

Analysis of the attractiveness and potential of the local region with emphasis on culinary tourism

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Abstract: - Tourism is a fast growing and emerging economic sector. Because of its continuous and rapid development, it represents an indispensable part of leisure time of almost every individual. Nowadays, especially in developed countries with a rising standard of living, tourism has been facing higher demands placed on tourism by its participants. For this reason, interest in passive recreation tourism has decreased and a new potential is seen in a new tourism trend in the form of active spending of leisure time. Therefore, tourism is diversified into various specific forms that are targeted to a specific audience. One of these forms is gastronomic tourism taking gastronomy as a key element. A primary motive of gastronomy tourism is to travel because of knowledge and discovery of secrets of local, regional and international cooking. This new trend offers to its participants' extraordinary gastronomic experience through gastronomic events or visiting certain sites associated with gastronomy. The aim of this research is to find and recommend new attractive opportunities within culinary tourism in a chosen region and thus increase its attractiveness and competitiveness, simply to add value and add something extra in comparison to other regions in the Czech Republic. The initial part of the research is dedicated to mapping of current state of culinary tourism in Zlín region and subsequently this state is compared to other regions in the country. A current state of culinary tourism in the region will be mapped by using questionnaire survey or personal interviews and field investigation. The last part of the research will contain a comparative analysis according to specific criteria of chosen gastronomic events taking place in Moravia. Finally, conclusions are specified to create a new event in the region.

Key-Words: *culinary tourism,*

1 Introduction

Culinary tourism is a young industry and it has been considered as a new science field. It only emerged as a separate branch from 2001. Two years later, in 2003 Erik Wolf founded International Culinary Tourism Association. It is essential to mention the role of culinary tourism because today it is a very important industry and its importance continues to grow. Specialty Travel Agents Association even identified culinary tourism as trend no.1 in tourism in 2009. This paper deals with this kind of tourism with an emphasis on using local potential in a given region. Moreover, the results will lead to increasing of the attractiveness of the Zlín region (Haná,

Valachy, Slovácko and the city of Zlín) for so called culinary tourists.

The main aim of this article and its analysis is to identify and recommend new and exciting opportunities within culinary tourism in the region which will lead to increasing of its attractiveness and competitiveness and offer something extra in comparison to other regions. (The initial part of the research was dedicated to mapping of the current state of culinary tourism in Zlín region and to comparison to other Czech regions.)

2 Culinary tourism - the background

Gastronomy is a key factor in the formation and development of gastronomic tourism since each

country has unique and rich cuisine. In these days, gastronomic tourism is considered to be a new trend which becomes better known for each of us. It is often a motivation factor for travelling as people want to try out something of a wide range of traditional domestic and foreign cuisine.

2.1 Definition of gastronomy

The origins of the word gastronomy come from the Greek word *gastros* – stomach and *nomos* – knowledge or rule. Gastronomy is therefore a science that deals with cookbooks and culinary art in connection with the preparation of meals, their serving and eating (Museum gastronomie, © 2016a).

Gastronomy concept is characterized by a number of definitions by different authors. Burešová et al (2014, p.38) writes in her book an example of definition made by philosopher, judge and gourmet J.A. Brillat Savarin that defined gastronomy already in 1825 as a science that deals with intellectual knowledge of everything that concerns human nutrition.

Orieška (2010, s. 161) described the term gastronomy as a socio-economic activity including food preparation, its variety and diversity, high quality and excellent presentation of various dishes as well as the sale in terms of specialization of individual activities and professions.

Gastronomic tourism includes gastronomic and culinary experience that is associated with the visit of special activities. The program of such activities is usually focused on consumption, preparation and presentation of food and it determines national traditions in a concrete destination (Kotíková, 2015, p. 39)

2.2 Gastronomic tourism

In modern times people expect far more from travelling and they constantly require something special and extraordinary. Therefore, tourism develops and it focuses on special forms attracting visitors. Gastronomic or culinary tourism is one of the new trends that emerges due to this phenomenon. Food is no longer perceived only as an element of fascination but it is also an important goal for travelling and for people who expect extraordinary gastronomic experience. Gastronomic tourism is in the Czech language referred to as “hospitality” which represents a collective term for the accommodation services and food and beverage. The term hospitality in its real sense is defined as a friendly providing of refreshment and overnight stay for free. Currently, this activity has become the subject of businesses in the hotel sector and

gastronomy and it represents a substantial part of the national economies of many countries. (Kotíková, 2013, p. 37-38)

Another definition of gastronomic tourism is related to its translation as “Food tourism” that is described by World Travel Association (WFTA) as “food tourism”, “tasting tourism”, “culinary tourism” and many others. Therefore, a number of definitions has occurred. According to WFTA, it is understood as travelling for pleasure and experience the unique food and drink specific for a certain area. Such travelling can be in its own region or with the possibility to travel to any other country and experience its gastronomy. (World food travel association, © 2016)

According to UNWTO, gastronomic tourism in recent years has become the most dynamic part of tourism. Hall and Sharples in 2003 designed one of the most common definitions of gastronomic tourism. According to these authors, it is characterized as a trip to the gastronomic regions, especially for entertainment, recreation and gaining new experiences from a certain area. It also includes a visit to local food producers, food festivals, events and exhibitions, culinary show and tasting of high quality food or any other activity related to tourism and to food. (UNWTO, © 2012)

Within the gastronomic tourism, it is necessary to distinguish between tourists who perceive gastronomy as a part of tourism and tourists whose primary impulse to travel is due to gastronomy itself. Their travelling is particularly aimed at visiting food producers, food festivals, restaurants and other specific locations where food production and tasting can be also experienced. The main motivation for gastronomic tourism is mainly cooked and traditional food and drinks typical for the destination. (Hall et al, © 2003, s. 9-10)

2.3 Gastronomic tourism and its classification

Gastronomic tourism is an important part of tourism because nowadays its popularity has been growing and it is considered to be a fashion trend. It can be divided to following activities and objects (Kotlíková, 2013, p-43):

Public catering or mass catering facilities as the objective of gastronomic tourism

Catering facilities are inevitable part of every town, village or tourist destination. Its formation depends on the size of the territory and the intensity of demand. The main objective is primarily to satisfy the basic need of a human. In these days, the new understanding of this term includes also entertainment, enjoying quality food, enabling communication not only between locals but also

tourists and moreover it is aimed at providing them with cultural and educational function ((Patůš, Gúčík a Marušková, 2011, p. 11)

Kotíková (2013, p.43-44) divides catering facilities to subcategories that are gourmet, historical, traditional and experience. These are mainly recommended businesses on touristic portals, websites, guides, etc. Gourmet catering facilities include luxurious restaurants offering the best services. In particular, these are the companies that were awarded by Michelin star which is considered to be one of the most prestigious rating in this area.

Businesses with this award are situated mainly in the European countries. In the Czech Republic there are only two restaurants with Michelin star, both of them are situated in the capital city of Prague. (Michelinové restaurace, © 2014-2016)

Another category, historic restaurants, has a long history with its unique and original recipes. The area of such restaurant is typical due to the historical event or meeting that takes place there. Traditional restaurant services emphasize its origin and long tradition of recipes for local dishes. Experience gastronomy is provided in restaurants with emphasis on experience that are special or unique mostly by its original equipment, range of assortment, meal preparation or staff. Admirable restaurant of this kind is for example one hidden below sea level of the Maldives, the restaurant on the top level above the ground in the 122-floor of skyscraper in Dubai or in a tree in New Zealand. (Kotíková, 2013, p. 44-45)

2.4 Gastronomic tourism destination

Some destinations have a very high potential for development of gastro-tourism. Touristic destinations are popular mainly due to its density of high-quality restaurants and plenty of local food providers. Among other tourist attractions, there belong also the gastronomic festivals and events that take place in a certain area. Charts about the best gastronomic destinations indicate the most popular cities such as for example California and its wine, France and delicious cheese, Mexico, Japan and others. (Yeoman, © 1995-2016) Goeldner a Richie (2014, s. 214-215) state that actions and public events are among the fastest growing segments of tourism. Currently, we can see a huge interest and therefore a big potential in such events that are placed all over the world. In terms of tourism, the greatest importance is seen in gastronomic events and events that significantly affect the image of the territory. These events can have a character of big events where gastronomy is a part of rich program such as wine harvest, beer festivals and others.

Popular are also small events that focus primarily on regional gastronomic products.

Gastronomic operation and production

As a part of gastronomic tourism, the tourists have the possibility of excursions to foreign or domestic enterprises or small agricultural enterprises and farms. Visits to these places are usually connected with tasting of products with the possibility of their purchase. For huge popularity, tours to chocolate factories, breweries or whiskey distilleries are becoming very frequent. Tourists in the Czech Republic admire mostly breweries and wine. The interesting tour is also to farms where visitors can see the production of local cheese, cider, jams and many other household products. (Kotíková, 2013, p. 46)

Gastronomic museum

As a part of gastronomic tourism, the tourists can visit gastronomic museum where they can experience the history of cooking, food preparation and development of kitchen tools from prehistoric times to the present cutting-edge technology. Another typical exposition in historical museums is historical development of food culture along with its rules. Visitors have an insight to the world's chef history including their famous recipes. One of the largest gastronomic museum located in the Czech Republic is in Prague. (Muzeum gastronomie, © 2016b)

Farmers markets

A lot of farmers markets can be seen in the Czech Republic of varying quality. This is why the Association of farmer's marketplaces was created in the Czech Republic. In 2011, Ministry of Agriculture announced a code of farmer's markets. This code serves for farmers who are bound to comply with the set terms and conditions in the cultivation, production and sale of food. The code also gives a definition of farmers markets (rural, agricultural etc.) as a form of sales of agricultural and food products and food producers with the aim of supplying small and medium-size businesses and provide people with fresh food especially of Czech and regional origin. Farmer markets are mainly held in public places in an announced place and time in the open air. Sellers of such farm food are governed by a pre-announced and posted market order (Dvořáčková, © 2011 a Asociace farmářských tržišť, [© 2016]).

As Kotíková (2013, s. 46-47) says, a phenomenon of farm places is known worldwide and it has become interesting opportunity for tourism as well.

Farmers markets always attract many tourists from all over the world, not only for the opportunity to purchase locally made products but also due to its attractiveness, uniqueness and the possibility of meeting local people.

Cooking courses

Recently, interest in culinary tourism has attracted also new tourism products. One of them are cooking courses and lessons. In cooking schools and courses, people are taught by top chefs and under their supervision, they learn how to prepare dishes from the best ingredients. Practical cooking course takes the form of a theater performance. Visitors can try champagne sabering, prepare their own food and taste special dishes. Nowadays, the popularity of these courses is increasing and it is often sold out. (La Finestra, [© 2016])

2.4 Gastronomy in the Czech Republic

Ivana Jenerálová (2010) in her article states that Czech cuisine is strongly influenced by geographical location of the country and in the case of the Czech Republic it is influenced by inland environment dominated by colder climate. The basis of the gastronomy consists of domestic ingredients such as legumes, cereals, potatoes and meat. Despite the simple origin of these ingredients, delicious and creative dishes are served in Czech restaurants. The most important component of Czech cuisine is meat. Most commonly used meat is pork, beef, poultry, rabbit, venison as well as freshwater fish (mainly carp). Czech specialties are sauces, bread and potato dumplings filled either with fruit or smoked meat. Popular dishes are soup of various kinds and pastries. The sought-after specialties include sandwiches, Prague ham, variety of salads and ripened cheeses – typical Olomouc cheese and many others. (Budinská, © 2012)

Czech Republic offers special dishes and typical food for a specific region. Famous city of Olomouc is by world known because of its cheese. Pardubice region is known for its excellent gingerbread, Chodsko is specialist at cakes, the pride of South Bohemia are dishes made from freshwater fish and the capital town Prague is famous for its Prague ham. It is worth to mention special dishes made from hog-killing which are very popular in Valachy. (Jenerálová, © 2010)

2.5 Influences of gastronomy

The most important factor, that currently influence the gastronomic tourism, is the price because customers increasingly check whether the expected

quality of food meets the price requirements. In this hectic period full of stress, people want to experience and enjoy a sense of peace therefore it is necessity for restaurants or other facilities to create a pleasant atmosphere and maintain individual approach to clients. The facilities are constantly discovering new ways of preparing food, new trends and technologies. Therefore, it is necessary to have a well-prepared and trained personnel who is able to answer any question of the customer. Gastronomy is associated with human senses. People are willing to pay for gourmet experience. Guests appreciate the variety of homemade products. Also they prefer local products, fresh vegetables, fruit, herbs, fish that they can buy at local market etc. Another influencing factor is the authentic products that are offered by small independent local restaurants and pubs. It is a rustic style combined with appropriate selection of local dishes and drinks, regional specialties, cheese, pastries and more. The last factor that currently affects gastronomic tourism is comfort and safety. (Burešová et al, 2014, s. 36)

3 Problem Solution

Comparative analysis of five gastronomic events according to set criteria was conducted in a chosen region. Subsequently, the city of Zlín was taken and used for event realization. The evaluation was done with the help of SWOT analysis, the output of which was to evaluate both internal and external factors. The results of this analysis primarily served as the starting point for the draft of a new gastronomic event in a region.

SWOT analysis identified the strengths of the city of Zlín in the form of high-quality facilities for the gastronomic event realization. The city center offers many hot spots that are accessible and its location is attractive for many tourists. A great opportunity is seen in the unused parks and lawns that can be used for gastronomic events. At the same time, as already seen in the previous analysis, there is no gastronomic competitive event in Zlín and this is another prerequisite for ensuring a successful gastronomic event. City of Zlín is very attractive for tourists as it offers a wide range of cultural and social events of various kinds but also many sights and attractions which annually attracts many domestic and foreign tourists. Secondary supply in Zlín is well-built as it offers accommodation services of high-quality for domestic and foreign visitors.

Every event management is associated with the occurrence of weaknesses. Therefore, it is necessary to eliminate them before the start. The best option is

either to customize those weaknesses or completely transform them into strengths. Competition can be taken as a weakness of such gastronomic event when it comes to setting dates. Planning and completing of this event is very demanding in terms of finance because it is necessary to provide all necessary resources. Another weakness is costly advertising. Since this is the first annual gastronomic event, it is inevitable to make a creative advertisement that catches the attention and thus gets into public awareness. Even though the advertising campaign will be both financially and time consuming, return on investment should mirror in a successful and profitable event. While preparing this event, it is necessary to put a great emphasis on following safety and health conditions. In terms of smooth running of the project, it is vital to ensure quality personnel, material and technical support that will ensure the satisfaction of the visitors and organizational team.

A great chance of increasing demand and interest of the planned event occurs by defining opportunities. Therefore, it is important to focus more on these opportunities and ensure repeatability. The target group of the event is the general public so the range of age group is wide. All these visitors have the opportunity to improve existing skills and learn more in the field of gastronomy through experts and their topics. Moreover, new opportunities emerge in terms of new trends and technologies used for preparation and processing of food. Last but not least opportunity is increasing public interest in gastronomy. People are often willing to travel in order to try and find out more information about regional and national cuisine in a selected destination.

The worst threat that can not be affected is adverse weather and bad wind conditions. Every action that takes place in the open air is exposed to the risk of cancellations. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare alternative option in rainy weather such as for example prepare tents or move the action to the building with roof. Gastronomic event will be situated in Comenius Park and it continues to Congress Centre and Gahurova park.

This area is lined by streets therefore it is proposed to close transport communication especially the street Gahurova because of safety of the visitors. It is essential to contact the city of Zlín for obtaining authorization for getting permission. Based on this, the threat in the form of non-cooperation of Zlín city or rejecting the planned event can emerge.

Gastronomic event represents an advantage in terms of awareness of the destination and raising visits. Therefore, representatives from the city of Zlín

should meet the needs of organizers and should provide the organizers with as much information as needed. A great problem occurs when it comes to estimation of visitors. This is due to the fact that if only few visitors come, it will mean the failure of the event and all efforts and financial resources will be degraded. On the other hand, in the case of high interest, the event may possible show a profit but large groups of people can cause overcrowding in one place. The result of this threat can lead to dissatisfaction of visitors and organizers. The last threat that can occur is uncertain interest by public. It is not possible to clearly determine which target group will be interested therefore it is important to create a program that will focus on all age groups. Although the project has its weaknesses and threats, their impact does not represent a major risk in the form of its cancelation.

4 Conclusion

Based on the analysis of social events held in Zlín, these major conclusions appeared:

In 2015, Zlín organized 251 social events, 6 of them where aimed at gastronomy. However, these 6 events do not represent a strong competition. According to the analysis it was noted that these events take place mainly on square Náměstí Míru and near the Congress Centre in Zlín. Given the fact that the city has a lot of parks and grass and vegetation, there is a large space for gastronomic events like this. After evaluating all age target groups, it was showed that gastronomic events can be targeted at the general public.

Based on comparative analysis it was revealed that:

- Gastronomic events are held almost in the whole Moravia. Their attendance is influenced primarily by location and destination profile of a gastronomic event.
- Comparison of demographics may have a significant influence on visiting these gastronomic events. With the highest probability, substantive attendance of such events is expected in Ostrava and Brno because in these cities, the highest number of locals in age group 15-64 was recorded.
- Gastronomic events are relatively new trend since the first gastronomic event is recorded in 2010. After a few years, events have built a strong foundation with annual continuity and repetition.
- To ensure high number of visitors, it is necessary to carry out the event on correctly chosen place. Culinary events perfectly fit into open air places and therefore the

analysis proved that most of these events were outdoor projects.

- In terms of visits and number of participants, it is reported as a growing trend with growing tendency. It can be concluded that in the future, the number of visitors will likely increase.
- From the given comparison of the target group, it is confirmed that the interest in gastronomic events was reported by general public therefore the target group can not be defined clearly. Gastronomic events were accompanied by a full-day program which was aimed at all age groups.
- We found out that three gastronomic events used special means of payment for food and beverages while using different services.

All conducted analysis revealed significant findings that could be taken into account while organizing other similar gastronomic events in a given region.

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