

Chapter 10

Food, Rural Heritage, and Tourism in the Local Economy: Case Studies in Serbia, Romania, Italy, and Turkey

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the manifestations of the values of the gastronomic cultural heritage in geographically and ethnically different territories in southeastern European countries such as Serbia, Romania, Turkey, and Italy. The chapter explores how the development of gastronomy and the food heritage can help to protect rural heritage values. This study used qualitative method. Case studies were used to summarize the local survey results and to consider how an entrepreneurial culture can enhance locally produced food as a value-added touristic experience. Case study surveys in the four countries enable us to get an insight into the cultural values of the gastronomic heritage in each of them, to formulate gastronomic cultural heritage marketing development paths to continue to increase the demand for these values, and hence to revitalize economic activity in the local rural communities. There is a wide variety of different practices in different regions and countries.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Within the field of rural development, localized agriculture and small-scale entrepreneurship are increasingly promoted as means by which the rural economy, culture and ecosystem can be sustained. State agencies are, in different political programmes, intervening to improve the management of rural areas: for example, there are EU policies for the recovery of weak regions, and EU funded financial frameworks. Sustainable landscape management in rural areas requires the creation of opportunities that deal with landscapes in the context of historical, cultural and social factors. The key factors in rural areas are found in the interaction between enterprises, productive sectors, institutions and territory, and the exploitation of the potential of local food. The popularity of the local food sector, as part of broader sustainable tourism development strategies, calls for a study of the dynamics between heritage, tourism and creative entrepreneurship.

Agricultural production provides raw materials that are necessary for the development of gastronomic tourism and therefore influences the fact that gastronomy makes an integral link in the chain of destination experience. For rural areas these facts are of particular importance because they have a circular cycle of production and consumption of foodstuffs (Štetić, 2010). Local food and its relationship with tourism have become key aspects in the analysis of tourist destinations, especially destinations related to culture and heritage. Food can be the main subject or can be combined with other cultural expressions, and the choice appears to depend mainly on the personal interests of the entrepreneurs (Garibaldi & Pozzo, 2019).

Food and gastronomy in tourism have been discussed using various disciplinary approaches and from different perspectives. It is a topic of increasing importance for many destinations, and many studies focus on the value of food as a tourism resource, looking at the influence of tourism on the transformation of local cooking, or the role of tourism in the social reproduction of the food-based heritage (De Jong et al., 2018; Thomé-Ortiz, 2017).

Food and gastronomy (and their heritage) are key aspects of a local community, place and destination (Dredge & Jenkins, 2003; Everett, 2012; Kim & Iwashita, 2016; Mak, Lumbers & Eve, 2010; Reynolds, 1994), but much depends on the geographical context and the specific structural, infrastructural, historical, social and human resources. Food is a part of culture and national identity and, as such, it has a connecting power, bringing people, communities and businesses together.

The culinary heritage corresponds to the collective memory and roots, which promote a sense of belonging to a territory (Bessière, 2013, p. 277) this is confirmed by anthropological approaches dedicated to the cultural heritage of food and how it has evolved with tourism (Jolliffe & Aslam, 2009; Kim & Ellis, 2015). Heritage is what contemporary society inherits and passes on; thus, it represents not only the past but also the present use of the past (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Food in its authenticity is heritage: it gives value to a destination, and can be the means and the motive of attachment or the attractiveness of a place or place making (Lew, 2017).

Gastronomy has appeared to be an indispensable element in getting to know the culture and lifestyle of a destination, and so it embodies all the traditional values associated with the new trends in tourism and the 'gastronomic revival' (Di Renzo, 2014, p. 27): respect for culture and tradition, a healthy lifestyle, authenticity, sustainability and experience. Food practices are shaping today's urban life in a new way. Food and tourism have the potential to generate income and employment and to promote local and social development through their visible impact on and relationship with local stakeholders. The desire to live like a resident, combined with the desire of locals to become entrepreneurs of tourism experiences, has stimulated a new 'live like a local' trend that has been met by creative tourism based on the

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