

## **IDENTIFICATION DEFINITION, DETERMINATION AND PROMOTION OF LARGE MOUNTAIN TOURIST REGIONS IN THE WORLD**

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### **Abstract**

Mountains are a natural attractive motif spread on all continents. The mountains have many opportunities for recreation, sports, education, entertainment and other activities for tourism. Tourism that is practiced in mountainous environment is identified as mountain tourism, which consists of special alternative forms - hiking, mountaineering, walking, skiing and more.

Mountain tourism is one of the most selective types of tourism. Mountaineering, walking and organized skiing date back to the mid-19th century. Today, mountain tourism is widespread on all continents and it is more or less practiced in about 80 countries around the world.

To complete this paper we use literature and extensive internet research of relevant data.

The purpose of this paper is to identify and define the criteria through which we determine and make the first promotion of large mountain tourist regions in the world. Through this text, on geographical regionalization we identify 17 large mountain tourist regions and over 3100 mountain resorts and ski centers, which practice various forms of mountain tourism.

In addition to the text, several tables, graphs and thematic maps have been moved. In the end, in the conclusion are presented several directions and recommendations for future more thorough research of each mountain tourist region separately, but also studio research on the mountains where one or more alternative forms of mountain tourism are practiced.

**Key words:** hiking, mountaineering, skiing, hiking and mountain trails, ski resorts, tourists.

**JEL Classification:** Z32 Tourism and Development; Z39 Tourism: Other

### **INTRODUCTION**

The mountains have always fascinated people because of the clean air, clean water, rich biodiversity, natural landscapes, various geomorphological shapes and specific features that provide opportunities for recreational and sports activities on the mountain.

The first forms of mountain tourism - hiking, walking, mountaineering and skiing as organized activities for recreation and mountain sports date back to the middle of the XIX century. (Gerrard, A. J. 1990) The first forms of organized mountaineering are found in Europe, in 1857 when the first mountaineering organization was established in London (Great Britain) called "Alpine Club", and then followed the establishment of such mountaineering clubs and organizations in several countries (Austria, Australia, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, France, etc.). (Kazazavić, E. & Caplar, A., 2010)

Geographically, there are mountains on all continents of the Earth in large and still unknown numbers. There are many interconnected mountains on Earth that form mountain systems or chains, from 100, 200, up to several thousand kilometers. The total number of major mountain ranges, systems and independent mountains with a length of over 100 km is 1233, of which 396 in North America, 267 in Asia, 218 in Europe, 132 in

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South America, 124 in Africa, 46 in Antarctica, 31 in Central America and 19 in Australia with Oceania. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_mountain\\_ranges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mountain_ranges) (Dimitrov, 2021)

There are 70 mountain systems in the world longer than 500 km. Most of them are in Asia (35), followed by North America (12), Europe (8), South America (7), Africa (4), Australia with Oceania (3) and Antarctica (1). Of all these, only about 20 large mountain systems practice various forms of mountain tourism. The most famous of them are: Alps (mountain system 1200 km long), Apennines (1200 km), Carpathians (1700 km), Scandinavian Mountains (1700 km), Pyrenees (700 km), Urals (2500 km), Greater Caucasus (1200 km), Appalachian Mountains (2414 km), Rocky Mountains (4830 km), Coastal Mountains (1600 km), Andes (7000 km), Himalayas (2500 km), Australian Mountains (3500 km), Atlas (2500 km), Dinaric Mountains (645 km), Tavr (600 km), Balkan Mountain (557 km), Karakorum (500 km) and others. (Dimitrov, 2021)

From its emergence onwards, mountain tourism is enriched with new primary and secondary activities, such as walking, mountaineering, skiing, then mountain biking, mountain running, paragliding, rock climbing, hunting, fishing, cultural-historical tourism, rural, landscape tourism and the like. However, the dominant activities are: recreational hiking, walking, skiing, rock climbing, mountain running, mountain biking and paragliding. (Malcev, & Sotirov, 2015)

Important segments of mountain tourism is the mountain infrastructure, which are: mountain resorts, mountain hotels, ski resorts, mountain lodges, villas, marked hiking and hiking trails, ski and other trails, jumps, traffic access, various cable cars, ski lifts and more tourist and catering infrastructure. The developed mountain tourist regions attract millions of tourists, especially in the summer and winter period of the year.

The tourism research the problem of mountain tourism in the world is overshadowed by the coastal tourism that dominates. Namely, in 2018, world tourism realized 1,401,000,000 tourists (UNWTO, July 2019), of which most, over 800 million tourists (57.1%) spent their vacation by the sea and lake, or belong to coastal and lake tourism, then over 300 million tourists belong to cultural and religious tourism (21.4%), over 200 million tourists belong to mountain tourism (14.3%) and over 100 million tourists belong to other types of tourism (7.2%).

With this paper, we make a modest contribution to the study of the regionalization of mountain tourism, we provide data on the number of large mountain tourist regions, data on the number of mountain resorts, ski centers, the longest mountain trails and more.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The materials and methods we use in the research are part of the method of description and we group them into two groups, namely: primary and secondary group. In the primary group there are descriptions of used literature, and in the secondary group there are data from the websites of mountain ski resorts, resorts, mountain and alpine federations, etc., as well as personal mountaineering observations and experiences.

Based on the textual materials and data obtained from literature and websites, we identify, define and determine the geographical location, ie location of large mountain tourist regions, mountain resorts, ski resorts, marked mountain and other trails globally.

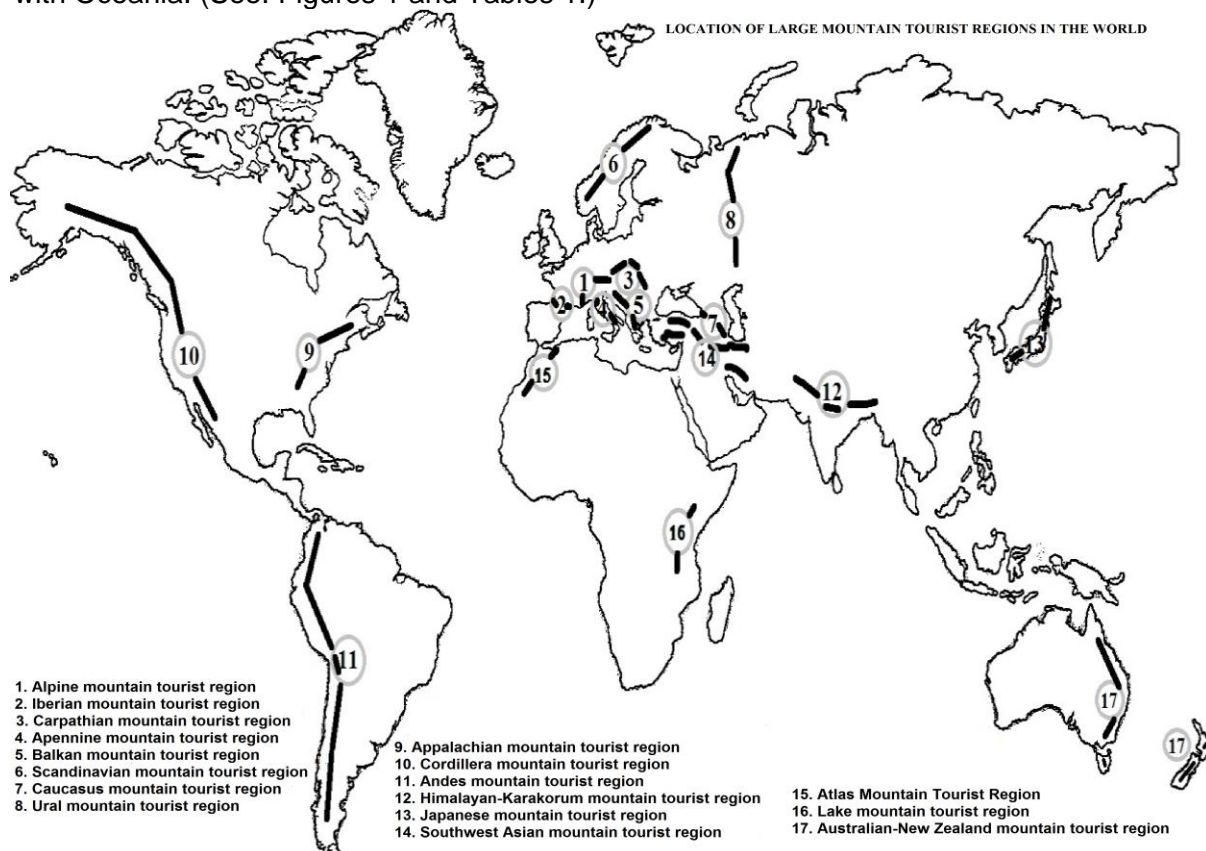
We define and determine the large mountain tourist regions based on three criteria: **scope** or size of mountain natural conditions (mountains, mountain massifs, dominant peaks, richness of geomorphological forms, etc.); **mountain tourist infrastructure** in function of mountain tourism (terrains for sports - recreational tourism, hiking, walking, mountaineering, skiing, mountain biking, mountain running, rock climbing, paragliding and other activities, then accommodation, food, entertainment, culture and etc., as well as

spaces and facilities for communication - roads, cable cars, sports trails, etc.) and **international importance** - tourist visits to the mountainous region.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Large mountain tourist regions

From the extensive research, we group the mountains and massifs that practice mountain tourism in the world into 17 large mountain tourist regions. These regions cover several thousand mountains spread across 71 countries and on all continents. By continents, the largest mountain tourist regions are 8 in Europe, 3 in Asia, 2 in North America, 2 in Africa, 1 in South America and 1 large mountain tourist region in Australia with Oceania. (See: Figures 1 and Tables 1.)



Figures 1: Location of major mountain tourist regions in the world

Tables 1: Large mountain tourist regions in the world

SN	Mountain tourist region	Name of the mountain	Countries where the mountainous region extends
<b>EUROPE</b>			
1.	<b>Alpine</b>	Alps (western and eastern Alps)	Switzerland, Austria, Italy, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Monaco (8)
2.	<b>Pyrenees</b>	Pyrenees, Sierra Nevada	Spain, France, Andorra (3)
3.	<b>Carpathian</b>	Carpathians, Tatra, Sudetans and others.	Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia (6)
4.	<b>Apennines</b>	Apennines, Vesuvius,	Etna Italy, San Marino (2)

5.	<b>Balkan</b>	Dinara, Jahorina, Igman, Durmitor, Tara, Zlatibor, Kopaonik, Prokletie, Shar Planina, Bistra, Baba, Pind, Olympus, Rila, Pirin and others.	Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Greece (10)
6.	<b>Scandinavian</b>	Scandinavian Mountains	Norway, Sweden and Finland (3)
7.	<b>Caucasus</b>	Caucasus (Greater Caucasus, Lesser Caucasus)	Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia (4)
8.	<b>Ural</b>	Urals	Russia (1)
<b>NORTH AMERICA</b>			
9.	<b>Appalachians</b>	Appalachians	Canada and USA (2)
10.	<b>Cordillera</b>	Cordillers and others.	Canada and USA and Mexico (3)
<b>SOUTH AMERICA</b>			
11.	<b>Andes</b>	Andes	Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina (7)
<b>ASIA</b>			
12.	<b>Himalayas Karakorum</b>	Himalayas, Karakorum, Kunlun Shan, Hindu Kush, Pamir, Tian Shan et al.	China, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan (8)
13.	<b>Japanese</b>	Fuji-Fujiyama	Japan (1)
14.	<b>Southwest</b>	Southwest Tabor, Pontic Mountains, Ararat, Elborz, Zagros and others.	Turkey, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Israel (5)
<b>AFRICA)</b>			
15.	<b>Atlas</b>	Atlas	Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria (3)
16.	<b>Lake</b>	Lake Kilimanjaro, Ruvenzori, Kenya	Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda (3)
<b>AUSTRALIA WITH OCEANIA</b>			
17.	<b>Australian-New Zealand</b>	Australian Alps, Southern Alps	Australia, New Zealand (2)

Of all the 17 major mountain tourist regions, 4 are the largest and most developed mountain tourist regions in the world, namely: **Alpine, Appalachian, Cordillera and Japanese**.

These large mountain tourist regions are located in the territories of highly developed states, as well as near densely populated areas with millions of cities and other major cities. Fourteen major mountain tourist regions are visited by over 150 million mountain tourists or 75% share of the total number of 200 million mountain tourists. (Dimitrov, 2021)

In the first place is the Alpine mountain tourist region (Austria, Switzerland, France, Italy, Germany and Slovenia), which is annually visited and stayed by over 100 million mountain tourists (with a share of 50% in the total number of mountain tourists), with visit by over 30 millions of mountain tourists are the Appalachian and Cordillera Mountain Tourist Region (in the USA and Canada) and with over 10 million mountain tourists is the Japan Mountain Tourist Region.

The primacy of the Alpine Mountain Tourist Region is illustrated by the example of the Alps, which has 1,500 tourist centers with 3.5 million beds, 13,000 cable cars and more than 7,000 km<sup>2</sup> of ski slopes. (Stevanovic, 2008), as well as 1200 large and small ski resorts and mountain resorts. (Dimitrov, 2021)

The most visited countries are France, USA, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Japan and Canada. (See: Tables 2)

Tables 2: Countries in the world with over 10 million mountain tourists

Country	Number of tourists		Percentage %
	Total tourists	From that mountain *	
France	89.400.000	30.000.000*	33,5%
USA	79.618.000	30.000.000*	37,6%
Austria	30.816.000	25.000.000*	81,1%
Italy	62.146.000	25.000.000*	40,2%
Switzerland	11.715.000	10.000.000*	85,3%
Germany	38.881.000	10.000.000*	25,7%
Spain	82.773.000	10.000.000*	12,0%
Japan	31.192.000	10.000.000*	32,0%
Canada	21.134.000	10.000.000*	47,3%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>447.675.000</b>	<b>160.000.000*</b>	<b>35,7%</b>

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), July, 2019; \*Evaluation by the author

The other 13 major mountain tourist regions are visited by a total of about 50 million mountain tourists. Of these, 8 major mountain tourist regions, Pyrenees, Apennine, Carpathian, Scandinavian, Balkan, Ural, Caucasian and Australian-New Zealand, have a total visit of over 40 million mountain tourists.

The five largest mountain tourist regions have the lowest attendance and stay of mountain tourists of about 6 million: Himalayas - Karakorum, Southwest Asia, Andes, Atlas and Lakes. The low attendance is primarily due to the distance from large cities and poor traffic and other infrastructure.

The remaining 4 million tourists belong to mountains and countries that are not included in the seventeen major mountain tourist regions. These are mountains in twenty countries: Great Britain, Portugal, Iceland, Belgium, Mexico, South Korea, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Brazil and others. Some of the mentioned countries do not have ski centers or mountain resorts, but they still have attractive mountain landscapes, conditions for recreational hiking, mountaineering, walking, cycling, forest houses, houses and the like. (Dimitrov, 2021)

### Mountain resorts and ski resorts

Mountain skiing is an important recreation and sport that has existed without interruption for about 150 years. Various ski activities: downhill, slalom, giant slalom, cross country, Nordic skiing, biathlon, sledding, ice hockey, ski jumping, snowboarding, etc. Special skiing equipment: skis, appropriate footwear, appropriate clothing, etc. Accompanying instruments and facilities are: various types of ski lifts, cable cars, devices for making artificial snow, snow removal machines - snowmobiles, snowmobiles, helicopters, ski patrols, then hotels, restaurants, mountain houses, etc.

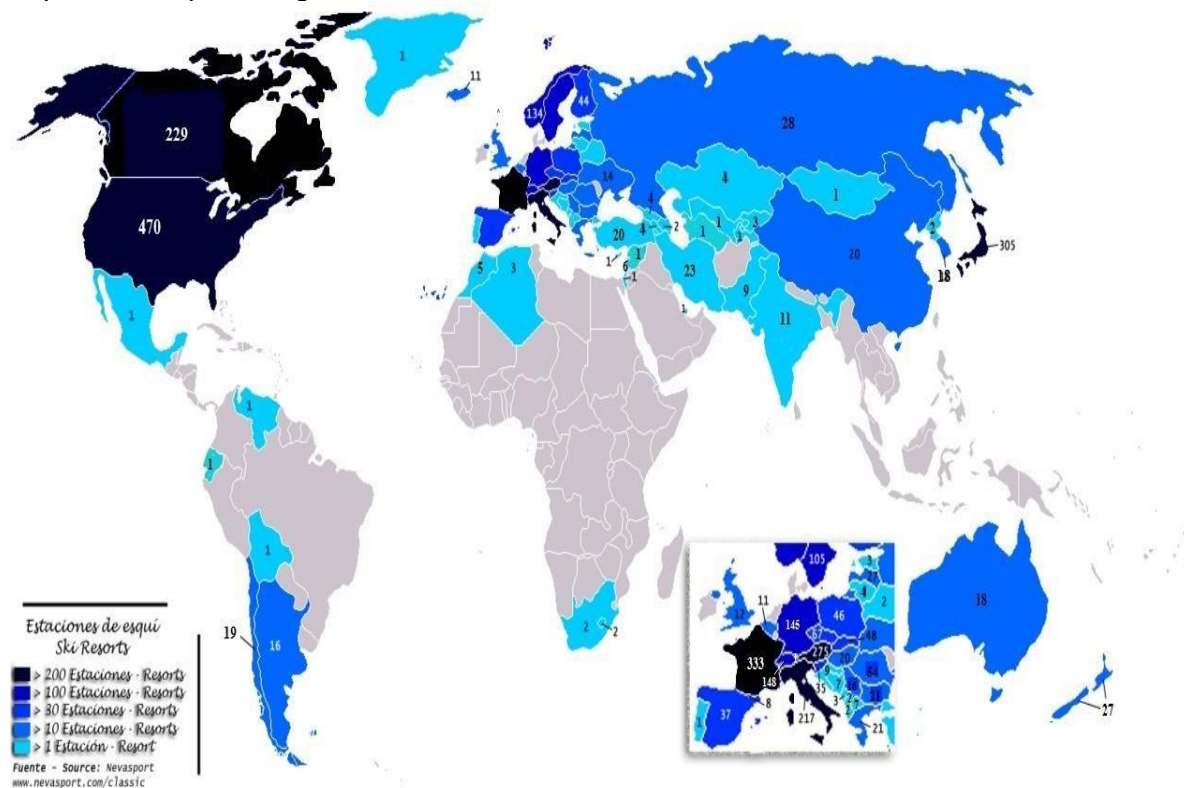
As of 1994, there are an estimated 55 million people involved in alpine skiing worldwide. (Čečić, & Mačić, & Komlenović, & Manić, 2006: Mačić, 2008). Today, the conditions for alpine skiing in the world are better and the numbers have significantly increased to about 200 million people.

In 2012, there were 2791 large and small ski resorts and mountain resorts in the world, of which 1689 in Europe, 644 in North America, 379 in Asia, 38 in Australia with

Oceania, 35 in South America and 8 in Africa 8 ski resorts and mountain resorts. (Dimitrov, 2021)

In 2020, there are 3153 ski resorts and mountain resorts in the world, or in eight years, ski resorts and resorts have increased by 362 new or about 13%. The highest number of ski resorts and resorts is in the USA 470, in France 333, in Japan 305, in Austria 275, in Canada 229, in Italy 217, in Switzerland 148, in Norway 134, in Germany 116, in Sweden 105, int. There are 73 countries in the world that have ski resorts, of which 10 countries have over 100 ski resorts, 7 countries have over 30 ski resorts, 9 countries have 20 or more ski resorts, and 10 countries have over 10 ski resorts, and 37 countries have under 10 ski resorts. (See: Tables 3 and 4; Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ski\\_areas\\_and\\_resorts\\_in\\_the\\_world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ski_areas_and_resorts_in_the_world)



Figures 2: Location of ski resorts and mountain resorts in the world, in 2020.

By continents. Most ski resorts are in Europe 1930, North America 700, Asia 428, Australia with Oceania 45, South America 38 and Africa 12 ski resorts.

Tables 3: Geographical location of large mountain tourist regions by continents, by number of ski resorts, resorts and number of countries

SN	Large mountain tourist region	Number of ski resorts and resorts	Number of countries	Continent (number of large and small ski resorts and resorts)
1.	Alpine	1200	8	Europe (1930)*
2.	Pyrenees	70	3	
3.	Carpathian	120	6	

4.	<b>Apennine</b>	40	1	
5.	<b>Balkan</b>	90	10	
6.	<b>Scandinavian</b>	290	3	
7.	<b>Caucasian</b>	Caucasus	4	
8.	<b>Ural</b>	Ural	1	
9.	<b>Appalachians</b>	Appalachians	2	North America (700)*
10.	<b>Cordilleras</b>	Cordillery	3	
11.	<b>Andes</b>	Andes	7	South America (38)
12.	<b>Himalayas-Karakorum</b>	Himalayas-Karakorum	8	Asia (428)*
13.	<b>Japanese</b>	Japanese	1	
14.	<b>Southwest Asia</b>	Southwest Asia	5	
15.	<b>Atlas</b>	Atlaski	3	Africa (12)*
16.	<b>Lake</b>	Lake	3	
17.	<b>Australian-New Zealand</b>	Australian-New Zealand	2	Australia-New Zealand (45)
<b>Total:</b>		Total:	Total:	<b>3153</b>

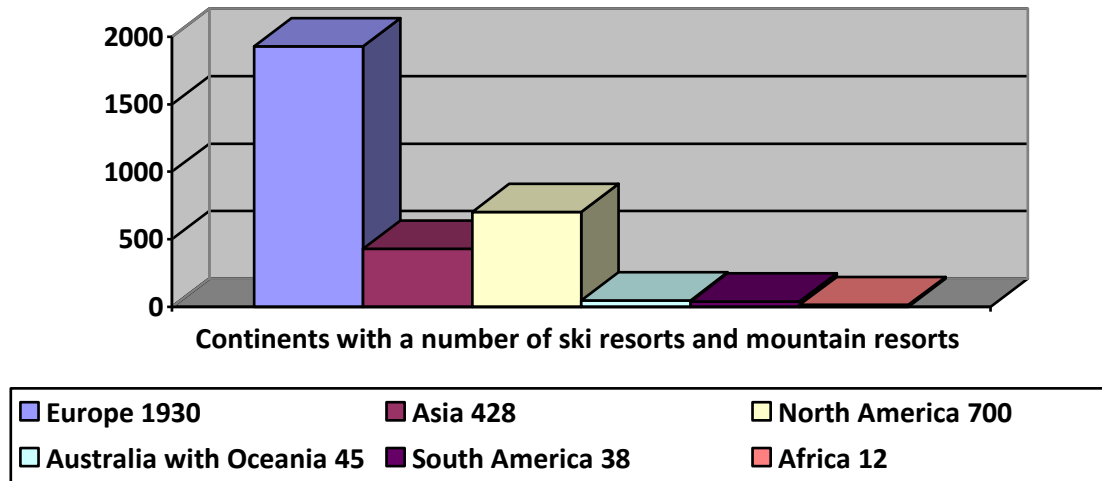
\* Together large and small ski resorts and mountain resorts in other mountains and countries.

\*\* Together with states that repeat in two regions.

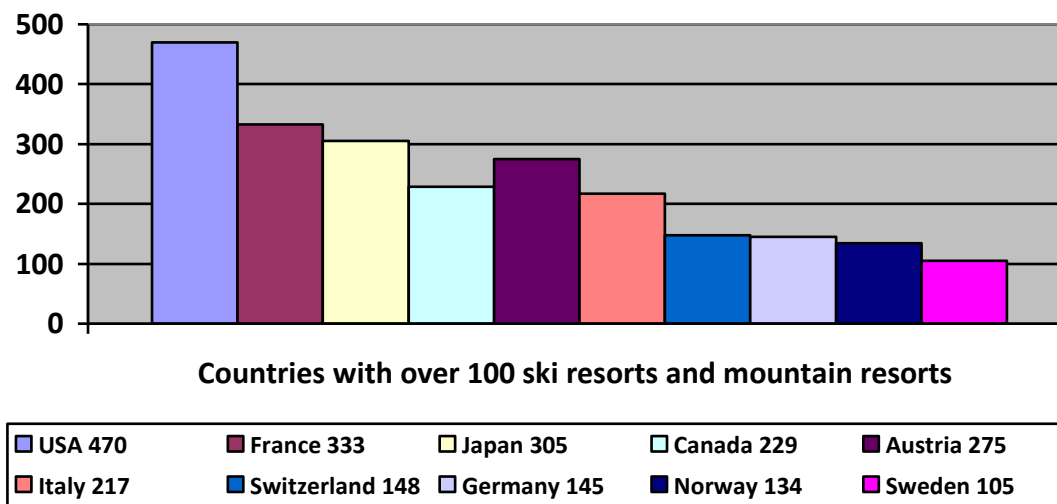
Tables 4: Geographical location of large and small ski resorts and mountain resorts in the world, in 2020

Continents with a number of ski resorts	Држави со број на големи и мали ски центри и планински одморалишта
<b>Europe: 1930</b>	<u>In 41 countries:</u> France 333, Austria 275, Italy 217, Switzerland 148, Germany 145, Norway 134, Sweden 105, Czech Republic 67, Romania 54, Slovakia 48, Poland 46, Finland 44, Spain 37, Slovenia 35, Russia 28, Latvia 27, Bulgaria 21, Greece 21, Hungary 20, Serbia 16, Ukraine 14, Great Britain 12, Belgium 11, Iceland 11, Croatia 9, Andorra 8, Macedonia 7, Bosnia and Herzegovina 7, Armenia 4, Lithuania 4, Georgia 4, Montenegro 3, Albania 2, Azerbaijan 2, Estonia 3, Kosovo 2, Belarus 2, Liechtenstein 1, Portugal 1, Cyprus 1, Denmark 1 (Greenland).
<b>Asia: 428</b>	<u>In 18 countries:</u> Japan 305, Iran 23, Turkey 20, China 20, South Korea 18, India 11, Pakistan 9, Lebanon 6, Kazakhstan 4, Kyrgyzstan 3, North Korea 2, Israel 1, Mongolia 1, United Arab Emirates 1 **, Russia (Asian Territory) 1, Syria 1, Tajikistan 1, Turkmenistan 1 and Uzbekistan 1. ** Ski Dubai - closed large ski resort with an area of 22,500 m <sup>2</sup> , temperature from -1 to 2°C, height of 85 meters, with a ski trail, sledding, cable car, etc.
<b>North America: 700</b>	<u>In 3 countries:</u> USA 470, Canada 229, Mexico 1.
<b>Australia with Oceania: 45</b>	<u>In 2 countries:</u> New Zealand 27 and Australia 18.
<b>South America: 38</b>	<u>In 5 countries:</u> Chile 19, Argentina 16, Bolivia 1, Venezuela 1, Ecuador 1
<b>Africa: 12</b>	<u>In 4 countries:</u> Morocco 5, Algeria 3, Lesotho 2 and South Africa 2.
<b>Total: 3153</b>	<b>In 73 countries</b>

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ski\\_areas\\_and\\_resorts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ski_areas_and_resorts) in the world

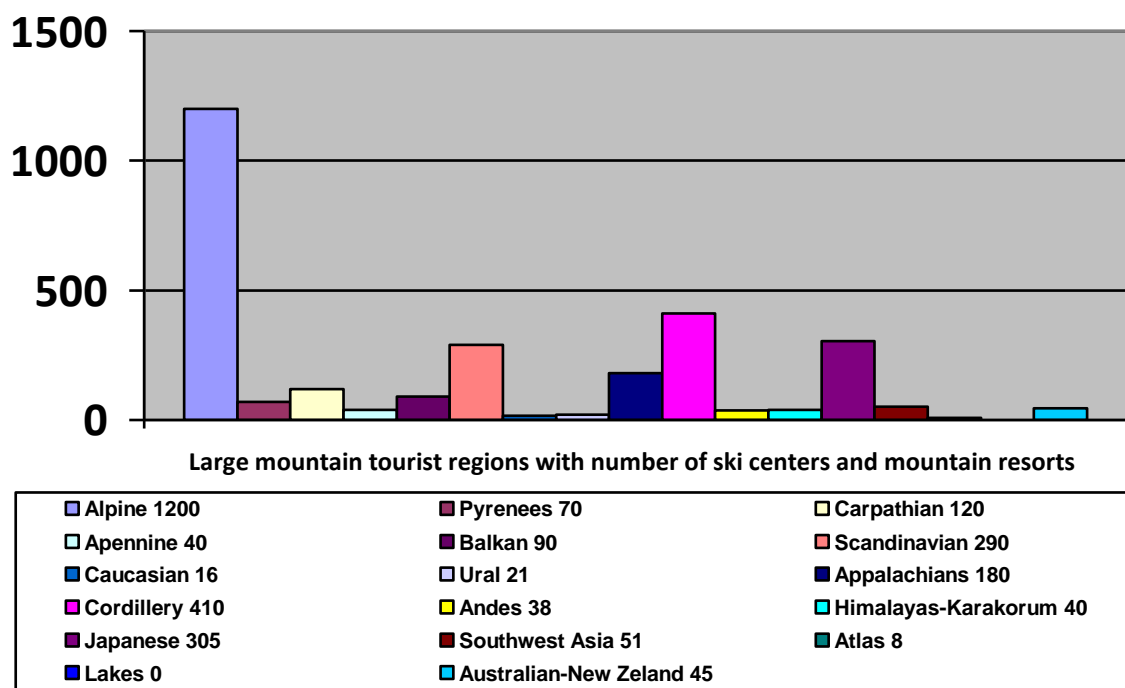


Figures 3: Continents with number of ski resorts and mountain resorts



Figures 4: Countries with over 100 ski resorts and mountain resorts





Figures 5: Large mountain tourist regions with number of ski centers and mountain resorts

From all the previous tables, maps and graphs, generally we can conclude that mountain tourism in greater or lesser form is practiced in the world by about 80 countries, of which 65 countries belong to the 17 major mountain tourist regions. In 65 countries (33% of the total number of 196 countries) they practice ski and mountain tourism in the mentioned 17 large mountain tourist regions. Large mountain tourist regions have 2924 large and small ski resorts and resorts (92.7% of the total number of 3153 large and small ski resorts and mountain resorts in the world). The remaining 229 large and small ski resorts (7.3%) are located on other mountains in over twenty other states (along with the United States outside the two major mountain resorts - Appalachian and Cordillera).

### Mountain trails, mountain running and mountain biking

The function of safe mountaineering is to trace and mark various trails for recreational hiking, recreational and professional mountaineering, various weight trails or mountaineering directions, mountain running trails, cycling trails, etc.

Based on extensive analysis and calculations, we come to the conclusion that the total length of the network of hiking and mountaineering trails in the world is over 343,000 km. Of these, the longest network of hiking and mountain trails is in Europe, over 130,000 km (37.9%), in North America about 110,000 km (32.1%), in Asia about 60,000 km (17.5%), in Australia with Oceania about 20,000 km (5.8%), in South America about 18,000 km (5.2%), in Africa about 3000 km (0.9%) and in Central America about 2000 km (0.6%). (Dimitrov, 2021)

Viewed by country, there are long hiking and mountaineering trails in the USA, France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Great Britain, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Russia, Japan, India ,

Nepal, China, Israel, Tanzania, Kenya, Morocco, Chile, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand and others.

The longest recreational hiking and mountaineering trails are the following: 12 European or E-trails, with a length of more than 70,000 km that pass through several countries in Europe. Other non-EU European countries also have a large network of 60,000 km of hiking and mountain trails.

The most important and most attractive mountain trail in Europe is Via Alpina with a length of 5000 km, with a level of 0 to over 3000 meters above sea level. This trail has 342 stages through the alpine regions of eight countries: Italy (121), Austria (70), Switzerland (55), France (40), Germany (30), Slovenia (22), Liechtenstein (3) and Monaco ( 1 stage).

Other longer trails in Europe are: Great Italian Trail with 6166 km, English Coastal Trail 4350 km, Scanneleden Trail 1250 km, Hungarian National Blue Trail 1128 km, Sornlandseleden Trail 1000 km, Nordkalotruta or Arctic Trail 800 km, High Randone Pirinene (HRP) with 800 km., trail peaks in the Balkans and High Skardus with 700 km. etc.

In North America, the longest hiking and mountaineering trails are in the United States (80,000 km long), the most important of which are the Appalachian National Walking Trail with 3500 km, then the Continental 5000 km, the Pacific Ridge 4300 km, etc. The longest multiple recreational trail in the world is the Trans Canada, or Grand Trail, which stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the Arctic Ocean for 24,000 km.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long-distance\\_trail#Mountain\\_trails](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long-distance_trail#Mountain_trails)

In Asia, the most important mountain trails are the Himalayas and the Japanese mountains. The Himalayan trails are about 8000 km long, of which the longest is the Great Route of the high mountain Himalayan trail, 4500 km long. Meanwhile, the trails in Japan have a total length of 27,000 km.

In South America, the longest trail is the Great Patagonian Trail 3,000 km, and the entire network of hiking and hiking trails in the Andes is over 16,000 km. There are over a dozen long trails in Australia, the most famous of which is the National Trail with a length of 5330 km, etc.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Due to the global approach to mountain tourism, this research does not claim to be comprehensive and has some ambiguities. However, this is the first attempt through a short text supported by several tables, graphs and thematic maps, it we promote 17 major mountain tourist regions, 3153 ski resorts and mountain resorts, countries that practice mountain tourism and a network of hiking and mountain trails in the world.

In the interest of the development of mountain tourism, we recommend a more thorough research of each mountain tourist region separately, but also a study of the mountains where one or more alternative forms of mountain tourism are practiced.

The direction of research should be interdisciplinary through the preparation of expert studies and strategies for mountain tourism, especially for each mountain tourist region, for the larger mountains and for each country separately.

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