

STUDY ON TRADITIONAL GASTRONOMY FROM THE MARGINIMEA SIBIU AREA

MUSCHICI MĂDĂLINA-IONELA¹, MUNTEAN CRISTINA MARIA¹, IAKAB REBECA¹,
RABA DIANA-NICOLETA¹, PÎRVULESCU LUMINIȚA^{*1}

¹University of Life Sciences "King Mihai I" from Timisoara,
Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism, Romania

*Corresponding author's e-mail: luminita_pirvulescu@usvt.ro

Abstract: The Marginimea Sibiu is an area with a special ethnological, cultural, architectural and historical heritage, where the inhabitants still respect traditions and customs, taking pride in the cultural richness of the place and of the people. From a gastronomic point of view, the area offers a wide range of traditional dishes, which are unique both in terms of preparation methods and the fact that most of the raw materials come from local households.

Keywords: authenticity, tradition, gastronomy, traditional dishes

INTRODUCTION

Marginimea Sibiu is a region in Transylvania with a unique ethnic, cultural, architectural and historical heritage. This area was awarded the "Golden Apple" tourism award and the title of "European Destination of Excellence" in 2009 [1,6].

Marginimea Sibiu is a unique ethnographic area in Romania located to the west of Sibiu, bordered to the south by the Sadului valley and to the north by the valley of the river Saliste, comprising 18 settlements: Boita, Sadu, Rau Sadu, Talmaciu, Talmacel, Rasinari, Poplaca, Gura Rau, Orlat, Fantanele, Sibiel, Vale, Saliste, Gales, Tilisca, Rod, Poiana Sibiu and Jina. (figure 1) [8,10].

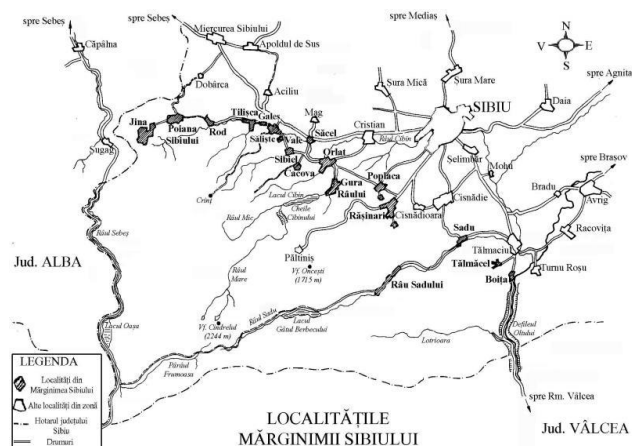


Figure 1. Marginimea Sibiu region

Source:
https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C4%83rginimea_Sibiului#/media/Fi%C8%99ier:Harta_Marginimea_Sibiului.svg

Source: <https://limbaromana.org/revista/ce-este-m%C4%83rginimea-sibiului/>

Marginimea Sibiu is located in the vicinity of the centre of the Saxon culture in Transylvania, the river Vadului encloses to the south and the river Saliste to the north the area of more than 200 km² of Sibiu. The villages are located at the junction of mountain

and depression, as well as on the valleys of the rivers flowing from the Cindrel Mountains [2,10].

The area is occupied by a predominantly Romanian population. The locals are called *mocani*, or *margineni*. Since ancient times, shepherding has been the main occupation, which has led to the maintenance of links between the Romanian communities to the south and north of the Carpathian Mountains [3].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper carries out a bibliographic study regarding the traditions and customs of Marginimea Sibiu, respectively the main traditional dishes from this region. A series of monographic works are used for this purpose.

Marginimea Sibiu is a region located in Transylvania, Romania, and is known for the beauty of its landscapes, but also for its rich traditions and customs. Many elements of Saxon culture are preserved here [1].

The wedding in Marginimea Sibiu is an important event, marked by traditions and customs that reflect the cultural identity of this region. A custom typical is closing the road of the wedding road, decorating the gates of the newlyweds with fir branches, leading the groom to the godparents, then to the bride with a procession of groomsmen. The bride and groom accompanied by the procession go first to the church, then to the hall where the party is held [1,2].

"Girl in the Window" custom. On the morning of the wedding, the bride is arranged in an open window where she is admired by guests and locals. This custom symbolizes the transition to a new stage in life and brings good luck to the marriage [1,7].

Wedding cake. The bride receives a special colac called *"marias"* or *"bride's colac"*. It is decorated with traditional motifs and is often handmade. The necklace is worn during the ceremony and then offered to the guests [6,7].

Winter traditions and customs in the Marginimea Sibiu reflect the authenticity and cultural specificity of this region. Winter celebrations begin on Christmas Eve and end with the feast of St. John on 7 January. The children start carolling, then continue with the lads organised in groups. On feast days the young people of the settlement organise balls and games and lead all the activities, except on Epiphany [7].

On the fourth day of Christmas, in the Junii Square in Saliste, there is a meeting of the games, where the Junii come dressed in folk costumes. Here the judge from Saliste welcomes each judge from the other villages and communes, toasts from the traditional *plosca*; each judge gives a speech and after the children play the *"plugusorul"*, the juniors and the youngsters from all the villages play the union dance [1,7].

The *"cart with sweet bagels"* is a local custom in which groups of carolers go from house to house, riding on a car decorated with lights and decorations, offering sweet bagels, cakes and good wishes [1,7].

"Plow climbing" is a tradition specific to this region. On New Year's Eve, a group of men or young people dressed in traditional costumes carry a decorated plough into the centre of the village and dance around it to bring fruitfulness and abundance in the coming year [3,7].

Masks and costumes. In some localities of the Sibiu Margin, the tradition of wearing masks and costumes during the winter celebrations is preserved. These can have various roles, from mythological characters to representations of nature [6].

A gastronomic tradition specific to the area, also known as *"Porcaria"*, is the organisation of the pig's feast. The community meets to celebrate the slaughter of the pig, and the meat is shared and used to prepare various traditional dishes [1,2].

In the Marginimea Sibiu, traditions related to the Easter holiday bring a mixture of customs specific to the Saxon culture and Romanian traditions [6].

The last day before Lent or entry into the Easter fast is marked by the so-called "*Hodaite*". These are fires lit on the hills around villages, around which certain announcements are made and certain people are satirised [2,3].

Egg dyeing is an important tradition in the Marginimea Sibiu reg as in many other communities in Romania. People use various traditional techniques, including dyeing eggs with onion shells to achieve natural shades of brown and red [3,4].

On Easter Day, in some villages in the Marginimea Sibiu region, the custom called the "*raising of Miron*" is practiced. A group of children go to the edge of the village and shout "Miron has risen!" to announce the Resurrection to the community [3,4].

Another tradition is *decorating the house* with flowers, willow branches and other springtime items. These decorations bring a fresh and welcoming air into people's homes and symbolise the resurrection of nature [3,4].

Blessing of the dishes. In some villages, it is customary to take the food prepared for the Easter meal to the church to be blessed by the priest. This tradition reflects the spiritual importance of the feast in the life of the community [7].

These elements add to the beauty and authenticity of Easter celebrations in the Marginimea Sibiu region, reflecting a community that honours its past and celebrates its traditional values [7].

The "*Sangeorz*", on 23rd of April, marks the explosion of vegetation in nature and on this holiday shepherds haggle to shepherd sheep [2,3].

"*Chilipii*", on November 15, or wolf's day, is a holiday in which sheep shears are tied to bind the wolf's mouth [2,3].

Closely related to the introduction of glass manufacture by the Austrian imperial authorities is glass painting, a tradition dating back to the 18th century. Also, the wearing of the traditional black and white folk costume with a rounded hat worn by men at important events is still a custom respected by the inhabitants of the area today [6].

The large, imposing houses with an inner courtyard enclosed on all sides have an architecture with strong Saxon influences. Wood was the traditional building material, but in recent years it has been replaced by brick [1].

In the Marginimea Sibiu region, the inhabitants are engaged in weaving and sewing, as well as in animal husbandry. The most famous occupation in this area is sheep shearing, with all its derivatives: from the preparation of cheese and traditional sheep meat dishes to the processing of sheepskin and wool [6,7].

Sheep breeding is of great importance in this region so the inhabitants have dedicated several festivals to it:

- Sheep Feast - an event celebrated annually on August 15 in Tilisca.
- Cheese and Cheese Festival - celebrated annually on the last weekend of August in Rasinari.
- Sheep Lowering from the Mountain-takes place in September in Poiana Sibiului[8,15].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The traditional gastronomy of Marginimea Sibiului reflects influences of Saxon culture and local Romanian traditions. Traditional dishes contribute to the diversity and authenticity of the cuisine of Marginimea Sibiului, reflecting the traditions and cultural influences that have defined this region [8,9].

At the time of the pig's slaughter, tradition requires the locals of Gura Raului to prepare a **horseradish soup**, a dish also suitable for the Christmas meal. It is a soup with

pork and vegetables, in which horseradish is added, it is spiced with pickled cabbage juice and finally topped with sour cream [11,12].

Shepherd's cuisine is the calling card of Sibiu County, and the traditional dish from the Marginimea Sibiu is a white soup where young mutton is flavoured with a spoonful of "chisatura" (a minced bacon paste with parsley and red onion) and given the freshness of a healthy vegetable salad. **Cabbage soup with kale** is a dish of young mutton and cabbage, seasoned with tomatoes, thyme and egg yolks and soured with vinegar. The special feature of this dish is that it is served with warm polenta [11,13].

"**Sheep Sloi**" is a dish based on boiled stewed boiled mutton in sheep tallow. At the end, finely chopped onion, bay leaves and pepper are added. It can be served as it is, cold or warm melted in a pan, accompanied by polenta [3,11].

The "**Shepherd's Balmos**" is a dish specific to the region obtained from corn flour boiled in sheep's milk to which butter and sheep's milk are added at the end. It is served warm [12,13].

The "**Shepherd's Bulz**" is the daily food of the sheep in Marginimea Sibiu. The main ingredients are polenta and bellow cheese. Put the cheese in the middle of a piece of polenta, seal it well on the edges and then bake it on the stove [12,13].

Milk noodles are homemade wide noodles cooked in goat's milk and sweetened with sugar. They can be served plain or with cherry jam [14].

"**Morandau**" is a dessert whose main ingredients are corn flour and milk. It is a sponge cake obtained from corn flour and milk to which cream, butter and sugar are added [2,3].

"**Uscate**" are a dessert in the form of dry leaves. They are made from egg, wheat flour and cream and are the form of a dough that is stretched into a very thin sheet and braided. They are baked in the oven and served with powdered sugar [2,3].

"**Chicate**" is a dessert obtained from a dough similar to that of pancakes but much thicker so that it can be taken with a spoon and fried in oil [3,4].

"**Vuta**" is a dessert in the form of snails. They are made from a dough of potatoes and wheat flour, from which balls are formed that are scalded and then rolled in breadcrumbs [4,5].

"**Chisalita**" is an easy-to-make dessert eaten on fasting days. Mix the plum magium with boiled water and then add pieces of bread or polenta [11].

"**Leves**". The villagers of Marginimea Sibiului prepare, on the eve of Epiphany, a dish based on bread soaked in cabbage, on top of which is placed onions tempered with paprika [1,5].

Peasant pie with potatoes, onions and cheese. It is a pastry product obtained from a leavened dough filled with boiled potatoes mixed with fried onions [14,15].

CONCLUSIONS

Marginimea Sibiu is a unique ethnographic area in Romania. Most of the villages in the area have preserved strong spiritual and ethno-folkloric traditions.

The Marginimea Sibiu region has become an important point of Romanian rural tourism. The typical rural atmosphere, the intact preservation of traditions and customs, the hospitality of the villagers increase the attractiveness of these places.

The way in which the inhabitants show and take pride in the history of the place is through customs and traditions as well as traditional culinary preparations. These dishes reflect the distinct culinary identity of the Marginimea Sibiu region, with influences from Saxon and Romanian traditions, and contribute to the rich and authentic atmosphere of this region.

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