

MONTENEGRO



THE **MISTERY** OF **ACCURSED** **MOUNTAINS**



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STORY ABOUT THE NAME

Here, everything is a fairy tale. Starting from the name.

Yes, they have a terrible name, to make you immediately shiver and give you chills. But don't worry, they are not dark, dormant, petrified, when you are in them you will not turn into some other beings.

Only with a curse (legend, fairy tale) could man explain everything he saw and experienced in the Accursed Mountains, living on them and with them since the most ancient, prehistoric days. Or traveling, searching for passages in a labyrinth of peaks above two thousand meters, windy passes, stunning valleys, elegant gorges and strange canyons, lush meadows and dense forests full of the sweetest water sources - towards the Adriatic Sea, or towards the Metohija plain. Traveling, as well as living with the Damned, was by no means easy. They were full of conflicts: mountains and people, people with each other, with internal conflicts.

Psychologists say that curse in fairy tales has the task of telling us how to wait for the conflict to be resolved. It doesn't matter how much we should wait.

In the 21st Century, human life in the Accursed Mountains is so much easier. The Internet has covered (or discovered) the entire labyrinth. The huts on the katuns are covered by solar panels. Shepherds and blueberry pickers make arrangement via Viber, they no longer need to shout. Finally, secret beauty of the Accursed Mountains are available to the whole world, to travellers of all types.

The course has disappeared. What remained is the name, to tell tales about it. The fairy tale has remained.

Mokra gora and Suva planina, forest and water villas, giants and magic beans, lake of happiness, healing springs, fantastic fogs where everything is possible, icy blizzards and avalanches, rains that connect the sky and the earth, intricate caravan roads, wonderful trees, good and evil peaks, a river with four names, mysterious passages, caves full of treasures, phoenix churches, huge fish, little dragons, stars that can be picked ...

Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo are proud of the Accursed Mountains. They do as much as they can to protect, explore and present them. Since, after all, the Accursed Mountains are miracle of nature, no matter how diverse it is, and joint work like this one – the Best of Prokletije - is the most natural one.

And, to repeat, don't you worry. Fairies and wizards from the Accursed Mountains may have extraordinary powers and exquisite imagination, but they are witty and good-natured. They look forward to guests as much as the hosts in the villages, towns and katuns. Your excitement gives meaning to their creativity.

Enjoy the Accursed Mountains, with all your senses!

NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

Relief of the Accursed Mountains was shaped by numerous glaciers, engraving their last messages, sliding along the riverbeds, melting, and swelling. The largest glaciers moved through valleys of Vrmoša and Grnčar, and the most powerful was the Plav glacier: 35 kilometres long. Thickness of the ice was 200 meters! But that glacier, as well, has evaporated. What remained are cirques, waves, rocks. Serrated ridges. Like an arrow a smooth upward-pointing stone.

Fairy tale valleys have remained. Unique sources. Noisy streams and mighty rivers. Enchanted lakes. Grass carpets, leaf carpets. Ancient forests. Incredibly opulent and authentic flora and fauna.



NATIONAL PARK

Prokletije National Park is located on the territory of the municipalities of Plav and Gusinje. It is located along the border with Albania, from Trojan in the southwest to Starac in the northeast, at a length of 28 km.

The central part of the National Park consists of areas above 1,200 m above sea level, where traces of glacial and karst processes are visible: Volušnica, Karanfil, Bjelič and Bogičevica. In addition to numerous peaks above 2,000 m, within the park are the three highest peaks of Montenegro.

There are as many as 9 glacial lakes in the park, some of which are occasional. 42 globally important species of plants and animals have been registered, which places the park in one of the six centres of European and one of 158 centres of world biodiversity. It is one of the most important centres of bird biodiversity, vascular flora and mammal bio-centres.



GUSINJE VALLEYS

Ropjana

Through the valley of Ropjana and the territory of the National Park, you can reach the emerald Ropjana Lake, on the border with Albania. It is 12 kilometres away from Gusinje. True, in summer the lake often dries up, but when it is there, visible just like the high and sharp peaks of Karanfil, the magic is complete. One forgets to breathe.

Grebaja

Grebaja valley is even closer to Gusinje, and certainly more accessible. The famous three meadows will lead you towards the huge, rocky wall that looks as if it protects these meadows from winds and influence from the other side of the wall. Looks quite surreal, the friendly meadows and tall, rocky mountains around, a stark contrast to each other.



Ropjana Valley



PEAKS AND DOORS

They have been playing the “catch the cloud” game for millions of years. Exactly a thousand times smaller than them, one looks at them with fear and admiration.

In the glacial relief, the peaks stand out: Lipovica, 1882 m, Trojan 1190 m, Popadija 2057, Volušnica 1879 m, and Karaula 1915 m. Then there is a three-fingered massif – Kranfil. Sjeverni vrh is 2490 m high, Kremeni vrh 2490 m, southern peak - Zlovrh 2441 m. Kranfil Ljuljaševića is 2240 m. We come to the throne, the winning trio, the highest peaks in Montenegro are right here. In third place is Maja Rosit on Bjelič - 2525 m. The second and first belong to Maja Kolata: Dobra Kolata, with 2528 m, Zla Kolata wins by far - 2534 m. Maja Bor, Maja Šćapica, Krš Bogičevica also have over two thousand meters.

Montenegrin-Albanian border stretches over tops of the Plav-Gusinje Accursed Mountains. It is also the border of the basin, that is, the watershed of the Adriatic (sources of the Drim tributaries) and the Black Sea basin (the source of the Lim).

There are also three natural gates in the Accursed Mountains: the first one in the canopy of Kranfil, the second one in the valley of Ropojana leading to the plains of the Albanian Valbona, and the third one is the imposing gate of the Trojan (three peaks), at 1820 meters.



Accursed Mountains



WATERS

What kind of magic are water fairies from the Accursed Mountains, what kind of labyrinths and miracles !!!

Those are sources of drinking water which erupt in all directions (for example, in village Velika there are as many as 114 of them), and not only individually but also in crowds, in waves (Ali-Pasha's Springs). Some are so deep that their bottom cannot be measured, and they change colour like a chameleon (Oko Skakavice is sometimes as blue as a sapphire). Sometimes the water at the spring is so cold that it will make your teeth go numb, and sometimes it is sweetly sparkling and hidden by leaves. Some torrents from 2000 meters just fall into the Lim (Bijeli potok). Some rivers are wide and flat, and are a bit bored so they wind (the Ljuca), others are suddenly squeezed by the throat and fall into the ground (the Grlja).

What interesting fairy secrets are kept by glacial lakes (Hridsko, Visitorsko, Ropojansko, Tatarijsko, Bjelajsko, small lake on Vezirova brada, small lake on Treskavac, Koljindarsko) and mountain ponds, no one knows.

And the fish? Fish have such a sweet life in the waters of the Accursed Mountains that they reach the maximum possible size!



LAKE PLAV

The steep waters of the Accursed Mountains calm down in the lake, swaying under the fast mountain clouds that mix their colours and making olive pastel, and storm blue oil from the thinnest blue watercolour. In this sea of peace interwoven with a cheerful play of light and water currents, reflections, soul of occasional travellers calms down as well.

Lake Plav was formed at the end of the ice age. Under the watchful eye of Visitor, it is tucked away in woods and green meadows, at about 900 meters above sea level.

It is about three kilometres long, two wide, and its maximum depth is nine meters. In winter, the lake is frozen. The largest glacial lake in Montenegro gets clear and very cold water from the river Ljuča, 16 kilometres long, which originates from Vruja and Grnčar, as well as from underwater springs.

For lovers of water sports, this is part of an ideal whole: tributary of the Ljuča, Lake Plav, tributary of the Lim. Swimming, sailing, kayaking, rafting. Then fishing: today there are huches, trout, pike, chub, scorpionfish and barbel in the lake. It is also possible to hunt feathered game, such as coots, grebes, ducks, and mallards.

There is a popular belief that the water of Lake Plav also has healing characteristics.

There are various legends about the origin of the lake.



Plav from the top of Visitor



Lake Plav



Plav i lake Plav

LAKE HRID

When the ice age ended (because every trouble ends someday) and flowers and trees sprouted from the seeds again, the power on the Accursed Mountains belonged equally to the queen of peaks Morena and the forest king Dobrosav. Since then, six months a year the Queen of Peaks Morena with a company of cold winds decides on snow and fog, blizzards and snow covers. It is unpredictable and changeable, difficult in nature, but there are also bright moments. For the remaining six months, from May to November, the good forest king Dobrosav rejoices with fairies and birds, enjoys listening and painting. The beauty of his noble artistic soul is Lake Hrid.

At 1970 meters above sea level, it is in love with the sky, the sun and the universe. Protected by rocks and trees like eyelashes, lots of lively newts, it is smiling and is happy, so it is quite logical that the man felt that it has also brought him health and happiness. He even believed that a lake for a piece of jewellery, and it fulfils love wishes, so occasionally lovers of necklaces and rings crawled along its bottom. In any case, like any artistic soul, the lake stimulated the imagination and the emergence of legends.

It is worth every effort to reach Lake Hrid (Rid), for many the most beautiful lake in Montenegro. A walk along the perimeter in search of the footsteps of fairies, the touch of a tree that was greeted by a lightning strike, socializing with newts, swimming ... or just a rest on the grass – it is both a reward and a blessing.



Lake Hrid



Lake Hrid



Lake Hrid



Lake Tatarija



Lake Visitor

OKO SKAKAVICE

One of the strongest springs in Prokletije is Oko Skakavice. It is a place where a strange river is born from the snows and depths, which constantly conceals its identity by changing its direction and way of movement, as well as its name.

The karst spring hidden by trees is located 2.5 km upstream from Grlja waterfall, at 1000 meters above sea level. Spring is its time, but it can happen that even in the middle of July, when there is usually a green eye with a calm blue pupil, it is incredibly blue and agitated, and so cold that one cannot stand in the water for more than ten seconds.



ALI-PASHA'S SPRINGS

The largest permanent karst spring in Montenegro is located only a kilometre from Gusinje, accessible, in the plain, as in the palm of your hand. Another proof that, although they are Accursed Mountains, they are not selfish and want to show what they have, they share their beauty and treasure.

For many, the symbol of Gusinje is also a symbol of life. Ali Pasha's Springs erupt at more than 300 square meters, at 925 meters above sea level. They never dry out, and in the spring they are, of course, most abundant. Then the water spills widely and flows towards the river Vruja.

This is a well-known picnic spot. People come not only to see water erupting from the base of the Vezirova brada, a hundred meters wide, the temperature of which is always around zero. They come to drink excellent water, to wash themselves, to absorb the wonderful energy of the spring.

Every year, on August 2, several thousand people gather at Ali Pasha's Springs. Mostly those who left this area and went to the world in search of a better life. On that day, right next to the spring, young people meet or make the decision to get married. They inherited merchants who, long ago, on the way from Dubrovnik to Istanbul, had an important resting place here where they made deals and arranged trades.



Ali-pasha's Springs

THE LIM

The Lim on one, and the Drim on the other side. They even rhyme, although they travel and carry away the Accursed Mountains' streams and creeks in two different directions. Those carried by the Lim end up in the Black, and the other carried by the Drim in the Blue Sea, the Adriatic.

Both the Lim and the Drim probably got their names long before the arrival of the Slavs, because both rivers have always been extremely important for human life.

The Lim flows as long as 219 kilometres to the mouth of the Drina, built by his sisters the Tara and the Piva. 20 to 30 meters wide, it is the deepest, the fastest and most powerful in May. In the spring ecstasy, it picks up and carries all the mighty power of ice springs, swollen from melted snow and rain.

Trout, grayling and huchen love the Lim rapids and unexpected silences, latent power.



The Lim

FLORA

A deep bow in front of this golden-green temple. A European treasury of plants. The Accursed Mountains are home to almost two thousand species of vascular flora, so - for half of the flora of Montenegro. More than a hundred Balkan endemics! They are also mildly endemic, relict, rare, medicinal, honey plants.

The long list also includes munika, molika, mountain maple, yew, broad-leaved bellflower, *Draba bertiscea*, *Pedicularis ernesti-mayer*, *Hieracium bertisceum*, blueberry, *Wulfenia blecicii*. Many could be a symbol of the Accursed Mountains, but the blueberry has deserved to become its symbol.

Let's not forget the mushrooms. Among the edible mushrooms, there are mostly boletus and chanterelles, parasol mushroom, blusher. They are not an integral part of cuisine in the Accursed Mountains villages, probably due to the fear of the locals of poisonous animals and ignorance, but the collection of boletus and chanterelles is nowadays important source of their income.



BOTANIC GARDEN VELEMUN

In Brezovce, in the botanical garden of Mičo Prašević, even a traveller who does not have time to cruise the Accursed Mountains can see a part of its treasure.

The garden has been in the making for years. As a professor of biology, Mičo wanted to show students the plants he taught them about. He brought them in a backpack from his mountaineering cruises and thus a treasury of several hundred different plants was created, many of which are endemic. Special, accursed stories.

For example, Blečić's wulfenia - *wulfenia blecicii* - is endemic plant of the Accursed Mountains and protected plant species. It thrives on limestone and silicate terrains and is a very beautiful species. Then there is valeriana, *aster alpinus*, *gentiana cochiana*, *poentilia montenegrina*, snow white edelweiss...

BLUEBERRY

Blueberry was invented by the forest king Dobrosav - for consolation and help to people. To have the strength and will to cope with the powers and deeds of Morena, the queen of the peaks. That's why he scattered it everywhere, added a little more sugar, and that's why there is a lot of it in the Accursed Mountains, and it's sweeter and tastier and healthier than any other in the world. This is confirmed by scientific analyses, comparison with the Central European and American blueberries.

Blueberries are both food and medicine. Its healing properties have been known since ancient times. Fresh, dry, processed like juice, restores strength, speeds up recovery. It is an unusual antibiotic that prevents bacteria from attaching to the mucous membrane. It improves visual acuity, lowers blood pressure and does many other useful and good things.

Harvesting blueberries can be nice way to make profit. Experienced pickers know to find it going even above 2000 meters above sea level. It is protected from low temperatures in winter by thick snow. In autumn, its leaf has a fantastic red colour from which the blueberries ignite and with the surrounding spruce and fir forests and morning mists build beautiful landscapes.



DAYS OF BLUEBERRIES

The culture and tradition of the people who live at the foot and on the slopes of the Accursed Mountains can be best known at the Blueberry Days event. A rich program takes place throughout July. The most attractive events are the blueberry harvest, the selection of the Miss Blueberry, and open-air concerts. In between, there is an agricultural fair, theatre performances, exhibitions of paintings and book promotions, sports games. The guests are especially interested in the promotion of local cuisine specialties, blueberry and other forest fruit treats.

Blueberry days are a manifestation of incredible colour. The elegant blue colour of the berry of health, the queen of festivities, on the lush green grass, under the bright blue sky rubbed with fierce lightning, washed by heavy snows and dews, stands out even more in the colourful folk costumes and scarves of cheerful pickers.

FAUNA

The fauna of the Accursed Mountains is very diverse: wolf, brown bear, lynx, wild boar, chamois and roe deer, forest shrew, alpine shrew, bats, rabbit. Endemic and relict forms of amphibians. About 60 species endemic insects, 130 species of diurnal butterflies. As many as 160 species of birds. Lake Plav has indigenous fish species. Bogićevica Mountain is the only habitat of the black salamander in Montenegro.

Birds

Wherever you are, you will hear them, and probably see them. You may also be awakened by song of a tit or a strong beak of a woodpecker. An eagle couple circling freely above the valley; crickets are always in the group, and blackbird stops by as well. In addition to jackdaws and magpies, position at the top of a flagpole will be occupied by a raven. It is easy to recognize a mournful cuckoo and a forest pigeon, but how to recognize small songbirds with red, yellow and grey bellies, hidden and fast, faster than eyes and cameras...

Let's not forget wild duck, grey partridge, grouse, hawk ... it's clear, the birds adore the Accursed Mountains. Forests, meadows, orchards, willows, lakes, are full of nests.



PLAV

At the foot of the Accursed Mountains, along the shores of Lake Plav, the small medieval village of Ribare, first mentioned in 1235 within the parish of Plav, has developed into a town during the Turkish rule. Traces of Illyrian, Greek and Roman heritage are not easy to spot today, and the oriental influence was strong and long (from the 16th Century to 1912), because Plav was located at the intersection of the caravan roads Kotor-Metohija and Polimlje-Shkodra.

Today, Plav is a meeting place for mountaineers and explorers of the Accursed Mountains. Apart from mosques and narrow streets, towers also contribute to the oriental charm of the town. The towers were used as a living space, but they were also used to defend against attackers.



GUSINJE

One anecdote best illustrates the difference between the inhabitants of Plav and Gusinje, but not between those two, not mutually too distant, towns of the Accursed Mountains. When asked where he was, a person from Gusinje responded: - There, to Peja, and a person from Plav responded: - There, all the way Peja!

Unlike the lively Plav (especially on Fridays, when it is market day), calm and in vicinity of the soothing width of the lake, Gusinje is surrounded by miraculous springs, streams and rivers whose flows influenced the heartbeat of its inhabitants, invited them to movement and travel, prepared them for risks and temptations, and have strengthened them. Without a doubt, they were encouraged by the powerful peaks they are surrounded by, in eternal aspiration upwards. But there is something else, the 'passenger' spirit of the place: in the Middle Ages, but also much earlier, Gusinje was an important station on the caravan route that connected the Adriatic coast and distant Constantinople.

Although eternal travellers, the people of Gusinje are the guardians of tradition. In addition to modern houses, for which projects have been made around the world, in the town one can see mosques, bazaars and alleys, towers, as well as Orthodox and Catholic churches, but also hear interesting stories from the long and turbulent past of this place.



VILLAGES

As the Accursed Mountains are vast mountains, so are the villages. Some are so large that they have at least two climates: while at the bottom of the village, next to the river, fruit blooms, at the other end of the white thick layers of snow and ploughing and sowing is not even considered.

Living conditions in villages today cannot be compared to conditions a hundred or more years ago. But much has remained the same. Despite the roads, electricity and tractors, there is still a lot of work for the horses. Plenty of wood and hay still needs to be provided for the long winter. And food.

So, if you are a guest in a household, join that hard-working family in planting fruits and vegetables, mowing, harvesting raspberries, strawberries and blueberries, wild apples and cherries, picking mushrooms, making brandy, jams and juices... Learn to milk a cow, make cheese. There is always something to do in the village, for all generations.

Traditional rural architecture is still preserved. Stone, wood, auxiliary objects made of small round wood or reeds, orchards and gardens, are pleasing to the eye and soul. Like crowing of roosters or slow movement of a flock of sheep. As well as morning coffee on the table under the apple with a magnificent view of the peaks and valleys of the Accursed Mountains.



KATUNS

Summer life in a hut and on the pastures high on the mountain has been the same for centuries - diligent and cheerful, full of scents. Nowadays tourists can feel it directly, to get involved in mowing and keeping the herd, in collecting wood or preparing cheese and cheese cream, picking blueberries, raspberries, wild strawberries, teas.

Hot bread and soft white cheese from a vat in the mountain air becomes the sweetest food they have ever tasted. When refreshed by cold spring water, the freshness in the hut will entice them into dreams, sweet and lush as milk foam, full of the smell of resin and kindling woods, and all sorts of herbs.

In no other place guests are better and more welcomed than in katun. Far away from settlement, in vastness of grass and forest, in cosmic silence, on a runway for sudden summer showers and thunder, man is to a man truly - pure joy.

The Katun road connected katuns in the border zone of Montenegro and Kosovo, so this route is perhaps the best way to experience the authentic life of shepherds and mountaineers of the Accursed Mountains. Don't forget, high altitude and katun super food are a recipe for a 'steel' health.





Vujov katun, Čakov



Katuns, Hrid

CULTURAL HERITAGE

This area has been inhabited from ancient times. This is evidenced by numerous sites, petroglyphs, forts, cemeteries, traditional architecture, churches, mosques, beliefs, customs, ethnological motifs, costumes, folklore. The remains of the first settlements date from the Palaeolithic, Copper and Bronze Ages. The Old Mosque from the 15th Century and the Redžepagić Tower in Plav were declared cultural monuments, in the village of Brezje the church dedicated to St. Trojica from the 12th Century and the school building, and in Gusinje the Vizier's mosque from the 18th Century, the Balić tower and the church of St. George.

Tribes, empires, armies took turns. Cultures, customs, beliefs permeated. Caravans always passed. Traces of Illyrian, Greek and Roman heritage are not easy to spot. Oriental charm lasts in the cities, in Gusinje, Plav, Rožaje. And hospitality. The intertwining of peoples, languages and religions makes the Accursed Mountains even more interesting.



THE SECRET OF THE GREAT MOTHER

For many, it's just a rock. For the people "colourful stone". Mountaineers who rush next to it towards Volušnica barely notice the drawing (comic) on the rock. Although, miraculously, it lies in its place at the foot of Popadija, at 1,790 meters above sea level, since the Bronze Age, no fence or board indicates how valuable and significant it is.

- Is this a unique presentation of the Great Mother in pre-historic art in the Balkans - it certainly is - says archaeologist Miloš Petričević, who today studies the 'stone from grebaja' using the most modern techniques. His research shows that not all depictions on stone were created at the same time. Some were 'drawn' (by different techniques and means) after a long period of time.

However, the presentation of the mother, children, dog and a dancer are extremely old and were probably created at the same time, says archaeologist Petričević. What exactly do these figures show and mean - we will have to wait to find out. It is clear that a dog is a dog, not a wolf as it was thought, but what is the role of a dancer, what do children actually do?! Drawings on stone can mean 'all or nothing special', a family photo or a magical ritual or ... It is only certain that the mother from the Accursed Mountains, like any mother, has certainly always been a Great one.



REDŽEPAGIĆ TOWER

The Redžepagić Tower is the endowment of Hasan-beg Redžepagić from 1671. According to some sources, it was built by his ancestor in the 15th Century, to defend against attacks by Albanian tribes.

The stone building with a square base has three floors, the last of which is made of wood. In the stone part, in the walls up to one meter thick, loopholes are carved. The ground floor was intended for accommodation of horses and goods, and the daily life of the household was organized on upper floors. The wooden balconies of the tower give it a special charm. As a cultural monument, it is under the protection of the state and today it houses an ethnographic collection.



THE OLD MOSQUE

Representative buildings of oriental style originate from the period of Turkish rule over Gornje Polimlje area: the Old Mosque (Plav), the Vizier's Mosque in Gusinje and the Mosque in Petnjica.

The wooden minaret of the Old Mosque is a recognizable motif of Plav. At the place where it was built in 1471 used to be walls of the old Dizdar town, from which there was a great view of Lake Plav and the mountain ranges. We can enjoy this view even today near the well in the courtyard of the Old or Asker Mosque, because it was made for Turkish soldiers - askers. It was originally all made of wood, so it was also called Wooden. Even after several reconstructions, its original architecture, woodcuts and arabesques have been preserved.

Both interior of the mosque, shady surroundings, and gentle breeze that hangs around the well and small flowers, warmth of the wooden roof, transport visitors to another world, at time of encounter of a tired Ottoman soldier with a frowning view of Visitor under snow and bright green grass lakes, juicy and soft, which calls to plunge into it and sink into a deep, deepest sleep.



HOLY TRINITY MONASTERY

The Holy Trinity Monastery, the spiritual centre of Orthodoxy in the part of the Accursed Mountains that belongs to Montenegro, is located in Brezjevice near Plav, at the confluence of the Komorača River and the Lim. It was built in the 13th Century, probably on the basis of an older temple. According to the legend, it was built 30 years before Visoki Dečani, and according to the records on the monastery, we learn that it was built or renovated by the priest monk Nestor Dečanski and his brothers in 1567, when the Plav parish was under Turkish rule. It is believed that the monastery with the atriums of the surrounding villages of Meteh and Prnjavor was the property of the Dečani Monastery or the Peć Patriarchy.

Church of St. Trinity, a single-nave stone temple, belongs to the Byzantine style and is reminiscent of coastal churches. It has been burned several times over the centuries, so, unfortunately, only slight traces of the frescoes remain.

It has burned, was without a roof and without prayer for a long time, abandoned, but rose from ashes, to be our bridge today through the world and Balkan wars, uprisings and defeats, until the 13th and 14th Centuries, a brilliant period of the medieval Serbian state, when numerous churches and monasteries were built in the Lim Valley, the most beautiful books were written and transcribed, and skill of fresco painting was perfected. It was and remains a gathering centre for inhabitants of this area.

CUISINE

Plenty of water, fertile land, rich pastures on the heights and warm Mediterranean current, as well as the diligent hands of the hosts, are responsible for the excellent mountain cuisine from the Accursed Mountains.

At the Accursed Mountains anything grows and everything is extremely tasty. Maybe, when the forest king Dobrosav sprinkled blueberries, the sugar fell on the fields in the villages and on little gardens in katuns, so everything that grows in them is sweet and delicious. By the way, it is interesting that the best carrot in Montenegro is grown on the sandy shore of the Grnčar, not far from the border. Then, corn especially likes the proximity of the Lim. The cheese is just as good, in any part of the Accursed Mountains, primarily because of the great grass that grows everywhere.

Homemade wood-fired bread with cheese and cream, corn bread or corn bread with cheese and greens, or polenta, with thick and light cloud-like homemade yoghurt, are simple dishes of the Accursed Mountains cuisine, old-fashioned, traditional, and in fact top notch specialties. But, spice of the Accursed Mountains gives it a special flavour: air with scent of conifers or medicinal herbs, as well as mountain crystal in the form of spring water.

That water is also the key ingredient for pickled vegetables and sauerkraut. Also, it has its role in making brandy as well. Pear brandy is the best, but that is a matter of taste. Housewives usually serve slices of young cheese with brandy.

Speaking of fruit, for a sweet winter food (jams, juices, sweets) the Accursed Mountains offers plums, apples, cherries, cornelian cherries, dogwood, wild cherries, wild strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, and more recently chokeberries. All this goes well with walnuts and hazelnuts in homemade egg cakes.

The contribution of oriental cuisine is most visible in deserts. The mountaineers are hard-working women who have a lot of responsibilities around cattle, home and garden, children, especially during the summer when they are on the katum, so their pastries from the rest of the bread dough were breakfast and cake, and sponge cake, which takes a long time to whip it by hand, a lots of eggs, more than for a cake. Over time, they accepted the recipes of the townswomen, so today you can treat yourself to baklava and urmašica (syrup drained pastry), raspberry cake and other delicacies in the whitewashed houses from which smoke often wafts during the summer.





Hačajlija



Flija

RECREATION AND ADVENTURE

The Accursed Mountains, despite the name suggesting otherwise, are very accessible. Asphalt or macadam roads, paths and trails, it is easy to reach all places where one seeks rest, relaxation, deviation from everything that threatens one's peace, or regeneration of mind and body, through more or less effort, or first-class adventure, confrontation with fierce challenges, temptations, and dangers.

Our wizard is hospitable, generous and generous. He has prepared everything that is needed for - unforgettable moments, the deepest experiences, admiration, and essential change.

Numerous advantages of 'bathing in forest air' have been scientifically proven. It is a part of forest medicine, very popular in Japan, or in short - a walk in the woods. In addition to reducing stress, staying in the forest and inhaling phytoncides, essential oil of forest trees, it strengthens immunity, improves mood, ability to focus, accelerates recovery after illness, increases energy levels and improves sleep.

Coniferous forests are especially beneficial, and there are not only many of them in the Accursed Mountains, but there are also very old and special ones. As there are very old and special trees, giants, like the 700-year-old munica that lives in the inaccessible rocks of Trojan. Its circumference is as much as six meters!



Lipovica



Trail to Maja Jezerce

HIKING

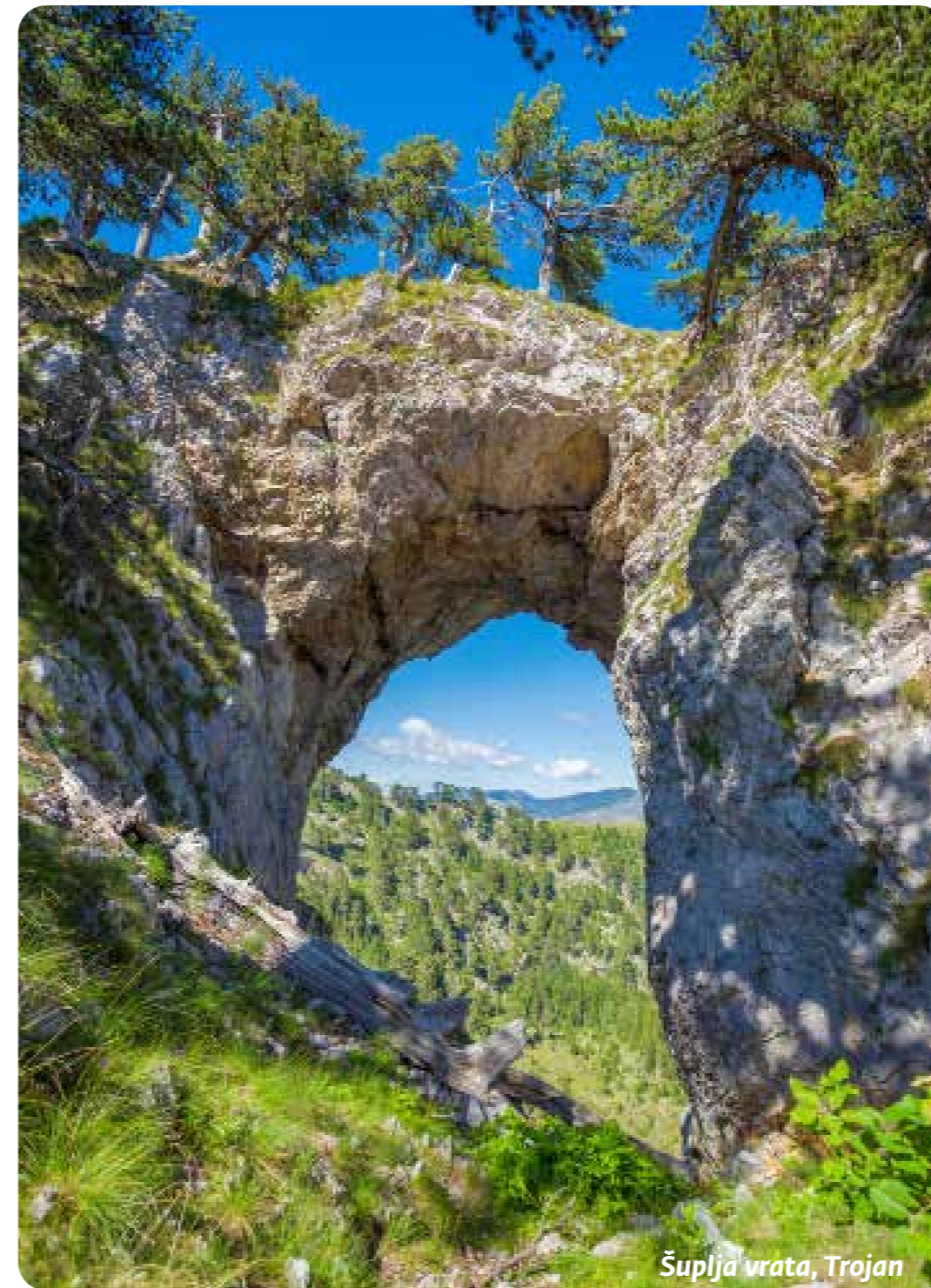
The Grebaja Valley is a hiking centre in the Plav-Gusinje Accursed Mountains. From here one ventures to daily or multi-day tours and adventures. But the valley is so beautiful and picturesque that it is a perfect choice for a trip, a picnic and an easy walk.

Among the numerous trails, the following stand out: Volušnica – Trojan; the trail passes by the special reserve Volušnica, to the lookouts Volušnica and Grbaj, the slopes of Popadija and Talijanka, next to the waterfalls and prehistoric drawings on the rocks near Čata and the Trojaska vrata. Bogičevica - Krš Bogičevica; the trail leads through the forest, over meadows, Hridski stanovi and Bajrovići katun.

Trails also lead through the legends of the fairies. Fairies were believed to be born from flowers. And dew. And rainbow. They have their sources. Their lakes. Their threshing floor, hidden, on which they play in circles. Their power is in their wings. And in long dresses. They used to be the cousins of the heroes, because the mountains were the home of the heroes. They even fell in love with them, gave up their magical powers for love...

Lately, hikers are showing lots of interest for Hajla. Hajla is made of both limestone and volcanic silicates, which is why its relief is varied. Visitors can expect rocky ridges, passes, bays, valleys, plateaus, grassy slopes, forests, streams...

Hajla also has 'its' tree: molika, an endemic pine, broad, 'scattered' canopy. Endemic species are also 'Ibrisim' carnation (*Dianthus superbus*), white-leaved, snowy edelweiss (*Leontopodium nivale*). Hajla is full of scents too. Not only grasses where lynx, hellebore, apple, yarrow, wolf's bane also compete, but also juniper bushes, black and white pine forests, pine curves, fir, spruce, birch.



BIKING

Bikers really have a great choice. National and regional trails include the Accursed Mountains, and there are trails in the national park and numerous local variants. In the area of Plav you can choose: Memina Mountain, Lake Hrid, Gusinje, Kofiljača, Grnčar, Grebaja valley, Lake Visitor... Biking routes go next to villages and katuns, across meadows, valleys, near springs and small rivers.

Katun road 'Granični visovi' is a special attraction. Not only did it 'open up' less known areas of Čakor and Mokra, but it has also enabled us to get to know the world of katun, to peek into life of cattle breeders in the high mountains, which has not changed for centuries. The Katun trail rewards bikers with beautiful views, landscapes that mountaineers rarely visit, cordial hosts, excellent spring water and local specialties, in a nutshell - a unique experience.



FLY FISHING

Lake Plav with its tributary the Ljuča and the distributary Lim is the perfect place for fishermen who want to make their dreams come true.

Why? Because in these waters, fish 'reach their genetic maxima'. For example, huchens have up to 41 kg, grayling from 2.5 kg, pike used to be caught weighing up to 20 kg. Common nase weighs over 2 kg, chub up to 6 kg.

The Ljuča River originates from the Vruja and Grnčar. The Vruja River, which consists of Ali Pasha's springs and the Grlja River, is the largest natural hatchery for 'mud' trout - endemic species and brown trout. It can weigh up to 10 kg, but is usually caught from 3 to 6 kg.

When it comes to techniques, it's all just a matter of choice. Still, fly fishing is becoming increasingly popular. The fly fishing zone in Plav has one of the best and most diverse offers in Montenegro, and tourists are equally attracted by the terrains of the fly fishing zone on the Lim.



RAFTING AND KAYAKING

Rafting at the foot of the Accursed Mountains does not have a long tradition, but that does not mean that it will not have it. Because the Lim is a mighty mountain river full of surprises.

The most exciting part of the Lim for rafting is from Plav to Murino (13 km). For raft boats it is navigable in the spring and at slightly higher water levels, and for smaller boats, canoes and kayaks during the summer.

The first kilometre of the river, which is actually distributary of Lake Plav, is just a start. From the mouth of the right tributary of the Komarača, there are numerous smaller and larger waterfalls of different classes and difficulty.

The part between Murino and Andrijevića (16 km) is a little bit “easier”, but one should be careful here as well. Like the Accursed Mountains that gave birth to it, the Lim is unpredictable and can be a big challenge for skippers’ concentration, especially at high water levels.

If you are more for peaceful rowing in a kayak or boat, indulge in the play of sun and fast clouds in the reflection of the mountains on the surface of Lake Plav.

If you prefer peaceful rowing in a kayak or boat, indulge in the play of sun and fast clouds in the reflection of the mountains on the surface of Lake Plav.

The most important event for rafters is the Lim Regatta. It is usually held in late May and early June, when the water level is high.



CANYONING

A synonym for canyoning in Montenegro is Nevidio, but an even bigger (coldest and darkest) challenge for fans of extreme experiences is the Grlja canyon. Somehow it is quite logical, isn't it, that the most demanding canyon in Montenegro is located in the Accursed Mountains, the realm of frightening verticals, both visible and invisible.

Only last year, the first commercial tour was organized and recorded, and now we can all peek into Grlja's secret, miraculous stone-cutting work, and the bravest ones can also face it. The "perfect adventure" begins with a jump into the first pool from a height of 15 meters. The water temperature in the canyon, which is about 500 meters long, is between 3 and 5 degrees. In some parts of the water, Grlja breaks through the rocks in complete darkness.



Grlja

FREE CLIMBING

There are only few easy and short routes on the rocks of the Accursed Mountains, they are there for 'traditional' climbers. But now there are also sports climbing areas. In the Ropojana and Grbaja valleys, south of Gusinje, 65 routes in six sectors have been equipped. Most of them are at Ali Pasha's springs, and the most visited is the Đerani sector. The climbing season is from April to November. The different orientation of the sector allows climbing even in the hottest summer days.

Another destination is located a few kilometres from Rožaje. The rock is right next to the river and it is equipped with 6 routes, with medium difficulty.



SPELEOLOGY

Caves in the Accursed Mountains are poorly explored. This does not mean that there are few of them or that they are uninteresting. They simply did not get their turn. There are many different speleological objects in these mountains: caves, pits, ditches, hollow gates. The locals usually know about them, because they were used to hide from the enemy in times of war, or as a shelter for shepherds and cattle from storms.

The balcony on Greben, a three-hour walk from Gusinje, is considered as the largest cave in the Montenegrin part of the Accursed Mountains; it is 1250 meters long and has two parallel canals. Tourists may one day have access to Toja's cave on Planinica (rim of Mokra, village of Velika), in which about 440 meters of canals have been examined. Located at 1780 meters above sea level, it has numerous halls full of various cave jewellery, petrified waterfalls and sculptures, glittering crystals, as well as three ponds. It is assumed that it is much longer and that it is only a part of the cave system.

PARAGLIDING

The surroundings of Lake Plav are ideal for paraglider landings. Their airfields are on the Visitor, at an altitude of 1589 meters, and on Kofiljača, at 1685 meters.

In the central part of Visitor there are two locations to start, with an altitude difference of about a hundred meters. The airfield on Kofiljača is one of the best natural airfields: a gentle, grassy slope without obstacles.

In order for the adventure to go in the best way, it is very important to take into account the microclimate that is influenced by the Plav-Gusinje valley and the immediate vicinity of the mountain range.



APPLICATION AND WEB PORTAL

We have prepared for you the application for IOS and Android that will present to you outdoor offer of Accursed mountains. If you download this application, you will be able to use it in offline mode as well, as navigation mean for your tours through our mountains. This is significant because mobile networks signal is unstable in the mountains, and from safety perspective this tool will be very useful. You can download application in Android or IOS stores, or directly from the web portal.

On the web page www.accursed-mountains.me you will find all the information you need if you are visiting this zone. All the trails and overall outdoor offer are described there, as well as all the services you can get in this zone. Where trails are concerned, on web portal you will find all the descriptions, technical information, photos, and you can also download GPS logs of the trails that you can then upload into your navigation devices.





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