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CULTURAL HERITAGE OF PODLASIE AS A FACTOR OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: This paper is devoted to the cultural heritage of the Podlasie region and in particular, the intangible heritage of culinary art. Changes in the definition of “intangible heritage” and the definitions related to culinary tourism are also discussed. The area of research has been defined as the Hajnówka county. On the basis of authors research examples of traditional dishes and products and the possibility of their use in order to increase the value of economically under-invested areas are considered. In addition, the paper presents cases of similar activities undertaken in Italy and Great Britain. To conclude, a comprehensive approach of combining tangible and intangible cultural heritage is proposed.

KEY WORDS: intangible heritage, culinary tourism, culinary route

Introduction

Inhabitants of Polish cities have long been interested in the countryside, but it was only in the first half of the 19th century that architecture and folklore were systematically studied (e.g. Oskar Kolberg's research), thanks to which rural culture gained importance. According to Majewski (2000), rural tourism is a form of tourism taking place in the rural environment and using its advantages.

The main attraction is the countryside itself (its nature, culture, buildings) (Majewski, 2000). Living in a rural homestead, participating in the daily activities of its residents and observing nature can be a rich and diverse experience. An important aspect is also learning about the culture of a given region, because both elements of material and non-material legacy make up the area's "spirit". Products and dishes characterized by being prepared in traditional ways, which reach back to the distant past, can be part of this heritage. Those products are made on a small local scale, using specific skills and technologies. In rural areas, different towns usually specialise in the production of specific regional dishes. Tasting, often combined with sales of those products, may take place on an agritourism farm, at a production plant or during special events, such as festivals, fairs and farmers' markets. Thanks to this, it may be possible to preserve or recreate the methods of production of local products that promote the region. In the European Union, regional cuisine products are covered by special protection: they are seen as an important element of cultural heritage, but are also a major development factor of rural areas. In Poland, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has in 2005 initiated a list of traditional products. Products entered into this list must be of excellent quality or have exceptional features and properties which result from the use of small-scale traditional production methods and natural ingredients, over the past 25 years.

Cultural heritage protection

According to the official UNESCO definition, the term "cultural heritage" covers material heritage, which consists of immovable and movable monuments, and intangible heritage, transmitted primarily by the means of oral communication and tradition. However, at the present the scope of this concept is expanding rapidly – the largest changes are related to intangible heritage.

The origin of protecting intangible cultural heritage is the UNESCO 25th Session of the General Conference in 1989 in Paris, where a “Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore” was adopted, as it was decided that the 1972 “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage” was insufficient. Traditional and folk culture was defined as a collection of products of a certain cultural community, derived from tradition, as an expression of its cultural and social identity. It has been pointed out that values are passed verbally, through imitation or by other means. In 1996, UNESCO began to develop guidelines to create national lists of “living cultural goods” to protect folk spaces or cultural areas. An important element of this work was defining the concept of the “oral heritage of humanity”, which was understood as the entire intangible heritage. This led to the proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (by 2005, 90 proclamations were announced). In 2003, during the 32nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris the “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage” was adopted. Intangible heritage has been defined as practices, customs, traditions, oral communication, knowledge and skills related to nature and any associated objects or cultural spaces, which are considered by a given community as part of their heritage. This type of heritage is passed down from generation to generation and recreated by communities and groups in relation to their environment and their attitude to nature. Intangible heritage is also a source of a sense of identity and continuity for the given community (Konwencja UNESCO, 2011). As the 2003 Convention was adopted, all previous proclamations were transferred to the “Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity”. Poland ratified the Convention in 2011 and the first entries to the national list of intangible cultural heritage were made in 2014. There are now 17 items on this list and only one, honey harvesting, can be related to the culinary aspect if the term was expanded to cover honey products. Currently, honey harvesting is defined as a set of practices, knowledge and traditions concerning the honey bee. Honey harvesting does not refer to the production of honey in man-made beehives, but to the traditional collecting of honey from tree hollows (“wild beehives”).

Definition of culinary tourism

Researchers studying the aspects of culinary tourism point out that although it has always been an integral part of travel, there is now a growing interest in this form of leisure. There are various definitions of culinary tourism in the literature on the subject.

According to Kowalczyk, the term culinary tourism can be used to describe “all trips whose main reason is the desire to taste dishes and drinks, visit well-known restaurants and other gastronomic establishments, participate in gastronomic events, learn recipes and ways of preparing dishes, purchase products and ingredients necessary to preparing specific dishes, as well as trips to visit regions and towns that stand out in the context of culinary traditions, including the specific cultural landscape, etc.” (Kowalczyk, 2016, p. 32).

On the other hand, Dominik and Zadrożna believe that culinary tourism “is not only new experiences, new tastes, learning about cultures and traditions. It is mainly the transformation of culture, nature, way of life, handicrafts and local delicacies made according to traditional recipes into a network of innovative offers in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.” (Dominik, Zadrożna, 2014, p. 23). According to Wysokińska, culinary tourism is based on “domestic or foreign travelling, where the main aim is eating and enjoying the food, learning about culinary traditions and even buying local foods” (Wysokińska, 2014, p. 53-54). If we consider culinary tourism as one of the forms of cultural tourism, according to Kowalczyk, the existence of specific geographical and cultural resources is important: this includes places where food products can be produced, places for offering fresh and processed food products and a place for maintaining culinary traditions (Kowalczyk, 2016).

For tourists interested in gastronomy, places related to the cultivation of plants, the possibility of tasting products, familiarizing with production methods may be particularly attractive. With tourism come many “products”, which cover a number of aspects related to meeting the needs of travellers. One such product is a tourist trail that can consist of a number of locations or facilities connected with each other by a predefined marked route (Stasiak, 2007). The growing interest in regional cuisine has resulted in the creation of many culinary routes in rural areas. These routes allow not only to preserve and protect the heritage of a given area, but they can also stimulate local development, fostering the creation of new jobs and additional sources of income. Promoting regional cuisine and traditional products increases the touristic appeal of the area and favours the influx of travellers, preventing the economic stagnation of peripheral areas.

In Poland, many culinary routes have recently been created to promote regional cuisine or products. At the initiative of the Polish Tourist Organization, a consortium of “Polish Culinary Routes” was established that promotes culinary traditions and regional products based on the values of the natural environment, culinary and cultural heritage of each region.

General characteristics of the Hajnówka county

The historical heritage of the Podlasie region has created a specific cultural landscape that is formed by urban and architectural layouts of cities, palace and garden complexes, forestry and court gardens as well as wooden rural architecture. An extremely important element of this landscape is the richness of nature, which consists of large woodlands, varied postglacial terrain as well as marshes and primeval forests unique in the European scale. Podlasie has always been a borderland area of the country and as such, to this day it is the most ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse region. Under the influence of long-term political movements, settlers arrived from the west (Catholic) and from the east (Orthodox, mainly Ukrainian and Belarusian).

Hajnówka county ("powiat") is located in the south-eastern part of the Podlasie province. From the west it borders with the Bielsko county, from the south-west with the Siemiatycze county, from the north with the Białystok county, while the eastern border is with the Republic of Belarus. The county is divided into nine municipalities: seven rural, one urban-rural (Kleszczele) and one urban (Hajnówka). The county is relatively small, with an 1624 km² (8% of the area of the Podlasie province) and a population of 44,600 (3.7% of the total population in the province). The average population density is 27 people per 1 km² (59 people for the province) and varies between the individual municipalities. The smallest density in the municipalities of Białowieża, Dubicze Cerkiewne and Narewka is only 11 people per 1 km². The land usage has a large impact on the wide range of population density in the area. In the north-eastern municipalities (Białowieża, Narewka and Hajnówka) forests and woodlands, part of the Białowieża Forest, cover more than half of its area (in the Białowieża area, 87.7%). The south-western part of the county is agricultural in nature.

There are many legally protected areas in the county: the Białowieża National Park, 23 nature reserves, ecological lands, and 1,164 nature monuments. In addition, large fragments of many municipalities are part of Protected Landscape Areas "Dolina Narwi" and "Puszcza Białowieńska", the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve "Białowieża" and Natura 2000 "Puszcza Białowieńska". The legally protected areas amount to 58.8% of the total area of the county (31.8% of the province), while forests cover 53.3% of the county (30.8% of the province).

The area that includes the Hajnówka county is characterized by low spatial diversity. For the most part it is a lowland area, with few hills, crisscrossed by river valleys and marshes. The forest complexes located in the eastern part of the area exert a significant influence on the landscape, whereas the western section is characterized by the presence of arable fields and mead-

ows. In addition to the large Białowieża Forest, there is a water and swamp complex created by the artificial Siemianówka reservoir and the upper Narew basin. The Białowieża Forest complex together with the Białowieża National Park enjoys great tourist appeal, as it is the only Polish natural area included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979.

In the discussed area, the natural and cultural spaces co-exist alongside each other, and the preserved elements of cultural space testify to the historical richness of the settlement of these lands. The character of the development of the Polish-Belarusian borderland is visible in the spatial layout, which was created as a result of the planned settlement action and determined the shapes of the villages and buildings. After the land reform started in the 16th century, the buildings which quite dispersed in the past were concentrated along the street. This resulted in a very compact, rhythmic layout of the gable walls of each building facing the street, with a row of buildings on each property, often under a shared roof (i.e. the elongated farm building of the Bielsko-Hajnowski type). The traditional one-story houses were covered with Dutch gable roof covered with straw (Żarnowiecka, 2004). Few 19th century buildings remain (although the property locations are sometimes visible to this day), as most were transformed in the interwar period and immediately after the war. At the beginning of the 20th century most of the houses were destroyed. As a result of land consolidation, the existing plots sizes have changed, which allowed for a different house orientation relative to the street and the separation of the main house from the farm buildings. The roof structure, shape and materials also changed, with the houses now being covered with tiles, contributing to the creation of a new type of homestead.

In this period, buildings were decorated on an unprecedented scale with wood boards cut into complex patterns. The greatest surge of ornamentation took place in the 1930s and later in the 1950s. Ornamental motifs appeared in the gables, on building corners, around windows, and were gradually becoming richer. Gables were decorated by laying boards at various angles; the windows – by carving top and bottom frames and adding shutters, either painted white or in two/three colours. Intricate ornaments with floral and animal motifs and genre scenes of the Podlasie cottage windows led to initiatives aimed at renewing and preserving these decorations as part of the multicultural heritage of these areas (e.g. The Land of Open Window project covers villages with unique ornamentation from the Hajnówka county: Puchły, Soce, Trześcianka).

Tourist infrastructure of the Hajnówka county

The tourist draw of the region is determined not only by the natural values and rich material culture but also by the tourist infrastructure, i.e. the tourist routes. There are 10 hiking routes and 13 bicycle routes (bicycle routes are all connected), which run along forest roads, through nature reserves, peat bogs, nature and educational paths, in river valleys and through the old forest settlements. One 25 km route connects Hajnówka and Białowieża, running through the Szafer Landscape Reserve and can be followed by car. In addition, there are routes for Nordic walking in the forest: The Białowieża Nordic Walking Park has more than 30 km across four routes along the forest paths and roads of the Białowieża Forest, with varying degrees of difficulty.

Due to the specificity of this area (national park, reserves), the limited rules for making them available to the general public mean that not all forms of tourism can be practiced in this territory. Tourist infrastructure is usually limited there to the minimum infrastructure in the form of information boards, nature paths, lookout towers. In the Hajnówka municipality the "Forest and Bison" Nordic Walking trail, a network of seven loop routes of various lengths, was laid out. The Narewka municipality also offers seven routes of over 40 km in total ("Green Land of Good Winds" Nordic Walking Park).

The cultural heritage of the area can be explored by car through the "Cultural Beauty of the Region" trails passing through picturesque villages:

- Orthodox Temples trail (164 km between Białystok and Michałowo), which promotes the Orthodox religious culture: wooden churches, chapels and votive crosses, located in the Narew (Łosinka, Chrabostówka, Narew, Trześcianka), Czyże and Hajnówka (Nowoberezowo, Dubiny) municipalities,
- Tsar's trail (35 km between Bielsk Podlaski and Hajnówka),
- "Tree and Sacrum" trail (leading through villages in the Bielsko and Hajnówka counties),
- "Land of Open Shutters" trail (16.2 km), which includes three towns with unique architecture (Puchły, Soce, Trześcianka).

Another interesting initiative is a network project called the Ethnographic Bicycle Trail of the Kleszczele municipality, leading through the villages of Dasze, Dobrowoda, Saki and Toporki. The goal of the project is "reviving life in the countryside, the use of the potential of the older generation, rebirth of tradition and its cultivation. Passing on to the younger generation (...), what life in the village looked like, as well as creating a tourist offering." (www.etnoszlak.pl). This project is implemented under the "Micro-Grants Program", conducted by the Center for the Implementation of Projects at Białowieża National Park, and funded by the European Fund for the Development of Pol-

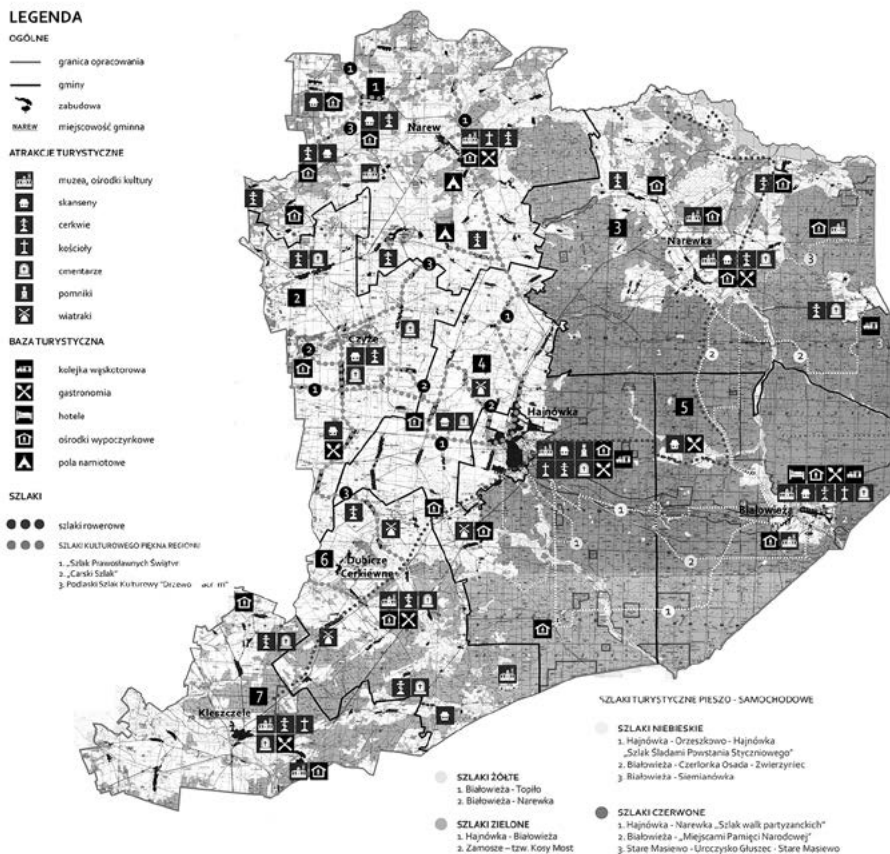


Figure 1. Culture-touristic analysis of Hajnówka County

Source: student’s work Gryniwicki, Illicz, Jurak (supervisor Asanowicz).

ish Villages. As part of the project, workshops showing old traditions, including culinary traditions, are organized.

The tourism base in the region consists of 37 facilities with a total of 1383 beds (including 1164 available all-year-round). According to the data of the Białowieża Forest Tourism Centre, the number of rural tourism lodgings is relatively high. Most are in close proximity to the Białowieża Forest and there are fewer in the villages. Most of the accommodation offer beds only, but sometimes entire houses can be rented. The accommodation usually includes: a bonfire place, barbecue, playground. Gardens, orchards and presence of farm animals are rare and few facilities provide meals. In general, the gastronomic base is poorly developed. The largest number of dining options are located in Hajnówka and Białowieża. Data from the Białowieża Forest Tourism Centre shows that there is a lack of catering infrastructure in the Czeremcha and Czyże municipalities.

Culinary traditions

Some of the important traditions of the Hajnówka region include the rules and customs associated with the preparation and consumption of bread, which have been passed on from generation to generation. In this area, bread is made from coarsely ground rye flour but quite often, a mixture of boiled and riced potatoes, as well as flour made from beans, lentils or split peas was added in to increase the volume. Bread dough is usually placed on top of horseradish, sweet flag or cabbage leaves and baked in special bread ovens. The same bread dough was often used to make flat breads (e.g. “podpłomyki”) or “wychopieńki”, which were baked in the oven on a greased pan.

There are also many baked goods associated with the region. One of those is a “Białowieża cinnamon cake”, a type of cake similar to cinnamon rolls or twisted doughnuts without any icing or filling. Another product characteristic to the Hajnówka area is “marcinek”, a multi-layered cake with cream, which is a must at any large occasions or gatherings, such as weddings, baptisms or birthdays. Marcinek has been entered onto the government’s traditional products list. “Busłowe Łapy”, buns in the shape of stork’s feet which traditionally symbolized the arrival of spring – this ritual is still observed in the village of Saki in the Kleszczele municipality.

A special regional product is the ceremonial cake – a wedding loaf (“korowaj”) always served at wedding receptions. In the village of Dobrowoda (Kleszczele municipality), wedding songs and chants are sung while producing the large and small cylinder-shaped “korowaj” cakes. The cakes are usually decorated with a braid and the larger cake is also adorned with twelve rose and twelve geese shapes, surrounding a bigger rose placed in the middle, under which a coin is placed.

Many dishes of the eastern borderland of the region were also made of vegetables, initially mainly pickled cucumbers and cabbage, but later on of potatoes. Now, potato dishes, such as “potato babka” (a cake-like dish of baked grated potatoes, flour, eggs, onions and bacon, often served with double cream) and “potato kiszka” (a mixture of grated potatoes, lardons, onions and spices, produced similarly to sausages and then baked) are the most widely known. Slightly less popular are “kraszanka” (a dish of sliced potatoes with onions and spices, sautéed with lardons and then stewed), “tołkanica” (boiled and mashed potatoes with spices and bacon, baked in a clay tray) or “haluszki” (small fried dumplings – kopytka (literally “little hooves”) – served with sugar and cream). Buckwheat, barley and proso millet were also common, eaten with lardons or used in various types of stuffing.

Regional meat dishes include “kumpiak”, a type of cured ham which is salted and seasoned with herbs, which give it a unique taste and aroma, and

cabbage rolls (“gołąbki”), made of a mix of sauerkraut and shredded cabbage leaves.

Traditional drinks include “sołóducha” (a refreshing beverage made from rye flour), Białowieża sour-flavoured forest fruit tea and the “spirit of the forest” – moonshine of over 55% ABV, brewed in the forest.

Examples of culinary tourism solutions outside of Poland

Great Britain, Isle of Wight: “Taste Round the Island” trail

The Isle of Wight is the largest and the second most populated island in England, located on the English Channel and is 2 miles away from England’s south coast. The area of the island is 384 km² and the length of the coastline is 92 km. Slightly more than half of the island is an area of protected landscape. Due to the very diverse landscape, it is called “England in miniature”. The island’s west is predominantly rural. The mild climate, beautiful landscapes and the short distance from the coast of England influenced the island’s popularity and in Victorian times it started to serve as a place of leisure. It was Victorian fashion that contributed to the development of the island in the 19th century, when Queen Victoria built her summer residence, Osborne House, in East Cowes.

The Isle of Wight is an area with a great variety of local products such as beer, wine and cider, organic fruit and vegetables, and even home-made ice cream and desserts. For those who want to become more familiar with authentic culinary flavours, the “Taste Round the Island” bicycle trail has been prepared (there are over 320 km of cycle routes on the island). The theme “Taste” was added to the popular Round the Island Cycle route in 2014 as part of the Bicycle Island cycling initiative. The route begins and ends at the ferry port in Yarmouth.

Along the route there are numerous restaurants, pubs and cafes, and many of these places serve regional products. Local food producers and gastronomic stops along the route are marked as “Taste Locations”, which are special gastronomic offers only available to those arriving by bike, such as free cappuccinos and cookies in the shape of a bicycle wheel or free wine tastings. The most interesting places located on the cycling route include the following:

- Freshwater, Dimbola Lodge Tearooms – the home and studio of the well-known Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, which is now a museum with an attached tea room and a gift shop.
- Fish Farm, located between the villages of Brighstone and Shorwell – a trout farm with a fishing complex, which includes a B&B.

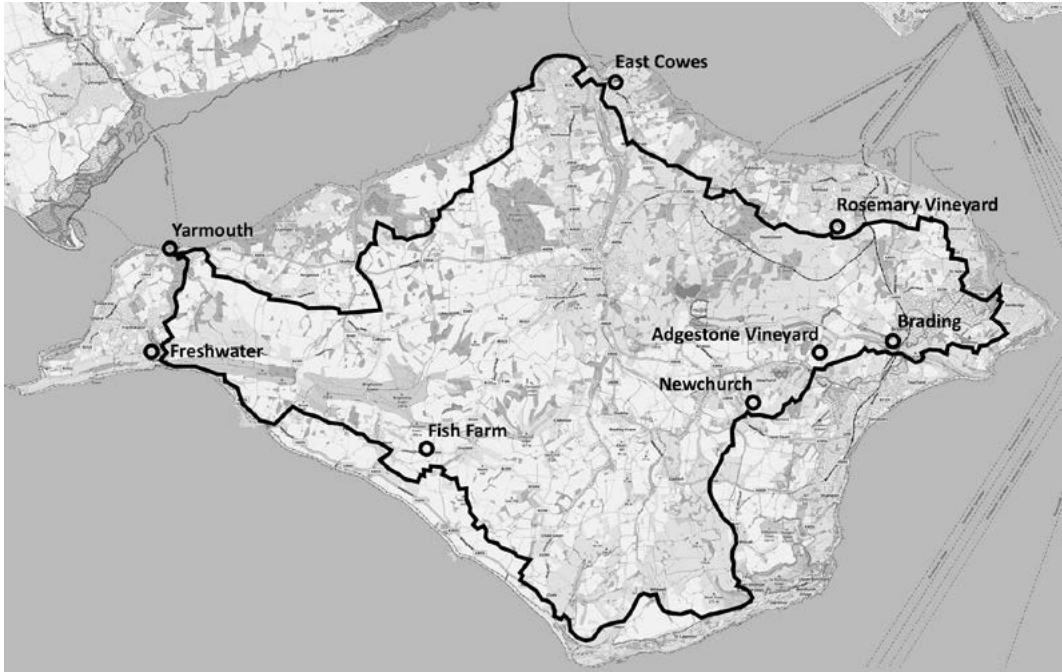


Figure 2. Cycle route on the Isle of Wight

Source: author's own work based on Open Street Map [30-11-2017].

- Garlic Farm in Newchurch – the largest garlic producer in the United Kingdom. At the farm there is a licensed restaurant and a shop that offers products made on the farm.
- Adgestone Vineyard – the oldest vineyard on the island (founded in 1968) and the only one in England with wine cellars. In the vineyard you can learn about wine production. The resort has a shop, a cafe and holiday cottages on the farm. Guests can visit vineyards and cellars as well as take part in wine tastings for free.
- Brading Station Tea Rooms in Brading Village, halfway between Ryde and Sandown stations, where the Railway Heritage Centre information point and a tea room are located.
- Rosemary Vineyard – a vineyard founded in 1986, covering an area of 12 ha. It is one of the largest producers of English wine. Tourists can visit the vineyard and learn about the process of wine production, as well as taste local products. There are also eight 8 camper stands and a shop serving lunches.
- Mrs Jones Tea Depot in East Cowes – a 1940s style cafe, serving breakfasts and lunches. As part of “Taste Locations”, cyclists receive a free cake when buying a hot drink.

Italy, Marche region, Pesaro e Urbino province: “Strada del gusto”

“The Road of Flavours” (Route 26 – Strada Provinciale 26) is a project based in the province of Pesaro e Urbino, which focuses on the integration of tourism policies to promote the principles of agri-food excellence developed by the Food and Wine Department. Along the 28 km long trail, there are over 90 companies and facilities recommended by the Unione Nazionale Pro Loco d’Italia di Pesaro e Urbino. The trail connects the towns of Saltara and Sant’Angelo in Lizzola, running through the ancient villages of Cartoceto, Serrungarina, Mombaroccio and Monteciccardo among olive groves, vineyards and orchards. Old customs are still strong here and traditional products are common. This tourist route not only promotes the area, but also offers an excellent gastronomic journey through places known for outstanding organically produced food and wine. Thanks to these local products, the well-being of residents increases, while fully respecting local environmental resources.

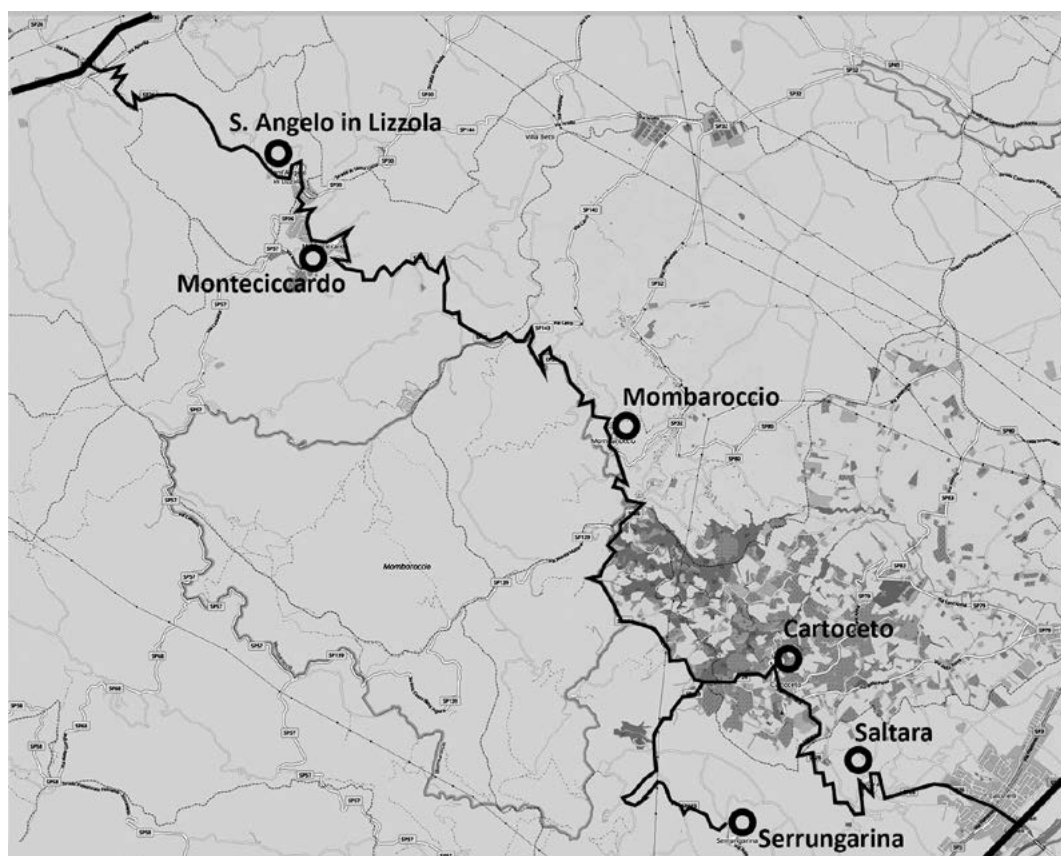


Figure 3. Strada del gusto

Source: author's own work based on Open Street Map [30-11-2017].

The region offers traditional products such as olive oil (Cartoceto DOP – the only Denominazione di Origine Protetta oil in the Marche province), cured ham (Gran Riserva dei Colli Pesaresi), cured sausages (lonzino from Sant'Angelo in Lizzola), goat and sheep cheeses in Monteciccardo, chestnut and sunflower honey in Mombaroccio and Pera Angelica pears in Serrungarina. In addition, various events take place in the area's villages, e.g. the Mushroom Fair in Saltara, the Oil and Olive Fair in Cartoceto, the Pera Angelica Festival in Serrungarina, the Festa d'la Crescia sai Cucon festival in Mombaroccio, the Conventino festival and the Calici di Stelle wine festival in Monteciccardo.

Conclusions

An important element of rural culture is regional cuisine, as it is in rural areas that there are traditional raw materials, products made from them, dietary habits and specific ways of preparing food. The growing interest of tourists in gastronomy and food characteristic of a given region has influenced the development of culinary tourism, which as researchers note is a new phenomenon within the rural tourism market in Poland. The goal of the economic and social development of rural tourism should be to stimulate the development of farms that offer tourism services, create attractive leisure opportunities, develop the infrastructure and provide an additional source of income for farmers.

The culinary tourism examples from outside of Poland presented in this article clearly show that it is possible to use local intangible cultural resources very intensively. It is necessary to undertake actions aimed at increasing the use of local resources. While the existing network of tourist routes can be considered satisfactory, the analysis shows that special attention should be paid to the development of a gastronomic base serving regional products. Rural tourism farms should enrich their offer with regional cuisine and on the farms "thematic" crops (fruit orchards, vegetable plantations, and herbal crops) could be established. As a model, solutions such as those presented earlier in this article should be adopted, where in the settlements located on the tourist route various products, characteristic only for that location, are offered. It would greatly encourage further tourist activity in the area. In many cases, this was planned in an artificial way, creating a basis for founding new traditions.

A comprehensive approach seems to be a desirable, with a mixture of tangible and intangible heritage. In connection with the above, it is necessary to organize the action of submitting the traditional products from the

Hajnówka county onto the official government list. During the interviews conducted by the author with the inhabitants of Hajnówka, Dubiny and Narwka, eighteen characteristic culinary products were identified. Of those, only five are currently on the list of traditional products, which is due to both a low engagement of the area's municipalities and a lack of coordination at the province level.

Acknowledgements

The research has been completed within the research project S/WA/1/2017 and financed by public funds of Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

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