



FESTIVAL NA ZELENIKATA

Location: Zabernovo Village, Strandja Natural Park, Southeast Planning Region

Key words: Eco, cultural and heritage festival



Hundreds of nature lovers walk each year in May along the routes designed by the Strandja Nature Park Directorate during the Periwinkle Festival.

Enthusiastic participants are drawn by the blooming periwinkles, beautiful views of Strandja, authentic villages, and mysterious chapels. The periwinkle (“Strandjanska zelenika”) is a relict plant, iconic for Strandja Mountain.

This year’s 17th Strandja Periwinkle Festival gathered many visitors under the shade of the nearly 1000-year-old oak in Tulpan (near the village of Zabernovo). Traditionally, the festival began with the performances of the Strandja anthem “Yasen mesez” (Clear Moon) and the song “You are beautiful, my forest”. Before the start of the routes, the tourists enjoyed the folk performances of the amateur group from the town of Marko Tarnovo and the ensemble Tsarevo.

Strandja Nature Park is the organizer of the event and offered to the visitors several thematic routes such as: 1) Predators in Strandja (4 hours of walking with focus on the mountain’s fauna); 2) Pilgrim route with visits of several chapels and temples; 3) Eco route (circular, 2-3 hours’ route) which goes through century old beech trees, evergreens, blooming periwinkles and 6 endemic plants (growing only in this region); 4) walk in the oldest Bulgarian natural reserve - Silkoskia.

The festival is two days long and during that time an intense cultural program is envisaged. It includes songs, folklore dances (hora), culinary degustation, crafts, competitions, and many others. Usually the event attracts more than 2000 participants, but this year due to the Covid19 measurements, the visitors’ number was reduced to 700 and some of the planned social and cultural activities were cancelled.

Marketing approach

The festival is featured in the Strandja Nature Park website (strandja.bg), as well as in its Facebook page which is updated regularly.

The event is also widely advertised in local and national media, on events

calendars and on specialized on-line platforms

One of the best promotions is the word-of-mouth of every excited tourist who has participated once and drawn forever to the beauty and mystery of Strandja.

Financial situation

The initiative receives project-based funding. The activities are financed by Strandja Nature Park budget as well as by Regional Water and Environmental Inspectorate in Bourgas.



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Key success factors and challenges

- Unique combination of environmental, traditional, ethnic and pilgrimage tourism;
- Tourists are involved in many aspects: walking, dancing, information, education, socializing with guides and other tourists;

- The festival promotes sustainable living, love for the nature and return to the routes;
- Strandja is one of the best preserved territories where all villages retain their authentic architecture and atmosphere. Tourists can experience Strandja in all of its aspects: as a natural park, as an architectural and

ethnic reserve, as a place for worship and spiritual growth;

- The event was suspended in 2020 due to COVID19 pandemic. In 2021, its attendance dropped and some of the cultural activities were cancelled.

GALLERY:



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/strandja/photos/>



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