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THE ROLE OF NATIONAL CUISINE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN AZERBAIJAN

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Abstract

Research purpose: Culinary heritage is part of the tourist experience, and it is precisely the aspect of nutrition in tourism that has a basic ethnic-geographical approach, since the food interests the tourist not so much from the point of view of the technology of its preparation, but as a phenomenon of everyday culture which develops in certain geographical conditions. National cuisine is closely interrelated with other aspects of life, which reflect the relationship of people in society, norms, and behaviours that are traditional for a given nation. Therefore, it is necessary to study the influence of the local cuisine and culinary traditions on the development of tourism. The aim of the study is to reveal the potential of the national cuisine in the tourism sector of Azerbaijan.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, national cuisine, tourism, traditions, food.

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The ethnic cuisine - one of the components of history and material culture of the people. The cookery is an important factor of involvement of foreign tourists to this or that country. It is confirmed by the fact that in culinary art national peculiarities and traditions of the people which are always interesting to the representative of this or that country strongly remain. The tourists travelling all over the world, certainly, wish to try traditional local dishes of that country which they visit. Therefore, one of the most important aspects of the development of tourist service in the country is an acquaintance of tourists with features of traditional food of the local people and development of the services industry in this direction.

It is very important to note that the culinary heritage makes a part of the tourist experience. The aspect of food in tourism has a basic ethnogeographical approach as food interests the tourist not so much from the point of view of the technology of her preparation and as the phenomenon of the household culture developing in certain geographical conditions. The ethnic cuisine is in close interrelation with other aspects of life which reflect the relationship of people in society, norms and the forms of behavior traditional for this nation. Therefore, now there is a need for a research of influence of the system of local cuisine and culinary traditions on tourism development.

Azerbaijan - the ancient country, with amazingly beautiful and various nature, the hospitable people, original culture and centuries-old traditions. Azerbaijan cuisine one of the most interesting and rich in the countries of Transcaucasia and deservedly uses broad popularity. About two thousand dishes of Azerbaijan cuisine are very well known. Even according to the English traveller Antoni Dzhenicson in Shamakha during his visit to Abdullah khan was given first 150 variety of dishes, and

later on have removed and have brought 140 more dishes.

For example, about 200 types of pilaf, 20 types of dolma, 20 types of kebab, etc. are very well known. Azerbaijan since ancient times uses meat large horned and small cattle, wild and pets and also meat and eggs of domestic and wild birds. The Caspian Sea, the Kura River, Araz and others, the lakes Goygol, Dzheyranbatan, Goychay and others have enriched our kitchen with amazing fish dishes.

Of course such a big variety can't escape eyes and the tourist's ears, he, definitely, will want to try all this.

The refinement and delicate aroma of dishes of Azerbaijan cuisine are to the taste to the most experienced gourmets coming to the republic from the different countries of the world. "Nush Olsun!" — "Bon appetit!" — so speak in any corner of Azerbaijan, hospitably inviting guests by a plentiful feast.

The ethnic cuisine of the Azerbaijani people quite strongly differs from the kitchen of other people in Caucasus. Practising Islam, Azerbaijanians in the food adhere to certain traditions.

The religion has made many amendments and restrictions to the menu of Azerbaijan. Pork is the forbidden meat, and to eat it, means to make a great sin, therefore, she is successfully replaced with lamb, beef, fowl and fish.

Regions of Azerbaijan differ in culinary addictions and have own house specialities. For example, in Lankaran, it is possible to be indulged with the chicken stuffed with nuts. It is baked in the tandoor. Residents of Absheron are famous for the love to a dyushbara and kutab, Shaki is well-known for a local dish which is called Pity, and the capital of the country – Baku – is well-known for a dish of a gyurza.

Foods of the Azerbaijan ethnic cuisine differ in high flavouring and nutritious qualities. Wide circulation in the country and beyond her limits such dishes as, kyufta-bozbash - broth with large meat and rice balls with peas potatoes have received, a dovga - sour milk greens soup, the well-known kebab.

Azerbaijan cuisine for centuries was formed under the influence of a special geographical location, a close arrangement of various climatic zones with their mountains, the sea, the woods and plains, having caused an abundance of meat, fish and vegetable dishes and also sweets, unique to taste. All dishes are complemented with fragrant greens and spices; at the same time, they are distinguished by beautiful appearance.

Widely apply lemons, olives, olives, cherry plum, dried apricots to the improvement of flavouring properties of dishes.

From grain products, Azerbaijanians prefer oblong bread and a lavash (thin flat cakes) - the bread baked in the tandoor. We will note that during the meeting of the eleventh session of intergovernmental committee on protection of non-material cultural heritage of UNESCO which has passed in the capital of Ethiopia to Addis Ababa "The culture of preparation of a thin bread – a lavash, a katyrma, a zhupka, a yufka", he has been entered in the list of representative non-material cultural heritage of UNESCO. The lavash was fixed in the territory of Azerbaijan as from time immemorial the settled population cultivated wheat here. In the territory of the republic even one of the most ancient tandoor where baked bread has remained.

This type of bread is mentioned in the book by the famous Turkish philologist of the eleventh century Mahmoud al-Kashkari where it is specified that in those days in Azerbaijan cooked thin bread. Besides, about lavashes, it has been written in Kitabi Dede Gorgud where they appear under the name "bozlamadj". Already in the twelfth century Nizami Ganjavi wrote about baking of white flat cake "ag lavash". Lavash as inherent in this region in a type of bread, it is told in separate works of other historians.

Azerbaijan cuisine not only tasty but also useful - not for nothing many people of the long-livers who have passed a centenary boundary live here. Traditionally the region of long-livers in our country southeast part where Lankararan district is located is considered, namely – a zone of the Talysh Mountains. However, the high index of longevity is noted also in some Areas of Nakhichevan are in Gazakh and Shamakhi zones. According to the State Committee on Statistics of the Azerbaijan Republic in 2018 70 years are more senior than aged people over 386000 people are extra charged. [7]

There is a wish to acquaint readers, with some customs of the Azerbaijani people connected with cookery. The Azerbaijani people have an ancient custom: even it is impossible to leave the late and uninvited guest behind a door - it is necessary to welcome and treat. Whether in prosperity there lives a host whether in need, but the entertainment for the guest at him will always be.

Another very popular and ancient custom: never to turn away from the person with whom I have refracted a piece of bread - bread and salt in Azerbaijan are sacred.

The interest of regions in the development of culinary tourism isn't surprising, according to the *World Tourism Organization* not less than a half of tourists at the choice of the vacation spot consider important a factor of tasty, qualitative local cuisine which dishes meet strict environmental standards

Having convinced of real opportunities of the Azerbaijani national cookery (it should be noted that it is necessary to try all dishes of different corners in our country) it is necessary to pay attention to a condition of tourism of Azerbaijan and influence of the ethnic cuisine on her development.

It should be noted that, since 2012, the strong jump in tourist flow has gone to our country and to interest in national cuisine. From that year Azerbaijan has begun to attract tourists from abroad. The fact that Azerbaijan "Eurovision" has been for the first time held has affected on it.

In September 2012, the experts who have gathered on the International Conference on a gastronomy, culture and tourism have said that the gastronomy plays an important role in the development of tourism and can become a support for growth. The experts who have arrived in Baku from the sphere of tourism, culture and a gastronomy, have emphasized that the gastronomy is an important component of tourist impressions and in percentage terms, her weight constantly grows in the total amount of tourist expenses. The importance of gastronomic tourism has been also confirmed in the Global report of UNWTO on gastronomic tourism submitted at the Conference.

Tasty Azerbaijani food - one of the first features which tourists want to open when arriving in the Country of Fire. It isn't surprising, considering that local food is famous around the world for the tastes and healthy features. The advance of the ethnic cuisine in hotels and restaurants of Azerbaijan has to be made at a high level. It is claimed that though it is impossible to tell that the ethnic cuisine in hotels of Azerbaijan badly moves ahead, it could be made more effective.

According to the researchers conducted by the World Tourism Organization in 80 countries, visitors remember the country for 82 per cent because of the ethnic cuisine. It means what the menu of hotels and restaurants in Azerbaijan has to consist of a national dish for 82 per cent.

It should be noted that travellers to other countries are more inclined to try local dishes, but there are no own familiar national dishes. Therefore, for example, for Italians, it is better to eat local pilaf because it attracts them more than the pizza and paste. Respectively, when Azerbaijanians come home after the trip abroad, they always begin the stories with the description of local cuisine. Here for what it is necessary to focus attention on such detail.

Naturally, it doesn't mean that in the culinary sector of Azerbaijan there shouldn't be foreign dishes.

The marketing development strategy of culinary and tourist branch means the development of a complex of actions as a result of which the tourist capacity of this or that country, the region or the city becomes widely known, and the number of the tourists coming here from other countries as a result increases. On average for the last three years' inflow of tourists to the country has grown to 40%, and this considerable indicator is accepted by the World organization of tourism as the best.

At a present stage Azerbaijan State Tourism Agency participating in several tourist projects which interests first of all the largest tour operators, seeks to balance cooperation with many countries of Europe and Asia, considering at the same time a geopolitical position of Azerbaijan. Nowadays the subject projects such as "Dumas in the Caucasus", "The German Settlements in Azerbaijan", "Wine Tour" on the Kiev initiative, "A great Silk way" and the international cruise across the Caspian Sea with the visit of all countries of the pool are actively developed. [1] In these tours national dishes of Azerbaijan cuisine will strongly propagandize. There are already Germans, Turks, British at the tourist market of Azerbaijan. Results of their activity — modern tourist's objects (generally hotels) with the absolute or combined foreign capital. It concerns first of all those perspective projects which are included in the program of development of tourism.

In 2017 in the city of Baku, "The Baku shopping festival" has been carried out. The purpose of Baku shopping festival was a logical continuation of system work on improvement of the country image and to development of a country brand and an important element, undoubtedly, leading to further growth of appeal of the country to the international visitors. The carried-out with organizational support of Azerbaijan Convention Bureau, first Baku shopping festival started on April 10 and has lasted till May 10, 2017. It covered several directions at once — trade, tourism, the sphere of entertainments, fashion and cultures. Within the festival numerous shopping centres of the city offered guests special discounts, trademarks of Azerbaijan and a number of foreign countries have been on a large scale presented in points of temporary trade.

I was the main feature that on "The Baku shopping festival" that part of representations which was carried out to Icharishahar has been presented by a set of national dishes from different corners of the country. Wishing, in particular foreigners, could try Kutab, a tandoor, chicken in tandoor, shish kebabs, different sweets and national drinks, and many other dishes of the ethnic cuisine of Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijani tourist market is open and is exempted from all barriers. Annually in the republic from 25 to 50 hotels and hotels are under construction. The growth of a number of hotels in Azerbaijan, both local, and known hotel networks in the world, is an indicator of the appeal of the Azerbaijan market.

Rapid development of tours to the regions of Azerbaijan seems in the last years. Marketing specialists and advertising agencies advance products of travel agencies and tour operators to such areas as the Gusar, Khinalig, Ganja, Ismailli, Lakhich, even to mountainous areas and others. Such advertising can be seen on websites or on social networks like Facebook, Instagram.

We will note that in 2015, in November, there has taken place the international festival of pilaf in Azerbaijan. The main objective of holding a festival - acquaintance with features of national dishes of the different countries prepared from rice and also a representation to foreign guests of a crown dish of Azerbaijan cuisine - pilaf. In June 2016, on an action, carried out by the Center of national cookery, there was an opportunity to provide to guests from abroad different national dishes from the Azerbaijani history. On the presentation tasting the dishes having a 500-1000-year history have been presented.

In 2016 with the assistance of the Center of national cookery and Association of national cookery of Azerbaijan and also with the assistance of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Baku at Sarin restaurant there has taken place the bread festival. Bakers from more than twenty regions and the cities of the country – from Karabakh, Lachin, Ganja, Ismailli, Absheron, the Gusar, Astara, Zagatala, Balakan, Zangilan, Shaki, Imishli, Goychay, Agdash, etc. have participated in an action.

On the event also guests from Turkey, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan participated. In the hottest and fragrant festival, more than five hundred kinds of traditional bread and the tender, bakery and flour products have been presented. Guests were acquainted with traditions of preparation and production of bread, national compositions and to mugam sounded. Guests of it without exaggeration of a grandiose festive action have been struck with warmth and love, reigning in all territory of a holiday. All guests were treated with bread. Along with bread served cheese, oils, honey and tea to snack, national production

In 2017 in Khachmaz district the dolma festival, in - the second time organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan, the Executive power of Khachmaz district, the Center of national cookery and Association of national cookery of Azerbaijan has been held. At a festival, about 300 types of the Azerbaijani dolma from forty regions of the country have been presented.

It should be noted that the government and also the private organizations are interested in the development of national cookery of Azerbaijan. They put investments, adopt experiment of foreign countries on the development of culinary tourism, expand a field of activity, given the chance to prove to young chefs of the ethnic cuisine, create for this purpose favorable conditions. By these methods, our ethnic cuisine becomes known worldwide.

Today tourism is developing at a high pace in Azerbaijan. The country witnesses about three million annual foreign arrivals and thousands of domestic tourism visits.

Thanks to the wonderful climate of Azerbaijan, its culture, cuisine, nature, attractions, and diversity, more and more tourists visit the country every year. Also, the hospitality of Azerbaijani people, the capital with its super modern and ancient buildings draw the attention of all tourists visiting this South Caucasus country. The tourists mainly visit the most popular destinations - Baku, Gabala, Guba, and many other cities. [10]

| Number of arrived and departed tourists | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Indicator | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Total arrivals and departures (person) | 91961.0 | 92305.0 | 61965.0 | 53999.0 | 63423.0 |
| Arrivals (person) | 10605.0 | 10657.0 | 2009.0 | 8949.0 | 13455.0 |
| departures (person) | 81356.0 | 81648.0 | 59956.0 | 45050.0 | 49968.0 |

Today, the tourism industry in Azerbaijan is being formed in a new format. The state supports the development of this sphere. Measures are being taken to ensure that the tourism sector is profitable all year round. From this point of view, provision of privileges by entrepreneurs is envisaged, as well as conducting reforms in the field of transport and infrastructure. The main recommendation of the State Agency for Tourism for entrepreneurs is the provision of quality services.

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