

## GASTRONOMIC TOURISM, BETWEEN TRADITION AND REINTERPRETATION

BORTEȘ FLAVIA<sup>1</sup>, TOTH ROBERT<sup>1</sup>, POP MARIA<sup>1</sup>, GABOR PAULA<sup>1</sup>,  
ANCA MIHAELA DICU\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad, Faculty of Food Engineering,  
Tourism and Environmental Protection Arad, Romania*

\*Corresponding author's e-mail: anca1474@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *Given the fact that economic and social development are being sustained by gastronomic tourism, we can say that people show a significant interest in traditional dishes. Seeking fresh, local, healthy and delicious products, people are increasingly concerned not only with the origin of the products they consume, but also with the methods used in order to process them. Identifying gourmet characteristic can be considered as a starting point in preserving and promoting local culinary traditions. In this paper, we emphasize traditional elements of recipes translated into reinterpretations of preparations using modern techniques in order to preserve the familiar taste but filled with textures, shapes and new colors.*

**Key words:** *gastronomic tourism, traditional, reinterpretation*

### INTRODUCTION

Judging by its results, it can be easily stated that the craft of preparing food is indeed an art which deserves its own special place. Within the current trends in the evolution of the modern society, there is an increasing interest in the culinary arts, shaping not only our personal lives but also more significant social aspects. Thus, gastronomy is establishing itself as a key element in diversifying and supporting the economic and touristic development of our society. In addition to culture and the natural environment, gastronomy is considered to be the third important criterion in choosing a certain tourist destination.

As it is an entertaining activity, accessible to everyone, gastronomic tourism is practised in both rural and urban areas.

Promoting images from various cultures, unique and impressive culinary experiences, gastronomic tourism is one of the most developed and established branches of tourism.

Despite its present popularity, it has been neglected and poorly managed in the past. It now invites tourists to appreciate the local cuisine and its related activities. [5,6]

The concept of gastronomic (culinary) tourism appeared for the first time in 2001, starting from the idea that food represents 40% of the total satisfaction expressed when assessing a particular tourist product. At that time, the President of the International Culinary Tourism Association (ICTA), Erik Wolf, defined food as a tourist attraction identical to all the other tourist activities, emphasising the benefits it brings to economic development.

A broader definition of gastronomic tourism might be that of „looking for unique and memorable culinary experiences, of any kind”.

It is estimated that in the near future gastronomic tourism will register a remarkable development, as the public's interest in both culinary and travelling TV programmes is constantly increasing. The most important demands of the culinary tourists revolve around two main aspects: an enjoyable experience and healthy food. Thus, customers are focusing more and more on healthy nutrition, based on locally sourced ingredients.

Therefore, in 2007, ICTA together with the travel industry association and the Gourmet Magazine carried out a study on a group of population which favour this type of

tourism. The interesting results confirm the fact that culinary tourists devote more than 50% of their expenses to gastronomic experiences. [3,7,8]

In that period, the words used to characterise culinary tourism were: “There is something for everyone in the food tourism industry”.

Starting from 2018, it has been considered that the main factor in choosing a tourist destination is represented by the cuisine of the area, the characteristics and specificities of the local gastronomy. There is a global interest for all healthy authentic dishes, accompanied by stories about the local culinary history and culture, discovering new tastes and textures.

In 2018, Erik Wolf described gastronomic tourism as being the act of travelling for a taste of a place in order to get a sense of a place. [8]

In the context of the present realities of culinary tourism, real culinary gems can also be found in Romanian gastronomy. There is an interest in exploring the traditional cuisine and the specific elements pertaining to local or regional areas. Culinary traditions and customs are an integral part of a people’s identity and these therefore deserve to be cherished.

Highly valued national culinary traditions keep authentic elements regarding: regional character, sustainability, seasonality, adaptability, health and naturalness.

Following and taking into account the selective and delicate of the culinary tourists, we can define the modern Romanian cuisine.

Preserving traditional and classical elements of certain recipes along with adding new tastes and textures, the Romanian cuisine falls within the culinary approach typical of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The synergy between the traditional and the reinterpretation of famous dishes is to keep the same savour.

We will definitely not deny our culinary heritage but the competitiveness of the dishes requires the introduction and development of modern techniques within the production process, adding contrasting textures and taking into consideration the nutritional balance.[10,11]

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Many writings and accounts given by witnesses about the dishes that make us famous present and describe the particularities of the local customs specific to each region. The gastronomy from Ardeal, with its Austrian-Hungarian influences, with its mixture of savoury ingredients, is considered to be one of the .... of culinary art. We have written about it, as well as many others before us.

In one of his Daily Telegraph columns, Ego Ronay, a British culinary critic of Hungarian origin, stated that “gastronomy gave to the world three complex culinary concepts: the French cuisine, the Chinese one and... Transylvanian cuisine”. The cookbook written by Zombor Gabor in 1984, entitled *The Past and Development of Hungarian Cookery* praises the cuisine from Ardeal, qualifying it as a cuisine of the elites.

At the same time, Mircea Groza, the well-known chef from Ardeal, describes the traditional dishes from Ardeal. [9]

To continue with the same area of Ardeal, the writer Radu Anton Roman, who has been devoted to traditional Romanian dishes, published in 1998 one of the most important books for the Romanian gastronomy, entitled *Romanian Dishes, Wines and Customs*. He presents various types of recipes, accompanied by stories that make the dishes even more appetizing to the reader and which bring to life the rituals and customs that are often part of their preparation. In order to characterise the specificity of the culinary Ardeal, he uses

the phrase “the Ardeal of tasty bacon”, which highlights the importance of pork for Romanian cuisine, humorously referred to by the author as ”the holy pork” [4].

As it can be seen, throughout the history of the Romanian gastronomy and in particular during the Ottoman occupation, our survival depended largely on pork. It has become in time the most important animal in Romanian households, being considered the king of Transylvanian meats. [9]

In the following paragraphs, we have made a parallel between the traditional and the reinterpreted elements of the stuffed pork tenderloin.

We started from the classic recipe of sausage stuffed pork tenderloin, which in the traditional Romanian cuisine is generally served with mashed potatoes and beetroot salad. This is a recipe that originates from the rural areas where, among many traditional foods made by the peasants when slaughtering their pigs, pork tenderloins are stuffed with sausage filling and wrapped in lace fat only to be cooked and served on winter holidays when all the family gathered together. This ritual of slaughtering the pig and preparing it is carried out on a specific date which is 20<sup>th</sup> of December or Ignatus day.

Nowadays this delicacy is produced on an industrial scale and can be found in many restaurants and butcher shops.

In our vision, this lean and tender prime cut is filled with a mix of wild mushrooms instead of sausage and is accompanied by sweet and airy parsnips puree, beetroot chips, garlic spheres and for a better visual and taste impact we have made a white truffle foam that brings all flavors together.



**Figure 1: Reinterpreted pork tenderloin**

## CONCLUSIONS

Old but so real, Romanian cuisine always will be surprise you in the most pleasing way, finding known tastes but with new textures. With a real tribute of a good old tastes, the already known Romanian recipes, will be reinterpreted and cooked in an avant-garde and innovative note.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. **CEZAR I., POPESCU ADRIANA**, 2018, Romanian gastronomy in the XXI century, Ed. Business ADVISER, București, pp. 12-16
- [2]. **DICU ANCA MIHAELA**, 2017, Date și obiceiuri tradiționale din zona Aradului, Editura Gutenberg, Arad, pp. 63, 64
- [3]. **IONNIN C.**, 2018, Bucătăria română, Editura GastroArt, pp. 17-18
- [4]. **ROMAN R.A.**, 1998, Bucate, Vinuri și Obiceiuri Românești, Editura Paideia, București,
- [5]. \*\*\*<http://evisionturism.ro/gastronomia-treilea-motiv-importanta-alege-destinatie/>,
- [6]. \*\*\*<http://evisionturism.ro/turismul-gastronomic-oportunitate-revitaliza-diversifica-oferta/>
- [7]. \*\*\*<https://emilpop.blogspot.com/2009/12/turismul-culinar.html>
- [8]. \*\*\*<https://worldfoodtravel.org/what-is-food-tourism-definition-food-tourism/>
- [9]. \*\*\*<http://jurnalul.ro/timp-liber/culinar/marea-bucatarie-uitata-a-transilvaniei-573002.html>
- [10]. \*\*\*<https://vinul.ro/laura-laurentiu-reinterpretarea-retetelor-traditionale-o-abordare-culinara-de-secol-xxi.html>
- [11]. \*\*\*<https://life.ro/bucatarul-nico-lontras-cu-sinceritate-despre-bucataria-romaneasca-in-2016-si-reinterpretarea-moderna-a-retetelor-traditionale/>