



UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES "KING MIHAI I" FROM TIMISOARA

"YOUNG PEOPLE AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN APPLIED LIFE SCIENCES"



"Young people and multidisciplinary research in applied life sciences"

21-22 November 2024

STUDY ON GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES FROM DIFFERENT REGIONS OF ROMANIA

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Abstract:

Romania boasts a rich and diverse gastronomic heritage, influenced by its geographic, cultural, and historical factors. This paper aims to explore the regional variations in Romanian cuisine, highlighting the specific gastronomic specialties from different parts of the country. The research provides an in-depth analysis of the traditional dishes, cooking techniques, and ingredients specific to each region, and discusses how these culinary traditions reflect Romania’s multicultural history. The study emphasizes the connection between local agricultural products, seasonal variations, and the development of regional culinary identities.

Introduction

In Transylvania, traditional aperitifs reflect the region’s rich history and diverse cultural influences, including Hungarian, Saxon, and Romanian traditions. These appetizers are often served during festive gatherings or as part of a hearty meal. Traditional cuisine in Muntenia, a historical region in southern Romania, reflects the rich agricultural and pastoral traditions of the area, with a focus on fresh ingredients and hearty, flavorful dishes. Muntenian cuisine is characterized by a mix of influences from Ottoman, Greek, and Slavic culinary traditions, but also retains distinctly Romanian flavors. Here are some key dishes and food traditions associated with Muntenia. In Dobrogea, the culinary traditions reflect both the region’s coastal location by the Black Sea and its multicultural influences, with elements from Turkish, Greek, and Balkan cuisines. The appetizers are typically light, flavorful, and often feature fresh fish, dairy products, and vegetables. Traditional appetizers in Moldova reflect the region’s agricultural roots and cultural influences, including Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Turkish elements. Moldovan appetizers are hearty, flavorful, and often incorporate locally grown vegetables, cheeses, meats, and preserved foods.

Material and method

The study was performed by consulting 30 bibliographical references. The data were then analyzed and presented in a comprehensive manner.

Table 3 Traditional Romanian dishes from Dobrogea

Starters	Liquid dishes	Main dishes	Desserts	Drinks
Name-Icre (Fish Roe Spread) Description-is a traditional appetizer in Dobrogea, made from fish roe (usually from sturgeon or carp), mixed with oil, lemon, onion, and sometimes garlic.	Name-Ciorba de peste (Fish Sour soup) Description-A traditional fish sour soup from Dobrogea, is made with a variety of local fish, typically simmered with vegetables like onions, tomatoes, and peppers. It is flavored with vinegar, garlic, and sometimes a little dill or thyme.	Name-(Fish in Brine) Description-is one of the most iconic main dishes in Dobrogea, reflecting the region's proximity to the Black Sea. It consists of fresh fish (usually carp, perch, or bream) that is marinated in a brine made from water, salt, vinegar, and various spices, such as garlic, thyme, and bay leaves.	Name-Coltunasi (Dumplings with Cheese) Description-are Romanian dumplings typically filled with fresh cow's cheese or salty sheep's cheese. In Dobrogea, they may also include sugar or vanilla to create a sweet filling. These dumplings are boiled and then served with a generous topping of sour cream) and powdered sugar.	Name- Tuica de prune (Plum Spirits) Description-a strong Romanian spirit made from fermented plums, and it is one of the most popular alcoholic beverages in Dobrogea, as well as in other parts of Romania. The process involves distilling fermented fruit into a potent brandy, typically around 40-50% alcohol by volume.
Name: Pește marinat (Fish in Brine) Description-this dish consists of fish (often carp, perch, or bream) marinated in a brine made of water, salt, vinegar, and spices like garlic, thyme, and bay leaves. The fish is typically grilled or roasted after marinating.		Name- Mămăliga (Polenta with Fish) Description- is a classic combination in Dobrogea, where polenta is paired with fish, typically grilled or fried. The dish is often made with fresh fish from the Black Sea, such as carp, bream, or perch.	Name- Frursecuri cu scortisoara (Gingerbread) Description- is a beloved dessert in Dobrogea, especially around the winter holidays. These sweet, spiced cookies are made with flour, honey, sugar, and a variety of spices such as ginger, cinnamon, and cloves. Sometimes they are glazed with sugar or decorated with icing.	Name-Bere (Beer) Description-is also a popular drink in Dobrogea, especially given the region's proximity to the Danube River, which historically supported brewing traditions. While local craft beers are gaining in popularity, beer from major Romanian brands is widely consumed.
Name-Caviar (Fish Caviar) Description-This is another traditional fish-based appetizer in Dobrogea, where fish caviar (from sturgeon or other local fish) is preserved and served as a spread or topping for bread or crackers		Name-Sarmale (Stuffed Cabbage Rolls) Description- are stuffed cabbage rolls made with a mixture of minced meat (usually pork or a blend of pork and beef), rice, onions, and spices, then slow-cooked in a tomato-based sauce.	Name-Găluște cu prune (Plum Dumplings) Description-are sweet dumplings made by wrapping plums in a dough made of cartofi (potatoes) and flour. The dumplings are boiled, then rolled in sugar and breadcrumbs, and sometimes garnished with cinnamon.	
Name-Mămăliguta cu branza și smantana (Polenta with Cheese and Sour Cream) Description-a hearty and comforting appetizer, is a Romanian version of polenta, served with salty cheese and sour cream.		Name-Friptura de miel (Lamb Stew) Description-is a rich, flavorful lamb stew made with chunks of lamb, onions, garlic, tomatoes, and a variety of spices like paprika and thyme. The stew is simmered until the meat is tender and the sauce thickens.		
Name- Cluperci pe gratar(Grilled Mushrooms) Description- are grilled mushrooms, typically prepared on an open flame and seasoned with herbs like thyme and garlic.				

Conclusion

Transylvanian holiday meals are rich in tradition and flavor, often featuring hearty meats like pork, lamb, and beef, complemented by comforting side dishes such as mămăligă and pickles. Traditional Moldovan drinks offer a fascinating glimpse into the country’s agricultural and cultural traditions. The cuisine in Dobrogea is centered around fresh, local ingredients like fish, lamb, poultry, vegetables, and grains, with a heavy emphasis on the use of mămăligă (polenta), brânză (cheese), and yogurt. Muntenian cuisine is known for its rustic, earthy flavors, reflecting both the pastoral traditions of the region and the influences of neighboring cultures.

Table 1. Traditional Romanian dishes from Transylvania

Starters	Liquid dishes	Main dishes	Desserts	Drinks
Name-Pateu de porc (pate of pork) Description-a popular starter, made from finely ground pork, often flavored with garlic, onions and spices-served on baked bread or toast	Name-Ciorbă de burță (Tripe Sour Soup) Description: a popular dish in Transylvania, especially during holidays like Christmas and New Year's. This rich and tangy soup is made from beef tripe, garlic, vinegar, and sour cream, and is seasoned with herbs to create a comforting and flavorful.	Name-Cluj-style cabbage (Varză a la Cluj) Description: a rustic, flavorful dish that's very popular in the Cluj-Napoca region of Romania, hence the name. It is a hearty, comforting dish made with layers of sauerkraut or fresh cabbage, rice, and meat (usually pork), often baked with herbs and seasonings.	Name-Kürtöskalács (Chimney Cake) Description-A famous Hungarian treat that is also widely enjoyed in Transylvania. It's made by wrapping dough around a spit, then roasting it over an open flame and coating it with sugar, cinnamon, or crushed nuts.	Name-Tuică (Spirits) Description-A potent plum brandy that is a staple in Romanian culture, including Transylvania. It's traditionally homemade and often served as an aperitif, especially during festive occasions or gatherings.
Name-Salata de vinete (Eggplant Salad) Description-Made from roasted and mashed eggplants, mixed with onions, garlic-served on bread	Name-Bulz Description-a traditional dish, especially popular in the mountainous regions, known for its comforting, rustic flavors. It's essentially a cornmeal (polenta) ball filled with cheese and often baked or grilled, resulting in a deliciously crispy exterior with a soft, gooey center. The dish is simple but packed with flavor, making it a perfect meal for colder months or as a hearty accompaniment to other dishes.	Name-Bulz Description-a traditional dish, especially popular in the mountainous regions, known for its comforting, rustic flavors. It's essentially a cornmeal (polenta) ball filled with cheese and often baked or grilled, resulting in a deliciously crispy exterior with a soft, gooey center. The dish is simple but packed with flavor, making it a perfect meal for colder months or as a hearty accompaniment to other dishes.	Name-Papanasi Description- A Romanian dessert, often served in Transylvania, made from fried or boiled cheese doughnuts. They're typically topped with sour cream and fruit preserves, usually blueberry or cherry.	Name-Palincă (Spirits) Description-Similar to Tuică, but often distilled at a higher proof and sometimes made from other fruits like apples or pears. It's common in Transylvania, especially in rural areas.
Name-Sângerete (Transylvanian Sausage) Description - A type of blood sausage made with pork, rice, and spices, caltaboș is often served sliced as part of a cold appetizer platter.	Name: Ciorba de fasole uscata cu afumatura (Bean Soup with Smoked Meat) Description: a hearty, flavorful dish that combines the earthiness of dried beans with the rich, savory taste of smoked meats and seasoned with herbs, giving it a rich, hearty flavour. This rustic soup is a staple in many Eastern European and Balkan cuisines, particularly in Romania.	Name-Piftie (Jellied Meat) Description-A classic dish for New Year's celebrations and special holidays, piftie is made from pork or beef (often including bones, feet, or other cuts that provide gelatin).	Name -Cozonac cu mac Description-a sweet bread traditionally made for holidays and special occasions in Romania and Transylvania. It's filled with a mixture of walnuts, cocoa, or poppy seeds.	Name-Vin (Transylvanian Wine) Description - The region has a long winemaking tradition, with notable wine regions like the Mures Valley, the Târnave, and the Olt River area. Transylvanian wines, particularly whites like Fetească Regală, and reds such as Fetească Neagră, are highly regarded.
Name-Carnati de casă (Homemade Sausages) Description-Transylvanian sausages, typically made with pork, beef, and spices, are often grilled or served cold in slices.		Name-Snitel ardelenesc Description-A popular choice for holidays like Christmas or New Year's. Made from breaded and fried pork or chicken cutlets, it's typically served with mashed potatoes, rice, or salad.	Name - Strudel cu mere (Apple Strudel) Description - while made from fir or pine tree buds, often served warm. It is believed to have health benefits, especially for colds.	Name-Mugur de Brad Description - A traditional herbal drink made from fir or pine tree buds, often served warm. It is believed to have health benefits, especially for colds.
Name-Brânză de burduf (Sheep Cheeses) Description-Transylvania is known for its diverse range of cheeses, especially those made from sheep's or cow's milk.		Name-Zacuscă cu mămăligă (eggplant Spread with Polenta) Description- while zacuscă is usually served as a side dish or appetizer, it can also be enjoyed as a main dish during holiday meals, especially during the colder months.	Name-Socată Description- a refreshing drink made from elderflower blossoms, sugar, and water, often served chilled in the summer. It's popular in rural areas of Transylvania.	

Table 4. Romanian traditional dishes from Moldova

Starters	Liquid dishes	Main Dishes	Desserts	Drinks
Name-Placinte moldovenesti (Moldavian Pies) Description- are savory pies that are a staple in Moldovan cuisine. They are made with a variety of fillings, such as cheese (brânză), potatoes, cabbage, or minced meat. The dough is typically thin and can be either baked or fried.	Name- Supa de perisoare (Meatball Soup) Description- is a comforting soup made with meatballs (usually pork or beef) in a tangy broth made from tomatoes, vegetables, and often vinegar or lemon juice. It's flavored with dill, bay leaves, and sometimes a bit of sour cream.	Name- Sarmale (Stuffed Cabbage Rolls) Description-are cabbage rolls stuffed with a mixture of minced meat (often pork or beef), rice, and spices like dill, thyme, and garlic. The rolls are then slow-cooked in a tomato-based sauce or broth for several hours, absorbing the flavors.	Name- Coltunasi (Sweet Dumplings) Description-are small, sweet dumplings filled with various fillings, such as sweetened cheese, fruit preserves (like cherries or plums), or poppy seeds. The dough is made from flour, eggs, and sour cream, which gives it a rich and tender texture.	Name-Vermut (Moldovan Vermouth) Description- is a sweet, concentrated fruit syrup, made from fruits like strawberries, raspberries, or cherries, mixed with water and sugar. It is typically served as a refreshing cold drink.
Name- Branza de oiaie (Sheep's Cheese) Description-is a traditional Moldovan sheep's cheese that is aged and packed in a fir tree bark or leather casing. The cheese is creamy and tangy, with a strong flavor.	Name-Bors (Borch) Description- is a type of sour soup, is made with chicken and typically includes ingredients like vegetables, cabbage and fermented wheat bran to give it a tangy flavour.	Name-Racitura (Jellied Meat) Description- is a dish made from slow-cooked pork or chicken that is set into a gelatinous broth, often with garlic, carrots, and herbs. Once chilled, it forms a firm jelly that is sliced and served as a cold dish.	Name-Poale in brau (Apron Pockets) Description- a delicious Romanian pastry that combines a rich, buttery dough with a variety of sweet or savory fillings. It's a dish that is not only loved for its flavor but also cherished for its cultural significance. Whether made with sweet cheese or savory ingredients, Poale in Brău is a comforting, versatile dish that highlights the warmth and hospitality of Romanian cooking.	Name-Sirop de fructe (Fruit Syrup) Description- is a sweet, concentrated fruit syrup, made from fruits like strawberries, raspberries, or cherries, mixed with water and sugar. It is typically served as a refreshing cold drink.
Name- Mămăliga cu branza dulce și smantana. (Polenta with Cheese) Description- is a classic Moldovan appetizer made with polent), which is typically served warm with crumbled fresh cow's cheese and a dollop of sour cream.		Name-Tochitura moldoveneasca (Moldovan Stew) Description- is a classic Moldovan stew made with pork, beef, or chicken.. The dish is seasoned with garlic, herbs, and spices, and cooked until tender. It is completed with sausages and fried eggs.	Name-Chec (Moldovan Easter Cake) Description- is a traditional sweet bread, usually prepared for major holidays like Easter and Christmas. The dough is rich, made with eggs, butter, and sugar, and filled with sweet fillings like walnut paste, cocoa, or Turkish delight.	Name-(Kvass) Description- is a fermented drink made from rye bread, sugar, and yeast. It has a slightly sweet and tangy flavor and is low in alcohol (typically under 1% ABV).
Name- Salata de vinete (Eggplant Salad) Description- creamy eggplant salad made by roasting eggplant, then peeling and mashing it with garlic, onion, and sunflower oil. It's sometimes blended with mayonnaise or yogurt for added richness.			Name- Alivanca (Cornmeal Pudding with Nuts) Description- is a cornmeal-based dessert similar to a pudding, often flavored with vanilla, nuts (such as walnuts or hazelnuts), and sweetened with honey or sugar.	Name-Moldovan Beer Description- is produced in several local breweries, with common styles including lagers, ales, and pilsners. The beer is often light, crisp, and refreshing.