

## Dorota Świtała-Trybek

University of Opole, Faculty of Philology

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8525-5800>

email: [dtrybek@uni.opole.pl](mailto:dtrybek@uni.opole.pl)

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# New trends in culinary tourism – regional (Silesian) fusion cuisine

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**Abstract:** This article concerns regional cuisine, mainly new ways of its presentation taking into account personal visions the preparation of certain dishes. Today, in culinary tourism there is a growing interest in regional dishes in fusion versions. The author discusses the characteristics of the regional and fusion cuisine, identifies selected Silesian dishes most often modified by chefs, presents the typology of restaurants that offer regional specialities in modern versions. The trend concerning modernized versions of regional specialities is constantly growing, as evidenced by, among others, an increasing number of restaurants specialized in such “food creations”. They are treated as a culinary attraction, and as such they appeal to the interests of an increasing number of culinary and gourmet tourists, especially among the younger generation.

**Keywords:** culinary tourism, regional cuisine, fusion cuisine, restaurants, Silesia

## 1. Introduction

Consuming different foods and drinks not only satisfies basic existential needs, namely, hunger and thirst. Its significance goes far beyond the above-mentioned needs, which is reflected in the intensive development of culinary tourism focused on the theme of culinary heritage. It is worth mentioning that culinary heritage is the material and spiritual output of previous generations, as well as contemporary achievements. It is an important cultural element of every nation, shaped for centuries and constantly developing, consisting of both local products as well as those borrowed and adapted to the needs, preferences and current trends in nutrition. Therefore, culinary heritage includes, apart from ready meals, physical artefacts such as kitchen utensils, household items, methods of growing plants and raising farm animals, food preparation and preservation, etc. It also accounts for intangible aspects, such as culinary practices accompanying family customs and annual events, knowledge of food ingredients, their use, preparation, as well as oral history concerning these issues, covering a variety of

means of expression. Lastly, culinary heritage manifests in language through names associated with cuisine and activities related to food preparation and circumstances of its consumption (Świtała-Trybek and Przymuszała, 2018).

Culinary heritage, so willingly emphasized today, has many enthusiasts who travel to specific tourist areas in order to get to know and experience it. Culinary tourism, one of the characteristic forms of cultural or cognitive tourism (Kowalczyk, 2008; Matusiak, 2009; Durydiwka, 2013), which belongs to one of the most interesting trends of contemporary cultural tourism in Poland (Stasiak, 2015), is “thematic travelling in order to learn local, regional and national raw materials, food products, as well as traditional dishes of both rural and urban areas. This type of tourism rewards tourists because they can personally experience new tastes and smells, and return to those already known. This is done by taking part in culinary events, traversing culinary trails, visiting restaurants and museums focused on culinary arts, watching technological processes in food processing

plants, as well as observing the preparation of culinary specialties” (Woźniczko et al., 2015). In addition, it includes “travels to visit regions and cities distinctive in the context of culinary traditions, also by reason of their specific cultural landscape, etc.” (Kowalczyk, 2016, p. 32). Culinary tourism consists of three inseparable components present in different proportions: high quality food, gaining knowledge and experience (Stasiak, 2015, 2016). Without a doubt, modern culinary tourism is by all means a cultural phenomenon (Orłowski and Woźniczko, 2016).

In the era of mass tourism, an opportunity to explore culinary heritage, both tangible and intangible, in different tourism areas is associated with the typologization of certain culinary tourists according to their motivations. C. M. Hall and L. Sharples identified four basic types of culinary tourists: *gourmet tourism* (the most informed in the matter of food, knowing exactly what they want, having a clearly defined goal, for example, having certain foods in a specific restaurant, purchasing food products on a specific market. These people subordinate all

tourist activities to food, its ingredients and preparation), *cuisine tourism* (the main purpose of a trip is widely understood cuisine, but less focused on details, rather expressed in the desire to explore new flavours or return to those already known, etc.), *culinary tourism* (motivations and culinary needs are secondary, e.g. participation in a culinary festival as a form of leisure, not just out of a necessity to meet physiological needs). The last type are tourists for whom cuisine is complementary in terms of tourism, e.g. the desire to taste or see something different in a new place, e.g. vineyard, market, etc. (Hall and Sharples, 2003).

In modern culinary tourism, which draws from a rich set of diverse content related to cultural heritage, practices that sweeten regional cuisine through extraordinary effort to present it in an entirely different way are becoming more and more popular. This is not a completely new phenomenon. Kitchen experiments have always marked the development of culinary arts, but, and it needs to be stressed, not necessarily in traditional cuisines that cherish unchanged, predictable and valuable methods.

## 2. Methods and material studied

The article includes:

- the discussion on the distinguishing characteristics of regional and *fusion* cuisine (Table 1);
- the presentation of selected regional (Silesian) *fusion* dishes (Table 2) as well as the typology of restaurants offering such foods;

The analysis of this interesting phenomenon has been conducted using the reactive method, secondary sources (Polish and foreign literature on the subject), materials obtained during visits to restaurants offering *fusion* cuisine, as well as online materials.

## 3. Results and analysis

### 3.1. Regional cuisine vs. *fusion* cuisine

In Poland, for centuries mainly an agricultural country, regional cuisines are similar. We often encounter the same or slightly altered dishes, frequently under different names, all over the country. Basic foods were: bread (especially of rye flour), cereal, pastries, dairy products and – since the 18<sup>th</sup> century – potatoes. Undoubtedly, gathering resources also used to play an important role (mushrooms, berries, fruits) (Bohdanowicz, 1996; Byszewska and Kurpińska, 2012). This does not mean

that there are no differences between Polish regional cuisines. There are, and their formation was affected by annexations and merging of various culinary patterns. In Galicia, belonging to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which was a conglomeration of different nations, the occupant did not interfere in the customs of its subjects, therefore cuisine could easily be subjected to various influences. Borderland cuisine with dumplings and jam was enriched by peppers and *mamałyga*, Viennese cakes,

apple strudel, Hungarian goulash or Viennese schnitzel. As a result, today's Małopolska cuisine is a real mixture of Hungarian, Austrian and Lvov delicacies. Wielkopolska, oppressed by the Prussians, was famous for its steamed dumplings with obligatory duck sauce, as well as excellent preserved products. It also took a lot from German cuisine, e.g. pork knuckle, one-pot dishes (eintopf) or yeast dough. The Russian annexation left the least traces – hatred of the tsarist regime prevented it. Only later our cuisine adopted blini, knish and coulbiac (Szymanderska, 2010, p. 8).

Regional cuisines are an important part of the tourist offer, and today their popularity is undeniable (Kowalczyk, 2011). This global culinary trend is gaining momentum every year, constantly taking new forms. This issue is so interesting that ways of narration about regional cuisines, as well as their form of presentation (simple and natural ingredients, home-made dishes prepared using time-consuming technological processes guaranteeing quality, familiar landscapes, etc.) increasingly often are becoming an indicator of traditional and healthy eating, at the same time creating specific consumer attitudes. This idea of regional cuisine is largely a result of the oper-

ation of the modern nutrition market, both globalized and unified as well as oriented on the production of goods containing unhealthy ingredients, such as flavour enhancers, trans fats, salt, etc. Traditional cuisine products are seen as opposed to “bulk-made” food products manufactured by food corporations and available commercially (e.g. in supermarkets, large shops), as well as eating in the so-called *fast food joints*. Their main value is the fact that they “come from the past”, are the legacy of earlier generations and are willingly highlighted, hence they are sentimental and trusted, but are also being memorized by next generations (Świtła-Trybek, 2019).

*Fusion* cuisine combines representative elements of culinary traditions from different countries, regions and cultures (What is fusion cuisine: <https://www.filharmoniasmaku.info/blog/czym-jest-kuchnia-fusion/>). It is an expression of multiculturalism, which is why it is also called “global” cuisine. It is primarily original cuisine, inspired by elements of traditional gastronomy. At the same time, dishes are prepared in an innovative and sophisticated way. Simple, traditional ingredients from everyday cooking, through innovative treatment and elaborate service, delight not only with their

**Table 1.** Regional cuisine vs. fusion cuisine (based on the Author's own study)

Regional cuisine	<i>Fusion</i> cuisine
Comes from the past, known for generations	Innovative, sophisticated, exclusive
Traditional, therefore considered valuable	Previously unknown, distant
Associated with the family home, known space, part of <i>orbis interior</i>	Served in specialized restaurants, associated with <i>orbis exterior</i>
Divided into every day, festive, celebration cuisine	Its status cannot always be determined
Stands out with known flavours	Characterized by previously unknown flavours, often exotic, difficult to identify
Methods of preparation and serving preserved for generations	Culinary experiments define its functioning
Undergoes changes very slowly	Continually modified, linked to food and beverage trends
An element of regional and ethnic identity	Global cuisine, an expression of multiculturalism
Respected among the older generation	Popular among the younger generation
Predictable, but also subject to critical evaluation	Sparks interest, intriguing
For those who like well-known and proven flavours	For those seeking new flavours
Used in various events (local, regional, national)	Popularized mainly among enthusiasts
An element of the promotion of cultural heritage of the country, region	Promotes a particular chef, culinary school or restaurant

taste but also appearance, creating culinary masterpieces.

The emergence of fusion cuisine is related to travelling and getting to know other cultures, and thus eating previously unknown food products, spices and learning methods of food preparation. While its beginnings can be traced back to the voyages of Marco Polo, the true birth of fusion cuisine occurred several centuries later in India, where European and Asian culinary trends met. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, along with the arrival of hundreds of thousands of immigrants from different countries to the USA, there was an intensive development of fusion cuisine, which still continues, as evidenced by various trends, e.g. widely popular *floribbean cuisine* (containing elements of Caribbean and Florida cuisine). It should be noted, however, that its development started when humans began establishing

contact with representatives of other cultures, changing, creating, and perfecting food, thus contributing to its modification and attractiveness. *Fusion* cuisines since the 70s. of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have played an important role in the creation of innovations in modern restaurants. They are currently very popular, which is reflected by the formation specialized in *fusion* cuisine. *Fusion* dishes are also served in *food trucks* and are popular mainly among the younger generation.

Regional and *fusion* cuisine, although seemingly completely different, have a common denominator: culinary tradition. In the case of the former, this tradition is changing very slowly, whereas in the case of the latter, tradition is the starting point for the creation of new dishes (Table 1). On the tourist market, both cuisines have their permanent place and followers – culinary tourists.

### 3.2. New Silesian cuisine

Silesian cuisine is diverse in terms of territory. There is no single Silesian cuisine characteristic of the entire area of Upper Silesia. In the south of the region we can distinguish: Cieszyn cuisine associated with the old bourgeoisie of Cieszyn and Skoczów, Beskidy highlanders and rural residents; cuisine of the central and eastern part (the so-called industrial area) and cuisine of the western part – Opolskie (Światała-Trybek, 2019).

Silesian cuisine is most often associated with white or dark dumplings (called Silesian), *roulade* (beef or pork), *modra* (red) cabbage salad, together forming a Sunday-holiday dinner (Fig. 1 A).

In addition, canon dishes confirming the regional identity of Silesians (Kurczewski, 2015, p. 224) can be *krupniok* (black pudding) (Fig. 1 C), *żymlok* (offal sausage), *karmin-dal* (meatloaf), *wodzionka* (soup with stale bread and garlic) and *panszkraut* (sauerkraut mixed with boiled potatoes and lard), as well as many other original delicacies served on specific days, during family and annual celebrations, e.g. *szoldra* (Easter dish, cold meat roasted in bread), *makówka* (Christmas dessert), *szpajza* (dessert with whipped eggs and gelatine), *kołocz* (yeast cake with poppy seed and fruit stuffing, with crumble, Fig. 1 B), etc.

(Łabońska, 1996; Sztabowa, 1990). Silesian cuisine, due to the richness and variety of dishes and methods of preparation, is among the most complex culinary traditions not only in Poland but throughout Europe. The following factors played an important role in this: history of the region with changing nationality; frontier character; specificity (terrain: uplands, lowlands, mountains; agriculture and industry), as well as changes in population after World War II. Different nationalities and cultures were mixed here, hence Silesian cuisine reflects German, Czech, Austrian, Jewish and borderland influences. This richness of many cultures, a mixture of different cultural patterns of ethnic groups, had and still has an impact on the cultural tradition of the native and migrant populations, which is also reflected in the cuisine.

Silesian cuisine, similarly to other regional cuisines, is used for popularizing and innovative events, e.g. festivals, culinary competitions (Światała-Trybek, 2015). The trend for a changed, modernized version of Silesian cuisine is evident in many restaurants located in Śląskie province, especially in large urban centres such as: Katowice, Zabrze, Chorzów, Tychy, Mysłowice, Ruda Śląska. So, what foods usually are the heroes of Silesian *fusion* cuisine? Among diverse delicacies, *krupniok* reigns (Fig.



**Figure 1.** A - Silesian Sunday dinner: dumplings, roulade, modra (red) cabbage, B – Silesian *kołocz* (yeast cake with filling), C – Traditional *krupniok* (photo by D. Świtała-Trybek), D – *Fusion krupniok* (photo: <https://slaskies-maki.pl/Potrawy/Pokaz/514249/krupniok-ogorek-musztarda-jablko-szalotka-boczek-k>)

**Table 2.** *Krupniok* (based on the Author’s own study)

Traditional version	Fusion version
<p><i>krupniok</i> – smoked meat product in a natural casing (intestine) filled with stuffing made of cooked buckwheat or barley, lesser quality meats (throat, pork head, groin, offal: heart, tongue), fresh blood and spices: salt, pepper, marjoram and onion. In the past, <i>krupniok</i> was prepared mainly after pig-sticking (in Cieszyn Silesia called <i>zabijaczka</i>, and in other parts of the Upper Silesia <i>bicie świni</i> or <i>bicie wieprza</i>) and given to relatives and neighbours. Today, <i>krupniok</i> can be purchased mainly in shops offering meat products and is eaten every day for lunch or dinner, also during family celebrations (weddings, parish carnivals), official events (e.g. <i>Barbórka</i>), as well as different outdoor events (municipal or rural festivals, city days, etc.). It is a traditional product of Silesia, entered on the list of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.</p>	<p>Pate / <i>krupniok</i> starter – bacon wrapped, served with red onion jam, bacon powder, mustard jelly, on bread; served in <i>Szyb Maciej</i> in Zabrze.</p>
	<p>Exquisite <i>krupniok</i> starter – deep fried and panko breaded, served on salad with roasted apples and apple puree. Dish by Piotr Rolnik, chef at <i>Biała Gruba</i>.</p>
	<p>Starter – <i>krupniok</i> fried with onion, served on yeast bun with mustard and pickled cucumber; <i>Cafe Kattowitz</i> in Katowice</p>
	<p>Starter – a bowl of crispy <i>krupniok</i> on fried cabbage; <i>Spichlerz Dworski</i> in Żyglinek.</p>
	<p>Dinner meal: <i>panczkraut</i> with <i>krupniok</i> in smoked bacon, pickled cucumbers with honey, garlic, fresh rosemary, dish by Tomasz Buchczik, chef at <i>Malinowy Dwór</i> in Ruda Śląska.</p>
	<p>Dinner meal: <i>Grubiorz</i> – potato purée with <i>krupniok</i>, bacon and onion, served by <i>Żurownia</i> in Katowice.</p>
	<p>Starter – <i>krupniok</i> with honey from <i>Wółczyn</i>; restaurant in <i>Spałka hotel</i>; <i>Kluczbork</i></p>
<p>Starter – fried quail eggs in <i>krupniok</i> on mushrooms with Jerusalem artichoke. The dish prepared by “<i>Kulinarne Nawigacje</i>” team from Katowice during the XI Silesian Flavours Festival in 2016 in Katowice.</p>	
<p>Starter – <i>krupniok</i> in shortbread served with pear and red cabbage by <i>Śląska Prohibicja</i> in Katowice-Nikiszowiec.</p>	
<p>Pizza with <i>krupniok</i> served by <i>Bistro &amp; Pizza Bzik</i> in Katowice.</p>	

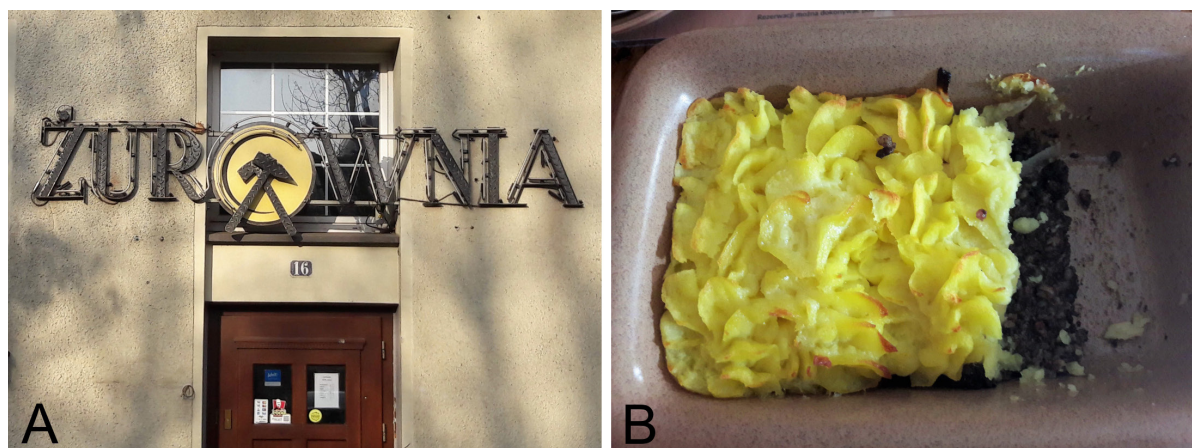
1 D). It is used in various starters with remarkable additions, as well as in dishes such as dumplings, croquettes, stuffed cabbage, casseroles, burgers, pizza, salads and soups (Table 2). When it comes to other classic Silesian dishes, subject to modifications are white dumplings with a hole in the middle (called Silesian dumpling). In the new version they are served with baked beets, pumpkin, boiled spinach or edible carbon (they can be dark red, orange, green or black). They are served with, among others, caper, thyme, dried tomato sauce, etc. Traditional paste (salad) called *hekele*, made of salted *matias* herring, onion, pickled cucumber and cooked eggs with mustard, salt and pepper is also modified.

Restaurants serving Silesian *fusion* cuisine can be divided into two main groups. The first involves those that specialize in new culinary trends and are aimed at *gourmet tourism* and *cuisine tourism*. An example of such restaurant is Żurownia in Katowice which, as the name suggests, serves sour soup in several versions, including: with boletus mushrooms, vegetarian and in a cup. It is worth noting that sourdough (rye flour) is prepared by the chefs and can be purchased to take away. Enthusiasts of Silesian dishes with familiar names can also try: *hajer* (tortilla with sour dough, beef, bacon, onion, pickled cucumber, gravy and fried red cabbage), *krupniok vege* (krupniok made of a mixture of grits and red beans served with rye bun and pickled cucumber), *grubiorz* (casserole made of krupniok, bacon, onion and mashed potatoes) and *kulebele* (Silesian dumplings stuffed with beef and bacon, pickled cucumber, onion,

served with gravy and red fried cabbage), *maczanka* (pork neck stewed in wine and onion, served on rye bun with pickled cucumber and horseradish sauce), *braty* (boiled and fried potatoes with different additions: fried onion, fried mushrooms, bacon or gouda cheese (Fig. 2 A, B). On the culinary map of Katowice, Żurownia certainly stands out and is very popular among fans of Silesian cuisine, as evidenced by this statement: “Żurownia turned out to be one of the most interesting places I have ever been to. This seemingly simple cuisine is full of amazing flavours. These flavours seem to be well known, but are served in a very tasty way. You want to come back and taste other menu items. I will definitely come back at every opportunity, because I fell in love with their cuisine. I recommend this restaurant to anyone who wants to try Silesian cuisine with a soul, who is looking for simple and delicious flavours, and anyone who likes to eat well” (<http://streetfoodpolska.pl/pieronsko-dobro-kuchnia-czyli-zurownia/>).

The second group involves eateries with one or two Silesian *fusion* dishes. Cooking masters want to elevate regional cuisine to a higher level of culinary arts, changing the stereotype that it is very oily and heavy. Therefore, in the menu you can find e.g. instead of caloric “dense oberiba (kohlrabi)” – you can find spicy kohlrabi cream soup with long-cooked egg yolk and bacon crisps. Interestingly, some restaurants located on two culinary trails, “Śląskie Smaki” and “Opolski Bifyj”, offer this refined Silesian cuisine.

Yet another example of eateries offering Silesian delicacies in different versions are



**Figure 2.** A – Żurownia restaurant in Katowice, B -- Casserole with krupniok and mashed potatoes in Żurownia (photo by D. Światała-Trybek)

*food trucks*. Their owners encourage tasting, for example, Silesian dumplings in a bucket in two versions: salty (e.g. with onion sauce or “kyjzowy miszung” – cheese sauce, arugula,

walnuts, olive oil and green pepper) or sweet (with sauce, raspberry jam and coconut), as well as *krupniok* in burgers, hot dogs, casseroles, etc.

## 4. Conclusions

Without a doubt, culinary tourism is still developing. Each year, there are new dietary practices defining new ways to explore the culinary heritage of our ancestors, local communities, regional, ethnic or national heritage, which may also include contemporary initiatives. Regional cuisine associated with traditional meals, ingredients or methods of preparation, like other cultural phenomena, are evolving and developing. This is one of the directions of changes. The second concerns modifications of regional cuisines in the context of interpretations, often by culinary professionals. In this case, we have *fusion* meals using new techniques, flavour mixing, as well as preparation at a suitable aesthetic level. Such activities are culinary attractions and become the target of

a growing number of culinary tourists, especially the younger generation. The trend concerning modernized versions of regional specialities is growing, as evidenced by, among others, an increasing number of restaurants specialized in such “food creations”.

In summary, regional cuisines with a rich legacy of eating habits have enormous potential, and their fusion versions are a great product creating unique and outstanding experiences at different levels. This presentation method of culinary heritage is a reflection of current tourist trends. After all, it is widely known that every example of the combination of “tradition and modernity” raises curiosity, intrigues and sparks interest.

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