



Wooden Churches of Northern Oltenia and Southern Transylvania

Romania

A large number of traditional wooden churches survive in Romania's northern Oltenia and southern Transylvania region. Associated with small communities, the churches are modest, vernacular structures, which tend to be distinguished by their privileged location, painted decoration, and the skill and care that went into their construction. Wood from Romania's thick forests lies at the heart of local architectural traditions, as does the technique of building with notched interlocking timbers, formed with axes and handsaws. While most of the churches in this mountainous region were constructed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some of the oldest date from as early as the sixteenth century, and most have been modified and sometimes reconstructed over the years.

In recent decades, many churches have been abandoned due to their small capacity and lack of amenities like electricity and heating. As a result, according to current assessments, many are in an advanced state of deterioration, with some at risk of immediate collapse. Efforts are now underway to find the necessary resources to repair and restore the buildings and to carefully introduce upgrades that would allow the abandoned churches to be reintegrated into community life.