

GASTRONOMICAL MANIFESTATIONS IN THE TOURISM OF SOUTH-EASTERN SERBIA

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ABSTRACT: *Destinations wherein globalization has not significantly changed the process of plant and animal growing, nutrition of a population and the way of preparing dishes and drinks, have become suitable for development of gastronomical tourism. Tourists gladly visit gastronomical shows having in mind pleasure that food offers and experience a part of culture and tradition of the certain destination. Thanks to the preserved authenticity, the region of the Southeastern Serbia creates a desire for some new gastronomical experiences. The subject of this research are gastronomical potentials of the Southeastern Serbia that are promoted through tourist events. Assignment of the paper is to find out potentials of this region through analyses of gastronomical manifestations. Objective of this paper is to contribute to the development and promotion of authentic food and drinks through food and drinks events. Through field investigation and research it will be indicated the state of the Southeastern Serbia as an outstanding destination of culinary tourism. The research was done in 2013., and the obtained results were statistically analyzed and presented in the graphs.*

Key words: *gastronomy, food, drinks, manifestations, the Southeastern Serbia*

INTRODUCTION

Every part of the world is specific for its customs, culture, history, heritage, flora and fauna, climate and they were formed under the influence of different factors. All these elements had their impact on creating of different culinary products and national dishes and such as they are becoming increasingly important tourist attraction. Visiting various destinations tourists look for tasting authentic specialties of the visited place. One of the main reasons for travel become tourist manifestations, especially food and drink shows that attract gastronomical tourists. Regardless the reason for their travel, food and drinks have become an important tourism factor (Hall and Mitchell, 2000; Tešanović, Koprivica, 2007; Kalenjuki sar., 2013).

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The Southeastern Serbia is a destination that possesses a good perspective for development of food tourism where they serve preserved local and national dishes and drinks. Precisely because of that retained authenticity the Southeastern Serbia is the region where desire for new culinary experience is created.

The research subject are gastronomical potentials of the Southeastern Serbia that are promoted throughout different tourist manifestations.

Assignment of this paper is to research the potentials of the Southeastern Serbia through food and drinks shows being held with the aim to attract gastronomical tourists.

Following global trends in the field of gastronomical tourism, objective of this paper is to contribute to the development and affirmation of authentic food and drinks through tourist food and drinks shows in the Southeastern Serbia. The field investigation and research will indicate the state of the Southeastern Serbia as an outstanding destination wherein this form of tourism can be developed.

It is expected that the obtained research results will influence better positioning of the Southeastern Serbia in the tourist map of Europe and give higher contribution to the overall economic development of the region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gastronomical tourism

Food presents an important part of the cultural identity of a people (Counihan, Van Esterik, 2008; Fischler, 1980, 1988). There is no doubt that the culinary identity of a certain nation has become a nucleus of gastronomical tourism. The term gastronomical tourism is closely connected to the culinary tourism, the term firstly used by Long 1998, while searching for the possibilities for the tourists to get to know the culture of other nations through food and drinks. Among others, gastronomical tourism is defined as an activity of research and finding out of the culture and history through food that affects the formation of unforgettable moments (Long, 2004). Gastronomical experience largely depends on whether the food being consumed is authentic for the visited destination. Through gastronomy other forms of tourism are permeated (Stojanović, Čerović, 2008). On the other hand, Hall and Mitchell define gastronomical tourism as the tourist visit to primary or secondary food producers, food shows, hospitality objects for production and food serving and particular destinations for testing and / or experiencing the attributes of regional specialties, whereby food is the primary motive or challenge for the travelling (Hall, Mitchell, 2006).

Wine, food and tourism are closely related. Some authors believe that wine and beer tourism make one section of gastronomical tourism for they involve consumption of both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages together with culinary products (Hall, 2003; Wolf, 2006). However, only recently, governments, scientists and wine, food and drink industries have explicitly accepted the role that wine and food play in the attraction of tourists to a certain destination. Food was accepted in the tourist market as a part

of local culture (Hall, Mitchell, 2001.), being consumed by tourists, as a part of tourist promotion; potential factor of the local agricultural and economic development and regional factor being influenced by the wishes of tourists.

Hall cites the following advantages of culinary tourism for a region (Hall, Mitchell, 2006.) : increased demand for agricultural and food products and culinary specialties, creation of brands, direct insight into the tastes of consumers, educational opportunities for visitors and residents; regional and local distribution of consumption as well as the protection of intellectual property rights.

The author, Richards believes one of the advantages of gastronomical tourism is the fact that it takes place throughout the year and is always available unlike some other forms of tourist consumptions (Richards, 2002).

Food and drinks manifestations

There is no doubt that the manifestations have become an important challenging factor for travelling as well as one of the increasing forms of tourism, both throughout the world and with us. Those manifestations are important on the level of tourist activity, they are mostly advertised and such as that they help the promotion of a place for future visitors (Backman et al., 1995). Despite the fact that attract tourists to visit a destination, they can contribute for a tourist to prolong his/her staying which would complement the traveling experience.

The term „ food and drink manifestations“ means some special events such as: fairs, festivals, exhibition, cultural and consumers and industrial happenings being held either regularly or just once. There was a significant increase of the number of gastronomical manifestations, which contributed to the promotion of the development of the destination itself (Wargenau, Che, 2006).

Food manifestations are closely connected with the spirit of the place where they are held and with the local community. Furthermore, food, emotions and needs that surround them are important not only to the producers but for the consumers of the presented products that can also affect identity and way of life (Hjalager and Corigliano, 2000; Hall et al., 2003; Che et al., 2005). There is also widespread agreement that the number of food manifestations that take place throughout the developed world is growing rapidly, although it is difficult to determine the numbers (Payne, 2002; Griffin, Frongillo, 2003).

Gastronomy of the Southeastern Serbia

The gastronomy of the Southeastern Serbia can mostly bear the title of Balkan cousin, due to the influence of other Balkan peoples (Bulgarians, Turkies, Greeks) and because of the abundant use of vegetables, especially peppers which grow in this region. Of course, here is the famous barbecue, whose way of preparing has been taken over from the Arabic people, and for the title of the barbecue capital fights two rival towns – Niš and Leskovac.

The most common culinary products are stuffed red peppers, stuffed wine leaves, polenta, corn bread with sour cream, a variety of pies, salad shopska and many other dishes. Authentic drinks of this region are various fruit brandies (plum, apricot, quince, pear) , wine, as well as various fruit juices made of sour charray, blueberry, cornelian, blackberry and raspberry.

The wines of this region have been famous since Roman times. Indigenous grape varieties like prokupac, cormorant, plovdin and Italian rieslingthrieve very well in this area. Winemakers have invented a particular sort of fruit wine made of sour charries. Wineries, appearing increasingly in the region of the Southeastern Serbia, are real museums with casks of the highest quality wines and vintage devices for storing and cooling (Zagorac et al.,2010).

Food and drinks manifestations in Vojvodina

In favour of the research, an example of gastronomical manifestations that take place in the region of Vojvodina is provided. Kalenjuc states that the largest number of manifestations in Vojvodina, are based firstly on food 55 % (111 manifestations), while 35 % (72 manifestations) are those wherein food and drinks are included into organizations with different thematic character. These are mostly ethno festivals. There are only 10 % (21 manifestations) devoted to drinks exclusively (Kalenjuk, 2012).

The data about types of manifestations in the region of Vojvodina are as follows: 58 % of manifestations (119) are with different character, ie., food and drinks are not primary, 28 % of manifestations (57) have competitive character and that is predominantly the cooking of traditional dishes of Vojvodina, such as fish, beef, pork stew , beans etc., and 14 % of manifestations have exhibitional character (29) and most common are wine festivals (Kalenjuc, 2012).

The largest number of gastronomical manifestations in Vojvodina take place from June to October- 69 manifestations, ie., 76 %. They are mostly held in August (24 %), food and drinks include in 15 % of the manifestations. February is the month when the greatest number of drink manifestations take place (1 %) (Kalenjuk, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

The research was done in the municipalities of the Southeastern Serbia :Boljevac, Sokobanja, Knjaževac, Niš, Bela Palanka, Zaječar, Dimitrovgrad and Babušnica.

The research was made on the basis of the data on themanifestations being held in the Southeastern Serbia and they are obtained through field investigation on the basis of 2013, and the results were statistically processed and presented in the graphs.

During the investigation the following methods were applied: description, induction and deduction, analyses and synthesis, descriptive statistics and the results are shown in the graphs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Manifestation analyses of Southeastern Serbia

Field investigation results in the region of the Southeastern Serbia during 2013., show that there are 22 manifestations in total. Further on there will be presented culinary manifestations of both food and drink being proved through them.

Traditional “Aspic show” in Niškabanja (spa) takes place in the middle of January. The dish acquiring a reputation through this manifestation is served as hors d'oeuvre combined with brandies made of plum, apricot, quince etc) and some salad (sour cabbage, radish, pickles, green tomato) and has a very long tradition in the gastronomy of Serbia.

“Brandy brand” takes place every year in Niš and it is the manifestation together with exhibition, wherein a large number of different brandies of the top quality are presented: made of plums, apricot, quince etc. During the manifestation, visitors may taste and buy the most famous brandies from the whole Serbia, as they use to say in Niš “do something with gusto has no price”

“World championship in making bottle-pressed sausages” in Pirot is the manifestation with both competitive and promotional character. The pressed sausage is the product made during winter time, of goat, beef and mutton with garlic and pepper with no additive, preservative and other fats. While drying the sausages are pressed every two to three days (mostly with a bottle)-the reason why they are named after and then get the shape of horseshoe. In this way the percentage of moisture is reduced which increases its durability and sustainability.

Manifestation „Dolce Vita“ expresses a common wish to involve light-heartedness, beauty and touch of luxury in the time we live in. During this manifestation, visitors have a chance to taste different sorts of wine, chocolates and various delicacy made of chocolate. Wine and chocolate sympathizers are very much interested in this manifestation, both from Niš and presenters from the whole country.

Traditionally, the Niš spa is the host of the event named „Days of wine and gusto“. Wine-growers and wine producers from the area of Niš, officially celebrate their day, the day of Saint Trifun. The manifestation takes place on the main promenade, accompanied by cultural and artistic program, final competitions and proclamation of the best producers of wine and spirit.

„Mens' hard-drinking feast“ takes place every year in Boljevac. Participants have a chance to taste different gastronomical products and drinks, and the merriest one wins. The characteristic of this manifestation is that women are not allowed to participate.

As there is the entertainment for men, so there is the event for women, called „Womens' hard-drinking feast“, also in Boljevac. The manifestation is of the same character as the one for men.

„Lamb show“ in Pirot takes place every year on the town quay and everything that is specifically produced in Pirot and this area, is brought here: their cheese, honey, pottery, carpets and lamb of course. Typical breeds of this region are at visitors disposal and the organizers of the lamb show are SO Pirot, tourist organization and a vet clinique.

„Velikdenska paraša“ in Dimitrovgrad is a manifestation devoted to promotion of tradition, folk dances, customs and food and drink show. These are actually dishes used to be made in a traditional way and today housewives and peasant women preserve the way of cooking.

„Saint John Biljober“ or „Saint John the herb collector“ in Sokobanja is the manifestation that takes place on the decorated stands made of ecological materials that look like pile dwellings but on the marble floor. This is the show of the companies that deal with processing of herbs and honey and the production of preparations made of herbs and honey.

The manifestation „dishes from the Old mountain“ in Pirot, gives a chance for the dairy, vegetable and meat producers as well as honey, home-made wine, brandy producers to present their products. During this manifestation the indigenous dishes from the Old mountain region are prepared. The presenters and producers have a chance to take part in the lectures on environmental tourism.

„Days of the Saint Makaveja“ in Boljevac, is a traditional manifestation mostly visited by the guests from the Eastern Serbia. Within this manifestation the competition on making the best corn porridge is organized and the show of the skilled hand weavers and handicrafts.

„Belmužijada“ in Svrljig is a commercial and tourist manifestation devoted to the traditional specialty from Svrljig, made of sheep and cow cheese and corn flour. The program of this manifestation is accompanied with the selection for the miss shepherdess, handicrafts, old dishes from Svrljig, shepherd dance and cultural programme.

„Wine festival“ in Niš is a type of the classical fair and wine show from all regions of Serbia and consists of different programmes (promotional-sales, business, media, educational and entertaining)

„Days of banica“ (banica- cheese pie made of rolled dough) takes place in Bela Palanka as a manifestation that promote the values of traditional folk kitchen of this area, arts and crafts products. Visitors have a chance to taste the „banica“ which compete for an award. Food producers from Bela Palanka also take part in this show.

During the manifestation named „ Kettle of the Crna reka“, fish fans and gastronomy get together from lots of areas. After the fishing and good catch has been done, the competitors compete in cooking kettle fish broth according to the common recipe. Each cook of the fish broth in this region has its own procedure and his secret spice that would enrich and refine the taste of his dish and give him a chance for the triumph and getting an award in this manifestation.

Niška banja (spa) is traditionally the host of „Burekdžijada“- bureky(leafy meat pie) show. Every year they promote and visitors may enjoy in the specialties of the well-known bureky made from cheese, bacon, mushrooms...).

Sponsored by the municipality of Pirot, the manifestation „ Golden kettle“ takes place in this town every year where cooks compete in making fish broth. This is a very similar manifestation to the one in Crna reka.

„Rose hip show“ takes place in Novo Korito wherein the main motive of the manifestation is the fruit of briar. During this event the competitors compete in different cat-

egories such as: the biggest and the most beautiful rose hip, the best jam and the most original recipe.

„Beans show“ is hold in Pirot every year, on the town quay in October. Except for the competition in preparing and testing of this traditional Serbian dish , the aim of the organizers is to support the social life of the local residents.

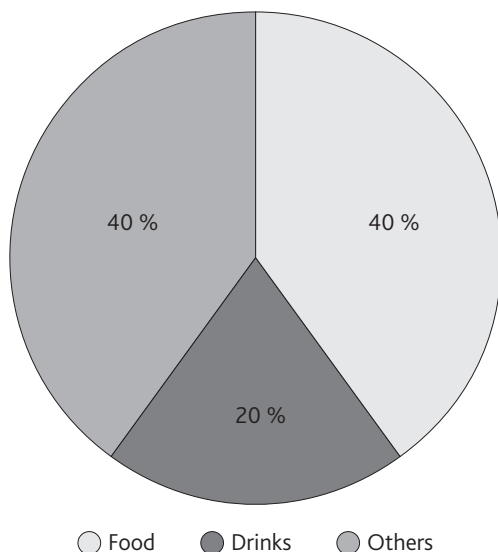
„Vurdijada“ is organized in Babušnica every year in November. This event has also competitive character and deals with preparing „Vurda“-special type of semi-sour curd cheese and other national dishes. This type of specific diary product is made in Lužnica and Pirot. Sheep, cow milk and their mixture is used for making this product named „Vurda“.

„Meetings of ethno unions and associations of Serbia“ are held in Knjaževac every year. This manifestation has tourist and traditional character with the aim to promote winter and village tourism on the Old mountain (Stara planina) and to preserve and save inheritance , immaterial values and national identity. Special attention is paid to the development of gastronomical tourism, as one of the possibilities for improvement general life quality and promotion of the tourist offer of this municipality.

Structure of the manifestations analyses of the Southeastern Serbia

Graph 1 presents the data that we obtained and processed based on the analyses of the structure of the manifestations being held in the Southeastern Serbia.

Analysing the manifestations that might attract gastronomical tourists to the Southeastern Serbia, it has been concluded that food manifestations make 40 % (Aspic show, Vurdijada, Manifestation of making Old mountain dishes, Belmužijada, Days of banica, Crna reka Kettle, Burekdžijada, Golden Kettle, Beans show, World championship in mak-



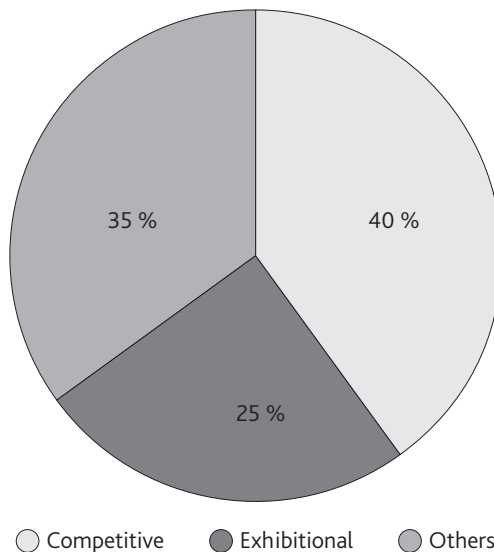
Graph 1. The structure of the manifestations in the Southeastern Serbia

ing pressed sausages). 20% make the manifestations that promote the drinks of the South-eastern Serbia (Brandy brand, Dolce vita show of wine and chocolate, Days of wine and gusto, Wine festival) and 40 % of both, whose elements are food and drinks (Meetings of ethno associations of Serbia, Days of wine and gusto, Mens' hard-drinking feast, Womens' hard-drinking feast, Lamb show, Velikdenska peraša, Saint John herb collector, Days of Saint Makavejas, Rose hip show, Dolce vita saloon of wine and chocolate).

Comparing these data with those referring to the similar ones in Vojvodina, it can be concluded that there are more food manifestations in Vojvodina (55%). South-eastern Serbia has more drink manifestations (20%) in contrast to those in Vojvodina wherein only 10% of the shows are devoted to drinks. Food and drink manifestations are represented in South-eastern Serbia in 40%, while in Vojvodina 35% of the shows deal with this theme.

Analyses of the types of the manifestations in South-eastern Serbia

Analysing types of the manifestations in South-eastern Serbia it can be concluded that there are 25% show and performance manifestations (Brandy brand, Wine and chocolate saloon, Lamb show, Saint John herb collector, Manifestation of Old mountain dishes in Pirot, Wine festival). 40 % of the manifestations are devoted gastronomic specialities (Aspic show in the Niš spa, World championship in making bottle-pressed sausages, Belmudžijada in Svrlijig, Days of banica in Bela Palanka, Crna reka Kettle in Boljevac, Burekdžijada in the Niš spa, Golden Kettle in Pirot, Beans show in Pirot and Vurdijada in Babušnica). Manifestations of various character make 35% (Days of wine and gusto, Mens' hard-drinking show in Boljevac, Womens' hard-drinking show in the same town, Velikdenska peraša in Dimitrovgrad, Days of the Saint Makavejs in Boljevac). The structure of manifestation types is shown in the graph 2.



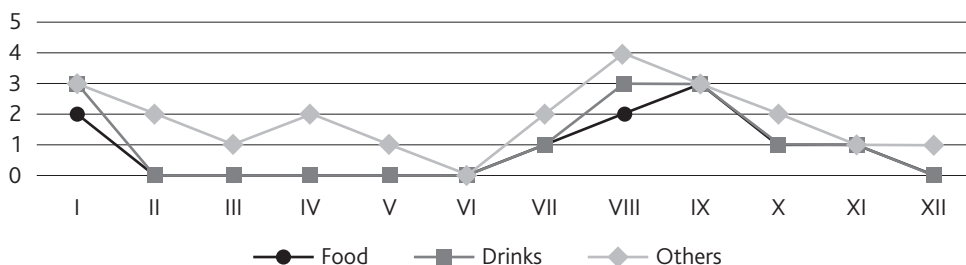
Graph 2. The types of the manifestations in South-eastern Serbia

The structure of manifestation types in South-eastern Serbia

Comparing the obtained data with the data on the manifestations character in the region of Vojvodina, it can be concluded that there are more manifestations with competitive character in the region of South-eastern Serbia, in contrast to Vojvodina wherein it makes 28%. Also, in South-eastern Serbia there are more manifestations of exhibition character, while only 14% of the manifestations in Vojvodina have this character. 58 % of the manifestations in Vojvodina have manifold character, while it is in less extent in the region of South-eastern Serbia.

Time Analyses of the manifestations in South-eastern Serbia

Analysing the time when the manifestations are held, one can conclude that most of them are organized in January, August and September. There are only one or two manifestations during other months, while there is none in June (Graph 3).



Graph 3. Manifestations time in South-eastern Serbia

Analysing the time when the manifestations take place in South-eastern Serbia (graph 3), it can be noticed that most of them are organized in August, and they are food events (Days of banica, Bela Palanka and Belmužijada in Svrlijig), one refers to drinks (Wine festival in Niš) and one manifestation is of manifold character (Days of Saint Makavejas in Boljevac). There are three food manifestations in September (Crna reka Kettle in Boljevac, Burekdžijada in Niš and Golden Kettle in Pirot). There are also three manifestations in January, two of them are of food character (Aspic show in the Niš spa and World championship in making bottle-pressed sausage in Pirot). There is none manifestation in June, but at the end of November and beginning of December there is the Meeting of ethno unions and associations of Serbia in Knjaževac. Based on the presented results one can find out an insufficient opportunity to exploit spring months, especially April and May. The characteristic of the gastronomic tourism is its existing regardless seasons so the number of manifestations should be increased during the year.

CONCLUSION

Gastronomic manifestations have become an important factor in the development of different tourism types with the special influence to gastronomic tourism, throughout the world and with us. South-eastern Serbia, being considered as essential part, the kernel of the „Balkan gastronomy“ possesses great potentials for development of gastronomic tourism. The influence of other Balkan peoples, especially Turks and Bulgarians affected Serbian south-eastern gastronomic products and specific way of preparing.

In the region of South-eastern Serbia the greatest number of manifestations promote agricultural, nutritional and gastronomic products participating in 40% (aspic, beans, bottle-pressed sausages, leafy pies). Manifestations for the promotion of authentic drinks participate in 20%. Manifestations are mostly of various character (58%), with competitive character there are 28% of them (dishes such as beans, leafy pies, aspic) and only 14 % of the manifestations are of exhibiting character (different home-made wines, brandies, honey and chocolate are shown). If the period or the time of the performance is taken into consideration one can conclude that the greatest number of them are held in January, August and September. Unfortunately, there are no manifestations all year round that could draw tourists being motivated to visit food and drink shows.

Since the gastronomic tourism does not depend on the season, the organizers should use the opportunity to hold manifestations throughout the year and promote authentic food and drinks. South-eastern Serbia is the destination with good prospects for the development of food tourism, wherein well-preserved home-made and national dishes and drinks are served. Just because of the preserved authenticity, South-eastern Serbia is the region where the desires for new gastronomic experiences are generated.

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