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## Culinary tourism in the Hutsulshchyna region – analysis of the current offer

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to present the culinary offer of Hutsulshchyna against the background of the region's culture and in the context of the development of culinary tourism. The paper constitutes an overview article. The research methods used in the work include the analysis of literature and web sources, field interview and a diagnostic survey using questionnaire technique (conducted among 140 tourists who visited the region before). The research results and the analysis revealed that rich cuisine and culinary heritage of Hutsulshchyna have great potential for the development of culinary tourism and are very interesting for tourists, albeit not enough promoted or sufficiently organized (although some interesting projects have been founded). The final conclusion of the paper is that it is necessary to continue cooperation and local partnership, take up new initiatives, as well as conduct further scientific research.

**Keywords:** culinary/food tourism, tourist offer, Hutsulshchyna

### 1. Introduction

Hutsulshchyna – a region located in the Eastern Carpathians in Ukraine and Romania – is culturally very rich. For this reason, in recent years more and more often this potential has been recognized and used for the development of the region via the creation of tourist products. One of the new endeavours is the attempt to develop culinary tourism as a new trend in tourism. The result of these activities is the creation of culinary routes, as well as new festivals related to cooking and breweries. Nevertheless, due to the fact that culinary tourism in the area is still underdeveloped, published information on the subject that is currently available is very limited.

The aim and task of the authors of the work is therefore to present the culinary potential of Hutsulshchyna against the background of the

region's culture and in the context of the development of culinary tourism.

Bearing in mind the universality of the culinary tourism concept paired with readily available and rich literature on the topic, the authors refrain from indulging in the theoretical presentation of the issue. The article follows the definition formulated by the American researcher, Lucy Long in 1998 (Long, 2010). According to her, culinary tourism is “the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of an other”. Such participation in foodways “implies the full spectrum of activities surrounding food. The term ‘foodways’ suggests that food is a network of activities and systems – physical, social (communicative), cultural, economic, spiritual, and aesthetic” (Long, 2010).

### 2. Research Methods

The research methods used in the work involve the analysis of literature and Internet

sources (mainly the latter, due to the topic of the study subject), and the scientific diagno-

sis of the places evoked in the work (the first of the authors visited all the places of Hutsulshchyna mentioned in the article to juxtapose the literature and Internet descriptions with the real state of those places). Moreover, the study employed a diagnostic survey based on the questionnaire technique. The research was conducted among 140 Polish tourists who had visited the region before. The target group were

tourists who visited Hutsulshchyna at least once. The questionnaire was conducted using the free online platform “Survio”, but the link generated by the system was sent to an intentionally selected group of people by email and through a social group created on Facebook in Poland. As a result of studies started in March and completed in November 2017, 140 anonymous surveys were received.

### 3. Study area description and material

#### 3.1. Basic information on Hutsulshchyna and its culture

People living in Hutsulshchyna, their clothing, language, cuisine, and the diversity of the landscape from the geomorphological and geobotanical standpoint are the reflection of the local heritage.

The appearance of the term ‘Hutsulshchyna’ in literature is relatively young and dates back to the nineteenth century. The name comes from the ethnic group of Hutsuls, which means: Ukrainian highlanders of Ruthenian and Romanian origin, living in the Ukrainian and Romanian Carpathians. The Hutsul culture created by its turbulent history is now the subject of extensive ethnographic research.

Description of this area, and above all its exact location within the Carpathian Mountains, is quite problematic, because its boundaries are not clearly defined, although there are various studies in which such an attempt was made. Nonetheless, narrowing down to some recurring facts, we can state that this ethnic region includes several mountain ranges. This land, with an area of about 6 thousand square kilometres is inhabited by approximately 200 thousand persons, of which 96.7% are Ukrainians. The largest settlements include cities, such as: Wyznycia, Kosiv, Rachiw, Yaremche, and urban settlements, such as: Werchowyna, Worochta, Deliatyn, Putyla, Jasinia. The region encompasses 140 villages, 5 urban-type settlements and 2 cities (Hutsulshchyna). Quite often, when talking about Hutsulshchyna, Kolomyia is also mentioned.

The local population speaks Ukrainian as their official language, but the Hutsul dialect is used on a daily basis (Gutsul’s’kiy slovník, Kosiv Art Original Ukrainian, [http://www.kosivart.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/hutsul\\_dictionary.main/](http://www.kosivart.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/hutsul_dictionary.main/)).

The area is located among forests, picturesque mountains, lakes and rapid rivers, which further increases tourist attractiveness of the Hutsulshchyna. A significant part of Hutsulshchyna is located in the Carpathian National Park.

Due to the fact that for a long time the Hutsul people lived far away from others and resided in demanding, remote areas, the group was very hermetic (maybe that is why the culture and traditions were quite well preserved and passed down, but unfortunately they are slowly disappearing at the moment). It also had an impact on Hutsul architecture and solidified its authenticity.

The history of the entire region is very complicated. Over the centuries, Hutsulshchyna belonged to various countries. It belonged to the Ottoman Empire, the Moldovan principality, First Republic of Poland, the Hungarian Kingdom; later to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; In the years 1920–1939 it was under the rule of the Romanian Kingdom, Second Republic of Poland and the Czechoslovak Republic. However, regardless of the artificially created administrative divisions, over the centuries the Hucul people very dynamically created their usual order, existence, culture and pastoralism conditioned by the strict rules of the forest and mountains (Spadshchina, 2014).

Currently, the economic sphere of Hutsulshchyna is rapidly developing, although the infrastructure of the region is still subpar. Two observations come to mind here. First: this state attracts tourists – the seekers of authenticity and pristine nature; and slower development of the

region allows the region to be unique to retain its heritage. Second: the expansion of infrastructure and increasing economic development entails the risk of losing the true face of the Hutsul culture, as inhabitants may feel incentivised to present tourists with a “staged” culture, i.e. one that is tailored to their expectations. On the other hand, the Hutsul people is a nation with deeply rooted traditions, respecting its culture and customs, loving their small homeland, which is not particularly susceptible to change. A Hutsul man always remembers that he is Hutsul, sometimes even more than a Ukrainian.

The Hutsul culture is incredibly rich. No wonder as, being surrounded by nature, the Hutsul people draw patterns, energy, motifs, inspiration and materials, straight from it. The cultural heritage of this group has been shaped over the years by manifestations of culture,

### 3.2. The Hutsul cuisine

The Carpathians inhabited by the Hutsuls are harsh, spacious mountains, yet at the same time generous, similarly to their inhabitants. For the natives Carpathians are not only their home, but also a very important source of sustenance. The forest is a real feeder. Cereals that have always been used in Hutsulshchyna include: barley, oats – wheat and rye being less common. Over the entire summer-autumn season, the inhabitants stock up on mushrooms (usually dried or marinated), berries, herbs and honey. The shepherds bring *brynza* (sheep milk cheese), *bunz* (sheep milk cheese) and milk from the pastures. They make a supply of vegetables: potatoes, carrots, beets, beans, broad beans. All these and other raw materials form the basis of Hutsul cuisine. Dishes cooked from mushrooms, vegetables, meat, fish, flour, groats are of high quality. They were always made with simple products using easy, classic preparation techniques. The most traditional are those baked in the oven or baked-fried on the kitchen countertop.

From time immemorial Hutsuls have had original dishes, especially those prepared in traditional rural ovens, baked in clay or cast iron dishes, without the addition of industrial components, such as dyes, aroma enhancers, artificial thickeners.

such as pottery, weaving, embroidery, writing icons, sculpting, and Easter egg writing – these forms are still cultivated and presented to tourists. Specific architecture is inseparably associated with Hucul culture: homestead huts, long porch huts, road chapels, wooden churches and other architectural units (Atamanyuk, 2015).

Hutsuls are very religious people. They profess Christianity. First, they were Orthodox, and later became Greek Catholic. Furthermore, Hutsuls always strongly believed in the magic of nature, which for centuries was a kind of “religion” to them (Bochenek, 2009). The Hutsuls skillfully combine ancient traditions and customs with modern existence and spirituality. Hutsulshchyna is a real repository of legends, mythical stories, superstitions, ancient customs, *mol'fars* (healers-wizards) and fairies (Bochenek, 2009).

The multi-purpose furnace has always been a very important element of the Hutsul house, and it very much shows in its construction. The furnaces are richly decorated and painted, with some of their elements carved or adorned with special tiles – made using the famous majolica technique (semi-majolica). It is said to be the source of the Hutsuls’ life. Undoubtedly, the furnace is a work of art in many ways. It serves primarily the cooking function – dishes are boiled on the cooktop; below there is an oven or a container for heating water and another oven for baking bread. The upper part of the furnace includes a place to sleep, and the bottom segment is used for storing dry wood. Today tourists have the opportunity to admire these furnaces during culinary tours (Mokry, 2003).

Most housewives are the true care-takers of the authentic kitchen. Each of them had, and still has, secrets pertaining to the preparation of Hutsul dishes. Very often these are family recipes, modified with their own sense of taste and culinary experience, taken from books or borrowed from other regions of Hutsulshchyna.

It is positively surprising that the enormity of this culinary heritage and experience has been cultivated over the years and passed down from generation to generation, not only in the female line.

Hutsul dishes are prepared using only simple ingredients, mostly potatoes, corn groats, flour, beans, broad beans, garlic, eggs, mushrooms and of course the “queen”, *brynza* – brine cheese made from sheep milk (almost every dish makes use of it in one way or another)

The most famous dishes in Hutsulshchyna include:

- *bunz* (sheep milk cheese, similar to mozzarella)
- *varenyky/pyrogy* (Hutsul dumplings),
- *banosh* (traditional meal of the shepherds, made from cornmeal and home cream topped with Hutsul equivalent of fried bacon: *shkvarka* and *brynza*),
- *bograch* (spicy meat dish with potatoes),
- *holubci* (Hutsul pickled cabbage rolls, stuffed with corn groats or rice, with meat or bacon),
- *deruny* or *tartiuchy* (potato pancakes),
- *kulesza* (hominy grits with *brynza*),
- *chanachy* (meat stewed in small clay pots, prepared in the oven, with the addition of vegetables, beans and spices),
- *juszka* (dried mushroom: boletus soup with homemade noodles),
- *ripianyky/ kartoplianyky* (stuffed pan-fried potato patties with the addition of raw egg, flour and salt ),
- *riplianka* (traditional local porridge made from potatoes, cornmeal and *brynza*),
- *rosilnycia* (sauerkraut soup, with some corn porridge),
- trout in cream,
- *kolotiucha* (mashed potatoes),
- smoked meat,
- bacon,
- boletus in cream,
- *kruczenyky* (meat rolls stuffed with mushrooms) (Savchuk, 2013).

The dishes are topped with special sauces, as well as butter, greaves and cream.

#### 4. Results of field and literature research on the current use of Hutsulshchyna’s culinary potential in tourism

Research on the cultural tourist attractiveness of Hutsulshchyna, carried out by K. Parzych and A. Kibycz (2010), indicate that this region meets the requirements to be considered attractive from the cultural tourism standpoint, which has a positive impact on shaping the region’s image also in terms of the development of culinary tourism (inherently linked with culture of the place). The most attractive areas are those located in the vicinity of Jaremca, Worochta, Tatariv and Polanica, Kosmacz, Werchowyna and Podzacharych.

There is a large number of gastronomic establishments in Hutsulshchyna that serve a wide range of local, Ukrainian and foreign dishes. They are, however, poorly promoted. Culinary tourism is just beginning to be recognized as

a potential element of region’s cultural development. Earlier, it was acknowledged as such primarily in the Transcarpathian and Lviv District of Ukraine. Website pertaining to these districts include culinary offers and promote visits to the region in the context of its culture and cuisine.

In turn, the authorities and non-governmental institutions of the Ivano-Frankivsk District are slowly making use of the experience of the neighbouring districts and attempt to promote the culinary image of the region. International cooperation based on EU projects also has an impact on the development of culinary tourism. Selected initiatives and activities of Hutsulshchyna in the field of promoting regional food tourism are discussed in the following section of this paper.

##### 4.1. International projects

One of the EU projects implemented in Hutsulshchyna is Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network (CCHN), which was established in April 2012 and constituted joint effort of the Tourist Association of Ivano-Frankivsk Region (Ukraine), Executive Committee of

Ivano-Frankivsk city council (Ukraine), Association “Ecologic” (Romania), Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Satu Mare county (Romania), Kosice regional branch of Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Slovakia) and Szamos-bazar Association (Hungary).



**Figure 1.** Outline of Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network (Source: <https://www.culinaryheritage.org>)

The “Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network” project was financed from the funds of the European Union as part of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENPI Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013 (Fig. 1). It was established to bring together producers of traditional culinary products from the Carpathian region and tourist industry facilities from four countries (Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network, May 2018, <https://taif.org.ua/en/completed-projects-en/carpathian-culinary-heritage-network/>).

The main project objective is to conserve and popularize the role and range of different traditional Carpathian food products and cuisines as a catalyst for sustainable regional development and preservation of local cultural heritage. Its main activities include: Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network and capacity building; Carpathian Traditional Culinary Cultures Preservation; Carpathian Culinary Heritage Trails (Project – Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network. The Programme: 2007–2013 Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENPI CBC, <https://www.keep.eu/project/3932/carpathian-culinary-heritage-network>).

The project was completed in January 2014. The Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network

logo was created for its promotion (Fig. 2). Fire is an important part of the logotype because cooking on fire is one of the old traditions in the Carpathian Mountain.



**Figure 2.** Logo of Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network (Source: Carpathian culinary heritage network is identified with the logo, November 2012, <https://taif.org.ua/en/news-en/carpathian-culinary-heritage-network-is-identified-with-the-logo/>)

The Network is based on five key assumptions: Organic and traditional food, Grandma’s recipes, Local people – local hospitality, Undiscovered part of the world, Genuine travel experience (Carpathian Culinary Trail, 2014, brochure, [https://taif.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Culinary-heritage\\_Taste-Carpathian\\_en.pdf](https://taif.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Culinary-heritage_Taste-Carpathian_en.pdf)).

Approximately 350 enterprises and organizations have joined the network and work to

cultivate the development of local culture and traditions, as well as to enrich and expand the culinary heritage of the Carpathian region (Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network, May 2018, <https://taif.org.ua/en/completed-projects-en/carthian-culinary-heritage-network/>).

Members of the network have worked towards establishing a database of enterprises that prepare traditional products and dishes. Efforts were made to develop tourist services related to the culinary offer and to implement certification programs for the network members. One of the objectives was to create an on-line database containing information on Carpathian dishes that would be readily available to tourists. They also planned to organize various types of culinary festivals and competitions as well as culinary trips.

Oksana Fedorowycz, the president of the Tourist Association of Ivano-Frankivsk Region and the author of the Carpathian Culinary Her-

itage Network project, pointed out at the time of its creation that culinary tourism has a major impact on the economic development of the regions participating in this project (Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network will from now link five transborder regions, May 2012, <https://taif.org.ua/en/page/2/?s=oksana>).

As the project founders noticed, most of the goals have been achieved, but more tangible results will become apparent in the coming years. After the project was completed, several promotional films were created (e.g. Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network, May 2018, movie, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gx-Q7p2rXzuE>; <https://taif.org.ua/en/business-en/video-en/carthian-culinary-heritage-network-3/>). Currently, however, the Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network is not sufficiently promoted, which is why few tourists know of its activity.

## 4.2. Culinary tours

Culinary aspect of tourism is increasingly emphasized in tourist offers related to the Eastern Carpathians and Hutsulshchyna, however, strictly culinary tours are still scarce. Most tour offers including culinary or wine elements are limited to Transcarpathia, since for centuries the region has been known for its wine production and rich cuisine (albeit information on said offers are not readily available).

The Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network initiated an offer of a trip on the Ukrainian side under the name *Hutsul Adventures: In Quest of Culinary Treasure*. It is a five-day culinary tour. Each day tourists visit different regions of Hutsulshchyna and Pokuttya. During the trip they can try local dishes and get to know the local culture and traditions. The highlight of the trip is a visit to Carpathian mountain pastures, where tourists have an opportunity to learn authentic recipes for local dishes, find out more about the old tradition of producing *bunz*. Moreover, visitors can appreciate rich mountain vegetation, take pictures of beautiful, pristine landscapes, visit apiaries and farms. Trekking enthusiast can participate in alpine trips under the care of experienced mountain guides. There are also workshops on cooking Hutsul dishes, espe-

cially *banosh*, dumplings and baking bread. In the evenings, dinner is usually served by the fire, which is accompanied by singing and sharing stories and traditions associated with the region. Tourists also visit the Egg Museum in Kolomyia and other cultural points of interest in the village. During these five days tourists can also buy honey, get spa treatment and rest on hay, visit a small mineral water factory, get a book with 64 recipes of traditional local dishes (Carpathian Culinary Trail, 2014, brochure, [https://taif.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Culinary-heritage\\_Taste-Carthian\\_en.pdf](https://taif.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Culinary-heritage_Taste-Carthian_en.pdf)). Each day of the tour has its own graphic representation, illustrating the nature of culinary and cultural experiences (Fig. 3).

Currently, there are no professionally curated culinary routes in Hutsulshchyna. Admittedly, the creators of Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network have released a brochure entitled *Carpathian Culinary Trail* (Carpathian Culinary Trail, 2014, brochure, [https://taif.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Culinary-heritage\\_Taste-Carthian\\_en.pdf](https://taif.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Culinary-heritage_Taste-Carthian_en.pdf)), however, it includes merely a proposal of a 5-day tour across the region, not a culinary tourist trail project *sensu stricto*.



**Figure 3.** Graphic representations of 5-day culinary tour around Hutsulshchyna (Source: <https://www.culinary-heritage.org>)

### 4.3. Culinary Events

Currently, in Ukraine, including Hutsulshchyna, there is a noticeable number of emerging culinary festivals with workshops and tastings of local and international dishes. A few interesting examples are indicated below.

The Hucul Festival, first held in Werchowina in 1991, belongs to the most famous and oldest festivals. It is a cultural event attended primarily by the Hutsuls from all parts of Hutsulshchyna, but also from around the world. It takes place every year in various Hutsul towns. During the festival there are conferences, competitions, folk dance and singing shows. The festival is held in a very nationalist spirit. In addition, an obligatory element of the event is cooking the banosh in a traditional way – by the shepherds, on fire – and trying *bunz* or *brynza*. At the stalls tourists can buy Hutsul products and delicacies (Parzych and Kibych, 2010).

The Festival of Riplianka takes place in June and is organized at the museum in Koloczawa, Transcarpathia. *Riplianka* – traditional folk dish – has been considered “the second bread” for centuries. *Riplianka* is considered a symbol of unification in every Transcarpathian house. The dish is cooked in a cast-iron pot on low heat, often stirred with a wooden tool. During the festival there are various theatre and dance performances, as well as competition for the tastiest *riplianka*. Every housewife presents a different take on this dish, adding different ingredients.

In August, The Werchowyna Afyna (special kind of blackberry) Festival takes place in the town of Huklywe in the Transcarpathian Region. The place for the event is not coincidental. Huklywe is considered the capital of the *afyna* – there is even a monument of this berry. During the festival, visitors may enjoy fresh,

juicy blackberries, preserves and other excellent products made of blackberries: pancakes, dumplings, plum jam, cookies and *afyna palinka* (local alcohol). In addition to the gastronomic aspect, the festival also features entertainment and cultural-cognitive attractions. Everyone who arrives at the Afyna Festival in an embroidered shirt gets a sweet gift.

The Hutsul Brynza is yet another Hutsul culinary festival, held in September in Rachow. The organization of the festival takes place at this time because it is closely related to the return of shepherds from the pastures to their houses. Many interesting customs and traditions, folk stories, legends and fairy tales of this land have been preserved. That is why a significant number of cultural events take place every year there. The Hutsuls from all over the world come to the festival. This event is the largest Carpathian festival. During the celebration various local dishes are cooked, but the main focus is *brynza*, sometimes called “the white gold of the Carpathians”. Brynza Festival is aimed not only at the development of pastoral lifestyle and tourism. It also popularizes the Hutsul culture. Every party that participates in the festival has its own stall decorated with genuine embroidery, kilim-rugs and serves Hutsul dishes. At the end of the festival, a ritual bonfire (*watra*) is lit as a symbol of pastoral life, a kind of an amulet of the mountain meadows.

The Berlibash Banosh Festival in the Rachow Region is another event in the Carpathian Mountains. During the festival, Hutsul dishes are cooked and served. The most important one being *banosh* – a traditional dish of Hutsul shepherds. The event program includes a visit to the Berlibash mountain pasture, where a rep-

representative shepherd's farm is located. The farm holds workshops on the preparation of a traditional Hutsul banosh with bacon and *brynza*, as well as tasting other dishes and treats.

The Varenykiw Festival is a festival of dumplings, and it is organized every year at the well-

known ski resort "Bukovel", just before Lent. Festival participants can try dumplings with various fillings, as well as participate in competitions to celebrate the event.

The Hutsul cuisine is also promoted during other local holidays and festivals.

#### 4.4. Development of brewery business

There are no beer tourism offers in Hutsulshchyna, but there is an increasing number of smaller breweries and pubs. The Brewery in Mykulyczyn, which has existed since 2002, is a place of particular interest. It is a small family brewery, which has been expanded in recent years. The establishment produces not only beer (honey, dark, wheat), but also *kvass*. At the brewery, patrons can also buy *bunz* and other beer snacks, as well as jams and honey. The place is popular both among tourists and locals. In 2016 another brewery was established in Mykulyczyn. It produces light, wheat and semi-dark beer

called "Hirskie" (HutsulBrew, <http://www.hutsulbrew.com/>).

"Skala" is the name of the first brewery in Yaremcha. It has been operating for several years and produces craft beers. The capacity of the beer container is 100 litres. Beers brewed in this establishment are: light, semi-light and dark (<https://skala-brewery.business.site/>).

The brewery was established in 2015 in the town of Kwasy, which is famous for its mineral healing springs. The "Cypa" brewery (Brovarnya; <https://tsypa.com.ua/>), together with the "Gagarin and Bokoras" Restaurant forms a gastronomic complex.

### 5. Results of survey research

The purpose of the research was to gather information on the perception and reception of the culinary potential of the Hutsul region among tourists visiting the region.

Men constituted 52.9% of all participants – 47.1% were women. The age of the study participants varied. The largest percentage (40%) were people in the age of 36–55. One third of the respondents were aged 56–70. 85.7% of respondents had higher education. Almost three-quarters of the respondents were employed, and every fourth (24.3%) was a pensioner.

The survey was conducted among the Polish people visiting the Hutsul region. Research showed that a small percentage of respondents have a relationship with Ukraine: 6.4% have Ukrainian roots, and 18.6% indicated that their family either lives or used to live in Ukraine. 38.6% of the respondents visited Hutsulshchyna only once, and almost every third person 2–3 times (32.1%). 29.3% of respondents visited it four or more times.

In the question pertaining to the assessment of respondents' knowledge of Hutsulshchyna

on a scale of 1–5, less than half of the interviewees (42.1%) claimed their knowledge is average, 26.7% assessed it as good, and 3.6% believe that they have a high educational level related to topic in question. The remaining 37.8% of respondents believed their level of knowledge was low or very low.

The subsequent question concerned the aims of travels to Hutsulshchyna – on average, each respondent indicated three destinations. 15.7% of people went there to get to know the cuisine – which was the most important information of the survey. Almost all trips undertaken by the respondents were for other purposes, such as resting in the mountains (90.7% of answers) which may well be complemented by some culinary experiences. For 65% of people, the goal was to visit cities and towns, half (50.7%) indicated visiting historic places, and 44.3% of people visiting Hutsulshchyna were led by motives related to the so-called Eastern Borderlands (Kresy Wschodnie). 7.9% of the surveyed tourists came to participate in festivals and cultural events.

The tourists were also asked about the types of cultural sites they visited during their stay in Hutsulshchyna. On average they indicated three types of places. Over 88% of people visited churches, 60% museums or open-air museums, 55.7% old Roman Catholic churches; strongholds and castles were visited by 38.6% of respondents, synagogues by 14.3% of them, and residential buildings by 11.4%. Almost every tenth person (8.6% of responses) went to the local breweries. 8.6% of interviewees selected “other” as their answer, and indicated shepherd’s huts as points of interest.

When asked about their associations with Hutsulshchyna, almost a quarter (24.3%) of the respondents mentioned tasty food, whereas 7.1% indicated rich cuisine. Three-fourths (75.7%) of people recalled the soothing sound of the Prut and Czeremosh rivers, and over half (54.3%) the slogan: “Eastern Borderlands”. Almost half (46.4%) of tourists in Hutsulshchyna mentioned Stanislaw Vincent, 45% included the Hutsul horse, for 42.1% these places associate with unusual inhabitants. 21.4% of people pay attention to the dialect. On average, there are four associations per one person.

An important survey question pertained to food-serving places. As it turned out, 62.9% of people ate at their hosts, over half of the respondents (57.1%) consumed meals made

on their own, 47.1% of people ate in restaurants, whereas 32.1% and 31.4% of respondents dined, respectively, at bars and local restaurants (called *kolyba*). On average, each respondent provided two places.

When it comes to trying regional dishes during their stay in Hutsulshchyna, 42.1% of the respondents willingly did (given it was possible), 30.7% consumed them sometimes, 10.7% did not eat local dishes, and 6.4% respondents did not know which of the dishes were regional.

Almost three-quarters of the respondents (74.4%) ate dumplings and 66.9% tried *bunz*. Tourists also tried *kulesza* (49.6% of answers), *juszka* (31.4%), *holubci* (30.6%); 27.3% of people had *bograch*, 25.6% *banosh*, 22.3% *kartoplianyky*; 21.5% experienced the taste of cooked boletus in cream, 14% ate *chanachas*, and less than 10% *kruczenyky*. On average, each respondent discovered three regional dishes.

When asked whether the Hutsul cuisine can be an element that enables better understanding of the region’s culture, more than half of the respondents (62.9%) answered positively. 34.3% stated they do not know whether it is important to learn about the cuisine of the region as part of cultural education and whether this knowledge allows them to get to know the region better, 2.9% believe that regional cuisine does not enable better understanding of the culture.

## 6. Summary and Conclusions

As mentioned earlier, there are currently no culinary routes in Hutsulshchyna. However, items included in the Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network may serve as a starting point for establishing such routes. Moreover, culinary events, which – as shown – are quite many in the region, could be used for this purpose together with increasingly popular breweries.

Undoubtedly, the Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network requires promotion and further development, but may potentially be used to establish several different thematic culinary routes. Furthermore, the offer of culinary trips should be made more available to tourists. At present it is difficult to find booking.

In addition, a trail could be created that would show the traditions of pastoral life

led in the mountain meadows and huts, the so-called *kolybas*. The element distinguishing the real Hutsulshchyna is the location of the bonfire-grill in the middle of the premises, which offers unusual atmosphere. To create such a culinary route, the *kolybas* located in Hutsulshchyna can be used. The trail could start in the town of Yaremche. The tour would begin with one of the oldest *kolybas* in Yaremche situated by the Prut River. A glass of vodka with bread and pickled cucumber would be served as a welcome at the *kolyba*. At the same time, the musicians would play Hutsul songs using folk instruments. The huts could organize workshops on cooking *jushka* and a short presentation of one of the elements of Hutsul culture and cuisine. Having tasted the dishes,

tourists would go to one of the *kolybas* (also in Yaremche), stopping on the way at the Hutsul stalls. After the walk, they would arrive at the *kolyba* for cooking workshops, for example, presenting *banosh* and boletus in cream. This would be accompanied by interesting stories, anecdotes, legends and cheerful Hutsul games. The rest of the trail could be equally interesting and varied.

In Hutsulshchyna there are single offers of mushroom picking and berry harvesting. These offers constitute a private initiative of the agritourism hosts. However, such attractions do not appear as a tourist product in any of the official offers. The richness of local forests and mountains can be used to show tourists what path products take before they appear on our table. The ordinary “ritual” of collecting berries or mushrooms, and then their culinary processing, for a Hutsul is a normal behaviour, while for tourists who come here from different parts of the country and from abroad, it often proves to be an unusual attraction (Andrashchuk, 2017). That is why this element should be considered when creating tourist offers.

„If we realize that food is the basis of human life, a source of energy, and that over the centuries the process of organization of nutrition of a given nation, its needs, appetite, taste, i.e. trying and choosing the most appropriate, results from the geographical, natural and climatic conditions and tasty dishes, and then preparing and serving them on the table, both on a daily basis and during religious, native and calendar-ritual holidays – then we will realize that the food consumed by every man and his nation is one of the most important culture problems of every nation, including the Ukrainian nation” (Mokry, 2003). As a consequence of these words, the culinary heritage should be more widely and more reliably shared, not only with subsequent generations of given communities, but also with tourists eager to learn about them.

The rich cuisine of Hutsulshchyna has great potential for the development of culinary tourism. To this end, however, it is necessary to continue cooperation and promote local partnership, take up new initiatives, as well as conduct further scientific research.

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