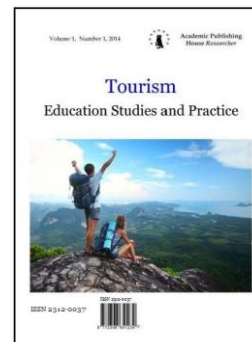


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### **Importance of Food With Protected Origin and Attitudes of Employees Towards the Development of Gastronomic Tourism**

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#### **Abstract**

By developing gastronomic tourism gradually but successfully, southeastern region of Europe has faced a question: How to make tourists spend more? Based on the examples of successful gastro-tourist destinations, the answer has been found in authentic, protected, agricultural, alimentary, and gastronomic products, which tourist, apart from consuming them on the spot, can take away as a souvenir. The aim of this work is to research the products with protected origin and establish the attitudes of the tourism and hospitality employees about their importance. The aim of the work is to point out the condition and define perspectives of the gastronomic tourism in the region.

**Keywords:** protected origin; authenticity; food; gastronomic tourism.

## Introduction

Regions in which technological wave and globalization did not significantly influence the changes in the way of production of food and beverages as well as of the culture of their consumption, became favorable for the development of a selective type of tourism which is known in the world by the name food and beverages tourism, culinary tourism, gastronomic tourism but also gourmand tourism or tasting tourism [1], [2], [3] [4] [5] [6]. These types represent a special type of tourism whose aim is bringing or taking away tourists motivated by food and beverages in different ways [7], [8]. Gradually but successfully developing gastronomic tourism based on the examples of successful gastro-tourist destinations [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], southeastern part of Europe faced a question: How to make tourists spend more? The answer has been found in authentic, protected, agricultural (for example fruit, vegetables), alimentary (for example dairy and meat products), and gastronomic products (for example pies, gibanica (cheese pie), meat and pastry dishes, etc.) [14], which tourists can, apart from consuming them on the spot, take away.

Interest in traditional products is growing [15], thus their protection as well. Products labeled by protected geographical indication origin influence consumers to form an idea about top quality or special properties. Therefore, protected products can be, with no danger for the survival of the product in the market competition, sold at higher prices. Apart from the participants in the market competition, legal protection of the geographical indication origin is in the best interest of consumers, but also of the national economy [16]. National economy can rely on the development of gastronomic tourism whose tourists like products just like these and which represent basis for visiting of a certain tourist destination [17], [18].

In order for a product from a certain geographical area to be protected it has to be characterized by a higher quality and different properties in relation to the quality and properties of the same type of products which originate from another territory. It is necessary that natural factors and/or social presumptions (nurturing traditional craftsmanship, knowing of traditional technology) are decisive for accomplishing specific qualitative properties of products to which indication refers to.

The task of the work was to research the current state of protected authentic products and attitudes of employees in tourism and hospitality industry about their number, as well as about potential products for protection.

The aim was to determine current state and potentials for origin protection which would have multiple benefits in the development of gastronomic tourism in the region.

Research results were supposed to confirm or deny the following presumptions:

1. The region did not have sufficient number of protected products which could attract tourists motivated by food
2. The education level of the tourism and hospitality employees significantly influenced the level of awareness about products which should be protected.
3. The region had authentic products which could be protected and help development of the gastronomic tourism and region.

**Gastronomic tourism.** Gastronomic tourism is defined as a visit to primary or secondary producers of food, presence at food and beverages festivals and consumption of authentic food and beverages in different restaurants and hotels. Tourists who attend different schools of authentic regional cooking that last for several days is an increasingly popular type of gastronomic tourism [19]. Ignatov and Smith (2006) state that gastronomic - culinary tourism can be defined as a trip during which shopping or consumption of regional food or observation and studying of the food production (from agriculture to cooking schools) represent an important motive or activity [5].

Gastronomic tourists visit places which offer them unique gastronomic experiences, they like entering into the kitchens of hosts to inquire about typical dishes, to find out where they can find groceries and spices from the dishes of the visited destination [17], [20]. Currently there is a growing demand for tourism because of food and wine, therefore gastronomic tourism is becoming an important sector in the tourism industry. Popularity of tourism for food and wine has been known in the world for a couple of decades [21], but in the southeastern Europe only for half a decade.

**Protection of geographical origin in the EU.** Indications of geographical origin as marks of differentiation are used for labeling the products which originate from a certain geographical locality. Europeans started their engagement in the protection of local and traditional

products in the 50's of the past century, first by establishing laws at the state-national level, and later with international agreements. The European Union established in 1992 a system of protection of crop plants and products for the countries, members of the EU and later for other countries which wanted to enable authenticity of traditional domestic products [22]. EU performs and controls the following indications [23]:

- Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) encompasses agricultural and alimentary products which are produced and prepared in a certain geographical area by using appropriate knowledge and skills.

- Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) encompasses agricultural and alimentary products which are closely linked to the geographical area and at least one phase of the production, processing or preparation takes place in this region.

- Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) highlights traditional character of a product, either in composition or the process of production.

Importance of the product protection is reflected in the obtained research, conducted by the European Commission, which emphasized that the value of the wholesale of PDO and PGI products in 2007 amounted to 14.2 milliard euros. It was established that 30% of the total production of these products, 700 million euros worth of sale, were exported from the EU. This research encompassed 820 protected products which were at the time included in the European register. In 2013, the number of protected products was 1.164 and it has a tendency to grow every year, which confirms the variety of cultures and gastronomic heritage of European nations [24].

The highest number of registered PDO and PGI products in 2008 had Italy (165), followed by France (156), Spain (110), Portugal (105), Greece (85), Germany (62), UK (29), etc. This number was not often in correlation with financial value of production and trade of PDO and PGI products, achieved by a certain country. Portugal had a great number of products in the European register, but considering the fact that majority of the products were of low economic value (fruit and vegetables), this country financially achieved a very low turnover in European proportions. Contrary to that, Germany and UK with a low number of registered products achieved over 30% of the total European turnover with their products [25].

**Protection of geographical origin in the Republic of Serbia.** In the Republic of Serbia to the protection of origin, in the past couple of years, in the legal sense has been paid a lot more attention, so the regulations in this field have been completely in accordance with the international and European legislation. Goods and services labeled by geographical indication origin are sold easier, at a higher price and in greater numbers mainly because those products in the minds of consumers excite the idea of top quality or special properties, which those products, as a rule, do have [14]. Legal guarantees of the geographical origin of food and other products are exceptionally profitable, not only as far as companies are concerned, but for the national level as well.

Legal protection of the geographical indication of origin represents developmental chance of economy, having in mind that the Republic of Serbia is mainly an agricultural country. By using this export developmental chance, better conditions for better life in rural and other smaller environments would be created, which would enable their survival. In the Republic of Serbia two following indications have been adopted and legally regulated [26]: *the name of origin* and *geographical indication*.

Geographical indication origin consists of the name of the place, i.e. name of the geographical region from which the product originates, which is labeled by that indication and by the name of the product (for example beef prosciutto produced in Uzice (a place in central Serbia), "Beef Uzice prosciutto", domestic sausage produced in Srem (mountainous part of Vojvodina) "Srem domestic sausage", raspberry from Arilje (a place in western Serbia) "Arilje raspberry", honey from Homolje mountains (a mountain in the eastern Serbia) "Homolje honey", etc. [27].

*The name of the origin* is the geographical name of the country, region, or locality, by which the product which originates from that part is labeled, whose quality and special properties are exclusively or substantially conditioned by the geographical environment, including natural and human factors, and whose production, processing and preparation are completely conducted in a certain, limited area. *Geographical indication* is an indication which identifies a certain product as a product which originates from the territory of a certain country, region or locality from that

territory, where a certain quality, reputation, or other product's characteristics can substantially be attributed to its geographical origin and whose productions and/or processing and/or preparation take place in a certain, limited area [26].

Legal procedure for the legal protection of the geographical indication origin is carried out by the competent authorities. In Serbia the procedure of the protection of geographical indication origin is realized with the Institute for Intellectual Property, which is an organ of state administration, and is characterized by certain specificities in relation to other rights of industrial property. Legal procedure is carried out in two phases. The first phase consists of the procedure for registering of the geographical indication origin. The second phase is the procedure for getting the right of authorized user of the geographical indication origin. These procedures are completed by the adoption or rejection of the request for registering geographical indication origin, i.e. getting the status of authorized user [16], [28].

**Branding the product according to the geographical origin in the world and its importance for the development of gastronomic tourism.** The names of protected products, i.e. brands enable producers to be recognized in the market, to bring variety in their offer and to get legal protection. This level of branding enables producers in the world to get the highest price for their products.

Geographical identity can enable producers "branded name" and protection, which other products of the type do not usually get. For the protected products, there is a possibility for the producers to ask for the highest prices, especially if it is considered that there is a real difference in the quality, including the differences attributed to their unique geographical position, contrary to the origin of the product [29].

Food producers receive the protection as a result of EU legislation from 1992, which provides protection for the products (for example Parma prosciutto and Feta cheese) with the production process traditionally limited to certain geographical areas, because the companies which use protection of origin are able to achieve the highest price in the market [30]. The importance of protected products, i.e. brands is reflected in the possibility of sale in the destinations visited by gastronomic tourists.

### **Methods and place of the research**

Place of the research was the region of AP Vojvodina, which represents the northern part of the Republic of Serbia in the southeastern Europe.

The methods of the research were adopted for the subject of the research and were arranged in three parts.

First part of the research dealt with the analysis of all the protected products based on the data which were possessed by the Institute for the Protection of Intellectual Property [31]. The research did not encompass protected wines, which is regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Waterpower Engineering in the region [32]. The data were statistically observed and processed together with the graph.

The second part of the research dealt with the analysis of the attitudes of employees in tourism and hospitality about the potentials for protection, which was conducted by a survey. From the 150 surveys in total, which were sent to institutions responsible for education in the tourism and hospitality industry, tourist organizations and agencies, as well as to hotels and restaurants and other state and province institutions, from September 2012 to March 2013, 127 surveys were successfully filled in, returned and processed.

Firstly, the competence of the respondents participating in the survey was determined. From the total of 127 respondents, 54,3 % were men, and 45,7 women. Also from the total number of respondents, 69,3% were people under 35, 21,3% were people from 35 – 50 years old, and population over 50 years old was least represented, with 9,4%. 19,7% of respondents had finished high school, 27,6% respondents had finished college or faculty, whereas in the survey representation of respondents with master or doctoral degrees, was the highest, 52,8%. Conducting activities in a certain work place in tourism and hospitality can influence the attitudes of respondents. Based on the answers to the fourth question in the survey, it was noted that 14,2% of them were employed in a state or province institution which was engaged in tourism and hospitality industry. The second group consisted of the employees in tourist organizations and agencies. 22,8% of them took part in the survey. The majority of the respondents were employed in

the institutions for the education of young people in tourism and hospitality in high schools and faculties, and in the structure they were represented by 34,6%. Employees in hotels and restaurants who were engaged in offering services, mainly food and beverage, but also accommodation, were represented in the survey by 28,4%.

The thing that had a great, direct impact on the attitudes about the development of gastronomic tourism was work experience of the employees, in the field of tourism and hospitality industry. Based on their answers to this question it was noted that 36,4% of them had been relatively shortly employed in this field (less than 5 years). 30% of the respondents had had from 5 – 10 years of working experience in the tourism and hospitality, whereas 33,8% had worked more than 10 years in this field.

Answers to the sixth question in the survey showed that the great majority of the respondents, 76,4% was familiar with the notion gastronomic-culinary tourism. 23,6% of them, were not familiar or were not sure what this type of tourism represented.

The analysis of the answers of the respondents to the first six questions showed that the respondents were convenient for this type of the research.

The data obtained by the survey were analyzed by the appliance of the program package for statistical analysis and data processing SPSS 20.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), by which the graphical illustration was carried out as well. In the work, having in mind the nature of the data and starting with the set goals of analysis, apart from descriptive statistics,  $\chi^2$  test was applied as well [33].

The third part of the test dealt with the analysis of the data of authentic products which could be interesting to the gastronomic tourists, and as such, for the sake of multiple benefits, be protected. For the needs of this part of the research data obtained by the survey of employees were used. The obtained data were statistically observed and processed, showed in the graph, in order to give a better insight of the possibilities for authentic offer across the region in relation to the current state, which was analyzed in the first part of the research.

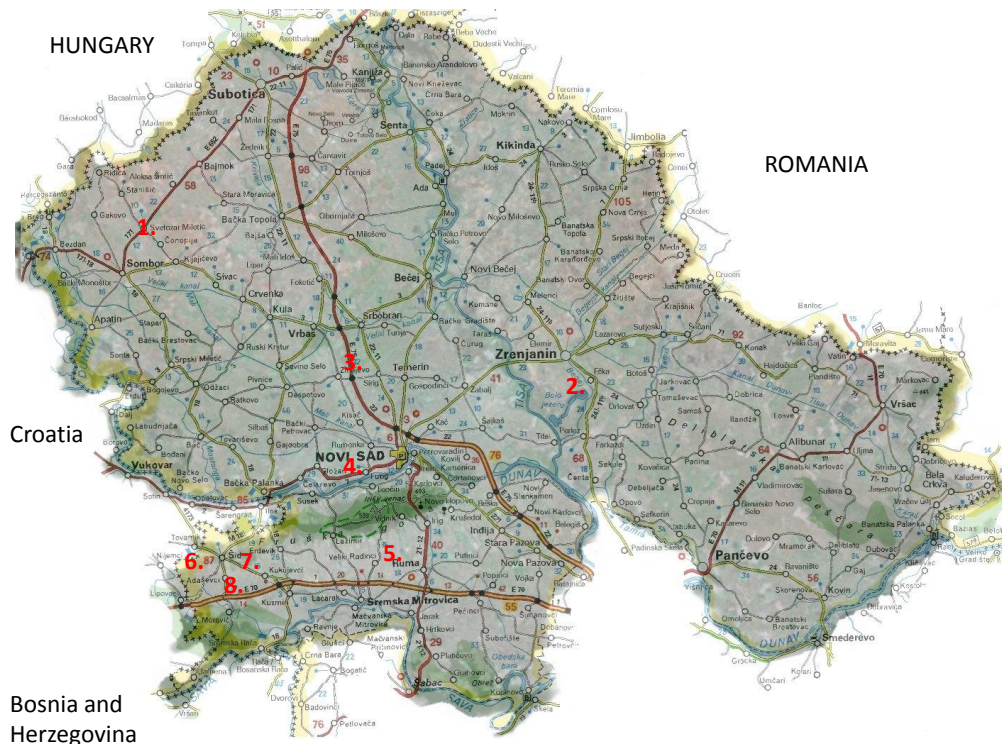
### **Results of the work and discussion**

The first presumption in the research was that the region did not have sufficient number of protected products which could attract tourists motivated by food. Analyzing the data about products registered at the Institute for Intellectual Property of the Republic of Serbia [31] in the territory of Vojvodina from 1992, protection had had:

1. "Sombor cheese", cow's and sheep's milk cheese, produced in the western part of Vojvodina, in the place Stapar, close to Sombor;
2. "Ecka carp", carp grown in the fishpond of Ecka;
3. "Petrovac sausage" sausage produced according to the traditional recipe of Slovaks, inhabitants of Backi Petrovac;
4. "Futog fresh cabbage and sauerkraut", grown in Futog;
5. "Fruska gora linden honey", honey made of linden produced in the mountain of Fruska gora in the south part of Vojvodina;
6. "Srem kulen" kulen (a type of flavored, pork sausage) produced in Srem, southern and mountainous part of Vojvodina;
7. "Srem domestic sausage", domestic sausage produced in Srem;
8. "Srem salami", salami produced in Srem.

To these products were also added "Banat Riesling" (wine Riesling from Banat), Apatin Jelen beer (beer "Dear" from Apatin), "Vrsac Champion beer" (beer "Champion" from Vrsac), Karlovac Riesling (wine riesling from Sremski Karlovci), "Biserno ostrvo muscat-krokan" (wine muscat-krokan from the Biserno ostrvo), "Bermet of the Fruska gora vineyards" (Bermet from the Fruska gora vineyards) and wines protected by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Waterpower Engineering, i.e. producers of wines with geographical origin in the production year 2013/14 [32], of which there were 65.

Distribution of protected products is shown in the following picture.



**Picture 1.** Diffusion of protected products: 1. Sombor cheese 2. Ečka carp 3. Petrovac sausage 4. Futog fresh cabbage and sauerkraut 5. Fruška gora linden honey 6. Srem kulen 7. Srem domestic sausage 8. Srem salami

Based on the graph it can be concluded that the protected products were unequally distributed across the region and that there were areas which did not have a single protected product which would attract attention of the tourists motivated by food and which would have the possibility, as stated by Agarwal and Barone (2005), to be sold to tourists at a much higher price in relation to the other products offered to the tourists and other locals [29].

The other initial assumption in the research was that the employees with a higher level of education had a greater number of concrete suggestions for the protection of food origin. The results of the  $\chi^2$  test showed that this assumption was correct.

Based on the value from table 1 it was noticed that there was significantly greater percentage of respondents with faculty, master and doctorate diplomas who mentioned products which, according to them, should be protected, in comparison to the respondents with the high school degree.

**Table 1.** Frequency of respondents based on the level of education who mentioned the products which they concerned the brand of Vojvodina

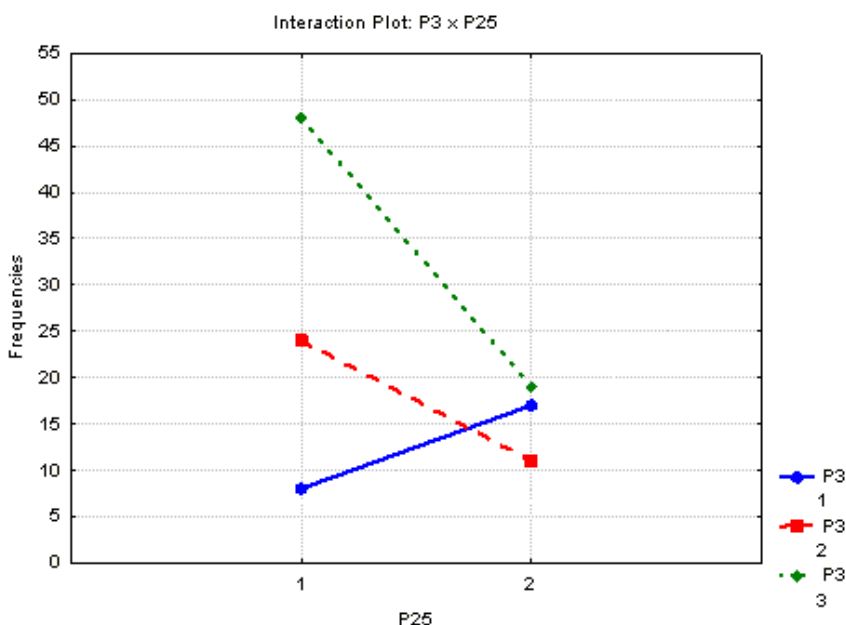
	Summary Frequency			
	P3	P23 1	P23 2	Row Totals
Count	1	13	12	25
Row Percent		52.00%	48.00%	
Count	2	27	8	35
Row Percent		77.14%	22.86%	
Count	3	57	10	67
Row Percent		85.07%	14.93%	
Count	All Grps	97	30	127

Results of the derived test showed as well that the respondents with the higher level of education in relation to the respondents with high school degree gave more suggestions for the products which should be protected (*table 2*).

**Table 2.** Frequency of respondents based on the level of education who mentioned the products which should be protected

Summary Frequency Table Marked cells have counts > 10 (Marginal summaries are not marked)				
	P3	P25 1	P25 2	Row Totals
Count	1	8	17	25
Row Percent		32.00%	68.00%	
Count	2	24	11	35
Row Percent		68.57%	31.43%	
Count	3	48	19	67
Row Percent		71.64%	28.36%	
Count	All Grps	80	47	127

Graph 1 also shows that the employees with the higher level of education had a greater number of concrete suggestions which products in Vojvodina should be protected, in relation to the respondents with high school degree.



**Graph 1.** Interaction of the level of education of the respondents with suggestions for the products for protection

All previously mentioned confirms the initial assumption in the research that the employees with the higher level of education would have concrete suggestions for the protection of products which would bring multiple benefits to the gastronomic tourism, as well as to the region.

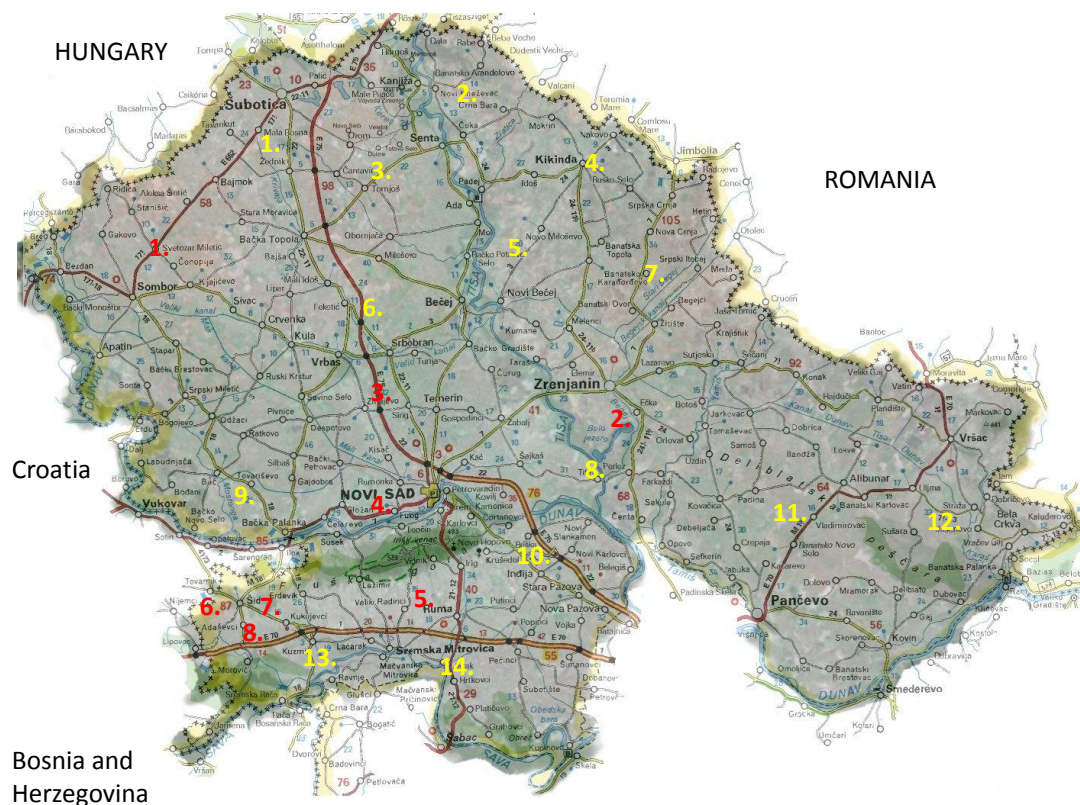
The third assumption was that Vojvodina had a great number of products which contained all the elements important for the fulfillment of requests about the protection in accordance with the Legislation about the indications of geographical origin [26]. Protection of origin represents a developmental chance for the economy of the region, having in mind that the question is about predominantly agricultural country [27], [34].

As it was shown in the previous part, there are parts in the region which do not have even one single protected product with the protected geographical origin. By conducting a survey in hospitality and tourism industry, suggestions about the products which could be protected in Vojvodina were reached.

Suggested products for protection are:

1. Sour cream from Subotica;
2. Spicy cayenne pepper from Novi Knezevac;
3. Rolled cheese from Mokrin;
4. Pumpkin from Kikinda;
5. Banat quince cheese;
6. Sausage from Turija;
7. Strudel from Banat;
8. Vojvodina dumplings;
9. Sausage from Bac;
10. Karlovac kugloff;
11. Banat strudels;
12. Banat hams;
13. Irig cheese and
14. Irig peaches.

Distribution of suggested products across the region as well as the possibility for their degustation and purchasing during the trip is shown in the following picture (picture 2).



**Picture 2.** Distribution of suggested products: 1. Sour cream from Subotica; 2. Spicy cayenne pepper from Novi Knezevac; 3. Rolled cheese from Mokrin; 4. Pumpkin from Kikinda; 5. Banat quince cheese; 6. Sausage from Turija; 7. Strudel from Banat; 8. Vojvodina dumplings; 9. Bac sausage; 10. Karlovac gugelhupf; 11. Banat phyllo rolls; 12. Banat hams; 13. Irig cheese and 14. Irig peaches

By protecting a greater number of products and their better placement in the tourist market, visitors would, regardless of the part of the visited destination, try and take away with them something authentic and characteristic just for those parts.



## Conclusion

Trying to find the ways which could make gastronomic tourists spend more money, based on the model of successful gastro-tourist destinations, by applying the established scientific methodology, three crucial conclusions were drawn.

According to attitudes of the employees in hospitality and tourist organizations and the number of suggested products for the protection of origin it can be considered that Vojvodina, the region of Serbia in the part of the southeastern Europe, has the potential for the development of the gastronomic tourism.

The level of education of the employees in tourism and hospitality industry in Vojvodina, significantly influences the level of awareness about the products which should be protected.

It was concluded that this region does not have sufficient number of protected agricultural, alimentary, or gastronomic products which can make tourists, motivated by food, spend more, by buying and consuming products on the spot, but also by taking them away. This indicates that the existing potentials are not completely used.

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