



TITLE: Bulgarian mountain tourism initiatives

Responsible tourism provides an alternative for mass visited locations. The most often cited reason for participating in an alternative vacation is the need to escape from the busy lifestyle in the city, to leave behind the noise and pollution and to experience wild undamaged nature and the quiet and beauty it provides. One of the most popular ways to experience the benefits of responsible tourism in Bulgaria is mountain hiking. The practice is very popular thanks to geography and climate in Bulgaria, the variety of routes and considerably lower cost of the vacation. Mountain tourism enthusiasts highlight the health and mental state benefits of hiking tourism – the physical challenge the routes can pose develop body strength, while the remote locations, lacking large masses of people, along with lack of phone service in some regions, prove to be a great ways to get rid of everyday stress. Tourists usually have a choice between organized group hiking and self-organized vacation. The group hiking is usually done under the supervision of trained mountain guide and offer the chance of building new friendships with likeminded people. Many hikers speak fondly of the bond that forms between people high in the mountains. For experienced mountaineers the self-organized hiking may be preferable, since it does not require conforming to a group and offers greater freedom. This type of vacations uses high mountain huts for accommodation, which often offer poor conditions and questionable hygiene. Nevertheless for enthusiasts the benefits are much greater.

A variation of hiking tourism is the option to combine both the comfort of hotel accommodation and wild nature walks. In Bulgaria the winter resorts prove to be popular in the summer too, with promotional packages and mild climate. In the popular ski resort Borovets per example, different tours are organized in the summer that involve hiking, horse riding, adventures for children. These trips are usually organized on a day-to-day basis and rely on visitors in the resort, and strive to use eco-friendly transportation.

Good examples of responsible tourism could be found in national tourist organisations, such as Chernomorski Prostoni, Rodni Balkani. Both organisations offer variations of mountain and sea-side tourism, with accents on eco-friendliness and respect towards nature. Rodni Balkani per example offer a large variety of mountain hiking trails in Bulgaria, which can be visited in an organized group alongside experienced guides. Such excursions use high-mountain huts for accommodation and the taxes for the stay and food consumptions support the lodge, and are executed entirely by walking.



Zhechka Karova has been member of the Bulgarian Tourist Association for more than 40 years. She is former orienteering trainer and since 1992 is the chief secretary of tourist association “Rodni Balkani”. As such she is involved with organisation and communication management for tourist groups, interested in responsible and cultural vacations.

There are also good examples of voluntary organized festivals and events promoting sustainable tourism. One such festival is the “Blueberries Festival”, organized annually in Stara Planina (Balkan Mountains). The event is situated by the Ambartisa Hut, and participants usually camp near the hut. The only access to the festival is by hiking through mountain terrain. Over the ears local musicians have played for visitors, and special courses are delivered for waste management and preservations of natural resources.

15 ГОДИНИ

април 2016 г.

ЗЕЛЕНИ ГРАДСКИ ЛАГЕРИ "МЛАД ТУРИСТ"

ИЗДАВА ТУРИСТИЧЕСКО ДРУЖЕСТВО "РОДНИ БАЛКАНИ"

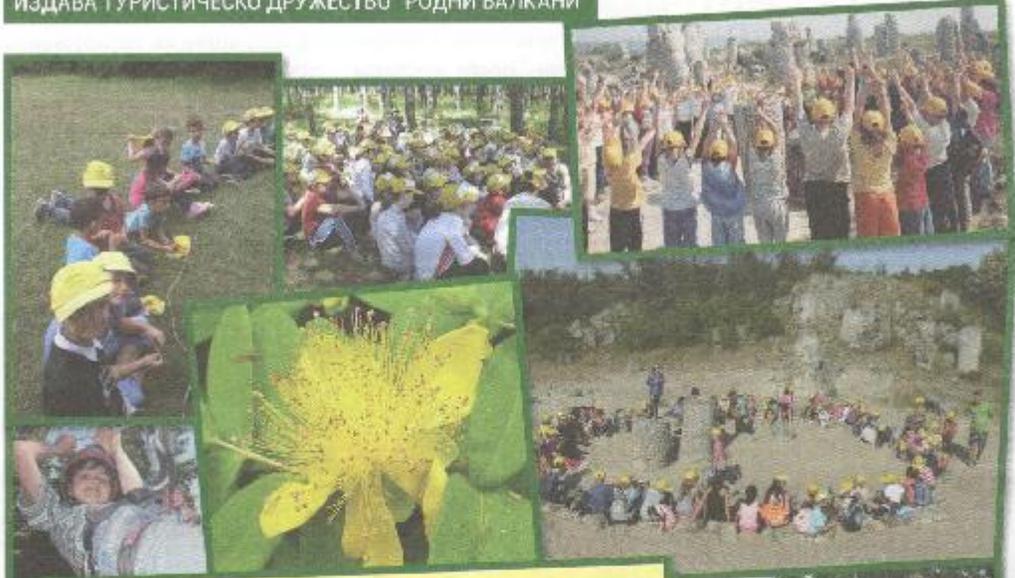


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