

## MANGALIA SPAS POTENTIAL, A POTENTIAL TOURISM RESOURCE OF THE ROMANIAN SEASIDE

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### Abstract

*Treatment Tourism is a specific form of rest tourism, destined to prevent certain illnesses or diseases. This is one form of the constant movement of a tourist relatively stable clientele. The paper analyzes the main forms of tourism in the area, referring in particular to the spa potential and its recovery. The study analyzes the main forms of tourism in Mangalia, focusing on spa treatment and the resources available in the city for bathing cures. The data from the National Institute of Statistics, Department of Statistics Constanta, regarding the flow of tourists in Mangalia were used. The data were processed and converted into tables, graphs and then analyzed and interpreted. The study pointed out that Mangalia is visited by tourists four months a year (June, July, August, and September), and tourists who spent their holidays in Mangalia are both of Romanian and foreign origin. The number of tourists in Mangalia fluctuated from 210,000 in 2010 to 240,000 in 2014. The average length of stay is 5 days in sanatorium, like in the rest of spas in the country. Of the total arrivals in Mangalia, only 2% tourists have treatment tickets. Customer categories have the following structure: 35% retired persons, 25% people with secondary education, 25% persons with higher education, 5% artists and sportsmen, 0.5% other professions.*

**Key words:** tourism, natural mineral water, vegetable slime, therapeutic gases

### INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, by exploring the environment, man discovered the mineral waters. The archaeological discoveries have come to light parts of the ancient Roman baths used for spa in Herculane, Ocna Sibiului, Buziaș, Moneasa, Călan etc. [7].

During the time of the Roman Dacia, the war wounded or sick people used those waters to recover and to thank the gods they built shrines and worked commemorative stones in their honor. Since then, the Romanian balneology evolved and the resorts have come to mean true health centers with very good specialists in the field and endowed with modern medical equipment [1].

Today, health tourism is a form of tourism constant movement, one of the major tourism segments as it presents specific features represented by the inviting environment [2]. These factors can be used for a range of spa treatments. It stands out from other types of tourism because it has both economic and social benefits that bring positive effects on people's physical and mental condition.

Tourism treatment not only cater to people with medical problems but also to those who want to rest, to relax, to have a physical and mental condition, to regain their vitality[3]. In this context, the paper aimed to analyze Mangalia spa potential as a potential tourism resource on the Romanian Black Sea shore.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main methods used in this study were: comparative methods, inductive, deductive method of direct visual observation of the area and photographic methods. The data were collected from National Institute of Statistics, Department of Statistics Constanța. They regard the flow of tourists in Mangalia. The data were processed and summarized into tables, nicely illustrated in graphs and then interpreted and analyzed.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Romanian spas have natural therapeutic factors such as: mild climate, various natural mineral waters, mud and gas emanations.

In this article we will refer and analyze the seashore therapeutic factors that have driven the development of spa tourism in Mangalia [4].

a) **Beach** is a natural curative factor of the seashore. Its sand consists of marine sediments, rock fragments and remnants of shells. In Mangalia, the predominant component comes from limestone shells. An important character is the grain of sand but also its chemical composition especially in the treatment of sand called psamotherapy. In Mangalia, sand has a medium particle sand size. Due to its medium grain sand size in the Mangalia, sand could be easily heated reaching at midday even at + 44 ° C in summer season. Walking on the beach is a hydrotherapy spa procedure which helps blood and lymphatic circulation in the limbs. There are also the well known "baths of sand", which are arranged in a hollow, where a thick layer of sand is left in the sun for about an hour after heating, and the same patient will lie down in that hole and covered with a thin layer of sand, and after that will take a bath in the sea[11].

b) **Thalassotherapy** is another sort of salt bath where both the waves and sea water temperature have a combined effect. An important therapeutic factor is the sea and its chemical composition. Seawater is hypertonic (13-18g ‰), containing important minerals such as: sodium, magnesium, sulphate and chlorinated [10].

c) **Sunrays** have the strongest radiation around midday, being 4 times more powerful than in the morning because of the atmosphere that pervades almost vertical. Sunbathing are essential because they activate metabolic processes in the body and causes redness, pigmentation.

d) **Sludge from Mangalia**. The peat mud is well hydrated (water 826 g ‰) and rich in various minerals. This requires no further processing prior therapy because it is well decomposed.

e) **The mineral springs in Mangalia** is another important therapeutic factor used both internal and external cures. These are meso temperature springs of +20 to + 25 °C, the heat comes from the depth thereof where the

layers of gypsum are decomposed by bacteria and debris sulfur. They have a poor mineralization and contain hydrogen sulfide. It comes from sand and pyrite from Sarmatian sandstones [10].

Harnessing these resources is achieved largely at Mangalia Sanatorium which was established in 1975 under the Ministry of Health as a specialized medical unit of national interest. It is structured in 2 pavilions: Pavilion A and Pavilion B. Pavilion A comprises a hotel, a clinical ward, a treatment center, cafeteria, administrative offices, laundry, heating, water pumping station and a substation high. It is approximate 1 km to Pavilion B. Pavilion B comprises: a treatment center, a central heating, laundry and a substation.

The procedures performed are the following ones: massages handmade by specialized professionals with various ointments, mud and massage-type shower-massage; hydro mud which consists partially or totally of different baths: salty, sulfurous hot herbal baths, herbal whirlpool, sauna; physical therapy can be made both in a group and individually, and it is another form of hydro-kinetotherapy which works with seawater pool or sulfur; pneumotherapy is performed using aerosols which may be individual drug substances, seawater and sulfur mineral water buffered; electrotherapy which is made with currents: ionization bathrooms Stanger, shortwave, ultrasound; electro magnetic therapy can be done by local or general or diapuls: high frequency pulsating with anti-allergic effects, anti-inflammatory effects; phototherapy, relying on infrared light. Other treatments: gynecological, acupuncture, infiltrations.

The therapeutic indications in the treatment of recovery are: respiratory diseases, orthopedic injuries, impairments, neurological, gynecological, dermatological, and digestive diseases.

#### **The tourism infrastructure in Mangalia**

There is wide range of accommodation units in the city, including hotels dating back many years (Callatis, Corsa, President, etc.) and various villas and apartments leased by private citizens.

The hotels in Mangalia are prevalent as accommodation units. The number of beds rose to 1,400 in the city hotels and resorts, and the housing capacity in terms of seats reached about 52,000 beds.

Located on the seafront, at 50 m distance from the town, the Mangalia Sanatorium has a two-star hotel with a capacity of 200 seats, two clinical sections each with 75 beds and two modern treatment, serving both wards with beds the sanatorium and ambulatory - located in Matei Basarab street no. 3 Mangalia, with a total capacity of 1,000 patients per day. Tourists choose this destination both for leisure and for treatment [6].

**Tourist flow for spa purposes.** Tourists come in Mangalia, obviously for coastal and others for spa treatment. In this way, they can visit the city's main attractions because many tourists come for a longer stay. Mangalia is visited by tourists in four months of the year (June, July, August, and September). In the rest of the year, many of the accommodation units are closed and the number of tourists is insignificant. The tourists who spend their holidays in Mangalia are both Romanians and foreigners [5].

Table 1. Number of tourists arriving in Mangalia in the period 2010-2014

Year	Tourists arrivals
2010	210,000
2011	220,000
2012	240,000
2013	210,000
2014	240,000

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Department of Statistics Constanța

Spa tourism in Mangalia strongly fluctuated until 2012 (Table 1) reaching a total of 240,000 tourists in 2014, but this number has recorded a significant decrease to 210,000 people in 2013. But, since 2014, it started to rise again recording 240,000 tourists, like in 2012 (Fig. 1) [5].

The average length of stay is 5 days in sanatorium, like in the rest of spas in the country.

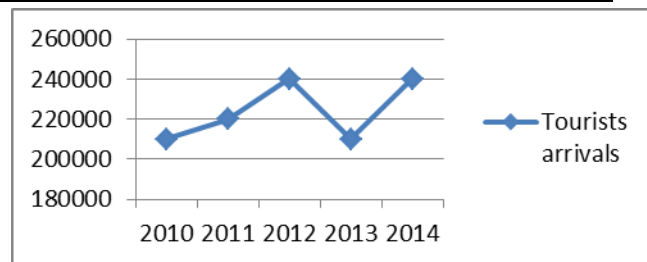


Fig.1. Tourists arrivals in the establishments of tourists' reception with functions of tourists in Mangalia City in the period 2010-2014

Source: Own determination.

In Mangalia, the capacity utilization index includes accommodation and coastal component of the total count, but even so this index is below the average value in the country. The employment index manages to exceed even 35% in 2012 ( Table 2) in high season, but hide the fact that accommodation is closed in winter [5].

Table 2. Use index of accommodation capacity in Managalia from 2010 to 2014

Year	Use index of accommodation capacity (%)
2010	30%
2011	33%
2012	37%
2013	35%
2014	35%

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Department of Statistics Constanța

In Fig. 2 is presented the evolution of the accommodation capacity index. The highest capacity index was recorded in 2012, approximately 37% and 35% in 2013 and 2014. This indicator hides the attractiveness of the seaside in winter due to the lack of alternative solutions based on both on the sea and the natural resources of the sea [6].

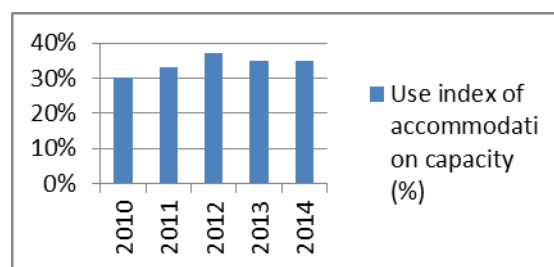


Fig. 2. Evolution of the use of accommodations in Mangalia

Source: Own determination.

Of the total arrivals in Mangalia, only 2% of tourists have treatment tickets, this being due to the related resorts that have a much larger clientele in summer. However, the number of tourists who have treatment tickets does not decrease. In Table 3 it is presented the ticket number 5,200 settled in 2012 and 2014 a total of 4,900 tickets. Fig. 3 shows the evolution of the number of discounted tickets during the three years [5].

Table 3. Number of tickets settled from 2012 to 2014

Year	Number of tickets settled
2012	5,200
2013	4,800
2014	4,900

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Department of Statistics Constanța

If Mangalia would provide alternative leisure and would develop products like thalassotherapy and complete spa in winter, it could become a tourist destination that can extend the season as such and the stay of tourists in the low season [6].

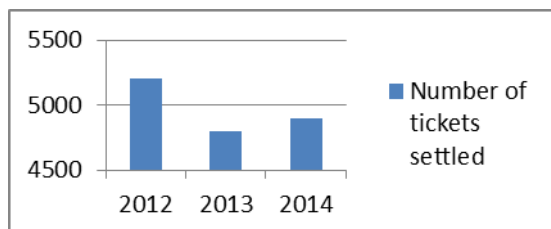


Fig. 3. The evolution of treatment vouchers settled in Mangalia, 2012-2014

Source: Own determination.

By treatment tourism, tourists satisfy their needs such as: feeling good both physically and mentally, they begin to know and better understand various physical problems, begin to adopt a new lifestyle and why not a catering much healthier [8]. The average stay is 12-18 days customers.

The customer categories have the following structure: 35% retired, people with secondary education 25%, persons with higher education 25%, 5% artists and athletes, other trades 0.5% (Table 4) [5].

Tourists choose to practice this form of tourism because many of them suffer from various diseases and follow treatments once

or twice a year at the doctor recommendation.

Table 4. Structure categories of customers in Mangalia

Customers	%
Retirees	35
Frames with secondary	25
Frames with higher education	25
Artistes and Athletes	5
Other trades	0.50

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Department of Statistics Constanța

Tourists entering the nursing home follow a particular treatment and spend much time inside it, because they want to recover their staying but also to establish social relationships with other people [9].

## CONCLUSIONS

The study provides a number of general conclusions as presented below:

Spa tourism is a tourism constant form of movement, a major segment in tourism due to the presence of curing factors. It is addressed not only to people with medical problems but also those who want to relax or rest. It is based on a permanent potential that can be practiced throughout the year.

Natural healing factors are: climate, natural mineral waters, therapeutic muds, therapeutic gases.

The seashore therapeutic factors are: beach, sea baths, sunlight, mud, mineral springs in Mangalia.

Mangalia Sanatorium is a specialized medical unit established in 1975. It comprises two pavilions: A Pavilion and B Pavilion.

Mangalia is visited by tourists four months a year (June, July, August, September), and the rest of the year many of accommodation units are closed. Tourists vacationing in Mangalia are both Romanians and foreigners.

The number of tourists in Mangalia fluctuated from 210,000 in 2010 to 240,000 in 2014.

The average length of stay is 5 days sanatorium, like in the rest of spas in the country. Of the total arrivals in Mangalia, only 2% of tourists have treatment tickets.

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