



With funding from  
 Austrian  
Development  
Cooperation

# TOURIST GUIDE "LOWER DNIESTER"



This publication has been edited under the project "*Ecosystem-based adaptation, climate-resilience measures and institutional development in the Lower Dniester Area*" financed by the Austrian Development Agency within the Austrian Development Cooperation Program.

Translated in English and printed with the additional support of Sweden.

This material is not developed for financial purposes and can be downloaded from the web pages of the Public Association EcoContact and the Ecological Society BIOTICA.

[www.ecocontact.md](http://www.ecocontact.md)

[www.bioticamoldova.org](http://www.bioticamoldova.org)

[lower-dniester.org](http://lower-dniester.org)

Developer: Viorel Miron

Photo: Anatolie Poiata, Viorel Miron

Publication editor: Tatiana Cociaș

Publication coordinator: Natalia Guranda

All rights to this publication belong to PA EcoContact and ES BIOTICA

Pictures reflecting the images of children are published with parental consent.

© Public Association EcoContact , 2021

© Ecological Society BIOTICA, 2021



*A village in the Dniester floodplain*



*Reed-houses in the village of Cioburciu*

This material presents a selection of the most valuable destinations of historical, religious, ecological and tourist significance of the Wetland of International Importance – the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site (hereinafter – Ramsar Area)\*. This Touristic Guide is developed within the project “Ecosystem-based adaptation, climate-resilience measures and institutional development in the Lower Dniester Area”, funded by the Austrian Development Agency within the Austrian Development Cooperation Program. The Project is implemented by the ES BIOTICA and PA EcoContact, and is aimed at supporting the creation of the Lower Dniester National Park – a State Protected Natural Area – stimulating, as well, population’s interest for the opportunities of development in the Area.

Also, an important part of the project is dedicated to the local infrastructure development. Within the project, the inhabitants of five villages in the area benefit from works to improve the water supply systems, and strips on both banks of the Dniester are forested with the support and involvement of several actors, as well central and local authorities, the local population, volunteers, and the media.

\* Wetlands of international importance (hereinafter – Ramsar areas) represent territories and/or stretches of water which include different types of humid ecosystems and correspond to the Criteria for highlighting wetlands of importance of the Ramsar Convention, holding a rich biological diversity and having an important role for waterfowl.

# WELCOME!



*The Dniester old bed between the villages Copanca and Talmaza*

## DEAR READERS!

Browsing this tour guide, you will discover that the Lower Dniester area is one of the most picturesque places in the Republic of Moldova. On your way to exploring new tourist attractions, you will enjoy discovering the most beautiful settlements here.

Thus, you will see that the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site has represent specific settlement, which includes natural protected areas from the oldest vestiges full of history and hospitable people. The lowest geographical point, Lake Aivazia from Palanca, is at -1.75 m below sea level.

Moreover, landscape and natural reservations, secular trees, geological and paleontological monuments are eloquent evidence that this ecotourism destination can offer visitors unforgettable moments in places where the beauties of nature and the chronicles of history are found in a special harmony. The exceptional historical heritage of the Lower Dniester is reflected in the number of tourist attractions with authentic historical value. Thus, a special place in the tourist cultural diversity has the

attraction named Trajan Wave and the lost ancient and medieval cities, famous wineries and in the oldest villages from the country were kept and multiplied outstanding traditions.

We hope that today's reader (of the present guide) will become the tomorrow's visitor, who will come to love these places and will promote further the tourist destinations of the Lower Dniester. We also want to assure you that the locals would be happy to receive their visitors and help them discover the beauties and tourist attractions of the area. And after your first visit here, we have every certainty that you will come back!

Sincerely, The project implementation team.

# 10 reasons to visit the Lower Dniester

## 1. The "Turkish Garden"

The "Turkish Garden" (Leuntea-Talmază) is considered one of the first natural protected areas in Europe.

## 2. The "Blind Dniester"

The "Blind Dniester" is a fossil trough (also called by the locals "the dead Dniester", Adana, Two Brothers, Jidranu), which is worth being visited, as it represents the old Dniester riverbed between Copanca and Talmază. It is a jewel among several attractions of a much larger area - Ramsar Area "Lower Dniester" (approx. 60 thousand ha).

## 3. Purcari Winery

The famous Purcari Winery, probably the oldest in Bessarabia (1827), and its known wine "Negru de Purcari" has long been considered a business card of the Republic of Moldova.

## 4. Palanca Fortress and Cioburciu Parish

In medieval Moldova, on the Lower Dniester segment were two centers of royal power (Palanca Fortress and Cioburciu Parish), located between Tighina and Cetatea Alba.

## 5. The "Great Moldavian Road"

The hearths of the villages here preserve histories and legends about travel on the famous "Great Moldavian Road", excerpt from the "Silk Way", which links major fairs in Europe and Asia.

## 6. "Togai Swamp"

The "Togai" swamp (village of Crocmaz) is one of those larger swampy areas in the Republic of Moldova.

## 7. "Nighicea Gardens"

The "Nighicea Gardens" represents a dendrological collection made of unique fruit trees (prior to 1816).

## 8. "The Imperial Forest"

The "Imperial Forest" is an exotic greenhouse between the villages Olanesti and Crocmaz,



which purpose was to ensure public parks in southern Russia with decorative trees (in the 20s of the twentieth century).

## 9. Fauna

The faunal diversity here represents about 2/3 of known species in the country, especially pond, sedentary or migratory animals.

## 10. The National Park

Based on the Lower Dniester Wetland of international importance (Ramsar Convention) works are being done to found a new national park in the Republic of Moldova (on a surface of about 60,000 ha).

**The Lower Dniester is a tourist hub of the Southern Region of Moldova with significant flows of visitors from neighbouring cities (Tiraspol, Tighina, Causeni, Stefan Voda, Slobozia, Chisinau, Belgorod, Odessa), being the largest area transit to the Black Sea coast.**

# About the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site

Located in the South-Eastern part of the Republic of Moldova, The Lower Dniester Ramsar Site (LDRS) stretches on the territory of Causeni and Stefan Voda districts and it borders, to the North with Tighina, to the North-East with Tiraspol and Slobozia district, and to The South-East with the Odessa region (Ukraine). It is bordered in its Eastern part of the Dniester River, navigable on this portion.

The relief here is plain, without large hills sloping towards the Dniester. Maximum height is Movilacea Mare (196.9 m, Popeasca village), although in the immediate vicinity rises the Causeni Hill (209.8 m) and the Brezoli Plateau (198.8 m, village of Ermoclia). In several valleys there were founded traces of fossil fauna and flora which are now under State's protection (in the villages of Cioburciu, Tudora, Purcari), and in the floodplains, fragmented patches of forests characteristic of wetlands have been preserved.

In the area of the Lower Dniester, the river forms numerous meanders, to which the right tributaries lead: Stiubeiu, Rarau, Garla. Near the current Dniester riverbed are: "Blind Dniester" – a fossil riverbed fragmented river, lakes Aivazia, Togai and others. Spontaneous vegetation is largely represented by plants characteristic of the steppe, meadow and forest areas, located mainly along the Dniester River and its tributaries. The Turkish Garden is considered one of the first protected natural areas in Europe. The "Imperial Forest" (Crocmaș village) was a greenhouse to provide public parks in Southern Russia with exotic decorative trees. The "Togai Swamp" (village of Olanesti) is one of the largest swampy surfaces from the Republic of Moldova. Fauna diversity represents about half of the species known in the country, especially sedentary or migratory pond animals.



*The Blind Dniester in the village of Talmaza*



*Virgin Steppe in the village of Popeasca*



*A typical bessarabian house in the Lower Dniester Area*



*Juicy grapes harvested from vineyards on the Dniester bank*



*Secular trees in the "Turkish Garden"*

Currently, works are being done to establish a national park in the Republic of Moldova (which will include about 60,000 ha), based on the Lower Dniester Wetland of international importance (Ramsar Convention).

The traveller who arrives at the Dniester riverbed for the first time is impressed by the large number of old towns that, by their local names, remind of a tumultuous past, when several civilizations perished here, and trade routes along the river were connecting the main cities from the region with fairs in Europe and Asia on the famous "Moldavian Road".

In the villages you can still see many ancestral hearths dating back to the early fifteenth century, especially along the Dniester, Trajan's wave from above, 41 archaeological sites, Getic earth fortifications, 7 ancient or medieval towns and fortresses, 10 churches – monuments of culture of national or local importance, 21 rural communities, which knew how to preserve the tradition of local hospitality.

Also, three geopaleontological monuments can be visited in this area, a unique dendrological collection of fruit trees (19<sup>th</sup> century varieties) "Nighicea Gardens" in the village of Popeasca, 14

relatively well-preserved fragments of meadow forests, 9 landscaped parks and squares, 3 secular trees, 23 lakes and ponds, 12 beaches on the Dniester, 22 local leisure areas, and can be made observations of migratory birds along the river. Seven wineries have brought the fame of local winemakers far beyond the country, and the famous wine "Negru de Purcari" has long been considered a business card of the Republic of Moldova.

Even though it has a large territory (it is bordered by Tighina municipality 8 km South to 40 km North of Odessa, near the village of Palanca), the Lower Dniester Ramsar area is easily accessible throughout the year and no entrance fees to natural complexes are charged.

Thus, only 95 km from Chisinau can be reached here in one hour and 40 minutes (on the route R30 (Chisinau – Anenii Noi – Causeni – Popeasca – Stefan Voda) and L530 (Causeni – Plop – Stiubei – Talmază – Palanca – border with Ukraine). To the Southern border of the area to the village of Palanca is a distance of 45 km (about 30 minutes). Access from Ukraine (Odessa) is about an hour and 10 min. (60 km to the village of Palanca) and 2 hours to the village of Talmază (112 km).



Secular Park



A region called the "Hay-Valley" in the village of Popeasca



A Boyar mansion in the village of Grădinița



The cellars from the village of Leuntea are among the oldest in the Republic of Moldova



„Casa Veche” (The Old-house) Pension, village of Palanca

# Tourist districts in the Lower Dniester Ramsar Area

For a better tourist orientation and development of the visiting locations, the Ramsar Area has been divided in four special tourist districts.

## Tourist district with its centre in the village of Talmaza.

This is where the children's summer break is organized and are carried out several trips, during the year, and ecological education activities or sports marches.

### Localities

Copanca, Plop-Stiubei, Leuntea, Gradinita, Carnateni, Popeasca, Talmaza, Cioburciu, Rascaietii, Rascaietii Noi.

### District attractions

- Here are vast forests, forest lakes and fish farms, the Dniester River with its fossil bed, natural monuments, a threshold on the

Turunciuc arm with traditional nautical tourism routes, the largest island on the Dniester, etc. All these offer unique and interesting experiences.

- Here are two summer camps for children (villages of Talmaza and Carnateni), considered to be the best in Moldova.
- Likewise, we can find here one of the oldest wineries in Bessarabia.
- The regional folklore festival "In poiana dorului" (In the glade of longing - organized in June, in Popeasca village) and the Festival of culture of national minorities "La casa cu neamuri multe" (The full house - it takes place in September, in Talmaza village) are among the most popular events of the Lower Dniester.



A typical house in the village of Talmaza



A village on the Dniester



The Dniester old bed, village of Leuntea



The Dniester Floodplain



The hand-woven towel has a special place in the local tradition





Purcari Winery, 1827

**The Tourist district with its center in the village of Olanesti**

An area specializing in oenological experiences, and with great perspective in the organization of thematic holidays in the South of Moldova.

**Localities:**

Purcari, Viisoara, Olanesti.

**District attractions**

- The most famous winery in Moldova, in Purcari village, offers special experiences related to famous local wines.
- The "Imperial Forest", the protected natural areas and the beach in the Olanesti rest area form, perhaps, the most representative image of the "Lower Dniester" area.



Kayaking on the Lower Dniester



The Upper Trayan's Wave, village of Copanca



A bottle with old wine in Purcari Winery



The wine from Stefan Voda wineries is a very special one...for the special ones



An outdoor activity: Hand-made crowns for girls, village of Tudora



The "Etcetera" tourist Villa

### The tourist district with its center in the village of Tudora

It borders with the National Park which is in process of foundation in the region of Odessa (Ukraine), thus favouring the organization of cross-border ecotourism routes.

#### Localities

Crocmaș, Tudora, Palanca.

#### District attractions

- One of the most special festivals in Moldova "Hai la Piersici!" (Picking peaches) is held in

Tudora – a feast everyone would want to join.

- The most representative museum called "Casa bunicii" (Grandma's House) preserves the elements of traditional architecture in the hearth with the oldest church maintained in the area.
- In the village of Crocmaș there is a breeding farm for thoroughbred horses, which could offer equestrian excursions along the Dniester, because here are several favourable points for observing the migration and nutrition of marsh birds.



The tradition of the fishing house, village of Palanca



The tradition of the fishing house, village of Palanca



Ready to receive the dear ones



The bride's pie is tastier here



Tudora is the capital of peaches in Moldova

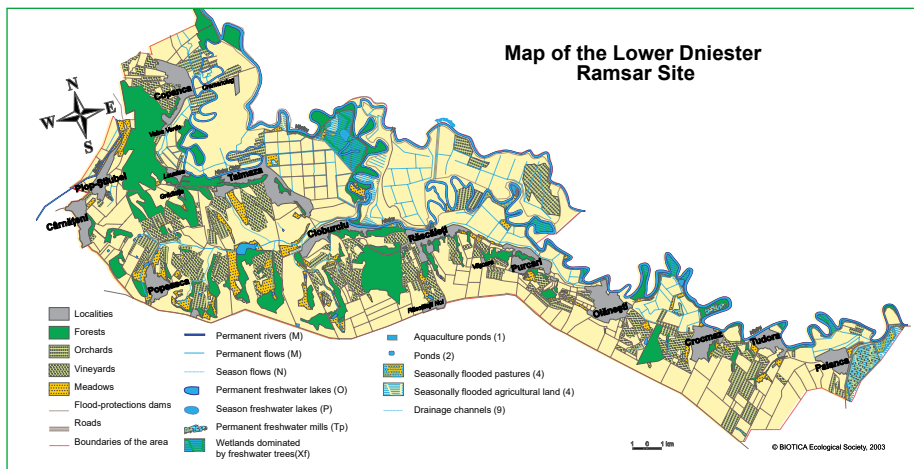
**The tourist district with its center in the town of Slobozia** includes lands under the administration of the villages of Chitcani and Cremenciug, as well as those on the left bank: Slobozia, Cioburciu, Glinoe (Hlinaia), Crasnoe, Corotna and Nezavertailovca.

**District attractions**

- Here are three medieval localities (1541: Nezavertailovca, 1769: Glinoe/Hlinaia and

Corotna), where you can visit local museums, but also the ruins of a medieval fortification (Corotna).

- Also, the tourists can visit two landscaped parks: Glinoe/Hlinaia and Nezavertailovca, 7 rest zones with 7 beaches (Glinoe/ Hlinaia, Crasnoe, Corotna, Nezavertailovca), both on the bank of the Dniester and on the 9 local ponds.



A household on the Dniester left bank



The window of the dear-old house



Autumn in the village of Hlinaia



Culinary tradition on the left bank of the Dniester



The Turunciuc branch in the village of Slobozia

# **Emeralds collar from the Lower Dniester**



*Hidden attractions through the Lower Dniester Meanders*

## Lower Dniester Wetland of International Importance



### Within the Ramsar Area perimeter

- Valul lui Traian (*The Trajan's wave*), village of Copanca
- The Protected Area "Grădina Turcească" (*The Turkish Garden*), village of Talmaza
- "Nistrul Orb" (*The Blind Dniester*), village of Talmaza
- Lunca mare, village of Talmaza
- The winery "Leuntea-Vin", village of Gradinita
- Turunciuc threshold, situated between the villages of Talmaza and Cioburciu
- "Dealul Șerpilor" (*The Snakes' Hill*), village of Răscăieți
- The Garnet cliff, village of Răscăieți
- The Purcari Winery, village of Purcari
- The Diculi Island, village of Nezavertailovca
- The Aivazia Lake
- The Nistrea firth swamp, village of Palanca



*The flower-well*



*The lake of the village of Popeasca*



*The egret in the old riverbed of the Dniester, village of Leuntea*



*The Ash - tree hills, village of Popeasca*



*The Medieval Church in the city of Causeni*



*Colors on medieval frescoes (no flash used while taking these photos)*



*Saints and martyrs in the church from where 16 thousand Moldovans were taken into captivity, in 1770*

### **In the immediate vicinity**

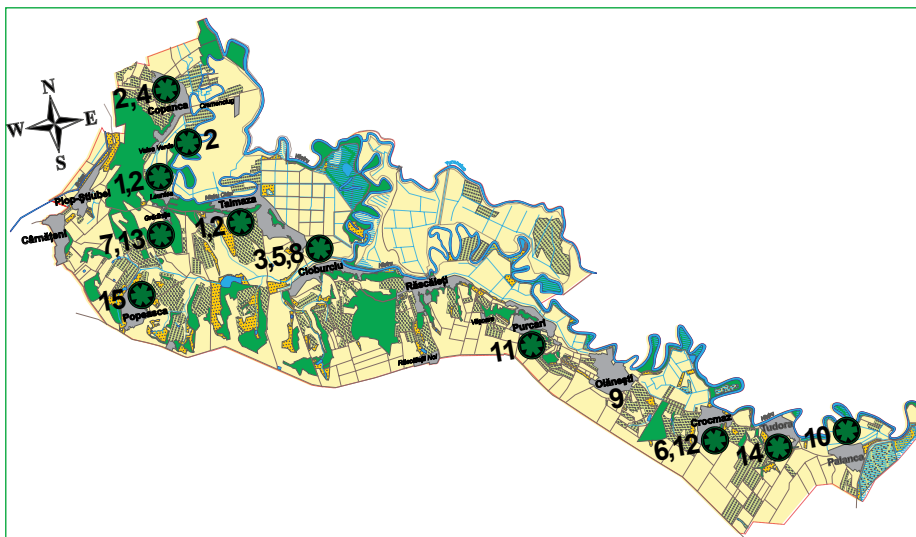
- The church "Adormirea Maicii Domnului", the city of Causeni
- The Bender Fortress, the city of Bender
- The Green Museum, the city of Stefan Voda
- The "Carahasani-Vin" Winery, the village of Carahasani
- The Wine Museum, the village of Ternovca
- The "Kvint" winery, the city of Tiraspol



*The Tighina Fortress*

# Top 15 Touristic attractions in the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site

1. "Grădina Turcească" (*The Turkish Garden*), village of Leuntea, Talmaza
2. "Nistrul Orb" (*The Blind Dniester*), villages of Copanca, Valea Verde, Leuntea, Talmaza
3. Dniester Turunciuc threshold, village of Cioburciu
4. The Upper Side of the Trajan's Wave, village of Copanca
5. Cioburciu Parish
6. "Pădurea Împărătească" (*The Royal Fortress*), village of Crocmaz
7. The Dendrariu Park, village of Gradinita
8. "Râpa lui Albu" (Albu's Ravine), village of Cioburciu
9. The Togai Swamp, village of Olanesti
10. The lowest place in Moldova - 1.75 m below the sea level, Lake Aivazia, village of Cioburciu
11. Purcari Winery
12. "Et Cetera" Winery (Crocmaz)
13. "Leuntea-Vin" Winery (Grădinița)
14. The oldest church and the Museum "La bunici", village of Tudora
15. "Nighicea Gardens", village of Popeasca





# Remarkable ecotourism attractions

## The Lower Dniester Ramsar Wetland of International Importance

The Lower Dniester Ramsar Wetland of International Importance

The perimeter of the Ramsar Area includes 21 localities from the districts of Causeni, Stefan Voda and Slobozia. There are nine communes from the Stefan Voda district included in the Area (Popeasca, Talmază, Cioburciu, Răscăieți, Purcari, Olănești, Crocmaz, Tudora and Palanca), which occupy 12086.23 ha of the protected area. Here are 18 natural complexes, of which the most representative segments of the wetland are: Lunca Talmază, the Cioburciu-Rascaiety segment and the meanders of the Dniester on the Olanesti - Crocmaz section. There are six localities in Causeni district, and there are five localities in Slobozia. The territory of the Wetland "Lower Dniester" is located in the contact area of three biogeographical regions (Podoliano-Moldovan forest-steppe, Danube and Pontic steppe)

and includes geobotanical steppe formations, floodplain, sub-arid groves of Southern Moldova. The varied relief and human activity have created in this area a great diversity of typical ecosystems, and mainly 7 aquatic biotopes and 15 terrestrial biotopes.

The seven types of aquatic biotopes include:

(i) the Dniester River; (ii) permanent or temporary meadow lakes and ponds (shallow, standing with fresh water) (eg. Talmază meadow); (iii) the old Dniester riverbed (stagnant waters with variable depths); (iv) stagnant water channels, which interact with the river; (v) freshwater drainage systems, ponds and wetlands, other artificial aquatic reservoirs; (vi) slightly saline water channels without a direct connection to the Dniester; (vii) ecosystems of streams and creeks (eg: Stiubei creek with a very branched system).

Similarly, in the Ramsar area there are another 15 types of terrestrial biotopes, including four types of floodplain forests (periodically flooded



*Pavel Taranu is a master in his village. He explains the art of wickerwork*



*One of Dniester's meander, village of Cioburciu*



*The Bugeac steppe starts from the Dniester*



*Colourful meadow in the Lower Dniester*

forests, riparian willow forests, ash dominated forests, artificial plantations), five types of hilly forests semi-arid forests of pedunculate or fluffy oak, natural and artificial thickets of trees and shrubs, complex forest plantations, anti-erosion and productive acacia plantations), two typical steppes (dry natural grassy areas, grassy carpets and dry pastures) and four grassy meadow biotopes (floodplains with tall grasses, meadow pastures, swampy meadows and ponds, grassy swamps). In fact, in the Dniester meadow there are ash forests, unique in the Republic of Moldova, which are considered habitats of European importance with an age of about a

century, but with a complete floristic assortment and a typical structure. Small but very precious sectors of garnet have been preserved on the hills- a Mediterranean-type complex of fluffy oak forest and picturesque steppe meadows, in whose grassy carpet rare plants for the Republic of Moldova have been preserved. In the places rarely visited and on the barren lands, portions of the meadows and natural steppes of the past have been preserved, almost destroyed in the rest of the territory. Extensive swamps have been preserved here only in the meandering areas of the Dniester.



*Spring flowers*



*A different sunshine*

## Protected natural reservations

**The "Olanesti" forest natural reservation** occupies a forested segment surrounded on three sides by a meander of the Dniester at the western border of Olanesti village (108 ha). Here are protected patches of forest represented of white poplar, Euro-American poplar, ash, pedunculate oak, elm, and willow, harmoniously combined with isolated meadows. The forest vegetation was preserved in an almost natural state here, without major human interventions. At the same time, it is recommended to visit the reservation in spring-autumn, during the active vegetation, to closely observe the biodiversity specific to meadow forests, which improves the microclimate and hydrological regime, favours the increase of groundwater reserves, protects pollution waters and riverbanks from landslide.



*Secular Oak, village of Olanesti*

**The "Togai Swamp", a mixed natural reservation**, is one of the largest portions of natural swamp in Moldova and is located in the northeast of Crocmaz (51.2 ha). The area also includes a meander in the Dniester river meadow, with an impressive diversity of over 700 species of aquatic and steppe plants, but also a portion of meadow forest. Here, many endangered species of hydrophilic plants grow in the natural environment, for example, wild-grapes vines. The swamp is predominantly covered with reeds, which, in the wind, soothe like a real natural vegetal carpet, resembling a dense forest, as the name "Togai" means from Turkish translation.

The reserve aims to conserve aquatic biodiversity, including exceptional wildlife, consisting of over 20 species of mammals, 39 species of birds, three rare species of reptiles and six species of amphibians, numerous pond insects, with just 19 species of dragonflies. Thus, the nature reserve "Togai Swamp" is one of the cores of the National Ecological Network of the Republic of Moldova.

Indeed, on a small territory there are concentrated a lot of animals included in the Red Book of Moldova, such as otter, four species of bats, little eagle, four species of owls, black stork, three species of reptiles, frog -field etc. It is recommended to visit the reservation in spring-autumn, during active vegetation, except during the nesting period of birds when visitors are not allowed.



*Sharing councils in the Lower Dniester's pond*

## Protected natural areas of local interest

**"Râpalui Albu" (Albu's Ravine) in the village of Cioburciu** is a monument of geological and paleontological nature (2 ha), located at the entrance to the village, on the high bank of the Dniester river. The name of the ravine is related to the name of a native-born who built his house near this ravine. The bones of about 24 species of fossil animals have been discovered here, including the Hipparion (a species of horse that disappeared 22 million years ago) and Deinotherium giganteum. Thus, due to fossil species, it is possible to know the evolution of fauna and geographical conditions in the past on Earth.

**"Râpa din Purcari" (Purcari Ravine)**, is as well, a monument of geological and paleontological nature (5 ha) with remains of Hipparion fauna and a unique geological structure. Located 1.9 km from the Dniester River.

**"Râpa de Piatră" (the Stone-Ravine)** – a natural geopaleontological monument, located in the north of the village of Tudora, 190 m from the Dniester river, on an area of 2 ha. As early as 1914, the scientist F. Frolov discovered in the sands here multiple bones of representatives of 11 species of Hipparion fauna. Small works of site layout in this protected area makes possible the visitor's access.

**"The complex of alluvial carbonate chernozemic carbonates of swampy and muddy grassland of the Bessarabian steppe area"** in the village of Talmază is a resource reserve located in two segments in the Dniester river meadow, on an area of 278 ha. Representative samples of alluvial soils are preserved in nature here meadow. It is accessible all year round with the permission of the village's authorities.



*"Râpa lui Albu" (Albu's Ravine), village of Cioburciu*



*"Râpa din Purcari" (Purcari Ravine) – autumnal view*



*"Valul Zmeului" (the Dragon's Wave)*

# Cultural heritage

## Medieval monuments

Cioburciu (1405), Olanesti (1410), Palanca (1410), Copanca (1429), Leuntea (1460), Nezavertailovca (1541), Purcari (1560), Talmaza (1595), Rascaiети (1595), Crocmaz (1595), Tudora (1595), Carnateni (1651), Popeasca, Corotna, Glinoe/Hlinaia (1769).

## Ancient and medieval fortifications

Getic fortress (Copanca, Tudora), fortress from the Roman period (Copanca), vestiges of Iurghici fortress (Palanca), Trajan's Valley (Copanca), Dragon's Wave (Talmaza, Cioburciu, Rascaiети).

## Representative churches

Popeasca, Talmaza, Rascaiети, Purcari, Olanesti, Crocmaz, Tudora, Carnateni, Plop-Stiubei.

## The wine road

- Wineries (Purcari, Crocmaz, Gradinita, Talmaza, Popeasca, Rascaiети, Tudora)
- Tasting rooms (Purcari, Crocmaz, Gradinita, Talmaza)
- Famous wines ("Negru de Purcari", "Roșu de Purcari")

## Events

The regional folklore festival "În poiana dorului" (village of Popeasca), the Festival of culture of national minorities "La casa cu neamuri multe" and the Festival of tourists (village of Talmaza), the Festival of peaches (village of Tudora) and the patron saint of villages.



A paved road to the church, village of Crocmaz



Local rustic style yard



A museum room in the village of Crocmaz

# Performances of the Lower Dniester

## Geography

- Palanca is the southernmost locality of the Republic of Moldova on the Dniester, which flows into the Black Sea estuary.
- The Dniester River intersects the Ramsar Site from northwest to southeast on a segment of 144 km, with the highest degree of meandering.
- On the territory of the Ramsar Site were taken under protection eight natural areas, which have biodiversity protection as a special function (Law no. 1538-XII of 25.02.1998). In the village of Olanesti there are two secular trees that have been taken under protection, another secular oak is protected at Leuntea.
- On the territory of the area were identified 90 species of rare plants, 14 rare species of insects, 11 species of fish, 6 species of amphibians and reptiles, 13 species of mammals, 15 rare species of birds, especially pond ones, sedentary or migratory.
- Currently, ongoing work is being done for the foundation of the only national park on the Dniester in the Republic of Moldova (about 60,000 ha) based on the Wetland of international importance "Lower Dniester" (Ramsar Convention).
- The highest place in the perimeter of the Ramsar Site is *Movilacea Mare* (196.9 m, Popeasca), although in the immediate vicinity rises Causeni Hill (209.8 m) and Brezoli Plateau (198.8 m, Ermoclia).
- The lowest point in Moldova (1.75 m below sea level) is in the village of Palanca.



*Turunciu – the largest island in Moldova, called in the past as Tiragetia, as noted in medieval maps*



*The Dniester in Spring*

- The picturesque relief places the village of Popeasca in the middle of the 16 valleys full of legends: "Valea Nighiceii" (*Nighicea Valley*), "Valea Fânului" (*Hay Valley*), "Valea Bostanului" (*Pumpkin Valley*), "Valea Căpșunii" (*Strawberry Valley*), "Valea Lacului" (*Lake Valley*), "Valea lui Moșu", "Valea Morii" (*Mill Valley*), "Valea Porcului" (*Pig Valley*), "Valea lui Iepure" (*Rabbit Valley*), "Valea Stâniei" (*Buron Valley*), "Valea lui Cărăman" (*Caraman Valley*), "Valea Adâncă" (*Deep Valley*), "Valea Arnăuțului", "Valea Turcului", "Flocenii" or "Sârchezu". In this village there is also the largest number of springs in the neighbourhood.
- Talmaza has the largest portion of the Dniester pond. The abbess "Nistrul Orb" (*the Blind Dniester, also named "Adanaua", "Doi frați", "Jidranu"*) is worth a visit because it represents the old riverbed of the Dniester.
- Here the pond flora and fauna have been preserved as it was two centuries ago, and there is a beautiful meadow forest nearby.
- There is a part of the old „Turkish Garden” between the villages Leuntea and Talmaza, which is probably one of the first protected natural areas in Europe. A few centuries ago, the administration banned the exploitation of the forest by the natives, who had the obligation to protect it and increase its wealth.
- The largest island on the Dniester is located at the confluence with the Turunciuc arm, where it is also the most picturesque river threshold in Moldova (traditional place for competitions of nautical tourists).



*The pond in the village of Palanca*



*Summer leisure on the Dniester*

## Localities

- One of the most interesting places to visit on the Dniester banks is the village of Copanca, the place where a Getic fortress and a Roman fortress was discovered; in the village of Zahornastarts the *Trajan's Wave*. It is a medieval monastery village since the time of Alexander the Great (1429). Currently, it is bordered by the Dniester and its abbey "Nistrul Orb", "Grădina Turcească" and a meadow forest, thus becoming a nucleus of the Wetland of international importance "Lower Dniester".
- In the area of the Lower Dniester is found the locality with the oldest documentary attestation in the south of Moldova – the village of Cioburciu (in various sources: 1362, 1405), which later became the largest medieval fair in the area and grocery store after the withdrawal of the administration from the White Citadel, conquered by the Turks in 1484.
- The "youngest" locality - Valea Verde - was created on the basis of an agricultural brigade on June 11, 1964.
- The oldest medieval hearths on the famous "*Drumul mare moldovenesc*" (*the greatest Moldavian road*) that have survived to this day can be found in the Lower Dniester. The local names here recall an unsettled past, when several civilizations perished, and trade routes along the Dniester River connected the main cities in the region with fairs in Europe and Asia on a fragment of the Silk Road.
- The oldest colony was created in 1816 in the village of Rascaietii by German settlers. In 1913–1914, following the floods, the German settlers moved and created the hamlet of Rascaietii Noi.



*The masks come to life during the local holidays*

- The first Austrian colony in Bessarabia appeared in 1827, when General Ponset colonized the village of Leuntea with 25 families of emigrants from Austria (152 men and 59 women). A part of the former colony has been preserved till nowadays in the village in Mahalaua Catalapilor.



*Traditional House in the village of Palanca*



*The village of Valea Verde*





The museum "La bunici" (At the Grannies), village of Tudora

## History

- The largest ancient construction to date is the Wave of Trajan (second century) or the *Wave of Grevtungii*, which begins from the village of Copanca to the Dniester.
  - Scientists believe that precisely at the fords over Nistru nexttoday'svillage of Cioburciu was settled the remote camp of the Persian king Darius, during his war of empire expansion.
  - In 1958, near the village of Olanesti, an ancient treasure was discovered – a unique archaeological site of great scientific value: 20 bronze objects (5 helmets, 6 pairs of spats, 2 pendants and a lamp) brought from ancient Greece. The oldest is the lamp (6<sup>th</sup> century BC) with a dedication to the goddess Artemis. The two types of helmets (Attic and Thracian) belong to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Of particular interest is the Thracian helmet with the image of the god Pan on the front and the panther on the temples. It is believed that the helmet was made by the Greek sculptor Lysippos (second half of the fourth century BC), sculptor and artist of the court of Alexander the Great.
- The treasure is kept in the National Museum of Archeology and History of the Republic of Moldova.
  - The oldest school was established in 1860 in the house of the priest of the village of Copanca, and the following year, in the villages of Popeasca and Rascaieti, there were opened two more schools.
  - One of the first four lower agricultural schools in Bessarabia was founded in Purcari in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
  - The first post office mentioned in the perimeter of the current Ramsar Site was opened in 1861, in the village of Popeasca.
  - The oldest mention of a Christian church in the Lower Dniester area dates from 1641, when a larger church was built in Olanesti (probably, to replace the smaller one), it was made of clay and twigs, covered with reeds. In the middle of the roof was a small tower with a cross on it.
  - The oldest church to date is "St. Averchie" (built in 1866, on the site of the wooden church from 1808/1811) from the village of Tudora.

- The oldest museum appears in July 1936 in the village of Olanesti, thanks to Professor D. Gusti and to his students from Bucharest (Sociological School), who carried out sociological and ethnological research in the locality. The students also opened here the cultural home "Spiru Haret", the National House of the People "Astra", with library and Agricultural House.
- The most famous Romanian here is the encyclopedist and scientist Ștefan Ciobanu (member of the first Government of the Democratic Republic of Moldova), who was born on November 23, 1883 in the village of Talmaza, Tighina county. He died on February 28, 1950 in Bucharest. Known works: Romanian Legends about the Mother of God (Moscow, 1911), Metropolitan of Suceava Dosoftei and his literary activity (Kiev, 1915), Dimitrie Cantemir in Russia (Bucharest, 1925), Bessarabia (Chisinau, 1926), Tighina Fortress (1928), The Union of Bessarabia (Bucharest, 1929), From the history of the national movement in Bessarabia (Chisinau, 1933).
- The most famous Russian who was in the area is A. Pushkin, traveling from Chisinau to Odessa; he visited the ruins of the Iurgheci fortress at Palanca (1821). Another time (July 1823), in Purcari, where the cart axle broke, he stayed overnight in the village, being hosted by the priest Turuta in his house. The poet was feasted on selected dishes and wines, and at dawn, with the carriage repaired, he continued his journey through Palanca to Odessa.



*The oldest church in District is settled in the village of Tudora*



*Church of the village of Popeasca*



*Eugenia Clășevici—the "soul" of Crocmaz Museum*



*The place where the Iurgheci's Fortress was settled, village of Palanca*

## Outstanding businesses

- The oldest winery in the Republic of Moldova still operates today in Purcari, where produces the famous wine "Negru de Purcari". In 1827, the first specialized winery was established here, where classic European grape varieties were grown. At the Agricultural Exhibition in Chisinau (1847) the wines from Purcari won the first gold medal, but the great triumph is obtained at the International Exhibition in Paris (1878), when the wine "Negru de Purcari" was awarded the Gold Medal.
- The first accommodation unit is known in Olanesti between 1855–1873, when there was a "sleeping house" for detainees headed in stages from Bessarabia in prisons in Odessa, Kharkov, Siberia. The truth is that, near the tap, not far from the hearth of the village of

Olanesti, as the inhabitants say, there is an "old sheepfold", i.e. the place where in the Middle Ages the merchant caravans stopped on the "Old Moldavian Road" between Tighina and Cetatea Alba.

- The oldest bank in the area dates from 6 March 1907. It was opened in the village of Olanesti.



Ready to taste famous wines



Autumn in a country yard



Traditional yard of a modern winery



The Purcari Castle, after what was named the famous Winery

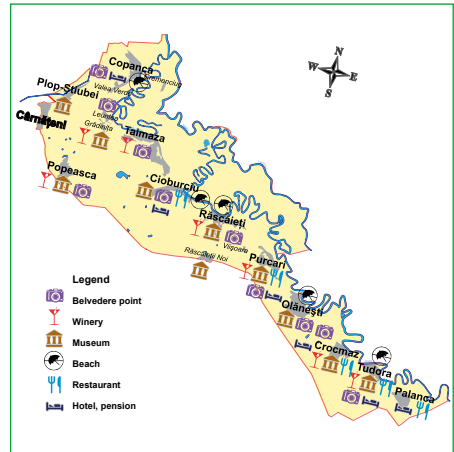
# Tourist infrastructure

In the perimeter of the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site and of the 21 rural communities there are 4 restaurants, 2 hotels, 4 guesthouses, 3 summer camps and 13 museums, whose staff offer traditional hospitality to the place. We find them at a maximum of 30 minutes from any place in the area, tourists can opt for services from Premium to Economy class.

**Hotels** can be found in the wineries from the area (Purcari, "Et Cetera"), but also in the neighbouring cities (Tiraspol, Tighina, Causeni, Stefan Voda, Slobozia). There are available places in rooms furnished for 1, 2, 3 and more people. Most hotels have breakfast included or are available to order. Hotels usually offer local excursion programs to tourists.

**The pensions** (Cioburciu, Tudora, Palanca, Copanca) offer rooms in traditional houses of the place, and a prior request is made by phone or e-mail. For large groups there are accommodation possibilities in neighbouring families in the village. The guesthouses offer themed excursion programs to tourists.

**Summer camps** (Carnateni, Talmaza) usually accommodate children during the summer. The tourist offer includes, in addition to



accommodation, three meals a day, organized leisure and additional services

**The restaurants of the wineries** (Purcari, "Et Cetera") offer a range of dishes assorted with the range of wines and distillates offered in a varied package (from Standard to Premium class), at the customer's choice. Depending on the preferences and possibilities of the restaurant, there is the availability of preparing dishes from special menus.

**The restaurants of the pensions** (Cioburciu, Tudora, Palanca) offer a menu of local products (traditional menu), but for large groups a prior request is recommended.

## Wineries:

- Wineries in the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site are settled in Purcari, Crocmaz, Gradinita, Popeasca, Talmaza, Rascaiети, Tudora;
- The wineries in the immediate vicinity of the Ramsar Site are in Causeni, Carahasani, Volintiri, Ternovca, Tiraspol;
- Tasting rooms are arranged at Purcari, Crocmaz, Gradinita, Ternovca, Tiraspol, Palanca, Talmaza;
- Famous local wines: "Negru de Purcari", "Rosu de Purcari".

## Leisure, vacations:

- beaches on the Dniester (Copanca, Cioburciu, Rascaiети, Olanesti, Tudora);
- rest areas in each locality.



A dormitory in a rustic pension

### Nature observation locations:

"Grădina Turcească" (village of Leuntea), "Grădinile Nighicei" (village of Popeasca), "Pădurea Împărătească" (villages of Olanesti, Crocmaz), meadow forests (villages of Copanca, Leuntea, Talmază, Cioburciu, Rascaietii, Purcari, Olanesti), geopaleontological monuments "Râpalui Albu" village of Cioburciu and "Râpa de Piatră", village of Tudora, pheasant farm (village of Talmază), abbot "Nistrul Orb" (village of Talmază), thresholds on the Turunciuc arm (village of Talmază, Cioburciu), natural lakes (village of Olanesti), large ponds (village of Talmază).

### Information centers:

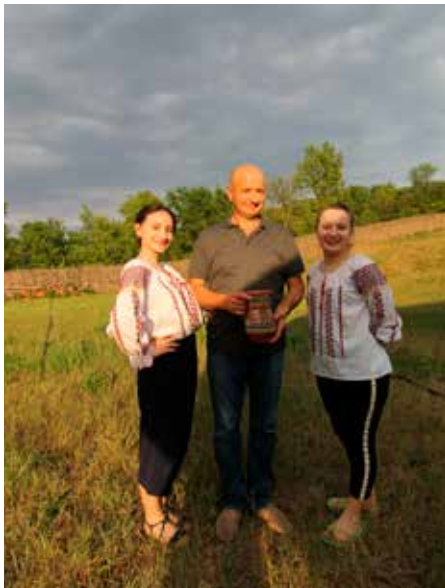
- In the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site, centres are opened within 13 museums (in the villages of Plop-Stiubei, Gradinita, Cioburciu, Crocmaz, Olanesti, Popeasca, Purcari, Rascaietii, Rascaietii Noi, Talmază, Tudora) or in the Municipalities of the localities.
- In the immediate vicinity of the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site, centres are opened within 11 museums (in the villages of Tiraspol, Tighina, Causeni, Zaim, Stefan Voda, Antonesti, Carahasani, Caplani, Copceac, Feștelîța, Stefa-nești).



Expedition on the Lower Dniester



The "Et Cetera" Winery aerodrome, village of Crocmaz



The Onici Family ready to host their tourists in the small Pension Tudora



The beach with white sand is located between the villages of Cioburciu and Rascaietii



Learning by doing - this is how traditional handicraft become an art

# Ecotourism routes

## The bike route 1

The Bike Route 1 includes the following localities in the district of Caușeni: Carnateni, Plop-Stiubei, Gradinita, Leuntea, Valea Verde, Copanca. This route includes several natural and anthropic attractions, which can be visited in different combinations.



On the bank of Botna river, village of Carnateni

## Village of Carnateni

- The old centre of the village dates from 1651, and the church "St. Arch. Mihail"(1818)
- Botna river pond and the springs of the Știubei tributary
- Carnateni Forest,

Accommodation: summer camp



Church in the village of Plop-Stiubei

## Plop-Stiubei

- Old centre of the village dates from 1850 and the restored church
- Botna river valley
- In the woods on the first front line

Information: Ethnographic Museum, Museum of Military Glory.

## Village of Gradinita

- The 19<sup>th</sup> century park with an old winery
- Forest (759 ha)
- The new church
- On the bank of the "Blind Dniester" (where the former children's camp used to be)



A paved road along the "Turkish Garden", village of Leuntea

## Village of Leuntea

- At one of the oldest wineries in Bessarabia
- In the former Austrian colony of Bessarabia (Mahalaua Catalapilor)
- Secular tree (300 years old) in the "Turkish Garden"
- On the bank of the "Blind Dniester" (where the former children's camp used to be)



The old winery in the village of Gradinita

### Village of Valea Verde

- At the abbess of the "Blind Dniester"
- The "Turkish Garden"

### Village of Copanca

- Archaeological sites: Getic fortress (4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC) 0.5 km northwest of the village; fortress from the Roman period (II-IV centuries) in the area of the locality *Movila Lata*; Sarmatian tumulus (1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> century), in the area of *Valul Grevtungiloror Valul lui Traian* (2<sup>nd</sup> century)
- At the old centre of the village settled in 1429 (known as Zaharna estate) with the church "Assumption of the Holy Virgin" (1859)
- At the "Blind Dniester" and the meadow forest
- Beach on the Dniester



The oldest protected area in Moldova

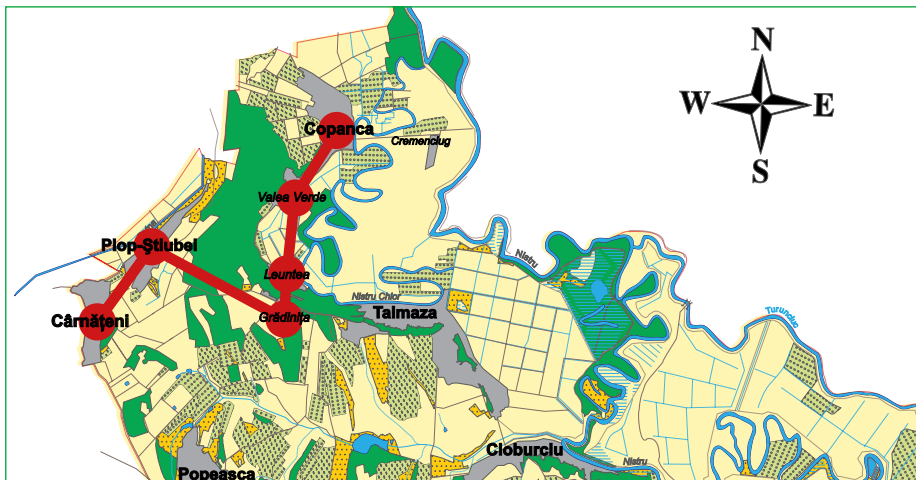


Local mascots



The old basement under the Trajan's Wave, village of Copanca

### The map of the bike route 1



## The bike route 2

The bike route 2 includes the localities from the district of Stefan Voda: i. e. Popeasca, Talmază, Cioburciu, Rascaieti, Purcari, Olanesti, Crocmaz, Tudora and Palanca.

### Village of Popeasca

- The old centre of the village dates from 1774. There is a spring, the ruins of the old church, the current church and the street plot with the initial location of the peasant households.
- "Drumul Tătarului" (Tatar's road) through "Pumpkin Wave" (it was named after the old watermelon farm), village of Leuntea, Deep valley towards the village of Cioburciu.
- "Nighicea Gardens", where can be seen a collection of varieties of fruit trees from the nineteenth century, and "Poiana Dorului" - the venue of the biannual Folk Festival
- The sheepfold here is famous for the cheese produced in the village of Popeasca (original product)
- Sovusca pond

*Information:* The Museum of the Native Land (in the House of Culture, it has a rich collection of ethnographic pieces, books, tools, etc.).



Turunciuc Threshold



"Nistrul Chior" (The Blind Dniester), village of Talmază

### Village of Talmază

- One of the first natural areas in Europe - the "Turkish Garden", is a real collection of rare native species near the old riverbeds of the Blind Dniester.
- In this area flow several rivers (*Stanoste, Gârla Cazona, Gârla Cucului, Gârla Satului, Adana, Bahna Cioroiului, Batlanita, Ezerul, Stiubeiul, Cruglic, Puica*), bypassing the secular forest from Jidran and Unghiul Boului. Here are the thresholds of the Lower Dniester.
- The landscape from the Dniester Valley to the village of Talmază is completed by picturesque valleys (*Valea Adanca, Valea Canichii, Valea Moș, Valea Oitei, Valea Popii, Valea Teti, Valea Parului*) and high hills (*Chiscului Murg, La Hartoape, La Ruptura, La Malachesti*). The plains also keep old local names (*Altita, Arpinte, Frasanul, Jidran, La Cazal, Fundul Colacului, La Harlau, La Cheptanarita, La Saraturi, La Cucosoaie, La Chira, Locul Popilor, In Toloace, Stiubei, Unghiul Boului*). The traveller can quench his thirst at several springs (*Susmeaua, La Chiperi*) or old wells (*Buiuvan, Donos, Ananii, Dogaru, Tiganelui, Lupoe, Răului, Țanțar, Pungă, Frunze*).
- Archaeological sites: The Great Movila Tumulus (early Bronze Age, late fourth millennium to the Sarmatian period, I-II centuries), "Movila de la sleah", the anti-hail station; the Paleolithic resort "Stiubei".
- Pheasant farm
- The only threshold on the Dniester in Moldova (traditional place of water tourists, ancient oak, etc.) at the confluence with the Turunciuc arm
- Landscape area "Turkish Garden"
- Thematic excursions: "At Stefan Ciobanu's hometown", visit to the local peasantry, tastings at the local winery.

*Accommodation:* "Dumbrava" children's camp.

*Information:* The local museum at the Theoretical High School "Stefan Ciobanu", Green Museum.





*Harley-Davidson made of osier from trees growing on the Blind Dniester bank*



*The Dniester, village of Rascaieti*

### Village of Cioburciu

- Archaeological sites: Cioburciu 1 settlement (Oriniac culture of the Upper Paleolithic, about 30 thousand years ago); Cioburciu 2 settlement (Eastern Gravett culture of the Upper Paleolithic, about 18,000 years ago); Cioburciu 3 settlement (Belozerka culture, 11<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries BC); the settlement from "Rapa lui Albu".
- Stops in the Dniester meadow (*Unghiul Neagului, Ambrusu, Palanca, Potcoava, etc.*), *Padurea de la Deal, Lunca Stiubeiului, Altita, Arpintea, Dealul Pasa, Dragaica, Stanca, Adanaua, La Trei Fantani, Valea Targului, Radinegru, Noroceca, Locul Popii, Bahna-șes* and others.
- At the entrance to the village there is a natural geopaleontological monument, "Rapa lui Albu", and in the village can be seen old representative houses (Trifan Schiopu), old cellars (T. Chincheci, N. Chilian) and secular fountains (*Bulazir, Ciuntu, Chincheci, Cismeauului Zaharia*).

*Accommodation:* two guesthouses.

*Information:* Local school museum



*Morning on the Dniester*

### Village of Rascaieti

- Archaeological sites: Rascaieti 1 settlement (Cucuteni-Tripolie culture, Coțofeni-Usatovo culture, end of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC) at the eastern base of the valley between the old and new village; the Slavic settlement Rascaieti 2 (VIII-IX centuries) 2 km northwest of the school, on the bank of a stream; Rascaieti3 settlement (New-Sabatinovka culture, 14<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries BC), between the old and new village; rural settlement (late Bronze Age), east of the village of New Rascaieti, in the gorge.
- The centre of the village from 1560 with the Church "St. Gavril and Mihail" (1793/1850), built to replace the old one.
- The protected natural area to the east in the "Cioburciu de Munte" sector (*Dealul Serpilor*) with steppe vegetation, on the right bank, near the meander of the Dniester between Rascaietian and Purcari villages. Nearby you can visit picturesque landscapes (Twin valley, Bogdan hill, Stanca, Podul, Bordeiul) and three wells.

*Information:* Museum of the Homeland (1968, in the house of culture).



*The bridge that unites the 2 banks of the Dniester*

## Village of Purcari

- Archaeological sites: Purcari 1 settlement (Poienesti-Lucaseuca culture, 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC), at the south-western edge of the village, 50 m from the road to Rascaieti; the settlement of Purcari 2 (Basslkan-Danube culture, IX-XI centuries), southwest of the former sovkhos workers' home; Purcari 3 tumulus (late Cucuteni - Tripolie culture, late 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC).
- At the hearth of the medieval vineyards from 1560, with the church "The Ascension of the Lord" (1986) and with old houses located along the old Moldavian Road.
- Tasting of the most famous Moldovan wine, "Negru de Purcari", at the oldest winery in Bessarabia (1827). Created by a special decree in 1827 as the first specialized winery, named Ghermanson in honor of one of the founders. In the 19th century, the classic European grape varieties were brought to Purcari: Cabernet-Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir.
- Flora and fauna observations from the Dniester meadow (Bahna pond, Banghea, Carpana forest, old Caliana riverbed, Causu, Sernetea, Carmogea, Rusca or GarlaSatului) and the geopaleontological monument.

*Accommodation:* Hotel "Purcari Winery".

*Additional information:* Local Museum of Study of the native land.



Purcari Winery

## Village of Olanesti

- Archaeological sites: the treasure of the Temple of Artemis from Ephesus; rural settlement (Santana de Mures-Cerneahov culture, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) in the courtyard of the post office; Slavic rural settlement (VIII-XIX centuries) on the bank of the Dniester in the village.
- At the tap on the "Old Moldavian Road", at the old sheepfold (1410), where you can see old houses (Gorduza, Balac, Buhbinder), old cellars, mill, but also legendary places: The Dragon's Mound, "The Imperial Forest", Mine under the Dniester, etc.
- At the new church "St. Parascheva", erected in 1990 in the style of national romanticism on a place with a special history. In this place in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was a small church made of clay and twigs, covered with reeds, but which was destroyed by the Turks. The church was rebuilt also from clay, and just in the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was built from wood. In 1832 was made the stone church "St. Parascheva", but it was destroyed in 1973. It was also demolished during the Soviet period the great church "St. Constantin and Elena" (1912).
- Observations in nature: the Transnistrian natural lakes (*Baltoagele Halbagiului, Chioru, Gheorghiescu, Garlalui Minciuna, Japsa, Ochiul Marii*), old riverbeds and meanders of the river, pond flora and fauna (Togai natural swamp) on an area of about 800 ha, sophora trees (250-300 years old). Picturesque landscapes are captured in different parts of the village (Hodoba, Staniste, Taranei Valley, Arpentea, Joreanu, Tarama, Domuz-Bugeac, Ranea Scurta, Undul Miezului, Lingea Diaconu, salt springs, Sucher valley, Mihalcea hill, Halbagiu and Suhai rivers - tributaries of the Dniester).
- At the cannery can be seen vegetable processing technologies.

*Information:* The local museum at the High School "B.P. Hasdeu".



Pathway in the middle of the old Town, Olanesti

### Village of Crocmaz

- Archaeological sites: rural settlement Crocmaz 1 (Santana de Mures-Cerneahov culture, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries); the rural settlement Crocmaz 2 (Santana de Mures-Cerneahov culture, III-IV centuries) 1 km north of the village; the rural settlement Crocmaz 3 (Santana de Mures-Cerneahov culture, III-IV centuries) in the Obari area; Slavic settlement (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries) 3 km north of the village (between telegraph poles 82/44 and 81/44).
- At the hearth of a medieval village with old slums (potica, șaba, yurt) and the church "St. Nicolae" (built in 1992 on the place where in 1794 a church made of twigs and clay was erected, in the period 1887-1978 there was a stone church functioning, but destroyed during the Soviet period).
- Picturesque landscapes: in the Dniester pond with riparian lakes, natural areas protected by the state ("Togai Swamp" and the "Halbagiu Swamp" massif), natural monuments ("Padurea Imparateasca", Piridirea forest), the island between swamps ("Grindu"), the forested valleys lurt and Curudurea (Curudra), Valea Racșugea, the hills Cornul, Locul Popii, fountains (Maxinoaei, Chiurtu, Agusoaei, from Herdim, Flacailor);
- "Et Cetera" winery

*Accommodation:* "Winery Et Cetera" pension.

*Additional information:* Ethnographic Museum (inside the school), Green Museum, Ecaterina Malcoi Museum



*The reconconditioned Church in the downtown, village of Crocmaz*

### Village of Tudora

- Archaeological sites: Tudora 2 tumulus (Catofeni-Noua-Usatovo culture) 0.4 km west of the village in Valea Carnacari; the settlement of Tudora 3 (late Bronze Age, 14<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, Getic fortress from the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC) at the entrance to the village, on the steep promontory towards the Dniester; the settlement of Tudora 8 (Santana de Mures-Cerneahov culture, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries) to the south-west of the village, in the Baicozea Valley
- At the hearth of the village with the recently discovered fortress, old slums (Baibol, Moara, Sofia, Ciuleac, Ciuduc, Tiganilor, Maricica, Tambala, Surda, Casleanu) and the old church "St. Averchie" (built in 1866, on the site of the wooden church from 1808/1811)
- Geopaleontological monument "Rapa de Piatra"
- Tudora-Vin Winery

*Additional information:* "La bunici" Museum.



*The local cuisine tasted on the Dniester bank*

### Village of Palanca

- Archaeological sites: settlement (Sabatinovka-Coslogeni-Noua culture, XIV-XIII centuries BC) at the southern edge of the village, near the farm; the settlement of Palanca 1 with multiple cultural layers (Cotofeni-Usatovo culture, end of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, Santana de Mures-Cerneahov culture) at 30 m from the previous site, on the opposite bank of the valley; Palanca 2 settlement (Santana de Mures-Cerneahov culture) 2.5 km north of the village towards Tudora.
- At the "Iurghici Fortress" (the site of the former medieval fortress from 1447), where there is a hearth with old slums populated by Moldovans, Russians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians.
- The lake of the Romanian poet Ovidiu.
- The lowest place in Moldova (1.75 m below sea level), Aivazia

Accommodation: "Casa veche" (Old House) pension, local hotel.

Additional information: Local school museum. Customs with Ukraine.



*There is a reach fauna in the meadow of the Lower Dniester*

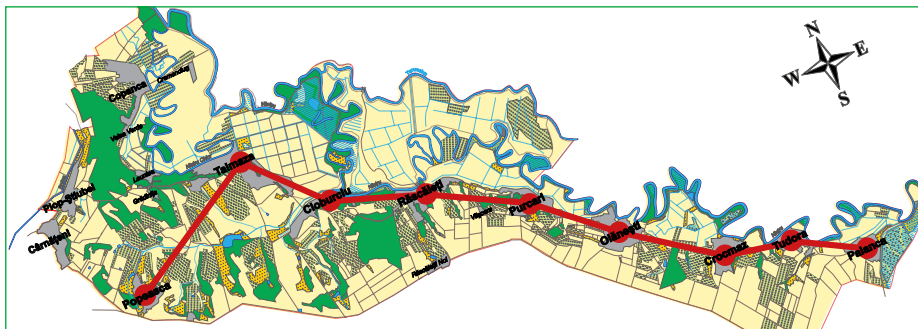


*The Quince tree near the "Casa veche" pension*



*The place where the Dniester flows into the estuary*

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> route map



### Route 3 (pedestrian and bicycle)

Route 3 includes only the localities near the "Blind Dniester" abbey: Talmază, Gradinîta, Leuntea, Valea Verde, Copanca.

It is a route that goes through the natural and anthropic attractions on different segments of the Dniester riverbed, partially covered with water.

#### Village of Talmază

- One of the first natural areas in Europe - "Turkish Garden", a real collection of rare nativespecies near the unique stables "Blind Dniester". Several streams flow in this area (Stanoste, Garla Cazona, Garla Cucului, Garla Satului, Adana, Bahna Cioroiului, Batlanita, Ezerul, Stiubeiul, Cruglic, Puica), bypassing the secular forest from Jidran and Unghiul Boului. Here are the thresholds of the Lower Dniester.
- Archaeological sites: the great Movila mound (early Bronze Age, end of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium to the Sarmatian period, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries); Mound "de la șleah"; The mound at the hail station; the Paleolithic resort "Știubei".
- Pheasant farm.

*Information:* The local museum at the Theoretical High School "Stefan Ciobanu", Green Museum.



The Dniester Meadow in the village of Talmază



Summer holidays on the Dniester

#### Village of Gradinîta

- The 19<sup>th</sup> century park with an old winery.
- Forest (759 ha).
- The new church "Acoperământul Maicii Domnului".
- On the bank of the Blind Dniester (at the former children's camp).



The old bed of the Dniester river



The Dniester: view from the height of a bird's eye



Flowers on the beach



Unpacking camping tents in the "Turkish Garden"

### Village of Leuntea

- At one of the oldest wineries in Bessarabia.
- In the former Austrian colony of Bessarabia (Mahalaua Catalapilor).
- Secular tree (300 years old) in the Turkish Garden.
- At the "Blind Dniester" ford (former children's camp).

### Village of Valea Verde

- At the "Blind Dniester" abbot
- The "Turkish Garden"



The rustic garden of the Gradinita Winery

### Village of Copanca

- Archaeological sites: Getic fortress (IV-III centuries BC) 0.5 km northwest of the village; fortress from the Roman period (II-IV centuries) in the Movila Lata area; Sarmatian tumulus (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries); The Wave of the Grevtungs; The Trajan's Wave (2<sup>nd</sup> century).
- The old centre of the village settled in 1429 (Zaharna estate) with the church "Assumption of the Virgin Mary" (1859).
- At the "Blind Dniester" and the meadow forest.



The Blind Dniester: preserved ecosystem from the 19<sup>th</sup> century

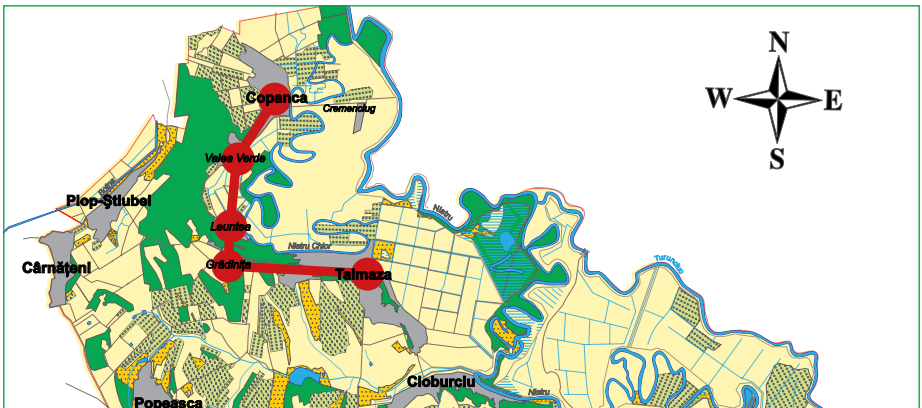


In the medieval period this was the way used by the sea ships



Willows on the Dniester

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> rout map



# Traditional events

## Calendar of large festivals in the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site

Name	Period	Place of venue
„În poiana dorului” - regional folklore festival	Jun	Popeasca
„Festivalul piersicului”	July	Tudora
„La casa cu neamuri multe” - the festival of the culture of national minorities	September	Talmaza

## Calendar of local events in the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site

The locality	The patron saint of the locality	Date
Cărnățeni	„St. Arch. Mihail”	21 <sup>st</sup> of November
Plop-Știubei	„St. Dumitru”	8 <sup>th</sup> of November
Grădinița	„Acoferământul Maicii Domnului”	14 <sup>th</sup> of October
Copanca	„Adormirea Maicii Domnului” (St. Mary)	28 <sup>th</sup> of August
Popeasca	„Acoferământul Maicii Domnului”	14 <sup>th</sup> of October
Talmaza	„Adormirea Maicii Domnului” (St. Mary)	28 <sup>th</sup> of August
Cioburciu	„St. Dumitru”	8 <sup>th</sup> of November
Răscăieți	„St. Archs. Gavriil and Mihail”	21 <sup>st</sup> of November
Purcari	„Înălțarea Domnului”	40 days after Easter
Olănești	„St. Cuv. Parascheva”	27 <sup>th</sup> of October
Crocmaș	„St. Nicolae”	22 <sup>nd</sup> of May
Tudora	„St. Averchie”	4 <sup>th</sup> of November
Palanca	„Nașterea Maicii Domnului”	21 <sup>st</sup> of September

## Environmental days

Event	Date
World Wetlands Day	February, 2
International Biodiversity Day	May, 22
Dniester Day	Last Sunday of May
World Environment Day	June, 5



Traditional masks used in the region of the Lower Dniester



This is how art is transmitted to future generation



# Folk craftsmen

## Folk craftsmen

The locality	Craftsmen
Cioburciu	Pavel Taran, Lidia Gorun (lotion braiding), Zahar Mihailov, Alexei Sălcuțan, Anatol Rusu, Association „Meșter-Faur”
Crocmaș	Elisei Taranenco (wood carving, furniture making, metal processing), Iulia Luchianov (clay processing, beaten glass, painting), Visarion Pascal (wickerwork), Ecaterina Burlac (traditional clothing making), Maria Lopată (clay making)
Olănești	T. Antoci (embroidery), S. Burdiugov (working with beads), V. Spinenco (lotion), Nadejda Sciur (lace, leather), Arcadii Culea, Nichita Adăscăliței, Sergiu Pavlicenco, Olga Curcan
Popeasca	Anton Port (wood carving), Pavel Cojocar
Purcari	Dumitru Damaschin and Galina Dolgoter (osier braiding), Maria Dicusar and Maria Ciubari (embroidery)
Răscăieți	Ion Cojocari (hardware)
Talmaza	Tatiana Pușcă (embroidery), Elizaveta Pronoza (braiding)
Tudora	Marina Chilian (knitting, crocheting, embroidery), Tatiana Barbăneagră (knitting, crocheting, embroidery, weaving, pottery), Marina Babei (knitting, crocheting, embroidery, weaving), Maria Cravenco (crocheting, embroidery), Mihai Gavriuc (osier braiding)



*Working hard before creating*



*Ethnic wear, Lower Dniester*



*Local motives on traditional towels*



*Wood sculpture, village of Copanca*



*Discovering advantages of a famous winery*



*A meadow nearby the Pension Tudora*



*Common rural landscape in the Lower Dniester Area*



*Reed Houses, village of Cioburciu*

# Content



<b>Welcome!</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>10 reasons to visit the Lower Dniester</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>About the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Tourist districts in the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>The emeralds of the necklace from the Lower Dniester</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Top 15 Attractions in the Lower Dniester Ramsar Site</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Remarkable ecotourism attractions</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Cultural heritage</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Lower Dniester records</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Tourist infrastructure</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Ecotourism routes</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Traditional events</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>Folk craftsmen</b> .....	<b>41</b>



This publication has been edited under the project *Ecosystem-based adaptation, climate-resilience measures and institutional development in the Lower Dniester Area* financed by the Austrian Development Agency within the Austrian Development Cooperation Program.

The Project is implemented by the ES BIOTICA and PA EcoContact, and is aimed at supporting the creation of the Lower Dniester National Park – a State Protected Natural Area – stimulating, as well, population's interest for the opportunities of development in the Area.

More details about the Ramsar wetland "Lower Dniester" are available on the dedicated website [www.lower-dniester.org](http://www.lower-dniester.org)



Chisinau, MD 2012, 27/1 Vlaicu Pircalab Street  
Tel.: (+373 22) 99 61 62  
E-mail: [office@ecocontact.md](mailto:office@ecocontact.md)  
[www.ecocontact.md](http://www.ecocontact.md)

We are also on the social media::



**BIOTICA**  
Ecological Society

Ecological Society  
Chisinau, MD 2068, 17/4 Nicolae Dimo Street  
Tel.: (+373 22) 49 88 37  
E-mail: [biotica.md@gmail.com](mailto:biotica.md@gmail.com)  
[www.bioticamoldova.org](http://www.bioticamoldova.org)

