

TÜNDE MINORICS – TIBOR GONDA

The use of our gastro-cultural heritage in tourism

Abstract: A trend more and more dominant in recent years is an increasing demand for unique tourism products carrying local values. With the present study the authors intend to draw attention to the potentials of the use of local products in tourism. Our gastro-cultural assets through their heritage values and uniqueness can contribute to the development of a new, appealing supply structure of the tourism sector. The study presents nutrition-related customs and the relevance of the relationship between heritage, local identity, tradition and modernity in the gastronomy for the modern man. **Keywords:** gastronomy, culture, heritage, region, nutrition, habits, ethnicities, local identity. **Keywords:** gastronomy, culture, heritage, region, nutrition, habits, ethnicities, local identity.

Introduction

On the ever more diverse international market of tourism sector those destinations will be successful in the competition which are able to supplement and renew their traditional supply with unique and creative tourism products. A trend palpable all over the world is that a growing number of tourists are showing conscious consumer behaviour by looking for authentic local products, including the values of gastronomy as one of the most important factors. These days the cooperation with the tourism sector allows folk gastronomy, an important cultural heritage, to be preserved and renewed at the same time, to keep its value and to become an organic part of our everyday lives. In this process a greater emphasis must be placed during tourism product development on the gastronomic identity of a country. The birth of gastronomic identity is basically determined by three factors: the geographical position and the endowments of the respective country; the historical past of the country (including the ethnic amalgamations and impacts experienced in the course of history); and last but not least those creative craftsmen who renewed gastronomy and were the first to market products that have been characteristic to a certain country since then (FÜREDER-RÄTZ, 2009: 321-327).

The great value of Hungarian cuisine is in its diversity in which we can feel both the impacts of the peoples coexisting in the Carpathian Basin on each other's culture and of course the long occupation by the Turks and the Hapsburgs. The Hungarian gastronomic heritage is thus extremely varied and diverse; it is hardly known outside Hungary in the globalised world, but may be a real speciality for more demanding and conscious tourists, if integrated into the tourism supply of the country. This means that more care must be taken of the touristic management of our gastro-cultural heritage – our paper is a contribution to this effort.

The values of heritage in tourism

The way, form and organisation of nutrition are all cultural manifestations of a given nation, a community, a group of people. A diverse gastronomy has a strong correlation to the ordinary days, holidays and characteristic traditions, rituals of the people. Way of life is limited by diverse geographical, climatic and economic environments, narrowing down the range of ingredients of foods, the potential for producing certain foods or the access to them, but these factors also have an impact on the nutrient demand of humans. Variety of nutrition is increased by the substitution of certain ingredients or foods and their harmonisation with the rhythm of life, with the new situations in life. Nutrition thus has differentiated features characteristic of each culture, but can only partially be described with economic geographical aspects, as it has a strong correlation with the temporal changes of society and impacts caused by the encounters of different cultures.

Changes that are hard to follow are manifested in foods, diets and the order of meals. The methods of preparing foods, and the character of foods are influenced by technical equipment and the features of the ingredients, but the preparation method, the choice of spices, the number, quantity and frequency of meals, or local tastes and traditions, the judgement of certain foods by the locals also matter. The order of meals is always regulated, it may depend on the seasons, the working schedule, or the hierarchy of weekdays, special occasions and holidays.

Further differentiation of the nutrition systems may be caused by inner development but also an example from outside; on the other hand, it has several elements that will remain intact within a respective community in the longer run. These elements always have an important role in people's identity, and are considered as a kind of local heritage, local resource.

What correlation can we see between nutrition culture, community identity and heritage? If we start from the concept of tradition, we must think of a practice proven, important, necessary and useful for a community which is repeated for a relatively long time; or, if the community recedes from it, they will return to and get inspiration from it every now and then. On the other hand, the community continuously shapes this practice, in accordance with its current possibilities or needs. So when we think of traditions, we must also take into consideration their innovative character, the process of adaptation to the current needs of the community. All this, of course, is based on local knowledge, by some kind of redistribution of that, which promotes to a large extent the strengthening of local identity; at the same time it may be a breakout chance for e.g. communities excluded from developments.

Preservation of the heritage thus presumes respect for the community values, sticking to them and thereby presumes an attitude offering stability, which expresses two mechanisms, the balance and ever changing dynamism of the integration of new elements and the preservation of old structures. Nutrition culture shows several contemporary examples where tradition is integrated with today's lifestyle. Heritage is thus not an object or a phenomenon that is taken out from the passing of time, and a habit is not a replayed performance either but reality liveable for today's persons, a possible way of life. Adaptation to the most noble values can be seen also a kind of effort for the activities typical and natural for the given region and the traditional culture of the people living there, and for the encounter of space and time, past and present, modern and traditional, i.e. the ancestors and the descendants.

Continuous reproduction of the values of local culture is a prerequisite of the existence of community, as well. The passing on of the characteristics patterns and values of culture to the next generations, the recurring repetition is one of the most important mechanisms in culture. Traditions are thus the cultural memory of a community, an inventory of memories that stores the information necessary for the self-identification of the community (HOPPÁL, 2008: 12).

Nowadays we can see the increase and strengthening of the role of local cultural values. Communities seem to discover again that they have to rely on themselves in the first place in the solution of problems at local level. Ethnic consciousness, the focused demonstration of the identities of cultural groups is strengthening. On the other hand, the foundation of regional cooperations is the collaboration of the local communities in a wider circle, as well. A regional consciousness can only be built on the strong local consciousness of small communities, their voluntary cooperation. It is not accidental that the concept of identity gained more attention in the last decades of the 20th century: this concept is based just on the passing on of local cultural heritage, local traditions, because local traditions always mean a strong emotional identity. The acknowledgement of values, lifestyles, myths, beliefs, religions and languages, i.e. traditions is the foundation of cultural pluralism. Only the recognition of the existence of local traditions can safeguard cultural continuity (HOPPÁL, 2008:13).

The cultural characteristics, regional identity of the people living in the territory of the historical Baranya county, and the formation of different ethnographic groups were also influenced by the endowments of the landscape and the social and historical factors. Geographical environment determined the occupations of people living in the respective areas. Raw materials and potentials

offered by nature led to the birth of various occupations, handicrafts and farming methods over time. The population of peoples speaking different languages, the religious diversity, the range of their marital relations, and also their material culture, nutrition traditions, their clothing or the spread of their habits all allowed the differentiation of the respective historical ethnic groups. From the 16th century Serbs of orthodox religion fled in several waves from the Turks from the Balkans territory to Baranya, as did catholic Croats (Sokác and Bosniak) during the 17th century. The territories depopulated by the Turkish invasion were settled by the profane and the clerical landlords with German speaking ethnic groups on the turn of the 17th and 18th century, who populated mainly the Danubian region. The new settlers, using the possibility of free movement, migrated to other regions as well later, so it is hard to clearly separate them now on the basis of language or folk traditions, only. It is not a goal in this essay, anyway, we only wish to emphasize the multitude of factors shaping this varied landscape into a region with diverse nutritional culture.

The region bordered by the Danube and Dráva Rivers is an excellent demonstration of diversity. This is a region reaching right to the Ormánság and also to the Central Baranya hill ridge. The Inner Dráva Corner, i.e. Baranya Triangle was detached from Hungary by the peace treaty of Trianon, but the formerly single ethnographic character of the Hungarian folks still survived in some respects, despite the state border. The so-called Outer Dráva Corner, around the town Siklós has a population whose occupations, clothing and lifestyle show many similarities to their counterparts in the Inner Dráva Corner. Along the former Osijek–Buda military road, in the stead of the decreased population German and Croat ethnic groups were settled; also, after the expelling of the Turks, protestant Hungarians were invited here from the Kiskunság area in the late 17th century. The inhabitants of the Dráva Corner (Drávaszög), adapting to the geographical environment and making use of the rivers, the fertile soils and the climate, pursued fishing, plant cultivation, animal husbandry and viticulture as well. Their traditional diet was also adapted to this lifestyle and the raw materials offered by the natural environment. Widespread is the cultivation of several fruits and vegetables, and of red pepper used for many purposes. The cuisine of the Germans settling here was also markedly adapted to the regional endowments. The foundation of this was the German gastronomy, supplemented by the habits taken over from the other ethnic groups living here. They preserved the traditional foods of their original living space, especially the ones made from flour and potatoes, but their preparation was palpably influenced by impacts from the new environment, above all the use of the already mentioned paprika as a new spice. There were other plants that they met in this region first, e.g. tomato and pumpkin, peach, and also maize as a human food.

In direct touch with the region above, also along the Croatian–Hungarian border, along the Dráva River and the Fekete-víz (“Black Water”) we find the micro-region called Ormánság. The main occupation of the Croat and Hungarian speaking inhabitants used to be fishing and animal husbandry here as well. After the regulation of the rivers and deforestations, the size of land available for farming increased, and they were mainly used for the cultivation of cereals. The typical dishes include many fish meals, like in the Drávaszög region. Fish was smoked and also grilled on open fire and ember, put on sticks fixed in the ground, like in the Drávaszög. Snails were considered as a delicacy, as were the many species of mushrooms. White pudding is a speciality here, as is sausage made from lungs, but pig slaughters were widespread in winter, especially on the week before Christmas all over Baranya, in all ethnic groups, as was the making of smoked foods including black pudding and sausage.

The coexistence of ethnic groups with different cultures and languages will necessarily lead to interactions. Not only Germans took over the foods of their new home, Hungarians also learned from them. The sausage called “stifolder” (*Stifuller*) was taken over by the Hungarians from South Baranya Germans, both the method of making and the name. This salami speciality is seasoned with black pepper in the original home, Germany, while Germans living in Baranya use red pepper intensively.

As we have already mentioned, this region is very much characterised by favourable natural endowments that allowed traditional animal husbandry and plant cultivation, farming in home-steads, the diversity of foods simple but made from varied ingredients and also made possible a small-scale food processing industry. The history of nutrition shows a development accepting, mixing and integrating good ideas, which is a synthesis of ancient Asian nomadic, German, Italian, South Slav, Turkish, Austrian, French and Hungarian gastronomies.

The nutrition habits of neighbouring gastronomic regions are usually not sharply separable; there is a broad transitory zone, in fact, parallel to the transition of the nutrition habits the arrangement of gastronomic regions also changed continuously, and they are overlapping with the ethnic or political borders only in exceptional cases. The development of these regions is only known relatively precisely since the 18th century: at that time we could already see the existing or unfolding regional characteristics still tangible today, existing irrespective of the state borders.

The role of community heritage in all communities is common knowledge, common goals, and strengthening by the “us” conscience. This is how it fulfils its community stabilising role, the maintenance of the sense of belonging to the local society, and by re-learning also the information preserving function. Heritage becomes an organically integrated part of identity if the members of the community experience heritage as a medium from which they live, if they are proud of it and active participant practicing it, if they consider heritage-related knowledge as their own and sensitively protect it. Community knowledge often becomes a symbol on the basis of which social groups define themselves as communities. The most realistic and powerful protection of these heritages is provided by “local protection”, i.e. the protection of the society in the respective settlement, which operates as a filter and allows freedom and creativity. Heritage thus means a living practice interpreted in the present, owned and upgraded by the communities, which is a part of group, settlement, regional, national, European and international community identity (ERDŐSY-SONKOLY, 2005: 73-78).

The use of heritage in tourism is more and more becoming an economic interest. Past that cannot be erased from human memories is a constantly renewable resource. We may encounter in some places the reconstruction of the heritage, elsewhere the practice of creating the heritage in order to substitute the missing community memory, and later this becoming the heritage, in fact, part of the identity of the respective community. The essence thus is the living practice that is adapted to the present, the needs of humans living now and does not conserve past, in fact, upgrades the values of the past.

Nutrition then is an organic part of local culture, local culture is a constant source of inspiration for it, and it is continuously adapted to the topical needs of the local communities. Gastronomic culture is a manifestation of community culture that shows at the same time the specific lifestyle of the people living in the region, different reactions to changes but also the hospitality of the communities, or their innovative capacities and creativity adapting to the needs and possibilities of the different generations.

Gastronomy and gastronomic culture together express the relationship between pleasure and the eating habits, i.e. the human demand that nutrition, in addition to its health preservation function, should express the striving for a quality life by its diversity, the selection of special foods for special occasions and the conditions of the consumption. In the light of this, local gastro-cultural heritage may be suitable for the spread of the diversity and quality of European gastronomy and can contribute to the development of the economy, including, among other things, catering industry, tourism, food processing industry and researches.

Conclusions

The diversity of the Hungarian cuisine, its continuous development and not last the still existing knowledge of the elder generation, which may be taken as gastro-cultural heritage, may be a firm foundation for the utilisation of these values in tourism. A stronger focus on the gastro-cultural heritage may be a contribution to the innovative renewal of several touristic products.

The Hungarian actors of rural tourism, ecotourism and enological tourism have evidently discovered already the potential in local products the our gastro-cultural heritage of the country, and are doing their best to valorise these values and make use of them in their touristic activities. By a lucky coincidence, the tender system of the recent years also supported and promoted this process (Gonda 2012: 233-245).

We believe then that the era of the Hungarian gastronomy ruled by the image of “paprikash and goulash” is over, and we are witnessing the birth of a new practice of gastronomy that focuses more on values. As a result of this process, Hungarian cuisine can be “exciting” and recognised again. There is enormous work to do, on the other hand, until Hungarian gastronomy, including our gastro-cultural heritage, becomes a pull product of Hungary on the international markets.

References

- Egyezmény a Szellemi Kulturális Örökség Megőrzéséről (Convention on the Preservation of Intellectual Cultural Heritage). 17 October 2003, Paris <http://www.szellemiotrokseg.hu/files/letoltesek/9.pdf> (Downloaded 12 November 2013.)
- Erdősy Péter – Sonkoly Gábor: A kultúra melankóliája. A kulturális örökség fogalmának megjelenése (The melancholy of culture. Appearance of the concept of cultural heritage). *Világosság* 2005/6. 73-90.
- Füreder Balázs - Rátz Tamara: Gasztronómiai örökség és identitás Magyarország turisztikai marketingjében (Gastronomic culture and identikty in the tourism marketing of Hungary). In: *Örökség és Turizmus*. Pécs: PTE TTK 2009. 321-327.
- Gonda Tibor: A helyi termék reneszánsza (Renaissance of the local products) . In: *A kultúra turizmusa, a turizmus kultúrája*. Aubert A. – Gyuricza L. – Huszti Zs. (eds.) Pécs: ID Research Kft./Publikon Kiadó, 2012. 233-245.
- Hoppál Mihály: Hagyomány és identitás (Tradition and identity). In: *Szellemi kulturális örökség – a megőrzés útjai*. Csonka Takács, Eszter (ed.) Budapest: Európai Folklór Intézet, 2008. 12-18.
- Táplálkozás. Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon (Word ‘nutrition’ in the Lexicon of Hungarian Ethnography). <http://mek.oszk.hu/02100/02115/html/5-415.html> (Downloaded 10 December 2013)