

## THE CULINARY FESTIVALS IN SHUMEN REGION

Leylya Shefka

Assist. Prof. PhD, Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, l.shefka@shu.bg

**Abstract:** The number of culinary festivals in individual villages in the region is growing. They promote the culinary traditions of a given settlement, which also contributes to the development of local tourism. In the region, this type of event is held either once or periodically. Culinary festivals are places where traditional dishes are accompanied by music and are performed by local people. The goal is to transfer knowledge from the past to the present and future, and to preserve the traditional taste of food. Each season has its own food and each region its own specificity, which makes it different. Food always leaves unforgettable impressions.

**Key words:** *culinary festival, food, traditions, knowledge*

Food is part of the national identity of the Bulgarian. This publication aims to briefly review and evaluate the role of culinary festivals as a tourist product in the region.

How these events affect the socio-economic status of a given territory. Festivals are a phenomenon with only a 30-year history, as Lyck (2012) rightly notes. Culinary events in Bulgaria have been summarized and cataloged by Nikolova et al. (Nikolova, 2019), according to which there were 137 such events in 2019. Of these, those related to wine predominated (21%), followed by those related to wheat and bread (13%), and those recreating traditional recipes from vegetables and pulses (12%). The majority (93%) of these are annual, and only 3% are international (Petkov, V., M. Penerliev, 2019).

They are smaller and bigger, famous and not so famous, but they are carried out by local people. Culinary festivals transfer knowledge from the past to the present and the future. Food always leaves unforgettable impressions. Every season has its own food, fruits, vegetables, meat. Every Bulgarian region has its own specifics that make it different. Food festivals are places where traditional flavours meet 'modern spices' and new culinary challenges.

In this material I seek to highlight other competitive advantages of the Shumen region from the point of view of precisely these "cultural phenomena - festivals". Whether they will be successfully implemented as part of a tourist product in cultural tourism in the region is a problem concerning the regional authorities.

In recent years, the many festivals have shown that traditional cooking in Bulgaria can be attractive and interesting, but also preserve the authenticity of Bulgarian cuisine. The rich culinary traditions in Bulgaria and their regional characteristics are the basis for creating country-specific culinary holidays, festivals and gatherings.

The aim of this study is to present culinary festivals and outline their regional specificities.

The research methods used are:

- Expeditionary-field;
- Description and explanation;
- Cartographic.

The presentation of local culinary features going takes the form of specific festival events.

According to most terminological dictionaries, a "Festival" is a special event organized with specific public manifestations, on specific themes and in a specific place, organized on a specific day or period of time. The aim is the gathering of people in one place, and to empathy and possible contact between them.

According to the European Festivals Association, they are "primarily temporary events, a united programme of artistic performances, going beyond the qualities of everyday programming to achieve a level of exceptional festivity in separate venue. Consequently has possesses a unique appeal that can only be maintained over a period of time..."

Thus defined by the criterion of "time", the festivals and its tourism potential passes through the organization of so-called event tourism. In English-language literature, this is a separate type of tourism activity known as *event tourism*. This is a generalizing group of activities such as congress tourism, some elements of pilgrimage tourism, sporting events and others. In this sense, the organization and management of festival tourism are subordinates definitely to the peculiarities of all types of activities accompanying event tourism.

According to the above definition, a festival is a special event. According to Elexieva and Bokova (2013), special events in cultural tourism are those that facilitate acquaintance about different cultures, participating in authentic folklore holidays and festivals, sharing emotions and knowledge. They help to diversify the tourist product and extend the season of traditional types of tourism.

According to Penerliev and Petkov (2019), culinary festivals are part of the so-called event tourism. They are periodic or cyclical and present local ethno-culinary traditions in certain periods. Given the massiveness of festivals, they consider this a good a possibility. They combine the ethno-cultural, ethno-religious, agrarian and other features of the territories and are the most adequate manifestations for the preservation of the Bulgarian identity and its corresponding successful application as part of a tourist product.

In the sense of the above, festival tourism should be accepted as part of cultural tourism, with strongly expressed characteristics of event tourism, and ultimately with all the accompanying features of these types of tourism activity.

I strive to properly define terminology for two reasons: on the one hand, the specific description of the festival potential of the territory under study. On the other hand, to provide a clear direction for the proper promotion and analysis of this specific tourism product. Otherwise, the potential would remain untapped and without the maximum of its social and economic benefits being derived.

Some attractive culinary festivals in Shumen region.

### **The Culinary Festival "Forgotten traditions – ceremonial tables"**

The village of Vasil Drumev is located 8 km southeast of the town of Shumen.



jury - Uti Bachvarov

The aim of the culinary festival is to search, enrich, promote and preserve the traditional dishes characteristic of the region, which are an inexhaustible source of human life.

The Culinary Festival has a competitive character.

Participants in the competition part of the festival have to prepare two dishes characteristic of their region in an attractive way, as well as provide information about the name and the authentic recipe.

Uti Bachvarov, a famous presenter, was invited to chair the jury.

In 2015, for the first time was organized and conducts in the village of Vasil Drumev the culinary festival "Forgotten traditions - ceremonial tables". The idea is from the community center

secretary Maria Velikova. Uti Bachvarov gives a very high rating of the first edition of the race by the hearth and his opinion about the festival is "without analogue in Bulgaria".

The festival takes place in the last week of August or the first week of September. It takes place every year and in 2023 is its 5th edition.



the different shots from the festival

The last two editions of the festival are under the motto "*Forgotten traditions - kindlin embers*". A wide variety of delicious dishes have been presented and prepared over the years that the festival has been held.

The winners of the last edition are:



- „Probuda - 1928" Community Center, town of Kaspichan - wins the award for "the most delicious dish" with the dish they cooked "beans with porcini mushrooms in a pot";

- "Prosveta 1925" Community Center village of Ilija Blaskovo was awarded the prize for "the most authentic recipe" for the prepared banitsa with bulgur;

- "Probuda - 1928" Community Center village of Zmeiovo, Stara Zagora municipality, wins the award for "the most attractively prepared food on the embers" - "tyurlyu mandzha".

The hosts from the village of Vasil Drumev present themselves with the typical dishes of this region of the country - "pork ribs with bulgur" and " the style drobeno to Idzhishki ". The technology for preparing these dishes is explained by the village secretary Maria Velikova.

*"Pork ribs with bulgur"*

"The meat was stored salted in a wooden vat (small barrel) because there were no refrigerators then. After the salted ribs are taken out, they must be soaked in clean water. Then they must be well fried with onions. The bulgur and water, red and black pepper are added to them, after which the dish is then put in an the oven or furnace."

*" The style drobeno to Idzhishki "*

"To prepare the dish, the innards of the lamb are used, except for the liver and spleen, two teacup of bulgur, one cup of rice, salt, old and fresh onions, red and black pepper, oil, mint and water. Fry the onion with a little salt and oil. Add the entrails of the lamb, cut into larger pieces. Then add bulgur, rice, spices and finally fresh onion. The water for the bulgur is about three tea cups. The dish is baked in the furnace, but the most aromatic and delicious is prepared in the oven.

The dish is typical of the village and dates back many years and has been passed down for generations. According to the secretary, the women in the village cook it in all seasons of the year, but most often on St. George's Day, when the village festival is also held. Velikova notes that in general, locals prefer to cook with more bulgur and less with rice, unlike other regions in the country.



The rich diversity of Bulgarian cuisine

### **Festival of young wine and fresh sausage in the village of Kyulevcha**

The village of Kyulevcha is located at the southern foot of the Kyulevcha plateau, 20 km away from the town of Shumen, about 3 km. southeast of the village of Madara and 10 km. from the town of Kaspichan.

"Stone Pillar – 1888" Community Center and the Kyulevcha village Hall are the organizers of the already traditional Festival of Home Beer, which is held twice a year in the spring and autumn, when the people of Kyulevcha close the summer season, and the Festival of Young Wine and Fresh Sausage, with which they traditionally open the winter season.

Every year in the fall, the traditional Fertility Fest day "Kyulevchiada" is held, which includes a culinary exhibition of a competitive nature, which presents dishes prepared according to preserved old local recipes and rich music.

Particularly characteristic in ethnographic terms is the local cuisine, which is radically different from the urban cuisine. The use of pulses prevails - bulgur, beans, bakla, as well as porridges based on flour, greaves and walnuts prevails. The cooking is closely related to the festive Orthodox cycle and includes many vegetables and dried fruits, which are still widely used by the population today. It is traditional to serve the so-called "siktir mandzha" at the end of the festival, which is a stew of potatoes, bulgur and dried fruits.

"Festival of Young Wine and Fresh Sausage" was created by Vesselin Todorov, together with the village hall and the "Stone Pillar - 1888" community center in 2010. It is annual and last year the 12th edition was held.



Sausage

The preparation of the sausage is according to an original recipe and includes a demonstration of making sausage on site. In it, the residents of the village provide for tasting home-made sausage, for which the recipe is kept secret.

Emblematic of the festival is the preparation of beans with sausage. Experienced cooks from the village prepare a delicious bean stew with sausage, which is served to all the guests of the holiday.





Bean stew with sausage

Guests can also taste different types of wines, including young "Beaujolais".  
Sommeliers evaluate the best wines in three categories - white, red and rose.  
Every time, the celebration in Kyulevcha passed with a lot of mood, songs, dances, delicious sujuk and "young" wine.



Wine

Wine with sausage with sausage



songs and dances

#### **Festival of the gyuzleme in the village of Gradishte**

The village of Gradishte is located on the northern slopes of the Shumen plateau, about 10 km. from the city of Shumen in the northwest direction. It is located in a valley locked between two flat ridges.

The idea for the festival came from the community center secretary in the village of Gradishte, Yuke Hussein.

"We showed the gyuzleme at the Fertility Carnival in Shumen and many people liked it. Uti Bachvarov also loved it and we thought we could make a festival."

The first Gyuzleme Festival began to from two consecutive carnivals.



Gyuzleme

"Fertility Carnival - 2010" on 03.10.2010 the culinary show, accompanying the exhibition. A jury with the participation of Uti Bachvarov evaluates the exhibits.

The village of Gradishte presents itself with a culinary show - live gyuzleme. The wonderful gyuzlemes bring Shumen residents and guests back to the memories of the grandmothers of the past.

"Fertility Carnival - 2012" on 07.10.2012 everything is repeated. From the very beginning to the end there was a long queue of people waiting to buy gyuzleme. The community center was awarded the "Culinary Show" prize and a cash prize.

On 05.10.2013, the Gyuzleme Festival was held independently for the first time in the village of Gradishte. It was created on the idea of the community center secretary Yuke Beiti Hussein and



after the great interest shown by participants and guests of the two previous carnivals, so that more people could experience the delicious Gyuzlema. It officially opens at 11 a.m., but the feverish preparation begins in the morning for all participants and guests.

The aim of the festivals is to keep and preserve the traditions of generations. The Festival of the Gyuzleme is now an annual event, and in 2024 it was its 8th edition.

The most interesting attraction for guests is the authentic demonstration of making gyuzleme, which includes the entire process - from kneading the dough to baking the sach to tasting.



Demonstration of making gyuzleme

The recipe is a traditional one. Flour, water, baking soda, eggs and a little salt are needed for the dough, from which the women in the village of Gradishte knead their patties – gyuzlemeta. The craftsmen kneaded 50 kg. of flour. The kneading is entrusted to the 63-year-old aunt Zekie Yumerova and her assistant Selime. I make the dough into balls, roll out a large thin crust with a wooden rolling pin, spread with butter, crumble cheese and fold it like an envelope for a letter. They bake a little and then fry until golden.



The Gyuzleme are now the trademark of Gradishte, and the holiday always has a rich cultural program, many guests and visitors.

The festivals characteristic here may not be the only ones. Each such event is unique in itself.

From the above, it is clear that in Bulgaria culinary tourism is synonymous with culinary festivals. It is still not used as an alternative for the development of additional tourist activities in regions (Shefka L., M. Penerliev, Sv. Stankova, 2014).

### **The conclusion**

Festival tourism is also an element of event tourism that "joins" separate events in both rural and cultural tourism, has a strongly expressed complex role.

1. Preservation and preservation of authentic local culinary traditions from generation to generation;

2. Drawing attention to smaller settlements and presenting their natural, historical and cultural landmarks;

3. Preservation of the authenticity of Bulgarian cuisine;

4. Development of projects with cultural routes related to culinary festivals.

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