

ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF SPA AND MOUNTAIN TOURISM IN SERBIA

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***Abstract:** Tourism as a complex socio-economic category selects the most attractive and most beautiful natural resources, especially in the mountains and plains, as well as to the spa health resort centers. The reason for the going to the mountain is the need for rest, relaxation and stay on a healthy and clean air, as well as the desire for recreation, skiing, etc. Existing resources, its topography, lush vegetation, clean air, healthy food, is indicating numerous potentials related to the culture and natural heritage, which only needs to use it. The paper describes the benefits of a spa and mountain tourism of the Republic of Serbia as the most visited tourist destinations. Well preserved natural environment of Serbian mountains underlies a variety of activities that are related to mountain tourism, while traditional treatment healing thermal waters dates back to Roman times, as evidenced by numerous archaeological sites in the localities spas of Serbia.*

***Keywords:** economic significance attendance, mountains, tourism, spas*

Introduction

Tourism as one of the modern activities of today is consisted of a series of various factors that are matched to each other and that are dependent of each other. It is a multifunctional complex socio-economic category that stems from more complex biological, social, demographic, economic, natural, spatial, architectural and other relevant facts and phenomena. Tourism selects the most attractive and most beautiful natural resources along the rivers and lakes, by mountains and the plains, as well as to the spa and health resort centers.

Thanks to its natural beauty, ecological and climatic diversity, the richness of the cultural heritage, and convenient to major international markets, Serbia disposes with enormous tourist resources with a high possibility of developing different types of tourism. Plenty of information about the natural beauty and cultural and historical heritage of various epochs makes Serbia very suitable for various forms of cultural tourism. Mountains of Serbia are characterized by a unique and vast forest areas and the rich flora and fauna.

Well preserved natural environment of Serbian mountains underlies a variety of activities that are related to mountain tourism. Traditional treatment and healing with thermal waters dates back to Roman times, as evidenced by numerous archaeological sites in the Serbian Spas. Spa tourism in Serbia today has great possibilities of development, by virtue of being placed in a natural and attractive environment which offers ideal conditions for rest and recreation, but also the health tourism.

Economic Importance and Role of Tourism

Basic economic importance of tourism is located in tourist spending in those areas they visit, because in addition to accommodation services are included and events, festivals, recreation, production and sale of handicrafts and crafts, agricultural and other products. Accordingly, the money earned by the tourists in places of their permanent residence, is spent in tourist areas. In this way, there is a result of their consumption where created certain economic effects on the economy, both in the areas from which the tourists coming, and to the areas that tourists visit (Unković, Zečević, 2006). The positive economic impact of tourism can contribute to much needed funds of historical, cultural and natural heritage in the communities they visit, (Vehbi, 2012).

The economic effects of the demand of tourists to specific areas of the economy have direct or indirect effects. Since the direct impact of rural tourism is done to the economy, the most important are: (Maksimović *et al.*, 2015):

- The impact of the social product and national income;
- The impact on the development of economic activities that make up the tourism industry;
- The impact on the country's balance of payments;
- The impact on employment of the population and standard of living;
- The impact on investment activity and structure of investments.
- Impact on faster development of underdeveloped countries and areas.

In addition to direct, significant attention deserves and indirect impact of tourism on the economy. Consumption of tourists that are directly realized through the activities of the tourism industry more or less secure affects all economic and non-economic activities. In this way, the opening of new jobs that automatically reduces unemployment, which has been identified as one of the foremost benefits of tourism (Inskip, 1991). In order to achieve economic goals, should strive to providing quality tourism services, because it provides optimal satisfaction of the needs of domestic and foreign tourists on the one hand, and the achievement of a favorable economic results of operations of the participants in the meeting the tourism needs of on the other hand.

In 2015. the total number of tourist arrivals in the Republic of Serbia amounted to 2.437.165 (increase of 9% compared to the same period 2014.

year), of which the domestic accounted 1.304.944 (increase of 8,93%), i.e. accounted for 53,54% of the total arrivals as seen in the following table. Number of foreign tourists amounted to 1.132.221 (increase of 9,08% compared to the same period of 2014. year) with participation of 46,46% in total tourist arrivals.

Regarding the overnight stays in 2015. year is achieved 6.651.857 overnight stays (increase of 9,1% compared to the same period of 2014. year), of which domestic tourists 4.242.172 overnight stays (increase of 9,25% compared to the same period 2014. year), i.e. participated with 69,8 % the total number of overnight stays, while foreign tourists accounted 8,95% more overnight stays (2.409.680) compared to same period 2014. year, i.e. participated with 36,2% the total number of overnight stays.

Table 1. Tourist arrivals

Year	Arrivals			PARTICIPATION IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ARRIVALS IN SERBIA	
	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign
2010.	2.000.597	1.317.916	682.681	65,9%	34,1%
2011.	2.068.610	1.304.443	764.167	63,1%	36,9%
2012.	2.079.643	1.269.676	809.967	61,1%	38,9%
2013.	2.192.435	1.270.667	921.768	58,0%	42,0%
2014.	2.192.268	1.163.536	1.028.732	53,07%	46,9%
2015.	2.437.165	1.304.944	1.132.221	53,54%	46,46%

Source: <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/>

According to available statistical data for the period January-November 2015. year, and spas was recorded an increase of the total number of tourist arrivals (403.156) of 11,1%, of which foreign tourists (73.560) recorded an increase of 27,6%, while the number of domestic tourist arrivals (329.596) recorded an increase of 7,9%.

In the mountain region has recorded a total of 411.544 arrivals, which represents an increase of 19,5% compared to the same period of 2014. The number of domestic arrivals in mountain resorts is increased for 21,3%, and foreign of 11,4%.

Table 2. Tourist overnight stays

<i>Year</i>	<i>OVERNIGHT STAYS</i>			<i>PARTICIPATION IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF OVERNIGHT STAYS IN SERBIA</i>	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Foreign</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Foreign</i>
<i>2010.</i>	<i>6.413.515</i>	<i>4.961.359</i>	<i>1.452.156</i>	<i>77,3%</i>	<i>22,7%</i>
<i>2011.</i>	<i>6.644.738</i>	<i>5.001.684</i>	<i>1.643.054</i>	<i>77,4%</i>	<i>22,6%</i>
<i>2012.</i>	<i>6.484.702</i>	<i>4.688.485</i>	<i>1.796.217</i>	<i>75,3%</i>	<i>24,7%</i>
<i>2013.</i>	<i>6.567.460</i>	<i>4.579.067</i>	<i>1.988.393</i>	<i>69,7%</i>	<i>30,3%</i>
<i>2014.</i>	<i>6.086.275</i>	<i>3.925.221</i>	<i>2.161.054</i>	<i>64,5%</i>	<i>35,5%</i>
<i>2015.</i>	<i>6.651.852</i>	<i>4.242.172</i>	<i>2.409.680</i>	<i>63,8%</i>	<i>36,2%</i>

Source: <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/>

Measured by the number of overnight stays in the first eleven months 2015. the largest turnover had spas (1.771.331 overnight stays), which represents a slight increase from 0,3% compared to the same period of 2014. Year, whereby the recorded increase in the number of foreign tourists (218.829) for 15,6%.

According to the registered number of overnight stays, domestic tourists are, after spa centers, most stayed in mountain areas (1.320.092 overnight stays), with growth of 17,6% compared to the same period of 2014. year.

Serbian Spas

Spas in Serbia have a long tradition and have always been favorite places for vacation. Most of spas has a mild climate and an environmental clean environment, rich in warm springs and mineral waters with chemical composition, temperature and other properties are conducive to the treatment of almost all diseases for which the spas are recommended. Whether you are a professional or an amateur, in Serbian spas awaits many opportunities for sports and recreation, both indoors and outdoors (<http://www.linkserbia.com/banje/>). Spas are perfectly equipped for the organization of conferences, seminars, other meetings, as well as fitness and conditioning training of sports teams. The most visited are the following spas:

Bogutovačka spa is located at 23 km from Belgrade on the wooded slopes of the mountains Troglav. Moderate continental climate, unpolluted environment, provide excellent conditions for treatment, rest and recreation. Treatments are performed by bathing and drinking mineral water temperature of 24-27 degree. Bogutovačka spa also offers "health path".

Brestovačka spa is located in a beautiful setting, just 8 km from the city of Bor and carries the title of the largest spa forests in Europe. The waters of the spa are among the most therapeutic in our country. Guests can visit the spa residence of Knez Miloš, built in 1837, and restored Turkish hammam and Turkish bath. Around Brestovac Spa stretches of forests, on 90ha.

Mataruška spa is located 8 km away from Kraljevo. Moderate continental climate, the river Ibar and spacious park provides excellent opportunities for health, sports and recreational tourism. The curative mineral water, temperature 42-51 degrees and contemporary modern equipment provide excellent results in the treatment. Mataruška spa offers facilities for sports, recreation, conferences and school excursions.

Niška spa is a spa of Emperor Constantine and the Serbian kings. The oldest spa in Serbia, one of the oldest in Europe, with many healing springs of warm water that are used from the time of the Roman Empire. Niska spa is now a center for the treatment of cardiovascular and rheumatic diseases, as well as a sports center and congress tourism.

Ovčar spa is located in Ovčarsko-kablarskoj canyon, 18 km from Cacak. There are testimonies that the water from Ovčar spa is used to treat people from Roman times through the Middle Ages and the Turkish times. Today, the treatment is consisted of bathing in thermal mineral water and coating the diseased parts of the body. Ovčar Spa is the ideal place to stay because it offers a wide array of opportunities for rest, relaxation, sport...

Soko spa is located in southeastern Serbia, between mountains Ozren and Rtanj, on the banks of the river Moravica. For healing Sokobanja thermal springs were known at the time of the ancient Romans.

Vrnjačka spa is the largest and most famous spa resort in Serbia and traditionally very attractive tourist center for rest and recreation. Vrnjačka spa has a medical treatment tradition. On Vrnjačka hot mineral springs in the period from 2nd to 4th century, the Romans built their spa and rehabilitation center Aquae Orcinae. This is evidenced by archaeological finds, a swimming pool, and a Roman source of hot mineral water.

Gamzigradska spa is one of the most important spa resorts registered in Serbia. It is located at the site 220 km southeast of Belgrade, near Zaječar. It is located at 160 m above sea level in the valley of the river Crni Timok, the end of the main road Paraćin-Zaječar. Air conditioning in the spa is mild continental, a river and the surrounding forest give it freshness and pleasantness. Gamzigradska Spa is rich in medicinal springs of mineral water with a temperature of the most abundant sources of 42°C, (<http://www.gamzigradskabanja.org.rs/>)

In the period January - November 2015. year spas have participated with a 17,8% of the total arrivals of tourists in Serbia, i.e. the 28,5% the total number of overnight stays in Serbia, which is shown in the table 3. Tourist traffic in Serbia spas, expressed by the total number of tourist arrivals in the period January - November 2015. is increased 11,1% compared to the 2014. year, thanks to both, increase the number of domestic arrivals (7,9%), and foreign tourists (27,6%). The total number of overnight stays in spas recorded a slight increase of 0,3%, as a result of falling rates for domestic guests 1,5 %, although the increase in overnight stays by foreign tourists accounted for 15,6%.

Table 3. Tourist arrivals in Serbian spas in the period from January - November 2015.god.

	January –November 2015	ARRIVALS		
		Total	Domestic	Foreign
	Republic of Serbia	2.260.243	1.214.407	1.045.836
	SPAS	403.156	329.596	73.560
1	Vrnjačka spa	165.640	138.317	27.323
2	Soko spa	40.014	35.936	4.078
3	Bukovička spa	27.103	21.664	5.439
4	Palić spa	24.915	13.375	11.540
5	Vrdnik spa	16.393	13.912	2.481
6	Koviljača spa	14.206	10.706	3.500
7	Prolom spa	13.627	10.930	2.697
8	Kanjiža spa	12.463	7.251	5.212
9	Lukovska spa	12.105	10.791	1.314
10	Gornja Trepča spa	9.652	8.265	1.387
11	Vrujci spa	9.366	8.522	844
12	Junaković spa	7.103	5.661	1.442
13	Ribarska spa	6.934	6.490	444
14	Sijarinska spa	5.590	5.423	167
15	Selters spa	5.607	5.472	135
16	Niška spa	4.423	3.097	1.326
17	Vranjska spa	2.326	2.197	129
18	Gamzigradska spa	2.159	2.096	63
19	Rusanda spa	1.950	1.850	100
20	Mataruška spa	1.124	1.112	12

Source: <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/>

Serbian Mountains

Mountain tourism encompasses a wide range of activities for lovers of various tendencies of hikers and climbers to cavers, etc., whether binds them all the love for nature and spend time in the fresh air, tradition of hiking, mountain climbing and skiing in this region there are over a hundred years as

evidenced by numerous documents and objects (<http://www.linkserbia.com/planinski/?list=planinski>).

Mountain **Crni Vrh** of Bor is distant 30 kilometers, the highest peak is located at 1043 meters above sea level. Ski resort disposes arranged ski trail length of 920 meters, one of the fastest ski lift in Serbia, which can carry 1,200 people per hour.

On mountain **Fruška Gora**, is dominated by beech and oak forests that are considered indigenous species. Fruška Gora is also rich in monasteries in this region many centuries the meeting place of spiritual life.

Kopaonik is the largest mountain massif in Serbia, with almost 200 sunny days. Kopaonik throughout the year, offers ideal conditions for an active vacation and is the largest and best-known Serbian ski resort.

Tara is located in western Serbia, near Bajina Bašta, on the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina and is one of the most beautiful mountains in Serbia. Is characterized by diverse plant life, including the most famous Serbian spruce.

Zlatibor, is a famous summer and winter tourist center, with over one million overnight stays per year, is at the very top of the Serbian tourism.

Stara planina is one-third located in eastern Serbia, while two-thirds in neighboring Bulgaria. Area Serbian part of Stara planina, extending in the direction of NW - SE with its highest peak at 2,169 meters named Midžor. (www.serbiaecotour.rs/sr/zasticena-podrucja/stara-planina)

In the period January - November 2015. year mountain places accounted for 19,5% of the total arrivals of tourists in Serbia, ie the 26,3% the total number of overnight stays in Serbia for mentioned period.

Table 4. Tourist arrivals in the mountains of Serbia in the period January- November 2015.

	January- November 2015.	ARRIVALS		
		TOTAL	Domestic	Foreign
	Republic of Serbia	2.114.772	1.135.837	978.935
	Moutains	411.544	338.977	72.567
1	Zlatibor	137.633	106.039	31.594
2	Kopaonik	90.586	78.499	12.087
3	Tara	56.569	51.821	4.748
4	Divčibare	21.146	20.237	909
5	Stara Planina	16.001	12.030	3.971
6	Zlatar	8.711	7.456	1.255
7	Goč	6.987	6.987	-
8	Ivanjica	5.813	5.764	49
9	Rudnik	4.235	3.785	450

Source: <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/>

Tourist traffic in mountain centers in Serbia, expressed by the total number of tourist arrivals (411.544), in the first eleven months 2015. grew by 19,5% compared to the same period 2014. year, while the increase in the total number of overnight stays (1.541.730) accounted for 17,0%.

The growing trend of arrivals to mountain resorts that have contributed the arrival of domestic tourists (338.977) which is either 21,3% more than in the first eleven months 2014. year, as well as foreign tourist arrivals (72.567) which saw an increase of 11,4%. In the same period, the number of domestic tourist nights (1.320.092) was higher for 17,6%, and the foreign (221.638) for 13,6% in relation to the period January -November 2014. year.

Zlatibor is leading in tourist traffic which is the number of tourist arrivals (137.633) accounted for 33,4% in the total number of tourist arrivals in mountain resorts.

The largest increase in the total number of arrivals (48,1%) in the first eleven months 2015. year is registered in Stara planina, where foreign tourists recorded the highest increase in arrivals (75,4%).

Conclusions

In relation to global tourism trends, Serbia is a relatively new destination which the development strategy tends capturing a favorable place on the tourist market. For the development of tourism there are good opportunities, which should be directed in the right direction for many reasons. The natural wealth of the mountains and the healing properties of spa centers, lately are attracted and increasing attention from both domestic and foreign tourists. From the results obtained of this study can be seen that the most visited mountains: Zlatibor, Kopaonik and Tara, and the most visited spas are: Vrnjačka spa, Soko spa and Bukovička spa. This development of tourism in Serbia encourages the development of mass tourism which reflects positively on the economy as a whole. Significant attention should be given to the indirect impact of the mountain and spa tourism on the economy. Consumption of tourists that are directly implemented through tourism activities more or less secure affects all economic and non-economic activities. In this way, the opening of new jobs that automatically reduces unemployment, which has been identified as one of the foremost benefits of tourism activities in the territory of the Republic of Srbije. What is noticeable is that it is up to 2014 year number of overnight stays of domestic tourists has been decreased, and the was still present tendency further decline. With the measures of the Serbian government was stopped the further decline in 2015. year, ie there was a significant increase of 8% comparatively to the previous year.

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