DISCOVER
PĂDUREA CRAIULUI
Pădurea Craiului Mountains unfold on a north-to-south axis, from the spectacular gorge of Crişul Repede to the gentle slopes bordering the lowland of Beiuş. The area is a true natural paradise, both in surface and underground. It is a protected area as well as a site of community importance, being included in the European “Natura 2000” network.

While forests, flowing fields, narrow, craggy valleys lead their visitors to an underworld of incomparable beauty. The caves of Pădurea Craiului hide tracks of human life from the oldest of times, but also galleries adorned with calcite crystals, huge breathtaking underground halls, adorned with fabulous concretions. A variety of creatures inhabit this dark, world below the world - the most spectacular being bats.

While in the sunshine, however, one can also admire several elements that come to life in the landscape: old wooden churches, water mills, traditional households still in a good shape. The traditional spirit (“palinca”), the cheese pies accompanied by sour cream, garlic or dill and prepared according to old recipes, in a plaster oven, in addition to the exceptional chilly pepper marmalade – all these make a combination that you cannot resist!

Pădurea Craiului is the appropriate destination for solitary travelers, for groups but also families with children. Regardless of the amount of time you spend here – be it a few days or an entire holiday – you will find many things to do to keep yourself active: rafting, mountain-biking, caving. You may also choose to relax and enjoy the silence and beauty of these places, simply walking along the old cart roads and discovering ancient traditions.
LOCATION AND ACCESS

Located in the north-western part of the Apuseni Mountains, Pădurea Craiului Mountains cover a large part of Bihor county and they are relatively close to Oradea, Cluj-Napoca and Beiuş. The distance from the Hungarian border is also less than one hundred kilometers.

Pădurea Craiului Mountains are easily accessible to tourists, who can reach them by plane – flying to Cluj-Napoca or Oradea, by car – following E60 that connects Oradea with Cluj-Napoca or DN76 from Oradea to Beiuş. The Oradea-Bucharest railroad crosses the northern limit of Pădurea Craiului in the area of Bratca - Şuncuiuş-Vadu Crişului. There is also another possible railroad connection through the south, but only as far as the town of Beiuş. This long way around is recommended mostly to those passionate by railroad travels, as the train takes a long time on this route.

USEFUL INFORMATION:
www.infofer.ro
www.autogări.ro
www.airportcluj.ro
www.aeroportoradea.ro

SHOW CAVES

Pădurea Craiului boasts the first network of caves arranged for tourism in Romania. Meziad Cave, which was long considered the biggest in the country, is often compared to an underground cathedral. The Crystals Cave in Farcu Mine is the only one in Romania where the visiting route allows visitors to admire from a short distance the glittery beauty of calcite crystals. Unguru Mare and Vadu Ciocului caves were opened for tourism more than 100 years ago. Their special features are the beauty of underground shapes and the interesting archaeological relics they keep.

Details about the visiting program and other useful information can be found on www.padureacraiului.ro.
Pădurea Craiului is a true paradise for cavers, who have the possibility to explore not less than 18 tourist caves with different levels of difficulty and varied technical features: Stanul Pohonii Pothole, Ociu Ponor Cave, Craiului Cave, Ponorul and Ţirul caves, Tâlca Ieluin underground system, Mihăileni Bistrici Cave, Mihăileni Nălău Frunză cave, Edmond pothole, Bălăținul Cave, Poatea cu Apă de la Leșu (the water cave in Leșu), Poatea cu Ferici, Călușării Cave, Dobnești Cave, Poatea falci on Cublă Valley, Gruiu cave, Murgărița, Silagheș and Gălășeni caves.

A list of the tour-operators that provide guiding for these caves as well as the visiting regulations can be found on www.padureacraiului.ro.

Warning! Prior to visiting these caves you must receive an approval from the administration of the Natura 2000 site Defileul Crișului Repede – Pădurea Craiului. Caving groups must be accompanied by specialized guides and monitors and they must follow the visiting regulations applicable to each cave.
CYCLING TOURISM

Pădurea Craiului also offers a great variety of biking routes, of different lengths and difficulty levels. However, as everyone else, bikers are most likely to be attracted by the landscape of this area, with its mountain paths, deep gorges, glorious forests, hay meadows that abound in flowers and insects, as well as the traditional peasant households. All these are waiting to be discovered!

In addition to the similar bike rental services provided by a few local guesthouses, the centers in Remetea and Roşia keep 12 fully equipped mountain bikes waiting for you to ride them.

To book your bike(s), please call 0744.296.308 – Fila Istvan (Remetea) or 0741.119.020 – Daniela Oniţa (Roşia).

www.padureacraiului.ro also gives you further information about recommended routes, including descriptions and related GPS tracks.

DISCOVER STEP BY STEP

Those who did it already say that the best way to discover these mountains is to approach them step by step. Pădurea Craiului still shelters beautiful forests that appear to be endless, as if removed from a story. It is the home of protected plants and animals: orchids, wild tulips and pasque flowers are but a few rare flowers you can admire here.

The marked trails, the thematic routes or the simple forest paths will lead you through beautiful landscapes, with highlights such as the Crişul Repede Gorge, limestone plateaus, tourist caves and many valley hidden in between the mountains. Besides housing its local tourist trails, Pădurea Craiului is also crossed by the European long distance path E3, the area connecting Oradea with Bihor Mountains.
Crişul Repede river (the “quick Criş”) – from Bulz to Vadu Crişului can be the perfect destination for rafting lovers, especially in spring. The course of the river is easy to medium, being accessible even to families with children or to those less experienced in water sports. There are specialized companies and trained monitors who can provide you with the necessary equipment and support, once you have decided for such an adventure. A typical journey on Crişul Repede takes about 4 hours and includes a visit to one of the caves located close to the river: Ungurul Mare or Vadu Crişului, as well as a stop at Vadu Crişului waterfall.

Details about the rafting opportunities and their providers can be found on www.padureacraiului.ro.

HIKING AND THEMATIC TRAILS

The thematic trails of Pădurea Craiului Mountains can be walked in a relatively short time and without much effort, being the ideal outdoor activity for you and your family or friends. They offer visitors the chance to actively discover a special area, but also to learn more about the local natural environment.

There are two such trails you can walk:
- "Discover Roşia Valley" – a circuit marked with a blue stripe starting at the Crystals Cave in Farcu Mine.
- "Stories of the Forest" is a circular path following the right side of Crișul Repede Gorge and is marked with a blue dot.

The list of all thematic and tourist trails as well as data about their duration, general condition and difficulty can be found on www.padureacraiului.ro.
ROCK CLIMBING

The steep crags of the Crişul Repede Gorge, between Vadu Crişului and Șuncuiuş, have been a challenge for generations of rock climbers. There are three via-ferrata routes in Pădurea Craiului, but also tens of climbing routes - ranging from beginner to professional ones. Many of these have recently been fixed and whole new areas have been opened to climbers. There are mentors who will provide the necessary equipment and technical assistance to those who are only getting to know this sport.

A list of the climbing routes, details about their grades and lengths as well as information about available monitors can be found on www.padureacraiului.ro.

CULTURAL TRIPS

This part of the country has preserved its old customs, traditions and occupations. The wooden churches of this area are living proof of the old times. The white pottery of Vadu Crişului is unique in Romania, being made from a special clay, with no iron content.

The horn violin – an instrument typical for this area - will be heard during most traditional social events. Arts and crafts such as bead work, weaving of tissues with typical motifs or painting icons on glass are also flourishing. Before Easter, several traditional events are organized here, to gather people for decorating the Easter eggs.

There are also traditional fairs, such as “Straiţă plină”, mountain lovers’ celebration named “Pădurea Craiului Days” or the market of Negreni, events which attract thousands of visitors every year.
Your holiday in Pădurea Craiului Mountains will comprise quality services, provided by local people. There are various types of accommodations – from camping sites, cabins, holiday homes, guesthouses to 3 or 4-star hotels. There are restaurants awaiting you with Romanian or Hungarian foods. The visitors’ centers, information points and souvenir shops nearby Meziad and Farcu caves – located at the very heart of Pădurea Craiului – are available throughout the year. There are local guides, monitors, specialized tour-operators offering caving tourism, rock climbing, rafting, mountain biking programs as well as relevant information. Medical and banking services are available both in the towns of Aleșd and Beiuș and also in some of the smaller localities within the area.

The list of services and other relevant information for visitors can be found on www.padureacraiului.ro.

**GASTRONOMY**

The typical cuisine in Pădurea Craiului includes easy but tasty recipes, inherited from grandmothers and great-grandmothers. Dishes are both Romanian and Hungarian. The joy of exploring this area will be heightened by tasting traditional pies, bogracs, the grilled trout, zacusca, the home-made bread, the local cheese and pork fat, but also the jams and forest fruit syrups.

Of course, these must be accompanied by a traditional pălinca, a spirit made with great passion and skill, from local fruits.

**TOURIST SERVICES**

Your holiday in Pădurea Craiului Mountains will comprise quality services, provided by local people. There are various types of accommodations – from camping sites, cabins, holiday homes, guesthouses to 3 or 4-star hotels. There are restaurants awaiting you with Romanian or Hungarian foods. The visitors’ centers, information points and souvenir shops nearby Meziad and Farcu caves – located at the very heart of Pădurea Craiului – are available throughout the year. There are local guides, monitors, specialized tour-operators offering caving tourism, rock climbing, rafting, mountain biking programs as well as relevant information. Medical and banking services are available both in the towns of Aleșd and Beiuș and also in some of the smaller localities within the area.

The list of services and other relevant information for visitors can be found on www.padureacraiului.ro.
Publication issued by the Center for Protected Areas and Sustainable Development-Bihor (CAPDD Bihor), within the project “Pădurea Craiului – Ecotourism Destination”, which received financial support from EEA Grants as part of the NGO Fund program and was implemented by CAPDD Bihor in partnership with Roșia Town Hall and Ethical Travel Portal (Norway).

Date of issue: April 2015, Oradea

Contact CAPDD Bihor:
Oradea, P-ța 1 Decembrie nr. 4-6, etaj I, cam.8, Oradea
Tel/fax: 0359-410556
Email: contact@padureacraiului.ro
Web: www.padureacraiului.ro

ISBN - XXX XXXX XXX

Proiectul este implementat de către Centrul pentru Aria protejată și Dezvoltare Durabilă Bihor (CAPDD Bihor), în parteneriat cu Ethical Travel Portal (Norvegia) și Primăria comunei Roșia.