

Study on the Evolution of Tourist Accommodation Facilities in Cluj County

Ana-Mariana Dincu¹, Andreea Adriana Petcov², Gabriela Popescu¹, Camelia Mănescu*¹, Corina Sîrbu¹

¹University of Life Sciences "King Mihai I" from Timișoara, Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism, Timisoara, Romania

²University of Life Sciences "King Mihai I" from Timișoara, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Technologies, Timisoara, Romania

Abstract

The authors of this article present the evolution of tourist accommodation structures in Cluj county. Thanks to its tourist attractions, the studied area has become, in recent years, a destination visited more and more often by tourists from all over the world. The aim of this article is to highlight the evolution of the tourist accommodation structures in the studied area taking into account the tourism potential of Cluj county. In 2023, almost 700,000 tourists visited Cluj county, an increase of 8.6% compared to the previous year. The number of foreign tourists increased by 30% compared to 2022. According to the data presented by the Cluj County Directorate of Statistics at Cluj County level, in 2023, 688,183 tourists were accommodated, an increase of 8.6% compared to 2022, of which 132,434 are foreign tourists, representing 19.2% of all tourists. It can also be seen that the number of tourist accommodation facilities has increased compared to previous years, reaching 596 in 2023 compared to 222 in 2010. Information obtained from local authorities and other bibliographic sources, as well as data provided by the National Institute of Statistics contributed to this article. Centralisation, analysis and data processing are some of the methods used to prepare this scientific approach.

Keywords: tourists, Cluj, tourist accommodation structures, accommodation capacity

1. Introduction

Cluj County is a county located in the central-western part of Romania, in the center of the historical province of Transylvania. The county seat is Cluj-Napoca, a lively city with a western atmosphere, recognized in recent years as the most prosperous city in Romania. Because of this, Cluj-Napoca is also called the Silicon Valley of Europe. In addition, this city in northwestern Romania is one of the most popular in the country, both by Romanian and foreign tourists [1,2]. It borders the counties of Sălaj, Maramureș, Bistrița-Năsăud, Mureș, Alba and Bihor [3,4].

Cluj County, with an area of approximately 6,674 square km, representing 2.8% of Romania's territory, is located at the intersection of three natural units: the Apuseni Mountains, the Someșan Plateau and the Transylvanian Plain. [5] Renowned for its valuable historical heritage and distinct Transylvanian influences, this county stands out for its diversity and breadth, leaving an unforgettable impression on all who explore it [6]. Cluj is one of the most active counties from a cultural point of view, benefiting from a rich heritage, an old reputation in the field of education and culture, and numerous prestigious institutions. From the point of view of traditional culture, the current county is made up of several distinct ethno-folkloric areas (Country of Motilor, County of Călatei, etc.) to which is added the Cluj-Napoca Metropolitan Area. The abundance of monuments

*Corresponding author: Camelia Mănescu, 0766268932, camelianamnescu@usvt.ro

and historical sites, along with the architectural and traditional heritage, mostly included in the national circuit, constitute some of the most visited and famous tourist attractions in Cluj [7,8]. Last but not least, Cluj county has a high tourist potential, reflected in the existence of a varied range of forms of practicing leisure activities: hiking, climbing, spa treatment, winter and summer sports or camps for children and youth. All these attributes qualify it as an ideal destination that offers multiple possibilities, both for spending free time and for business development in various fields of activity [4,6].

2. Materials and methods

Data provided by local authorities, as well as information extracted from other bibliographic sources and from the National Institute of Statistics, served as the main sources for the development of this article. The process of centralization, analysis and processing of these data represents some of the methods used in carrying out this scientific research.

3. Results and discussion

The territory of Cluj county is distinguished by a varied landscape, with various forms of relief and

numerous natural monuments. To these are added historical monuments from ancient times, works of art and authentic folklore elements. The tourist potential is considerable, offering ideal conditions for tourism, recreation and treatment [9].

The most representative tourist attractions are concentrated in the municipalities of Cluj-Napoca and Turda, the others being scattered throughout the Cluj county [10].

Cluj County has a well-developed tourist infrastructure, with a wide range of accommodation options, from luxury hotels to guesthouses and hostels. There are also numerous restaurants and eateries offering traditional and international cuisine.

In order to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the tourist activity in Cluj county, it is essential to focus on a fundamental indicator of tourism development, namely the accommodation infrastructure intended for tourists, together with the statistical data regarding the number of tourists, as well as their origin.

Therefore, in the following, we will examine the evolution of the tourist reception structures in Cluj county, as well as the evolution of the existing and operational accommodation capacity.

Table 1. The evolution of tourist reception structures with accommodation functions in Cluj County

Types of tourist accommodation structures	- number -						
	2010	2015	2017	2019	2021	2022	2023
Total	222	186	283	334	507	547	596
Hotels	48	56	64	67	61	57	63
Hostels	4	3	10	11	15	15	16
Apartments and rooms for rent	:	:	:	:	130	150	179
Apartment hotels	:	1	1	2	3	6	6
Motels	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Tourist villas	14	12	12	11	15	17	15
Tourist cabins	8	3	2	2	3	3	3
Holiday villages	:	:	:	1	1	1	1
Campsites	1	1	1	3	3	4	7
Tourist lodges	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tourist cottages	:	:	:	:	1	2	2
Camps for pupils and preschoolers	:	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tourist pensions	29	43	64	65	64	64	61
Agritourism guesthouses	113	59	121	164	203	220	227

Source: <http://statistici.insse.ro> [11]

During the analyzed period, the tourist reception structures in Cluj county registered a significant increase, reaching 596 units in 2023, compared to

2010, when there were only 222 accommodation units, as can be seen in the table above.

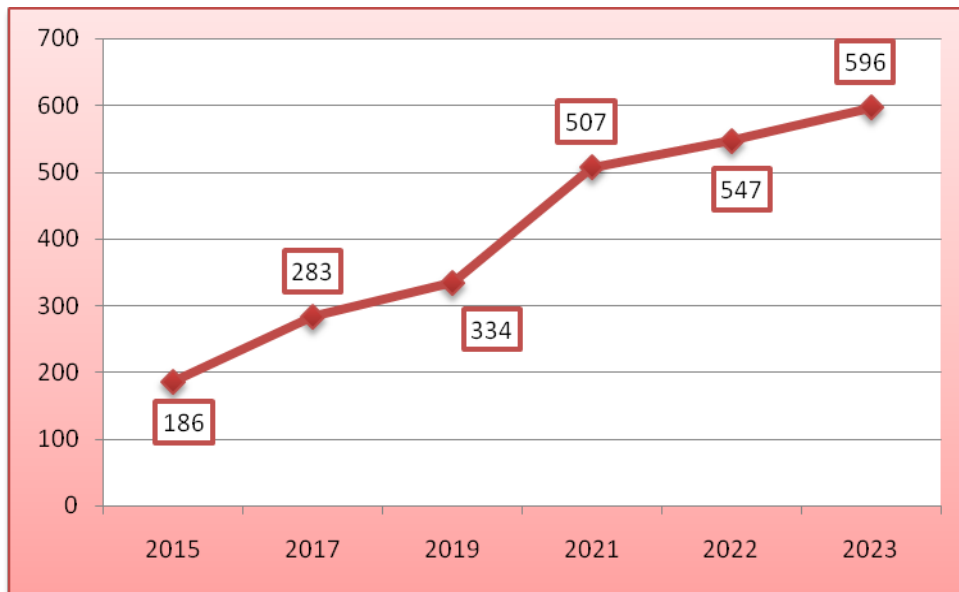


Figure 1. Evolution of tourist reception structures, in the period 2015-2023 [11]

During the analyzed period, a significant increase in the number of agritourism guesthouses was observed, reaching 227 accommodation units in 2023, compared to 59 units in 2015 and 113 in 2010. In addition, in the last three years, a new category appeared of accommodation units: apartments and rooms for rent.

Regarding the existing accommodation capacity, in the analyzed area, there is a significant increase from one year to the next, reaching 16,565 accommodation places in 2023, compared to 2010, when there were 6,960 places available.

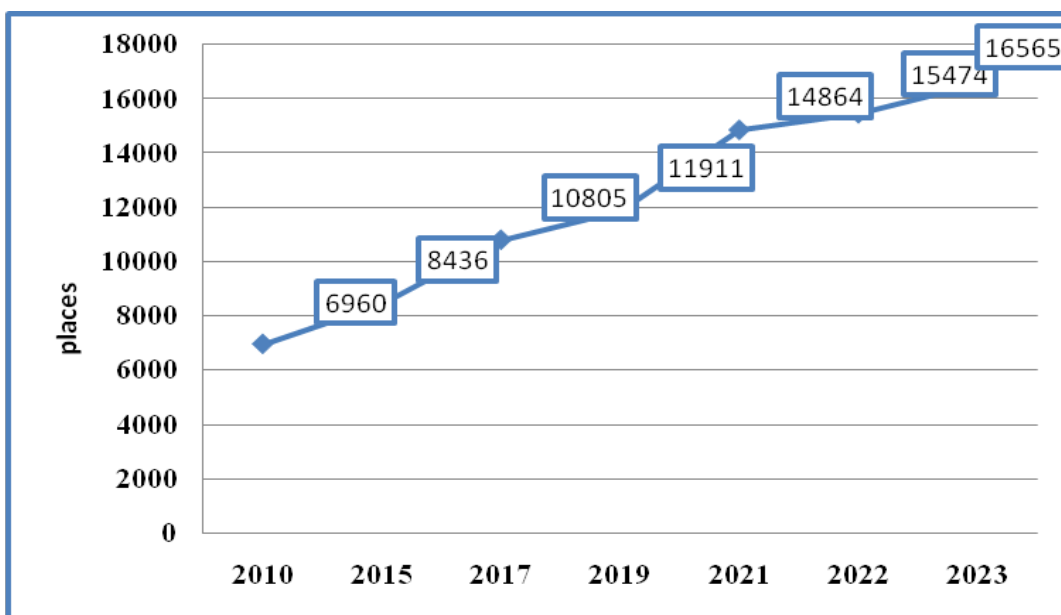


Figure 2. Evolution of the existing accommodation capacity in Cluj county, in the period 2010-2023 [11]

The distribution of accommodation places, during the analyzed period, was as follows: 6,058 in hotels, 3,571 in agritourism guesthouses, 2,960 in apartments and rooms for rent, and 1,437 in tourist guesthouses. After analyzing the existing

accommodation capacity, we will continue with the analysis of the dynamics of the accommodation capacity in operation, in the period 2015-2023, according to the data presented in table 2.

Table 2. Tourist accommodation capacity in operation in Cluj county

- places days -

Types of tourist accommodation structures	2015	2017	2019	2021	2022	2023
Total	3016860	3271853	3651561	3991907	4352908	4589737
Hotels	1712552	1942002	2089286	1661058	1715198	1906686
Hostels	35712	78783	88430	90801	83555	87568
Apartments and rooms for rent	:	:	:	617956	798805	923800
Apartment hotels	14600	14600	89790	139621	167677	172356
Motels	102790	65130	105986	86078	69753	57275
Tourist villas	84492	97299	96109	102611	110487	71466
Tourist cabins	5124	4380	7444	28934	27138	26223
Holiday villages	:	:	4428	:	:	:
Campsites	83640	:	19573	36254	40851	11090
Tourist lodges	20440	:	:	:	:	:
Tourist cottages	:	:	:	920	:	4026
Camps for pupils and preschoolers	9638	28914	32120	:	:	:
Tourist pensions	573676	473875	488769	438664	434577	415010
Agritourism guesthouses	374196	566870	629626	789010	904867	909349

Source: Processing according to INS-Tempo online, 2024 [11]

The tourist accommodation capacity in operation of the tourist reception structures registered a significant increase from one year to the next during the analyzed period. In 2023, hotels represented the largest part (41%) of the total capacity of tourist accommodation in operation, followed by agro-tourism guesthouses (20%), apartments and rooms for rent (20%), tourist guesthouses (9%), apartment hotels (4%), and other types of tourist reception structures (6%).

During the analyzed period, there was a complete disappearance of places-days at holiday villages,

tourist stops and camps for students and preschoolers. The similar situation was also observed in the case of tourist cottages, which reappeared in 2023 with a total of 4,026 available place-days.

Table 3 shows the evolution of the number of tourists by category arriving in Cluj county. The city of Cluj-Napoca is the main tourist destination in Cluj county and one of the main tourist destinations in the North-West region.

Table 3. Arrivals of tourists staying in accommodation structures in Cluj county

- number of people -

Specification	2015	2017	2019	2021	2022	2023
Total	428812	633569	670560	468872	655294	710166
Romanian	340278	498270	534159	421683	551374	575214
Foreigners	88534	135299	136401	47189	103920	134952

Source: Processing according to INS-Tempo online, 2024 [11]

The pandemic had a significant impact in this sector in 2021, causing a considerable decrease in the number of tourists, but, starting from 2022, a

return of the upward trend in activity was observed.

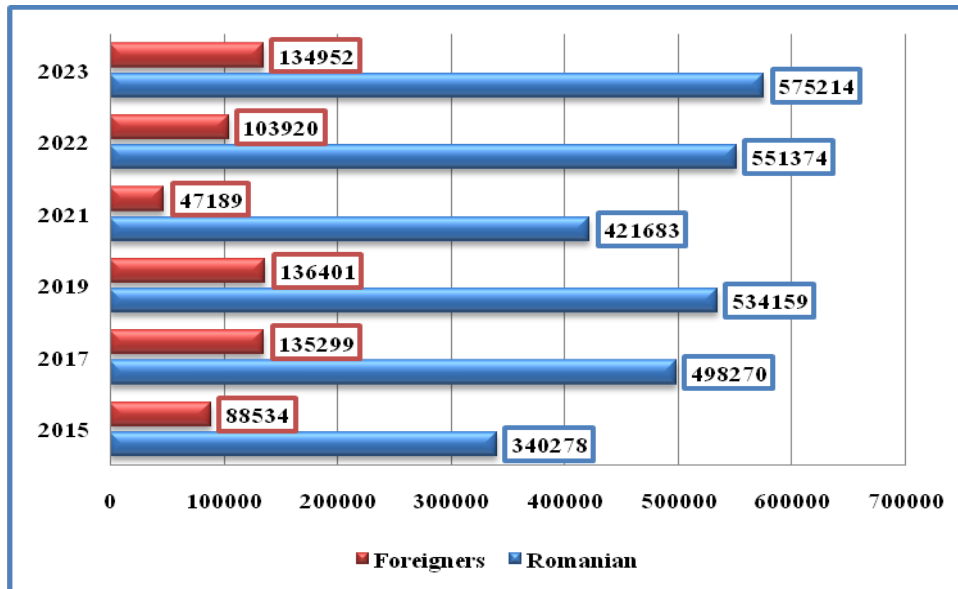


Figure 3. Evolution of the number of tourists staying in tourist reception structures in Cluj county, 2015-2023 [11]

According to the data provided by the Cluj County Statistics Directorate (DJS), in May 2023, the arrivals of Romanian tourists in tourist reception structures with accommodation functions constituted 79.7%, while foreign tourists represented 20.3% [12].

According to the Cluj Statistics Directorate, regarding the arrivals of foreign tourists in the tourist reception structures, the largest share was the tourists from Europe, representing 82.3% of the total foreign tourists. Compared to the same period in 2022, the number of foreign tourists increased by 41.9%.

In August 2023, the average length of stay was 1.9 days per tourist. The net accommodation occupancy index for all tourist accommodation structures in the same month was 37.7%, registering an increase of 0.4 percentage points compared to August 2022 [13].

During the analyzed period, the evolution of the number of overnight stays by tourists registered a significant increase from one year to the next, with the exception of 2021, when the number of overnight stays decreased drastically due to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the data presented in the figure 4.

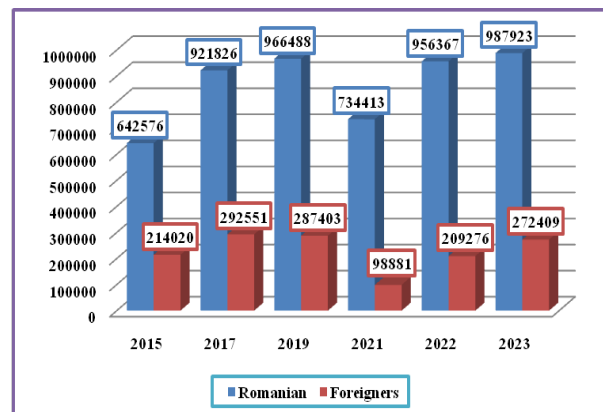


Figure 4. Evolution of the number of overnight stays by types of tourists in Cluj County [12]

In 2023, the overnight stays of Romanian tourists in tourist reception structures with accommodation functions represented 78% of the total, while the overnight stays of foreign tourists represented 22%.

Also, in March 2024, tourist reception structures recorded a total of 76,916 overnight stays, representing an increase of 6.6% compared to February 2024 and a decrease of 13.8% compared to March 2023 [12].

The average length of stay, in November 2023, was 1.7 days/tourist. The net utilization index of accommodation places, in November 2023, was

26.0% of total tourist accommodation structures, down by one percentage point compared to November 2022 [14, 15].

In conclusion, Cluj county, especially the city of residence, is an important hub of touristic, historical, cultural, academic and multicultural attraction. It conveys a captivating "spirit of the place", attracting especially young people open to diversity, modernity and progress.

4. Conclusions

Cluj County has considerable tourist potential due to the diversity of its attractions, well-developed infrastructure and internationally renowned events. A strategic and sustainable approach to tourism development can maximize economic and social benefits for the region.

The tourist activity in Cluj County is vibrant and diverse, offering attractions and experiences for all tastes, from adventure and nature to culture and wellness. This diversity, combined with a well-developed infrastructure and international events, makes Cluj county a top destination for tourists from Romania and from around the world.

Local authorities and tourism organizations actively promote Cluj County as a tourist destination through various campaigns and partnerships, including participation in international tourism fairs and the use of online platforms to attract visitors.

Tourism has a significant impact on the economy of Cluj County through its contribution to GDP, job creation, investment stimulation and infrastructure development. Tourism also

contributes to local budget revenues and stimulates other industries. However, to maximize the economic benefits, it is essential to address the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities for sustainable tourism development in the region.

References

1. <https://iturist.ro/obiective-turistice-cluj/>
2. <https://www.alohotels.ro/blog/locuri-faine-de-vizitat-in-cluj>
3. https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jude%C8%9Bul_Cluj
4. <https://bunadimineata.ro/de-dimineata/travel-calatorii/10-cele-mai-frumoase-locuri-din-judetul-cluj/>
5. <https://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/travel/obiective-turistice-in-judetul-cluj-de-la-salina-turda-la-statiunile-din-apuseni.html>
6. <https://clujtourism.ro/>
7. <https://cjcluj.ro/turism/>
8. <https://aventurainromania.ro/obiective-turistice-judetul-cluj/>
9. [file:///D:/Downloads/Monografie_Cluj_2012%20\(1\).pdf](file:///D:/Downloads/Monografie_Cluj_2012%20(1).pdf)
10. <https://romaniadategeografice.net/unitati-admin-teritoriale/judete/judete-c/cluj/>
11. Institutul Național de Statistică – Tempo online, 2024
12. Direcția Județeană de Statistică (DJS) Cluj
13. <https://www.transilvaniabusiness.ro/2023/10/19/turistii-straini-cazati-in-cluj-mai-multi-cu-42/>
14. <https://www.monitorulcj.ro/timp-liber/116426-turismul-a-crescut-usor-la-cluj-la-final-de-2023-majoritatea-turistilor-straini-provin-din-europa>
15. <https://www.zcj.ro/economie/turismul-isi-revine-la-cluj-peste-250000-de-oameni-au-vizitat-judetul-de-la-inceputul-anului-crestere-considerabila-fata-de-2022--250976.html>