



International Journal of

Sciences: Basic and Applied Research

ISSN 2307-4531
(Print & Online)

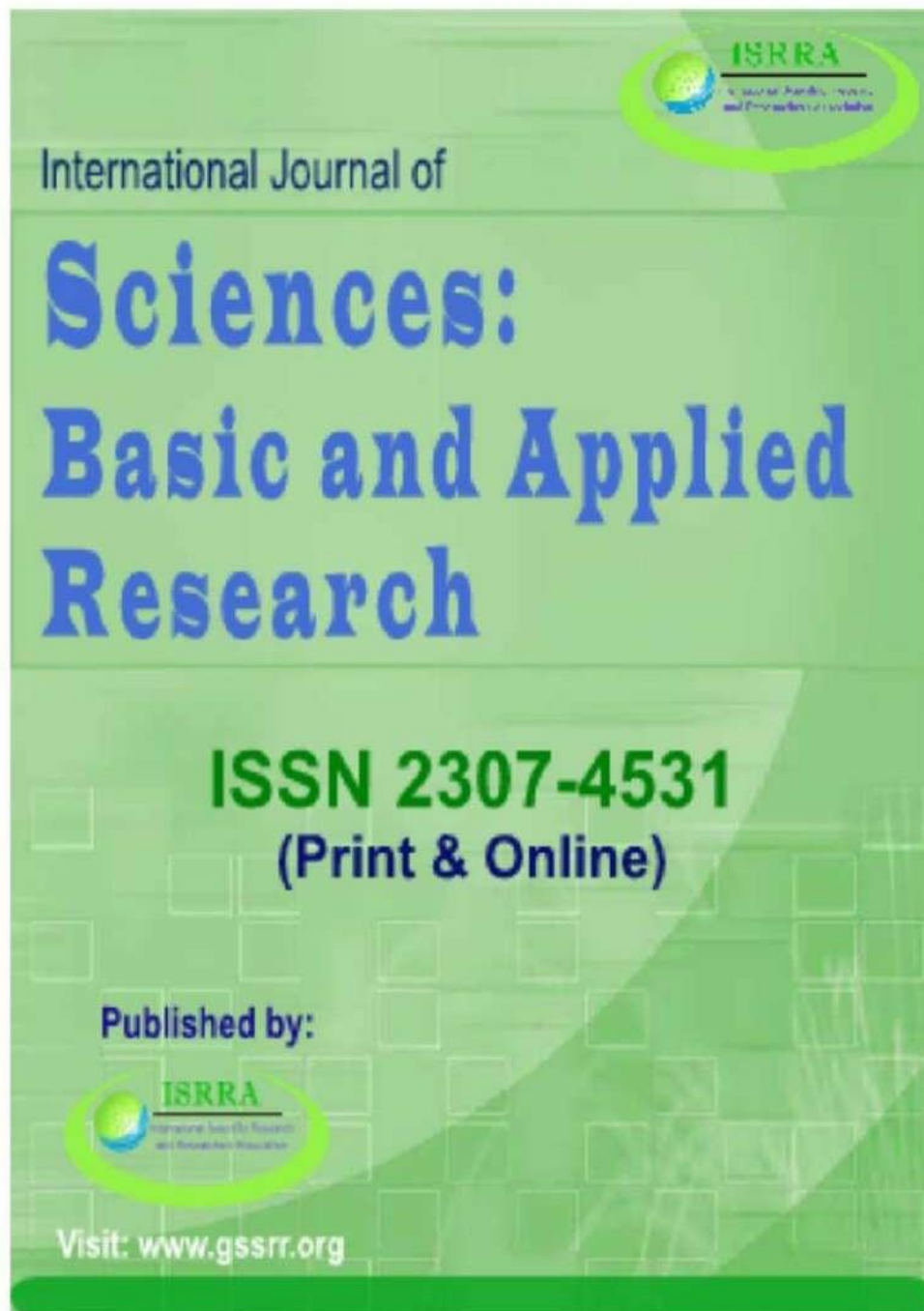
Published by:



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Impact Factor: 0.415

ISSN: 2307-4531



ISSN: 2307-4531

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International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research (IJSBAR)

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Published: 2024-10-07

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Krushevo: A Comprehensive Study on its Tourism Opportunities

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Abstract

The seminar paper provides an overview of Krushevo, focusing on its geographical-touristic, natural, anthropogenic, communicative, and receptive characteristics. It also examines the tourism practices within the city, with the primary research centered on evaluating tourist satisfaction in Krushevo for the year 2022. Sources for information on geographic features, natural and anthropogenic elements, as well as communicative and receptive motifs, include reputable websites and city surveys. Population data was sourced from the 2021 census Reference [3]. The primary research on tourist satisfaction with Krushevo's offerings was conducted through a survey questionnaire completed by 40 participants. In processing the research data, both analysis and synthesis methods were employed. Three hypotheses were proposed (one general, and two specific), all of which were confirmed through the analysis of the survey data. The primary research concluded that while Krushevo has significant potential as a tourist destination in Macedonia, substantial investment and innovation are necessary to enhance its offerings.

Keywords: Krushevo; tourism; history; Krushevo Republic; skiing; village; mountains.

Received: 7/27/2024

Accepted: 9/27/2024

Published: 10/7/2024

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1. Introduction

- **Subject of Research:** The subject of this research is the tourist potential and satisfaction of visitors in the city of Krushevo.
- **Purpose of the Research:** The main purpose of this research is to examine the geographical-touristic characteristics, economic and non-economic activities, natural attractions, and the satisfaction of tourists visiting Krushevo in 2022.
- **Research Hypotheses:** Based on the set tasks, the following hypotheses are assumed:
 - **Main Hypothesis:** Visitors to the city of Krushevo are satisfied with the overall tourist offer provided by the city.
 - **First Specific Hypothesis:** Tourists suggest improvements in the tourist offerings in the city of Krushevo.
 - **Second Specific Hypothesis:** Tourists who have visited Krushevo are satisfied with their accommodation in terms of cleanliness, price quality, service, and location.
- **Research Variables:**
 - **Independent Variables:** Tourist attractions, accommodation facilities, food services, and activities available in Krushevo.
 - **Dependent Variables:** Tourist satisfaction levels, suggestions for improvements, and overall experience in Krushevo.
- **Research Methods, Techniques, and Instruments:**

The study employed empirical research of a descriptive nature, focusing on analyzing the impact of independent variables on dependent variables and establishing cause-and-effect relationships through the causal method. The primary methodological approach involved conducting surveys, which provided a systematic, cost-effective, and efficient means of gathering respondents' opinions. The key instrument used was a specially designed survey questionnaire tailored to the specific tasks and hypotheses of the research. The questions in the questionnaire were crafted to be clear, unambiguous, and precise. To test the hypotheses, the Chi-square (X^2) test was utilized, along with the calculation of the contingency coefficient to assess the association between variables.

- **Sample Research:**

This research covers the population of tourists who visited Krushevo in 2022. The sample consisted of 40 tourists who completed the survey questionnaire. The sample was selected using a judgmental sampling method to ensure a diverse representation of tourists' experiences. The research was conducted throughout 2022.

- **Organization and Flow of Research:**

The research began with the preparation of a conceptual project, followed by the distribution of survey questionnaires to tourists visiting Krushevo. The data collected from the survey were analyzed and processed to

interpret the obtained results. The findings were then presented both tabularly and graphically for a detailed understanding of tourists' satisfaction levels and suggestions for improvements.

2. Geographic and Tourism Characteristics of Krushevo

2.1. Tourist Geographic Position

Krushevo (Vlach: Crushuva) is located in the southwestern part of the Republic of Macedonia, within the western region, nestled in the embrace of Busheva Mountain. Known as the city of the former Krushevo Republic, it is home to the iconic Makedonium monument, which stands prominently above the town. The city's territory spans hilly and mountainous terrain, forming part of the Pelagonian Basin, and is characterized by a moderate-continental climate. As Macedonia's only mountain city, Krushevo is well-connected, with solid infrastructure linking it to surrounding villages. The city benefits from a well-developed network of public services, including hospitals, postal services, and utilities. Krushevo's residents have a strong tradition of tourism and hospitality, attracting visitors, particularly during the ten-day commemoration of the Krushevo Republic and the winter skiing season. Situated at an elevation of 1,220 meters, Krushevo is not only the highest town in Macedonia but also the highest in the Balkans. It serves as the administrative center of the municipality that shares its name. Centrally located in the southwestern part of Macedonia, Krushevo stands out as an economic, cultural, and administrative hub. It is bordered by the villages of Dolneni and Krivogashtani to the east, Plasnica and Macedonian Brod to the north, and the city of Kichevo to the west. To the southwest, it is adjacent to the city of Demir Hisar, with the village of Mogila to the south. The municipality and town of Krushevo are accessible via regional roads R 516 (Prilep (connecting with R 526)-Krushevo-Sladuevo (connecting with R-416)) and R 517 (Krushevo (connecting with R516)-Pusta Reka-Cer (Prostranje) (connecting with R 416)), which connect to the main highways M4 and M5 [1].

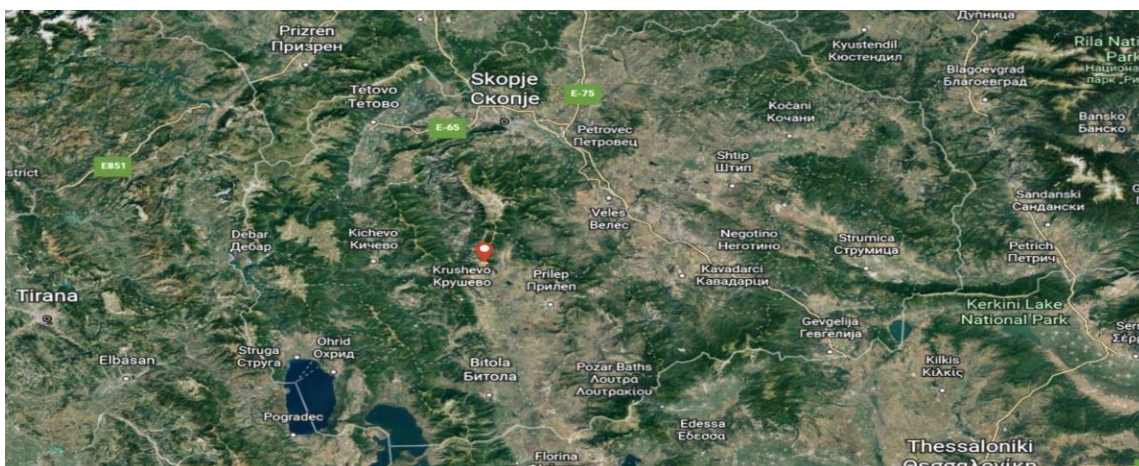


Figure 1: Krusevo's location in Macedonia, Retrieved from Google Earth



Figure 2: Map of the Municipality of Kruševo with village Ataris, retrieved from Wikipedia

2. Brief History

Krushevo was first mentioned in historical records in 1467 as a *mezra*, a term used for a village that was part of Hussein Beg's estate. The name Krushevo appears in the Slepčanski Codex, maintained by monks beginning in 1544, referring to the current settlement. During the Ottoman period, Krushevo was a small Slavic village, and by the late 18th century, it was under the ownership of Kerim Beg of Ohrid, to whom the residents paid taxes until 1847. Krushevo began to develop into a well-organized urban settlement towards the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. This transformation was greatly influenced by the immigration of Vlachs from Moscopole and its surrounding areas between 1769 and 1788, who established the Vlach Quarter. In the early 19th century, specifically from 1812 to 1821, a second wave of Vlachs arrived, this time from the Gramos mountains, and they formed a new quarter known as Strunga. Their primary occupation was livestock farming, which they successfully developed in the region. Around the same time, a group of Orthodox Albanians from Southern Albania settled in Krushevo, founding the Arnautska Quarter on both sides of the Krushevska River. Additionally, a significant number of Macedonian livestock farmers from the Mijak villages, including Galichnik, Lazaropole, Tresonce, and Gari, also settled in Krushevo, establishing the Mijak Quarter

3. Population

According to the 2002 census, Krushevo had a population of 9,684 inhabitants and 2,706 households. Of the total population, 6,080 were Macedonians, 2,064 Albanians, 315 Turks, 1,020 Vlachs, 38 Serbs, and 136 Bosniaks Reference [3]. According to the 2021 census, Krushevo has a population of 8,385 individuals, representing a -13.4% population change compared to the 2002 census. Of the residents, 4,276 are male and 4,109 are female,

with the majority being aged between 40 to 79 years. In terms of ethnic composition, the majority of the population (8,385 individuals) are Macedonians, followed by 2,464 Albanians, 867 Vlachs, 283 Turks, and the remainder are Serbs, Bosniaks, and others.

Municipality	Total	Macedonian	Albanian	Turks	Other (Rome, Serbian, Bosnian)
Krushevo	9684	9081	2064	315	1224

Figure 3: The population in Krushevo is divided by ethnicity, Census in 2002

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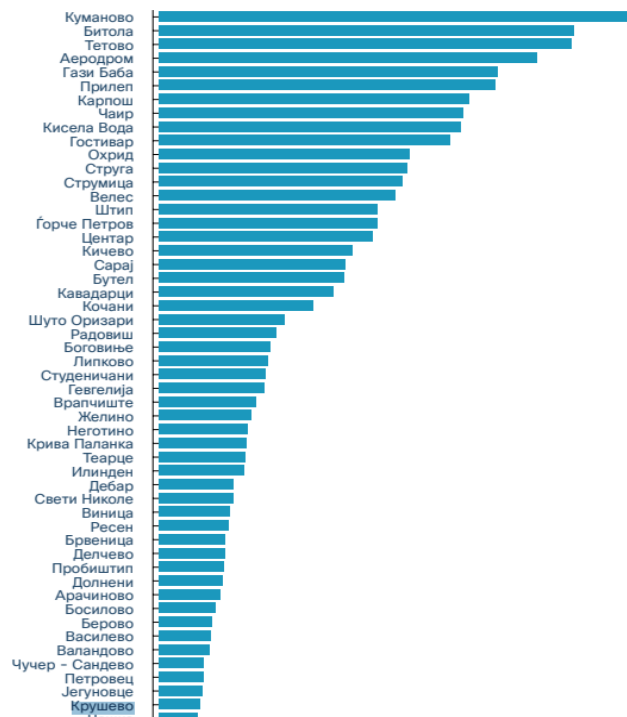


Figure 4: The number of population in Krushevo compared to other municipalities, Census in 2021

According to the census and direct statements from citizens, Krushevo is experiencing an intense wave of emigration, predominantly inhabited by retirees. Young people from Krushevo, after finishing high school, tend to move to larger neighboring cities in Macedonia or to Slovenia. Many residents predict that Krushevo will become the next Galichnik as the town is in decline and job opportunities are simultaneously diminishing [4].

4. Economic and Non-Economic Activities

4.1. Economy Past and Present

In the past, Krushevo had three market days: Monday, Thursday, and Saturday. The majority of the goods sold were livestock products, which were also transported to Bitola, Skopje, Shkodra, Thessaloniki, Kavala, and Constantinople. In the second half of the 19th century, the Vlachs went abroad to work as traders, craftsmen, butchers, goldsmiths, tailors, etc. The traders traveled to Vienna, Budapest, Bucharest, Constantinople, and eventually to the USA and Canada in the 19th century. All these activities helped Krushevo grow economically as a town. The Vlachs who arrived in Krushevo were known as saddlers, coppersmiths, tinsmiths, and makers of various items such as chewing gum holders, braziers, pitchers, glasses, bracelets, and other jewelry. They were also well-known for processing wool, from which they made blankets, rugs, and other items.

In 1993, the transition led to the closure of the "Kristalogravera" factory, which produced crystal items and employed a total of 90 people. In 1996, the trading company "Universal" with more than 100 employees went bankrupt. In 1997, the textile factory "Ilindenka," which at one point employed even 560 people, was destroyed. The same year, the largest hospitality enterprise "Ilinden," employing 96 people, went into bankruptcy.

The economy in the municipality of Krushevo is currently categorized as undeveloped, with the last significant investment in this sector made in 2016 when the "Seke" tobacco processing factory opened, creating 250 jobs.

4.2. Non-Economic Activities

4.2.1. Education

In the town of Krushevo, there is one kindergarten named "Goncha Tufa," established in 1981, two primary schools, "Kiril I Metodij" and "Nikola Karev," and one municipal high school "Naum Naumovski - Borche." Annually, these schools educate about 800 students. Unfortunately, the schools in Krushevo are not equipped with modern facilities, but renovations are expected in the coming years which will improve the educational conditions in the town.

4.2.2. Museums and Galleries

- *Martinovski Gallery* - This gallery is dedicated to the work of the artist Nikola Martinovski and was reconstructed in 2015. The renovated gallery houses 62 original artworks by Martinovski.

- *Museum of the Ilinden Uprising and Krushevo Republic* - This museum falls under the jurisdiction of the Historical Museum - Krushevo and is located in the house where the Krushevo Republic was proclaimed in 1903. The museum displays exhibits of weapons, maps, and photographs from the Ilinden epic.
- *Bullet Casting Workshop* - This facility for casting bullets and repairing weapons, opened after the liberation of Krushevo, was turned into a museum in 2003.
- *Museum of NOV (National Liberation War)* - This museum, opened in 1988, houses exhibits that showcase the National Liberation Struggle from 1941 to 1945.

4.2.3. Cultural Center

The "Naum Naumovski - Borche" cultural center is located in the Vlach Quarter in the southern part of the town.

4.2.4. Health

The health center in Krushevo covers 2,500m² of usable space, employs 46 people, and provides health care to the municipality of Krushevo and part of the Dolneni municipality, serving a total of 11,000 residents from a mixed ethnic composition (Macedonians, Albanians, and Vlachs). It includes a rural team consisting of a doctor, a nurse, and a driver, and two community nurses who provide health care to residents of the Krushevo and Dolneni municipalities.

4.2.5. Sport

- *Paragliding* - This sport is most developed in July and August due to favorable weather conditions. The landing is considered the most enjoyable moment as the entire mountain mass faces Pelagonija. Krushevo also hosts many paragliding competitions.
- *Hunting and Fishing*
- *Hiking*
- *Mountain Biking*
- *Winter Sports*



Figure 5: Krushevo [Photography] by Milo Van Kovacevic, year 2014, Flickr

https://www.flickr.com/photos/mico_kovacevic/14997521056/

5. Natural Attractions

5.1. Relief

Krushevo is situated on the western mountainous edge of the Pelagonian Basin, in the shallow valley source area of the Krushevo River. This river divides the town into two parts: a larger one on the left and a smaller one on the right bank. The houses in the town are arranged amphitheatrically. Due to its specific morphoplasty, Krushevo is considered a typical mountainous small town, with an average altitude of 1,350 meters, making it the highest such town on the Balkan Peninsula. It is located 25 kilometers north of Demir Hisar, 32 kilometers west of Prilep, and 52.5 kilometers north of Bitola.



Figure 6: Krushevo seen from Pelagonia Valley

5.2. Climate

The average annual temperature in Krushevo is 8.4°C, with average temperatures in January of -1.3°C, February -0.5°C, March 2.6°C, April 7.1°C, May 12°C, June 15.6°C, July and August both 17.9°C, September 14.6°C, October 8.3°C, November 4.7°C, and December 0.4°C. Temperature inversions, which are common in the winter months in this area, are one reason for the relatively high temperatures during this season in Krushevo, giving it a unique climatic characteristic from a temperature perspective. The inversions significantly increase the average monthly temperatures in the winter months, which are lower compared to Pelagonia, but not as low as they would be expected based on the difference in altitude. The annual temperature amplitude is 19.2°C. Autumn in Krushevo is significantly warmer than spring. The average autumn temperature is 9.5°C, while the spring temperature averages 7.2°C. September is 2.6°C warmer than May, October 2.2°C warmer than April, and November 2.1°C warmer than March. The temperature difference between the spring and autumn months is not significantly pronounced, and the transitions from winter to summer and from summer to winter are not abrupt, making both spring and autumn distinct transitional seasons. The average annual minimum temperature in Krushevo is 4.9°C, and the maximum is 12.1°C. On average, Krushevo experiences 178 frost days per year. The average date of the first autumn frost is October 25, and the earliest recorded autumn frost was on September 22. The average date of the last spring frost is April 21, with the latest spring frost recorded on May 13.



Figure 8: Krushevo and part of Pelagonia, Ana Petroska, 2022 -> [link](#)

5.3. Hydrography

The territory of the municipality of Krushevo is characterized by a very weak and underdeveloped hydrographic network. The most significant watercourse is the Crna River, which enters the municipality above the village of Buchin, collecting surface and draining groundwater. The main tributaries of the Crna River are the Zhaba, Zhureshnitsa, and Selishka Rivers, which originate from the Krushevo Mountain. The water levels in these rivers are highest during precipitation and snowmelt when they often turn into torrents. During the summer months, some watercourses may even dry up. The river beds are partially regulated, especially those with torrential characteristics, where cascades have been constructed to reduce the erosive effects of the torrents. The Crna River originates from the Crna Dupka spring near the village of Zheleznec at an altitude of 760 meters. From the source to the village of Buchin, the Crna River flows through Demir Hisar, and from there to the village of Skochivir through the country's largest basin, Pelagonia.



Figure 9: The artificial lake in Krushevo, Weekend in Krushevo, 2020 -> [link](#)

6. Research on Tourist Satisfaction in Krushevo in 2022

6.1. Theoretical and Methodological Approach in Research

For effective implementation of any empirical research, it is necessary to first develop a research project. The research project includes several basic phases:

- Setting the goal and subject of the research;
- Formulating hypotheses;
- Developing the sample (selection of the sample);
- Development of methodological tools for data collection in the field;
- Data collection in the field;
- Data processing;
- Interpretation of data, i.e., drafting of the study [1]

6.1.1. Research Goals

This research aims to gain insight into the level of satisfaction of tourist visitors to the city of Krushevo in 2022. After undertaking the analysis, our next mission was to gather propositions for future cultural development and enhancement of the tourist experience.

6.1.2. Scientific Goal

The scientific goal refers to discovering certain theoretical knowledge about the promotional aspect of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of visitors during their tourist stay in Krushevo in 2022. The scientific goal of this research is to uncover new knowledge about visitors' opinions on the existing offerings and activities in the city. If visitors are satisfied with the hospitality, the hosts' attitudes, the quality of food, and hygiene, this will increase, along with the efficiency and effectiveness of businesses in the tourism sector.

6.1.3. Practical Goal

This research also has a practical goal, which is closely related to the scientific goal. It involves the implementation of theoretical knowledge into practice. The practical goal of the research is to implement the discovered theoretical knowledge to enrich Krushevo's tourist offerings with promotional activities that will contribute to the dynamic development of tourist enterprises and, thereby, tourism itself. It is also necessary to determine the level of satisfaction in tourist-hospitality enterprises concerning hospitality, food quality, and hygiene levels. Therefore, the practical goal of this research has broad dimensions, as it needs to mobilize all factors directly and indirectly involved in tourism, i.e., those interested in this issue.

6.1.4. Research Subject

The subject of this research is the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of visitors to Krushevo in 2022.

6.2. Hypotheses

One of the most important aspects of empirical research is the formulation and verification of hypotheses. "It is a statement that can be tested to prove its value. The hypothesis may appear contrary to common understanding or in agreement with it. It can be proven to be correct or incorrect. In any case, it leads to empirical testing. Whatever the outcome, the hypothesis represents a question posed in such a way as to obtain some answer. It represents an example of organized skepticism in science, a refusal to accept any claim without empirical verification." Each hypothesis shows the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

6.2.1. General Hypothesis

- It is assumed that visitors to the city of Krushevo are satisfied with the overall tourist offer that the city provides.

6.2.2. First Specific Hypothesis

- Tourists suggest improving the tourist offer in the city of Krushevo.

6.2.3. Second Specific Hypothesis

- Tourists who have visited Krushevo are satisfied with the place where they stayed and its factors (cleanliness, price quality, service, and location).

6.3. Methods and Organization of the Research

6.3.1. Research Methods

General and specific methods are used in the research of social phenomena. "All social sciences, in addition to general methods, apply and use specific and specialized methods that are appropriate for data collection in the respective field." In processing the data obtained from the research, we used the method of analysis and the method of synthesis.

6.3.2. Method of Analysis

The term "analysis" comes from the Greek word "analysis," meaning the breakdown of a whole into its component parts. Therefore, decomposition is a basic characteristic of the method of analysis. In fact, decomposition means separating a complex object into parts which it consists of observing its qualities, determine the quality of the complex object, and indicating their effect on it. Namely, we performed a decomposition of the tabulated data, providing explicit explanations.

6.3.3. Method of Synthesis

The method of synthesis is a procedure in scientific research and explanation of reality by way of synthesizing simple judgments into more complex ones. Synthesis is a process of generalization in which all more abstract concepts arise compared to the previous ones. Synthesis is a way of systematizing knowledge according to the laws of formal logic, as a process of creating theoretical knowledge from the particular towards the general, i.e., from the species towards the genus. All findings obtained through the method of analysis, with the application of the method of synthesis, were transformed into conclusions from which further recommendations for improving promotional activities in the tourist offer and improving the quality of tourist services were given.

6.3.4. Methodological Techniques of the Research

In the defined subject of research, we used the following methodological techniques:

- Survey
- Scaling method
- Statistical method.

7. Materials and Methods - Primary Research

7.1. Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive empirical research design to investigate the tourist potential and visitor satisfaction in Krushevo. The research was conducted using a survey methodology, which involved distributing a structured questionnaire to tourists who visited Krushevo in 2022.

7.2. Sample

The sample comprised 40 tourists who visited Krushevo in 2022. The participants were selected using a judgmental sampling method to ensure a diverse representation of tourist experiences.

7.3. Data Collection

Data were collected using an online survey created with Google Forms. The survey was distributed through social media platforms and personal contacts to reach the target audience. The survey included questions about demographic information, satisfaction with tourist offerings, and suggestions for improvements.

7.4. Instruments

The survey questionnaire consisted of 14 questions, including multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed to capture detailed information on visitor satisfaction with various aspects of their stay in Krushevo.

7.5. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic information and satisfaction levels. The Chi-square (X^2) test was applied to test the research hypotheses, and the contingency coefficient was calculated to determine the association between variables. Data visualization tools such as Canva and Visme were used to present the results.

The analysis included primary research in the form of an online survey, created in Macedonian, which was published in tourist groups on social networks and distributed among acquaintances and personal connections who visited Krushevo in 2022. The survey was created using the free tool Google Forms, which simultaneously provided deep statistical insight into the upcoming results. The survey consists of 14 questions where respondents initially chose their gender, age group, income, and place of residence. Then followed the season in which they visited Krushevo and the choice of place where they stayed. There were questions about food and where it was most commonly consumed, and how satisfied they were with the offer using the Likert scale. Next, respondents filled out a Likert scale for their accommodation and the level of cleanliness, quality, service, and location. Finally, visitors chose the sphere of activities that needed to be changed on a creative and quantitative level for a more successful future season in Krushevo and had the opportunity to describe the city in one word.

7.6. Scaling Method

The scaling method is used to gather data from multiple questions in an interview. We applied scaling to activate the possibilities for the representation of promotional activities in the tourism offer, as well as to understand the importance of service quality in tourism enterprises. The formulation of scales was carefully planned for statistical data processing, which was the next step.

7.7. Statistical Method

In this research, we applied statistical methods to achieve greater accuracy in studying phenomena. We used the following statistical techniques: calculating percentages and calculating statistical significance using Chi-square (X^2). Data processing was performed using computer software.

7.8. Development and Selection of the Sample

The survey was successfully completed by 41 individuals who visited Krushevo as tourists in 2022. The analysis covered responses from all 100 respondents. The targeted respondents were residents of Macedonia and other countries.

7.9. Implementation of the Research

The survey was sent to respondents on December 15, 2022. The targeted respondents lived outside of Krushevo and were part of the tourists who visited Ohrid in the summer of 2022. After successfully reaching the target number of respondents, the survey was closed. The results were downloaded from Google Forms and processed using the websites Canva and Visme, which offer tools for manually creating personalized research outcomes.

8. Analysis of Research Data

The primary research on the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of tourist visitors to Krushevo in 2022 was conducted through an online questionnaire using Google Forms. This tool provides visual results from the questionnaire, but we used the websites Canva and Visme to present a more creative and clear picture of the results.

The first part of the questionnaire segmented respondents by their gender and age. The results showed that a larger portion of the respondents (73.2%) were female. Regarding the age group of the respondents, the highest percentage (31.7%) categorized themselves in the age group of 40 to 50 years. This was followed by 22% belonging to the 31 to 40 years group, 31% between 21 and 30 years, and 9.8% of respondents aged between 18 and 20 years. The least represented were people over the age of 50 years (3.3%).

Following the division based on the current place of residence, the largest proportion of visitors (56%) live in Skopje, with responses also received from residents of Ohrid, Prilep, Štip, Veles, Negotino, Struga, and Kočani. Two respondents currently live in Germany and Helsinki.

To obtain a clear picture of the visitation rates throughout the year in Krushevo, we asked respondents in which period during the summer they visited Krushevo. As expected, the majority of them (31.7%) visited in January, February, or March. Following them were people who reserved their holidays in Krushevo for July, August, or September (29.3%). Krushevo was visited by 14.6% of respondents during April, May, or June, and the same percentage applies for October or November (14.6%). On the other hand, 9.8% visited Krushevo in December.

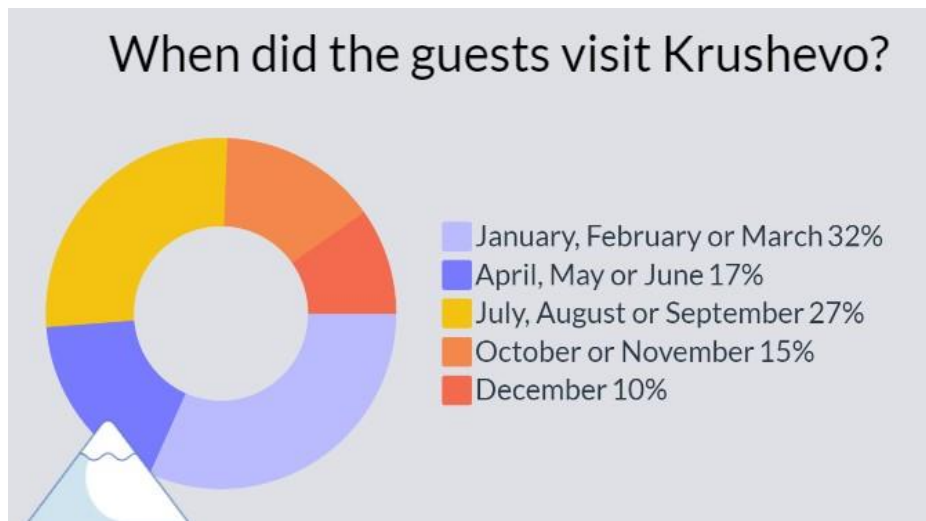


Figure 10: The period of visit of respondents created with Visme

The next question asked respondents to specify where they stayed during their visit to the city. The largest portion of respondents stayed in private apartments (30.8%), and 28.3% stayed with friends or relatives. 17.9% of respondents stayed in private villas, and 12.8% stayed in 3-star hotels. The complete results from the survey are represented in the following visualization:

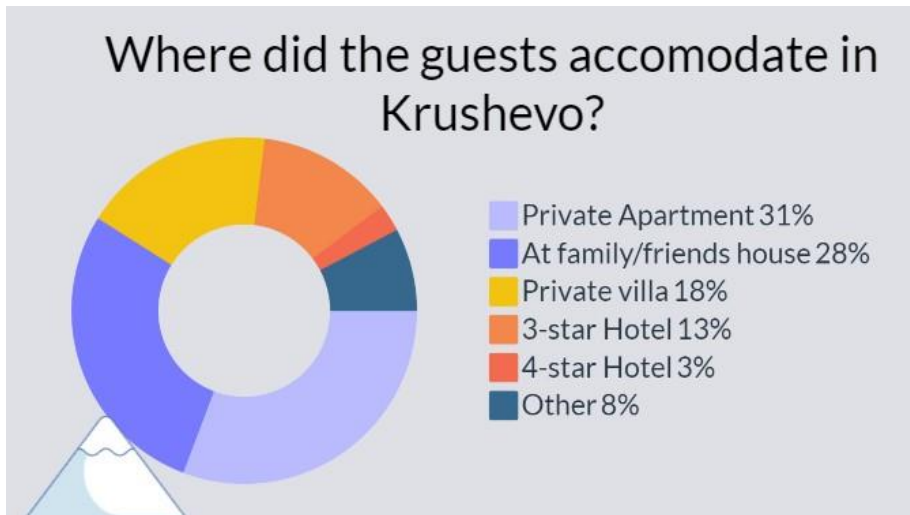


Figure 11: The place of accommodation in Krushevo, created with Visme

Regarding the food in Krushevo and how satisfied visitors were with the offerings in the city, we initially posed a multiple-choice question: “Where did you most commonly eat during your visit to Krushevo?” The results showed that ethnic restaurants were the primary choice for visitors, followed by classic restaurants and lounge bars. Additionally, 22 percent of respondents cooked at the places where they stayed. Detailed results from the question are presented in the following visualization. To evaluate visitors' satisfaction with Krushevo's food offerings, we asked respondents to rate the food on a scale from 1 to 5. Only one visitor rated the food with a score of 1. Two respondents gave it a score of 2, and three gave it a score of 3. The remaining 26.8 percent rated the food with a score of 4, and 58.5 rated it with the highest score, 5.

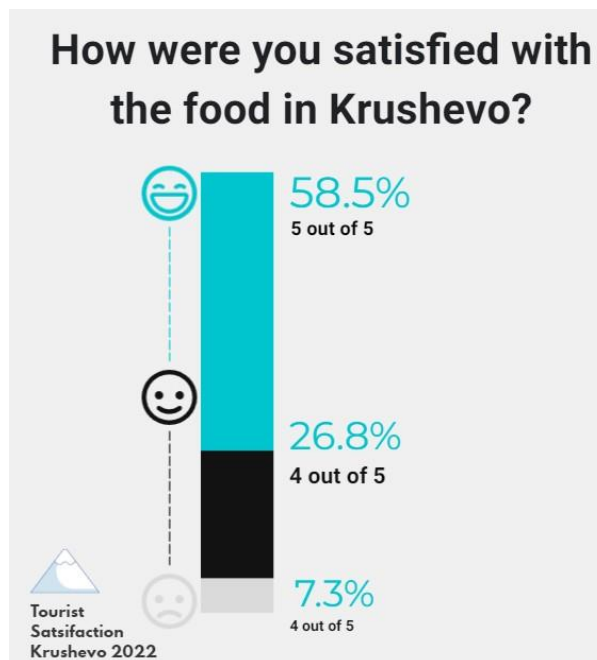


Figure 12: Respondents’ food satisfaction in Krushevo, created with Visme

Regarding activities in Krushevo, we asked respondents to select the activities they engaged in while staying in

Krushevo. The most practiced activity was sightseeing around the city, with 80 percent of respondents walking during their stay. The next activity was hiking, with 45 percent of respondents visiting the mountains in Krushevo. Thirty-two percent had culinary experiences visiting restaurants, and 25 percent went skiing. Also, 15 percent engaged in other sports activities.

The next question was: "How satisfied are you with the activities that Krushevo offers?" The responses were represented on a Likert scale, with the largest portion of respondents (36.6%) stating they were very satisfied with the city's range of activities. On the other hand, 31.7 percent stated they were satisfied with the activities offered in Krushevo. Respondents who chose a neutral opinion accounted for 17.1 percent, and the remaining 6 percent stated they were unsatisfied.

Using the Likert scale, respondents further evaluated their stay in Krushevo by sharing how satisfied they were with the location they stayed at. The list of factors evaluated included the location of the stay, cleanliness, service, and the price-quality ratio they paid. More than 50 percent of respondents were very satisfied with the location of their stay. Regarding cleanliness, 50 percent of respondents were very satisfied, and 30 percent were satisfied. The opinions on the service at the place they stayed were very positive, with 44 and 40 percent being very satisfied and satisfied, respectively. When it comes to the price-quality ratio of the accommodation, the total number of satisfied visitors was 83.

A striking 75.6 percent of respondents visited the memorial house of Toše Proeski.

For the penultimate question of our primary research, we asked respondents to share their ideas on areas in which the city of Krushevo could be improved. The majority of respondents would like improvements in nightlife, music events, the ski center, activities for children, cultural workshops, and spa centers.

For the last question, we asked respondents to describe the city of Krushevo in brief, and we shared the responses we received the following answers: "beautiful, nostalgic small town in the mountains, safest town for living, a town with big potential, underrated, calm city with its soul, underdeveloped."

9. Krushevo's past as a tourist potential

The city of Krushevo possesses a rich and deeply ingrained history that is also part of the history of the Republic of Macedonia. Krushevo is renowned for its historical past and cultural wealth, which preserve as an eternal memory the history and events that shaped it. The city proudly preserves the memory of the Ilinden Uprising, during which the first Republic in the Balkans, the Krushevo Republic, was established on August 2, 1903. Since then, Krushevo has been abundant in monuments and other cultural-historical objects, such as the Ilinden monument, unveiled on August 2, 1974, on the 30th anniversary of the First ASNOM Session and the 71st anniversary of the Ilinden Uprising. The monument is a symbol of defiance, the struggle, and the eternal aspiration of the Macedonian people for national freedom.



Figure 13: Makedonium - Ilinden Monument, retrieved from Google

9.1. The Ethnographic Color and Richness of the City

Due to the poor security towards the end of Turkish rule, the Christian population from the surrounding villages continuously migrated into Krushevo during the 19th century, thereby increasing the population of the already established town. By 1858, Krushevo had 1,400 houses, ten mills, ten blacksmiths working with copper, tin, and iron, as well as eight workshops for processing tallow and meat. According to the Austrian Han, during this period Krushevo had a distinctive appearance with thirteen churches both in the town and in its vicinity. By the end of the 19th century, Krushevo was renowned for its silversmiths, coppersmiths, and leather products. In addition, carriage services were developed in the town. There were caravan connections with Prilep, Bitola, Ohrid, Thessaloniki, and other cities in Macedonia, which contributed to the intensive development of trade and crafts. Krushevo traders could be found in Budapest, Vienna, Leipzig, Athens, Constantinople, Smyrna, Alexandria, Addis Ababa, and other cities around the world. Later, people from Krushevo went as far as America and Canada for trade and also traded with Asian countries like India and Persia (Iran). This made the city known almost worldwide. As a crafts and trade center, the city rapidly developed and by 1883 it had about 12,000 residents.

9.2. Cultural and Historical Monuments in Krushevo and the Surrounding Area

• Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration

The Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration is undoubtedly one of the most visited sites in Krushevo. Situated at an altitude of 1620 meters, this monastery boasts immense beauty, offering views towards Pelagonia on one side and Krushevo on the other. It is located in the village of Seloce in the Ruchalo area (Bela Voda region) where the Church of St. Transfiguration, destroyed in the 19th century, previously stood. The people of Krushevo began to rebuild this church in 1986, greatly aided by the renowned humanitarian from this region, Todor (Toše) Proeski. He visited this church from the age of five and always claimed that he found his peace there. After his tragic death, room number 10 in the monastery's guesthouse is dedicated to him.

Legend has it that a great storm destroyed the church many years ago. Since then, the locals have celebrated the great feast of the Transfiguration of Christ on August 18 and 19 every year.



Figure 14: The Church Sveto Preobrazhenie, retrieved from Google

- **Church of Saint Nicholas**

This church is located in the central part of Krushevo's bazaar. It was built in 1832, but much of the church and bazaar burned down during the great fire at the time of the Ilinden Uprising in 1903 and was subsequently rebuilt from 1904 to 1907. The Church of Saint Nicholas in Krushevo is home to numerous icons dating back to 1884. The icons in the church were painted by the iconographer Mihail with his sons Danail and Nikola, and the iconostasis was the work of the famous wood carvers Petre Filipovich-Garkata and Dimitar Stanishev, among the sacred works are many carefully preserved, rarely seen masterpieces that testify to a certain cultural and historical period of Orthodox culture, works by great masters of icon painters, wood-carvers, and iconographers whose creations are voluminous and historically valuable. The church is a three-nave basilica with an elevated central nave, and on the southern side is the bell tower in which the city clock is installed.

- **Church of the Holy Mother of God**

The Church of the Holy Mother of God was built in 1867 and is the second oldest church in Krushevo after the Church of Saint Nicholas. It is located in the upper part of the town near the historical museum and the old school "Nikola Karev". It is a single-nave city church, built of dressed stone, and inside it contains a large part of the famous fresco painting, which was painted even before its construction. It also has many recorded icons from the 19th century.

- **Church of Saint John the Baptist**

The Church of Saint John the Baptist, known among the people of Krushevo as the "Vlach Church", is located in the central part of the city, and its construction began on August 3, 1897, and the Christian temple was built in 1903. At the entrance of the church are frescoes transferred from the church of Saint Athanasius dating from 1627 depicting St. Hierarchs, St. Mary, and other saints, and inside the church is the beautiful wooden iconostasis made over about four years by the Nestorovski brothers.

- **Church of the Holy Trinity**

The Church of the Holy Trinity is located on the periphery of Krushevo, in Gjupsko Maalo. It was built in 1881, but like several other religious buildings, it was burned during the Ilinden Uprising but was soon restored afterward.

- **Monastery of Saint Saviour**

This monastery is located in Trstenik, on the road from Prilep to Krushevo, at an altitude of 600 meters. Built in 1826, thanks to the beautiful forest environment and good climatic conditions, it is a very popular excursion spot for locals and tourists.

- **Monastery of Saint Basil**

This monastery was built in 1995 on the foundations of the former church of St. Basil and is located near the former village of Trstenik, 8 km from the city of Krushevo.

- **Makedonium – Ilinden**

The Makedonium, one of the most important landmarks of Krushevo, built in the Gumenje area, symbolizes the Ilinden Uprising. It reflects the struggle and desire of the Macedonian people for independence and freedom. At the entrance, the door is shaped like the letter M, in honor of the name Macedonia. The monument contains many invaluable landmarks for this people, such as the tomb of Nikola Karev and many other fighters who died in the Ilinden Uprising, works by the famous Macedonian artist Petar Mazev. The way it is built and its specific architecture is the work of the Macedonian married couple Jordan and Iskra Grabul from Prilep. The construction of the Makedonium started in 1970 and was completed in 1974. It is built of reinforced concrete, armature, and glass.



Figure 15: Makedonium inside, retrieved from Google

- **Monument Mečkin Kamen**

The monument Mečkin Kamen carries immense value for the Macedonian people, depicting one of the largest and bloodiest battles during the Ilinden Uprising. The sculpture of a man with a raised sickle above his head symbolizes the last efforts of the insurgents led by vojvode Pitu Guli, who with their lives defended the Krushevo Republic.

The monument is the work of the Macedonian sculptor and academic Dimo Todorovski. Built in 1983, today the monument Mečkin Kamen is declared a significant cultural heritage.

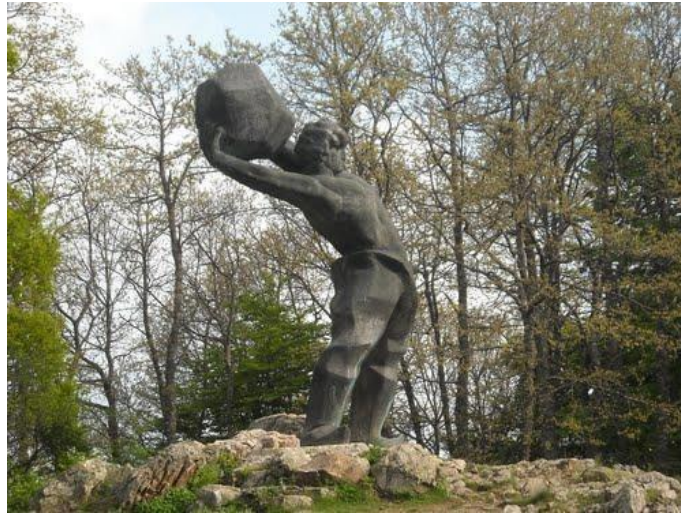


Figure 16: Monument Bear Stone, retrieved from Google

- **NOB Museum (National Liberation War)**

The Museum of the National Liberation War in Krushevo was opened in 1988 in the Gumenje area, near the monument to the Ilinden Uprising, and it contains exhibits that testify to the war from 1941 to 1945. On the frontal wall in this museum is the fresco "The Mural" - an artistic work by the famous painter Borko Lazeski, which depicts the course of the war. Besides this timeless artistic work, various photographs, original weapons, and items used by the revolutionaries led by Pitu Guli can be found.



Figure 17: .Museum of the National Liberation War., retrieved from Google

- **Museum Foundry**

The Museum Foundry was opened in 2003, in the same house where one of the secret foundries for bullets during the Ilinden Uprising was located. It was disguised as a paint shop for jam makers from where predominantly older women carried out the ammunition, disguised in trays of bread and in their belts. It served for the repair and manufacture of bullets and parts for weapons. Today there can be found various tools (hammers, knives, etc.) as

well as a large collection of weapons from the uprising, and also the personal weapon of Nikola Karev, President of the Krushevo Republic in 1903.

- **Museum of the Ilinden Uprising**

The Museum of the Ilinden Uprising was opened in 1953, on the 50th anniversary of the Ilinden Uprising and the Krushevo Republic. It is housed in an old townhouse from the 19th century where in 1903 the Krushevo Republic was proclaimed. The house is owned by the Tomalevski brothers and chronologically exhibits items of weapons, maps, models, texts, photographs of members of the provisional government, and various objects used by Nikola Karev, Pitu Guli, and other insurgents. Here is also the Krushevo Manifesto. This museum also houses data on the great human and material damages inflicted on the Krushevo population and the city itself by the Ottomans, as well as the Response to the Ilinden Uprising and the Krushevo Republic in the foreign press and the clock face of the church St. Nicholas which was burned during the suppression of the uprising.



Figure 18: Museum of History Krushevo, retrieved from Google

- **Memorial House of Todor (Toše) Proeski**

For many, the first thing that comes to mind when Krushevo is mentioned is the Macedonian pop star Toše Proeski. The Memorial House of Toše was opened on April 25, 2011, and spans an area of 870 square meters, built in the shape of a cross. It contains everything related to the Macedonian star, from his beliefs and opinions to religious items he used to the clothing in which he performed, etc. In the Memorial House are two wax figures of Toše, one with a microphone in hand, and another as he sits playing the piano. The Memorial House possesses state-of-the-art equipment and is undoubtedly at the top of the list of places to visit for all visitors to Krushevo and Macedonia. It is visited by people from all parts of Europe, as Toše Proeski transcended Balkan borders. Taking a tour of the memorial house, fans can closely acquaint themselves with Toše's life, from his teenage days, early successes, and humanitarian actions, to the peak of his artistic career.



Figure 19: The memorial house of Toše Proeski, retrieved from Google

- **Nikola Martinovski Gallery**

Macedonian artist and academic Nikola Martinovski, born in Krushevo but educated in Bucharest and Paris, is one of the most significant figures in the development of Macedonian culture in the 20th century. He has received numerous awards and was declared student of the year in 1927 at the School of Fine Arts in Bucharest, Romania. The Krushevo House is a unique example of old town architecture from the last century, and it houses exhibits, oils, drawings, and paintings dedicated by Martinovski to his hometown Krushevo. The permanent exhibitions include "The Krushevo Room from the 19th Century" and the ethnological setup "Costumes in Krushevo and Krushevo Region in the 19th Century."

10. Investigation of Communicative and Receptive Motives

10.1. Communications to and from Krushevo

Krushevo is located in the southwestern part of the Pelagonian Plain, in the source area of the Krushevo River, which divides the town into two parts. Krushevo is a town stretched between the cities of Prilep (32 km west), Bitola (52.5 km north), and Demir Hisar (25 km north), and 168 km from the capital city Skopje. It is connected to these cities by the following regional roadways:

- Krushevo – Prilep – Bitola – Ohrid. – Skopje;

- The following regional roads pass through the Municipality of Krushevo: R1 regional roads;

1. Regional Road 1306: Prilep – Krivogashtani – Krushevo – Sladuevo;

R2 regional roads;

Regional Road 2337: Krushevo - Pusta Reka - Prostranje.

The closest highway is the M5 route, which passes near Prilep.

Krushevo is distant:

- 160 km from Skopje Airport;
- 150 km from Ohrid Airport;
- 250 km to Thessaloniki Airport, Greece.
- The bus station in Krushevo is located at Ilindenska Street 101, close to the city center, and daily schedules are available on the Balkan Viator website. A large number of residents and tourists use social media groups to travel together to or from Krushevo and to share costs. There are no taxi companies in Krushevo, but many individuals offer transportation on their own and can be contacted through social networks.

- Daily bus lines to and from Krushevo are as follows:
 - Skopje to Krushevo: 12:00; 19:10
 - Krushevo to Skopje: 07:00; 16:30
 - From Bitola to Krushevo and back, buses run several times a day:
 - Krushevo to Bitola: 7:20; 14:40
 - Bitola to Krushevo: 12:20; 16:30
 - From Prilep to Krushevo and back:
 - Prilep to Krushevo: 07:25, 09:35, 11:40, 14:45, 16:40, 19:30
 - Krushevo to Prilep: 06:25, 08:40, 12:30, 15:20, 17:30

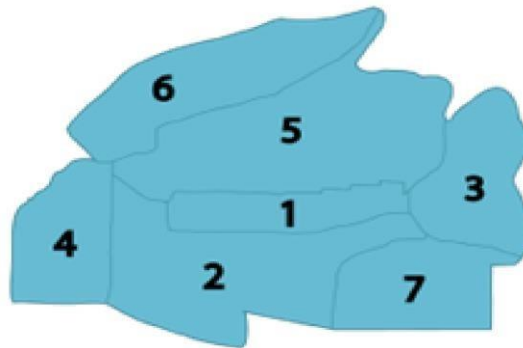


Figure 20: Neighbors in Krushevo, retrieved from Wikipedia

11. Municipality of Krushevo

Krushevo holds a central location which makes it an administrative, economic, and cultural center. Today, the town of Krushevo comprises 12 neighborhoods: Vlashko, Tashe, Strunga, Busha, Arbinësh, Koku, Mijachko Maalo, Gorno Maalo, Krstot, Matak, Chereš, and Gjupsko Maalo. In the center of these neighborhoods, small community centers are formed, featuring crossroads with a bakery and a fountain, and two such centers have churches built in them.

Regarding energy infrastructure, the Municipality of Krushevo utilizes electrical power with a transmission network consisting of three power lines, and for heating, high-quality oak and beech wood from its own natural forest resources are used.

11.1. Tourist Agencies and Guides

There is no tourist agency headquartered in Krushevo, but local villas have long been cooperating with major tourist agencies such as On Top Apartments and JK Travel, which is a significant step forward considering that these agencies primarily offer arrangements outside the country.

In the past year, ATV tours with a guide were held in Krushevo where guests experienced a tour of the town and an unforgettable adrenaline adventure through Busheva Mountain. There are four tourist guides in Krushevo, and their information and contacts are as follows:

Name	e-mail	Phone	Language
Nikola Kardula		070 762 343	English, Italian, Romanian
Konstantin Gjorgjieski	kgorgievski@gmail.com	070 330 960, 071 379 161	Vlach, Serbian, English
Daniela Stefanoska			English
Boris Markoski	borismarkoski@yahoo.com	075 202 123	English

Figure 21: Tourist Guides in Krushevo, retrieved from Weekend in Krushevo

11.2. Receptive Motives

The Municipality of Krushevo has 1000 beds, most of which are in the private accommodation sector, and currently, there are two 4-star hotels and about 80 categorized accommodation facilities. In the vicinity of Krushevo, there are 2 monasteries with a total of 80 beds.

Hotel	Number of beds
Montana	220
Panorama	70
Ilinden	150
Shula Mina	150
Private apartments	200

Figure 22: Hotels in Krushevo and their accommodation facilities

• Weekend in Krushevo – Your Online Tourist Guide

The platform "Weekend in Krushevo" is an initiative by 5 young people from Krushevo aimed at better tourist promotion of the city. It has been operational since March 2018 (initially only promoted on social media), and from May this year, it also has its own website. The platform serves as a tourist guide for visitors, including tour suggestions, information on important sites, and connecting tourists with local accommodation facilities.

12. Types of Tourism Practiced in Krushevo and Their Perspectives

12.1. Krushevo - a Mountain Ski Center and summer 'Air Spa'

Krushevo is a town with a mountainous relief, allowing for a rich palette of mountain tourism. Busheva Mountain and its nature, abundant with flora and fauna, make this place idyllic for mountain excursions and sports-recreational hiking along a 30km marked trail leading up to the peak of Musica, where the mountain hut “Lovechka Kucha” is fully equipped for mountaineering overnight stays. There are opportunities for winter fun for both professionals and beginners, as Winter Clubs rent equipment and lessons, not only for skiing but also for snowboarding and Nordic running.



Figure 23: The Ski Center in Krushevo, retrieved from Macedonia Timeless

12.2. Cultural-Historical Tourism 'Ethno Town Krushevo'

The "Ethno Fair" in Krushevo is traditionally held from August 1 to 10, showcasing traditional items from the rich traditions of the Macedonians and Vlachs who lived in Krushevo at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. This fair first began in 2004 and has been held intermittently to the present day under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture and the Municipality of Krushevo, as well as the "Naum Naumoski – Borce" Cultural Center.

12.3. Event Tourism

The Krushevo Republic (August 3-13, 1903) was an insurgent local authority during the Ilinden Uprising. After the liberation of Krushevo on August 3, 1903, an insurgent authority was established, organized on republican-democratic and revolutionary principles, chaired by Nikola Karev, head of the Forest Command - the military authority of the free territory. The highest civil authority was the Council of the Local Revolutionary Authority, which consisted of 60 members. The Council elected a Provisional Administration of 6 members: Vangel Dinu (president and responsible for justice), Gjorgji Chache (requisition), Teohar Neshkov (finance), Hristo Qurchiev (mayor and responsible for order and security), Dimitar Sekulov (food), and Nikola Balju (sanitation). During its

ten-day existence, the Government organized a revolutionary court for criminal and civil cases, a postal service, a sanitation service with a hospital, a bullet foundry, production of insurgent equipment, a tax was announced and voluntary contributions were collected, requisition of items and facilities for the needs of the insurgent authority and for the defense of the town, enterprises were nationalized, several cannonballs were manufactured, and measures were taken for the fortification of the town for defense. A declaration (known as the Krushevo Manifesto) called on the Muslim population from the surrounding villages to remain peaceful.



Figure 24: Manifestation of scientific and cultural meetings "Ten Days of Krushev Republic", retrieved from Google

12.4. Adrenaline Tourism

Krushevo possesses all the necessary natural resources for the development of adrenaline tourism. The meteorological and thermal conditions, as well as the fact that the entire mountain massif faces the Pelagonia plain, allow for the practice of paragliding and hang gliding. The take-off point at Mečkin Kamen, located at 1400m above sea level, is one of the rare places in Europe and the world with natural conditions suitable for paragliding. Since 2019, Krushevo has hosted the World Paragliding Championships.



Figure 25: Paragliding in Krushevo, retrieved from Weekend in Krushevo

Krushevo boasts beautiful ski slopes at the location called “Stanič,” which features two amateur tracks and one professional skiing track that is 618m long. The Municipality of Krushevo is working on a series of tourism projects, which are becoming a priority in boosting local economic development. Currently, it is implementing the "Project for Local and Regional Competitiveness" through the EU's IPA 2 program, focusing on the development of adventure tourism, enriching the offer for potential tourists, promoting Krushevo as a destination, and infrastructure equipment of the city in the context of tourism. To enrich the content for the development of adrenaline tourism, the Municipality of Krushevo is also working on building an adventure park with a zip-line, and it is recommended that a "high ropes" course for adults and children be included in this park. Mountain tourism in mountainous areas, due to the different properties of the offers conditioned by climatic conditions, is divided into mountain tourism in the summer period (from May to October) and mountain tourism in the winter period (from November to April). Winter sports in winter, as well as walking and hiking in summer, are fundamental motives in both basic seasonal periods of mountain tourism. Walking is becoming increasingly popular, and for this category of visitors, special walkways are built in forest and mountain areas, most often as paths or marked trails. At many of them, at a certain distance, there are smaller catering facilities, rest stations, or simply resting places with benches.

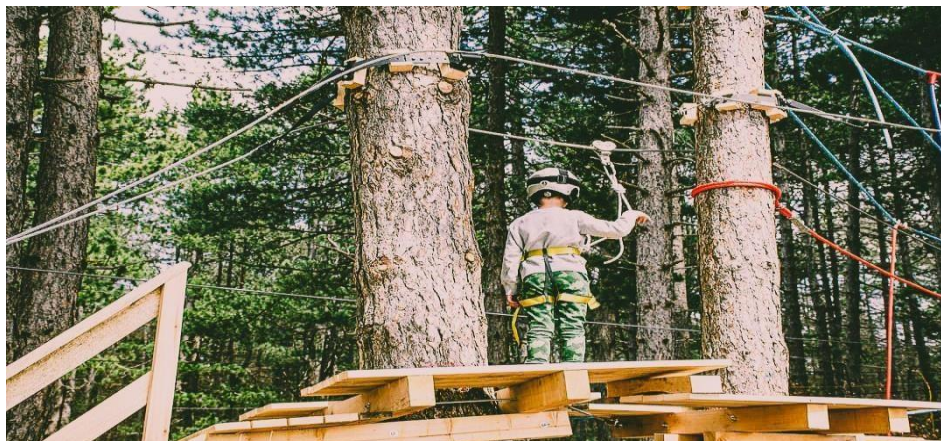


Figure 26: Adventure Park in Krushevo, retrieved from Kayak

Krushevo is a town with mountainous relief, enabling a rich array of mountain tourism. Busheva Mountain and its nature, filled with flora and fauna, make this place an idyll for mountain outings and sports-recreational hiking along a marked trail of 30km that leads to the peak of Musica, where the "Lovechka Kucha" mountain hut is fully equipped for overnight stays. There are opportunities for winter fun for both professionals and beginners, as winter clubs rent equipment and provide lessons, not just for skiing but also for snowboarding and Nordic running.



Figure 27: Peak Musica on Mountain Busheva, retrieved from Kayak

12.4. Other Types of Tourism

- **Eco-Tourism**

Traveling to natural environments is a crucial component of tourism as it develops underdeveloped regions and maintains and protects natural resources. This type of tourism has seen significant growth in recent years, where modern tourists increasingly enjoy natural values and are concerned with their sustainable development. The Krushevo Forest, which surrounds the city from the north, northwest, and west sides, is characterized by features that give significant ecological, protective, touristic, and economic value to the area. The area of the forest is a natural beech stand, with tree ages ranging from 150 to 280 years, and the forest extends at altitudes from 1160 to 1370 meters. Notably, the beech near the "Panorama" hotel is over 300 years old and is a symbol of the hotel. Walks through the forest are especially pleasant during the summer months when temperatures are higher. Krushevo Forest is a paradise for nature lovers, filled with nature and clean air, and rich in a variety of plants, animals, and breathtaking landscapes. Krushevo Lake is also an ideal place for peace and recreation throughout the year. Common activities around the lake include running, biking on the new bike path, picnicking, swimming, and sunbathing during the summer days, as well as recreational fishing. The lake is rich in wildlife, housing carp, crucian carp, chub, Ohrid and California trout, roach, etc.

- **Congress Tourism**

Congress tourism contributes to the transfer and exchange of experiences and knowledge. It represents a form of tourism with a specific purpose and belongs to the category of educational and communication forms of tourism, which are not directly related to the main tourist season. It is significant for extending the tourism season, increasing employment opportunities and tourism revenues, and promoting and effectively using capacities in regions. Congress tourism mostly takes place outside the main tourist season, hence its special importance. In Krushevo, there are two four-star hotels capable of organizing conferences, seminars, trainings, consultations, team-building activities, promotions, and related events. Given that these events most often occur off-season, this type of tourism would contribute to the goal of making "Krushevo a destination for all seasons."

13. Conclusion

The research on the tourist potential and visitor satisfaction in Krushevo for the year 2022 has yielded valuable insights. Krushevo, with its rich historical and cultural heritage, diverse natural attractions, and hospitable environment, demonstrates significant potential as a premier tourist destination in Macedonia. The findings indicate that the majority of tourists are satisfied with their overall experience, particularly appreciating the cleanliness and quality of accommodations, the variety and quality of food, and the range of activities available. However, the research also highlights several areas for improvement. Respondents suggested enhancing the nightlife, increasing the frequency and variety of music events, improving facilities at the ski center, and developing more activities for children and cultural workshops. Additionally, the need for spa centers and wellness facilities was emphasized. To capitalize on Krushevo's potential, it is essential to invest in infrastructure improvements and innovative promotional activities. Enhancing the existing tourist offerings and addressing the identified areas for improvement will not only increase tourist satisfaction but also attract a broader range of visitors. Furthermore, sustainable development practices should be adopted to preserve Krushevo's natural and cultural resources while promoting tourism growth. Future research should focus on exploring new tourist attractions and activities, evaluating the effectiveness of implemented improvements, and continuously gathering feedback from visitors to ensure the offerings meet their evolving needs and expectations. By adopting a proactive approach and making strategic investments, Krushevo can establish itself as a top-tier tourist destination, attracting visitors from Macedonia and beyond throughout the year.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to the Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, Goce Delchev University, for their support in conducting this research—special thanks to all the tourists who participated in the survey and provided valuable insights. We also thank the local authorities and tourism organizations in Krushevo for their cooperation.

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