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Food tourism as a tool for intergenerational transfer of culinary traditions

Abstract: The presented study reveals the phenomenon of culinary collection as an element of a region's tradition and culture. Learning about culinary traditions is possible via culinary tourism, which contributes to the popularisation of local cuisine and serves as a tool for education in this field.

The culinary attractiveness of a region or a specific place is determined by the richness and distinctiveness of its cuisine and the degree in which it is faithful to its roots. In addition, culinary tourism not only provides a sensory experience, but also contributes to social and economic development. In the list of results, it is difficult to overestimate the role of culinary tourism in conveying cultural traditions as well as learning and maintaining the culinary heritage in its various forms. Today, besides the alternative methods of globalised gastronomy and experience, the skill of creating tradition as a resource of cultural memory is also gaining popularity.

Traditions implemented in the parents' home often reoccur in the children's homes, and known flavours evoke positive emotions and precious memories. Traditional cooking, which requires time and dedication, is part of the modern "slow food" trend. The time and diligence needed to prepare a set of dishes are a rarity in the modern world. At the same time, it seems that the common table symbolising harmony, unity and continuity of inheritance is so indispensable that it needs to be integrated into our modern life.

Keywords: tourism, food tourism, culinary traditions, food, culture, gastronomy

1. Introduction

The ever more popular phenomenon of food tourism is an important element of what is broadly defined as cultural tourism. This very form of tourism encompasses not only tasting experiences but also shopping and educational opportunities. The culinary attractiveness of a region or a particular place is determined by the richness and distinctiveness of its cuisine and the degree to which it remains true to its roots. Moreover, culinary tourism is not only a source of satisfying experiences, but also a factor of local socio-economic development.

In recent years, visiting places of famous cuisine has been increasingly popular. The market has responded with a variety of offers ranging from visiting vineyards, whisky distilleries, breweries and tea plantations, through

farm stays and cooking classes, to celebrations and events centred around a particular crop or product, such as tomato or bread festivals.

Culinary tradition plays an essential role in every culture. It can be defined very broadly as a phenomenon that includes ingredients, the making of the meals and the ways of eating them. Other surrounding elements should also be taken into consideration, for instance the table and the room layout, the skills and abilities of the persons preparing the dishes, or even the associated myths and legends. All those factors have for centuries distinguished particular groups and societies, and have created strong bonds and identities. In a multigenerational setting – particularly in a family – such traditions have been passed on and upheld as part of

cultural heritage, which often remains a source of culinary habits and patterns.

People and communities are frequently conditioned by either the natural availability of certain foods or either the local or regional prevalence of specific culinary traditions. There is often a notable sense of longing for familiar tastes that are reminders of one's ancestral home or region – dishes with recipes passed on by generations. The reverence and nostalgia for the

tastes that constitute an individual's identity tend to intensify along with the physical and cultural distance from one's roots. Culinary tourism can therefore also become a vehicle of time travel owing to the manner in which food, its making and its consumption, is intrinsically bound with the ways and the fates of particular people.

The aim of the study is to evaluate the potential of culinary tourism as a tool for intergenerational transfer of culinary tradition.

2. The concept of culinary tourism and methodology

This paper uses the literature review method on the topic taken and the description of a case study related to the issue. It also shows the practical use of the culinary tourism tool in maintaining intergenerational tradition on selected examples. In addition, the reader will be introduced to the conclusions drawn from two editions of a pilot study based on the method of diagnostic survey carried out in 2014 and in 2019.

The concept of culinary tourism was introduced in literature in 1998 by Lucy Long, who considered it one of the aspects of studying other cultures (Kowalczyk, 2005). Today, scholars of culinary tourism largely agree that it constitutes, among others:

- a form of tourism;
- a tourist attraction;
- an element of cultural tourism;
- a business activity characterised by relatively small outlays and large benefits;
- culinary compositions and entire dishes rather than their individual components;
- exceptional gastronomic experiences, not necessarily dependent on formal rating systems or gastronomic splendour;
- a tool of economic development, especially at local level.

Culinary tourism can simply be defined as “traveling in the search for and the tasting of dishes and drinks” (Boniface, 2003), but its forms can be very diverse. In most cases it involves intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and becomes an opportunity to identify, cultivate and pass on experiences, histories and identities shared by otherwise distinctively different interest and age groups. Culinary traditions can bring together families and clans through group visits or celebrations even if

other material aspects of their common roots are missing.

Moreover, culinary tourism creates opportunities for joint recreation and education. Learning about regional cuisines and the associated aspects of culture contributes to the education and upbringing of younger generations. Parents have an important role to play in cultivating their children's sensitivity to the values that seem to lose importance in the contemporary society.

Places of particular interest in this context are gastronomic enterprises. One can find outlets that primarily serve the local population and as such naturally cultivate local culinary traditions all around the world (Boniface, 2003). In Poland, such folk gastronomy plays a major role in cementing and popularisation of cultural traditions and norms that constitute the country's national cuisine and its regional variations (Orłowski, and Woźniczko, 2010).

Presumably, the most spectacular place to showcase traditional and regional foods is an inn. In the past, an inn would be located in a bustling part of a town, close to a major road or in any other place frequented by travellers. It used to be the place where local town and village people would spend their free time, socialise and celebrate; this very place often served as a shop or a guesthouse as well. Typically, a village inn offered little more than bread and staple dairy products, lard and sausage, eggs and poultry (for customers of better means), and salted herrings (at the fasting time). Many inns only served alcoholic drinks manufactured at the local manor or brewed by the innkeeper himself. Today, if properly managed, inns continue to foster local cultural distinc-

tiveness and preserve familiar tastes, drawing on the local folklore and culinary heritage, and even the building itself can cultivate the local styles and architectural traditions (Orłowski and Woźniczko, 2009).

Among many ways to encounter culinary heritage is to meet with a renowned restaurant owner or a celebrated chef, whose personality and skills can not only broaden one's knowledge about a particular gastronomic subject but also inspire further culinary interests. Of particular appeal are culinary events organised in traditional settings, such as the above-mentioned inns (Orłowski and Woźniczko, 2007). Similarly, tourists can participate in culinary competitions where they can taste specific dishes and learn about their origin directly from their creators. A restaurant or an inn opening can also offer an attractive means to become familiar with traditional and local food as well as cooking methods, especially if such an event involves traditional rituals, dance and music (Dominik, 2009).

One of the most remarkable ways to learn the culinary specificity of a place is through participation in a food festival. There are many such events, which celebrate traditional and regional dishes, foods or particular ingredients. A yet more refined way to discover more about

local tastes is by tracing specific culinary ingredients. Places of origin of spices, plant varieties or animal species are increasingly accessible to dedicated tourists (Long, 2004).

Another rapidly developing method of popularising culinary heritage involves culinary trails. Such trails can take many forms and shapes, based on a selected main theme or a few specific characteristics of a particular route or area, a distinctive dish or a traditional crop. Culinary trails can either promote one region, connect several regions within one country, or even offer thematic tours of several countries.

Throughout Poland, a stay at an agritourism farm offers a family-friendly opportunity to learn about local culinary heritage. Rural guesthouses and agritourism establishments frequently cultivate culinary customs and serve local dishes in time-honoured ways (Mucha-Szajek, 2006). Moreover, it is often possible for visitors to participate in the preparation of fruit, vegetable and dairy products – an activity which is commonly seen as a tourist attraction in its own right. A hand-made jam, a cottage cheese or pickles which can be taken home become a valued souvenir or a precious gift, and for the farmer they also represent an economic way to market their own produce.

3. The need for an intergenerational transfer of tradition

There are two aspects of intergenerational dialogue: private (within a family) and public (observed in a community). Both aspects are subject to change and evolution; the former has been much studied, the latter has attracted increasing attention since the process of society ageing was observed at both the global and the local scale (Rosochacka-Gmitrzak and Chabiera, 2013).

The communication of cultural heritage within the family also includes elements of food and nutrition. The family influence over the nutrition habits of a child is twofold: directly, through the provision of certain foodstuffs, and indirectly, through the transmission of specific culinary preferences and attitudes (Sanjur, 1982).

Polish cultural heritage is among the oldest in Europe. Almost a thousand years of continued inheritance mean that religious rituals and folk traditions, community ceremonies and

family customs have been passed on for generations. Alongside has grown a body of myths, legends, sayings and proverbs that are considered a 'wisdom of the nation'. Storytelling traditions, still strong in many multigenerational families, have contributed to the process of shaping the worldview of younger generations. Legends and anecdotes play a variety of roles from promoting desired attitudes to warning against repeating others' past mistakes.

The long history of Poland has resulted in rich and diverse cultural traditions. Emotional, engaged observance, both lay and religious, of such holidays as Christmas and Easter is deeply rooted in the Polish mentality, including such characteristic elements as Easter egg painting, food blessing on Holy Saturday and decorating the Christmas tree and breaking of the communion wafer on Christmas Eve.

Nevertheless, in many aspects the relationship between various generations in the modern Polish family differs from the traditional model. It is occasional rather than continuous; it tends to be focused on providing help or assistance where and when needed. Multigenerational families are increasingly rare and rarely are they completely voluntary, resulting in failed communication issues and mounting intergenerational conflicts. The fact that different generations live together is often simply a consequence of a limited availability of housing or a temporary need for childcare. For the lack of other factors binding large households together the socialising function and other benefits of a multigener-

ational family are severely limited. This includes the role of the family as a transmitter of culture. "The ability to ensure rational recreation and to create conditions for the development of interests and intellectual skills of children is one of the key challenges of parenthood" (Maciejaszowa, 1980). Consequence and consistence are necessary in the process of successful upbringing, be it with regard to teaching technical skills, or to fostering community engagement. It is the role of the family to provide knowledge and skills, but also to shape values and attitudes; to encourage creativity and continuous self-development, but also to nurture the ability to create social bonds and lasting relationships.

4. Family traditions

The cultural role of the family is difficult to gauge because it encompasses almost all the relations and dynamics between its members. However, it can be observed that this role has diminished recently along with the rise of specialised public and private cultural institutions. In some regions, rural culture is still largely far from subjecting to commercialisation and it has at its disposal few of the cultural institutions that can be found in cities – books, newspapers, movies etc. Until recently the protection and cultivation of tradition depended on the family and the neighbourhood. It had elevated the role of the family and warranted its supremacy over individual family members (Dominik, 2017). Such traditional family was highly instrumental in shaping correct attitudes of an individual and their relationship with the rest of the world and with other people (social norms, hierarchies of values etc.). It is only within a family that one could learn

how to make proper use of the legacy of previous generations; it could be argued that the failure of a family to teach this happens at a great cost for younger generations (Żebrowska, 1976).

Cultural traditions are upheld through repeated and continuous experiencing of social values playing out in families and communities, rural and urban. Traditions are embedded in heritage, tangible and intangible, as well as present in various acts of local, regional and national patriotism. Many customs and traditions are nurtured and passed on in families. There are particular moments in the life of a family that bring together parents and children – obviously, they include common meals by the family table, when even small children can enjoy their relative importance and have a role to play in the ritual. Common meal preparation creates an opportunity to strengthen family bonds and teach children basic culinary skills.

5. Culinary traditions

Culinary heritage can be broadly regarded as all the foods and dishes of specific quality, as well as the food preparation, serving and consumption methods that stretch far back into the past. Heritage culinary products are typically manufactured on a small scale, using very specific skills and technologies, and are usually associated with a particular geographical area (Gąsiorowski, 2004).

Every country with a long history also boasts its own distinct cuisine. The cuisine and the dining customs are inseparably linked with the rise and development of the material culture of a society. Typically, feasts and banquets have accompanied most important events in the history, and the meals and drinks consumed on such occasions reflected the wealth

of the country and the wellbeing of its citizens (Warمیńska, 2009).

Being a result of the regional diversity of the country, its history and the influence by the neighbouring cultures, the Polish culinary heritage is considerably rich. It is a fact easily forgotten and culinary heritage does not typically feature prominently in the minds of the persons responsible either for heritage management or for economic development at the regional administrative level (Vinaver and Jasiński, 2004).

The perception of flavour of a dish is a complex phenomenon, involving all the senses. Tastes, aromas, sights, sounds and tactile sensations are transmitted by receptors to the central nervous system. Sensory experiences are linked with feelings of pleasure, especially if the table is nicely laid, and the atmosphere is favourable (Tauber and Kamiński, 2000).

Flavours of a national cuisine not only depend on the preparation and seasoning of dishes but also on the quality and the specific taste of their ingredients. The secret of the Polish cuisine often lies in the microbial flora present in gherkins, sauerkraut, and sour milk, which in turn is used to make sour cream and cottage cheese. Meat, too, owes its specific flavour to the marinating and curing methods, so characteristic for the Polish sausage and other

traditional charcuterie. Regional flavours are also affected by the type and character of the soil, and the animal fodder. For instance, the taste of bread can differ from one county to another, even if the recipe remains the same (Tauber and Kamiński, 2000).

The ingredients used in the Polish cuisine are largely products of an eco-friendly and extensive agriculture. Soils free of artificial fertilisers and natural methods of animal husbandry result in high quality products. Even if the economic aspect of such production remains questionable, the taste of the Polish lamb, pork or beef is inimitable.

Poland still has great potential in terms of natural food. Forests are a source of natural raw materials: mushrooms, berries and wild game. It is still relatively easy to find old varieties of apples, pears and plums, as well as assorted vegetables, which only facilitates wide cultivation of the rich traditions of the Polish cuisine, regardless of their sophistication.

The Polish national cuisine is represented by thousands of dishes, both less and more exquisite. The spices used and the method of serving a dish can differ, depending on the occasion and the wealth of the home. The long legacy and the diversity of the Polish cuisine sets it on par with or even above many others in Europe (Tauber and Kamiński, 2000).

6. The role of culinary traditions in ensuring intergenerational contacts

Everyone belongs to a particular society, in which they are rooted and on which they are to a certain degree dependent. The feeling of belonging is crucial for complete human development. In fact, community is the source of one's identity, security, and purpose in life (Zimbardo and Ruch, 1998), and, in turn, every individual's identity results from the culture in which they grew up. It is difficult, therefore, to overstate the influence of cultural heritage and traditions, passed by one generation to another.

In the broad sense, culture includes science, beliefs, arts, law, customs and everything else that an individual acquires as a member of a community. It is a sum total of attitudes and behaviours, an integral system, an essential part of which is the sphere responsible for nutrition (Narojek, 1993).

It should also be mentioned that culinary traditions play an important role in culture and are generally held in high regard. One should put them in a broader context since they encompass the ingredients, the ready meals, ways of preparing them, customs and the rituals surrounding their consumption altogether. Culinary traditions also include the circumstances and specific times when the meals are eaten, the associated legends and stories, and the skills of the people preparing them. Those characteristics are usually typical only for specific communities, and therefore distinguish them from one another; at the same time, they create certain of the strongest bonds that hold those communities together.

Similarly to values, norms and attitudes, every person's personality is shaped since the

early childhood. It begins in a family but in time it is increasingly influenced by one's ever widening social circles (Rembeliński, 1957). Eating habits of a family define its boundaries and represents its uniqueness. As a matter of fact, culinary traditions are passed on within a family, which means that foods consumed in one's parental home will probably be served in their own home, too (Rembeliński, 1957). On a larger scale, culinary patterns are also characteristic for specific communities. What is eaten, when and how, the size and time of the meal, its preparation etc. is integral for every community and often carries symbolic meanings.

One of the more straightforward explanations of specific culinary customs of almost every group of people boils down to the physical availability of particular foodstuffs, exemplified by what was eaten by its forebears. The above observation also helps explain the degree of nostalgia associated with familiar flavours and dishes that define one's roots and identity. Both the sentiment and search for known tastes, driven by it, grows stronger with time and distance.

Of particular prominence is the traditional Polish hospitality, reflected in the proverbial saying "a guest in the house is God in the house". The global Polish diaspora is commonly regarded as very welcoming by the societies of the host countries. Unsurprisingly, Poles often anticipate that the hospitality they are familiar with will be returned, as much as they expect to be treated in the same manner by friends, families and restaurateurs back at home.

Hospitality can be naturally expressed through food. The common meals and the kind of food that is served often reflect the connection between people, not to mention that it is by the common table that social bonds are created and nurtured (Walcher, et al., 1976). The habit to share food with others is a psychological phenomenon and it occurs everywhere where food is available in sufficient quantities (Maus, 1973).

The so-called taste memory is responsible for specific flavours that come to mind in association with specific circumstances. Most Poles, once they think of a rich Easter table, will immediately imagine a white sausage cooked by their mother or grandmother in their family home. Holiday celebrations and hours spent together by the family table often remain in one's memory forever. What is more, flavours are remembered

along with other reminiscences of childhood: sounds, colours, activities and emotions.

One should bear in mind that traditional and regional foods are of particular importance for rural areas. True dedication to local culinary traditions not only reinforces social bonds and makes people feel special and unique, but also contributes to the positive image of rural communities in the society at large. Regional foods provide a bridge between the past, the present and the future. Joined activities such as searching for recipes and traditional dishes bring people together and stimulate cooperation of various community groups and education establishments. Such "reconstructed" traditions tend to open new perspectives. As an illustration, local activity groups, cultural centres or farmer's wives' associations, which cultivate culinary traditions in rural areas, often become places of lively intergenerational dialogue. Furthermore, they also offer tourists an opportunity to learn about local culinary traditions as part of their travel experiences.

A good example of how intergenerational dialogue can be centred around culinary traditions is the project conducted recently in Lipnica Murowana (Fig. 1) by a class of 6th grade pupils together with a group of ladies in their sixties from the same village. The main objectives of the project were to ignite the interest of both the youth and the adults in the culinary traditions of the region, stimulate the local community to act together, and integrate different generations around a common theme. The project involved meetings of young people with elderly women who wanted to share their culinary knowledge, as well as workshops titled "Flavours of My Childhood", aimed at reconstructing particular tastes and dishes of bygone times. One of the aspects of culinary traditions that these endeavours aimed to explore was the reasons why old recipes and dishes surpass their modern counterparts in flavour and appeal. The young project participants drew a conclusion that the secret lies in the passion and dedication with which the meals were traditionally prepared. Among many positive outcomes of the undertaking were shared experiences that connected the generations participating in it and an enhanced common understanding of the value of tradition. The next meeting was organised under the slogan „culinary traditions



Figure 1. Promotional poster for the Intergenerational Cooking Workshop (Source: <http://www.lipnicamurowana.pl/component/content/article/5-txt/2172-specjaly-lipnickie-na-warsztatach-miedzypokoleniowych.html>)



Figure 2. Fair in Nowy Gieraltów (Source: Author's own collection)

of our region". As such, culinary traditions constitute an important part of cultural heritage. These workshops helped to understand the youth of the region how to prepare certain dishes, cultivate regional traditions and care for maintaining traditional recipes, among which were the recipes for spread and the Lipnicka shake. The experienced housewives taught the children on making traditional dishes that were served in their homes every day, i.e. chicken roast, lard with onion and apple, pork loin with plum, salads with broccoli and noodles, along with the above-mentioned spread. At the very end of the project, there was a meeting during which three generations – grandmothers, daughters and grandchildren – gathered in a hall. They could enjoy one another's presence and summarise the ending project while relish-

ing a joint feast. All three parties unequivocally agreed that a family meal is a great time to talk about the plans and problems of family members. While eating at a common table, one can pass on various family stories and build a sense of togetherness. It is also advisable to share the responsibilities and prepare the meals jointly.

The young project participants arrived at the conclusion that "although we are absorbed in a lot of matters, we should be able to organise the day so that it has a place for a family meal together. Let's turn the television off and meet the family". This very inference arose during the whole project, where one could observe the young ones' involvement in the work they put into preparing the meals, setting the table as well as conversing and asking questions during the workshops for the elderly.

7. Current case study

The fair in the village of Nowy Gieraltów, which is located in the Kłodzko Poviát, poses another place where the transmission of culinary traditions from generation to generation takes place. Incidentally, this event is also a means of popularising the local culinary specialties (Fig. 2).

For several years now, the residents of said village have been presenting and selling their products on specially prepared stalls every summer Saturday. Prepared by entire multi-generational families, the culinary prod-

ucts include jams, juices, preserves, pastries and many more. It should also be mentioned that representatives of different generations participate in the presentations and sales as well as learn how to make the offered products. For the young people and children alike, frequenting fairs and food sales in general is educational. Local consumers exchange ideas and recipes with one another, while guests and tourists learn about the culinary traditions of the region.

8. The results of own research

In 2014, a pilot study was carried out to determine the following aspects:

- Is intergenerational dialogue possible?
- Can culinary tourism be a platform for dialogue?
- Do the respondents undertake practices related to intergenerational dialogue?
- Is the subject of these practices the subject of culinary tourism?
- Do the respondents travel in a multi-generational model?
- Is this seen as an asset?
- What forms of culinary tourism are particularly proposed as a form of multi-generational tourism?

- Are any of these forms carried out by the respondents in their lives?

The study was conducted among 100 people between May and June 2014 in Warsaw, the respondents included UTA students and the full-time students of the Tourism and Recreation Department. Having analyzed the results of the pilot study, it can be inferred that these topics are worth further research and study.

In turn, between May and June 2019, an analogous survey was conducted, during which similar questions were asked among both UTA and full-time students. In this case also, the study group consisted of 100 people.

Based on the answers obtained from the surveys it was found that:

1. 80% and 90% of students participating in the study (respectively in 2014 and 2019) as well as 75% of seniors (2019) indicated culinary tourism as a great form of interaction between generations. Only 45% of respondents in total admitted to having travelled in multi-generational groups. There were also a few who added with regret that they had no opportunity to pass relevant information, especially of culinary nature, to the younger generation;
2. The following forms of culinary tourism were indicated as the most preferred ones: stays at agritourism farms, participation in festivals, holidays, visits to open-air museums, taking part in culinary presentations and workshops;
3. In the survey from 2019, the respondents were asked about the reason behind their

interest in cooking. It so transpires that it was often a result of the popularisation of this subject through media (70%), organised conferences (20%), culinary festivals (50%), contact with cooking during leisure and travel (35%) as well as culinary traditions cultivated in their families (20%). One should also bear in mind that more than one answer could be selected;

4. Compared to the year 2014, there was a decrease in the possibility of passing on culinary traditions in families in 2019. It may be concluded that the subsequent generations have less and less knowledge about culinary traditions, and that said traditions are practiced in families less frequently. By the same token, the interest in culinary traditions as a vanishing value is increasing as time goes by.

9. Conclusions

It is difficult to estimate the role of culinary tourism in transmitting cultural traditions. In truth, it allows various generations to learn and cultivate culinary heritage in its diverse forms. In particular, younger generations can discover alternatives to the globalised gastronomy and experience the potential of tradition as the store of cultural memory. By participating in culinary tourism, multiple generations can influence and motivate one another through a wide range of means and activities.

The time spent on cooking and eating together plays an important role in shaping values and attitudes that are passed on in families from one generation to another. Studies confirm that the families that celebrate common meals build stronger and longer-lasting bonds based on better mutual understanding, care and empathy. Positive feelings are reflected in the attention with which the meals

are prepared. Joint meal preparation not only allows one to pass on valuable culinary skills and knowledge but also creates opportunities to build better relationships, instil confidence, and strengthen the feeling of being needed and valued.

Traditions cultivated in the parental home often reappear in the future homes of the children, and familiar flavours evoke positive sentiments and treasured memories. Traditional cooking, which requires time and dedication, fits in the modern trend for “slow food”. The time and care needed to prepare traditional dishes is a rarity in the modern world. At the same time, it so appears that the common table that symbolises harmony, unity and continuity of inheritance is so important that being separated from it (as in the Roman adage “separation a toro et mensa”) can affect one’s cultural identity and integrity.

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