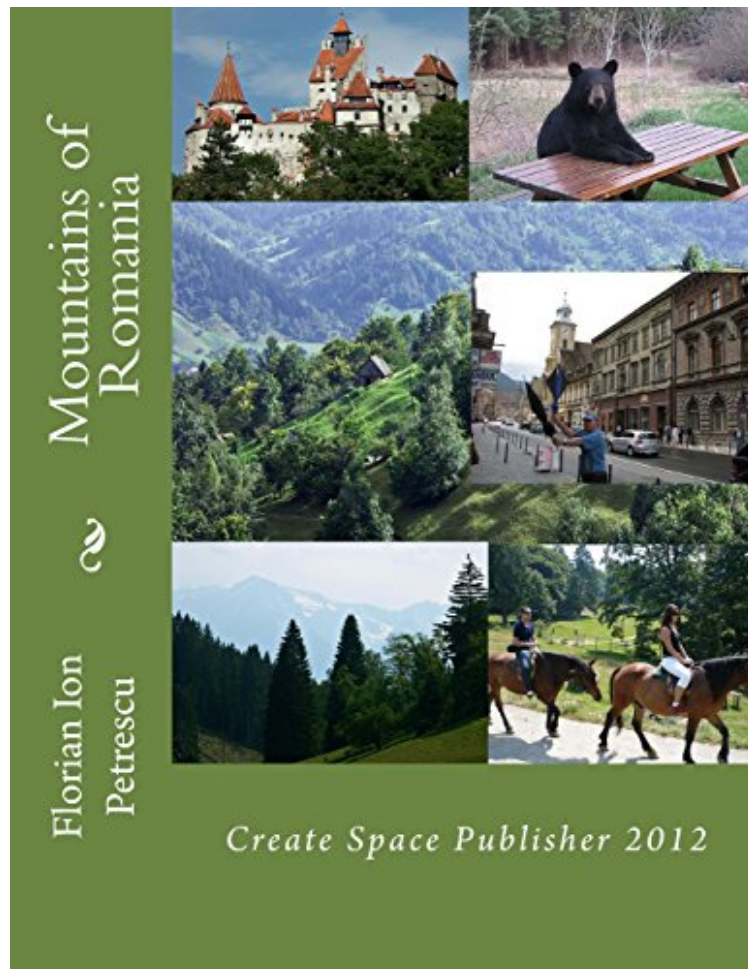


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The Carpathians Mountains The Carpathian Mountains are the eastern wing of the great Central Mountain System of Europe, curving 1500 km (~900 miles) along the borders of Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and northern Hungary. Romania contains by far the largest area of the Carpathians, and forms the eastern and southern boundaries of the region. 55.2% of the Carpathian region is located within Romania. 47.4% of Romanian territory is part of the Carpathian mountain range. The Romanian Carpathians are divided into three groups: Eastern Carpathians, Southern Carpathians and Western Carpathians. The highest peaks are in the Southern Carpathians - Moldoveanu (2544 m/8,346 feet) and Negoiu (2535 m/8,316 feet) The Carpathians'

ensemble is characterized by its varied landscape owing to the different types of relief particularities (glacial, karstic, riverine, structural-lithological), the alternation of mountainous and depressions units, gorges and valleys and the diversity and configuration of the vegetation. They contain the highest concentration of large carnivores in Europe, with estimates of over 6000 brown bears, 2500 wolves and some 1750 lynx living in the region. The Romanian Carpathians represent an exceptional tourist attraction. The flora of the Carpathians includes 1350 species, among which 116 are endemic. The Carpathian floral year begins at the end of February - the beginning of March, with the coltsfoot, the snowdrop, the hollow wort and the pheasant's eye. The rose bay flowers at the beginning of June, when the mountain slopes above the juniper belt become red being covered by the splendid carpet of rose bay. It is indeed a special event. In July and August, the lawns, the slides and the rock walls are turned into multicolored canvases by the other plants in bloom: little lilies of the valley, pigeon chins, various species of pursuance, bird's eye, saxifrages, spotted gentian and the yellow gentian. Autumn time is announced by the amellus starwort (*Aster amellus*) and the swallow wort gentian. The fauna of the Romanian Carpathians is extremely rich and varied. There are numerous and various species of insects that can be seen everywhere. On the blooming alpine lawns, one's attention is drawn by many butterflies and all sorts of beetles. The trout and the umber live in the clear mountain rivers. Occasionally, one can come across the salamander in the deep damp holes of beech forests. The snake of Aesculap hides in the leafy forests and you can see the adder-with-cross on the sunny slopes. In the forest area, up to the alpine zone, live the lizards. In the beech forest live around 100 species of birds; in the common spruce forest around 40 others; and in the superior areas 13 more species. You can also see the titmouse, the woodpecker, or the gray owl. Birds are loyal guests of Romania's sky. Try to look for the plover, the longeared-lark, the common creeper and the rock-eagle. Most of the mammals living in the Romanian Carpathians can be found in the forests: the Carpathian stag, the brown bear, the lynx, the weasel, the squirrel, the fox and so on. The rocky areas constitute the kingdom of the chamois, where the mountain salamander lives as well. Fauna Carpathians Mountain Romania Nature has been generous with the land of Romania, characterized by variety, proportion and harmony. So you can walk or climb just about anywhere you like, both during winter and summer time, as well as in spring or autumn. The Carpathians can be a great experience. And let's not forget about the large range of opportunities for hiking, mountain climbing and winter sports or about the natural therapeutical conditions or the coziness offered by the resorts which lie on this itinerary.

About the Author Nihil sine Deo Ph.D. Eng. Florian Ion PETRESCU Senior Lecturer at UPB (Bucharest Polytechnic University). Citizenship: Romanian; Date of birth: March.28.1958; Higher education: Polytechnic University of Bucharest, Faculty of Transport, Road Vehicles Department, graduated in 1982, with overall average 9.63; Doctoral Thesis: „Theoretical and Applied Contributions About the Dynamic of Planar Mechanisms with Superior Joints”. Expert in Industrial Design, Engineering Mechanical Design, Engines Design, Mechanical Transmissions, Dynamics, Vibrations, Mechanisms Machines Robots and Mechatronics. Association: Member ARoTMM - IFToMM, SIAR-FISITA, ARR. Languages known: -French; -English. Related activities and functions: Instructor and Social Commission Head of CUB (Bucharest's University Center) 1985-1987, the Third Head of CUB after [Moncea] and Bostan, 1985-1987.