

# THE ANALYSIS OF THE DEGREE OF PRACTISING THE ADVENTURE TOURISM – AN OPPORTUNITY OF ATTRACTING TOURISTS IN DAMBOVITA COUNTY

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**Abstract.** *The analysis aims to identify the underlying reasons for the redesign of behavioural patterns of the tourists, shifting to new forms of tourism (such as adventure tourism) and creating innovative ways of recreation and personal development through means designed to stimulate creativity and to develop skills. Taking into account the constraints imposed by the global economic crisis, which had a strong negative impact on the tourism in general, and the adventure tourism, in particular, the study offers a multitude of possibilities that could lead to alternative scenarios, which adds new values of this form of tourism, giving thus the opportunity to overcome the obstacles imposed by the current contradictory economic context.*

**Keywords:** *tourism, adventure tourism, opinion survey.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Adventure tourism is a form of tourism to encompass the aspects of sustainable development, environmental protection and the development of entrepreneurship, both in related businesses and direct practicing this form of tourism.

Adventure tourism consumers, irrespective of the age group to which they belong, can affirm that adrenaline, the challenges with successful effort that turns into satisfaction, the joy of discovering new places represent the ways they influence change for the better part of his life consist of spare time, which is becoming more and more precious.

## 2. INITIATION INTO ADVENTURE TOURISM

Adventure tourism presupposes active party time by visiting an area less accessible, almost unaffected by the human impact, training a great physical effort and taking big risks, being a mix between nature and adrenaline. Adventure tourism includes activities such as: navigation on rivers (rafting), diving, hiking, mountain biking, ATV and Quad, climbing, skiing, bungee-jumping, parachuting, crossing with flying fox, hunting, equitation, paintball [1].

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Adventure tourism can be considered a form of niche tourism given that all activities which it comprises, constitutes a narrow space in the great mass of the forms of tourism [3].

“For the past twenty years, there were two forms of adventure travel: extreme adventure (is characterized by activities with a high degree of challenge requires high power, energy and skill as they are risky and are interested only in a small number of tourists) and easy adventure (of interest to a large number of tourists, especially if we add walking, hiking, cycling, hunting, rafting, boating on the lakes, swimming, yachting, archery, horseback riding and skiing on the mild or moderate slopes) [2].

### **3. PUBLIC SURVEY AMONG TOURISTS OF DÂMBOVIȚA AND ILFOV COUNTIES. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### *3.1. THE METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE APPLIED RESEARCH*

- a) The purpose of the survey is to establish the extent of the tourism of adventure and its place in the forms of tourism in Romania by the Romanian citizens.
- b) Objectives of the research. According to the purpose of the research theme, the survey took as objectives:
- c) to determine the place of adventure tourism among forms of tourism in the counties surveyed;
- d) to identify the level of sportsmanship and the reasons for the practicing/non-practicing the adventure tourism;
- e) identifying types of adventure activities practiced by tourists of Dâmbovița and Ilfov counties;
- f) identifying the areas in which we practice the adventure tourism and the accompanying persons;
- g) establishing the degree of injuriousness with regard to the practice of adventure tourism;
- h) finding out the perception of tourists on the prices and benefits of practicing adventure tourism in Romania;
- i) the degree of knowledge/thanks for the offers of the travel agencies and tourists.

*The central hypothesis of Romanian Tourists, in practice, little adventure tourism ".*

In order to achieve the set objectives, there have been formulated the following assumptions derived:

- The degree of knowledge of the offers of travel agencies is low.
- The practice of adventure tourism prices is affordable.
- Adventure tourism presents a high degree of injuriousness.
- The organization researched is represented by tourists from Romania.
- The observation unit is made up of tourists practicing adventure tourism in Romania.
- The survey is aimed at tourists that practice adventure tourism in Dâmbovița and Ilfov counties.

The method of sampling and the sample size. We used simple random sampling. The sample comprised 108 tourists, and the number of validated questionnaires was 100, representing a response rate of 93%. The sample is not representative because there are no financial resources and time available for the completion of a complex research.

The technique of data collection. Data collection was done by the survey method, the survey-in-front, the tool used is the questionnaire. It contains 21 questions, of which 16 closed, 2 open 3.

Data collection period was 15/02/2016-17/03/2016. Processing the questionnaire was done using Excel 2010, which allowed for the calculation of certain statistical indicators used for the survey results which are interpreted in terms of their relevance.

### 3.2. THE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION of THE RESULTS of THE OPINION SURVEY

Objective 1. Determining the place of the adventure tourism among forms of tourism in Romania (Table 1).

**Table 1. Adventure tourism in place of the main forms of tourism in Romania**

No. Crt.	Forms of tourism	Points	Place
1.	Cultural tourism	539	I
2.	Religious tourism	452	III
3.	Balneary tourism	260	VII
4.	Adventure tourism	380	V
5.	Rural tourism and agritourism	470	II
6.	Business tourism	296	VI
7.	Ecotourism	411	IV

*Source: authors' interpretations*

In calculating the scores (method of ordering the ranks) granted by tourists from Dâmbovița and Ilfov counties, we noted that the adventure tourism is in the V/VII with a score of 380, which shows that this form of tourism is carried out with a reduced frequency, but the least practiced is balneary tourism that is in last place with 260 points the most practiced form of tourism is cultural tourism that is in place I totalling 539 points.

The fact that adventure tourism is practised with a reduced frequency can be confirmed using the online newspaper dailybusiness.ro, who made the following statement: “in Romania, the demand for adventure tourism is quite low and packages that include these activities are contracted annually in a very small number” [7].

Objective 2. Identifying the level of sportsmanship and the reasons for the practice / non-practice the adventure tourism. It is observed that 54% of the respondents practice adventure tourism, while 46% do not practice this form of tourism. Of the 46% of respondents who do not practise adventure tourism, only 24% intend to practice ever, and the remaining 22% will not practice again. In Figure 1 we can ascertain that a percentage of 21% of the respondents practice adventure tourism twice a year, and just 1% practice this form of travel each week.

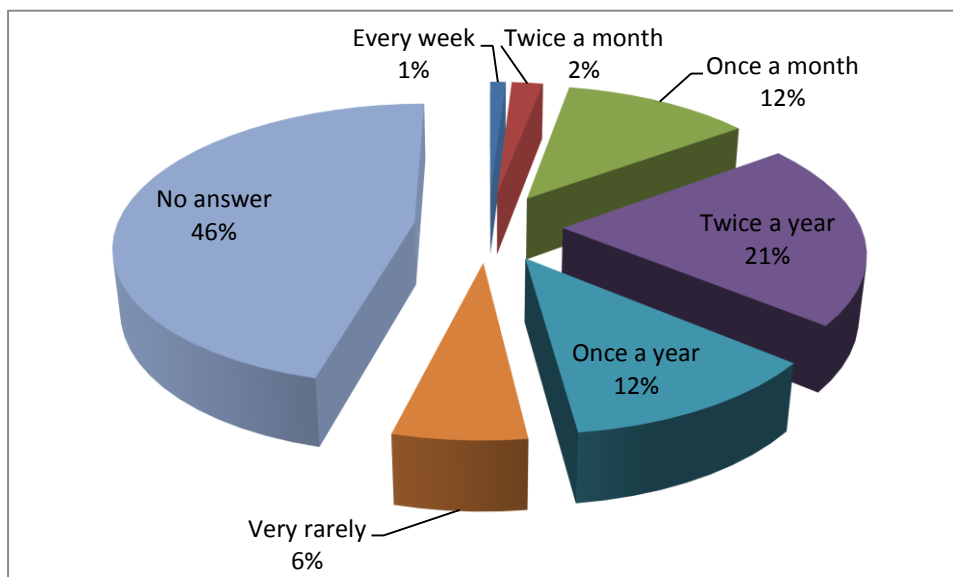


Figure 1. The frequency of the adventure tourism practice.

The main reason for practicing the adventure tourism is the state of excitement (15%), followed by a healthy life style and exploring the unknown, and the main reason for non-practicing this form of tourism is the high dangerousness (21%) (Table 2).

Table 2. The reasons for the practicing/non-practicing the adventure tourism

Reasons for practicing adventure tourism	Percentage %	Reasons for non-practicing adventure tourism	Percentage %
1. The state of adrenaline	15	1. Is it dangerous	21
2. Movement	9	2. Submit high prices	7
3. Healthy lifestyle	10	3. Lack of promotion	13
4. Overcoming fear	2	4. Limited offers of travel agencies	2
5. Releasing tension	8	5. Other (not my type)	3
6. Exploring the unknown	10		
TOTAL	54	TOTAL	46

Source: authors' interpretations

As far as the main reasons of practicing this form of tourism, such as adrenaline and healthy lifestyles [4], we can confirm that these are the main features [5] listed by Swarbrooke John, Beard Colin, Leckie Suyanne and Pomfret Gill in the book *Adventure Tourism-the new frontier*, and the Director of Satului de Vacanță Frații Jderi, Cezar Coțescu makes the following statement in the online newspaper *ziare.com* about the healthy lifestyle choices: “there is no better remedy for stress than bodily fatigue which is obtained by effort. You have to do much sport and plenty of movement, it is very simple and you do not need pills or medical consultations.” [8].

We also find that adventure activities (in particular those extremes) has a high degree of risk, this being stated by Cristian Culea who said that extreme sports are potentially dangerous. In this regard, experts from many countries have developed two standards regarding: “*Safety management Systems - ISO 21101 and Informing the attendees - 21103 ISO*” [9].

Objective 3. Identifying the types of adventure activities practiced by tourists from Dâmbovița and Ilfov counties.

**Table 3. Adventure activities practiced by tourists from Dâmbovița and Ilfov counties**

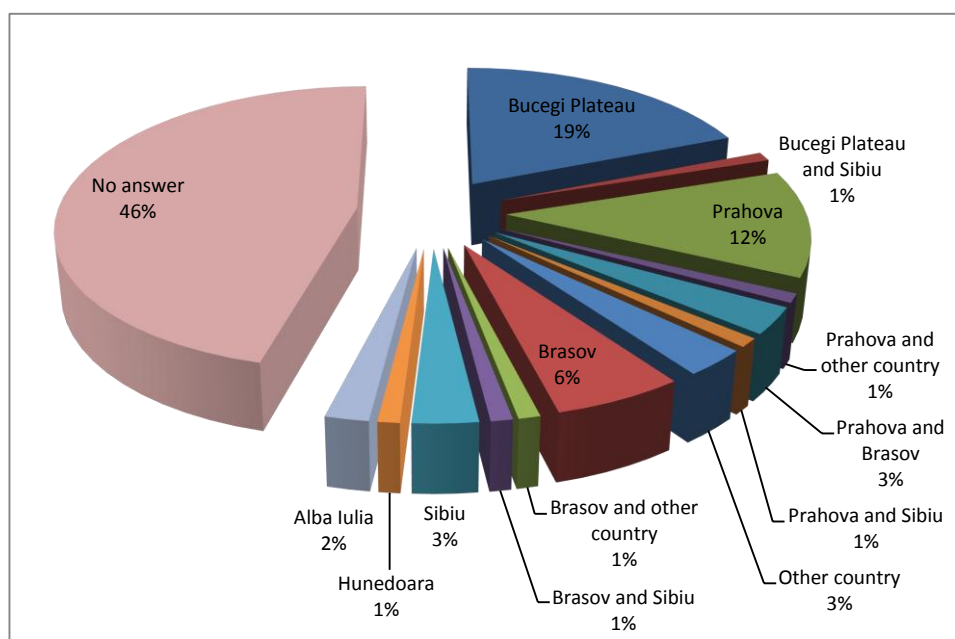
No.	Adventure activities	Percentage%
1	Climbing	8
2	Paragliding	5
3	Bungee Jumping	7
4	Rafting And Canoeing	2
5	Mountain trips	43
6	ATV and Quad	13
7	Snorkelling	0
8	Cycling	25
9	Zip lining	16
10	Equitation	11
11	Escalation	8
12	Snowboarding	4
13	Others (paintball and surfing)	2

Source: authors' interpretations

The most practiced activities are hiking adventure (43%), cycling (25%) and zip lining (16%), and least practiced activities are: rafting and canoeing (2%), paintball (2%) and surfing, and snorkelling is not practical at all by respondents from Dâmbovița and Ilfov counties (table 3).

This confirms and Director of Outdoor Tourism Holidays, Dan Stefan Șendriuc in the online newspaper *ziare.com*, who believes that “most people who practice hiking adventure tourism prefer mountain hiking” [8], and Ileana Ionescu stated that “among the main preferences of Romanians include zip lining, climbing and cycling.” [7].

Objective 4. Identification of areas in which the adventure tourism is practiced and the accompanying persons.



**Figure 2. Additional areas of adventure tourism.**

The most common areas of practicing the adventure tourism are: Bucegi Plateau (19%), Prahova (12%), Braşov (6%), Sibiu (3%) and other countries such as Spain and Italy (3%), (Figure 2). The majority of respondents practice these activities with friends (24%) or family (19%), while only 5% of respondents practice adventure tourism alone, which shows that this form of tourism is practiced more in the group.

Objective 5. Degree of dangerousness with regard to the practice of adventure tourism.

$$\text{Overall score} = \frac{1 \times 7 + 2 \times 12 + 3 \times 24 + 4 \times 38 + 5 \times 19}{100} = 3,5 \approx 4$$

As a result of the global score, we obtained a score of  $3,5 \approx 4$ , which shows that the majority of respondents also said that practicing this form of travel is fairly dangerous.

Objective 6. Finding out the perception of tourists on the prices and benefits of practicing the adventure tourism.

$$\text{Overall score} = \frac{0 \times 18 + 1 \times 0 + 2 \times 0 + 3 \times 43 + 4 \times 33 + 5 \times 6}{100} = 2,91 \approx 3$$

As a result of the global score, we obtained a score of  $2,91 \approx 3$ , which shows that most respondents have said that the practice of this form of tourism presents moderate prices (no small, nor great).

Objective 7. The degree of knowledge and content of the travel agencies offers.

$$\text{Overall score} = \frac{1 \times 0 + 2 \times 2 + 3 \times 13 + 4 \times 9 + 5 \times 1}{25} = 3,36 \approx 3$$

As a result of the global score, we obtained a score of  $3,36 \approx 3$ , which shows that 25% of respondents who are aware of the offers of the travel agencies are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with these offers.

The fact that very few tourists know the offers of the travel agents, is, “the result of a lack of promotion of this type of tourism that exists in a small degree both at national level and at the level of travel agencies” [10]. However, there are travel agents, as “Tourist, Romania”, “Perfect Tour”, “Christian Tour”, 45th Parallel, “Outdoor Holidays”, “Explore Travel”, “TUI Travel Centre”, or “Etura”, “Prestige Tours”, which offers adventure tourism packages both at home and abroad. For example, Romania Tourism Travel Agency offers a tour package adventure with duration of 4 days, in Bucovina, for a group of 4 people, at a price of 830 euros [11].

On the basis of cross-frequency tables may be applied  $X^2$  test for two variables. Purpose of the application is clear determination of an association between two variables; the association is not due to chance [7].

In this case, there is an association between sex tourists and frequency of practicing adventure tourism. Test implementation steps are:

a) determining the value of calculated using the formula:

$$\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{(R_{ij} - A_{ij})^2}{A_{ij}}$$

where:

$R_{ij}$  = frequencies resulted from the survey;

$A_{ij}$  = theoretical frequencies;

$r$  = number of rows of the table;

$k$  = number of columns in the table.

In Table 4 the two variables under analysis are detailed.

**Table 4. Frequencies for tourism adventure in relation to the sex of the tourists.**

Frequency	Male	Female	Total
Once a week	1	0	1
Twice a month	1	1	2
Once a month	7	5	12
Twice a year	15	6	21
Once a year	10	2	12
More than a year	1	5	6
TOTAL	44	10	54

a) The value of  $\chi^2_{\text{theoretical}}$  is established for  $(r-1) \times (k-1)$  degrees of freedom and a possibility of guaranteeing of the result of 95%. The degrees of freedom reflect the table size (number of lines and number of columns), which may differ from one situation to another. The values of  $\chi^2_{\text{theoretical}}$  are known, and in table 5 [12], it can be observed that  $\chi^2_{\text{theoretical}}$  for  $(6-1) \times (2-1) = 5$  degrees of freedom is 11,07.

**Table 5. The theoretical values of the test  $\chi^2$  for the level of significance  $\alpha=0.05$**

$\alpha = 0.05$	
Degree of freedom	$\chi^2$
1	3,841
2	5,991
3	7,815
4	9,488
5	11,070

b) formulating the null hypothesis according to which there is a clear association between gender variable and variable frequency for tourism adventure. Thus, the null hypothesis is: the sex of the tourists does not influence the frequency of practicing adventure tourism;

c) verify the null hypothesis is done by comparing the value of  $\chi^2_{\text{theoretical}}$  to that of  $\chi^2_{\text{calculated}}$

So, if:  $\chi^2_{\text{theoretical}} > \chi^2_{\text{calculated}}$  there is no clear association between the two variables;

$\chi^2_{\text{theoretical}} < \chi^2_{\text{calculated}}$  there is a clear association between the two variables and the null hypothesis is rejected;

The question needs to be asked is: in statistical and mathematical terms, which is the relationship between the sex of the tourists and the frequency of practicing adventure tourism?

$$\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{(R_{ij} - A_{ij})^2}{A_{ij}}$$

results,

$$A_{11} = \frac{1}{54} \times 35 = 0,64 \approx 1$$

$$A_{12} = \frac{1}{54} \times 19 = 0,35 \approx 0$$

$$A_{21} = \frac{2}{54} \times 35 = 1,29 \approx 1$$

$$A_{22} = \frac{2}{54} \times 19 = 0,70 \approx 1$$

...

$$A_{62} = \frac{6}{54} \times 19 = 2,11 \approx 2$$

it can be concluded as follows (table 6):

**Table 6. The theoretical frequencies of the two variables.**

Frequency	Male	Female	Total
Once a week	1 (1)	0 (0)	1
Twice a month	1 (1)	1 (1)	2
Once a month	7 (8)	5 (4)	12
Twice a year	15 (14)	6 (7)	21
Once a year	10 (8)	2 (4)	12
Less than once a year	1 (4)	5 (2)	6
TOTAL	35	19	54

Applying the previous formula,

$$\begin{aligned} \chi^2_{\text{calculated}} &= \frac{(1-1)^2}{1} + \frac{(0-0)^2}{0} + \frac{(1-1)^2}{1} + \frac{(1-1)^2}{1} + \frac{(7-8)^2}{8} + \frac{(5-4)^2}{4} \\ &+ \frac{(15-14)^2}{14} + \frac{(6-7)^2}{7} + \frac{(10-8)^2}{8} + \frac{(2-4)^2}{4} + \frac{(1-4)^2}{4} + \frac{(5-2)^2}{2} \\ &= 11,83 \end{aligned}$$

$$\chi^2_{\text{theoretical}} = 11,07$$

$$\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} = 11,83$$



Results,  $\chi^2_{\text{theoretical}} < \chi^2_{\text{calculated}}$ , so: the null hypothesis is rejected – the sex of the tourists does not influence the frequency of adventure tourism.

Then, coefficient V of Cramer is calculated, the coefficient of association based on chi square using the formula:

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2_{\text{calculated}}}{n(s-1)}}$$

where,

$$s = \min(r, k) = \min(6, 2)$$

n = the sample size

results:

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{11,83}{54(2-1)}} \approx 1, \text{ the perfect association between two analysed variables: the sex of}$$

the tourists and the frequency of adventure tourism.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Adventure tourism is a newer form of niche tourism, known by few of the Romanian tourists. Certain activities of adventure tourism are practiced from immemorial time (mountain biking, hiking, climbing), and as a result of the new identification requirements of tourists, new activities have arisen: bungee jumping, paragliding, rafting and canoeing, ATVs and Quads, paintball, etc.

Among the strategies to promote the tourism of adventure, absolutely necessary we include: communicating a favourable image to highlight the originality of adventure tourism, summarising the characteristics of potential tourism, the conception of land-use planning, the ways of practising tourism and the socio-cultural context; highlighting, within areas in the adventure tourism, the specialized products such as winter sports, paintball, bungee jumping, horseback riding, hunting, speleology, and others, and the possibility of combining these products, according to the wishes of consumers, giving the appearance of novelty in the Romanian offer; opting for a promotional strategy to each market, both internal and external, and the peculiarities of each consumer segment to which it alludes, using the most appropriate messages and tools; the combination of "push" strategies (focused on promotion intermediaries) and "pull" (promotion of focused on final consumer), to boost the two forms of tourism, i.e. organized and unorganized, but at the possibilities of the adventure tourism; the use of a wider range of ways, referring both to communication and information techniques, such as at the place of sale, advertising techniques, trade fairs, exhibitions, as well as the stimulation such as contests, sweepstakes, grouped sales. Also important is the application of techniques of public relations, because public relations constitute the best way to communicate openly, knowing customers' wishes to meet and create a favourable image of the tourist product for the potential consumers; proper training of personnel that has direct contact with the tourist, being forced to have marketing knowledge, so that they can intuit what motivates and what are the requirements of the tourist, describing the product well, highlighting the strengths compared to other products, in order to influence the purchase decision, be courteous and responsible; creating adventure itineraries and promoting them both internally and externally through travel agencies, sites relating to adventure tourism, but also through participation in travel fairs. It also calls for the creation of the national routes, so

as to connect with the European ones; concluding agreements in the field of the adventure tourism in other states; increasing the level of professional tour guides to guide tourists in the various adventure sightseeing tours; creating a larger number of adventure and adventure camps, which are equipped with all the comforts so as to satisfy all the wishes of our clients, from accommodation and food, to the fun and excitement; upgrading the infrastructure such as the building of roads, the parks, the roundabouts, the accommodation, the tourist halts, representing access facilities for the tourists who want the adventure tourism, especially since these runs mostly in the inaccessible places; organizing excursions for Romanian and foreign tourists and free adventure parks to spark the interest in them. A customer who visits a place and leaves satisfied will be back in that place with other tourists. To organize these trips, we were accessing European funds and we are appealing to large organizations that want to invest in this profitable business in the future.

It is noticed that the central hypothesis, “Romanian Tourists practice little adventure tourism” must be checked because although 54% of the respondents practice adventure tourism, 46% do not practice at all, and those who engaged in such activities they do them with a low frequency, with a percentage of 21% of the respondents practice adventure tourism twice a year, and 18% even lesser, and just 1% practice this form of travel each week.

Also the assumptions derived shall be verified given the fact that most respondents said that the practice of this form of tourism presents moderate prices (neither large nor small), is dangerous to a large extent and the degree of knowledge of the travel agencies offers is low, taking into account that only 25% of respondents are aware of these offerings.

Following the completion of the survey, we found that the respondent’s profile is: a person between the ages of 21-30 years old, male, resident in the urban areas, unmarried, with higher education and with an income of over 2000 euro. So for this type of tourist and not only, we propose to the travel agencies to implement the following possibility: *the offer of practicing the adventure tourism easily in the Bucegi Natural Park (2 days)*: the program is addressed to tourists of all ages who wish to discover the beauty of the mountain and the mountain altitude vacationers mysteries, to know the geology, local flora and fauna, and practicing cycling; transportation, lodging and food.

Transportation will be by bus, for those living in Ilfov and Dambovită counties succeeded by organizing a group accompanied by two entertainers specialized in working with tourists.

The accommodation will be at the Șipotului Valley Pension, where it will provide three meals a day. On some occasions, lunch or intermediate meals will be taken in the form of a picnic. Participants will also receive snacks, sodas, sweets and fruits for extra energy intake during more demanding routes.

To take part in this activity, tourists will have at their disposal an equipped bike for mountain roads (paths, forest roads, cobblestone roads), protective equipment for cycling (helmet, defenders, leg pads, elbow pads, knee pads and gloves), a backpack of at least 10 l.

### **Day 1 – Hiking and caving**

Route: Moroeni - Cabana Scropoasa - Bolboci - Ialomița Cave

07.00-08.00 - waking up and eating breakfast.

08.00-13.30 - departure from Moroeni alternating walking with biking.

They will pass near the western flank of Mount Pripor, along Ialomita Valley, they will climb Mount Lespezi, down to Scropoasa Chalet, where tourists will stop on the lake reservoir.

From Scropoasa, they will enter the Great Zănoaga Fountains, among the walls of large limestone mountains of Zănoaga and Dichiu. It crosses again Ialomița, they climb under

Zănoaga, they descend at the end of the Fountains. It pervades among Ialomita riverbed and take a break near Dichiu Valley on the extensive meadows to take lunch in the form of a picnic.

13.30-14.30 - Lunch under the picnic form.

14.30-19.00 - Pass on Cheile Zănoagei Chalet and Bolboci Chalet, after they pass through meadows of Obârșia Coast and under there are a series of rivers. It crosses the Firdalet Valley and it penetrates into Tătarul Fountains.

It continues northward through Padina, besides Izvorul Tătarului trout farm in Coteanu Fountain, and it crosses Coteanu river at the confluence of Ialomița, the road runs through Padina to a beautiful opening over the Valley basin.

It crosses the Valley of Horoaba and towards the end of the trail they reach Ialomita Cave where tourists will stop to explore the interior of the cave, and then they will return to the pension.

19.00-20.00 - Dinner.

20.00-23.00 - Correlation with other groups of tourists through games, contests (chess, backgammon, rummy, ping-pong, billiards, bonfires).

### **Day 2 - Horse-riding, fishing and archery**

07.00-08.00 - Waking up and eating breakfast.

08.00-13.30 - Riding classes (Valea Șipotului Pension provides these courses having specially designed spaces for activities, featuring horses, thoroughbred Arabian, ponies, semi-heavy Romanian).

13.30-14.30 - Lunch at Pension restaurant.

14.30-19.00 - Fishing in the Pension trout farm and archery.

19.00-20.00 - Dinner.

20.00-23.00 - Correlation with other groups of tourists through games, contests (chess, backgammon, rummy, ping-pong, billiards, bonfires).

Total price = 120 euro.

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