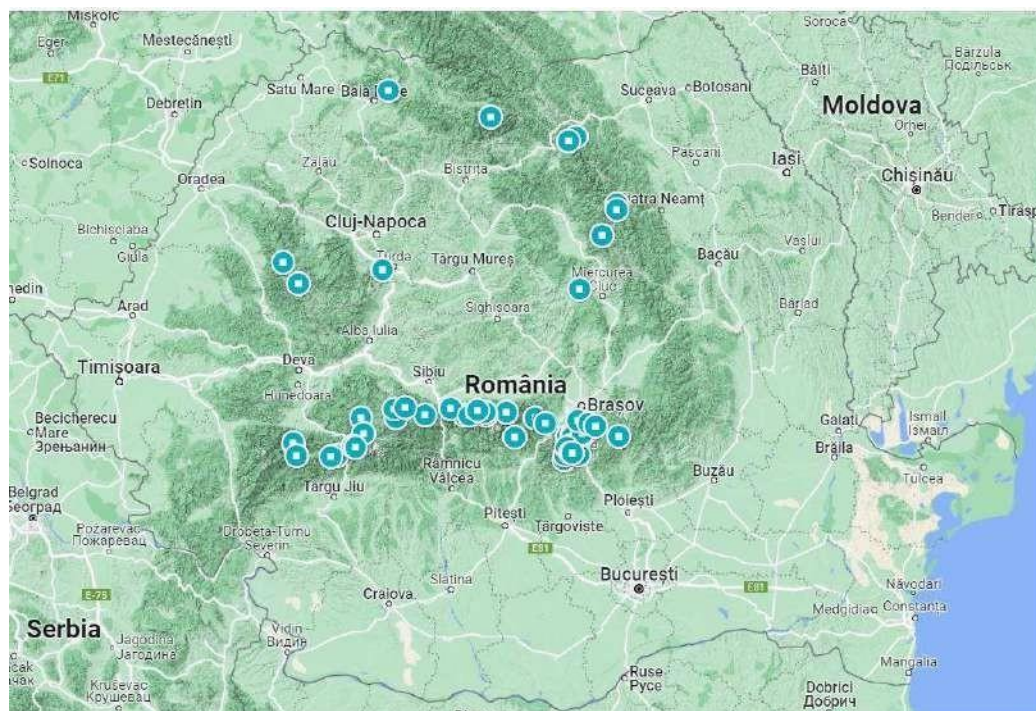


The evolution/ of mountain huts in Romania

Within the study we analysed the evolution of mountain huts in Romania in the last 60 years, taking as reference data publicly available information from the 1960s, namely the Guide to mountain huts by Gh. Epuran from 1964 2nd edition.

Of the 150 mountain huts listed in the guide I chose to visit those that at that time could be reached by footpath in at least half an hour. I didn't visit the areas for which there is clear public information: the huts have been demolished and a tourist resort has been built in their place, or huts that have disappeared without a trace: for example the Colibița hut. Out of a total of 150 mountain shelters considered at that time as huts and refuges respectively, we selected 59 huts and 3 refuges that fulfil the conditions.

Distribution of mountain huts according to the 1964 hut guide:



In analysing the present-day huts we have considered:

- present state: ruin, identical, modernised, rebuilt, replaced by hotel, resort
- analysing the mountain hut character: photo and description, landscape
- facilities: heating mode, water supply, sewage water treatment, toilet, electricity
- services offered, comfort level: sport, comfort, luxury
- access, catering
- links with other huts via footpaths (which, times, waymarking)
- owner, management, contact details
- other mountain huts, if they have appeared in the area

We analysed the current situation of the huts and found that:

















- 8 have been destroyed/ have totally disappeared or are unrecoverable ruins. For the most part these huts have burnt down, having been built entirely of wood. Another reason for the degradation of the huts was the difficult access and difficulty to keep the huts in working order, especially by private individuals without the support of a mountain club
- 5 are closed but could be restored and brought into working order. These huts are in decent condition and could be refurbished and opened to the tourist circuit, but the owners need help in refurbishment and management
- 5 are privately owned or closed-circuit military structure lodges
- 15 continue to be mountain huts in a situation close to that of 60 years ago (condition and services offered). Minimal investments have been made, but the conditions of comfort are rudimentary, with no running water or toilets in the hut, beds and bed linen not constantly washed. Many tourists avoid them, preferring to sleep in huts or tents
- 6 have been repaired/renovated and are operating to a satisfactory standard as a mountain hut. They are examples of good practice in management, which has led to an increase in tourist traffic in the area
- 12 have been replaced by new hotel-level buildings with car access. These sites have evolved in terms of comfort, but they have also evolved in terms of the expectations of hikers: they have become crowded, car- filled areas that hikers avoid. This development has also damaged the area's natural setting
- 3 have become the centre of small local resorts with car access
- 5 have become the location of resorts of regional or national interest with car access



Evolution of mountain huts in Romania from the 1960s to 2023:



13,6%	Destroyed
17%	Closed
25,4%	Functional at 60s level
10,2%	Modernized
20,3%	Became hotels
5,1%	Became local resorts
8,4%	Became regional/national resorts



Comparative analysis of huts



1960 - 2023



Photos from the 1960s	HUTS			Photos taken in 2023
Gutâi Mountains				
	Izvoare Hut, 916 m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Modernised Micro-station	
	Trail 160	Access Number of accommodation places	Paved road 24	
Rarău Mountains, Gilău, Bucovina				
	Rarău Hut, 1520 m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Modernised	
	Trail 145	Access Number of accommodation places	Paved road 84	
	Giumalău Hut, 1600 m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status Access mode	Functional Footpath	
	Footpath 30	Number of accommodation places	28	
Ceahlău Massif				
	Dochia Hut, 1750 m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Trail 100	Access mode Number of accommodation places	Footpath 100	
	7 November, 1220m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Modernised	
	Trail 80	Access mode Number of accommodation places	Footpath 30	
Giurgeu Mountains, Hășmaș				
	Suhard, 1107m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Rebuilt Micro-station	
	Trail 46	Access Number of accommodation places	Paved road 31	
	Lonely Stone, 1430m			
	Hut in the 60s Footpath	Status	Functional Footpath	
	30	Access mode Number of accommodation places	28	
Rodna Mountains				
	Puzdrele Hut, 1540 m			
	Hut in the 60s Forest road	Status Access mode	Disused Trail	
	30	Number of accommodation places	0	



Gurghiu, Harghitei				
	Mădăraș, 1710m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Forest road	
48	Number of places		100	



Ciucaș				
	Ciucaș, 1550m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Rebuilt/modernised	
	Footpath	Access mode	Forest road	
	Number of accommodation places		67	



Barsei				
	Rențea, 1243m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Military hut	
	Footpath	Access mode	Forest road	
60	Number of places		0	



	Piatra Mare, 1630m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Reconstructed/ Closed circuit	
	Footpath	Access mode	Trail	
128			11	









	Poiana Secuilor, 1070m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Modernised	
	Functional Trail	Access mode	Asphalted road	
30	Number of places		26	





	Cristianu Mare, 1705m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Completely burnt/ Rebuilt	
	Footpath	Access mode	Trail	
104	Number of places		25	





	Postăvaru, 1590m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
113	Number of places		120	













	Bunloc, 1011m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Rebuilt Private	
	Footpath 60	Access mode	Footpat	
	Number of places		11	








Iezer - Doll				
	Iezer Refuge, 2165m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
20	Number of places		10	







Baiului				
	Dog's Nest, 985m			
	Hut in the 60s	Condition	Private	
	Footpath	Access mode	Paved road	
21	Number of places	0		
	Clăbucet Departure, 1456m			
	Hut in the 60s	Condition	Ruin	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
80	Number of places	0		
	Gârbova, 1350m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
90	Number of places	38		
	Susai, 1350m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Private	
	Trail + forest	Access mode	Forest road	
65	Number of places	0		

















Piatra Craiului				
	Curmătura, 1470			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
82	Number of places	30		
	Vf. Ascuțit, 2047m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	trail	Access mode	Footpath	
10	Number of places	8		







Cindrel				
	Paltiniș, 1450m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Closed	
	Path + road	Access mode	Path + road	
80	Number of places	0		
	Fântânele, 1257m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Totally burnt	
	Path + road	Access mode	Path+ forest road	
90	Number of places	0		





Bucegi +Leaota				
	Diham, 1315m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Modernised	
	Footpath	Access mode	Trail	
	75	Number of places	86	
	Poiana Izvoarelor, 1455m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Closed	
	Trail	Access mode	Trail + Path	
	100	Number of places	0	
	Vârful du Dor, 1885m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Distroid	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
	79	Number of places	0	
	Piatra Arsă, 1950m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Modernised	
	Footpath	Access	Paved road	
	32	Number of places	140	
	Babele, 2200m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Closed	
	Footpath	Acces	Footpath, auto, funicular	
	130	Number of places	0	
	Caraiman, 2025m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
	70	Number of places	19	
	Refuge Coștila, 1670m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
	30	Number of places	20	
	Mălăiești, 1720m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
	95	Number of places	100	
	Omu, 2507m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
	30	Number of places	28	







	Ialomicioara Cave, 1610m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Modernised/Rebuilt	
	Path + road	Access mode	Forest road	
	119	Number of places	100	
	Bolboci, 1460m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional/Modernised	
	Path + road	Access mode	Forest road	
	36	Number of places	42	
	Zănoagei Gorges, 1400m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Modernised/Rebuilt	
	Path + road	Access	Forest road	
	100	Number of places	87	
	Scropoasa, 1205m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Closed	
	Path + road	Access mode	Forest road	
	60	Number of places	0	
	Leaota, 1370m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Closed	
	Trail	Access mode	Footpath	
	60	Number of places	0	



Bihorului+Vlădeasa				
	Padiș, 1280m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Modernised/Rebuilt	
	Footpath	Access mode	Forest road	
	22	Number of places	36	
	Scărișoara, 1108m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Rebuilt/Micro-station	
	Footpath	Access mode	Paved road	
	32	Number of places	42	
Lotrului				
	Prejba, 1630m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Closed	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
	80	Number of places	0	
Făgăraș				





	Urlea, 1533m			
	Hut in the 60s Footpath 45	Status Access mode Number of places	Totally burnt Footpath 0	
	Sâmbetei Valley, 1401m			
	Hut in the 60s Footpath 61	Status Acces Number of places	Under construction Off-road vehicles & Footpath ???	
	Towers, 1450m			
	Hut in the 60s Footpath 20	Condition Access mode Number of places	Functional Footpath 20	
	Podragu, 2136m			
	Hut in the 60s Footpath 71	Status Access mode Number of places	Functional Footpath 70	
	Bâlea Waterfall, 1234m			
	Hut in the 60s Footpath 109	Status Access mode Number of places	Rebuilt Hotel Footpath, Auto, Cable Car 69	
	Bâlea Lac, 2034m			
	Hut in the 60s Footpath 152	Status Access Number of places	Functional Footpath, Auto, Cable Car 31	
	Negoiu, 1544m			
	Hut in the 60s Footpath 140	Status Access mode Number of places	Functional Footpath 150	
	Bârcaciu, 1550m			
	Hut in the 60s Footpath 20	Status Access mode Number of places	Functional Footpath 20	
	Suru, 1450m			
	Hut in the 60s Footpath 75	Status Access mode Number of places	Reconstructed Footpath 31	

Șureanu				
	Șureanu, 1734m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Military hut	
	Footpath	Access mode	Forest road	
	55	Number of places	0	
	Prislop, 1200m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Ruin	
	Trail	Access mode	Forest road	
	68	Number of places	0	
	Lonea, 950m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Forest road	
	50	Number of places	50	

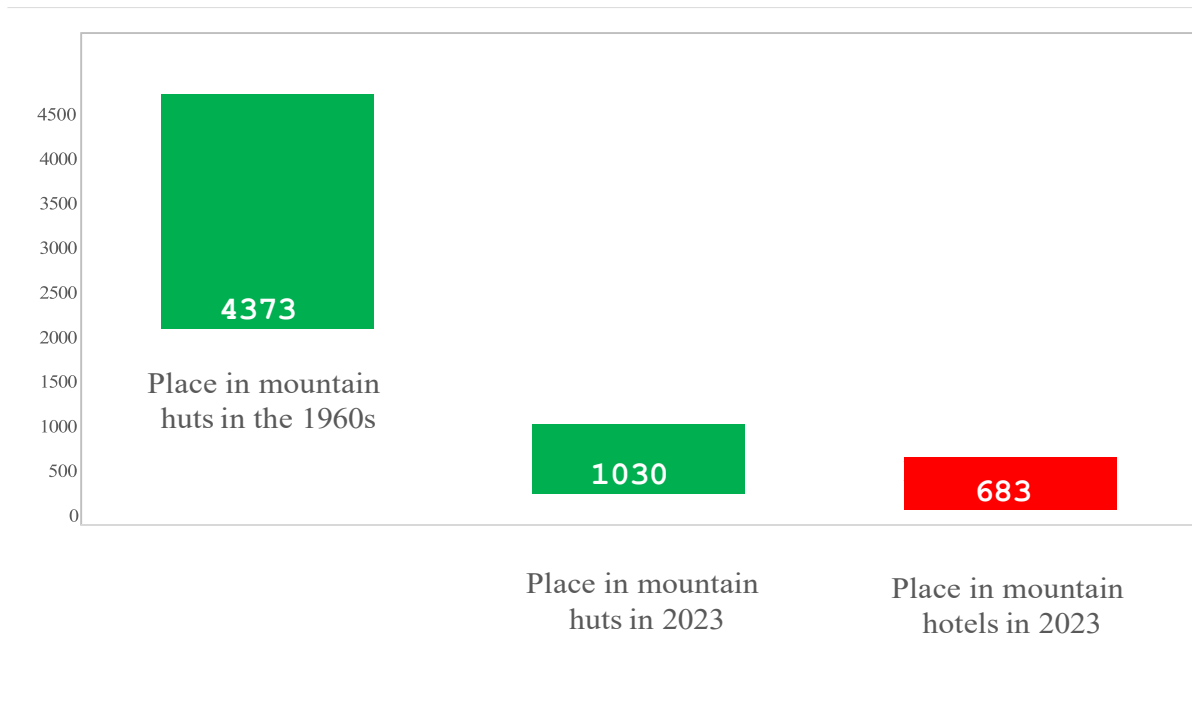
Parâng				
	Rusu, 1168m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Modernised/Resort	
	Path + road	Access	Path + road	
	72	Number of places	85	
	Parâng, 1579m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Resort	
	Footpath	Access mode	Auto, Funicular	
	95	Number of places	65	

Retezat				
	Buta, 1580			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
	65	Number of accommodation places	26	
	Baleia, 1410m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	Paragina	
	Path + road	Access mode	Forest forest road	
	100	Number of accommodation places	0	
	Stones, 1480m			
	Hut in the 60s	Rebuilt Status	/ Functional	
	Footpath	Access mode	Footpath	
	156	Number of accommodation places	45	

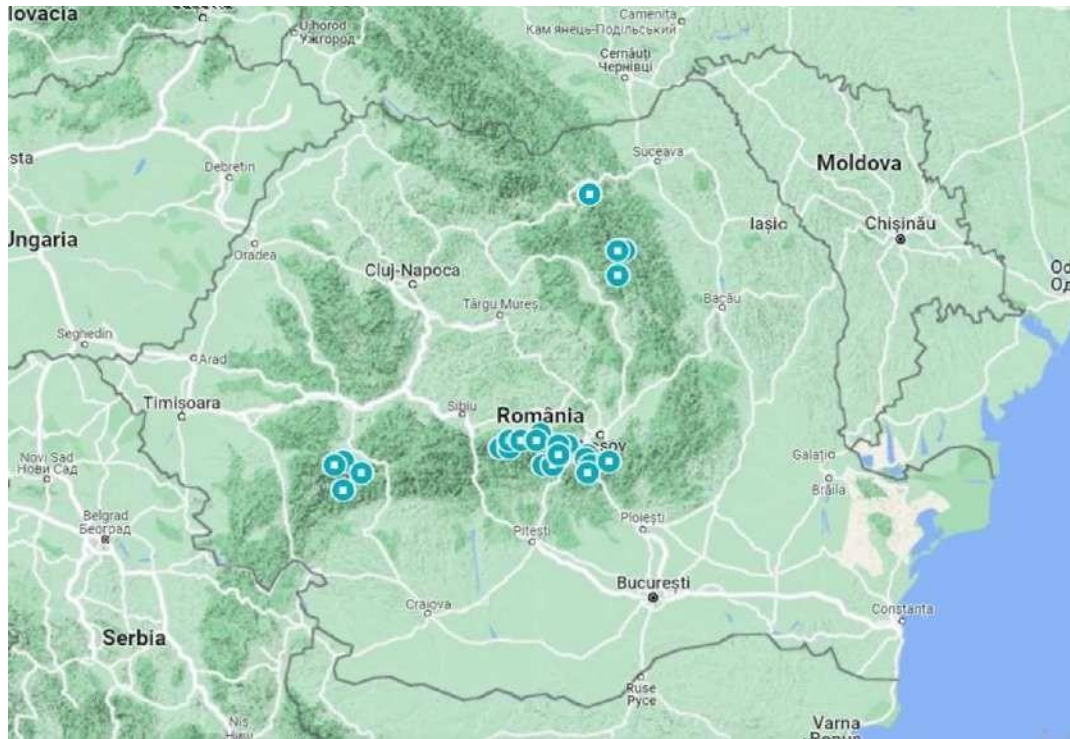
Gilăului				
	Cheile Turzii, 1385m			
	Hut in the 60s	Condition	Functional	
	Footpath	Access	Asphalted road	
38	Number of accommodation places		36	

Vâlcanului				
	Vâlcan, 1418m			
	Hut in the 60s	Rebuilt/Status	Mode rised	
	Path + road road	Access	Forest tarmac	
40	Number of accommodation places		60	
	Straja, 1445m			
	Hut in the 60s	Status	De molished/R eso rt	
	Footpath	Access	Paved road	
76	Number of places			

Analysing the accommodation available in the selected cottages from the 1960s, we can see that there is a capacity of 4373 places. After checking in 2023, we have a capacity of 1030 in mountain huts that can only be reached on foot, 683 in huts converted into hotel-type accommodation while some huts have been converted into tourist resorts with hundreds of beds, but there are also destroyed or abandoned huts that limit the movement of tourists in the area.

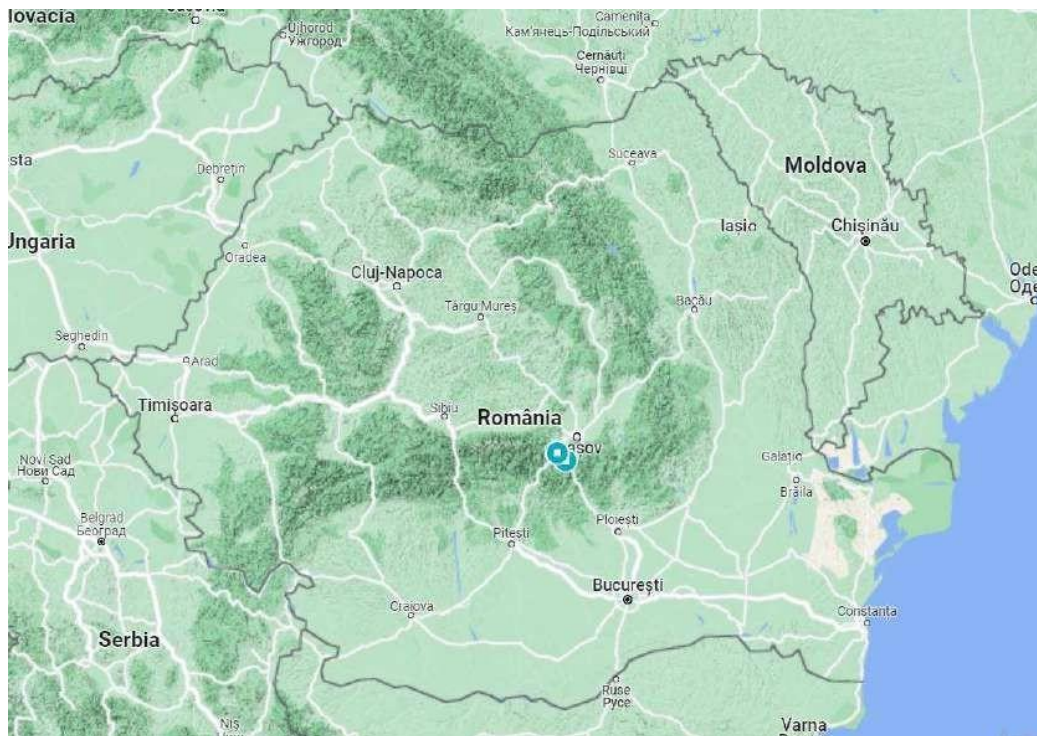


Map of mountain huts still accessible only by footpath and in working order



Whereas 57 of the huts studied (about 96%) belonged to mountain and hiking associations between 1930 and 1945, only 2 huts (4%) belong to mountain and hiking associations today, 55 of which have been owned by private individuals or companies since 1990.

Map of publicly accessible huts now owned by mountain associations.



The difference between the 59 huts surveyed and the 21 that are in working order and can only be accessed on footpaths are due either to the degree of anthropisation of Romania's mountain areas or to the difficulty and lack of involvement in managing a hut without the support of a mountain hiking club.

Out of the total of 59 huts, 20.3% have been converted into hotel-type accommodations, where guests come by private cars. The hut owners/shareholders sought to maximise profit by creating a road to facilitate provisioning, reconstruction and access for tourists.

Of the 21 mountain huts that are in working order, only 6 have been refurbished, the huts have been brought up to a decent standard of comfort without jeopardising the natural setting and accessibility for hikers.

Huts opened after 1964

In addition to the huts presented in the 1964 guidebook, we identified and visited 6 other mountain huts that appeared in the following 10-15 years. Of these, two are currently closed and one has been given access by car on a forest road.

Situation of the visited chalets opened after 1964

Huts opened after 1964				
	Miorița, Bucegi Mountains			
	Hut in the 60s	Status		Closed
	Footpath	Access mode		Trail
	90	Number of places		
	Dorului Valley, Bucegi Mountains			
	Hut in the 60s	Status		Functional
	Footpath	Access mode		Footpath
	32	Number of places	32	
	Garofița Pietrei Craiului, Piatra Craiului Mountains			
	Hut in the 60s	Status		Functional
	Footpath	Access mode		Footpath
	44	Number of places	23	
	Cuca, Iezer Mountains			
	Hut in the 60s	Status		Functional
	Footpath	Access mode		Forest road
	24	Number of places	36	
	Gențiana, Retezat Mountains			
	Hut in the 60s	Condition		Functional
	Footpath	Access mode		Footpath
	47	Number of places	38	
	Cănaia, Cindrel Mountains			
	Hut in the 60s	Status		Closed/ Refuge
	Footpath	Access mode		Trail
	20	Number of places	12	












Map of huts visited, opened after 1964



Refuges

In the absence of huts, numerous mountain constructions (refuges, technical shelters and Salvamont bases) have been built and are being built by various entities (mayors, county councils, private initiatives, with state funds, various projects and sponsorships), some in the care of authorities, volunteer groups or not, the records of which are not known at national level. With the exception of the Salvamont technical mountain huts, the rest are available to tourists with or without services.

In addition to the huts and refuges in the guidebook, a total of 13 mountain refuges were visited and assessed, located on frequently travelled trails, with insufficiently equipped huts. These offer only a roof over their heads, often overcrowded, in poor condition, full of rubbish, but we also have examples of modern refuges that attract hikers to less travelled areas.

REFUGES FOR HOLIDAYMAKERS			
	Fereastra Mica, Făgăraș Mountains		
	Status	Functional, in bad condition	
	Access	Footpath	
	Scara, Făgăraș Mountains		
	Status	Reconstructed 2023	
	Access	Footpath	
	Giurgiuului Bridge, Făgăraș Mountains		
	Status	Damaged, not functional	
	Access	Footpath	
	Viștea Mare, Făgăraș Mountains		
	Status	Functional	
	Access mode	Footpath	
	Grind 2, Piatra Craiului Mountains		
	Status	Functional	
	Access mode	Footpath	
	Speranțelor, Piatra Craiului Mountains		
	Status	Functional	
	Access mode	Footpath	
	Spirlea, Piatra Craiului Mountains		
	Status	Functional	
	Access mode	Footpath	
	Number of places	8	

	Bătrâna, Bucegi Mountains	
	Status Functional Access mode Footpath Number of places 20	
	Strunga, Bucegi Mountains	
	Status Functional Access mode Footpath Number of places 10	
	Șandru Mare, Nemira Mountains	
	Status Functional Access mode Footpath Number of places 6	
	Piatra Poenii, Cheile Bicazului	
	Status Functional Access Footpath Number of places 6	
	Ucigașu Peak, Cheile Bicazului	
	Status Functional, built 2021 Trail Access mode Footpath Number of places 4	
	Zănoaga, Retezat Mountains	
	Status Functional Footpath Access mode Footpath Number of places 10	

In the Romanian Carpathians, in the last decades, there has been a strong anthropisation of the mid-altitude mountain area. Public policy to promote nature protection, hiking as a healthy, active and environmentally friendly way of spending leisure time in nature is not supported by adequate infrastructure and services - a network of cosy and affordable huts. The mountain associations, which 80 years ago owned and managed mountain huts for public use, have not regained their place and role in society after the nationalisation and then privatisation of the area. The growing number of mountain huts cannot make up for the lack of dozens of necessary, well-located, environmentally friendly, solidly built and efficiently run mountain huts.

13,6% Destroyed
 17% Closed
 25,4% Functional at 60s level
 10,2% Modernized
 20,3% Became hotels
 5,1% Became local resorts
 8,4% Became regional/national resort