

Come to visit our country

CĂLĂRAȘI



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“Paparuda” is an old Romanian custom. It is used to try and bring about rain. Many young girls take part in it. The ritual takes place especially in the South-East of the country (Călărași), but also in other parts of it.

“Paparuda” comprises three ceremonial parts: the birth of the goddess, the delight of the goddess and its death. The birth is marked by making up a group of the “Paparuda”. A person will be selected to play the part of the sacred character. A dress is made of leaves and embellished with flowers and the “Paparuda” puts it on.



The group visits the wells of the village, the houses of peasants. The character dances, the tune being a simple one done clapping people’s hands and tells a simple text to bring forth rain.

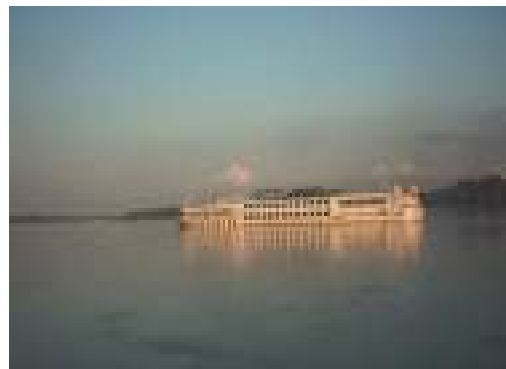
The death of the character is marked by taking off the dress. This dress is put into the river where it flows down (the Danube).



Cuisine treats

- salad (made of tomatoes, green peppers, cucumbers, sliced hard boiled eggs, grated chesse, hot chili peppers)
- pilaff with raisins
- fisherman’s bortsch
- cow tripe soup
- spitted carp
- grilled great sturgeon
- roasted lamb





Călărași, 2004

CĂLĂRAȘI County

The county's population

324 617 inhabitants
(on March 18, 2002)

(1,5 % the country's population)

Area

5,088 sq.km



Situated in the south-eastern part of Romania and of the Romanian Plain, on the left bank of the Danube (km 452-300).

The county seat is **Călărași** municipality, on the left bank of the Borcea, with over 70,000 inhabitants.

The other towns count less than 50,000 inhabitants: Oltenița, Budești, Fundulea, and Lehliu-Gară. There are 48 communes and 160 villages.



Millenary history



Goddess from Potcoava
Anthropomorphic statuette, Gumelnița
Culture, millennium IV B.C.

*Bronze objects, ceramics,
anthropomorphic statuettes
kept at the Museum of the
Lower Danube of the town
Călărași.*

The territory of the Călărași County is one of the most important segments of the Lower Danube zone. The extraordinary habitat conditions favoured the population of these territories as early as the upper Paleolithic age.

Prehistoric civilizations like Boian, Gumelnița, Cernavodă-Renie, Coslogeni have specific Călărași names.

Getian and Roman vestiges found in numerous ancient settlements (Durostorum, Pietroiu, Unirea, Chirnogi, Radovanu) continued the tradition of culture and civilization of these Danubian territories.



Applied anthropomorphic part
Boian Culture, millennium V B.C., Gălățui - Movila Berzei



Păcuiul lui Soare Island



Vicina

The pre-feudal and feudal era was marked by the Roman-Byzantine and Byzantine culture emanated by the cities built by the Danube. We must mention here the extraordinary contribution of the Byzantine city Vicina, built on the Pacuiul lui Soare Island. In the 12th century, Vicina was the center of a Danubian pre-statal formation that occupied broadly, also the territory of the present day Calarasi County.



Monasteries, churches

On the left bank of the Danube there are documentary attested old villages.

Mănăstirea Village

Around this area there used to be the famous medieval town Cornățel, a prosperous commercial centre along the Danube.



We have known about its existence since the 16th century. Little by little it falls into decay because of the many robberies of the Ottomans and it moves towards the terrace of the Danube settling around a monastery which was built by a ruler - Matei Basarab in 1648.

The new settlement was to be known by the name of Mănăstirea, a name has been preserved so far.



Dervent Monastery

In the South of Călărași the Danube loses its unique flow and splits into two branches - one flowing along the eastern margin of the Bărăgan Plain, the Borcea branch – the other one flowing along the western margin of the Dobrudja, the Old Danube. The flow of the Danube through two river beds determines an interior meadow - The Island of Borcea - and an external meadow.

Here, on the limy lands of the Dobrudja the first Christian communities were constituted. An old folk tradition speaks about Saint Andrew who came to the Dobrudja of today and very shortly he succeeded in baptizing the first Christians, in ordaining the first priests.

Four martyrs of Saint Andrew found there death at Dervent. Out of their bodies there grew four crosses. Only one cross was survived and it is know under the name of the Healing cross.

On September 1942 the **Dervent Monastery** was sanctified. It was built in a Byzantine style and the Healing cross is still there.



CĂLĂRAȘI town

The first documentary reference of the town was made on **June 1 st 1541**, but it was certified under the name of Lichiresti.

During Constantin Brancoveanu's reign, the town was named Călărași, a name taken from the detachment of the cavalry men, the Romanian term of "călărași", who used to transport the mail between Bucuresti and Constantinopol through Silistra.

With **1731** Călărași had been a market town.

The name of Călărași instead of Lichiresti is mentioned for the first time in an Austrian map dating from **1791**.



Since April **1833** (when it counted only 866 inhabitants) till April **1952**, Călărași was the seat of Ialomița county.



The town's Cathedral - It is as old as the city, if not older, since it existed in 1630. The Saint Nicholas Cathedral has been also known under the name of The Virgin's Dormition.

**"Știrbei Vodă"
Highschool**



After **24th September 1852**, when it became a free town, Călărași would register a real economic, social and public utility development. It was the period during which - to the end of the 19th century - important administrative and social-cultural edifices were built: "Stirbei Voda" Highschool (1881), the Town Hall (1887), the County Administrative Palace (1895 – 1898), the Firemen's Headquarters etc.



Nowadays Calarasi tries to find its own identity, wanting to be a city in which going back to traditions has to take into account what was accomplished during the years of the communist dictatorship too, when, thanks to the efforts of its citizens, important industrial edifices were raised.

Folk art

With the Romanians, the artistic element has always been a natural, daily part of life. The peasant's house, the utensils in the kitchen, the folk costume worn on festive occasions, the customs, the poetry, the songs and dances have always represented the object of an art applied with great fantasy and originality.



The charm of the countryside is definitely represented by ancient trades which can be gathered into a symbolical museum. Archaic tools as well as the customs and faith related to them have been carefully preserved by the villagers along the centuries.



The main occupations of the people living here are: working the land, fishing and animal breeding.



A stretch of waters and earth

Before leaving for a fight, the dacians, ancestors of Romanians, would drink the water of the Danube. The gods of the river benefited from the power to inspire them with the necessary courage and the good luck to help them win the battle. The contemporary world has forgotten this rite, but the force of the Danube is still a lively one, not only tangible and material, and we still find its various echoes in the old beliefs and legends, and in songs and verse.



The Danube is a real “diagonal of Europe” and through the links it makes between the countries of the continent it represents the main way of water transportation from Europe. Calarasi zone is a part of the Low Danube represented by the last 1075 km from its course. That is equivalent to 38,09% of its length. This is the Carpathian/balcanic/pontic district and it lies between Bazias and its flowing into the sea through a unique delta in Europe.



Călărași is part of the Lower Plain of the Danube. Its very fertile soil made of a black earth zone and this it grows cereals, technical plants and vegetables. The forests protect the land but they are no so widely spread as the agricultural ground.



There will always be the unspeakable beauty of the Plain, understood maybe by lonely souls, by those who are still capable of being thrilled by the sight of a village fountain or by lovely sunflowers longing after the star of fire.

The people, traditions and faith

In a Europe in which the rural elements have become a simple memory, Romania continues to be a country with an impressive number of villages, where the archaic atmosphere has been preserved in the landscape, in the beliefs, in the traditions. It is worth visiting the Romanian villages mainly on the occasion of Christmas, the New Year or Easter. These are cardinal points of the Romanian year in which tradition means long corteges of carol singers and people in disguise, dishes with tempting flavors and rites.



“Breazaia” – The people wear a zoomorphical mask embellished excessively and this person who wears the mask is a substitute of a god who comes to life again before Christmas; “Brezaia” also hears the name of “Capra” (the goat) in the South East of Romania.

“Cucii” is a spring tradition; it takes place in Calarasi County. Its significance is that of purifying. The boys and the young men dress up, they put on masks and call themselves “Cucii”.

They wear a sort of hoods made of sack cloth. The hoods are covered with white or colored paper. There are holes for the mouth, the nose and the eyes. On the hoods there are two horns covered with flakes and feathers.

There is a belief that one, who isn't touched by the “Cucii” that day, will not be healthy during the year. “Cucii” can be translated as cocoons and old beliefs say that this bird has a purifying quality.

