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**Study on the Tourist Potential of the  
Timiș County Municipalities of Vălcani,  
Dudeștii Vechi, Beba Veche and  
Sânnicolau Mare**

Study on the tourist potential developed with the European Union  
co-funding regarding the Timiș County municipalities of Vălcani,  
Dudeștii Vechi, Beba Veche and Sânnicolau Mare

## **Tourist potential:**

According to some authors (Cândeia and Simon, 2006; Cocean, Deszi, 2009) the tourist potential (grouping the natural and anthropic attractions) is synonymous with the primary or potential tourist offer of a territory. This, together with the production equipment of the tourist services (accommodation, restaurants, leisure and entertainment possibilities) and the general and tourist infrastructure, along with the quality, variety and marketing conditions of the tourist product, labor force, hospitality, and customs, make for the real (actual) tourist offer or the tourist attractions.

## **Tourist Attractions:**

Before we briefly present and classify the tourist resources of the four municipalities targeted by this study, we would like to place them in a short geographic and historic framework, in order to understand the context in which they were founded and later developed.

Old province of the Habsburg Empire, the historical area of Banat covers a surface of about 28 526 km<sup>2</sup>. It included territories now located in Romania, Serbia and Hungary, limited to the Mureș River to the North, the Tisa River to the West, the Danube to the South, and the Carpathian Mountains to the East. The historical events changed the destiny of this space, dividing it in 1919 between the three States: Romania received the greater part of the Banat (an area of 18 966 km<sup>2</sup>, that is about 2/3 of the total), and traces of its past as Habsburg province are visible throughout its territory. The Banat is made of what is currently known as the Banat Highlands and the Banat Lowlands, and it stretches over the surfaces of Timiș, Caraș-Severin, Arad (partly) and Hunedoara (partly) Counties. The studied region is part of Timiș County, which totals an area of 8637 km<sup>2</sup> (2010).

The historical context, geographical location, the rich natural resources and the economic context have attracted people from different parts of Europe ever since ancient times, and made them settle here. The most important peoples for its later development were the ones brought over from the Empire, starting the 18th century. As a result of the successive colonizations of the 18th century, as well as the economic migrations of the 19th and 20th centuries, the composition of the region is today, from an ethnic point of view, very diverse. Romanians, Serbs, Hungarians, Germans, Bulgarians, Jews, Czechs (Bohemians), Slovaks, Roma, Croatians, Aromanians, and Ukrainians live here. Over time,

a mixture of different populations has been created here, who have all lived together peacefully and developed a specific way of life, through permanent cultural exchanges, by adopting customs and traditions specific to other groups, Banat becoming, thus, a miniature Europe.

This ethnic, confessional and linguistic multiculturalism can still be found today, and this study will highlight this defining feature for the area, by pointing out the elements of historical and cultural heritage present within the three communes and the town of Sânnicolau Mare.

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## **1. Geographical Framing and Historical References Important to the Evolution of the Municipalities of Vălcani, Dudeștii Vechi, Beba Veche și Sânnicolau Mare**

The four municipalities are located on the Western Plain, in a low area, represented by the Aranca Plain, a river with many branches. The Aranca River springs from the Vinga Plain, close to the Mureș riverbed, between the municipalities of Felnac to the East and Sânpetru German to the West. It covers a distance of 108 km on Romanian territory, draining an area of 1016 km<sup>2</sup>. However, the slope of the riverbed is very small, almost horizontal, which is why the course of the river is very winding, with many meanders, unraveling and abandoned branches. The Aranca River course was connected to an extensive network of dams and canals built in order to drain and remove excess water from the surface of the soil. The genesis of this river is related to the course changes of the Mureș River in the last 10,000 years. The current riverbed of the Aranca is, in fact, an old, abandoned course.

The swamp that existed in the past, along with the floods undergone by the inhabitants of this area, have determined the resettlement of the village hearths, as well as the shaping of the infrastructure. One can see the winding road that connects Dudeștii Vechi with Beba Veche. The Beba Veche locals tell the legend according to which this road was “designed” by following the footsteps of a donkey who only stepped on the non-floodable land.

### **Vălcani**

The first information about Valcani appeared in documents in the year 1256, when it was called Kyuolkan, and it was inhabited by “blachi” (Vlachs/Romanians) and “biseni” (probably Pechenegs). It was first owned by the Csanád family, the descendants of the one who gave the name to Cenad and fought with Voivode Glad. The road that crosses the border of the municipality, called „the military road”, used to connect the Fortress of Cenad with Beba Veche and Comloșul Mare, passing through Vălcani.

The estate later became property of a János Horváth-Kissevics, in 1647, during the Ottoman administration. After the Habsburgs took over the province in 1717, the village became property of the Habsburg Empire. Following the annexation of Banat by Hungary, the estate was sold to the Batthyány family, who then sold it to Baron Simeon Sinna, followed by Ludovic Schwartz, Arthur and Carol Lederer, Mrs. Rezső Weiler, Dr. Samuil Doja, Keleti Adolf, Mrs. Oszkar Echard and Ioan Korek. The large land estates were divided

under the reform of 1919-1920, then again in 1945, thus the locals becoming owners one after the other.

The population of Vălcani was initially exclusively Romanian, and in 1892 Hungarian inhabitants settled here from Makó (Hungary), and these are still the main ethnic communities living in the commune.

Judging by the names of the commune lands – “the eel’s river mouth” and “Petak’s river mouth” it appears that in the past the place where Vălcani is located was swampy, which is proven by a seal of the Vălcani parish of 1863, on which there is a pig surrounded by reeds. According to the village elders, the name of the place comes from „Valea Câinelui” (Valley of the Dog), as for a long time where the village is now located there used to be a grazing ground, where the flocks of sheep of the local shepherds would graze, while being guarded by dogs.

The Vălcani commune was first established as an administration in 1877 and it functioned as such until 1968. After the administrative-territorial reform, once counties reappeared, the commune was abolished, and the village was attached to the commune of Dudeștii Vechi. Following a local referendum organized in 2004, Vălcani was reestablished as a commune, consisting of a single village.

## Dudeștii Vechi

The Dudeștii Vechi commune is located in the northwest of Timiș County, in the central-western part of the Aranca Plain. It consists of the following villages: Dudeștii Vechi, Cheglevici and Colonia Bulgară (The Bulgarian Colony).

Hungarian documents show that during the reign of Hungarian King Stephen the Holy (997–1038), 60 Pecheneg families (called „bisseni” or „besseni” in Latin), together with their servants were settled in this area. These Pechenegs were a Turkic, nomad, primitive, warrior and pagan population. They were colonized in several places of the Kingdom of Hungary, gradually engaged in sedentary behaviour and converted to Christianity. In return for their compulsory military service to the Hungarian King, they received certain privileges. The historical name of this village comes from the name of the Pechenegs. The first documentary attestation dates from 1213 as „Terra Castri Bossene”. In the year 1230 the village was under the name of Besseneu, and in 1232 as „Meta Bisenorum”. The village belonged to the Fortress of Cenad, which brought it several privileges, later strengthened by King Sigismund of Hungary, as Bessenova was considered at the time a real “nest of Hungarian land owners”, that is, Hungarian nobles of small and medium rank. In fact, there are later documents, dating back to 1647, in which the names of such noble families

who owned the settlement are mentioned, such as those of Petre Szél and Gáspár Tar or Ștefan Dóry and Andrei Török.

After the Ottoman occupation, the village declined greatly, while very few people stayed behind to live in it. On a 1715 map, the village is mentioned as „Bessenyo”, a settlement with a church and a cula (a defence tower), but on Florimund Mercy's map of 1723 the place is listed as an deserted settlement.

In the spring of 1738, the approximately 2000 Paulician Bulgarians who took refuge in Oltenia, fleeing from the Ottomans, settled in Beșenova, with the help of Bishop Nicola Stanislávič. The Bulgarian Catholic settlers found a deserted settlement here, with a run down kula made of stone blocks. They reused the material to build the present church (between 1801–1804) by placing the stone blocks at the foundation of the church and founding a new community. This community still speaks an archaic dialect, the Paulician Bulgarian, and uses a Latin, not a Cyrillic alphabet, unlike the other Slavic languages of the Balkans.

In 1968, the commune received the name of Dudeștii Vechi, or Star Bîsnov in Bulgarian.

## **Beba Veche**

Located in the westernmost point of the country, called Triplex Confinium, where the borders of Romania meet those of Hungary and Serbia, the Beba Veche commune consists of the following villages: Beba Veche, Cherestur and Pordeanu.

The village, such as the name suggests, is one of the oldest in Banat. Judging by the mounds discovered on the territory of the village, it can be concluded that it dates back to at least the time of the Agathyrsi (6th century BC). When the Hungarians arrived, they named it Óbéba, meaning „the Old Beba” (Beba Veche). The historian Nicolae Ilieșiu claims that until the 5th century, it was called Vitoliu, after the name of the Roman duke Viteliu.

The first documentary attestation dates back to 1247, during the reign of King Bela IV, in a chronicle in which it appears under the name of Óbéba. In 1330, the village was destroyed by the Ottomans, followed by a period of about two hundred years in which there is no mention of Beba. After the establishment of the Austrian rule in Banat, it seems that Beba Veche was no longer inhabited, because on Mercy's map of 1723-1725, Beba is no longer mentioned. Shortly afterwards, it began to be repopulated with Orthodox Romanians from across the Mureș River, trying to escape the Hungarian serfdom. The village was rebuilt starting 1760, during the second period of colonization of the Banat, known as the “Theresian colonization”, after the name of Empress Maria

Theresa. By 1779, about 300 Swabian families arrived in Beba as a result of the colonization programme, but at the same time Romanians and Hungarians settled here. In 1781, during the reign of Empress Maria Theresa, several estates of the State were sold, including Beba, bought by Count, later Bishop Ignác Batthyány of Transylvania, whose name is also linked to the famous Batthyaneum library in Alba Iulia. His estate in Beba also included Oroszlamos (beyond today's border), Vălcani, Cherestur and Cociorhat.

Following the First World War, the area was disputed by the three countries and, for a time, the status of the border was unclear, while Romania's territorial claims were not met. However, on November 24, 1923, a rectification of the original demarcation line took place, through which Romania and the Serbian Kingdom made a territorial exchange. Romania undertook to cede the communes of Pardany, Modos, Surgan, Crivobara and Nagy Gaj, while the Kingdom of Serbia ceded to Romania Beba Veche, Pusta-Kerestur, Ciorda, Iam and the town of Jimbolia. Thus, Beba Veche was under Serbian administration from March 25, 1921 until April 10, 1924, when Beba Veche officially became part of the Romanian state.

## Sânnicolau Mare

Sânnicolau Mare is the westernmost city in Romania, being the third largest town in the county, after Timișoara and Lugoj. It is documented in 1247, in the "Royal Privileged Diplomas", but its existence dates back to much older times. It is a border town, located 6 km from the border with Hungary and 24 km from the border with Serbia, on the irregular course of the Mureș River.

In the Paleolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages, the town was a simple settlement, with a few houses in the Seliște area. During the Dacian and Roman periods, the town was part of the fortress and the town of Morisena, which fulfilled the role of administrative center of Banat. Morisena was the residence of Attila, the capital of princes Glad, Claudius and Ahtum. The existence of this town is due to the fact that it was an outpost for the defense of the fortress, bordered to the south by the Aranca river, the Galațca lake and the swamps created by Aranca, and to the north towards Cenad was the Zăbrani forest. Between the years 907-1025, the town developed territorially towards the north, through new civil and administrative constructions. In the royal diplomas from 1217 and 1256, the settlement is mentioned with the name of Sân-Nicolau, after the name of the monastery here which was dedicated to "St. Nicholas". Starting with the years 1241, the fortress and



the town fall under Hungarian occupation, an administrative center for the Banat area being established here. After the passage of the migrating peoples of Tartars, Mongols and Cumans between the years 1300-1551, the fortress of Cenad moves some of its responsibilities to the town of Sânnicolau Mare, which thus becomes a fortress. After 1552, with the Ottoman occupation of Banat, they moved their prefectural residence to the citadel of Cenad, with a garrison in the locality, where they also had a Janissary school. After the passing of Banat under the Habsburg administration, an early medieval treasure was discovered here (in 1799), consisting of 23 gold objects, currently on display in Vienna. During all this time Sânnicolau Mare underwent a special economic, demographic and urban evolution. The town was colonized by Germans (Swabians), a population meant to contribute to the economic development of the province and to the promotion of the Roman Catholic denomination. Thus, the German town of Sânnicolau also developed, and was later incorporated into the city.

## **2. The Tourist Resources in the Four Municipalities**

The tourist potential refers to two main categories of tourist resources: natural and anthropogenic.

### **2.1 Natural attractions**

Regarded in its entirety, the Aranca Plain has a monotonous, low plain appearance, with wide and straight interfluves, interrupted here and there, by mounds, raised, on average, by 2 – 3 m above the general level of the plain. The highest altitudes (about 82 – 83 m) are reached at the level of the "mounds", the origin of which is either anthropogenic (Neolithic mounds) or structural (the presence in the subsoil of "pits" of stronger sandy clays, or local "swellings" of the clay, due to a higher local groundwater level).

### **2.2. Anthropogenic Resources in Vălcani, Dudeștii Vechi, Beba Veche and Sânnicolau Mare**

#### **2.2.1. Tourist Attractions (built heritage)**

The number of sites declared monuments in the four settlements, according to the List of Historical Monuments 2010 - Timiș County is 13. Following the field research conducted in January 2022, we may reduce this number to 11. This is because the monument "house" from Beba Veche listed under number TM-II-mB-06184, dating from 1900 and

located at no. 307, was demolished. A similar situation occurs in Dudeștii Vechi with the “house” monument TM-II-m-B-06223, dating from the 1800s, located at no.882. The monuments include sites from the Bronze, Roman, or Middle Age, or secular and ecclesiastical monuments from the 18th - 20th centuries. Hereforth, we will group them into categories of attractions, including a broad description and drawing a conclusion regarding their capitalization from the point of view of tourism.

## Categories of Attractions:

- **Archaeological Sites**

The appearance of earth mounds in Europe is linked to Indo-European migration, in fact being a new fad in terms of funeral rites and rituals. This trend can be considered one of the elements that lead to the creation of ancient Europe as we know it today. The current territory of Romania does not lack this type of discoveries. At the level of Timiș County, the mounds of earth, bearing different names – “gomilă, moghilă, movilă, dâmb, huncă, hügel, berg” - constitute a special category of the archeological patrimony being located mainly in the western part of the County. Earth mounds are a category of archaeological heritage that contain essential information on the material and spiritual culture of the human communities that have inhabited Banat over time. In the studied area, a considerable number of such mounds have been identified in the last century, but here we will only be referring to some of them.

### Vălcani

Close to the bed of the Aranca canal, near the railway administration building, 7 solid chisel-shaped stone tools were found, and handed over to the Ethnographic Institute in Cluj.

At the Vălcani-Vamă (Vălcani-Customs Office) site, between the hearth of Vălcani village and the border crossing point (right side of road 59F), a very important burial necropolis was identified, consisting of 199 tombs of Hungarian horsemen (10th-11th centuries) and 30 Avar tombs (7th-8th centuries).

### Dudeștii Vechi

a) 1 km south of Dudeștii Vechi, to the left of the road and of the Dudeștii Vechi – Vălcani railway, there is the mound of earth called “Movila Tătraneanu”. A skeleton of a woman

with ornaments was unveiled here, along with pieces of weapons (shield, spear), and a large amount of pottery dating from the migration period.

b) 7.5 km south of the village, on the border with Teremia Mică, there is an earth mound in which a rider's tomb from the migration period and a child's tomb were discovered.

c) In the Bukova III mound, located on the road between Dudeștii Vechi and Sânnicolau Mare, a burial tomb was found which, along with the skeleton, also contained weapons, harness parts and parts of a horse skeleton. The tomb dates from the end of the 1st millennium BC. Neolithic ceramic material belonging to the Tisza and Criș cultures also comes from here.

d) At the "Izlaz" point, a site belonging to the Starčevo – Criș culture was identified, and in Pusta Bukovei, north of a branch of the Aranca Valley, a tell was reported, called "Movila Mare" (the Great Mound), in which seven idols, an amulet, six polishers, and 84 vessels belonging to the Starčevo – Criș culture, Vinča, Tisa, Tiszapolgar were found.

d) In the archeological site from Cociohat, located at approximately 15 km west of Dudeștii Vechi commune, on the agricultural territory of Farm no. 3 (Cociohat) complexes belonging, mostly, to the Bronze Age (Mureș culture) were identified and researched, and some to the Middle Ages (11th-13th centuries). In ancient times, the area was swampy, prone to floods, so the archaeological material found here is dominated by the presence of fish bones and white-nacre shells, probably part of the common food of prehistoric people. The seasonal collection of shells for consumption was also revealed by the exclusive storage of shells in several household pits, probably waste left over from a "collective feast" (one of the pits housed over 140 kg of shells). When cleaning and washing the material from such a "shell pit", an appreciable amount of burnt grains of wheat was identified in the soil accumulated in the shells. Their analysis showed that in ancient times, in this swampy and muddy area, triticum spelta, a type of primitive wheat with an uneven grain on the ear, was cultivated on ridges, but despite its low productivity, it was very nutritious and easy to cultivate. This discovery, as well as the identification of a large number of bones resulting from domestic animals (especially cattle and goats) show that life was good in the swampy areas, with mild climates and abundant vegetation being exploited by human communities of the Bronze Age and, later, of the Middle Ages.

## **Sânnicolau Mare**

TM-I-s-B-06083 – Settlement – "Viile" , 500 m E of town. Dated: 2nd Millenium BC, Bronze Age

TM-I-s-B-06084 – Roman settlement – "At the brick factory", 1.5 km SE of town. Dated: 2nd-3rd century AD, Roman Empire Era

TM-I-s-B-06085 – Medieval settlement – "Seliște", 1 km E of town. Dated: 2nd-3rd century AD, Modern Age

- **Religious attractions, in use for religious worship:**

## 1. The Romanian Orthodox Church of Vălcani



After the old place of worship of the Orthodox believers in Vălcani, built on the site of "Petac's river mouth", was damaged because of floods, between 1789-1799 the locals erected a new church in the heart of the village. The church was built in Byzantine style by an unknown mason. During the Second World War, an observatory post and a machine gun nest belonging to the retreating German armies were installed in the church tower. They were discovered by the Russian troops advancing from the southwest, and the tower was hence hit by a shell, which caused serious damage to the entire church. During the renovations of the tower, three documents from 1874 and one from 1908 were found

inside the cross, wrapped in a leather, on which the names of the donors who contributed to repairs in those years were written. These are still preserved inside the cross.

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## **2. The Roman-Catholic Church of Vălcani**

The list of papal tithes attests in 1334 the existence of an independent Roman Catholic parish in Vălcani, which disappeared during the Ottoman rule. The current church was built in 1904 and is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, the parishoners being mainly Hungarians and Germans. With a modest exterior, the church is decorated with neo-Gothic furniture, and the basement has a crypt that houses two beautiful white marble sarcophagi belonging to the Freiburger and Weiler families.





Contact:

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### **3. The Roman-Catholic Church of Beba Veche**

A Catholic parish had existed in Beba Veche ever since the Middle Ages, but later disappeared during the Ottoman rule. After the liberation of the Banat, Beba Veche was one of the first settlements to house a Hungarian population, at the end of the 18th century. In this context, the Bishop of Transylvania, Ignatius Batthyány, acquired an estate

in Beba Veche, at the same time contributing to the re-establishment of the Catholic parish. The church was built by the family of Counts Batthyány in 1833 and is dedicated to the Holy Name of Mary (September 12). There were several estates around the town, most of which have disappeared today, including one called Batthyányháza, in honor of the bishop whose name is linked to the rebirth of Catholic life in the town. Bishop Batthyány is the first to publish in modern times the theological-philosophical work "Deliberatio" of Saint Gerhard, the first bishop of Cenad.



Contact:

Address: No.200, Beba Veche

Tel: +40 756353774

#### **4. The Romanian Orthodox Church of Beba Veche**



The Orthodox Church in Beba Veche, dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was built in 1779 and is classified as an A category historical monument, under number TM-II-m-A-06181. In the northern part of the altar, outside the church, there is a red marble cross with an inscription marking the resting place of the first priest of the Orthodox Church in Beba Veche. The bells were cast in 1929 in the workshops of the famous Timișoara bell manufacturer, Anton Novotny. On the altar there are old objects of worship, a silver cross and a silver chalice with an inscription erased by time, on which one can still read the year 1773.

Contact:

Address: No.293, Beba Veche

Tel: +40 724 302 343



## 5. The Roman-Catholic Church of Dudeștii Vechi

The Roman Catholic Church, consecrated in 1804, is the third church built by the Paulician Bulgarians who settled here in 1738. The inside retains features of the Baroque style, although the interior decoration was executed after the first decade of the 19th century. The main altar was made by craftsmen from Budapest, and the side altars and pulpit were ordered in Tyrol, and executed by the well-known craftsman Ferdinand Stufflesser.

The church is classified as an A category historical monument under number TM-II-m-A-06222.

In front of the church stands the monumental sculpture of St. John of Nepomuk, who became the patron saint of the Banat in 1726.



Contact:

Address: No.257, Dudeștii Vechi

Tel: +40 256384124

## **6.The Romanian Orthodox Church of Sânnicolau Mare**

The Romanian Orthodox Church was built between 1898 and 1903, after the separation of the community of believers from the Hierarchy and the Serbian Church, which took place in the year 1900. The interior of the church is adorned with works by great specialists in the field, including painter Ioan Zaicu from Jimbolia, considered the last outstanding figure of the Banat art before the war, and Jenö Spang, a well-known goldsmith from Timișoara.

In the courtyard of the church a memorial plaque is mounted on the wall, dedicated to the Romanian Orthodox heroes from the town, who died in the two world wars.

Contact:

Address: No.15, Calea lui Traian Street, Sânnicolau Mare

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## **7. The Roman-Catholic Church of Sânnicolau Mare**

Following the floods of 1816, the city's old Roman Catholic parish church was replaced in 1824, at the expense of Count Alexander Nákó, by a new, spacious, eclectic-style basilica with three naves (one main and two secondary). The church is dedicated to St. Teresa of Avila depicted on an imposing-sized icon on the main altar. In addition, the main altar is the only one in Banat with a canopy. In the church there is a smaller painting depicting St. Nicholas, whose author is Countess Berta Nákó.

Under the church sanctuary, Count Nákó arranged for a crypt, to house the remains of members of the Nákó family, including the Count's parents, Kristóf Nákó and Sofia Szecsujaz Heldenfeldi, who are baptized in the Orthodox rite.



Contact:

Address: No.1, Piața 30 decembrie, Sânnicolau Mare,

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### **8. The Serbian Orthodox Church of Sânnicolau Mare**

The place of worship was built between 1783 and 1787, making it the oldest church in town. Built of burnt brick, the building stands out for its elegant Viennese Baroque-style shapes, with Macedonian-Romanian elements, and for its imposing size. The church was built by local Orthodox believers - Serbs, Romanians, Greeks, with the help of the local Nakó family of nobles, and served as a place of worship for all Orthodox parishoners until 1893, when the separation of Romanian believers from the Serbian Hierarchy and Church took place. The church building is classified as an A category historical monument under number TM-II-m-A-06286.



Contact:

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### **9. The Greek-Catholic Church of Sânnicolau Mare**

The Greek Catholic parish of Sânnicolau Mare was founded in 1846, when forty Romanian families converted to Catholicism. Until the construction and consecration of the church in 1902, the believers had their place of worship in a house close to the current site of the church. The church, whose patron saint is the Holy Hierarch Nicholas, the protector of

the city, continued its activity until 1948, when the Greek Catholic denomination merged with the Orthodox one, and in 1990, the two denominations separated again.

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- **Cultural Attractions**

### **Museums:**

#### **1. The Vălcani Village Museum**

The one-room museum of Vălcani was set up in 2018 due to the desire of the locals to revive the cultural traditions in the area. They donated various exhibits for the museum collection: from traditional fabrics, clothing, to objects typical of the rural households in this area, craft and agricultural tools used in field work. A useful visit for those who want to reenact the rural life of the 19th and 20th centuries. The museum of Vălcani village is housed in one of the rooms of the multicultural centre of the Vălcani town hall.



Contact:

Address: No.222, Vălceni, on the premises of the multicultural centre of the Vălceni town hall

Contact person: Galu Adina

Visiting hours: Mon-Fri, 8:00-16:00; no appointment required

## **2. The Museum of the Bulgarian Community of Dudeștii Vechi**

The local Museum of the Bulgarian Community is housed in an 1871 building. The collection includes various exhibits specific to the area and the Bulgarian ethnic group: impressive archeological artifacts uncovered around the village (medieval tombs, ornaments and offerings, animal skeletons, and leftover food and tools from the early Neolithic period), art and ethnographic objects (pottery, household tools, furniture, fabrics) and historical (maps, documents, books). The museum also exhibits interior



reconstructions, as well as folk costumes of the Banat Bulgarians. Fire extinguishers from the last century are on display in front of the museum.



Contact:

Address: No.236, Dudeștii Vechi

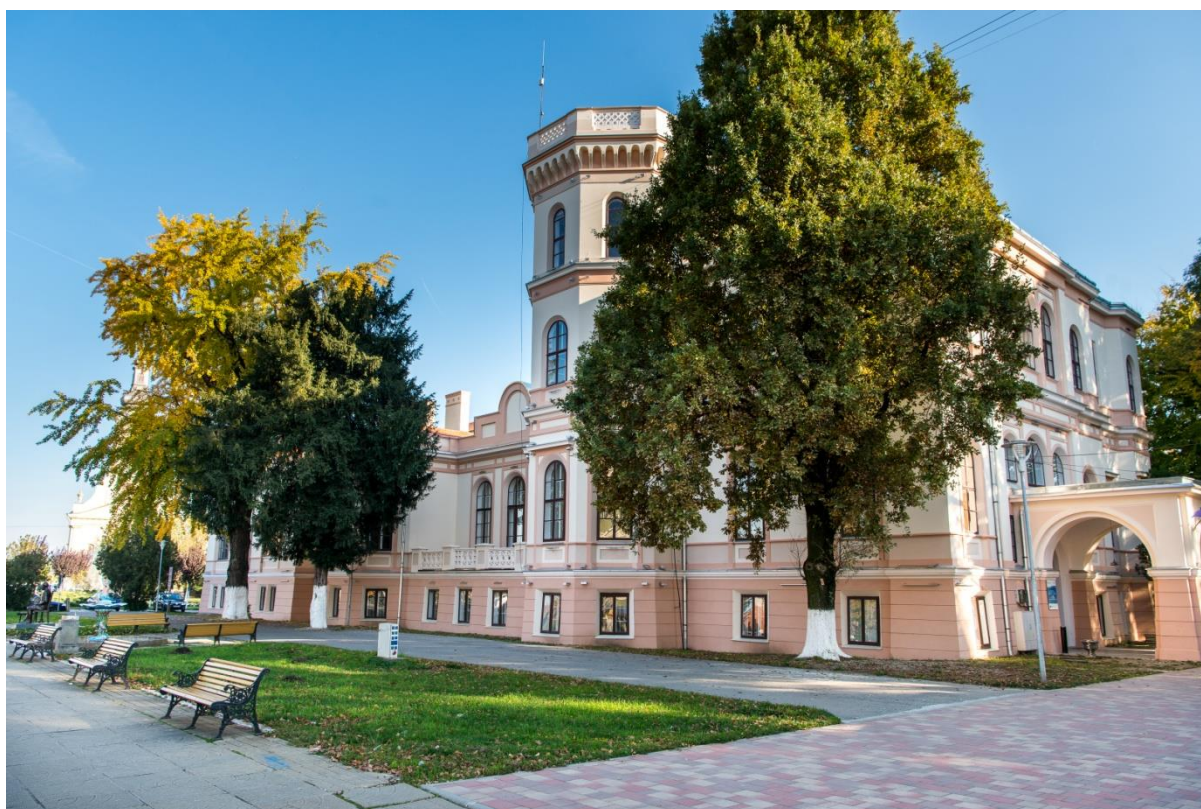
Tel: +40 764460283

Contact person: Ioan Calapiș

### **3. The Nákó Manor in Sânnicolau Mare**

The Nákó Manor, located in the centre of the town of Sânnicolau Mare, was built in 1864 by Count Kálmán Nákó, based on the plans of architect Miklós Ybl, who provided it with a romantic tower and battlements on the north side. The reception hall was decorated with silver art objects, an old German gem, bronze sculptures and inlaid cabinets, and 15th century paintings. A park with rare trees was set up around the manor. The Nákó Manor cannot be architecturally placed in a single style, however, it took on the style elements of the Baroque and the influences of Romanticism, giving the building a certain

look meant to impress, typical of small castles on the outskirts of the Austro-Hungarian Dualist Monarchy. The manor now houses the Sânnicolau Mare House of Culture and Museum, as well as a Béla Bartók Memorial Room.



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#### 4. The Sânnicolau Mare Town Museum

The Sânnicolau Mare Town Museum, housed in the Nákó Manor since 1981, a former noble residence, is one of the important elements of the local culture. The museum houses the permanent Béla Bartók exhibition, elements of local ethnography and folklore, as well as an exhibition of archeological discoveries in the area. Also, a room is dedicated to the Treasure of Sânnicolau Mare, which exhibits a replica of the original treasure found at the Museum of Art History in Vienna. The treasure of Sânnicolau Mare was discovered in July 1799, by Serbian peasant Neța Vuin, while he was digging in the garden of his house. It consists of 23 gold vessels, weighing over 10 kg, its origins still subject to much debate nowadays.





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<http://muzeu-oras.blogspot.com/>

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Visiting hours: Mon-Fri: 8:00-16:00

### **5. The Béla Bartók Collection in the Sânnicolau Mare Town Museum**

The most important collection of the Museum focuses on composer and pianist Béla Bartók (1881 - 1945), born in Sânnicolau Mare by his full name - Bartók Béla Viktor János. The exhibition presents, in addition to old images and original manuscripts on Bartók's life and work, the phonograph with which he recorded folk music. Béla Bartók made the largest collection of Romanian folk songs (approx. 4,000) but also numerous specialized scientific studies. His collection of folk music from Transylvania and Banat includes 3,379 Romanian songs, 774 Hungarian, 21 Serbian and 7 Bulgarian. In 1924, Bartók received

the Enescu Prize for his "Piano Suite". King Ferdinand I decorated Bartók with the Bene Merenti Order, I Class .

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## **Tourist resources of ethnographic value**

### **1. The Căpăț House of Sânnicolau Mare**

A typical Banat house, dated 1820, and classified as a B category monument under no. TM-II-m-B-06285. The house still has a beautiful wooden pediment, unusual for this area, decorated with elements specific to the Banat folk architecture: a wreath, hearts, flower pot-like decorations. Unfortunately, some of these wooden elements have fallen off the pediment, most likely because of the owners' carelessness.

Contact:

Address: No.35, Simion Bărnuțiu Street

## **Schools:**

### **1. The Theoretical "Saints Cyril and Methodius" High School of Dudeștii Vechi**

The Theoretical "Saints Cyril and Methodius" High School in Dudeștii Vechi is considered to be the oldest Bulgarian school outside the borders of Bulgaria. According to tradition, since its establishment in 1745, the Bulgarian language was taught in the school from the 1st to the 12th grade, a unique situation on the territory of nowadays Romania.

Contact:

<https://liceulkirilsimetodii.wordpress.com/>

Address: No.253, Dudeștii Vechi,

Tel: +40 256384101

### **2.The Theodor Bucurescu No.1 Middle School**

The building of the No.1 Middle School was built in 1897, with the contribution of the locals. Its destination was the Headquarters and then the District People's Council, and in

1966 it became the headquarters of the No.1 Middle School. It is a two-storey building with large rooms and windows, it has an observation tower, which is the second largest after the Catholic Church. It has eclectic elements and neoclassical forms of Neo-Romanesque style.

Contact:

Address: No.2, Piața 1 Mai

Tel: +40 256 370971

E-mail: scoalasm1@yahoo.com

### **3. The First Agricultural School in the Country – Sânnicolau Mare**

Out of the desire to improve the level of theoretical and practical training of the serf peasantry and, implicitly, their material situation, nobleman Kristóf Nákó, one of the first agricultural entrepreneurs in Torontal County, founded in 1799 in Sânnicolau Mare the first agricultural school in present-day Romania. It opened in 1801 and operated until 1848, then reopened in 1863 as the "Kristóf Institute". At the Agricultural School, whose principals included János Bartók, Béla Bartók's grandfather, and later, even the great composer's father, tuition was free, school supplies were subsidized, and a dormitory was provided for students of various ethnic backgrounds. In 2012, the old Agricultural School became the "Cristofor Nákó" Technological High School. The building is listed as a B category historical monument under number TM-II-m-B-06284.

Contact:

Address: No.100, Victor Babeș Street

- **Technical and Industrial Attractions**

#### **1. The Old Bridge of Beba Veche**

The entrance to the village is done by crossing one of the two 300-year-old bridges, also called "The Wheat Bridge". The bridge is a testament to the historical and commercial importance of the small settlement located at the edge of the country. Back in the day, the grain would be transported to Vienna, Linz or Graz over the bridge, and it is said that the strudels served at the imperial tables were made out of Beba Veche wheat.

Contact:

Address: DJ682 Beba Veche



## 2. The Prohaska Mill

The Prohaska steam mill was built in 1854. It serviced the entire region and produced electricity. Today, a restaurant is accommodated on the mill premises.

- **Institutional Headquarters**

### 1. The Berta Town Hospital of Sânnicolau Mare

The history of the Sânnicolau Mare hospital is closely linked to the history of the Nákó family. This family also built the hospital, namely through Count Kálmán Nákó and his wife Berta Nákó, née Gyertjanffy. The fact that her eldest son, János, had died early when merely 40, that her daughter Malvina (1843-1856) had also died as a child, contributed to the Countess's decision to build a hospital in the town. Thus, she bequeathed money to a foundation in her name for the construction of the hospital. The construction was carried out by her husband Kálmán, starting 1883. At the time of construction, the hospital was very solid and modern, for example, at the beginning of the 20th century it already had electricity supplied by the nearby Prohaska mill. The three buildings are placed around a square English park with a statue of Berta in the centre.



Contact:

Address: No.14, Timișorii Street

Tel: +40 256371770

E-mail: [spitalsannicolaumare@artelecom.net](mailto:spitalsannicolaumare@artelecom.net)

- **Monuments and Commemorative Plaques**

## **Monuments**

### **1. The Triplex Confinium Monument in Beba Veche**

After the entry into force of the Treaty of Trianon, as well as after the conclusion of border correction negotiations, Beba Veche, a village in the extreme western part of the country, was ceded to Romania after three years of Serbian administration. In the vicinity of the village stands today the Triplex Confinium (in Latin "triple border"), the landmark that stands at the meeting point of the Romanian-Hungarian-Serbian borders. The monument is a three-sided stone obelisk, each bearing the coat of arms of one of the three neighboring countries. The saying that in Beba Veche one can hear roosters singing from three different countries is not surprising.

The borders open at Beba Veche only once a year, on the last Saturday of May, on which occasion the inhabitants of the three neighboring communes: Beba Veche (Romania), Majdan-Rabe (Serbia) and Kübekháza (Hungary) organize the celebration of the Euroregion Danube-Criș-Mureș-Tisza, which includes a series of cultural activities and sports competitions, as well as meetings between the Romanian, Serbian and Hungarian officials.



Contact:

Address: DJ682

Access: annually, on the last Saturday of the month of May

## **2.The Monument of the Deportees to Bărgan (Dudeştii Vechi)**

Contact:

Address: Dudeştii Vechi, behind the Roman-Catholic Church

## **3. The First and Second World Wars Heroes' Memorial (Dudeştii Vechi)**

Contact:

Address: Dudeştii Vechi, in front of the Roman-Catholic Church

## **4.The Cross of the "Americans" (Sânnicolau Mare)**

In front of the Romanian Orthodox Church stands the cross erected in 1907 from the contributions of locals who emigrated to the United States of America, in South Saint Paul, Minnesota. This monument has become a real tourist attraction for American visitors, descendants of the locals who left at the beginning of the 20th century, and are on an exciting journey to their origins.

Contact:

Address: No.15, Calea lui Traian Street, Sânnicolau Mare

Tel: +40 256370108

## Statues and Busts

### 1. The Dr. Téry Ödön Bust (Beba Veche)

Dr. Téry Ödön (née Edmund Rikker) is regarded by the locals as the most important personality born in Beba Veche (July 4, 1856). An avid mountaineer, hiker and explorer of the Tatra Mountains, Téry Ödön is considered the founder of the tourism movement in Central Europe. Every year, on the occasion of his birthday, a delegation from Hungary comes to Beba Veche to pay homage to the explorer at his bust, erected by the Union of Nature Lovers of Csongrád County in the centre of the commune, in the courtyard of the Roman Catholic Church.



Contact:

Address: DJ682 Beba Veche, in the courtyard of the Roman-Catholic Church

### 2. The Statue of Bishop Nikola Stanislavich (Dudeştii Vechi)

Nikola Stanislavic (1694-1750), Bishop of Nicopole ad Hystrium (1725-1739) and Bishop of Cenad (1739-1750) stood behind the decision of bringing the Catholic Bulgarians from Wallachia to the Banat, and have them settle in Beşenova Veche and Vinga. The Bishop's body rests in the crypt of the Roman-Catholic Cathedral located in Union Square in Timișoara.

Contact:

Address: Dudeştii Vechi, across the street from the Roman-Catholic Church

### 3. The Bust of Mihai Eminescu (Sânnicolau Mare)

The bust of Mihai Eminescu, unveiled on October 11, 1925, in front of the middle school led by school master Theodor Bucureescu, was the first monument erected in honor of the poet in the annexed provinces after the Great Union, and the third one in the country.

The bust of the poet was made by sculptor I. Dimitriu Bârlad from Bucharest, and cast in bronze at the Factory and Artistic Foundry V. Rășcanu, also from Bucharest, and posted on a granite pedestal, the whole monument being four meters high. To achieve this, Theodor Bucureescu initiated in 1920 a public collection - opened by himself with the amount of 600 lei, money representing his salary for three months. The inhabitants of 50 villages and towns, the Romanian Railroads Company, and some banks also donated money. Octavian Goga, member of the Romanian Academy, Vasile Goldiș, president of the "Astra" Association, from Sibiu, Ion Minulescu, general director in the Ministry of Cults and Religion and Liviu Rebreanu, president of the Romanian Writers' Society - were also present at the unveiling event - a national celebration attended by over 10,000 people. The agenda included, in addition to the unveiling of the monument, a consecration service, a programme of choral songs, followed by a competition between choirs, a literary raffle și a banquet for 1,000 de persoane, in the courtyard of the "Vulturul negru" (Black Eagle) Hotel. Mihai Eminescu's bust is listed as a B category monument under number TM-III-m-B-06324.

Contact:

Address: Nistor Oprean Street, in front of the Sânnicolau Mare town hall

#### **4.The Statue of St.John of Nepomuk (Sânnicolau Mare)**

Consecrated in 1726 as patron saint of the Banat, Saint John of Nepomuk is present in the region through a series of monumental stone sculptures, including the one in the courtyard of the Roman-Catholic church in Sânnicolau Mare. The monument was created by an anonymous artist, in a local workshop, according to the inscription on the decorative carved pergament, delimited by acanthus leaves, in 1757, at the initiative of Mátyás Oexel. A brewer from Sânnicolau Mare, Oexel was so proud of his profession that on the pedestal of the statue he arranged the sculpting, in addition to his initials, of the figure of a man holding in his right raised hand three ears of barley, one of the raw materials of his profession. The value of the statue places it on the list of historical A category monuments in Timis County, under no. TM-III-m-A-06323.

Contact:

Address: Sânnicolau Mare, Piața 30 decembrie, in the courtyard of the Roman-Catholic church

Tel: +40 256370551



### **5. The Statue of Count Alexander Náková (Sânnicolau Mare)**

In the square in front of the Roman-Catholic church stands the statue of Count Alexander Náková of Sânnicolau Mare, the work of the late Timisoara sculptor Aurel Gheorghe Ardelean. The name, years of birth and death are engraved on the pedestal of the statue, as well as the monogram adorned with a family crown. The Count was depicted in the typical clothing of the nineteenth century, holding his top hat in one hand and the staff in the other. The multilingual plaques around the statue pay homage to Alexander Náková's personality.

Contact:

Address: Sânnicolau Mare, Piața 30 decembrie, in front of the Roman-Catholic church

### **6. Monumentul Béla Bartók (Sânnicolau Mare)**

The Béla Bartók statue was created by the late Timișoara sculptor Peter Jecza, first as a plaster model during the communist period, and later cast in bronze and exhibited in the public space of Sânnicolau Mare on December 20, 1993. Every year, in March and September, as a tribute to the famous composer, the management of the Pro Bartók Society from Sânnicolau Mare, together with the professors and students of the Faculty of Music of the University of Szeged, lay wreaths at this monument.

Contact:

Address: Victor Babeș Street, at the intersection with DN59C

### **7. The Bartók Family Graves in the Sânnicolau Mare Cemetery**

Composer Béla Bartók was born in Sânnicolau Mare and died in 1945 in New York, where he was originally buried. Towards the end of the 1980s, at the end of the communist rule in Hungary, Bartók's two sons requested the burial of his dead body in Budapest. Bartók's grandparents and father are buried in the Roman Catholic cemetery in Sânnicolau Mare, and their graves were renovated on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the artist's birth. They can be visited, the access to the Roman Catholic cemetery being free during working hours and can be an attraction to be included in the Béla Bartók tourist route.

## **Commemorative Plaques**

### **1.The Béla Bartók Memorial Plaque (Sânnicolau Mare)**

A bilingual memorial plaque, mounted in 1970 on the wall of the house built in place of the modest birthplace of the famous composer Béla Bartók, located in Sânnicolau Mare, on Cerbului Street No. 3, reminds the passer-by of the rich activity carried out by the composer, which contributed to the friendship between the Romanian and the Hungarian people ”.

### **2.2.2. Intangible heritage:**

#### **2.2.2.1. Local Personalities**

Some of the personalities born in the studied area were immortalized by the statues, busts or commemorative plaques mentioned above. Next, we mean to provide a more detailed list, albeit not complete, offering at the same time, an idea for a theme route or a guided tour following the footsteps of some personalities. The four municipalities subject of our study can pride themselves with the following personalities, whose stories are more or less known:

#### **Vălcani:**

Grațian Sepi (Sepi II) (1910-1977) – member of the Ripensia Timișoara, Politehnica Timișoara, and Venus Bucharest football teams, and of the national football team of Romania in the interwar period; the second youngest debutant of the Romanian national football team, at the age of just 17 years, 3 months and 15 days in 1928.

#### **Dudeștii Vechi:**

Karol Telbizov (1915-1994) – lawyer, journalist, editor-in-chief of the Bulgarian newspaper "The Voice of the Banat Bulgarians" (Banátsći balgarsći glásnić, published between 1935 and 1943), researcher of ethnography, culture and traditional Bulgarian clothing in Banat.

#### **Beba Veche:**

Dr.Téry Ödön (born Edmund Rikker) (1856-1917) - climber, hiker, explorer of the Tatra Mountains, considered the founder of the tourism movement in Central Europe.

#### **Sânnicolau Mare:**

Miklós Révai (1750-1807) – poet, Piarist monk and teacher, creator of Hungarian historical linguistics

Béla Bartók (1881-1945) – composer, musicologist and pianist

Sándor Nákó, Count of Sânnicolau Mare (1785-1884) – landowner, church founder, school founder

Kálmán Náko, conte de Sânnicolau Mare (1822-1902) – landowner, model farmer, deputy in the Hungarian Parliament

Lajos Töttössy, of Zepetnek (1822-1883) – lawyer, town councilor, "one of the most outstanding forensic scientists of Southern Hungary"

Péter Heim (1834-1904) – postmaster, creator and modernizer of the Hungarian Post and Telegraph Network

Laura Mátray (1841-1904) – actress

János Dreher, Baron of Sânnicolau Mare (1848-1939) – royal adviser, printing house director

Mária Xavéria Aubermann-Keresztes (1890-1957) – school sister, teacher, last leader of the order of the Notre Dame nuns in Romania

#### **2.2.2.2.Traditions and Customs**

##### **Dudeștii Vechi**

The customs and traditions of the Bulgarians from Dudeștii Vechi are related to the religious holidays, the agricultural calendar, and the important moments in human life such as: birth, baptism, wedding, and death. They are one of the most precious and beautiful things in the existence of the Bulgarians in Banat.

**1.The village drummer:** although over time some old customs and traditions have been lost, the only constant that has remained in Dudeștii Vechi over centuries, plagues and upheavals of life, is the village drummer. A picturesque character, of vital significance both in the past and in the present, the drummer announces, on Saturday at the market and whenever necessary, the latest "laws" and the new orders given by the local authorities.

#### **2.2.2.3.Events**

**The Church Feast and Celebration** – takes place in both rural and urban areas, on the holiday of the patron saint of the most important churches in the town or village.

**Vălcani** – The patron saint of the Romanian Orthodox Church is Pious Paraschiva (October 14), on which occasion the inhabitants of Vălcani celebrate the annual traditional church holiday.

**Dudeștii Vechi** – The holiday of the Roman-Catholic Church is celebrated on August 15, on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The holiday is known to the locals as "Dvete nédeli" – "The Two Week Holiday", still celebrated today.

**Beba Veché** – Every year on August 15, on the church holiday of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the locals celebrate the traditional holiday in the courtyard of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

**Sânnicolau Mare** - The celebration of the church holiday of the Serbian Orthodox Church, "the Assumption" (August 28 according to the old calendar). The church holiday of the Romanian Orthodox Church is the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (September 8), a holiday marked by the feast of the Romanian Orthodox believers in town. On the day of the feast, after the religious services in the church, a varied artistic program follows in the courtyard, with traditional music and dance.

Other events with annual recurrence in the four municipalities:

## **Dudeștii Vechi**

### **1. "Fărșangul" (The Carnival)**

In a community as traditional as the one in Dudeștii Vechi, the Fărșang is one of the long-awaited holidays, which marks the beginning of the Catholic Easter fast. The tradition was borrowed from the ethnic Germans colonized in Banat, and the name Fășanc or Fărșang, under which the custom is known in the Banat has its origin in German (Fastnacht or Fasching), respectively Hungarian (Farsang), both names having the same meaning, that of carnival. Traditionally it lasted two days, and it was an occasion for participants of all ages to enjoy. On the Fărșang, the custom indicated that young married people disguise themselves: men dressed in women's clothes, and women in men's clothes, and then go from household to household in horse driven carts. There would always be a musician playing in one of the carts, people would stop to dance, drink and eat. The merriment lasted until midnight, when the bell announced the beginning of the fasting period. Currently, the event is down to one day, when people gather in the centre of the village,

they cook pork dishes in a cauldron, Bulgarian donuts and mulled wine are served. The orchestra plays, young people disguise themselves, and the evening ends with a campfire meant, according to tradition, to warm up Baba Marta (Old Woman Martha), chase away winter and welcome spring.

## 2. "Lazarița"

This is a custom associated with the arrival of spring, and it takes place on the Saturday before Palm Sunday. On this day, girls up to 12 years old, dressed in traditional costume, visit their relatives and neighbours and sing songs with secular and religious content. The songs speak of the raising of Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, others about a little boy (symbol of new life). The girls carry a basket in which they put the eggs, handkerchiefs, candy, and the money they receive. A great opportunity for visitors to feel the spirit of the place at an important time of celebration for the community.



## 3. The Cauldron Festival

The cooking contest is organized annually at the end of September - beginning of October, and welcomes participants from the entire region. Every year the theme of the gastronomic meeting is different, the participants having to cook various dishes based on

traditional Bulgarian recipes from Dudeștii Vechi: "kavarma" (a sauce from chicken offal), stew or various meat with cabbage dishes.

#### **4. The "Jaku Ronkov" Interethnic Festival**

The Jaku Ronkov Interethnic Festival is an important event of the Bulgarian community in Dudeștii Vechi, founded in memory of Professor Jaku Ronkov. Active in the interwar period, he contributed to the preservation of the cultural identity of the village, thus ensuring the continuity of traditions. He organized and founded the men's choir, was a founding member of the "Voice of the Banat Bulgarians" newspaper, and author of the history brochures of the Bulgarians of Banat and of the album "200 years in Banat", printed in 1938.

Every year, in November, the festival brings together on the stage of the Cultural Centre about 90 members of the local men's ensemble and choir, and over 100 participants from Banat villages and towns, but also from Serbia, Hungary and Bulgaria.

A wonderful opportunity for visitors to discover local customs and enjoy the colours of the traditional costumes belonging to different ethnicities, while the artists perform Bulgarian, German, Hungarian, Serbian and Romanian songs and dances. During the festival, a gastronomic show of Bulgarian pastries is organized, which all participants may enjoy.

### **Sânnicolau Mare**

#### **1. The Celebration Events of Sânnicolau Mare**

Commonly referred to as "The Celebration Events of Sânnicolau Mare", the event happens on the first weekend of September, and lasts three days. The festivities take place on the stage of the Summer Theater of the local Culture House, located behind the Nákó Manor. The agenda includes various performances and cultural events, book launches, awards, unveilings of statues, and addresses a wide audience: from lovers of pop, rock, classical, and contemporary music, to those of folklore. This is one of the most important events, not only for the town of Sânnicolau Mare, but for its entire urban area.





Contact:

Address: No.10, Republicii Street

Telefon: +40 256 370042

## **2. The Carol Concert**

The carol concert is an annual performance of the fourteen church choirs from Sânnicolau Mare. The event brings together the voices of the different denominations from Sânnicolau Mare and takes place in the Roman Catholic Church. It is organized by the local Culture House and takes place annually, in mid-December.

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E-mail: [casa\\_cultura@sannicolau-mare.ro](mailto:casa_cultura@sannicolau-mare.ro)

## **3. Erntedankfest, the Autumn Harvest Thanksgiving Day**

The Autumn Harvest Thanksgiving Day is an event of the German community in Sânnicolau Mare, and a successor to the Kirchweih. The Erntedankfest borrows from this holiday the famous parade through the city center of the young people belonging to the Swabian ethnic group, dressed up in the traditional folk costumes. The event allows visitors to admire the beautiful customs of the inhabitants who gave the name to a part of the city: the German Commune. The event is held regularly on the first Sunday of October.



Contact:

Address: The Democratic Forum of the Germans in Romania, the Sânnicolau Mare branch

Tel: +40 256 370 712

E-mail: [revai.miklos.ns@gmail.com](mailto:revai.miklos.ns@gmail.com)

#### **4. The Rooster Festival or "Kakasfesztivál"**

The rooster festival comes to complete, in a very special way, the series of cultural events of the city, being an international gastronomic festival. Organized by the Hungarian community in the city on the third Saturday of August, the theme of this culinary festival is the cooking of a poultry dish in a cauldron, and it is all carried out in an particularly rustic and traditional manner.

Contact:



Address: No.10, Victor Babeş Street, The Revai Miklos Association, Bisztray House

Tel: +40 745 526 374

E-mail: revai.miklos.ns@gmail.com

## **5. Saint Sava**

The multicultural mix of the westernmost city of the country cannot be complete without its Serbian community. Its most important event is the performance dedicated to Saint Sava, who is the patron saint of schools and children. The event, celebrated on January 27, is performed by local Serbian bands: the Saint Sava Folk Ensemble, the Batini Bećari Drum Orchestra and the Biseri Instrumental Vocal Group, and it takes place at the Serbian Regional Cultural Center in town, under the auspices of the Union of Serbs from Romania, the Sânnicolau Mare branch.

Contact:

Address: No.8, Victor Babeş Street, Centrul Cultural Regional Sârbesc (The Regional Serbian Cultural Centre)

Tel: +40 764 444 929

E-mail: ccrsm.rkcv@gmail.com

## **Vălcani**

### **1. The Multicultural Festival of Art and Interethnic Tradition**

The Multicultural Festival is a two-day event showcasing the rich cultural traditions of the different ethnic and religious communities in the Banat region. Attendees may enjoy folk music and dance performances, multi-ethnic folk costume parades, culinary contests, as well as activities which promote local traditions by means of theatrical reenactments: wooing and wedding customs, religious practices and profane rituals. The traditional food fair exhibits a wide range of ethnic dishes meant to familiarize the young generations with them. The festival also includes an exhibition of handmade objects. This is a perfect opportunity for visitors to discover the cultural and natural heritage of the villages located in the border region and to identify their common features and differences.

Contact:

Address: No.222, Vălcani; the Vălcani Town Hall

Contact person: Galu Adina

Tel: +40 256385205

Regarding the tourist capitalization of the above mentioned attractions, we mention that many of them are renovated or undergoing restoration; they are grouped in the center of the village or town, and are easy to access from the outside as part of a walking tour of up to two hours. However, with the exception of the Orthodox churches, both Romanian and Serbian, as well as the Museum of Sânnicolau Mare and Vălceni, their actual visitation is difficult, in most places the visit must be announced and scheduled in advance.

### 3.Types of Tourism to be Practiced

In the area consisting of the four municipalities, based on the types of tourist attractions, it is mainly possible to practice develop a **cultural-historical type of tourism**.

#### **Suggested Routes to be Organized in Collaboration Between the Four Municipalities:**

##### **Sânnicolau Mare**

**1. The Béla Bartók route:** the first agricultural school, the memorial plaque, the Béla Bartók monument, the Bartók family graves, the Museum of Sânnicolau Mare

**2.The Nákó family route:** the Nákó manor and the town museum, the Roman-Catholic church, the statue of Alexander Nákó, the Berta Nákó hospital, the first agricultural school

**3.The genealogy route:** oriented towards receiving the descendants of Romanians who left for the USA at the beginning of the 20th century. Important sites for a better understanding of the culture, history and way of life of the ancestors, in addition to the classic tourist attractions of a city tour: the Căpăț house, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Cross of the "Americans" and the Vălceni Village Museum, where traditional costumes are exhibited, as well as objects from traditional households used for field work. Add a stop at a restaurant serving traditional Romanian dishes.

##### **Vălceni, Dudeștii Vechi, Beba Veche, Sânnicolau Mare:**

**1.The multicultural route:** Dudeștii Vechi (Bulgarians), Vălcani (Romanians and Hungarians), Beba Veche (Romanians, Hungarians), Sânnicolau Mare (Romanians, Serbs, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Germans). Depending on the time allotted and the interest of the group, tourists can visit the sites related to certain ethnic communities present in the four municipalities: museums and traditional houses, as well as churches being the most revealing in this regard, in addition to traditional events of each culture and specific gastronomy, there where it may be tasted.

**2.Cultural-gastronomic events:** the places that already have on their agenda culinary events, such as Sânnicolau Mare (the Rooster Festival) and Dudeștii Vechi (the Cauldron Festival), can bring in tourists on one-day tours in collaboration with tourism agencies. Tourists can be attracted by the gastronomy side of the event, but the tourist package may include guided tours following various routes (like the ones suggested for Sânnicolau Mare) or visits to the Museum of the Bulgarian Ethnicity, to the Roman-Catholic church in Dudeștii Vechi.

The same type of collaboration can be aimed at the communes of Vălcani, on the occasion of the annual festival organized with the help of this project, which would include a visit to the one-room museum and the local churches; and Beba Veche, on the last Saturday of May, with a visit to the Triplex Confinium monument, as well as to the local churches, bridges and other attractions presented above; or Sânnicolau Mare, on the occasion of Erntedankfest.

## 4.Specific Tourist Infrastructure

### 4.1. Access Infrastructure

#### By road

National road DN6 crosses Sânnicolau Mare. From Sânnicolau to Dudeștii Vechi and, further, to Vălcani, the access is done on DN59F. To get to Beba Veche, from DN59F follow the route of the county road DJ682.

From the point of view of public transport, there is a just one route that connects Beba Veche with Timișoara via Sânnicolau. It is run by Trans Caradjov (contact: +40 744623764) and has the following departures:

Departure from: Beba Veche 5:30 - Sânnicolau Mare 6:45 - Timișoara 8:20 (Super Imposer bus station)

Departure from: Timișoara (Super Imposer bus station 14:15 - Military Hospital 14:20 - Calea Torontalului 14:30) - Sânnicolau Mare 15:45 - Beba Veche 16:30

### **By railway**

Three of the municipalities studied – Sânnicolau Mare, Dudeștii Vechi and Vălcani – are connected by railway to the town of Arad. The train is run by Regio Călători.

## **4.2. Accommodation infrastructure in Vălcani, Dudeștii Vechi, Beba Veche and Sânnicolau Mare**

Regarding the accommodation units in the studied area, their number is relatively small, in the three communes there are currently no official accommodation places. In this context, the traveler from this area can choose to spend the night in the town of Sânnicolau Mare.

### **Hotel Timișoara**

This three star hotel is located in the centre of Sânnicolau Mare, and offers tourists who cross its threshold accommodation services that will surely satisfy them due to the comfort, modern rooms and services provided. The 45 nicely furnished hotel rooms are equipped with modern furniture, refrigerator, telephone, internet and air conditioning. Guests staying at Hotel Timișoara can leave their car safely in the hotel car park, which is video-assisted 24 hours a day.



Contact:

<https://hotelsannicolaumare.ro/>

Address: No.6, Piața 1 Mai, Sânnicolau Mare

Tel: +40 356108790

E-mail: [receptie@hotelsannicolaumare.ro](mailto:receptie@hotelsannicolaumare.ro)



## **Hotel Malvina**

Strategically located 19 km away from the Hungarian border, in the same complex as La Maestro Restaurant, Hotel Malvina has a capacity of 14 double rooms and 2 suites. Each room has a private bathroom and is equipped with TV and air conditioning. Hotel guests can enjoy a pleasant atmosphere with access to the terrace or garden and a bountiful breakfast.

Contact:

<https://www.lamaestro.ro/>

Address: No.18, Republicii Street

Tel: +40 722316769

E-mail: [hotel.malvina.sm@gmail.com](mailto:hotel.malvina.sm@gmail.com)

## **Hotel Luna**

Located in the same complex as Luna Restaurant, the Hotel of the same name has 12 double rooms equipped with private bathroom, TV, air conditioning and Wi-Fi.

Contact:

Address: No.66, Calea lui Traian Street

Tel: +40 256372081

E-mail: hotelrestaurantluna@yahoo.com

### **Hotel Zoppas Inn**

Hotel Zoppas Inn is located in Sânnicolau Mare. The hotel has a garden, a bar and a terrace. All rooms at this hotel have a private bathroom and are equipped with air conditioning, a wardrobe, a desk and a flat-screen TV. The property offers free Wi-Fi, room service, a shared lounge and luggage storage.

Contact:

Address: No.31-37, Drumul Cenadului, Sânnicolau Mare

Tel: +40 256303909

### **Hotel Casa Sânnicolau**

A pleasant B&B, located close to the Hungarian border, Casa Sânnicolau is the perfect place for both business and leisure travelers, if you are looking to spend your holidays in the area.

Contact:

<https://casa-sannicolau.business.site/>

Address: No.67, Popa Șapcă Street, Sânnicolau Mare

Tel: +40 722392388; 0729809607

## **4.3. Public Catering Establishments**

Regarding the public catering units in the studied area, their number in the rural area is very small, Sânnicolau Mare representing the most viable solution for serving food. Following field observations, the food units in the four municipalities include the following categories: fast food and bar (Vălceni), canteen open for serving the daily menu and bar (Monday to Friday) in Dudeștii Vechi, as well as classic restaurant, restaurants & pizzerias, specialized restaurants, fast food establishments, pastry places, bars in Sânnicolau Mare.

### **Vălceni**

## 1. "La cabană" Fast Food

In Vălcani, travellers can satisfy their hunger by choosing from the menu of the fast-food establishment housed in the kiosk nicknamed by the locals La Cabană (The Cottage). The kiosk offers a variety of sandwiches, meat dishes and pljeskavica, a Serbian specialty adapted to local ingredients and very popular in Banat.



Contact:

Address: Strada Principală (across from the Vălcani town hall)

## 2. "Valcanis" Bar

Located in the centre of the village, on the main road, Valcanis Bar offers those who stop in Vălcani the possibility of a short break inside or on the terrace. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages are served here, such as coffee, tea, latte machiatto, cappuccino, and snacks - hazelnuts and chips.



Contact:

Address: No.893A, Strada Principală (across from the Vălcani town hall)

Tel: +40 724369030

Email: valcanis@yahoo.com

### **3. Bar „Giminasta”**

Contact:

Address: Vălcani, nr.876A

Tel: +40 736976891

## **Dudeştii Vechi**

### **1. Stomi Club**

Located in the centre of the village, Stomi Club opens its kitchen to those who want to have the daily menu. From Monday to Friday, Stomi Club serves traditional Romanian cuisine with regional accents. According to the saying "soup, sarmale, potatoes and meat" which summarizes the culinary preferences of the people of Banat, on the local menu



there are always soups and broths, as well as dishes based on potatoes, cabbage and pork.



Contact:

Address: No.159, Dudeștii Vechi

Tel: +40 744628994

## Sânnicolau Mare

### 1. La Maestro Restaurant

A new and colourful place, founded in 2018, where passion and things well-done blend harmoniously into an alternative design. La Maestro is the place where travellers can enjoy a pleasant atmosphere and carefully selected dishes for the most refined tastes. La Maestro Restaurant, located in the centre of Sânnicolau Mare, with direct access by car, but also on foot, has a capacity of over 60 seats inside and over 70 seats on the covered and air-conditioned terrace, depending on the season.

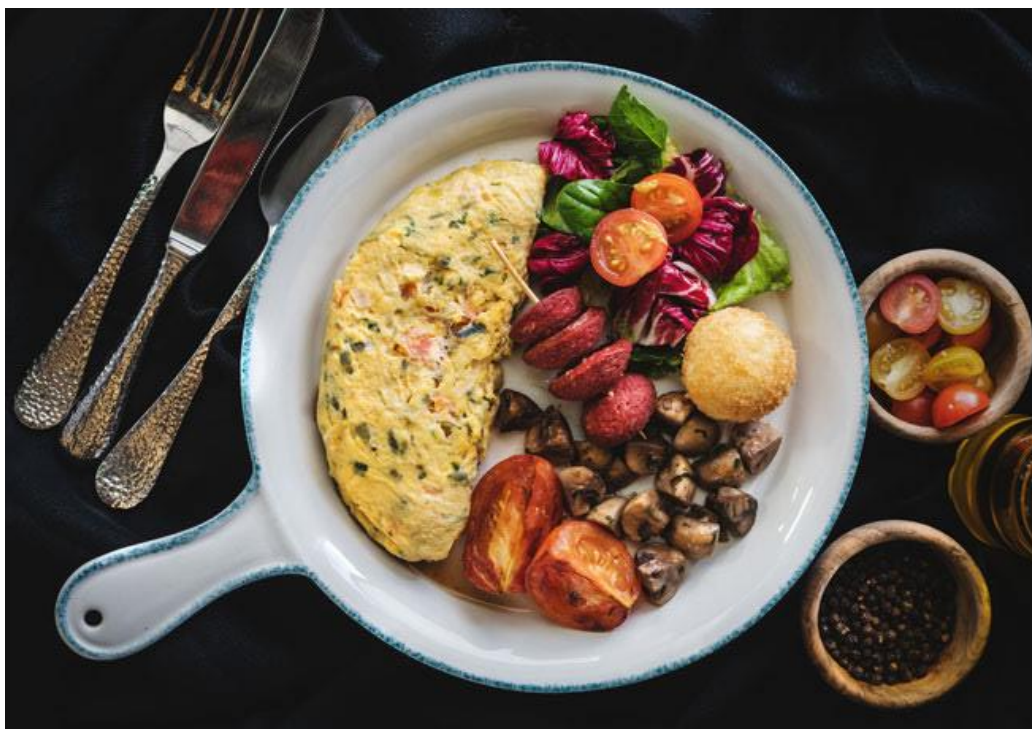
Contact:

<https://www.lamaestro.ro/>

Address: No.18, Republicii Street

Tel: +40 722316769

E-  
mail:



[hotel.malvina.sm@gmail.com](mailto:hotel.malvina.sm@gmail.com)

## **2. Luna Restaurant**

Luna Restaurant is a remarkable landmark of Sânnicolau Mare, with a rich tradition. Opened in 1996, over the past 25 years the restaurant has offered and continues to offer outstanding dining experiences to its guests. Here you can enjoy Romanian dishes (soups, cooked food, and canapés), international dishes (pizza, pasta, burgers) and a wide range of desserts (papanashi, crepes, lava cake). The artisanal ice cream is one of the tastiest in these parts.

Address: No.66, Calea lui Traian Street

Tel: +40 256372081

E-mail: hotelrestaurantluna@yahoo.com

## **3. Moara Veche Restaurant**

Contact:

Address: No.4, Timișoara Street

Tel: +40 771471796

FB: Restaurant Moara Veche

## **4. Madei Pastry Shop**

The Madei pastry shop, with a tradition of over 30 years, is a landmark for locals who want to continue enjoying the taste of childhood. From the steaming ovens of the pastry shop come sweet and salty triangular pastries, stuffed croissants and cakes specific to the area, always served with a smile and a friendly greeting.

Contact:

Address: No.11, Piața 30 Decembrie

Tel: +40 787755104

FB: Madei





	Event	Place	Time	Organiser	Contact details
1	Saint Sava	Sânnicolau Mare	January 27	Serbian Regional Culture Centre	+40 764 444 929 ccrsm.rkcv@gmail.com
2	The Fărșang	Dudeștii Vechi	Beginning of Catholic Lent	Dudeștii Vechi Culture House	+40 731 333 532
3	The Lazărița	Dudeștii Vechi	The Saturday before Catholic Palm Sunday	Dudeștii Vechi Culture House	+40 731 333 532
4	The Multicultural Festival of Vâlcani	Vâlcani	June	Vâlcani Town Hall	+40 256 385 205
5	The Catholic Church Feast and Celebration	Dudeștii Vechi	August 15	Dudeștii Vechi Culture House	+40 731 333 532
6	The Romanian Orthodox Church Feast and Celebration	Beba Veche	August 15	Beba Veche Town Hall	+40 724 302 343
7	The Serbian Orthodox Church Feast and Celebration	Sânnicolau Mare	August 28	The Serbian Orthodox Church	+40 766 565 938
8	The Rooster Festival / Kakasfesztivál	Sânnicolau Mare	Third Saturday of August	Revai Miklós Association	+ 40 745 526 374 revai.miklos.ns@gmail.com
9	The Romanian Orthodox Church Feast and Celebration	Sânnicolau Mare	September 9	The Romanian Orthodox Church	+ 40 256 370 108
10	Celebration Events of Sânnicolau Mare	Sânnicolau Mare	First weekend of September	The Sânnicolau Mare Town Hall	+ 40 256 370 042
11	The Cauldron Festival	Dudeștii Vechi	September-October	Dudeștii Vechi Culture House	+ 40 731 333 532

12	The Autumn Harvest Thanksgiving Day „Erntedankfest”	Sânnicolau Mare	First Sunday of October	The Democratic Forum of the Germans in Romania, Sânnicolau Mare Branch	+ 40 256 370 712 revai.miklos.ns@gmail.com
13	The Romanian Orthodox Church Feast and Celebration	Vălceni	October 14	The Romanian Orthodox Church	+40 726 785 910
14	The Jaku Ronkov Interethnic Festival	Dudeștii Vechi	November	Dudeștii Vechi Culture House	+ 40 731 333 532
15	The Carol Concert	Sânnicolau Mare	Mid December	Sânnicolau Mare Culture House	+ 40 256 370042 casa_cultura@sannicolau-mare.ro

## Conclusions

The range of tourist attractions belonging to the studied municipalities in terms of a tourist destination is relatively limited and could not make for a stay longer than 2 or 3 days. However, they cannot be separated from the area to which they belong. The area is located on the western border of the Banat Lowlands, in the immediate vicinity of the border and the crossing with Hungary, as well as in the relative proximity of the Municipality of Timișoara, a city designated European Capital of Culture 2023. The three communes thus benefit from the varied and valuable resources of the cities of Sânnicolau, Timișoara, Arad, and Makó, on the territory of Hungary. The municipalities not only benefit, but can also contribute, from a cultural point of view, in the form of a support network for the city of Timișoara, the recipient of a growing number of tourists. Less attractive in terms of landscape than the Banat Highlands, the area is suitable for sports such as cycling, rural, genealogical, ethnographic, cultural and religious tourism. The multiculturalism highlighted in these municipalities can lead to the capitalization of the gastronomic tourism side, seen as something new and specific to the Banat. For a start, by organizing food festivals or focusing on reviving traditions, with enough resonance to attract people from the urban areas.

Closer attention should be paid to managing and promoting the tourist heritage, as well as to stimulating collaboration between entrepreneurs in the field of tourism services in order to jointly capitalize on both the heritage and the existing infrastructure. Also, given the limited amount of tourist attractions in the rural areas, as well as accommodation and food facilities, there is a need for joint tourism programmes with the surrounding towns. Events can be organized with the involvement of the four municipalities targeted in this project, through mutual support when organizing events only in some of them in order to promote them. Advertising can be done through conventional means (printed media, social media, radio, television) or by means of tradition (the drummer from Dudeștii Vechi), which could arouse more interest from the public. Good quality tourism promotional materials to advertise routes in this area are essential, as is sending them to the Tourist Information Centres in Timișoara (Bastion Multifunctional Centre, belonging to Timiș County Council, Timișoara City Hall Tourist Information Centre) and to the Association for the Promotion and Development of Tourism in Timiș (APDT). In addition, the tourist attractions can be published on the Discover Timiș website and application (<https://discovertimis.com/>), coordinated by the members of the APDT team.

## **SUMMARY ABOUT SERBIAN PARTNER REGION**

The study on tourist potentials in the municipalities of Novi Kneževac, Čoka and the town of Kikinda with populated places in the municipality of Kikinda shows all those traditionally important things that this part of Banat, on the Serbian side of the border, offers to potential tourists. In cooperation with colleagues, tourism experts from Serbia, the final product of this study should be a brochure which will register a part of the tourist potential on both sides of the border in a way to suggest to potential tourists what to visit, where to sleep, eat well and get to know this area.

## **OVERVIEW OF TOURIST POTENTIALS MUNICIPALITY OF NOVI KNEŽEVAC**

### **1. SERVIJSKI-SHULPE CASTLE – NOVI KNEŽEVAC**

Built in 1793 by Marko Servijski, it is one of the most beautiful castles in Vojvodina, with its rich texture of the plasterwork concentrated around the opening on the first floor of the building, as well as a profiled cordon and an attic crown.

### **2. MALDEGHEM CASTLE, NOVI KNEŽEVAC**

Built as the summer residence of the count's family in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in the dominant eclectic style of the time, it now houses the Branislav Nušić National Library.

### **3. PODLOKANJ - ETHNO VILLAGE**

Podlokanj - a small village in the municipality of Novi Kneževac, which now has about sixty inhabitants, has been transformed into a work of art, a kind of rustic village.

### **4. REMAINS OF ST. GEORGE'S MONASTERY**

The location in the village of Majdan can be linked to the monastery of St. George, founded according to the legend of the Great Gellert around 103 Csanad with Greek monks.

### **5. SUMMER ON THE TISA NOVI KNEŽEVAC**

A traditional set of events during the summer months, of which the most visited are: "Fish soup cooking contest", "Easy descent on the river Tisza", concerts, theater performances and art colonies.

### **6. SERVIEN CHAPEL, NOVI KNEŽEVAC**

The neo-Gothic cultural property at Novi Kneževac Orthodox Cemetery was built by Georgije Đurković Servijski, a Spahiu from Turska Kanjiža.

## **OVERVIEW OF TOURIST POTENTIALS MUNICIPALITY OF ČOKA**

### **7. ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST. TRINITY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ČOKA**

The Roman Catholic Church in Čoka was built on a donation from the Marciban noble family in 1808, in the style of the transformation from baroque to classicism.

### **8. OSTOJICEVO, HEADQUARTERS OF THE POLISH NATIONAL COMMUNITY IN SERBIA**

The Visla Poles arrived in the village of Ostojicevo in April 1838, looking for better living conditions in terms of climate, economic conditions, and historical and political turmoil.

### **9. CASTLE OF LEDERER IN ČOKA**

The construction of the castle was started by the Marciban family, who maintained this property well until 1868, while the castle was completed by the new owners, brothers Arthur and Karolj Lederer.

## **OVERVIEW OF TOURIST POTENTIALS THE MUNICIPALITY OF KIKINDA**

### **10. NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KIKINDA**

It was founded on November 7th, 1946. It is located in the building of the former magistrate of Kikinda Mare District (Curia) and houses the original remains of one of the best-preserved mammoth skeletons in Europe, popularly called KIKA.

### **11. THE PUMPKIN DAYS**

The traditional tourist and catering event dedicated to the pumpkin, which takes place in the second week of September, where all the culinary skills and imagination in the preparation of pumpkin dishes are shown and the biggest and hardest pumpkin is chosen.

### **12. THE CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS IN KIKINDA**

The Serbian Orthodox Church in Kikinda, dedicated to St. Nicholas, was built in the second half of the 18th century, in Baroque style, with a wooden part of the iconostasis in penitential sculpture.

### **13. DRY MILL "SUVAČA"**

A dry mill that uses live labor (horses) to grind grain. It was built in 1899 and recently restored with a cultural and educational character.

### **14. EASTER CELEBRATIONS AND WORLD EGG TAPPING CHAMPIONSHIP, MOKRIN**

This is a traditional Mokrin ceremony created starting from the custom of cracking the Easter eggs, where the hardest egg in the world is chosen.



## 15. Tera- Kikina Symposium

The Tera Center for Fine and Applied Arts, based in Kikinda, is a three-part cultural institution: the Tera Gallery, the Tera Workshop and the Tera Museum.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above-mentioned tourist attractions, it can be concluded that the offer of this region is traditionally rich. There are plenty of places that potential tourists can visit, and related to different interests (churches, monasteries, castles, cultural and artistic buildings and events, archeological sites, restaurants, hotels, preserved landscapes ...) and not all can be counted and found in one brochure, studies, and even in larger written editions. Such content would certainly not make sense either, because nothing holds the attention of modern man for a long time, the rhythm of life is fast and in the time of electronic formats, excessive content in written form hardly finds purpose.

However, this study shows the fact that there is a tourist offer in the region. That tourism tradition, or whatever it is called (cultural, religious, ethno, rural etc.) is something that this region has always possessed, that economic entities seriously engaged in their activities are those that survive in this market, and they are ready to learn, to change and adapt to the demands of tourists.

Banat is a place where each guest will find something for himself. Both young and old, family people, retirees, couples, all of them can see, hear, feel something new, interesting or something old, traditional with a touch of modern.

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**Study on the Tourist Potential of the Timiș County Municipalities of Vălcani,  
Dudeștii Vechi, Beba Veche and Sânnicolau Mare**



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