



Research Article

The Danube Delta Culinary Tourism

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Abstract

The cuisine of Dobrogea is influenced, first of all, by the fauna, the climate, but also by the oriental cuisine. Fish, game and mutton are used a lot in cooking, as well as poultry, beef and pork. Dobrogea is rich in vegetables and fruits, milk, cheese and eggs. The dishes from Dobrogea abundantly reproduce the richness of the raw materials available in this area. Throughout history and especially after the first world war, with the development of resorts on the Black Sea coast, Dobrogea cuisine suffers the influence of major European cuisines, the dishes are fine, delicate, tasty, the range of dishes improves, but also their quality. The tastiest fish dishes are in Dobrogea, without a doubt. That is why over 80% of tourists who arrive in the Dobrogea area, in Tulcea, inevitably order fish.

Keywords: culinary tourism, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve

Introduction

The tourism within the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve is dependent on socio-economic activities, fishing and fish farming based on the richness of living aquatic creatures in natural fish habitats. At the level of Romania, the “Danube Delta” Biosphere Reserve extends on the territory of Tulcea and Constanța counties; of the total area of Tulcea county, almost half (4470 km²) is occupied by the wetlands made up of the Danube Delta and the Razim-Sinoie lake

complex. The connection of this space with tourism is known before 1991, the year of receiving the state of international protection by UNESCO, but also later in a form based on sustainable principles, the authorities acting to promote and develop it. Tourism was seen as the foundation of the economic development of Tulcea county following the evaluation of the opportunities through tourism on account of the tourist potential (Batu and Batu, 2018). The dishes from Dobrogea cuisine are light, tasty, using a lot of oil, butter and margarine in their

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preparation ('Культурное многообразие города Сочи (на примере кухни)', 2019). Whipped milk, yogurt and telemea cheese are used a lot, which is consumed as such, but also in the preparation of other dishes (Salanță *et al.*, 2015; Üstün *et al.*, 2019). Dobrogean cuisine on the Black Sea Coast can compete with any other traditional cuisine. Among the dishes specific to Dobrogean cuisine we mention: fish soups, a belly soup, fish marinades, a carp brine, a fish on a spit, a stuffed carp, Dobrogean salads, a sheep sausages, a lamb on a whim, the shackle, the chebabul, a sheep pastrami, ghiudemul, the musacaua, rice garnishes, but also baclavalele, sarailii, raisin sweets (Farrer, 2011; Wilus, 2017).

The processing of fish and fish products was the specific type of economic activity in most ports, contributing to their sectorization or expansion. Exploitation activity fisheries driven by economic programs have led to an expansion of the harvesting area (in the oceans) and establishment of industrialization and fish sales enterprises. The industrial profile of the Danube is also very clearly determined by the traditional activities related to the harvesting and processing of fish. The only enterprise for the industrialization and sale of ocean fish (30-40%), in addition to indigenous production, the I.I.D.P was established (in 1971), and developed in the Tulcea port area, consequence of the geographical position of Tulcea towards the Black Sea. In the port area of Brăila, on the skeleton of the former State Fisheries Administration, it was established in 1 April 1948 Brăila Fish Enterprise for the purpose of exploiting the ponds around the city, from the Island Sea of Brăila and the Danube channel from Isaccea to Vadul Oii and fish processing and preservation. Benefiting from similar conditions, in the port areas of Galați and Sulina were established and developed fishing enterprises; at Sulina there was a workshop for repairing fishing gear, a cannery fish and a cold store. Unlike shipyards, after 1990 they were established on the skeleton of old enterprises fishing industry private companies. For example, in Sulina fishing and fish farming are practiced several companies, which together with S.C. Piscicola S.A., exploit

the reserves from the canals, lakes, the Black Sea and from the fishing arrangement and capitalize them through the fish, recently established here. There are 6 fishing units in the area: S.C. PISCICOLA S.A. , S.C. AMOREL S.R.L., S.C. SIAV S.R.L., S.C. THALASA S.R.L., S.C. SANSTELMAR S.R.L., at which adds S.C. DELTACONSTAR S.A.

Material And Method

The study was carried out on behalf of the specialized bibliography, analysis and processing of statistical data on the flow of tourists and structures of tourist reception with accommodation functions, legislation and various documents, such as strategies / strategic plans and programs. The part related to statistical data comes to highlight: - the tourist flow, the size of which influences fishing (including sports) and business in the area, as a source of income for the local population, as well as the promotion of the image of delta cuisine and community culture by tourists by word of mouth or other communication channels.

The statistical data query was made from the website of the National Institute of Statistics, Romania. In selecting the localities for the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and its surroundings, the demarcation of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve made by the Administration of the Danube Delta Biofera Reserve, the legislative documents were taken into account.

The size of the tourist flow influences the basic economic activities.

Results and Discussions

Fishing, fish farming and agriculture were the main activities in the Danube Delta in 2006, together accumulating about 63% of total economic activities. The same time horizon, in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve related to freshwater fish fisheries and fish farming existed approximately: 18 points for fish collection, 11 commercial fishing areas (30-40 kg / ha), 24 sport fishing areas (Gâstescu, Brețcan and Teodorescu, 2016).

Recently, the Local Group Association for Sustainable Fisheries in the Danube Delta,

reports for the natural area protected by the implemented program "Danube Delta (Danube) FLAG"; 1428 employees (of which 1034 in fishing and 394 in aquaculture) and 46 landing points authorized as first sale centers.

For 17 years, starting with 2001, the tourist flow at the level of the Danube Delta

Biosphere Reserve and its surroundings registered variations between about 50,000 and 96,777 (peak reached in 2008) tourists, so that in 2018 and 2019 to reach almost 170,000 tourists, the largest ever known increases, and in 2020, the year of the Covid Pandemic 2019, to still be above the level of the year (Figure 1).

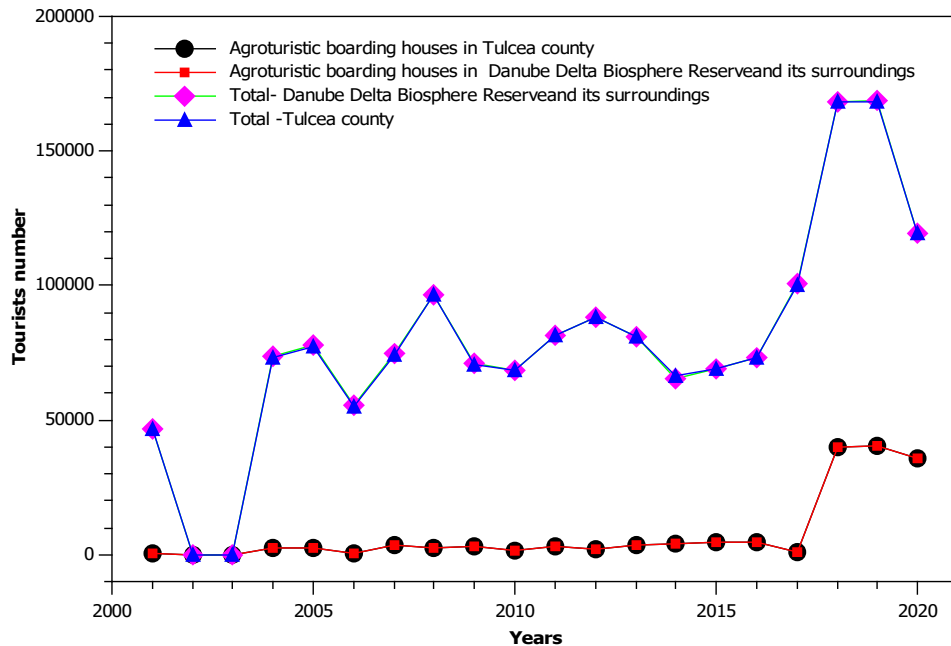


Figure 1: Number of tourists in the "Danube Delta" Biosphere Reserve and surroundings

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Romania; <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online>

These increases also came amid the granting of holiday tickets to civil servants and contract staff in the budget sector, starting with 2017. But the highest number of tourists is registered in the warm period of the year, especially after the prohibition period, after June 7 according to the legislation.

A potential benefit at local level is also represented by the businesses developed on the basis of tourist reception structures (17 categories of accommodation units in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve), permanently dependent on the dynamics of the tourist flow. Most of them have public

catering spaces / conditions for preparing and serving food, places that reflect the richness of fish, crustaceans, mollusks and other aquatic creatures of the protected natural area, products preferred by tourists. If from 2001 to 2017 the number of accommodation units in the "Danube Delta" Biosphere Reserve and its surroundings was below 140, in 2018 it will increase 2.5 times, and remained at high values in 2020, and in total, every year, on the other hand, their number was almost equal to that of the entire Tulcea county, which denotes that this natural area concentrates almost the entire accommodation base of Tulcea county (Figure 2).

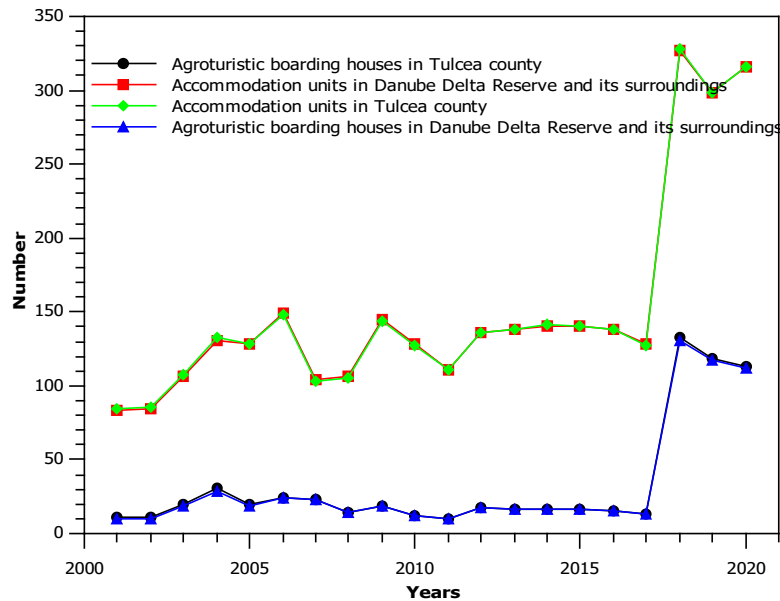


Figure 2: Accommodation units in the “Danube Delta” Biosphere Reserve and surroundings

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Romania; <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online>

Of all the structures of tourist reception with accommodation functions, the agritourism pensions stand out at the level of most localities and with a sudden increase in the last 3 years, constituting, at the same time, the category that works, unlike the others, both in citizens' homes and in independent buildings (like the others). In 2018, the agrotourist boarding houses will rise to the level of accommodation units in the entire natural area in 2017 (figure 2). The hosts are very involved, offering meals prepared from mostly natural products from their own household, including fish products, or from locally authorized producers / fishermen. Thus, tourists can understand, through the hosts, better and directly aspects related to traditional cuisine, the nature of the deltaic space through the places where they are walked or transported by boat for recreational / sport fishing (Bessi ere, 2013; Annes and Bessi ere, 2018). But culinary heritage is known by tourists beyond the limits of accommodation units that have

incorporated public catering spaces / conditions for preparing and serving meals, through other structures of tourist reception with public catering functions: fish restaurants, local restaurants, classic restaurants (Bessi ere, 2010; Mognard, 2014).

Culinary skills and practices are an integral part of individual, collective and territorial construction. But the ancient way of life regarding the preparation of fish is specific to the Russian-Lipovan and Ukrainian populations, which together in 2009 represented about 12% of the total population of the Danube Delta, quite a bit compared to about 50% at the beginning of the twentieth century (Bessi ere, 2017; Bessi ere and Annes, 2018). Basically, these tourist reception structures are points for taking over and processing a quantity of fish and other aquatic species related to the tourist flow and selling to tourists with the culinary products and the image given by the fishing specific of the Danube Delta, of the entire protected natural area (G omez-

Baggethun *et al.*, 2019; Tănăsescu and Constantinescu, 2020; Banciu *et al.*, 2021).

Tourism is dominant, developing businesses related to fishing and the sale of fish and processed products. However, aquatic resources are limited, the authorities intervene for sustainable exploitation, assess and establish annual catch quotas for commercial, family and recreational / sport fishing; for example, during 1996-2009, the catch quotas established by the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration and approved by the Romanian Academy for family fishing were about 2500 tons / year and those for sport fishing about 700 tons / year. Many businesses are at the family level, such as agritourism and tourist boarding houses, etc. Already at the level of 2016, the idea had been signaled that tourism has come to launch local families in a constant competition for natural resources, eroding social cohesion, practically changing family relationships. But the situation created by increasing the flow of tourists and accommodation units since 2018 (maximums recorded throughout the period 2001-2010) and maintaining in the coming years will probably draw more attention to authorities and specialists in various fields (environment, tourism, anthropology), anthropologists, environmentalists in the field through the peaks created, and maintained. The program "Danube Delta (Danube) FLAG" carried out in 2 stages in the period 2007-2020 came with a series of objectives in this regard: diversification of activities for workers in the fisheries and aquaculture sector (e.g. conversion of housing into accommodation units, facilities tourism, mini-aquaculture farms, etc.); improving access to basic services in hard-to-reach fishing areas, supporting cultural heritage (van Assche *et al.*, 2011; Damian, 2019).

Conclusions

The granting of holiday tickets to employees (civil servants and contract staff in the budget sector) starting with 2017, a situation maintained until 2020, was reflected in the sudden increase in tourist flow (60% in 2018 compared to 2017), the stimulation of

tourism business by increasing the accommodation base (2.5 times in 2018 compared to 2017) and, implicitly, those related to fishing and fish preparation / processing at the level of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and its surroundings; As agritourism guesthouses keep tourists in touch with nature and local traditions due to fishing and traditional cuisine in an attractive and host-guided way, there has been a greater preference for them than in 2020, the year of Covid 19 academy, arrivals of tourists accounted for about 1/3 of the total arrivals in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, compared to 1/4 in 2018.

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