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AN OVERVIEW OF THE BANAT GASTRONOMY

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Abstract: Specific features of people's diets are evident in their gastronomic preferences, with some elements also found in their daily eating habits. Thus, what is commonly referred to as a people's tradition refers more to particular specific dietary features.

History has made the Banat region a patchwork of different cultures, given the successive occupations of the Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires. The richness of the natural and cultural heritage is given both by the uniqueness of the fauna and flora and by the ethnography and folklore preserved unaltered in this region. The traditional cuisine of this region is fascinating in its richness and variety, an effect of the influence of the nationalities living in this multi-ethnic area. The gastronomy is very diversified and representative of this Euroregion thanks to the mix of different traditional cuisines specific to the ethnic groups that have lived together for hundreds of years in this region.

• Introduction

Romanian cuisine has been influenced over the centuries by a number of factors, such as: economic conditions, geographical and climatic conditions, the degree of civilization, the stage of development of agriculture and, last but not least, people's habits, tastes and preferences. Banat was also a multicultural territory, with the presence of Romanian, Serbian and Hungarian communities. These ethnic groups made their own contributions to the local culinary traditions, further diversifying the region's gastronomic landscape.

• Material and method

In this study, the authors consulted a rich bibliography, namely scientific papers, various publications, monographs.

The methodology of the article combines standard research techniques and methods: documentation, analysis and synthesis and formulation of conclusions.

• Results and discussions

Today, the history and diverse cultural influences of the Banat region are reflected in a variety of traditional dishes. These dishes are preserved and handed down from generation to generation, representing a gastronomic treasure and a symbol of Banat's cultural identity.

A traditional Banat dish is **Paturata pe crumpi**, a mixture of a potato dish and a rather fussy dough to make. The filling for the dough is fresh cow's cheese mixed with salted cheese, eggs and dill to taste. It is rolled into a snail or spiral shape and cooked with the smoked and potatoes, bay leaves and spices. At the origin of this dish is a Swabian recipe - dumplings cooked straight into the food - *Strudlknedle*.

There is a dish in Banat called **Varga Beles**, which is a homemade noodle pudding with cottage cheese and raisins, wrapped in a pie sheet and baked (in the oven).

Laste. It's a pasta dish, which is paired with a 'porridge' made from ripe pumpkin seed flour, flavoured with a little cinnamon and vanilla essence. This dish can be found pretty much all over the Banat Plain and is mostly made in autumn.

Iofca is a traditional noodle dish made with cheese, walnut, milk, poppy or cabbage.

Dumplings on cabbage. They are dumplings rolled out of bread dough. Basically, they make some sticks from the bread dough, roll them, give them the shape of the rolls and bake them on the steam from the braised cabbage with "jumere" (melted bacon) and sausages.

Milk soup with "tarhana" (Peiczl or Ribedl Supn). This dish can be found in the Slovak community and consists of a thick dough ground on a grater (*tarhana*) and boiled in milk and water in equal quantities. Salt or sugar is added to this soup to taste.

Pancakes from Banat. Banat pancakes are also known as "*Ana Lugojana pancakes*". The rolled pancakes are filled with cottage cheese, cream and raisins, put in a tray, topped with vanilla sauce and placed in the oven.. In the meantime, prepare a meringue from egg albumen, which will be poured over the pancakes when they are almost ready and left to brown.

Crempita (Cremeschnitten) is a dessert with Swabian origins, consisting of puff pastry dough and boiled cream made of eggs, sugar, flour, butter, milk and vanilla.

• Conclusions

The history and various cultural influences of the Banat region are reflected in a variety of traditional dishes. These dishes are preserved and handed down from generation to generation, representing a gastronomic treasure and a symbol of Banat's cultural identity.

It is important to promote and preserve these culinary traditions, as they represent a valuable part of the region's cultural heritage and contribute to its cultural diversity and richness.