

**PAPERS/RAZPRAVE****THE ROLE OF ACTORS' COOPERATION, LOCAL ANCHORING AND INNOVATION IN CREATING CULINARY TOURISM EXPERIENCES IN THE RURAL SLOVENIAN MEDITERRANEAN****POMEN SODELOVANJA AKTERJEV, VPETOST V LOKALNO OKOLJE IN INOVATIVNOST PRI USTVARJANJU KULINARIČNIH TURISTIČNIH IZKUŠENJ NA RURALNEM SLOVENSKEM SREDOZEMLJU***AUTHORS/AVTORJI***dr. Peter Kumer**

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute, Gosposka ulica 13, SI – 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
*peter.kumer@zrc-sazu.si*

**dr. Primož Pipan**

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute, Gosposka ulica 13, SI – 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
*primoz.pipan@zrc-sazu.si*

**dr. Mateja Šmid Hribar**

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute, Gosposka ulica 13, SI – 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
*mateja.smid@zrc-sazu.si*

**dr. Nika Razpotnik Visković**

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute, Gosposka ulica 13, SI – 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
*nika.razpotnik@zrc-sazu.si*

DOI: 10.3986/GV91201

UDC/UDK: 711.3:338.48-6:641/642(497.47)

COBISS: 1.01

**ABSTRACT**

***The role of actors' cooperation, local anchoring and innovation in creating culinary tourism experiences in the rural Slovenian Mediterranean***

*Food-related experiences are becoming increasingly important for destination choice in particular in the rural Mediterranean hinterland. In contrast to the mass tourism in littoral areas, the development of hinterland tourism has more favourable consequences for the local population. The paper examines culinary experiences in the rural Slovenian Mediterranean as a possible driver of sustainable tourism development.*

*We collected 213 culinary experiences and further explored 10 of them by the following three aspects: cooperation of actors from the local environment, embedment of the local community and innovative approaches. The qualitative approach comprised field work, short interviews and in-depth interviews. We found a linkage between the types of culinary experiences and the types of organizers and established that innovation plays an important role in their success.*

#### KEY WORDS

*tourism, culinary heritage, rural development, gastronomy, culinary event, experience, innovation*

#### IZVLEČEK

***Pomen sodelovanja akterjev, vpetost v lokalno okolje in inovativnost pri ustvarjanju kulinarčnih turističnih izkušenj na ruralnem slovenskem Sredozemlju***

*S hrano povezane izkušnje postajajo vedno pomembnejše pri izbiri destinacij, zlasti v ruralnem zaledju Sredozemlja. V nasprotju od masovnega turizma v obmorskih krajih ima razvoj turizma v zaledju več pozitivnih učinkov na lokalno prebivalstvo. Članek povzema raziskavo kulinarčnih izkušenj v ruralnem delu slovenskega Sredozemlja kot potencialnega gonila trajnostnega razvoja turizma. Zabeležili smo 213 kulinarčnih izkušenj, med njimi pa smo jih s treh vidikov podrobneje raziskali deset: z vidika sodelovanja akterjev v lokalnem okolju, vpetosti v lokalno skupnost in inovativnosti pristopov. Kvalitativni pristop je vključeval delo na terenu, kratke intervjuje in poglobljene intervjuje. Ugotovili smo povezavo med tipi kulinarčnih izkušenj in tipi organizatorjev ter pomen inovativnosti za njihovo uspešnost.*

#### KLJUČNE BESEDE

*turizem, kulinarčna dediščina, razvoj podeželja, gastronomija, kulinarčni dogodek, izkušnja, inovativnost*

*The article was submitted for publication on April 2, 2019.*

*Uredništvo je prispevek prejelo 2. aprila 2019.*

## 1 Introduction

The hinterland areas of the Mediterranean, which have a strong rural character, search for new ways to attract visitors from the traditional coastal *sun&sea* destinations. Concurrently, these areas aim at preserving their authenticity, prevent mass tourism and follow sustainability principles. Food-related experiences are becoming increasingly important for destination choice in particular in rural areas (Backe 2013). A culinary tourist experience is defined as any tourism opportunity in which one studies, appreciates, or consumes local culinary resources (Smith and Xiao 2008). Some of the new ways of promoting the rural areas through culinary experiences are farmers' markets, food events and festivals (Bessi re 1998; Hall and Sharples 2003). The actual meal does not have to be the primary aim of the experience, but is one of several activities (Hjalager and Richards 2003). A culinary experience comprises several surrounding factors, such as the place, its physical setting and ambient, people, history and traditions. Focusing on culinary experiences within a tourism offer may also contribute to the strengthening of the identity of particular regions. It enhances their uniqueness within their diverse communities (Telfer and Wall 1996; Rand, Heath and Alberts 2003; Everett and Aitchison 2008; Long 2015). Apart from inducing tourism, food experiences can directly support local development by providing the cultural capital necessary to create and sustain cultural production and consumption (Richards 2012), as well as food-related heritage-making (Godina Golija and Ledinek Lozej 2018).

Like in the majority of the Mediterranean areas, the development of tourism is concentrated in the coastal areas of Slovenia, whereas the hinterland receives only a small portion of visitors. The natural preconditions, rich tradition and scenic beauty are ideal for niche presentation of locally produced, processed and prepared food (Ren elj 2015). The hinterland is from a tourist perspective a typically marginal area with a rural character and has a high potential for the development of niche tourism based particularly on gastronomy. The potential for the development of culinary tourism has already been recognized in tourism strategies because it has several predispositions. Restaurants and homesteads with seasonal and locally produced food have a long tradition in the region due to the vicinity of urban areas of Trieste and Gorizia in Italy, favourable natural predispositions such as fertile soil, mild and windy climate, and high awareness of the quality of local products among local people (Ren elj 2015). A systematic culinary tourism development started shortly after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, in 1992. Wine tourist routes were among the first activities within the culinary tourism sector which were perceived as important for the integrated development of tourism (Kerma and Ga nik 2015; Kerma 2018). Rich and diversified heritage in gastronomy and wine-making are becoming an increasingly important factor of international tourism visibility. The proliferation of innovative food and wine festivals thus represents the fastest growing trend in cultural tourism and one of the most accessible forms of culinary experience (Ga nik 2012).

Successful actors' cooperation, strong local embeddedness (anchoring) and innovative approaches have been recognized as crucial factors in designing sustainable culinary experiences (Hall and G slling 2013; GoGSTC 2013; Frayssignes et al. 2018). **Actors' cooperation** is the ability to mediate a common profile and thus contribute to the marketing of a culinary destination (Buhalis and Spada 2000). The key criterion that makes a culinary destination is for actors to cooperate and find ways to promote common »products«, a »presentation« and »image« (Holloway et al. 2007). On the broader field of cultural values, which could also include a culinary experience, active participation of local stakeholders, political support that affects economic and other initiatives, as well as enterprising marketing and promotion are the three highlighted aspects ( mid Hribar and Ledinek Lozej 2013). This suggests a strong embedding of identified cultural value into a comprehensive marketable story or product that might bring development to rural areas. **Local anchoring** means linking local products and knowledge with culinary traditions of the area. The »local« has become valued by some tourists as something positive, genuine and involves locally sourced products in contrast to standardised and globalised products (Long 2015; Laurin 2010). Some studies show that local food is perceived to be authentic, pure

and traditional (Sims 2009; Kauppinen-Räsänen, Gummerus and Lehtola 2013), nevertheless there are several doubts about official certifications of locality (Ledinek Lozej 2016). **Innovation** is defined as »the process of translating an idea or invention into goods or services that create value or for which customers will pay ... It must be replicable at an economical cost and must satisfy a specific need.« (Business ... 2019). Innovation is manifested in different forms: as a product, technology or process, marketing and sales approach, function, organisation and as social innovation (Bessière and Tibère 2011; Bessière 2013). In gastronomy innovation is often linked with tradition where old styles of food preparation and cooking are renewed and combined in new ways (Hall and Gössling 2013).

The aim of this paper was to investigate the diversity of culinary experiences in the Primorska region in the Slovenian Mediterranean. We analysed culinary experiences in the area to learn about actors' cooperation and stakeholders' involvement, local anchoring, and innovation.

## 2 Methods

Data for this study were collected from a working assignment of a transnational project entitled *MEDFEST - Culinary Heritage Experiences: How To Create Sustainable Tourist Destination* with an aim to create a map of culinary experiences in eight Mediterranean countries (The Medfest ... 2017). Among other tasks the assignment included identification and analysis of culinary tourism experiences in the South Primorska region of the Slovenian Mediterranean.

Prior to commencing the study, a list of all culinary experiences in five areas of South Primorska (Vipava valley, Brkini and Čičarija, Goriška Brda with the Lower Soča Valley, Kras and Slovenian Istria) was compiled (Table 1). This was a preparatory phase for our analysis. A culinary experience was considered as something that goes beyond merely consuming food in a restaurant. We did not aim at giving specific emphasis on tourist products but wanted to comprise a variety of the culinary offer. I.e. fishing tourism *per se* was researched by Rogelja (2006) and Rogelja and Janko Spreizer (2015), wine tourism was analysed in previous literature (Jurinčič and Bojnc 2009; Kerma 2012; Kerma 2018). We considered oenological heritage as important but the purpose of the research went beyond a detailed research of wine tourism and wine routes. Instead, we focused on the festivals related to such type of tourism.

Based on Capatti (2012) and Richards (2012) we set up a typology of the following culinary experiences:

- 1) EVENT - culinary event (e.g. fair, market, festival),
- 2) SERVICE - service connected to food products (e.g. tasting, visit, cooking class),
- 3) FARM/BUSINESS - professional activity linked to food highlighted through a touristic activity (e.g. farms, food companies),
- 4) ROUTE - tourist site network dedicated to food or culinary products (e.g. tourist route),
- 5) SITE - specific tourist site dedicated to food or culinary products (e.g. museum).

For each culinary experience we prepared a general description and information regarding the venue and the dates, the type of the organiser and their contact details. It enabled us to get a better overview over the current culinary experiences and served as a pool for a further analysis of 10 selected culinary experiences. The latter were selected based on geographical dispersion of venues, variety of types of experiences and variety of organisers.

For the purpose of the analysis we used indicators for assessing sustainable Mediterranean culinary heritage experiences, which we developed within MEDFEST project (Medfest ... 2017). The indicators were agreed among the project partners - 37 indicators correspond to 4 topics: content of the experience, organization & governance, local anchoring of the experience and embedment in strategies & policies.

*Figure 1: Map of selected and analysed culinary experiences in the South Primorska region in Slovenia. ►*





Qualitative approach was mainly used to analyse the data grouped in three categories: stakeholders' involvement, local anchoring and innovation.

The data collection was based largely on field work and short interviews with the organizers and initiators of the culinary experiences, while we conducted in-depth interviews in three selected cases: the initiators of the Tourist Farm Butul (Pipan 2018), the Homestead Belajevi (Topole 2018) and the Brkini Fruit Route Festival (Volk Bahun 2018).

### 3 Results

The list of culinary experiences from the Slovenian case study included 213 cases (Table 1): 86 of them are located in the coastal Slovenian Istria, which receives the largest number of tourist visits among all studied areas. Among different types of experiences, the events (festivals, market, fairs) stand out - they are represented in 62% of the cases. They are followed by services (mostly workshops, guided tours - 19%) and farms/businesses (17%). Routes and special sites dedicated to culinary products occur only in 2% of cases.

Table 1: Identified culinary tourism experiences per type in the South Primorska region.

Area	No. of culinary tourism experiences	No. of culinary tourism experiences per type					Selected culinary experiences analysed in details
		<i>EVENT</i>	<i>SERVICE</i>	<i>FARM/BUSINESS</i>	<i>ROUTE</i>	<i>SITE</i>	
Slovenian Istria	86	54	22	9		1	Persimmon Festival (EVENT), Tourist Farm Butul (FARM, SERVICE), Fonda Fish Farm (FARM)
Kras	45	34	2	8	1	/	Brestovica Asparagus Festival (EVENT), Teran Wine and Prosciutto Festival (EVENT), Homestead Belajevi (FARM, SERVICE)
Brkini and Čičarija	23	6	/	16	1	/	Brkini Fruit Route Festival (ROUTE)
Vipava valley	39	22	13	3	1	/	Polenta Festival (EVENT), Chestnut Festival (EVENT), Wine and Olive Oil Festival (EVENT)
Brda and Lower Soča valley	20	15	4	/	1	/	/
Total	213	131	41	36	4	1	/

In the subsequent phase we analysed the following 10 culinary experiences (Figure 1; Table 2): 6 culinary events (the Polenta Festival, the Chestnut Festival, the Teran Wine and Prosciutto Festival, the Persimmon Festival, the Brestovica Asparagus Festival, the Wine and Olive Oil Festival), 2 farms/businesses focused on private professional activities linked to food highlighted through a touristic activity (the Tourist Farm Butul and the Fonda Fish Farm), 1 service connected to food products (the Homestead Belajevi) and 1 route network dedicated to food or culinary products (the Brkini Fruit Route Festival).

### 3.1 Actors' cooperation

According to Table 2 the majority of selected culinary experiences were organized by **local interest groups** (4 experiences) and **local public authorities** (3 experiences) with a strong support of local communities and farmers who supplied food and drinks. Additional 3 culinary experiences were organized by **individual local entrepreneurs**.

The culinary events or festivals are mainly organised by local tourist associations. They often share the organisation tasks with experts' society such as the Brkini Fruit Growers Society (in the case of the Brkini Fruit Route Festival) and the Karst Agricultural Cooperative (initial co-organizer in the case of the Teran Wine and Prosciutto Festival). Local interest groups often collaborate with municipalities mostly for acquiring an appropriate place for the event. Local farmers are food suppliers: *wine growers* in the case of the Teran Wine and Prosciutto Festival, *fruit producers* in the case of the Brkini Fruit Route Festival, *farms* where they grow persimmon in the case of the Persimmon Festival and *wine and olive producers* in the case of the Wine and Olive Oil Festival. Local entrepreneurs often team up with local food suppliers – up to 40 of them in the case of the Tourist Farm Butul; in the case of the Fonda Fish Farm they cooperate with farms which provide products such as wine, olive oil and vegetables. The Persimmon Festival cooperates with the Landscape Park Strunjan and uses its geographical indication.

Table 2: Selected culinary experiences by types and main organizers in the Slovenian Mediterranean area.

Type of event	EVENT	ROUTE	FARM/ BUSINESS	SERVICE	SITE
Time context	one-time annual event	one-time annual event	throughout the year	throughout the year	throughout the year
Type of organizer					
<b>Local interest groups (associations and NGOs)</b>	Chestnut Festival, Persimmon Festival, Polenta Festival, Brestovica Asparagus Festival	/	/	/	/
<b>Local public authority</b>	Teran Wine and Prosciutto Festival, Wine and Olive Oil Festival	Brkini Fruit Route Festival	/	/	/
<b>Individual local entrepreneur</b>	/	/	Tourist Farm Butul, Fonda Fish Farm	Homestead Belajevi	/

Culinary experience	Actors cooperation										Local anchoring									
	Experience organized by (collective) organization	Experience organized by a clearly identified local coordinator	Presence of a written official document	Involvement of local public authorities	Involvement of farmers	Link with handicraft sector	Link with environment sector	Link with energy sector	Link with R&D sector	Natural resources enhanced	Cultural resources enhance	Intangible/know-how resources	Participation of local community	Origin/provenance of food products	Seasonal food	Origin of suppliers	Origin of visitors			
Polenta Festival	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
Chestnut Festival	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
Teran Wine and Prosciutto Festival	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-			
Brkini Fruit Route Festival	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-			
Tourist Farm Butul	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-			
Homestead Belajevi	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-			
Persimmon Festival	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-			
Brestovica Asparagus Festival	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	-			
Fonda Fish Farm	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-			
Wine and Olive Oil Festival	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			

Figure 2: Culinary experiences evaluated according to actors' cooperation, local anchoring and certification system.

Professional and economic oriented activities and services connected with food products are typically provided by individual local entrepreneurs.

As demonstrated in Figure 2 in most cases (namely in 8 out of 10 cases) cooperation among different stakeholders is based on oral and not on written or formal agreement. Municipalities collaborating in the Brkini Fruit Route Festival had to adopt a decree on the tourist roads and every year the Tourist Farm Butul prepares a work programme that helps them enrich and also surpass their goals.

Linkages with handicraft sector among culinary experience holders are recognised. Handicraft most often refers to suppliers of cooking utensils and organisers of workshops – on how to make handmade wood, stone or ceramic products. Two groups of suppliers bring artefacts to the culinary experiences or take care of the side events (e.g. sets to cook polenta at the Polenta Festival; bowls and plates made of stone which could be seen at the Teran Wine and Prosciutto Festival and the Homestead Belajevi events; Figure 3).

In the research and development sector the cooperations with regional and international higher educational and research institutions is highlighted. For example, the Homestead Belajevi cooperates with the Institute of Agriculture and Forestry Nova Gorica and the Škocjan Caves Regional Park; the Fonda Fish Farm collaborates with the Marine Biology Station Piran and other maritime research organisations in the region; the Tourist Farm Butul cooperates with the University of Primorska; the Teran





MAJJA TOPOLE

Figure 3: Handicraft sector plays an important role in the presentation of culinary heritage and culinary products at the events organised at the Homestead Belajevi.

Wine and Prosciutto Festival cooperates with the students of stone carving at the Higher Vocational College in Sežana. There was no identified connection with either environmental or energy sectors.

Among analysed culinary experiences we noticed that pursuing official quality certification is not a priority. Only in one case (the Persimmon Festival) the farms which provide the fruits for the culinary event hold the certificates for organic farming. In this context it is worth mentioning that some organisers, e.g. the Brkini Fruit Route Festival, the Tourist Farm Butul, the Homestead Belajevi, the Persimmon Festival, the Fonda Fish Farm, cooperate or are linked with food and drink suppliers originating from protected areas like the landscape and regional parks, Natura 2000 and UNESCO areas, but do not plan to acquire any kind of certification themselves.

### 3.2 Local anchoring

To understand how culinary experiences are anchored locally, we examined the natural, cultural and intangible or know-how resource enhancement, the engagement of the local community, and the provenance of food products as well as the origin of food & drink suppliers and visitors (Figure 2).

In the process of examining the **natural resource** enhancement we found that the preservation and plantation of old species of fruit, vegetables and herbs and their traditional usage in cuisine are most frequently emphasized. In some cases the promotion of biodiversity (e.g. dry karst meadows and seabed benthos near eco-friendly fish farm) was also important. Almost all culinary experiences include seasonal food (e.g. the Polenta Festival, the Chestnut Festival, the Tourist Farm Butul, the Persimmon Festival,

the Fonda Fish Farm, the Wine and Olive Oil Festival). At the Brkini Fruit Route Festival and the Homestead Belajevi more than three quarters of all food is seasonal. More than half of food used at the Teran Wine and Prosciutto Festival and the Brestovica Asparagus Festival is seasonal. Within the scope of the natural resource enhancement we also examined waste management. Waste separation is present in all cases except at the Chestnut Festival, the Brkini Fruit Route Festival and the Brestovica Asparagus Festival. The most attention to waste management is given at the Tourist Farm Butul. They never use single-use plastic, neither at their farm nor at their mobile culinary events. At the events they exclusively use biodegradable disposable cutlery, bowls and cups. At the Fonda Fish Farm they ask their customers to return the polystyrene packages for fish so that they can re-use them.

Among the **cultural resources** the following accompanying activities were pointed out: preservation of cultural landscapes, herbalism, inclusion of non-mechanical work and handicraft (e.g. stone handicraft and traditional stone house building), inclusion of arts and culture (e.g. poetry and photography).

Furthermore, we identified the following **know-how resources**: *preparation of food where traditional knowledge of food preparation is combined with modern approaches* (e.g. polenta and chestnut sweets, innovative usage of herbs while cooking), *cooperation with artisans and craftsmen* who use wood, stone and ceramics and organise workshops to teach visitors to make their own products, *helping unemployed by including them in handicraft programs* where the products can be used in gastronomy, *cooperation with agricultural advisors* (lectures on growing fruit trees), *traditional folk dances* and *a rediscovering of traditional ecological knowledge*. All events contribute to the promotion and stronger recognition of towns, places, the wider region and Slovenia abroad.

Finally, we identified strong **engagement of local communities** in the experiences. The involved participants might be individual volunteers, clubs and associations (tourism (Figure 4), hunters' and



PRIMOŽ GAŠPERČ

Figure 4: Members of the local tourist association are the key people at the Polenta Festival.

boules, rural women society), farmers, bee-makers, folklore groups and similar. The experiences are often financially supported through local calls for tenders for tourism development and promotion (e.g. the Municipality of Piran subsidizes 10% of the organizing costs of the Persimmon Festival). Four experiences pay special attention to participants with mobility impairment from the local community. A part of the Brkini Fruit Route Festival is children friendly. At the Persimmon Festival people with disabilities sell products on persimmon theme. The same applies to the Fonda Fish Farm. The most active experience in this regard is the Tourist Farm Butul which includes people with members of the local community with various disabilities (i.e. mentally, mobile and visually impaired). They organise workshops for the children from local schools, as well as athletes and other individuals with special dietary needs from the local associations.

**The provenance of at least 80% of the food** in almost all examined experiences is in local areas – within less than 50 km. Some ingredients come from farther than 50 km but still origin in the Slovenian Mediterranean (e.g. olive oil, salt, fruit and vegetable from the Primorska region or other Slovenian regions). Only few food products, which are supplements to specific jams, honey and cheese, and are not found in local areas, travel longer distances (i.e. tropical spices and herbs such as black tea and cinnamon). The Tourist Farm Butul cooperates with a cheese maker from Idrsko alps on Mount Matajur in the Julian Alps. In the case of the Wine and Olive Oil Festival local food provenance is only 60% since they invite also winemakers from Italy and other Slovenian wine regions.

When examining the **origin of the visitors**, we noticed huge differences between the experiences. As a rule, the uniqueness of culinary experiences attracts people from distant areas since their recognisability goes beyond the borders of the local region. The highest share of visitors of local origin (within the radius of 50 km) receive the Polenta Festival, the Chestnut Festival, the Wine and Olive Oil Festival (all of them approx. 70%), the Brkini Fruit Route Festival (50%). On the other hand, the experiences with the lowest share of local visitors are the Teran Wine and Prosciutto Festival (40%), the Brestovica Asparagus Festival (20%), the Persimmon Festival (15%), the Tourist Farm Butul and the Fonda Fish Farm (10%), and the Homestead Belajevi (2%).

### 3.3 The role of innovation

The innovativeness was examined through the perception of organisers of what they think are innovative aspects of their culinary experience. An important aspect was the **creative (re)use of traditional meal recipes based on local overlooked ingredients**. Such examples are local varieties of maize for the making of flour for polenta, different wine sorts, local types of chestnut trees, olives, pears, apples, plums, nuts, sour cherries and cherries from the old orchards. In addition to all mentioned varieties it is worth mentioning persimmon which was brought by sailors from the Far East and introduced in the region in the beginning of the 20th century. The fruit is now perceived as a local sort and is an important part of the regional identity.

An important aspect of innovation in culinary experiences is **to offer guests traditional dishes, served in a modern and contemporary way**. At the Polenta and Chestnut Festival, they serve polenta and chestnut as parts of the deserts, but they were traditionally consumed as a main dish. Mountain savory (lat. *Satureja montana*) used to be used as a medical herb but the Homestead Belajevi started to use it in cuisine. At the Tourist Farm Butul they developed cheeses containing wine stone and black tea. Their wildflower honey includes also ginger and the blossom of the muscat nut and they use wild lemon to make jam and cordial. An interesting aspect of innovativeness could be the presentation of food. At the Tourist Farm Butul **food is served using their own designer products** (packages, plates, trays) made of cardboard, stone or wood. Not only how, but also **where the food is served**, can be an innovative element in culinary experiences, e.g. welcoming guests at a table in the middle of the vineyard, olive grove, or herbal garden – where the food is produced, or a typical stone carved karstic yard.



Another innovative aspect is an active **inclusion of visitors into a culinary experience through educational work**. At the Brkini Fruit Route Festival they offer »family experiences« on fruit-growing farms, where families can take part in farm work, pick apples or participate at workshops on how to make products from herbs.

The Tourist Farm Butul created a **new approach to cooperation with local food producers** which was recognised as innovative also by the wider public – in 2018 it was awarded with the »Slovenia's hidden gems 2018« title for the two-day food tour »Mediterranean flavours of Slovenian Istria«.

Innovation manifests itself through **awareness raising and knowledge transfer**. At the Fonda Fish Farm visitors learn about the quality and sustainability of *sea bass* aquafarming (Figure 6). They do not use anti-algae chemical agents for fish farm nets, instead they clean them by hand. They use the fodder of the highest quality and the fish breeding is slower compared to mass produced aquaculture. In this way the visitors (consumers) are encouraged to pay more for the Fonda Piran Sea Bass and support boutique sustainable production instead of purchasing farmed fish from the large-scale aquaculture facilities. The Fonda Fish Farm pursued the innovation in branding the »Piran Sea Bass Fonda«. This was the first »local territorial branding of a farmed sea fish« in the Adriatic Sea, presumably also worldwide, thus creating a sea-based »merroir«, a derivative of land-based »terroir« (Giacomelli 2015). The Homestead Belajevi offers workshops with experts for healthy lifestyle. The Tourist Farm Butul was involved in the design of many local culinary initiatives, which have now turned into major regional culinary events. The largest of them is »Sweet Istria« in Koper, an international festival of desserts and sweet products – the largest event of its kind in Slovenia and the second largest tourist event in the Municipality of Koper (Jerman and Vodeb 2018). Since 2014 the Tourist farm Butul has been



TOURIST FARM BUTUL

Figure 5: Students from the University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo (Università di Scienze Gastronomiche di Pollenzo), Italy, taking notes while listening to the presentation at the Tourist Farm Butul.

a learning centre for the University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo (Figure 5), Italy, which was established by the Slow Food organization. Students can apply for internships, while twice a year a one-week culinary field trip across Slovenia is organised. In organising workshops, they cooperate with the Institute for the Development and Research of Catering and Agricultural Activities (*SloVino*) from Maribor. Furthermore, they motivate their guests to think about what they eat and thus start making small steps towards a healthier diet. Their guests participate in food preparation in their culinary workshops.

## 4 Discussion

The present study is based on 10 carefully selected cases of culinary experiences. Although it contributes to a scientific discourse on the potentials of culinary experiences in fostering a sustainable development in the rural Mediterranean areas in Slovenia, we avoided any generalisation. The scientific contribution is explained in four sub-chapters below.

### 4.1 The levers of effective actors' cooperation

Our preliminary study showed that there is a linkage between the types of culinary experiences and the types of organizers. It seems that organizers are motivated in different ways which leads them to select different types of events. For local interest groups, who are often connected to specific food or



MATIJAŽ GERŠIČ

Figure 6: Sustainable sea bass production at the Fonda Fish Farm requires more handwork and technical adaptation.



drinks cultivation (i.e. wine and prosciutto), and local public authorities it is usually important to organize a culinary festival in which they can present their food products, places and local heritage. Local interest groups and local public authorities quite often work together; i.e. interests groups provide the content for an event while public authorities pay for the organizational expenses. On the other hand, individual entrepreneurs aim at gaining economic profit and thus organize payable lectures on diets and nutrition, cooking classes, special meals and other services connected to food. When organizing culinary events, they are small-scale and meant for a small number of attendees who pay a fee.

Apart from the cooperation among the main actors (interest groups, public authorities, entrepreneurs), culinary experiences exhibit strong connections with local farmers and the handicraft sector. Handicraft ideally supports the authentic character of an experience. Connections with the research and development sector are mainly related to individual entrepreneurs and could be 1) a desire to understand more, to develop and create something new, and recently also to better address the aspects of sustainability, or 2) a sign of willingness to learn from the practice (e.g. study visits and internships by students).

When organising culinary experiences actors tend to avoid formal cooperation and excessive bureaucracy, and rather rely on the pre-existing informal local acquaintanceships and trust. As for certification systems, the organizers of culinary experiences pointed out that they follow the recommendations and standards of various certificates, but pursuing them would engage them in too much bureaucracy. They highlighted that building trust between them, their food and drink suppliers, and their customers by following quality standards is more important than adopting the official labels.

#### 4.2 The embeddedness of culinary experiences within their local context

All 10 analysed cases are deeply rooted within their local context. Their food supplies travel short distances, they are mostly seasonable and based on local agricultural production. Waste management practices are good, although in general the culinary experiences could do more to avoid single-use plastics. Excessive use of plastic utensils (cutlery, bowls and cups) at some festivals pose a threat to the preservation of natural resources and environment, as well as the general societal aim at decreasing the use of non-renewable energy. It is possible to purchase single-use biodegradable utensils but due to the economy of scale they are still considerably more expensive compared to the plastic ones, therefore organizers tend not to use it.

The selected culinary experiences contribute to the preservation of traditional knowledge, handicraft, handmade products and cultural landscape. The examined experiences also contribute to the transfer of local knowledge onto activities related to food. The strong engagement of local communities is financially supported by public authorities. In spite of the strong local anchorage, the experiences generally attract visitors not only from the region, but from different parts of the country and even from abroad.

Based on the level of locality, size and influence, the selected culinary experiences can be divided into 3 groups:

- *Small-scale experiences based on the voluntary work of local communities:* They have a local character and are supported by local interest groups. Socializing is in the forefront of the experience and the financial revenue is perceived as less important. Any profit is used to manage local associations, organization of the same experience in the following year and the promotion of typical local products or the entire experience. They contribute to a higher recognition of the community and to higher social capital.
- *Small-scale experiences organised by local entrepreneurs:* These experiences have a unique character and the quality is their primal goal. They are based on rich experiences and social networks of highly engaged individuals.
- *Large-scale or professionalized experiences:* They are more successful in the promotion of the experience and the making of the revenue. The tradition is their main selling point.

### 4.3 The innovativeness of culinary experiences

Innovation plays an important role in the success of culinary experiences. We identified several aspects of innovation: creative (re-)use of traditional meal recipes based on local ingredients, presentation of tradition dishes in a unique, modern and attractive way, new approaches to cooperation with local food producers and to food catering, serving food using their own designer products, inclusion of visitors into a culinary experience and knowledge transfer. These aspects are not necessarily original; in many cases they were brought from other areas, however, we found that they have been successfully adapted to the local level. Among all identified innovations, two of them are particularly interesting: 1) a partnership between a producer of a traditional product (such as alps cheese maker) and a local entrepreneur who initiates a culinary experience; and 2) knowledge transfer which leads to an adaptation of traditional gastronomy to the modern needs of the visitors (gluten-free, vegan), and to a creation of new dishes. The latter emphasizes the general importance of innovation in gastronomy.

### 4.4 The limitations of the study

The principal limitation is the definition of the term »culinary experience« which goes beyond the mere consuming of food in a restaurant, although a very good restaurant can also be considered a culinary experience. To compile our database, we focused on events that are »more than food« – they are »an experience«. The 10 culinary experiences were selected arbitrarily.

## 5 Conclusion

Culinary tourism represents a rising economic sector in the rural Mediterranean Slovenia. In the past the inhabitants in the identified areas struggled with difficult natural conditions, limited employment possibilities, low salaries and with an inviting idea of leaving their rural land and move to the littoral or other urban areas, or abroad. Local residents have developed a strong dependence on the scarce natural sources and strong local identity. Therefore, they managed to preserve their distinct cuisine deriving mainly from the local produce. In the modern times, affected by global trends, they try to embed the cuisine in their culinary offer.

Our study revealed that a successful culinary experience must meet all three criteria: cooperation of the actors from the local environment, strong embedment of the experience in the local community and innovative approaches. The strength for the success lies in the innovative presentations of food while preserving its traditional elements. At the same time these modern interpretations should also be based on the local identity of the inhabitants.

The important potentials lie in 1) local interest groups, local communities and local public authorities who are, based on mutual cooperation, capable of turning a culinary heritage into a high-end marketing product, and 2) rare but dare individual entrepreneurs who, based on their professional knowledge and dedication, provide the small-scale, highly valued culinary experiences. Both groups play a key role in putting Slovenia on the world map of culinary experiences.

The findings of this research could be used in improvement of other and future culinary experiences in the region and also other parts of Slovenia. This is particularly important since in 2021 Slovenia will present itself as the European Region of Gastronomy. Furthermore, the findings from the case studies could make an important contribution to the strategies aiming at sustainable tourism development of the rural areas in the Mediterranean.

*Acknowledgements: The authors acknowledge the financial support from the European Regional Development Fund for funding project MEDFEST (MED Culinary Heritage Experiences: How to Create*

*Sustainable Tourist Destinations*) and financial support from the Slovenian Research Agency research core funding *Geography of Slovenia (P6-0101)* and *Heritage on the margins: new perspectives on heritage and identity within and beyond the national (P5-0408)*. We also acknowledge data collection and field work contributions by Primož Gašperič, Matjaž Geršič, Maja Topole and Manca Volk Bahun.

*Special acknowledgment goes to the informants who provided valuable information for the 10 selected culinary experiences: Tina Simonič (Tourism Association Ozeljan-Šmihel), Marko Kompara (Culture-Tourism Association Vitovlje), Ana Hrast (Tourist Information Centre Sežana), Gianfranco Giassi (Tourism Association Solinar, Strunjan), Irena Švigelj (Tourism Association Brest, Brestovica), Dejana Baša (Tourist Information Centre Nova Gorica), Tatjana and Mitja Butul (Tourist Farm Butul), Andrejka Cerkvenik (Homestead Belajevi), Irena Fonda (Fonda Fish Farm) and Ester Mihalič (Tourist Information Centre Hrpelje-Kozina). The authors acknowledge to Saša Požek for the proofreading the English text.*

## 6 References

- Backe, J. Ö. 2013: Culinary networks and rural tourism development – constructing the local through everyday practices. *Sustainable Culinary Systems*. London. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203114070>
- Bessière, J. 1998: Local development and heritage: traditional food and cuisine as tourist attractions in rural areas. *Sociologia Ruralis* 38-1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9523.00061>
- Bessière, J. 2013: 'Heritagisation', a challenge for tourism promotion and regional development: an example of food heritage. *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 8-4. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2013.770861>
- Bessière J., Tibère L. 2011: Innovation in food heritage in the department of the Midi-Pyrenees: types of innovation and links with territory. *Anthropology of Food* 8.
- Buhalis, D., Spada, A. 2000: Destination management systems: criteria for success – an exploratory research. *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2000*. Vienna. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7091-6291-0\\_43](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7091-6291-0_43)
- Business Dictionary, 2019: Internet: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/innovation.html> (26. 3. 2019).
- Capatti, A. 2012: Educating tourists in the art of gastronomy and culture in Italy. *Food and the Tourism Experience*, OECD Studies on Tourism. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264171923-6-en>
- Everett, S., Aitchison, C. 2008: The role of food tourism in sustaining regional identity: A case study of Cornwall, South West England. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 16-2. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2167/jost696.0>
- Frayssignes, J., Razpotnik Visković, N., Dardelet, A., Ribas Serra, J., Mulet Pascual, M. 2018: L'expérience culinaire durable comme grille d'analyse des démarches de valorisation touristique des ressources alimentaires. *Quelle contribution au développement des territoires ruraux méditerranéens? Infinite rural systems in a finite planet: bridging gaps towards Santiago de Compostela*. Santiago de Compostela.
- Gačnik, A. 2012: Gastronomy heritage as a source of development for gastronomy tourism and as a means of increasing Slovenia's tourism visibility. *Academica Turistica* 5-2.
- Giacomelli, J. 2015: The Fonda Case: What Fish Can Teach Us About Finding New Business Models. *Mediachange*. Internet: <http://mediachange.info/the-fonda-case/?case=394> (28. 3. 2019).
- Godina Golija, M., Ledinek Lozej, Š. 2018: Pomen in cilji projektov ohranjanja dediščine prehrane: Register nesovne kulturne dediščine, Etnofolk in AlpFoodway. *Etnolog* 28.
- GoGSTC – Criteria for Destinations and Suggested Performance Indicators. *Global Sustainable Tourism Council*, 2013: Internet: <https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/gstc-destination-criteria> (13. 3. 2019).
- Hall, C. M., Gössling, S. (eds.) 2013: *Sustainable Culinary Systems: Local Foods, Innovation, and Tourism and Hospitality*. London. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203114070>

- Hall, C. M., Sharples, L. 2003: The consumption of experiences or the experience of consumption? An introduction to the tourism of taste in Food tourism around the world. From Food Tourism Around the World: Development, Management and Markets. Oxford.
- Hjalager, A. M., Richards, G. (eds.) 2003: Tourism and Gastronomy. Oxford. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203218617>
- Holloway, L., Kneafsey, M., Venn, L., Cox, R., Dowler, E., Tuomainen, H. 2007: Possible food economies: A methodological framework for exploring food production-consumption relationships. *Sociologia Ruralis* 47. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2007.00427.x>
- Jerman, K., Vodeb, K. 2018: Družbeni vpliv prireditev v Mestni občini Koper. *Geografski vestnik* 90-1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3986/GV90102>
- Jurinčič, I., Bojnec, Š. 2009: Wine tourism development: The case of the wine district in Slovenia. *Tourism* 57-4.
- Kauppinen-Räsänen, H., Gummerus, J., Lehtola, K. 2013: Remembered eating experiences described by the self, place, food, context and time. *British Food Journal* 115-5. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/00070701311331571>
- Kerma, S. 2012: Wine tourism as a development factor of the Primorska wine region. *Regional Development and Regionalisation in the Adriatic Space*. Vienna.
- Kerma, S. 2018: Vinski turizem z geografskim poreklom. Koper. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-7055-32-0>
- Kerma, S., Gačnik, A. 2015: Wine tourism as an opportunity for tourism development: examples of good practice in Slovenia. *Journal of International Food and Agribusiness Marketing* 27-4. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08974438.2014.940122>
- Laurin, U. 2010: Den svenska turistmåltiden: en internationell bild av mat och måltider. Tillväxtverket.
- Ledinek Lozej, Š. 2016: Dairying in the mountain pastures in the Julian Alps: Heritages, utopias and realities. *Studia ethnologica Croatica* 28. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17234/SEC.27>
- Long, L. M. 2015: Culinary tourism: A folkloristic perspective on eating and otherness. *The Food and Folklore Reader*. London.
- Medfest: Culinary Heritage Experiences, 2017. Internet: <https://medfest.interreg-med.eu/> (1. 3. 2019).
- Pipán, P. 2018: Tourist farm Butul. Catalogue of good practices of sustainable culinary heritage experiences in Mediterranean area. Ljubljana. Internet: [https://giam.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/medfest\\_catalogue\\_of\\_culinary\\_good\\_practices-n.pdf](https://giam.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/medfest_catalogue_of_culinary_good_practices-n.pdf) (13. 3. 2019).
- Rand, G. E. D., Heath, E., Alberts, N. 2003: The role of local and regional food in destination marketing: A South African situation analysis. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* 14, 3-4. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1300/J073v14n03\\_06](https://doi.org/10.1300/J073v14n03_06)
- Renčelj, S. 2015: Kulinarika in kamen: Povabilo na Kras in Brkine. Internet: <http://ooz-sezana.si/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Kamen-Kulinarika.pdf> (1. 3. 2019).
- Richards, G. 2012: An overview of food and tourism trends and policies. *Food and the Tourism Experience, OEDC Studies on Tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264171923-6-en>
- Rogelja, N. 2006: Healthy Mediterranean food in local perspective: the case of the Slovenian coast. *Anthropological Notebooks* 12-1.
- Rogelja, N., Janko Spreizer, A. 2015: Welcome to Izola!: offering »authentic hospitality« on fishing boats. *Annales, Series historia et sociologia* 25-2.
- Sims, R. 2009: Food, place and authenticity: local food and the sustainable tourism experience. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 17-3. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802359293>
- Smith, S. L. J., Xiao, H. G. 2008: Culinary tourism supply chains: A preliminary examination. *Journal of Travel Research* 46. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0047287506303981>
- Šmid Hribar, M., Ledinek Lozej, Š. 2013: The role of identifying and managing cultural values in rural development. *Acta geographica Slovenica* 53-2. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3986/AGS53402>

- Telfer, D. J., Wall, G. 1996: Linkages between tourism and food production. *Annals of Tourism Research* 23-3. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(95\)00087-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(95)00087-9)
- The Medfest Browser, 2017: Internet: <http://www.ub.edu/medfest/> (1. 3. 2019).
- Topole, M. 2018: Homestead Belajevi. Catalogue of good practices of sustainable culinary heritage experiences in Mediterranean area. Ljubljana. Internet: [https://giam.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/medfest\\_catalogue\\_of\\_culinary\\_good\\_practices-n.pdf](https://giam.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/medfest_catalogue_of_culinary_good_practices-n.pdf) (13. 3. 2019)
- Volk Bahun, M. 2018: Brkini fruit route festival. Catalogue of good practices of sustainable culinary heritage experiences in Mediterranean area. Ljubljana. Internet: [https://giam.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/medfest\\_catalogue\\_of\\_culinary\\_good\\_practices-n.pdf](https://giam.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/medfest_catalogue_of_culinary_good_practices-n.pdf) (13. 3. 2019)



# POMEN SODELOVANJA AKTERJEV, VPETOST V LOKALNO OKOLJE IN INOVATIVNOST PRI USTVARJANJU KULINARIČNIH TURISTIČNIH IZKUŠENJ NA RURALNEM SLOVENSKEM SREDOZEMLJU

## 1 Uvod

Zaledna območja Sredozemlja, ki imajo pretežno ruralni značaj, iščejo nove načine, kako privabiti obiskovalce s tradicionalno obalnih destinacij morja in sonca. Za zdaj ta območja ohranjajo svojo avtentičnost, preprečujejo masovni turizem in sledijo načelom trajnostnega razvoja. Kulinarične izkušnje postajajo vedno pomembnejše pri izbiri destinacij, zlasti na ruralnih območjih (Backe 2013). Kulinarična turistična izkušnja je definirana kot turistična priložnost, kjer turist spoznava lokalne kulinarične vire, prepozna njihovo vrednost ali jih preizkuša (Smith in Xiao 2008). Med novejšimi načini promocije ruralnih območjih prek kulinaričnih izkušenj so kmečke tržnice, dogodki povezani s hrano in festivali (Bessière 1998; Hall in Sharples 2003). Sam obrok ni nujno prvotni namen izkušnje, je le eden od številnih dejavnosti (Hjalager in Richards 2003). Kulinarična izkušnja vključuje številne zunanje dejavnike, kot so prostor (v smislu postavitve in ambienta), ljudje, zgodovina in običaji. Osredotočanje na kulinarične izkušnje v sklopu neke turistične ponudbe lahko pripomore tudi k utrjevanju identitete posameznih regij, obenem pa krepi specifičnost teh regij znotraj raznolikih skupnosti (Telfer in Wall 1996; Rand, Heath in Alberts 2003; Everett in Aitchison 2008; Long 2015). Poleg razvoja turizma lahko kulinarične izkušnje neposredno podpirajo tudi lokalni razvoj, tako da skrbijo za kulturni kapital, ki je potreben za ustvarjanje ter ohranjanje kulturne produkcije in potrošnje (Richards 2012), pa tudi s hrano povezano dediščinjenje (Godina Golija in Ledinek Lozej 2018).

Kot pri večini sredozemskih regij je razvoj turizma skoncentriran na obalnih območjih Slovenije, medtem ko zaledje obišče le majhen delež obiskovalcev. Naravne danosti, bogata tradicija in lepota pokrajine so idealna osnova za nišne predstavitve lokalno proizvedene, predelane in pripravljene hrane (Renčelj 2015). Zaledje je s turističnega vidika tipično obrobno območje z ruralnim značajem in ima visok potencial za razvoj nišnega turizma, ki temelji predvsem na gastronomiji. Potencial za razvoj kulinaričnega turizma so že prepoznale tudi turistične strategije, saj zanj obstajajo številni predpogoji. Restavracije ter domačije s sezonsko in lokalno pridelano hrano imajo v regiji zaradi bližine urbanih območij Trsta in Gorice v Italiji že dolgoletno tradicijo, ugodni so tudi naravni pogoji z vidika rodovitne zemlje, milega in vetrovnega podnebja, lokalno prebivalstvo pa izraža visoko stopnjo zavedanja o kakovosti lokalnih proizvodov (Renčelj 2015). Sistematičen razvoj kulinaričnega turizma se je začel kmalu po razpadu Jugoslavije leta 1992. Vinske turistične ceste so bile prva dejavnost sektorja kulinaričnega turizma, ki so bile prepoznane kot pomembne za integriran razvoj turizma (Kerma in Gačnik 2015; Kerma 2018). Bogata in raznolika dediščina v gastronomiji in pridelavi vin postaja vedno pomembnejši dejavnik mednarodne prepoznavnosti turizma. Porast števila inovativnih festivalov hrane in vin tako predstavlja najhitreje rastoči trend na področju kulturnega turizma ter eno najdostopnejših oblik kulinaričnih izkušenj (Gačnik 2012).

Uspešno sodelovanje akterjev, močna vpetost v lokalno okolje (umeščenost) in inovativni pristopi so tisti dejavniki, ki so bili prepoznani kot ključni pri oblikovanju trajnostnih kulinaričnih izkušenj (Hall in Gössling 2013; GoGSTC 2013; Frayssignes in sod. 2018). **Sodelovanje akterjev** pomeni zmožnost ustvarjanja skupne podobe, kar pripomore k promociji neke kulinarične destinacije (Buhalis in Spada 2000). Pri ustvarjanju kulinaričnih destinacij je najpomembnejše, da akterji sodelujejo in najdejo načine promocije skupnih 'proizvodov', 'predstavitvev' in 'podob' (Holloway in sod. 2007). Trije poglavitni vidiki znotraj širšega okvirja kulturnih vrednot, ki vključujejo tudi kulinarične izkušnje, so aktivno sodelovanje lokalnih deležnikov, politična podpora, ki vpliva na ekonomske in druge pobude ter uspešna marketing in promocija (Šmid Hribar in Ledinek Lozej 2013). To pomeni močno umeščanje

prepoznane kulturne vrednosti v širšo zgodbo ali izdelek, ki ga je mogoče tržiti in ki lahko vpliva na razvoj ruralnih območij. **Vpetost v lokalno okolje** je povezovanje lokalnih proizvodov in znanja s kulturnimi tradicijami tega območja. 'Lokalno' nekateri turisti že prepoznajo kot nekaj pozitivnega, pristnega, označuje pa proizvode lokalnega porekla v nasprotju s standardiziranimi in globaliziranimi proizvodi (Long 2005; Laurin 2010). Nekatere študije lokalno hrano pojmujejo kot avtentično, pravo in tradicionalno (Sims 2009; Kauppinen-Räsänen, Gummerus in Lehtola 2013), čeprav obstajajo dvomi o uradnem certificiranju lokalnosti (Ledinek Lozej 2016). **Inovativnost** je definirana kot »*proces spreminjanja ideje ali iznajdbe v dobrine ali storitve, ki ustvarjajo vrednost oziroma za katere so stranke pripravljene plačati ... Inovacija mora biti ponovljiva za ekonomsko ceno in mora zadovoljiti določeno potrebo.*« (Business ... 2019). Inovativnost se kaže v različnih oblikah: kot proizvod, tehnologija ali proces, marketinški in prodajni pristop, funkcija, organizacija ter kot družbena inovacija (Bessière in Tibère 2011; Bessière 2013). V gastronomiji je inovacija pogosto povezana s tradicijo, kjer se stari načini priprave hrane ter kuhanja obnavljajo in prenavljajo ter kombinirajo na nov način (Hall in Gössling 2013).

Namen tega članka je raziskati raznolikost kulinaričnih izkušenj v Primorski regiji slovenskega Sredozemlja. Kulinarične izkušnje v tej regiji smo analizirali z namenom, da bi preučili sodelovanje akterjev in vključevanje nosilcev interesa, vpetost v lokalno okolje in inovativnost.

## 2 Metode

Podatki za študijo so bili pridobljeni v okviru nadnacionalnega projekta *MEDFEST - Culinary Heritage Experiences: How To Create Sustainable Tourist Destination (MEDFEST - Doživljanje kulturne dediščine: kako ustvarjati trajnostne turistične destinacije)*, z namenom ustvariti zemljevid kulinaričnih izkušenj v osmih sredozemskih državah (The Medfest ... 2017). Naloga je med drugim vključevala prepoznavanje in analizo kulinaričnih turističnih izkušenj na južnem Primorskem kot dela slovenskega Sredozemlja.

Pred začetkom študije smo pripravili seznam (preglednica 1) vseh kulinaričnih izkušenj v petih območjih južne Primorske (Vipavska dolina, Brkini in Čičarija, Goriška Brda in spodnja Soška dolina, Kras in slovenska Istra). To je bila pripravljalna faza za nadaljnjo analizo. Kot kulinarično izkušnjo smo opredelili tisto, ki je več kot le uživanje hrane v restavraciji. Nismo se posebej osredotočali na turistične izdelke, želeli smo zbrati raznoliko kulinarično ponudbo. Ribiški turizem kot tak sta podrobneje raziskali že Rogelja (2006) ter Rogelja in Janko Spreizer (2015), vinski turizem pa je bil predhodno analiziran v literaturi (Jurinčič in Bojnec 2009; Kerma 2012; Kerma 2018). Enološka dediščina je vsekakor pomembna tudi za nas, vendar smo z raziskavo želeli preseči podrobnejšo raziskavo vinskega turizma in vinskih cest. Namesto tega smo se osredotočili na festivale, ki so sorodni tovrstnemu turizmu.

Na podlagi Capatti (2012) in Richards (2012) smo vzpostavili tipologijo naslednjih kulinaričnih izkušenj:

- 1) DOGODEK – kulinarični dogodek (na primer sejem, tržnica, festival),
- 2) STORITEV – storitev povezana s prehranskimi izdelki (na primer pokušnja, obisk, kuharski tečaj),
- 3) KMETIJA/DEJAVNOST – poslovna dejavnost povezana s hrano, ki se izpostavlja kot turistična dejavnost (na primer kmetija, podjetje za pridelavo hrane),
- 4) POT – mreža poti, ki povezuje turistične zanimivosti, posvečena hrani in kulinaričnim izdelkom (na primer turistična pot),
- 5) TOČKA – določena turistična točka, povezana s hrano ali kulinaričnimi izdelki (na primer muzej).

Za vsako kulinarično izkušnjo smo pripravili splošen opis ter informacije o lokaciji in datumih, tipu organizacije ter kontaktnih podatke organizatorja. Tako smo dobili boljši pregled nad trenutno ponudbo kulinaričnih izkušenj, ti podatki pa so služili tudi kot podlaga za nadaljnjo analizo desetih izbranih kulinaričnih izkušenj. Te smo izbrali na podlagi geografske razpršenosti lokacij, raznolikosti ponujene izkušnje in organizacijske oblike.

*Slika 1: Zemljevid izbranih in analiziranih kulinaričnih izkušenj na južnem Primorskem, Slovenija. ►*





Za potrebe analize smo uporabili kazalnike za vrednotenje izkušenj trajnostne sredozemske kulinarčne dediščine, ki smo jo razvili znotraj projekta MEDFEST (Medfest ... 2017). Kazalnike smo sporazumno določili skupaj z ostalimi projektnimi partnerji – 37 kazalnikov ustreza štirim področjem: vsebina izkušnje, organizacija in vodenje, vpetost izkušnje v lokalno okolje ter umeščenost v strategije in politike.

Za analizo podatkov, ki so bili razvrščeni v tri kategorije: vključevanje nosilcev interesa, vpetost v lokalno okolje in inovativnost, smo uporabili pretežno kvalitativni pristop.

Zbiranje podatkov je temeljilo predvsem na terenskem delu in kratkih intervjujih organizatorjev in pobudnikov kulinarčnih izkušenj, v treh primerih pa smo opravili še poglobljene intervjuje: s pobudniki Turistične kmetije Butul (Pipan 2018), Domačijo Belajevi (Topole 2018) in Festivalom Brkinske sadne ceste (Volk Bahun 2018).

### 3 Rezultati

Seznam kulinarčnih izkušenj slovenske študije primera je vključeval 213 primerov (preglednica 1): 86 primerov se nahaja v obalnem delu slovenske Istre, ki ima med vsemi preučevanimi območji naj-

*Preglednica 1: Prepoznane kulinarčne turistične izkušnje po tipih na južnem Primorskem.*

območje	število kulinarčnih turističnih izkušenj	število kulinarčnih turističnih izkušenj po tipih					izbrane kulinarčne izkušnje, ki so podrobneje analizirane
		DOGODEK	STORITEV	KMETIJA/ DEJAVNOST	POT	TOČKA	
slovenska Istra	86	54	22	9		1	Praznik kakijev (DOGODEK), Turistična kmetija Butul (KMETIJA, STORITEV), Ribogojnica Fonda (KMETIJA)
Kras	45	34	2	8	1	/	B'rstovska špargljada (DOGODEK), Praznik terana in pršuta (DOGODEK), Domačija Belajevi (KMETIJA, STORITEV)
Brkini in Čičarija	23	6	/	16	1	/	Festival Brkinske sadne ceste (POT)
Vipavska dolina	39	22	13	3	1	/	Praznik polente (DOGODEK), Praznik kostanja (DOGODEK), Festival vin in oljčnega olja (DOGODEK)
Brda in spodnja Soška dolina	20	15	4	/	1	/	/
Skupaj	213	131	41	36	4	1	/

več turističnega obiska. Med različnimi tipi izkušenj izstopajo dogodki (festivali, tržnice, sejmi) – ti predstavljajo 62 % vseh izkušenj. Sledijo jim storitve (večinoma delavnice, vodeni ogledi – 19 %) in kmetije/dejavnosti (17 %). Poti in točke posvečene kulinaričnim izdelkom se pojavljajo le v 2 % vseh primerov.

V fazi, ki je sledila, smo analizirali naslednjih deset kulinaričnih izkušenj (slika 1; preglednica 2): 6 kulinaričnih dogodkov (Praznik polente, Praznik kostanja, Praznik vina in pršuta, Praznik kakijev, B'rstovsko špargljado, Festival vin in oljčnega olja), 2 kmetiji/dejavnosti s poudarkom na zasebnih strokovnih dejavnostih povezanih s hrano, ki jih promovirajo kot turistične dejavnosti (Turistična kmetija Butul in Ribogojnica Fonda), 1 storitev v povezavi s prehrabnimi izdelki (Domačija Belajevi) in 1 mrežo poti namenjeno hrani ali kulinarični ponudbi (Festival Brkinske sadne ceste).

### 3.1 Sodelovanje akterjev

Glede na preglednico 2 so večino izbranih kulinaričnih izkušenj organizirale **lokalne interesne skupine** (4 izkušnje) ter **lokalna javna uprava** (3 izkušnje) ob močni podpori lokalnih skupnosti in kmetov, ki so priskrbeli hrano in pijačo. Ostale 3 kulinarične izkušnje so organizirali **posamezni lokalni podjetniki**.

Kulinarične dogodke ali festivale v večini organizirajo lokalna turistična društva. Organizacijske naloge si pogosto delijo s strokovnimi združenji, kot sta na primer Društvo Brkinskih sadjarjev (v primeru Festivala Brkinske sadne ceste) in Kmetijska zadruga Vinakras (prvotno soorganizator Praznika terana in pršuta). Lokalne interesne skupine pogosto sodelujejo z lokalnimi oblastmi, zlasti ko iščejo primeren prostor za dogodek. Lokalni kmetje skrbijo za oskrbo s hrano: *vinogradniki* v primeru Praznika terana in pršuta, *sadjarji* v primeru Festivala Brkinske sadne ceste, *kmetije*, ki gojijo kakije, v primeru Praznika kakijev ter *pridelovalci vina in oljk* v primeru Festivala vin in oljk. Lokalni podjetniki se pogosto povezujejo z lokalnimi ponudniki hrane – kar 40 se jih povezuje s Turistično kmetijo Butul; Ribogojnica

*Preglednica 2: Izbrane kulinarične izkušnje po tipih in glavnih organizatorjih na območju slovenskega Sredozemlja.*

tip dogodka	DOGODEK	POT	KMETIJA/ DEJAVNOST	STORITEV	TOČKA
časovni okvir	enkrat letno	enkrat letno	vse leto	vse leto	vse leto
tip organizatorja					
<b>lokalne interesne skupine (društva in nevladne organizacije)</b>	Praznik kostanja, Praznik kakijev, Praznik polente, B'rstovska špargljada	/	/	/	/
<b>lokalna javna uprava</b>	Praznik terana in pršuta, Festival vin in oljčnega olja	Festival Brkinske sadne ceste	/	/	/
<b>posamezni lokalni podjetnik</b>	/	/	Turistična kmetija Butul, Ribogojnica Fonda	Domačija Belajevi	/



Kulinarična izkušnja	Sodelovanje akterjev											Vpetost v lokalno okolje										
	Izkušnja, ki jo organizira (kolektivna) organizacija	Izkušnja, ki jo organizira jasno določen lokalni koordinator	Prisotnost uradnega pisnega dokumenta	Vključenost lokalne javne uprave	Vključenost kmetov	Povezava z rokodelci	Povezava z okoljevarstveniki	Povezava z sektorjem energetike	Povezava s sektorjem za raziskave in razvoj	Izboljšava naravnih virov	Izboljšava kulturnih virov	Nesnovni viri/znanje	Sodelovanje lokalne skupnosti	Izvor/poreklo prehrabrenih izdelkov	Sezonska hrana	Poreklo dobaviteljev	Poreklo obiskovalcev					
Praznik polente	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					
Praznik kostanja	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					
Praznik terana in pršuta	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-					
Festival Brkinske sadne ceste	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-					
Turistična kmetija Butul	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-					
Domačija Belajevi	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-					
Praznik kakijev	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-					
B'rstovska špargljada	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	-					
Ribogojnica Fonda	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-					
Festival vin in oljčnega olja	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					

Slika 2: Ocena kulinaričnih izkušenj glede na sodelovanje akterjev, vpetost v lokalno okolje in sistem certificiranja.

Fonda sodeluje s kmetijami, ki pridelujejo vino, oljčno olje in zelenjavo. Praznik kakijev sodeluje s Krajskim parkom Strunjan in uporablja njegovo geografsko označbo. Strokovne ter ekonomsko naravnane dejavnosti in storitve povezane s prehrabrenimi izdelki običajno ponujajo posamezni lokalni podjetniki. Kot je razvidno iz slike 2, sodelovanje med različnimi sodelujočimi v večini primerov (v 8 od 10) ne temelji na pisnih dogovorih, temveč ustnih. Občine, ki sodelujejo pri pripravi Festivala Brkinske sadne ceste, so morale sprejeti uredbo glede turističnih poti, Turistična kmetija Butul pa vsako leto pripravi delovni načrt, ki jim pomaga bogatiti in tudi presepati cilje.

Prepoznali smo tudi povezave organizatorjev kulinaričnih izkušenj z rokodelci. Rokodelstvo se najpogosteje nanaša na izdelovalce kuhinjskih pripomočkov in organizatorje tovrstnih delavnic – ročno izdelavo lesenih, kamnitih ali keramičnih izdelkov. Dve skupini rokodelcev svoje izdelke prinašata tudi na kulinarične dogodke ali poskrbita za spremljevalne dogodke (na primer kuhinjski seti za kuhanje polente na Prazniku polente; skleda in krožniki iz kamna, ki jih lahko vidimo na Prazniku terana in pršuta ter na dogodkih Domačije Belajevi; slika 3).

Slika 3: Rokodelstvo igra pomembno vlogo pri predstavitvi kulinarične dediščine in kulinaričnih izdelkov na dogodkih, ki jih organizirajo na Domačiji Belajevi.

Glej angleški del prispevka.

Znotraj sektorja za raziskave in razvoj je poudarek na sodelovanju z regionalnimi ter mednarodnimi visokošolskimi in razvojnimi inštitucijami. Domačija Belajevi denimo sodeluje s Kmetijskim in gozdarskim inštitutom iz Nove Gorice ter Parkom Škocjanske jame; Ribogojnica Fonda sodeluje z Morsko biološko postajo Piran in drugimi morskimi raziskovalnimi organizacijami v regiji; Turistična kmetija Butul sodeluje z Univerzo na Primorskem; Praznik terana in pršuta pa s študenti oblikovanja kamna z Višje strokovne šole v Sežani. Povezav z okoljskim in energetskim sektorjem nismo zabeležili.

Pri kulinarčnih izkušnjah, ki smo jih analizirali, smo opazili, da pridobivanje uradnih certifikatov, ki izkazujejo kakovost, ni prioriteta naloga. Le v enem primeru (Praznik kakijev) imajo kmetije, ki dobavljajo sadje za ta kulinarčni dogodek, certifikate za organsko pridelavo in kmetovanje. V tem kontekstu je treba omeniti, da nekateri organizatorji, na primer Brkinska sadna cesta, Turistična kmetija Butul, Domačija Belajevi, Praznik kakijev in Ribogojnica Fonda, sodelujejo ali so povezani s ponudniki hrane in pijače, ki prihajajo iz zaščitene območij, kot so krajinski ali regionalni parki, Natura 2000 in območja pod zaščito Unesca, sami pa kljub temu ne razmišljajo o tem, da bi pridobili katerega od certifikatov.

### 3.2 Vpetost v lokalno okolje

Z namenom razumevanja vpetosti kulinarčnih izkušenj v lokalno okolje, smo proučili izboljšavo naravnih, kulturnih in nesnovnih virov oziroma znanja, vključenost lokalne skupnosti ter poreklo prehranjenih proizvodov, ter tudi poreklo dobaviteljev hrane in pijače ter obiskovalcev (slika 2).

Med preučevanjem izboljšave **naravnih virov** smo ugotovili, da je največkrat poudarek na ohranjanju ter sajenju starih vrst sadja, zelenjave in zelišč ter njihovi tradicionalni rabi v prehrani. V nekaterih primerih se je kot pomembna pokazala tudi promocija biotske raznovrstnosti (na primer suhih kraških travnikov in bentosa morsklega dna v bližini ekološke ribogojnice). Skoraj vse kulinarčne izkušnje vključujejo sezonsko hrano (na primer Praznik polente, Praznik kostanja, Turistična kmetija Butul, Praznik kakijev, Ribogojnica Fonda, Festival vin in oljčnega olja). Na Festivalu Brkinske sadne ceste in Domačiji Belajevi je več kot tri četrtine hrane sezonske. Več kot polovica hrane na Prazniku terana in pršuta in B'rstovski špargljadi je sezonske. V okviru izboljšave naravnih virov smo se posvetili tudi upravljanju z odpadki. Ločevanje odpadkov poteka povsod, razen na Prazniku kostanja, Festivalu Brkinske sadne ceste in B'rstovski špargljadi. Največ pozornosti ločevanju odpadkov posvečajo na Turistični kmetiji Butul, kjer nikoli ne uporabljajo plastike za enkratno uporabo, ne na kmetiji, niti na mobilnih kulinarčnih dogodkih, na katerih sodelujejo. Na dogodkih porabljajo izključno biorazgradljiv pribor, posodo in lončke za enkratno uporabo. V Ribogojnici Fonda obiskovalce prosijo, naj embalažo za ribe iz polistirena vračajo, da jo lahko ponovno uporabijo.

V povezavi s **kulturnimi viri** so izpostavljene naslednje spremljevalne dejavnosti: ohranjanje kulturne pokrajine, zeliščarstvo, vključevanje ne-strojnega dela in rokodelstvo (na primer oblikovanje kamna in tradicionalna gradnja hiš iz kamna), vključevanje umetnosti in kulture (na primer poezije in fotografije).

Prepoznali smo tudi naslednje **vire znanja**: *pripravo hrane, pri kateri se tradicionalno znanje o pripravi hrane združuje s sodobnimi pristopi* (na primer sladice iz polente in kostanja, inovativna raba zelišč med kuhanjem), *sodelovanje z rokodelci in obrtniki*, ki uporabljajo les, kamen ali glino ter organizirajo delavnice, na katerih udeležence učijo, kako ustvariti lastne izdelke, *pomoč brezposelnim z vključevanjem v programe rokodelstva*, katerih izdelki se lahko uporabljajo v gastronomiji, *sodelovanje s kmetijskimi svetovalci* (predavanja o vzgoji sadnih dreves), *tradicionalni ljudski plesi in ponovno odkrivanje tradicionalnega znanja o ekologiji*. Vsi dogodki prispevajo k promociji in večji prepoznavnosti mest, krajev, širše regije in Slovenije v tujini.

Prav tako smo prepoznali močno **vključenost lokalne skupnosti** v kulinarčne izkušnje. Sodelujoči v tem smislu so lahko posamezni prostovoljci, društva in združenja (turistična (slika 4), lovska in balinarska, društva kmečkih žena), kmetje, čebelarji, folklorne skupine in podobno. Izkušnje pogosto dobijo

finančno podporo prek lokalnih razpisov namenjenih razvoju in promociji turizma (Občina Piran na primer subvencionira 10 % vseh stroškov organizacije Praznika kakijev). Štiri kulinarične izkušnje so še posebej pozorne na obiskovalce iz lokalnih skupnosti z gibalnimi omejitvami. Del Festivala Brkinske sadne ceste je prilagojen tudi za otroke. Na Prazniku kakijev prodajajo izdelke tudi invalidne osebe. Enako je v Ribogojnici Fonda. Najbolj vključujoča izkušnja v tem smislu pa je Turistična kmetija Butul, ki vključuje člane lokalne skupnosti z najrazličnejšimi invalidnostmi (kot so na primer duševno prizadeti, gibalno ovirani in slabovidni). Kmetija organizira tudi delavnice za otroke iz lokalnih šol ter športnike in druge osebe iz lokalnih društev, ki imajo posebne prehranske potrebe.

*Slika 4: Člani lokalnega turističnega društva so najpomembnejši akterji na Prazniku polente. Glej angleški del prispevka.*

**Poreklo** vsaj 80 % **hrane** na skoraj vseh kulinaričnih izkušnjah, ki smo jih preučili, izhaja iz lokalnih območij – v oddaljenosti manj kot 50 km od dogodka. Nekatere sestavine prihajajo iz krajev, ki so oddaljeni več kot 50 km, vendar še vedno izvirajo iz slovenskega Sredozemlja (na primer oljčno olje, sol, sadje in zelenjava iz Primorske ali drugih delov Slovenije). Z bolj oddaljenih krajev pripotujejo le nekatere sestavine, ki so dodatki k določenim marmeladam, medu in siru ter jih ni mogoče najti v lokalnem okolju (to so tropske začimbe in zelišča, kot na primer črni čaj in cimet). Turistična kmetija Butul sodeluje s sirarjem na Idrski planini na Matajurju v Julijskih Alpah. Poreklo lokalne hrane v primeru Festivala vin in oljčnega olja je le 60 %, saj so nanj povabljeni tudi pridelovalci vin iz Italije in drugih območij Slovenije.

Ko smo preučevali **poreklo obiskovalcev**, smo opazili velike razlike med kulinaričnimi izkušnjami. Specifičnost kulinaričnih izkušenj običajno pritegne ljudi iz bolj oddaljenih območij, saj njihova prepoznavnost presega meje lokalnega območja. Najvišji delež lokalnih obiskovalcev (iz krajev, ki so oddaljeni največ 50 km) imajo Praznik polente, Praznik kostanja, Festival vin in oljčnega olja (vsi okoli 70 %) ter Festival Brkinske sadne ceste (50 %). Kulinarične izkušnje z najnižjim deležem lokalnih obiskovalcev pa so na drugi strani Praznik terana in pršuta (40 %), B'rstovska špargljada (20 %), Praznik kakijev (15 %), Turistična kmetija Butul in Ribogojnica Fonda (10 %) ter Domačija Belajevi (2 %).

### 3.3 Pomen inovacij

Inovativnost smo preučevali skozi dožemanje organizatorjev, kaj so inovativni vidiki kulinaričnih izkušenj, ki jih pripravljajo. Pomemben vidik je bila **kreativna (ponovna) uporaba tradicionalnih receptov za jedi, ki temeljijo na prezrtih ali pozabljenih lokalnih sestavinah**. Primeri tega so lokalne vrste koruze, iz katere delajo moko za pripravo polente, različne vinske sorte, lokalne vrste kostanjev, oljk, hrušk, jablan, sliv, oreščkov, višenj in češenj iz starih sadovnjakov. Poleg že omenjenih vrst je treba omeniti tudi kaki, ki so ga pomorščaki z Daljnega Vzhoda tu predstavili v začetku 20. stoletja. Sadež danes obravnavamo kot lokalno vrsto, ki sooblikuje regionalno identiteto.

Pomemben vidik inovativnosti kulinaričnih izkušenj je **ponudba tradicionalnih jedi, ki so pripravljene na nov in sodoben način**. Na Praznikih polente in kostanja polento ter kostanj postrežejo kot sladico, tradicionalno pa sta bila del glavne jedi. Kraški šetraj (latinsko *Satureja montana*) se je kot zelišče v preteklosti uporabljal v zdravstvene namene, na Domačiji Belajevi pa so ga začeli uporabljati v kulinariki. Na Turistični kmetiji Butul so razvili sire z dodatki vinskega kamna in črnega čaja. V njihovem cvetličnem medu je tudi ingver in cvet muškatanega oreščka, za marmelado in sirup pa uporabljajo divjo limono. Zanimiv vidik inovativnosti je lahko tudi postrežba hrane. Na Turistični kmetiji Butul **hrano postrežejo s pomočjo lastnih, oblikovalskih izdelkov** (škatel, krožnikov, pladnjev) izdelanih iz kartona, kamna ali lesa. Ni pomembno le kako, temveč tudi **kje je hrana postrežena**, kar je prav tako lahko inovativni element kulinaričnih izkušenj – goste lahko denimo sprejmemo tudi pri mizi sredi vinograda, oljčnega nasada ali zeliščnega vrta, tam kjer je hrana pridelana, ali pa na tipičnem kamnitem kraškem dvorišču.

Naslednji inovativen vidik je aktivno  **vključevanje obiskovalcev v kulinarčno izkušnjo skozi pedagoško delo**. Festival Brkinske sadne ceste na sadjarskih kmetijah ponuja »družinsko izkušnjo«, v sklopu katere družine pomagajo pri kmečkih opravilih, obirajo jabolka ali sodelujejo na delavnicah priprave izdelkov iz zelišč.

Na Turistični kmetiji Butul so iznašli **nov pristop k sodelovanju z lokalnimi pridelovalci hrane**, ki ga je kot inovativnega prepoznala širša javnost – leta 2018 je kmetija prejela nagrado »*Slovenia's hidden gems 2018*« (Skriti zakladi Slovenije 2018) za pripravo dvodnevne kulinarčne poti »*Mediterranean flavours of Slovenian Istria*« (Sredozemski okusi slovenske Istre).

*Slika 5: Študentje z Univerze gastronomskih ved Pollenzo, Italija (Università di Scienze Gastronomiche di Pollenzo) med zapisovanjem informacij med predstavitvijo na Turistični kmetiji Butul. Glej angleški del prispevka.*

Inovativnost se izraža tudi skozi **ozaveščanje in prenos znanja**. V Ribogojnici Fonda obiskovalci spoznavajo, kako kakovostno in trajnostno je gojenje brancinov (slika 6). V ribogojnici ne uporabljajo kemičnih sredstev za uničevanje alg na mrežah ribogojnice, namesto tega jih čistijo ročno. Za ribe uporabljajo hrano najvišje kakovosti, zato je gojenje rib počasnejše v primerjavi z masovno proizvodnjo rib. Na ta način obiskovalce (potrošnike) spodbudijo, da plačajo več za Piranskega brancina Fonda in podprejo butično, trajnostno pridelavo, namesto da kupijo gojene ribe iz ribogojnic večjega formata. Ribogojnica Fonda je inovacijo nadgradila z registracijo blagovne znamke Piranski brancin Fonda. To je prvi primer »lokalne teritorialne blagovne znamke za gojeno ribo« v Jadranskem morju, verjetno pa tudi na svetovni ravni, s čimer se ustvarja z morjem povezan »*merroir*«, izpeljanka na zemljo vezanega izraza »*terroir*« (Giacomelli 2005).

Domačija Belajevi ponuja delavnice, ki jih vodijo strokovnjaki za zdravo življenje. Turistična kmetija Butul je bila vključena v oblikovanje številnih lokalnih kulinarčnih pobud, ki so se razvile v pomembne regionalne kulinarčne dogodke. Največji od teh je Sladka Istra, mednarodni festival sladkosti in sladkih izdelkov v Kopru – največji tovrstni dogodek v Sloveniji in drugi največji turistični dogodek v Občini Koper (Jerman in Vodeb 2018). Od leta 2014 je Turistična kmetija Butul učni center Univerze gastronomskih ved Pollenzo, Italija (slika 5), ki jo je ustanovila organizacija *Slow Food*. Študentje se lahko prijavijo na pripravništvo, dvakrat na leto pa je organizirana tudi tedenska kulinarčna ekskurzija po Sloveniji. Pri pripravi delavnic na kmetiji sodelujejo z Zavodom za razvoj in raziskovanje gostinskih in kmetijskih dejavnosti SloVino iz Maribora. Prav tako svoje goste spodbujajo k razmisleku o hrani, ki jo jejo in s tem začenejo delati majhne korake v smeri zdravega prehranjevanja. Njihovi gostje na kulinarčnih delavnicah sodelujejo pri pripravi hrane.

*Slika 6: Trajnostno gojenje brancina v Ribogojnici Fonda zahteva več ročnega dela in tehničnih prilagoditev. Glej angleški del prispevka.*

## 4 Diskusija

Pričujoča študija temelji na desetih izbranih primerih kulinarčnih izkušenj. Čeprav prispeva k znanstvenemu diskurzu o potencialu kulinarčnih izkušenj pri ohranjanju trajnostnega razvoja na ruralnem območju sredozemskega dela Slovenije, smo se izogibali posplošitvam. Znanstveni prispevek je pojasnjen v štirih pod poglavjih v nadaljevanju.

### 4.1 Vzvodi učinkovitega sodelovanja akterjev

Predhodna študija je pokazala, da obstaja povezava med tipi kulinarčnih izkušenj in tipi organizatorjev. Kaže se, da so organizatorji motivirani na različne načine, kar vodi k izbiri različnih tipov

dogodkov. Za interesne skupine, ki so pogosto povezane s pridelavo določene hrane ali pijače (na primer vina in pršuta) in z lokalno javno upravo, je običajno pomembno, da organizirajo kulinarični festival, na katerem želijo predstaviti lastne proizvode, kraje in lokalno dediščino. Lokalne interesne skupine in lokalna javna uprava pogosto sodelujejo; interesne skupine na primer poskrbijo za vsebino nekega dogodka, javna uprava pa krije stroške organizacije. Na drugi strani pa so posamezni podjetniki, ki želijo ustvarjati dobiček, zato organizirajo plačljiva predavanja o prehrani in načinih prehranjevanja, kuharske tečaje, posebne obroke in druge storitve povezane s hrano. Kadar organizirajo kulinarični dogodek, le-ta poteka v manjšem obsegu in je namenjen manjšemu številu obiskovalcev, ki dogodek plačajo.

Kulinarične izkušnje pa ne pomenijo le sodelovanja med glavnimi akterji (interesnimi skupinami, javno upravo, podjetniki). Ti akterji so močno povezani tudi z lokalnimi kmeti in rokodelci. Vloga rokodelstva je predvsem podpora avtentičnemu značaju kulinarične izkušnje. S sektorjem raziskav in razvoja se v glavnem povezujejo posamezni podjetniki, povezave pa lahko izražajo (1) željo po širšem razumevanju, razvoju in ustvarjanju nečesa novega ter v zadnjem času tudi željo po boljšem naslavljanju trajnostnih vidikov, ali (2) pripravljenost za učenje iz prakse (na primer študijski obiski in študentska praksa).

Pri organizaciji kulinaričnih izkušenj se akterji izogibajo formalnemu sodelovanju in pretirani birokraciji, raje se zanašajo na že vzpostavljena neformalna lokalna poznanstva in zaupanje. V povezavi s sistemi certificiranja pa so organizatorji kulinaričnih izkušenj poudarili, da se držijo priporočil in standardov številnih certifikatov, da pa bi postopek pridobitve katerega od certifikatov zanje pomenil preveč birokratskega dela. Prav tako so izpostavili, da je izgradnja zaupanja med njimi, njihovimi dobavitelji hrane in pijače ter obiskovalci, ob tem ko sledijo standardom kakovosti, zanje pomembnejša od pridobivanja uradnih nazivov.

#### 4.2 Umeščenost kulinaričnih izkušenj v lokalni kontekst

Vseh deset analiziranih primerov je globoko umeščenih v lokalni kontekst. Hrana potuje kratke razdalje, večinoma je sezonska, temelji pa na lokalni kmetijski pridelavi. Praksa ravnanja z odpadki je dobra, čeprav bi na splošno kulinarične izkušnje lahko naredile več, da bi se izognile plastiki za enkratno uporabo. Pretirana uporaba plastičnih potrebščin (pribora, krožnikov in kozarcev) na nekaterih festivalih, predstavlja grožnjo ohranjanju naravnih virov in okolja ter splošnemu družbenemu cilju – zmanjšanju uporabe neobnovljive energije. Organizatorji bi lahko kupovali biorazgradljive pripomočke za enkratno uporabo, vendar so ti zaradi ekonomije obsega še vedno občutno dražji v primerjavi s plastičnimi, zato organizatorji njihovi uporabi niso naklonjeni. Izbrane kulinarične izkušnje sodelujejo pri ohranjanju tradicionalnega znanja, rokodelstva, ročni izdelavi izdelkov in kulturne pokrajine. Preučevane izkušnje prispevajo tudi k prenosu lokalnega znanja na dejavnosti, ki so povezane s hrano. Močno vključevanje lokalne skupnosti finančno podpira javna uprava. Kljub močni lokalni vpetosti kulinaričnih izkušenj, te na splošno privabljajo obiskovalce ne le iz regije, temveč tudi iz drugih delov države ter tujine.

Glede na stopnjo lokalnosti, velikost in vpliv izbranih kulinaričnih izkušenj, jih lahko razdelimo v tri skupine:

- *izkušnje manjšega obsega, ki temeljijo na prostovoljnem delu lokalne skupnosti*: te imajo lokalni značaj, podpirajo jih lokalne interesne skupine. Ves dobiček se uporabi za upravljanje lokalnih društev, organizacije enake izkušnje prihodnje leto in promocijo tipičnih lokalnih proizvodov ali celotne izkušnje. Te izkušnje prispevajo k večji prepoznavnosti skupnosti in večanju socialnega kapitala;
- *izkušnje manjšega obsega, ki jih organizirajo lokalni podjetniki*: te izkušnje imajo specifičen značaj, njihov glavni cilj pa je kakovost. Temeljijo na bogatih izkušnjah in socialnih mrežah izjemno angažiranih posameznikov;
- *izkušnje večjega obsega ali profesionalizirane izkušnje*: te izkušnje so uspešnejše v smislu promocije in ustvarjanja prihodkov. Te izkušnje prodajajo predvsem tradicijo.



### 4.3 Inovativnost kulinaričnih izkušenj

Inovativnost igra pomembno vlogo pri zagotavljanju uspeha kulinaričnih izkušenj. Prepoznali smo številne vidike inovativnosti: kreativno (ponovno) uporabo tradicionalnih receptov za jedi, ki temeljijo na lokalnih sestavinah, predstavitev tradicionalnih jedi na edinstven, sodoben in privlačen način, nove pristope sodelovanja z lokalnimi proizvajalci hrane in v gostinstvu, pri postrežbi hrane na/v lastnih, oblikovalskih izdelkih, vključevanje obiskovalcev v kulinarično izkušnjo in prenos znanja. Ti vidiki niso nujno izvirni; v mnogih primerih izhajajo od drugod, a vendar smo ugotovili, da so bili uspešno prilagojeni za lokalno raven. Med vsemi prepoznanimi inovacijami sta dve še posebej zanimivi: (1) partnerstvo med proizvajalcem tradicionalnega izdelka (na primer sirarjem iz planine) in lokalnim podjetnikom, ki pripravlja kulinarične izkušnje, in (2) prenos znanja, ki pomeni prilagoditev tradicionalne gastronomije sodobnim potrebam gostov (brezglutensko, vegansko) in oblikovanje novih jedi. To le še poudarja, kako splošno pomembna je inovativnost v gastronomiji.

### 4.4 Omejitve študije

Glavna omejitev študije je definicija termina »kulinarična izkušnja«, ki presega zgolj uživanje hrane v restavraciji, čeprav lahko zelo dobro restavracijo prav tako uvrščamo med kulinarične izkušnje. Pri oblikovanju baze podatkov smo se osredotočili na dogodke, ki so »več kot le hrana« – so »izkušnja«. Deset kulinaričnih izkušenj smo izbrali naključno.

## 5 Sklep

Kulinarčni turizem kot ekonomski sektor je v ruralnem delu sredozemske Slovenije v porastu. V preteklosti so se prebivalci v opredeljenih območjih spopadali s težkimi naravnimi pogoji, redkimi možnostmi zaposlitve, nizkimi plačami in privlačno idejo, da bi zapustili ruralno območje ter se preselili v obmorska ali druga urbana območja, ali celo v tujino. Lokalni prebivalci so postali izjemno odvisni od skromnih naravnih virov in so razvili močno lokalno identiteto. Tako jim je uspelo ohraniti specifične jedi, ki temeljijo pretežno na lokalnih pridelkih. V današnjem času globalnih trendov poskušajo te jedi vključevati v kulinarično ponudbo.

Naša študija je pokazala, da mora uspešna kulinarčna izkušnja izpolnjevati vse tri pogoje: sodelovanje akterjev iz lokalnega okolja, močno vpetost izkušnje v lokalno skupnost in inovativnost pristopov. Ključ do uspeha je v inovativni predstavitvi hrane, ki hkrati ohranja tradicionalne elemente. Obenem morajo te sodobne interpretacije temeljiti na lokalni identiteti prebivalcev.

Pomemben potencial se nahaja v (1) lokalnih interesnih skupinah, lokalnih skupnostih in lokalnih javnih upravah, ki lahko, če med seboj sodelujejo, kulinarično dediščino spremenijo v visokokakovosten marketinški produkt, in v (2) redkih, vendar drznih podjetnikih, ki ustvarjajo izjemno cenjene kulinarične izkušnje manjšega obsega, temelječe na lastnem strokovnem znanju in predanosti. Obe skupini sta ključni v smislu postavitve Slovenije na svetovni zemljevid kulinaričnih izkušenj.

Izkušnje iz te študije lahko pripomorejo tudi k izboljšanju drugih in bodočih kulinaričnih izkušenj v regiji ter tudi v drugih delih Slovenije. To je še posebej pomembno, ker se bo leta 2021 Slovenija predstavila kot Evropska gastronomska regija. Obenem pa lahko ugotovitve študij primera pomembno prispevajo k oblikovanju strategij, ki spodbujajo razvoj trajnostnega turizma v območjih Sredozemlja.

*Zahvala: Avtorji se zahvaljujemo Evropskemu skladu za regionalni razvoj za finančno podporo projektu MEDFEST (Sredozemska kulinarčno dediščinska izkušnja: kako ustvariti trajnostne turistične destinacije) ter Javni agenciji za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije za finančno podporo raziskovalnima*

*programoma Geografija Slovenije (P6-0101) in Dediščina na obrobjih: novi pogledi na dediščino in identiteto znotraj in onkraj nacionalnega (P5-0408).*

*Zahvaljujemo se tudi Primožu Gašperiču, Matjažu Geršiču, Maji Topole in Mancij Volk Bahun za zbiranje podatkov ter terensko delo. Še posebno se zahvaljujemo informatorjem, ki so posredovali dragocene informacije za deset izbranih kulinaričnih izkušenj; to so: Tina Simonič (Turistično društvo Ozeljan-Šmihel), Marko Kompara (Kulturno turistično društvo Vitovlje), Ana Hrast (TIC Sežana), Gianfranco Giassi (Turistično društvo solinar, Strunjan), Irena Švigelj (Turistično društvo Brest, Brestovica), Dejana Baša (TIC Nova Gorica), Tatjana and Mitja Butul (Turistična kmetija Butul), Andrejka Cerkvenik (Domačija Belajevi), Irena Fonda (Ribogojnica Fonda) in Ester Mihalič (TIC Hrpelje-Kozina).*

## **6 Viri in literatura**

Glej angleški del prispevka.