

## SWOT ANALYSIS, THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE APPEARANCE OF A NEW TOURIST DESTINATION

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***Abstract:** Once the working week got shorter, the free time became an important factor in the development of tourism. Therefore, a growing number of people have expressed the wish to spend this time or part of it outside their main residence. The existence of natural and anthropogenic tourist resources near the urban agglomerations can attract tourists on a regular basis. Valorising them supposes diversified actions, the SWOT analysis being the first of them. Located very close to Timișoara, Ciacova has a series of tourist resources capable of raising the interest of Romanian and foreign tourists, for one day firstly. The SWOT analysis was carried out with the aim to assess the possibility of developing tourism in this area.*

***Keywords:** tourist resources, tourist destination, SWOT analysis, forms of tourism*

### Introduction

The human being is on a continuous quest, being attracted by the new and undiscovered, which is why the appearance of new tourist destinations makes the permanent development of tourism and the involvement of more and more persons possible.

A tourist destination is a set formed of the natural and built environment, and the human factor.

Generally, the elements of a tourist destination are:

- constitutive or fundamental (location, climate and natural conditions existent along with historic and architectural sites);
- natural peripheral (surroundings, local population and general atmosphere);
- created peripheral (general and specific infrastructure, commercial services).

In order to make an area or a locality a tourist destination, we need a realistic strategy. A strategy can be regarded as a bundle of objectives achievable over a longer period of time together with the means by which they can connect with the available resources, in view of gaining a susceptible advantage to tackle the competition.

The SWOT analysis is one of the most important means of assessing the general state of an organization so as to be able to make up a plan, a development strategy.

The SWOT analysis highlights:

- strengths;
- weaknesses;
- opportunities;
- threats.

Knowing all these, the plan aims at eliminating weaknesses, neutralizing threats, exploiting opportunities and emphasizing strengths.

### **General aspects regarding Ciacova, Timiș County**

The Timiș County (8697km<sup>2</sup>), located in the west part of Romania, has a predominantly plain relief, and therefore its tourist resources are mostly anthropogenic.

According to the National Statistics Institute, the number of accommodation facilities in 2016, in the county, was 157, while the existent capacity is of 7876 beds.

Ciacova is a town in the Banat Plains which was first mentioned in historical documents in Count Behics' will between 1220 and 1224.

In 1243, King Bela the 4<sup>th</sup> sent the order to build and consolidate fortresses on the banks of the Timiș River, thus mentioning the Csaksau Chac fortresses, whose defence tower, called "Cula", was built between 1392 and 1395, and was used even after the fortress was demolished in 1701.

The history of the area is marked by foreign colonization, as the entire region was colonized. In Ciacova there are various ethnic groups, such as Romanians, Serbians, Germans, Hungarians and Gipsies. According to the 2011 census, the population in this area is of 5348 persons. Its GPS coordinates are: 45<sup>0</sup> 30'40"N and 21<sup>0</sup> 7'42" E, and it is accessed by road (E70 and then 9 km on DJ 693 B). There is also railway infrastructure, but currently it is not in use.

The villages that are under Ciacova administration are: Cebza (Cevzen-16<sup>th</sup> century), Macedonia (1332-1337), Obad (Ohad-1401) and Petroman (Petrus, Petree -1333).

The natural tourist resources of the area are:

- *The Macedonia Forest* – Avifauna Specific Protection Area (2007) part of the Natura 2000 network;
- *The Timiș River* around the villages Cebza and Macedonia;
- *The Dead Timș River* on the territory of the village Obad and the town Ciacova;
- *The geothermal waters* in Cebza village (the drill was done at 2290 m depth, the temperature of the water being 86<sup>0</sup>C);
- *The hunting ground.*

The anthropogenic tourist resources in Ciacova area:

- Ciacova's „Cula” – the defence tower of the fortress built between 1392 and 1395. The tower has a rectangular base (10,5 x 9,8 m), it is 23.7m high, which makes it the second highest tower in Romania, and its architecture combines Roman and Gothic elements. It is built from burnt bricks and inside the walls there is hard rock (on the ground floor the walls are 2.7m thick);



Photo 1. Ciacova's „Cula”  
Source: Sava Cipriana

- Piața Cetății (Fortress Square) was the meeting place of Turkish soldiers. It is an urban architectural square with buildings that have elements from the medieval period. There is also a statue of St. Mary (1802) and a red marble cross (1805);



Photo 2 Fortress Square  
Source: Sava Cipriana

- *Ciacova Museum* located in the building of a former bank, built in the 18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> centuries;
- *Administrative Palace*, built in 1890;
- *House of Post Chaise* (1772);
- *Heroes' Monument*, sculpture by Ferdinand Gallas from Timisoara;
- *Elisabeta Park*;
- The Serbian Orthodox Church (1768-1771), built by Gheorghe Karagici has the shape of a Byzantine cross, and its architecture is Byzantine. This church is a historic architectural monument;
- Dositej Obradovici's Memorial House (b.17.02.1742, Ciacova – d.1811, Belgrade) – Dositej Obradovici was a monk, writer and translator who influenced Serbian culture and who founded the Great School of Belgrade in 1808, which later became a university;
- *Roman Catholic Church* built in Neogothic style (1880-1881);
- *Turkish Bridge*, built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 3 km away from the road between Ciacova and Cebza (Dj 693B);
- Cebza Monastery is located 7km away from Ciacova in the Cebza village. The old church “St.George”, situated in the cemetery, was built in 1758 and it has a wooden roof and tower. It is a national architectural monument. In 1996, a monastery that celebrates the Ascension on 14<sup>th</sup> September was built in the area.



Photo 3. The old church “St.George”

Source: Sava Cipriana

Here are some events organized annually to support these tourist resources:

***Ruga in Banat (parties celebrating the patron saint of the churches in villages):***

- Petroman – 29<sup>th</sup> June - St. Peter and St. Paul;
- Ciacova and Macedonia – 15<sup>th</sup> August - St. Mary;
- Cebza - St. Sunday;
- Obad– 8<sup>th</sup> September - St. Mary;
- *Kirwei* – first Sunday after Pentecost;
- *Serbian Ruga* – 28<sup>th</sup> August - Assumption of Mary;

***Other events:***

- *Heroes Day* – Ascension of Jesus (40 days after Easter);
- “*Proud Flower of Ciacova*” Festival– first Friday in June;
- *Ciacova Fair*- last Sunday of every month.

There is a multitude of tourist resources, some of them showcasing remarkable value, but which have not been exploited yet.

**Ciacova –SWOT analysis**

The SWOT analysis can show us a radiography of the current situation of the Ciacova area from the perspective of a tourism activity.

*Strengths*

- Closeness to Timisoara (32 km) – modern road infrastructure and railway access;
- Multiculturalism, multi-ethnicity;
- Anthropogenic tourist resources;
- Natural resources;
- Sportive hunting ground;
- Annual cultural events;
- Traditions;
- Folklore dances group;
- Private fishery;
- Ciacova beehive;
- Thermal waters in Cebza;
- Banks of the Timiș;

*Weaknesses*

- Current state of the tourist resources preservation;
- General infrastructure (sewage, water supply, gas);
- Lack of qualified labour force;
- Lack of specific infrastructure (accommodation and public food facilities);

*Opportunities*

- Timișoara – European Capital of Culture 2021;
- European structural funds;
- Openness of local authorities;
- Attraction of local or foreign investors;
- Works on the county road DJ Parța-Ciacova (20 km);

*Threats*

- Political tensions between the local representatives;
- Degradation of anthropogenic tourist resources;
- Destruction of the forest Macedonia (unauthorized chopping);
- Excessive hunting;
- Natural disasters (known seismic area, floods in Cebza and Macedonia).

Weaknesses needing a longer period of time to be tackled with are those related to the general and specific infrastructure, even though there are numerous opportunities. Collaboration between the private and public sectors would lead to the removal of weaknesses and the annihilation of threats.

**Conclusions**

The limited, urban space, the daily stress and the pollution influence people's decision of spending free time outside their residence.

In the future, Ciacova can become a tourist destination, and the benefits would be both for the tourists and for the local community.

Its closeness to Timisoara (32 km) contributes to the development of leisure, itinerary or weekend tourism, especially when we think of 2021 when Timisoara is European Capital of Culture.

The existent tourist resources, both natural and anthropogenic, make the development of the following forms of tourism possible:

- Cultural;
- Historic;
- Religious;
- Ethnic;
- Leisure.

Ciacova comes under the category of short stay destinations, being a small town, but with heritage sights. Currently, due to the lack of accommodation facilities, as mentioned in the SWOT analysis, only trips can be organized here.

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