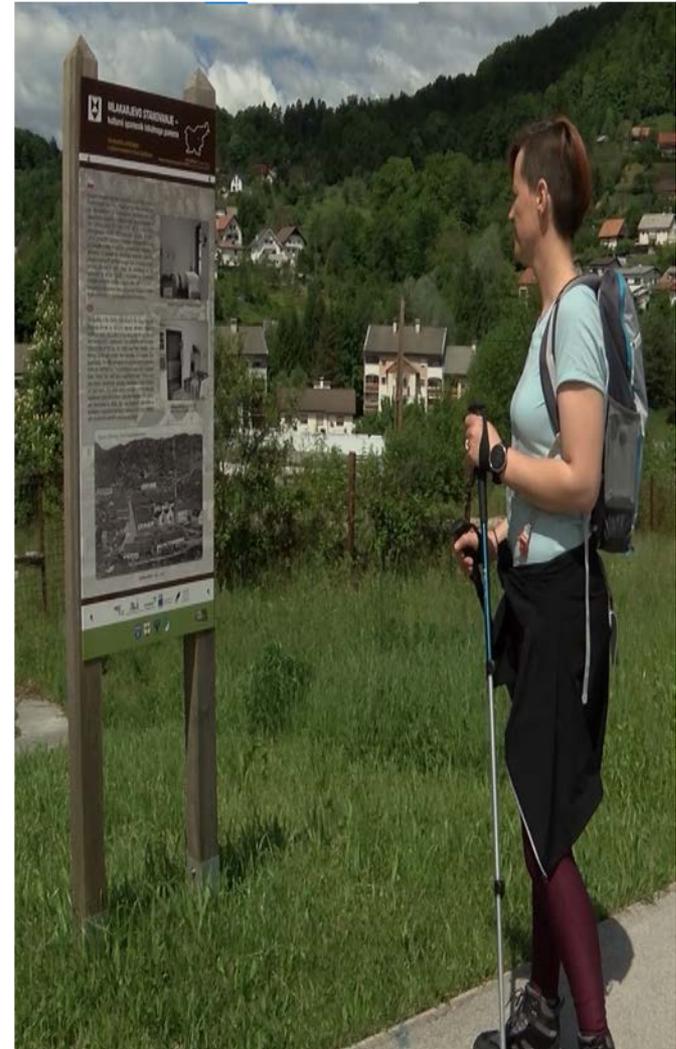
Most of the regional Rural Tourism takes place on the **Natura 2000 protected area**

One third of the regional territory protected as Natura 2000 site



## Miners hiking trail “pot srečno”

- the newly established hiking trail which mostly leads through rural parts of the region;
- more than 30 km long, routed along the areas that are rich with mining heritage;
- tourist product that contributes to the visibility & attractiveness of the region.





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Spain

# Rural tourism in Teruel

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Excellent offer and variety of natural and heritage resources;
- Astro tourism in Aragon, the best areas to watch the stars;
- The curing of ham in a natural way will be also an immaterial cultural assess;
- An APP of virtual reality will allow to know in detail the ancient art of the cultural parks of Aragon;
- Geological past in Teruel;
- The mycological park of the Community of Albarracin;
- Preservation of traditions and unmaterial heritage;
- Paleontological Foundation;
- Cooking based on the Mediterranean Diet and with km 0 products. Networking and associations in the territory very valuable;

# Rural tourism in Teruel

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Several counties of the north of Teruel create employment through its mining heritage;
- Promotion for the creation of associations and, clusters and product clubs for a better positioning in the global market;
- Creation of products with reference to important people in Teruel; Buñuel, Segundo de Chomón, Salvador Victoria, Elvira Hidalgo, Salvador Gisbert, Matias Abad;
- Gastronomic competitions as integrators of all other types of tourism;
- The World Heritage resources such as Teruel Mudejar have a particularly international promotion way to go.



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Ireland

## Rural tourism in the Sperrin Mountains

The region has developed a number of experiences to allow the tourist to participate in the activities, lifestyles and traditions of the Sperrin Mountains especially relating to **experience and connections with people, food, drink and local folklore & traditions.**



Discover Dart Mountain walking tour for example brings the visitor to a number of ancient sites and habitats to discover Giant`s graves, Fairy forts and some Celtic plant lore.

Another tour highlight is an insightful visit to the Dart Mountain artisan cheese facility,

## Rural tourism in the Sperrin Mountains

Visitors can also experience local life and culture in the Sperrins by staying on a working sheep farm which allows visitors to immerse themselves in the **stories of four generations** of a family hill farm.



Other visitor experiences which have been developed include participation in local traditional **craft skills** such as wood turning and basket weaving.



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Romania

## Rural tourism in Mărginimea Sibiului

- A region with **18 mountain villages** that share the same history in sheep breeding;
- Part of the European Destinations of Excellence in Tourism and Local Gastronomy;
- Part of Natura 2000 protected areas.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Big density of **bed & breakfast facilities**, with more than 90% of them run by locals;
- One of the first regions in Romania to practice **agrotourism**;
- Big variety of **local products** such as sheep cheese, meat, honey, cakes and so on.



# Rural tourism in Marginimea sibiului

## HIGHLIGHTS

- o Big variety of local traditions and festivals;
- o Many events related to local gastronomy;
- o Rich nature and biodiversity at the foot hills of the Carpathian Mountains ;
- o Specific local architecture old & new.





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Portugal

## Rural tourism in Alto Alentejo region

Alto Alentejo, a distinctly rural region, has allowed it to remain genuine.

These characteristics and the varied tourist resources have meant that the region has seen a growth in tourist activity .

In the region there is a great diversity which includes:

- Wine Tourism;
- Agritourism;
- Local accommodation;
- Gastronomic tourism and endogenous products;
- Experience tourism;
- Equestrian tourism.



## Rural tourism in Alto Alentejo region

**S. Mamede Natural Park** is without doubt the main reference in terms of natural resources.

Alto Alentejo is particularly rich from a **gastronomic** point of view and presents a very strong connection to the land and its **products**.

The dishes are some of the most recognised specialties, as well as the regional sweets, many of them of conventual origin.

Wines occupy a prominent place throughout the region, with a unique and a great aptitude for the production of **top quality** nectars.

It is possible to find in the region a great variety of artisans, most of whom work with **endogenous products** such as cork and local wood.

According to data, Alto Alentejo region has an accommodation offer characterised by hotels, which represent about 54% of the offer and by **small rural tourism and residential tourism enterprises**.





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Thank you!

Questions welcome



*Project smedia*