

TRADITIONAL ROMANIAN FOOD-AS THE RESULT OF HISTORY, NATURE, WAY OF LIFE AND HUMAN INGENUITY

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Abstract: *Traditional Romanian food is very diverse and rich, with great tourism potential. Romanian cuisine has been influenced by a number of natural, historical and socio-cultural factors, being characterized by its originality and ingenuity of combining old peasant recipes with those of other nations. Romanians have been in contact throughout history. Each of Romania's historical regions has a well defined historical, socio-cultural, economic and gastronomic identity. Certifying and promoting traditional food at gastronomic festivals and tourism fairs, with the involvement of central and local authorities, would result in creating a brand recognized internationally.*

Key words: *Romanian cuisine, traditional food, gastronomic tourism potential, certified traditional product*

INTRODUCTION

As part of tourism potential, Romania's gastronomic potential is various and rich. The traditional food of each historical region is proof that Romanians have not lost touch with nature, history and tradition, preferring to cook using local agricultural products and be proud of the recipes transmitted from generation to generation.

The Romanian cuisine has been influenced by a number of natural, historical and socio-cultural factors, being characterized by its originality and ingenuity of combining old peasant recipes with those of other nations. Romanians have been in contact throughout history. The Romanian cuisine includes ordinary, everyday food, festive food and food connected with the Christian traditions. Each of Romania's historical regions (Muntenia, Oltenia, Dobruja, Moldavia, Bucovina, Transylvania, Maramureș, Crișana, Banat) has a well defined historical, socio-cultural, economic and gastronomic identity.

The certification and promotion of Romanian traditional products contribute to the development of local communities by encouraging small producers and developing rural and cultural tourism. Promoting traditional food at gastronomic festivals and tourism fairs, with the involvement of central (Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) and local authorities, would result in creating a brand recognized internationally.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper is based mainly on the author's experience both as housewife and as a tourist in her own country, eager to know the ethnographic traditions, including the culinary ones. The literature research refers to the books and articles in this field, the laws and legislation, and the publications and information on the web pages provided by the specialized Romanian and European institutions (the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Tourism, the European Commission). The data were processed using Microsoft Excel computing functions.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The influence of natural factors on traditional romanian food

Romania was a rural country until the second half of the twentieth century (Simoni, 2015). Most Romanians were poor peasants working in agriculture (crop production, animal husbandry and fishing, hunting, beekeeping locally). Mechanization of agriculture, food industry development and urbanization came out after 1960s, so that the food was homemade with ingredients from local farms.

The **natural factors** influencing the traditional gastronomy are the landforms, the climate and the soil. The landforms, consisting of mountains, hills and plains (about one third each), the moderate temperate-continental climate and the fertile soils have enabled the development of a various and distinctive agrarian economy:

- of mountain-type: modest crops in intramontainous depressions (maize, potatoes, sugar beet, hemp, vegetables), a dominant animal husbandry (especially cows, sheep) on the basis of natural meadows and pastures, and forestry;
- specific to the hills, where animal husbandry (especially cows) is combined with wine and fruit growing (especially plum and apple trees);
- specific to the plains, with dominant cereal crops (especially wheat and corn), technical plants (sunflower, sugar beet), vegetables and forage plants.

The influence of climate on traditional cuisine is also proved by the way food is preserved for the winter: the meat may be salted, smoked or preserved in lard, the cheese may be salted, boiled or smoked, the vegetables are prepared in autumn as pickles and vegetable stew ("zacuscă"), while the fruits harvested in summer or autumn may be dried, or prepared as jams, marmalades and fruit compotes. In regions with harsh winters (the northern Romania or mountainous regions) there is also an obvious increase of alcohol concentration in the traditional alcoholic beverages (brandy – "pălincă", "horincă"); on the contrary, in regions with mild winters, such as Banat in southwestern Romania, the traditional brandy "răchie" is poorly concentrated in alcohol.

The influence of historical and socio-economic factors on traditional romanian food

Romanians were poor and divided between kingdoms for centuries and came into contact with the traditions of other nations throughout history, so they took and then arranged in their own way countless Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Hungarian, Austrian, French, Russian, Hebrew, Polish, Serbian, Italian dishes [3]. The Romanian cuisine is unique through the ingenuity of combining old peasant recipes (shepherd, fishing) with oriental (southward), Polish, Russian and Ukrainian (northward), and French-Austrian-Hungarian (westward) recipes. The Romanian cuisine includes ordinary, everyday food, festive food and food connected with the Christian traditions (fasts, feasts).

Romanian gastronomic culture inherited many culinary habits even since antiquity: the Getae-Dacians ancestors cultivated grains and grapes, raised cattle and hunted; the historical documents show that their meals consisted of porridge of millet, boiled wheat (which then became "colivă" alms), beef or venison roast on fire, milk, honey, apples, pears, grapes and wines. During the Roman occupation (2nd-3rd century AD), the Romans introduced the bread (pita or baked bread), the olive oil and the pie.

The Slavs (7th-8th century AD) introduced in gastronomy the borscht with meat and vegetables. Starting with the 9th century, the Hungarians migrated west of the Carpathians, then the Szeklers and the Saxons colonized by the Hungarian government in the 12-13th centuries influenced the cuisine of Transylvania. From the 13th century until the 19th century, the Romanian cuisine was strongly influenced by the Ottoman occupation, but also by the Greek, Arabic, Armenian and Byzantine cuisines. Also tomatoes, eggplants, onions, peppers, corn, quince and melon were brought and grew during that period. Thus

the Romanian menu enriched with: Turkish (meatball "perișoare" soup, meatballs, pilaf, stuffed bell peppers, "kebab", "ciulama", "tuslama", "baklava", "sarailie"), Greek (moussaka) and Bulgarian dishes (vegetable stews like "zacuscă" and "ghiveci"). In the 18th century, the migrants of some neighboring ethnic groups influenced the Romanian cuisine: Ukrainian in Maramureș; Lippovan in Northern Dobruja; Serbian, Austrian, German, Hungarian and Ukrainian in Banat. After the formation of the Romanian state in the latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century, many restaurants with fine Western dishes (French, Italian, Austrian) opened in major cities.

At present, Romanian **daily regular menu** consists of cereals, vegetables, vegetable oil, milk and dairy products, meat, pies, jams. The diet is based on bread, but polenta is still popular in all regions. Polenta ("mămăliga") is a corn flour boiled with salt, and regionally with whey, butter or cheese. Polenta used to replace bread for the Romanian peasants, until the industrial period (1960s). In addition, there are grills and steaks (especially pork or chicken), grilled meat rolls ("mititei"), meatballs in cabbage rolls ("sarmale"), pork jelly ("piftie"), pickles (especially cucumbers and cabbage). The Romanian breakfast includes: bread, eggs (boiled, poached or scrambled) or salami or ham, cheese, yogurt, milk, butter, honey or jam. The Romanian traditional lunch contains three dishes: vegetable borscht with or without meat, vegetables stew with or without meat or steak with potatoes, pickles or salads, and desserts like cakes, pies, tarts or fruits. Dinner contains more digestible dishes, such as puddings, macaroni and cheese, polenta with cream and cheese, fruit compotes.

The Romanian **traditional beverages** are "țuica" and wine. They are made from fruits, being 100% natural, without added sugar, preservatives or dyes, using traditional methods and recipes transmitted from generation to generation. Brandy ("țuica") and wine are always present on Romanians' tables to celebrate important occasions in their lives (baptism, wedding, funeral). "Țuica" is a plum brandy obtained by distillation (Romania is the fourth largest producer of plums [4]). Depending on the region, it may be obtained from other fruits, or from fruit mixture (plums, peaches, mirabelles, apples, pears, apricots, peaches, cherries) and the concentration of alcohol is higher in Transylvania ("pălinca") and Maramureș ("horincă") or lower in Banat ("răchie"). Romania is the 13th largest producer of wine, with universal varieties (Merlot, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet, Chardonnay, Muscat Ottonel, Pinot Noir) and local wines ("Fetească", "Grasă", "Tămâioasă"). "Vinars" is a strong alcoholic beverage, specific to Romania, obtained by aging wine distillates, in oak casks, for 3-7 years. Other Romanian spirits are fragrant and sweet, made from fruits macerated in alcohol and sugar; the recipes are simple to any housewife: sour cherry brandy ("vișinată"), blueberry brandy ("afinată"), cherry brandy ("cireșată"), raspberry brandy ("zmeurată") and lycopodium brandy ("cornată"). Another traditional drink is "socata", a refreshing, fragrant and healthy juice, made by the fermentation of elderflowers in water with honey or sugar and lemon.

The influence of the **Christian calendar** on Romanian cuisine stands out in times of fasts and feasts. The fasting food (there are two longer periods of fasting during the year - Lent and Advent - and smaller ones) excludes animal products (meat, milk, eggs), so the vegetarian food have diversified, containing: fruits and vegetables specific to each season or preserved fruits and vegetables, desserts with walnuts, jams, fruit compotes (we mention some traditional fasting dishes: cabbage rolls stuffed with rice, nuts and raisins, bean roe, baked celery with olives, garden sorrel brine, polenta with garlic sauce, monastic mushroom stew).

Romanian traditional food during **Christian holidays** (Christmas and Easter) is established by practice and millenary repetition. For Christmas, every family prepares meatballs in cabbage rolls ("sarmale"), pork jelly ("piftie" or "răcitură"), sponge cakes

("cozonac", "turtă"), curl brioche ("colac"), pies, steaks, boiled wine and brandy ("țuică"), because we identify with a certain tradition, it confirms we belong to this nation and we gather the family together. For Christmas, Romanians keep the tradition of "slaughtering the pig" and its preparation. This is the pride of the Romanian cuisine, due to the variety of dishes: sausages, smoked bacon, ham, pork jelly ("piftie"), greaves, rind, pastrami, liver sausage ("leabăr"), blood sausage ("sângerete"), "chișcă", "sarmale", "carne la garniță". The Christmas beverages are the plum brandy ("țuică") and the wine, boiled and seasoned with spices and sugar. For dessert, sponge cakes and curl brioche ("cozonac", "turtă", "colac") are always present. For Easter, Romanians prepare lamb meat (baked lamb in the oven, lamb borscht, Easter drob), red eggs, filled eggs, ham, Boeuf salad, radishes, green onions, and for dessert, "cozonac" and "pască" (special Easter cake filled with cottage cheese and raisins), croissants, and red wine.

Regional characteristics of traditional romanian cuisine

Each of Romania's historical regions (Muntenia, Oltenia, Dobruja, Moldavia, Bucovina, Transylvania, Maramureș, Crișana, Banat) has a well defined historical, socio-cultural, economic and gastronomic identity. The historical regions Transylvania (including Crișana and Maramureș), Banat and Dobruja are characterized by a millennial, multicultural and inter-ethnic coexistence (Hungarians and Germans in Transylvania; Saxons, Hungarians, Serbs, Ukrainians, Czechs in Banat; Turks, Tartars, Russians-Lippovans in Dobruja), that influenced the traditional gastronomy.

The traditional gastronomy of Muntenia (Wallachia) bears the influence of Turkish, Greek, Italian, French and Bulgarian cuisines. Boiled or baked vegetables are dominant in dishes, as well as vegetable salads; polenta ("mămăliga") is often used instead of bread, while onion and garlic are always present in meals. There is a large variety of vegetable borscht (beans, potatoes, garden sorrel, nettles, tomatoes), as well as meat borscht (meatballs, pork, beef, rustic chicken, often seasoned with egg rags); the main dishes are usually potatoe stews or without meat, vegetable stew ("ghiveci"), plum stew, pickle stew, green bean stew, pea stew, cooked rice ("pilaf"), moussaka, mushroom "ciulama", vegetables (zucchini, sweet pepper) stuffed with meat in the oven, chopped and grilled pork or chicken, often served with garlic sauce, sausages and grilled meat rolls ("mititei"), meatballs in cabbage or grape leaves ("sarmale") served with polenta, cream and hot peppers, ham, meat in lard ("carne la oală, la garniță"), pan fried fish with polenta and garlic sauce. Other renowned traditional dishes are: "zacusca", a vegetable stew preserved for the winter, made of eggplants, sweet peppers and onions; the vegetable salads of eggplant; green bean with garlic; baked sweet pepper with garlic; bean roe with fried onion. The specific dairy products from cow's milk (or a mixture of cow, sheep and goat milk) are: buttermilk or sour milk, sweet curd, cottage cheese, and in the mountains, salted sheep cheese "brânza de burduf", smoked cheese and curd. The usual desserts include: simple donuts, pancakes with jam or honey, puddings, sponge cake "pandișpan" with fruits (apples, sour cherries, plums), jams (the famous plum marmalade, berries - blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, cherries, sour cherries, quince, rose petals). The traditional alcoholic beverages are "țuică" (a brandy distilled from plums, mirabelles) and wine (medium dry white – "Fetească albă" and red wine – "Fetească neagră"), while the refreshments are "socată" and syrups (of fir, rose, sour cherry).

The traditional gastronomy of Oltenia is similar to that of Muntenia, but with some distinct characteristics such as the stronger seasoning of dishes with hot pepper, the use of leek in various dishes, the olives, and the pickles (green tomatoes, celery, bell peppers, cucumbers). The traditional beverage is a black, fragrant, dry, thick, very strong wine, named "zaibăr". Although not recognized as by the wine industry, it is produced in

peasant farms from not grafted grape-vines with round and bluish grains. "Zaibăr" is considered the pride of each Oltenian.

The traditional gastronomy of Moldavia and Bucovina is considered the most diversified and advanced in the country, while the Moldavian women are renowned as great housewives and cooks. It is characterized by the use of chicken meat and beef, lard, and light sauces with cream and without flour. The Moldavian specialities are: "tochitură" (pork meat and organs, fried in lard), "rose" sausages, Moldavian large meatballs ("pârjoale"), vegetable borscht, giblet ("potroace") borscht, homemade noodles ("tocmăgei"), traditional custard tarts ("alivenci"), meat pies, cabbage pies ("vârzări"), mushroom pies. Moldavian desserts are also famous and contain walnuts, honey, cheese: traditional cheese pies ("poale-n brâu"), rolled pies ("învârtita"), sponge cakes ("cozonaci"), "mucenici", noodles ("tocmăgei") with nuts. The traditional drink is the wine, in a wide variety of flavors.

The traditional gastronomy of Transylvania (including Crișana and Maramureș) is based on multigrain bread with potatoes, meat and lard, stews with thick flour sauce ("rântaș") and dairy products. Soups are always present (sometimes seasoned with sour milk): bean soup, green bean soup, cow soup with noodles, sausage soup, fennel soup, sorrel soup, lettuce soup, garden orache soup. Borscht is rare, such as the potatoe borscht or the pork borscht with tarragon. There are also many specific meat dishes: Transylvanian meatballs in cabbage rolls, pork chops, cow ham a la Cluj, cabbage a la Cluj, pork steak with fruit sauces, goulash and paprika (taken from the Hungarians), and the favourite spice is the sweet pepper paprika. The pig is completely prepared and stored in a variety of sausages, black pudding, blood sausage ("sângerete"), smoked bacon, ham, pork jelly, etc. Polenta is baked with cheese in the oven or boiled in whey ("balmoș"). The specific desserts are: pies with various fillings, kürtös cake ("kürtöskalács"), pancakes with jam, cream cakes, cream pastries ("cremeș") and cakes. The traditional beverage is "pălinca" and "horinca" (in Maramureș), a strong alcoholic drink, double distilled, produced from plums (sometimes with the addition of apples or cherries) after unique recipes, a source of pride for locals. Add the white and rosé wines.

The traditional gastronomy of Banat is a combination of Romanian dishes with those of ethnic groups Swabians (Austrian and German), Hungarians, Serbs, Czechs, Ukrainians, along with the Turkish ones. However, unlike Muntenia and Oltenia, with dominant light dishes with vegetables, the food of Banat is fat, based on pork meat and fat: smoked sausages, pork rind, smoked ham, smoked bacon, blood sausages, smoked fat ("clisă"). Other traditional dishes are: vegetables fried in lard, with sauces and spices (pepper, thyme, paprika), borscht (beef borscht, beet borscht), vegetable stew "zacuscă", cooked rice ("pilaf"), onion pie, baked beans with smoked meat.

The traditional gastronomy of Dobruja bears the imprint of the ethnic groups that settled there over the centuries: Turkish, Tatar, Macedonian, Russian (Lippovans), and the influence of local natural resources related to the Black Sea, the Danube and the Danube Delta, local fauna and milder climate (mutton, marine fish, Danube fish and venison). Mutton is prepared in various ways: ram borscht, stew, haggis ("drob"), stew ("ghiveci"), grills ("saslac"), ram baked in oven with rice. The Turkish culinary legacy of Dobruja is found in many dishes, such as "tuslama" (borscht of cow tripe and legs), moussaka, "ciulama" and various desserts with walnuts, raisins, figs, honey and concentrated syrups ("sarailie", "baclava", gingerbread, homemade halva). Dobrujan food is based on many dairy products, in particular yoghurt, buttermilk and sheep or cow cheese. Other traditional dishes are: meatballs in cabbage rolls with rice and raisins, Dobrujan pie (pastry with salty or sweet sheep cheese, served with yogurt), pastry with salty sheep cheese ("merdeneă"), pie with cheese and greens ("cherdelea") in the Danube

Delta. The Lippovan ethnic group in the Danube Delta (Northern Dobruja) cooks fish in various ways, but "uha", the fishermen's soup, is famous. There are many fish dishes: carp borscht, carp head borscht, fish borscht with pickled cabbage juice, baked carp, carp with rice, carp filled with nuts and raisins, carp pastrami, carp roe salad, pickled mackerel.

Certification and promotion of romanian traditional products

Certifying traditional food products is important economically, by the add value to these products, the protection of the respective intellectual property, a higher visibility for commercial purposes, encouraging small producers, developing local community, also through culinary tourism.

According to the current legislation [5], [6] on the certification of traditional products, a **traditional product** is a food product manufactured on the national territory, using local ingredients and which can be **certified** and registered in the **National Register of Traditional Products** (NRTP), managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The traditional product must be labeled with the logo of traditional products; the **national logo** is the exclusive property of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Romania has 558 traditional products certified and recorded in RNPT (2016), whose structure and distribution by historical region are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1.
The structure of Romanian certified traditional products, following Order no. 724/1082/360/2013 on the certification of traditional products [9]

Categories of certified traditional products	Number of certified traditional products (2016)	Share of total (%)
Meat and meat products	221	39.61
Milk and dairy products	125	22.40
Bread and bakery products	85	15.23
Vegetables-fruits	78	13.98
Fish	27	4.84
Beverages	20	3.58
Other	2	0.36
Total	558	100

Source: own processing of data from the National Register of Traditional Products [7]

Table 2.
The number of Romanian certified traditional products, the representative certified traditional products, the representative villages or towns with gastronomic tourism potential and gastronomic fairs and festivals (by historical region and county)

Historical region	Number of certified traditional products (2016)	Representative certified traditional products	Villages or towns with producers of certified traditional products (by county)	Representative villages or towns with traditional fairs and festivals (by county) in the period 2014-2016
Muntenia	78	lebar de casă; pastramă de porc afumată; cârnați de Pleșcoi cruzi și uscați; zacuscă de legume cu vinete; zacuscă de țelină; salată de icre de crap; păstrăv copt și afumat la jar; brânză de burduf; unt de vacă; cașcaval afumat; prune uscate mănăstirești; covrig muscelan; sirop de brad.	Curtea-de-Argeș, Aninoasa, Brăduleț, Corbi, Câmpulung Muscel, Morărești, Valea Mare Pravăț, Domnești, Rociu, Rucăr (Argeș); Pucioasa (Dâmbovița); Valea Dofanei, Breaza (Prahova); Berca, Poșta Câlnău (Buzău)	Rucăr, Corbeni, Brăduleț, Coșești (Argeș); Runcu (Dâmbovița); Izvoarele, Vălenii de Munte, Câmpina, Valea Dofanei (Prahova); Amara (Ialomița); Berca, Poșta Câlnău, Pietroasele (Buzău); București, Snagov (Ilfov).
Oltenia	13	jumări de porc; caltaboși oltenești; cârnați din topor;	Leleasca (Olt); Mihăiești, Stroiești (Vâlcea)	Valea Bistriței (Gorj)

		slănină usturoiată; tobă țărănească; țuică; rachiu		
Moldavia	53	pastramă de porc; ceafă afumată; cașcaval; caș; țuică de prună; zacuscă cu ghebe; zacuscă cu pește; povidlă de perje cu nuci; dulceață de cireșe	Manoleasa, Vlăsinești, Botoșani, Frumușica, Păltiniș, George Enescu, Coțușca, Săveni, Vârfu Câmpului (Botoșani); Piatra Neamț, Borlești (Neamț); Blăgești (Vaslui); Galați (Galați)	Tupilați (Neamț); Oituz (Bacău)
Bucovina	18	mușchi copt în jar; chișcă baciul; păstrăv afumat; cașcaval afumat; brânză frământată	Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Fundu Moldovei, Șcheia (Suceava)	Vama, Ciocănești, Câmpulung Moldovenesc (Suceava);
Transylvania	285	pâine secuiască de casă cu cartofi; cârnați de porc; slănină afumată; păstrăv afumat în cobză de brad; virșli; urdă; colac secuiesc; plăcintă cu brânză, colac de casă.	Brașov, Fundata, Feldioara, Hălchiu, Hărman, Făgăraș, Prejmăr, Bran, Victoria, Hoghiz, Moieciu, Rupea, Râșnov, Vlădeni (Brașov); Ghelinta, Ghidfalău, Brețcu, Bodoc, Tg.Secuiesc, Ozun, Cătălina, Sânzieni, Mereni, Poian, Bățani (Covasna); Sântimbru, Sebeș, Câmpeni, Ocna Mureș, Săsciori, Ponor, Ighiu, Daia Română, Arieșeni, Șugag, Alba Iulia (Alba); Țaga, Apahida, Mihai Viteazu (Cluj); Ciurmani, Valea Rece, Secuieni (Harghita); Loamneș, Tâlmăciu, Sibiu (Sibiu); Albești (Mureș); Lupeni, Sălașu de Sus, Petroșani, Densuș, Harău (Hunedoara); Șimleul Silvaniei, Coșeu (Sălaj); Bistrița (Bistrița)	Balványos, Turia, Sf.Gheorghe (Covasna); Prejmer, Bran, Tohanul Nou, Brașov, Drăguș, Poiana Mărului (Brașov); Albac, Ampoița, Alba Iulia (Alba); Hunedoara (Hunedoara); Praid, Miercurea-Ciuc (Harghita); Avrig, Rășinari (Sibiu)
Maramureș	91	horincă de prune; smântână; urdă; cașcaval; pastramă de oaie; cârnați de oaie; costiță afumată; slănină afumată; tăiței de casă; sirop de cătină; haioșe cu magiun.	Ocna Șugatag, Sighetu Marmăției, Seini, Copalnic Mănăstur, Vișeu de Jos, Satu Nou, Recea, Mireșu, Buciumi, Moisei, Prislop, Dumbrăvița, Tăuții Măgherauși, Botiza, Baia Mare (Maramureș)	Negrești Oaș, Ocna Șugatag, Cernești, Baia Mare (Maramureș)
Crișana	8	pălincă de caise, de mere, de pere, de gutui; plăcintă întinsă; caș de oaie, caș de capră; kaizer afumat; slănină de casă.	Tulca (Bihor); Hunedoara Timișană, Bârsa, Turmu (Arad); Satu Mare, Turț, Mărtirești, Micula, Cămarzana (Satu Mare).	Salonta, Oradea (Bihor); Moneasa, Arad (Arad); Medieșu Aurit, Satu Mare, Halmeu (Satu Mare)
Banat	4	brânză telemea; urdă dulce; brânză de burduf.	Secaș (Timiș)	Buziaș, Timișoara (Timiș); Băile Herculane, Caransebeș (Caraș-Severin)
Dobruja	8	batog de crap argintiu, de somn; pastramă de somn; salată cu icre de crap, de știucă; pastramă de crap argintiu; sardeluță marinată	Tulcea (Tulcea)	Jurilovca, Crișan, Mila 23, Tulcea (Tulcea)
Total	558			

Source: own processing of data and information from [2], [6] and [8]

Only three Romanian traditional products received the European Commission certification [5] (PDO - protected designation of origin or PGI - protected geographical indication): "magiun de prune Topoloveni" - PGI, from April 8, 2011; "salam de Sibiu" - PGI, from February 19, 2016; "telemea de Ibănești" - PDO, from March 15, 2016. Another product, "novacul afumat din Țara Bârsei" is under the process of European certification.

Fairs and festivals of traditional products take place in different regions of Romania, during national and local holidays. They are a good method of promoting the image of the village or region they come from, attracting numerous food-minded tourists from all over the world, eager to know the habits and traditions of our people. The Romanian Ministry of Tourism promotes traditional products through the Gastronomic Calendar [6] of fairs and festivals. In the years 2014-2016, there were over 80 festivals and fairs of traditional food, located as shown in table 2.

CONCLUSIONS

The Romanian cuisine has been influenced by natural, historical and socio-cultural factors, being characterized by its originality and ingenuity. As part of tourism potential, Romania's gastronomic potential is various and rich. The traditional food of each historical region is proof that Romanians have not lost touch with nature, history and tradition, preferring to cook using local agricultural products and be proud of the recipes transmitted from generation to generation.

The certification and promotion of Romanian traditional products contribute to the development of local communities by encouraging small producers and developing rural and cultural tourism. Promoting traditional food at gastronomic festivals and tourism fairs, with the involvement of central (Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) and local authorities, would result in creating a brand recognized internationally.

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