

Article

# Events based on gastronomic traditions in West Hungary, in Győr-Moson-Sopron County

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**Abstract:** The transfer of knowledge and the preservation of traditions is passed down from generation to generation. The main objective of this study was to explore people's knowledge of the gastronomic heritage of the Kisalföld regions through an analysis of the county's (attendance to, decision-making and willingness to spend on food and beverages) taking place in the county, such as the Flavours of Szigetköz, the County Wines Festival, the Flavours of Rábaköz or Eszterházy Baroque Food Festival at Fertőd. A quantitative research was used to analyse the topic ( $N = 666$ ), the sample is not representative and the selection of respondents was random. Data were collected between 1 September 2023 and 31 October 2023 using electronic questionnaires shared on Google Drive. Data were processed using SPSS 25.0 and MS Office Excel in addition to the descriptive statistical data (modus, median, standard deviation), correlation, and crosstabulation analyses. Important research questions of the study were whether the respondents' place of respondents influences gastronomic awareness whether age determines willingness to travel to attend a gastronomy event, The most popular gastronomic event in the county was the Vegetables of Hanság Region (mean 3.35), and the least popular was the Szigetköz Flavours of Szigetköz festival (mean 3.01). The key finding of the study is that an essential aspect of sustainability for decision-makers is to know the characteristics of tourists (middle-aged female target group), to select and maximize the different program packages in the marketing of the offer, to distribute the traffic and to avoid mass tourism.

**Keywords:** events; gastronomy; heritage; Hungarian; sustainability

## 1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, various festivals have become increasingly popular in Hungary, with many of the events being based on the theme of the typical folk dishes of the region. These events present food in a very different way from before, as a communal experience, a source of entertainment, and a source of pleasure. The documented results of Hungarian food culture research of European significance support the efforts of traditional communities and event organizers. The local and regional monographs, which usually include chapters on nutrition and folk food, also help to document the regional characteristics of folk gastronomy. Whether these descriptions are from the 19th, 20th, or 21st century, they are often found in local gastronomic publications. They do not document changes, such as the decline in bread-making and milk processing, the simplification of pig feasts, changes in working tools, the innovation of preserving, and the switch to shopping in shops (Báti, 2011). In addition, the Hungaricum movement, which has gained momentum over the past decade, has contributed in many ways to the discovery and preservation of recipes for traditional foods. The tourism and catering subcategory of Hungarikums (Food Hungaricums are

renewed traditional food products with a historical past) currently includes fish soup from Baja, mutton stew from Karcag, Bratislava croissants, fish soup from Tisza, lángos and Hungarian goulash soup. Hobsbawm's (1983) apt conceptualization of invented tradition refers precisely to the phenomenon described above. The theory itself emerged in the wake of developments in Europe between 1870 and 1914 when folklore works were first recorded and consciously and massively collected. Hobsbawm distinguished between two main forms of discovery of tradition in the period he studied. On the one hand, profound and rapid social changes determined the mood of the period, with new traditions being created, but also the rediscovery of old ones in many localities. The specific mixture of these two elements has led to an effective structuring of social relations through social cohesion and the strengthening of a sense of identity (Hobsbawm, 1983).

The county has been inhabited since prehistoric times, but its heyday was in Roman times. Archaeological finds indicate a major agricultural center. In addition to the local authorities, various NGOs and cultural associations are nowadays responsible for the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage. The gastronomy of the area has been influenced in the past by the particular way of farming, which is due to its location on the Danube. Their special feature is the presence of floating pastoralism and the numerous fish species (Timaffy, 1998).

According to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (hereinafter HCSO), the number of inhabitants of Győr-Moson-Sopron County in 2024 0 to 14 years 69,731 people, 15 to 64 years 312,458 persons and over 65 years 91,057 (KSH, 2024). The county has 195,299 men over the age of 15, of which 76,955 are unmarried, 93,655 are married, 5908 are widowed and 18,781 are divorced. The number of women over 15 years of age in the county is 208,216, of which 57,421 are unmarried, 94,771 are married, 30,060 are widowed and 25,964 are divorced (KSH, 2024).

## **2. Literature review**

Gastronomy originates from the Greek words "gaster" and "nomos". This term was first seen in the French language and accepted as a "good eating art". The Concise Dictionary of the Hungarian Language defines it as: 'Expert knowledge of Food and Beverages, as well as the as liberal ability to join them; art of tasting; gastronomy .... II. The culinary art, cookery' (Juhász, et al., 2006, p. 435). Gastronomy is present in tourism on three levels. On the first level, for example, there are foods and drinks for guests. On the second level, the hosts offer programs, such as presenting new gastronomic trends. At the third level, attractions are linked to these, such as intellectual cultural heritage, or wine, or spirits, or chocolate festivals. The subject has been addressed by a number of researchers in gastronomic events in several locations, including Darabos et al. (2024), Gündüz et al. (2024), Trošt Lesić (2019).

According to Büyüksalvarci and Akkaya the "general definition of the festival; is a program of cultural events, celebrations, or fun conducted by a person, group, organization or union that is privately owned and outdoors" (Büyüksalvarci and Akkaya, 2018, p. 455).

The concept of tourism is a general term used to describe supply and demand, and has been and is used in many forms all over the world. Tourism can be categorized

in many ways, one of which is tourists' motivation, for example, gastro-visual, cultural-sport-political, professional, and leisure tourism. Other important factors are the origin of tourism, the number and age of tourists, the length of stay, the seasons, the type of accommodation, the means of transport used, and the sociological content. In many aspects, tourism has changed from its early roots to the present day, and digitalization at the beginning of the 21st century played a significant role in the transformation of the segment. Happ et al.'s 2020 study investigated the diffusion of tools and methods used by Hungarian consumers, mapping the digital consumption habits of Hungarians.

For tourism to develop, it needs to be made sustainable. Sustainable tourism is a new approach to tourism development that focuses on the preservation of the ecological environment, the protection of cultural heritage, the promotion of community economies, and social development (Chang et al., 2020). Sustainability is an important issue in all industries, including tourism, yet decision-makers are not sufficiently prepared and lack the requisite knowledge to make decisions related to sustainability. Most do not even know its exact meaning (Happ et al., 2023). Moreover, smartphones open up new perspectives in terms of marketing communication (Happ, 2013).

In the world of tourism, the importance of traditional local or regional potential has increased worldwide, especially in the context of strategies to preserve the values of villages and communities. As stated by Fandeli (2002), regional tourism development policies should be based on the paradigm present in the area. Villages that preserve traditional production processes can be seen as a strategic base, while their communities are strengthened in the process. According to Friedmann (1992), the three main resources of these collective initiatives are:

- 1) The social force that is based on information, knowledge, and skills and becomes an economic force.
- 2) It is the public power that gives all members of the community access to decision-making processes, especially those that affect the future.
- 3) It is a psychological force based on the resources of the individual and the community and is associated with a sense of self-confidence and pride.

The relationship between gastronomy and tourism is nowadays unquestionable, not only because eating out is an almost obligatory element of the tourist experience, but also because it is increasingly recognized as a context-dependent and evolving social practice. In some cultures, cooking is considered an art, and good cooks are considered artists. Throughout history, cookery books have been second only to the Bible in popularity as the most frequently printed source of information. As ideas about food spread, eating habits, and food patterns developed deep cultural meanings. Patterns that do not have deep meanings can be transformed relatively easily, such changes often resulting from the need to appeal to particular consumer groups, for example. Indeed, tourists are looking for unique, immersive, and memorable experiences that are also authentic, including local gastronomy (Cardoso et al., 2014).

## **2.1. The role of self-sufficiency in folk nutrition**

The European rural food culture was closely linked to the natural environment,

to the central control of the state and the church, to the whole way of life, to work, to social relations, to housing culture, to the way of celebration, and to the world of beliefs (Wiegelmann, 1971). The determinants of dietary structure are food choice, food preparation methods, the daily order and menu of meals, the hierarchy of daily and festive celebrations, the central control of the rhythm of eating through fasting regulations, and the development of table etiquette.

In the past, peasant farms tended to be highly self-sufficient in basic foodstuffs. Families produced their own cereals, fat, meat, staple crops, dairy products, and domestic spices. These were stocked for the whole year. Food storage followed the order of harvesting throughout the year. In addition, the importance of commercial salt, sugar, rice, and oriental spices was dwarfed. Self-sufficiency in food, farming in seasons of plenty and scarcity, and a forward-looking annual schedule, all gave a sense of security and independence. This was a characteristic feature of the peasant way of life (Kisbán, 1997).

The first Hungarian statistics on raw materials were compiled by Károly Keleti at the end of the 19th century. According to these statistics, the average annual per capita consumption of basic foodstuffs was as follows: cereals were the most consumed, followed by potatoes, sauerkraut, vegetables, meat, bacon, pulses, porridge and fat.

Various records from the period before 1800 provide us with information on the characteristics of the popular diet. In medieval Europe, we know of two regular meals a day, both of them cooked meals with one course. The table etiquette was undifferentiated throughout the social scale, with meals being shared directly from the serving dishes. During this period, the landscape structure of the meal was determined by the local food supply and the availability of plant and animal raw materials. The bread diet only became widespread in the 14th century, in areas where the climate and the nature of the landscape allowed the cultivation of wheat and rye. With the crossing of the main trade routes to the Atlantic, the early modern period saw the appearance of maize, which had a seed yield incomparably better than that of cereals, while it could also be used in the form of porridge and flour (Kisbán, 1984). The most important innovation of the early modern period in south-central Europe was the cooked pasta, which later reached the peasantry throughout the Hungarian-speaking world. At first, the new pasta was eaten as a meal in its own right, on rare occasions. The cooking of noodles was an innovation of elite culture in the Carpathian Basin in the 16th century, and within two hundred years it had spread to peasant culture in all regions (Kisbán, 1997).

## **2.2. The role of folk food in gastronomic festivals**

The gastronomic festival can be understood as an extended, transformed, and multiplied form of the festive meal, which goes through processes of spatiotemporal recontextualization, quantitative change, qualitative and aesthetic revaluation, cooking, and modification of the way of consumption of each dish, in an organized setting (Chiselev, 2021). Moreover, in the increasingly competitive tourism industry, each region is constantly looking for unique products to differentiate itself from other destinations. Local, authentic, special food and gastronomy are one of the resources

that can attract visitors. Several other events based on everyday customs, folklore, and old ways of life also contribute to this attraction, as well as the fact that visitors are keen to participate in these types of events, which are often the only driving force behind local social life. Consequently, food and drink festivals are of particular importance, especially if we consider that they give urban and rural regions equal opportunities to become well-known tourist destinations (Lakićević et al., 2012). Several sources confirm that the motivation for this tourist experience is precisely the participation of the visitor in the gastronomic experience of festivals and events, where entertainment, food, drinks, and comfort services are the basis of the experience, which also results in emotional satisfaction. In the future, the focus of food and drink at events will increasingly be on regional or local traditional agricultural products, indigenous and distinctive cooking techniques, and special local wines, spirits, or even beers (Mandabach and Chuanbiao, 2019).

Gastronomic festivals are therefore at the heart of the different themed celebrations that attract the crowds. As well as being a basic biological need, food is an integral part of a nation's culture. By focusing on local values, collective celebration strengthens local patriotism and has an impact on the development of cultural tourism. In contrast to the centrally managed festivals of the pre-regime period, which had a similar structure and program elements, festivals that revive the traditions and customs of the local community have become established in many areas. These foster a sense of belonging and are important expressions of community consciousness (Sári, 2006).

The popular culture of a community, as described above, also has a tourist attraction, which can be divided into three forms:

- 1) Inanimate culture: buildings, objects of daily use, folk art
- 2) Culture expressed in everyday life: lifestyle, customs, gastronomy
- 3) Revived culture: festivals, carnivals, traditional events (Wall et al., 2006).

It can therefore be said that the traditions, the old way of life, the diet and the traditional means of food preparation, the traditional way of preparing the ingredients, of the inhabitants of a settlement or a small geographical area or ethnographic group, are in many cases now an integral part of tourism. At the same time, the tourist presentation of folk food also has an impact on local community life: it generates leisure activities and strengthens the attachment to local traditions and pride in local values (Edelényi, 2009).

According to Sári (2006), gastronomic festivals are divided into two broad categories based on their choice of theme:

- 1) The first group is represented by festivals that are not specifically based on local traditions, but rather on Hungarians as a whole, on Hungarism, but often with a focus on local values, with themes such as fish soup, goulash or paprika.
- 2) The other large group of festivals are events, celebrations, and festivals based on local, regional foods and festivals, such as pumpkin, cherry, cucumber, elderberry or potato. These are not commercial, dozens of events, but local, self-defining, and distinctive.

Other categories of gastronomic events are as follows:

- 1) Festivals of local products and crops: fruit and vegetables (potato festival, pumpkin festival, plum festival, cherry festival, etc.)

- 2) Traditional food cooking festivals (e.g., chowder festivals). The attraction lies in the large number of cooking teams and the tasting of the food prepared.
- 3) Mixed events are festivals and events with no clear profile and/or with a wide variety of events. There is a strong emphasis on tradition, multi-product programs, and a combination of drinks and food. Most of them also include musical and other cultural elements (Máté and Szabó, 2011).

Gastronomic festivals are complemented by many other elements, which can be divided into four main areas:

- 1) Professional programs, such as thematic conferences, species presentations, presentations on local history, ethnography, economic history, tourism, and professional country house presentations.
- 2) Sporting programs, matches, competitions (actors, journalists, politicians, etc.), quizzes. For example, country houses can play a role in reviving traditional folk games.
- 3) Entertainment programs, concerts (folk songs, songs, rock, jazz, disco, classical music), open-air theatre performances, musicals and street parties. The different musical programs are usually presented in different venues and settings: from the stage of the community center to the church, the courtyard of the country house and the open-air stage. The country house is the main venue for various folk music and folk-dance programs, taking advantage of the excellent opportunities offered by the environment.
- 4) Traditional events are an opportunity for tourists and the local community to enjoy the widest range of local traditions and folk culture. In addition to craft demonstrations and activities, the organization of folk music and folk-dance programs, the revival of old folk traditions, in which the local school or nursery school pupils, the women's choir or the drama group can take part. These communities not only provide a tourist attraction, but also take on the task of collecting and preserving local traditions, folk customs, and the village's treasure of folk songs and folk tales

An analytical presentation of the folklore-based gastronomic events of a specific region was made concerning the nearby Somogy region in comparison with the initiatives of the Great Plain. Knézy's (2006) study presents those programs in the lowland region, where great care was taken to propagandize the sale and promotion of marketable products, products, and preparations that had already become famous. Among these types of events, the author mentions farmers' days, competitions, festivals, professional meetings, exchanges of experience, conferences and produce fairs. The theme of the events is based on the presentation of intensively cultivated fruit, spices, vegetables, and staple crops, and of primary products such as poultry, fish, mutton, and stuffed meat products, which have been popular in the past. These events are often held over several days and attract a wide range of visitors, and many have even become international events. The food competitions have included meetings of certain occupational groups (fishermen, shepherds, millers), demonstrations of diets and traditions linked to economic and family customs, such as the pig feast, harvest competitions and diets, and harvest diet competitions. In addition to a national network of wine and brandy tours, plum tours have been organized in the Alföld'.

In Somogy county, in addition to the numerous traditional activities (e.g.,

religious tourism, publication of village chronicles), the gastronomic importance of the programs is great. In catering and local catering, the presentation of local traditions has increased, and among these, the serving of dishes suitable for large crowds (scones, goulash, fish soup, lecsó) and their consumption together has been very important. In Somogy, in contrast to the festivals in the lowlands, the baking and cooking competitions were not accompanied by product fairs or farmers' days, but rather by theatrical performances, sports, and other recreational and entertainment activities, playhouses, and fun competitions. The events are explicitly aimed at building up tourism and links with both domestic and foreign tourists, but also at strengthening links between the municipalities of the county. Most of the wine and gastronomic festivals were organized in the more tourist-friendly municipalities near and around Lake Balaton, and most of the foreign guests attended them. Many of the older generation have been inspired by reading the recipe books to recreate the dishes their parents and grandparents used to prepare in the past and which they still know. There is a kind of passive knowledge in the background, from which they can draw plenty of inspiration, while in many cases modifying the food to prepare it with modern equipment and adapting it to today's changing tastes (Knézy, 2006).

The pretzel is one of the iconic dishes of the Raba region. This is a boiled-beaten sweet course, because the dough has to be beaten by the head of the axe. Without it, no holiday, Christmas or Easter, would be complete on the table. The original recipe calls for 20 eggs, 1.6 kg flour, 15 dkg lard, 2 vanilla sugar, 2 sachets of confectioner's sugar, 2 teaspoons of icing sugar, a little cumin, a pinch of salt and 2 dl brandy. Preparation. Whisk the egg yolks, vanilla sugar, sweetener, icing sugar, cumin, and a pinch of salt until well foamy. Beat the whites of the eggs separately until stiff, add a little flour and the lard. When everything is ready, add flour to the yolks of the eggs, then the brandy, and beat on the board for half an hour, then cook in water that is not boiling. The water should not boil (Töreki, 2008).

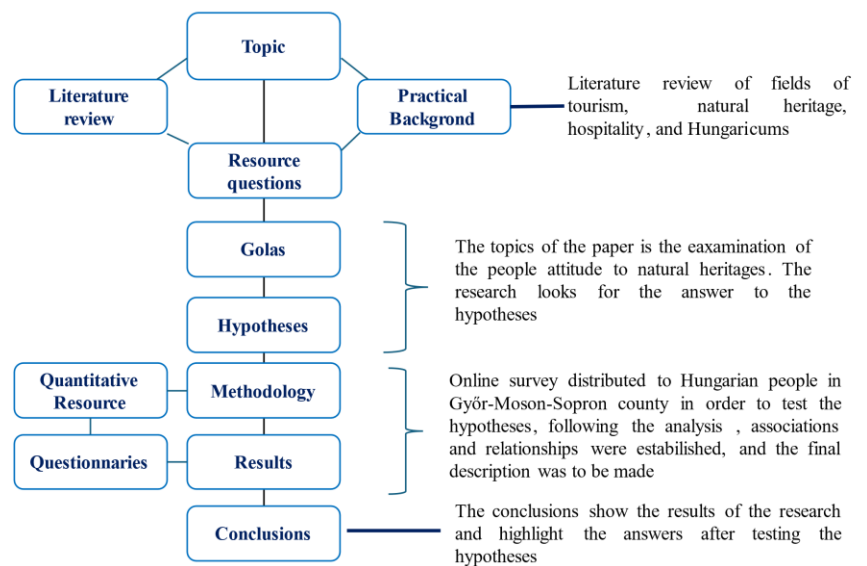
Another iconic dish of the Rábaköz is the Szany roast. This dish is made by roasting Rump, frying onions in fat, adding red pepper, cumin, garlic, and simmering. Then add the diced potatoes. For the garnish: add the sliced parsnips (cooked with their skins on), the heat will turn them into a basket, then add the English carrots, mushrooms, and green peas. Ingredients for 10 persons: 1.20 kg of beef shawl, 0.20 kg of lard, 0.02 kg of paprika powder, 0.05 kg of salt, 0.30 kg of onion, 0.20 kg of Parisian cold cuts, 3 kg of potatoes, 0.01 kg of cumin seeds, 0.30 kg of carrots and parsley, 0.20 kg of green peas, 0.20 kg of mushrooms and 0.01 kg of garlic (Töreki, 2008).

### **3. Materials and methods**

For an in-depth analysis of the topic, quantitative research (questionnaire survey) was carried out in the framework of the study of the gastronomic heritage of the Szigetköz, Rábaköz, and Sopron regions of the Kisalföld and Lake Fertő. The sample was non-representative, and randomly selected, with the main target group being respondents under 20 years of age. The questionnaires were available through electronic channels on online social media platforms between 1 September 2023 and 31 October 2023. The questionnaire consisted of 28 questions, of which 7 questions

included socio-demographic data, 13 closed questions, and 8 open questions. The questionnaire was divided into three blocks of questions. The first block focused on festivals and events of gastronomy in the region, the frequency of participation in these events, the decision-makers, and the values of gastronomy. The second set of questions focused on the gastronomic treasures of the county, while the third block analyzed the tourist attractions. The open-ended questions asked, for example, which food/drink the respondent would or would not try. The respondents' willingness to spend money on food and drink at gastronomic events was analyzed on a 9-point Likert scale (2 questions). A 7-point Likert scale (1 question) measured people's willingness to travel to attend these gastronomy events. On a scale of 5 (7 questions), for example, the respondents' gastronomic knowledge of the region was assessed, for example, how well they know the food of the different regions, and whether they would like to try local food and drink. Quantitative analysis (analyzing data obtained from the questionnaires using statistical methods, such as ANOVA (Analysis of VAriance, includes explanatory models) can be used to examine the effects of different factors (such as age, gender, education, place of residence – independent variables) on one or more factors (such as attitude, satisfaction, knowledge – dependent variables) (Sajtos and Mitev, 2007). Pearson's  $\chi^2$  statistic measures the statistical significance of the relationship between two variables. This is used to determine whether there is a difference between the dependent and independent variables. If the Chi-square is below 5%, then  $H_0$  can be rejected, i.e., there is a detectable difference between the two variables with 95% certainty. If the Chi-square is above 5%, then there is no significant difference between the two variables (Sajtos and Mitev, 2007).

In some cases, the tables and graphs contain fewer respondents due to missing answers, but this has been indicated in all cases. **Figure 1** below shows the phases of the survey.



**Figure 1.** Research model.

Source: authors' own editing.

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

Does the respondents' place of residence of the influence the gastronomic



awareness of the regions?

Are there differences in the perception of gastronomic traditions?

Does age determine the distance respondents are willing to travel to gastronomic events?

Does the status of the respondent influence the decision-making?

From these research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated.

H1: There is no significant effect of respondents' place of residence on knowledge of the gastronomic heritage of the Szigetköz

H2: There is no significant difference between the transmission of traditions to the next generations and the degree

H3: There is no difference between age groups and willingness to travel

H4: There is no difference between respondents' employment status and decision-making

Processing of the data was done using SPSS 25.0 and Microsoft Office Excel. After data cleaning, 641 scorable questionnaires were available for analysis. Figure 1 shows the different phases of the empirical research. The primary research includes univariate (descriptive statistical analyses, positional indicators, mean, mode, variance, standard deviation, variance and shape indicators, peak and skewness), analysis of variance, and bivariate (cross-tabulation) analyses.

#### 4. Results and discussion

Reliability (freedom from random error) and internal consistency of the questionnaire were tested using Cronbach's alpha indicator, presented in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1.** Cronbach's statistic.

Variables	Cronbach Alfa
It is important to preserve the traditions of a local area	0.726
How well do you know the gastronomic traditions of the Szigetköz (such as Szigetköz crispy bream, pickled fish, Szigetköz spirits, and Lipót bread)	0.722
Businesses' products are at affordable prices	0.722
A gastronomic tradition handed down from generation to generation	0.721
How do you know the gastronomic traditions of Sopron and Lake Fertő (such as sturgeon, sturgeon from Nagycenk, and Poncichters' wines)?	0.719
How much do you know about the gastronomic traditions of the Rábaköz (such as Rábaközi pretzel, Böllér liver, szalados = wheat germ, Szany bachelors' soup)?	0.709

Source: Compiled from Survey Data 2024.

The female population was represented by 67.4%, while the male population was represented by 32.6% of the total sample. Concerning age, the respondents were divided into three groups. Respondents belong to young Generation (16 to 39 years) represented 71.8% of the sample, middle aged (40 to 59 years) 24.2%, elderly over 60 years 4.0%. The highest number of respondents were high school (44.3%), followed by Master's and Bachelor's degrees (24.9% included doctoral degrees) and elementary (18.1%). With regard to occupation highest proportion of white-collar workers (21.1%), and at the lowest rate the housewives and child care allowance percentage of

both 0.5%. Regarding the level of residence, the largest number of respondents lived in urban (63.0%), followed by the group who lived in sub-urban (33.2%), followed by responders living in the Hungarian capital, Budapest (3.6%). The following **Table 2** shows the demographic data of the people included in the study.

**Table 2.** Demographics segmentation.

<b>Dependent variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
Gender		
Male	209	32.6
Female	432	67.4
Age group		
Young adults (15-39 years)	454	71.8
Older adults (40-59 years)	107	24.2
Elderly (over 60 years)	240	4.0
Education attainment		
Higher education	160	24.9
Secondary	384	57.0
Elementary	113	18.1
Occupation		
White collar worker	135	21.1
Blue collar worker	76	11.9
Leader	31	4.9
Entrepreneur	41	6.4
Retired	15	2.3
Students in college and high school	327	51
Childcare allowance	3	0.5
Housewives	3	0.5
Unemployed	8	1.3
Residence		
Capital (Budapest)	20	3.1
Urban	412	63.4
Sub-urban	209	32.6

Source: Compiled from Survey Data 2024.

The Tastes of the Szigetköz, the Castle County Wines Festival, the Protect the Homeland, Buy product of Kisalföld! Rábaköz Flavours Day, the Hanság Vegetable Day, the Wine Street in Hegykő, the Infeld Baroque Cooking Festival, the Euroregional Bread Festival and the Bográcsos Banzai in Győrújbarát would be the events that the respondents would most likely visit (average 3.33). The least attractive attractions are the Tastes of Szigetköz and Protect the Homeland (average 2.97).

According to the descriptive statistics, the respondents are familiar with the gastronomic traditions of Szigetköz, but not with those of the Rábaköz, Sopron, and Lake Fertő. Respondents consider the frequency and quantity of gastronomic events in the region to be adequate and consider it very important to pass on gastronomic

traditions. People are not familiar with the gastronomic festivals and events in the region but would like to know about them. 67.8% of respondents only attend events that interest them, 31.4% do not attend and only 0.8% attend all events. Decisions are taken by 48% of respondents alone, 47% jointly, and 5% by the head of the family. Women and men have different perceptions of the way that gastronomic traditions are passed down from generation to generation. The mean score for women (3.93) is higher than that for men (3.67), i.e., women are more likely than men to consider it important. Among the dishes from the Győr area, the best known is the “Pinnyéd meat” (average 3.63), the least known is the Cserpes cheese (3.15). When analyzing drinks, the best known are the wines of the Tar Winery (3.32), and the least known are the products of the Pannonhalmi Abbey Winery (2.76). The best-known dish of the Rábaköz is the Rába cabbage catfish, ahead of iconic dishes of the region such as the “Kapunvár meat stuffed with bacon and onions” (3.44), the Böllérmáj (called pork liver with roasted marrow) (3.33) and the Szanyi soup (3.32). In terms of drinks, only the Tárnokréti Pálinkaház was analyzed, with an average of 3.44. Only one food and drink from Sopron and its surroundings was included in the sample, with an average of 4.0 for the “Nagycekn roasted meat” and 3.42 for the wines of the Poncichters’. “Királyhalom” is the best-known dish of the Szigetköz (3.6), while Lipót farmhouse bread (despite being Megyericum) is the least known (2.9). As for drinks, two types were included in the sample, “Szigetköz soul” spirit with an average of 3.28 and Szigetköz fresh water with 3.12, which is also Megyericum. Of the dishes that respondents did not know, most would try the “Fűzfagomba” (willow mushrooms) stew first  $N = 467$ , (66 persons, distribution 14.1%). 72 persons (15%) would not try the “Böllérmáj”, which is also Megyericum. Most guests do not know but would like to try the cherry sponge cake from Öttevény, the doughnut from Barbacs, and the chocolate from Albertkázmépuszta, all with a distribution of 60.4%. 26.2% of respondents do not know and would not like to try the catfish from Rába. 16% of people would be the first to taste the fresh water from the inter-island region and 4% would like to taste the wines of Pannonhalma Abbey. 36% of respondents would not taste either the Pannonhalmi or the Taranokréti brandies.

H1: There is no significant difference between the respondents’ place of residence and their knowledge of the gastronomic heritage of Szigetköz.

**Table 3.** ANOVA.

<b>Knowledge of the gastronomic traditions of the Szigetköz (such as Szigetköz crispy bream, pickled fish, Szigetköz soul spirits, Lipót bread)?</b>					
	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between Groups	154.942	13	11.919	9.793	.000
Within Groups	688.870	566	1.217		
Total	843.812	579			

Source: Compiled from Survey Data 2024.

Analysis of variance was used to verify this hypothesis. As the significance is below 0.000 (see **Table 3**), i.e., below 5%, H0 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis of a detectable difference between the two variables is accepted. This is illustrated in ANOVA **Table 4**. Respondents who live between the Danube and the Tisza were not

familiar with the gastronomy of the Szigetköz, while those from the Tisza and the Danube were neutral on this question. The table provides an overview of the responses according to the major geographical regions of Hungary.

**Table 4.** ANOVA.

	N	MMean	St. Deviation	95% Confidence for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Dunántúl	603	3.15	1.163	3.06	3.25	1	5
Duna-Tisza köze	8	2.00	1.309	0.91	3.09	1	4
Tiszántúl	8	3.00	1.690	1.59	4.41	1	5
Total	619	3.14	1.177	3.04	3.23	1	5
MModel	Fixed Effects		1.172	3.04	3.23		
	Random Effects			1.02	5.25		

Source: Compiled from Survey Data 2024.

H2: There is no significant difference between the transmission of traditions to the next generations and the degree

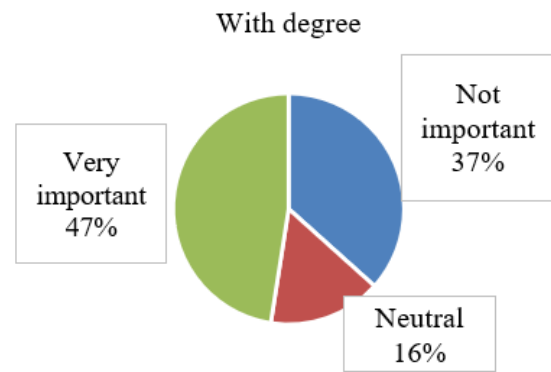
This assumption was tested by cross-tabulation analysis. As the associated probability value for the Chi-square (0.023, see **Table 5**), hence H0 is rejected, the alternative hypothesis, that there is a significant difference between the perception of the importance of folk traditions and educational attainment is accepted. A quarter of the sample consider it very important for those with a degree and 3/4 of those without a degree consider it very important to pass on traditions. This is illustrated in **Figures 2 and 3**.

**Table 5.** Chi-Square Test.

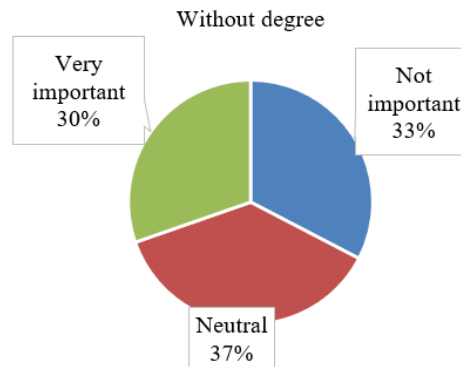
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.514a	2	0.023
Likelihood Ratio	8.904	2	0.012
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.162	1	0.075
N	640		

Source: Compiled from Survey Data 2024.

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.02.



**Figure 2.** The importance of passing on degrees and traditions (%) N = 640.  
Source: Compiled from Survey Data 2024.



**Figure 3.** The importance of passing on without degrees and traditions (%)  $N = 640$ . Source: Compiled from Survey Data 2024.

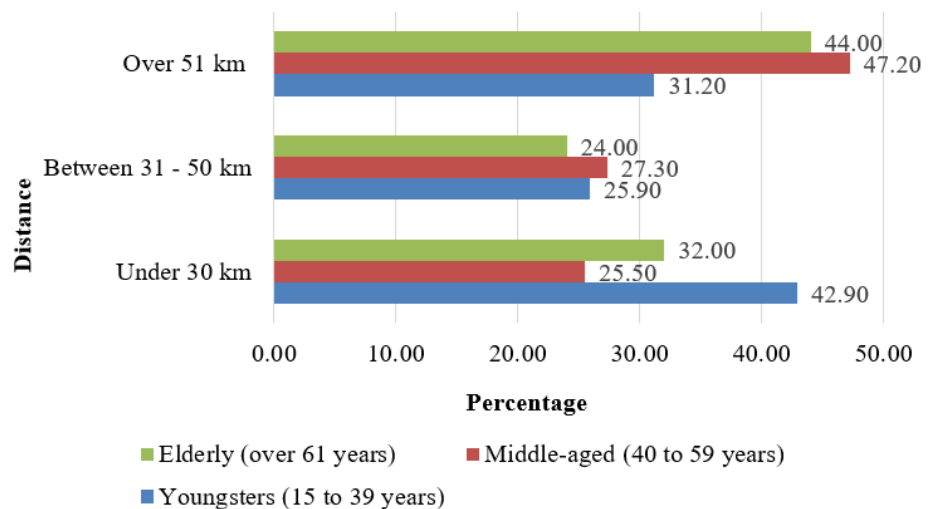
H3: There is no difference between age groups and willingness to travel

This assumption was also tested by cross-tabulation analysis. Since the Chi-square test is significant (0.001), as illustrated in **Table 6**, i.e., 95% confidence level, it can be stated that there is a detectable difference between people of different age groups and their willingness to travel to participate in gastronomic events. 42.9% of young people are willing to travel less than 30 km, 47.2% of middle-aged people are willing to travel more than 51 km and 44.0% of elderly people are also willing to travel more than 51 km (**Figure 4**).

**Table 6.** Chi-Square Test.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.853a	4	0.001
Likelihood Ratio	19.188	4	0.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.918	1	0.000
<i>N</i>	641		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.55.  
Source: Compiled from Survey Data 2024.



**Figure 4.** Examining willingness to travel and age (%)  $N = 641$ . Source: Compiled from Survey Data 2024.

H4: There is no difference between respondents' employment status and

decision-making

**Table 7** presents descriptive statistics, including mean, minimum, maximum values, and standard deviations, across various occupational groups. These metrics provide a means, range, and variability within each occupation, offering insights into the distribution of values for the variables examined.

This assumption was verified by univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA). The data in **Table 8** show that the group means are different, i.e., H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted so there is a significant difference between the two variables. Retired respondents tend to make decisions alone, other respondents make decisions together, and those on childcare allowance decide together with their spouse to attend gastronomy events.

**Table 7.** Descriptives.

	N	Mean	St. deviation	95% Confidence for Mean		Min.	Max.
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
White collar worker	135	2.30	0.519	2.21	2.38	1	3
Blue collar worker	77	2.36	0.583	2.23	2.50	1	3
Leader	31	2.23	0.497	2.04	2.41	1	3
Entrepreneur	41	2.41	0.547	2.24	2.59	1	3
Retired	15	2.60	0.507	2.32	2.88	2	3
Student in college and high school	327	2.53	0.615	2.46	2.60	1	3
Childcare allowance	3	1.67	0.577	0.23	3.10	1	2
Housewife	3	2.00	0.000	2.00	2.00	2	2
Unemployed	8	2.25	0.463	1.86	2.64	2	3
Total	640	2.43	0.588	2.38	2.48	1	3
Model	Fixed Effects		0.578	2.38	2.47		
	Random Effects			2.25	2.61		

Source: Compiled from Survey Data 2024.

**Table 8.** ANOVA Test.

Who made the decision?					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.258	8	1.282	3.842	.000
Within Groups	210.578	631	0.334		
Total	220.836	639			

Source: Compiled from Survey Data 2024.

Similar results have been obtained by Guzel and Apaydina (2016), according to whom sociodemographic factors, age, social status, and income affect local food consumption. Research by Folgado-Fernández et al. (2016) demonstrated a positive relationship between destination image and tourists' intention to revisit and recommend a place based on their experience at local gastronomic events. This topic has been less studied in Hungary, with studies of the territorial significance of food Hungaricums: The case of pálinka Kassai et al. (2016), for example, but only one

scientific publication on the food of these regions. The importance of gastronomy in Kalocsa and the Órség. Kalocsa is located 9.6 km from the eastern bank of the Danube River, about 54.7 km south of Budapest, called Paprika Capital of the World. (Órseg is located in the Western part of Hungary by the Austrian and Slovenian borders) has been studied by Csurgó and Smith, where local food and gastronomy, festivals, and traditions are important (Csurgó and Smith, 2021). Béres-Virág and Ritter (2018) analysed the tourism offer of the Tokaj wine region.

## **5. Conclusion**

The main objective of this study was to explore people's knowledge of the gastronomic heritage of the Little Plain regions. Quantitative research was carried out to investigate the topic. The results of the empirical research suggest that the people who filled in the questionnaires are most familiar with the food and drinks of the Szigetköz, and least familiar with the areas around Sopron and Lake Fertő.

Another important finding of the survey is that although the most well-known dish among the respondents is the cabbage catfish from Rába, people would not try this dish at all. The role of families in this issue is of great importance, as children will become familiar with the food that their parents introduce them to as they socialize. If fish, wild pigeon, and rabbit dishes are not on the table in childhood, the child will not eat them later in adulthood.

There is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and the gastronomic events in their place of residence, the significance of the chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 3.627$ ,  $df = 4$ ) was  $p = 0.459$ ). There is no significant difference between age groups ( $\chi^2 = 1.869$ ,  $df = 4$ ) was  $p = 0.760$ ). There is no significant difference between the frequency of festivals and educational level ( $\chi^2 = 7.313$ ,  $df = 8$ ) was  $p = 0.503$ ).

In terms of demographic data, there is a significant difference in the satisfaction of respondents with the products offered for sale ( $\chi^2 = 10.052$ ,  $df = 4$ ) was  $p = 0.040$ ). There is also a significant difference in the amount of money spent on food at events. Among the demographic data, there is a significant difference in the satisfaction of respondents with the products offered for sale ( $\chi^2 = 10.052$ ,  $df = 4$ ) was  $p = 0.040$ ). There is also a detectable difference between the amount of money spent on food at events and age groups ( $\chi^2 = 18.013$ ,  $df = 2$ ) was  $p = 0.000$ ). There is no detectable difference between place of residence and obtaining information about gastronomy events ( $\chi^2 = 18.989$ ,  $df = 15$ ) was  $p = 0.214$ ).

There is still potential for further research on this topic, as the gastronomic traditions of the Sokoró hills between the Győr basin and the Bakony were not investigated in this study.

Once the quantitative research has been carried out, a qualitative study of the topic could be carried out, whereby structured interviews with the hosts would be conducted and compared with the results of the quantitative research.

By preserving the values, we have built up over more than a thousand and one hundred years, our natural assets, we are taking up and fulfilling Széchenyi's legacy that "Respect the past to understand the present and work for the future" (Jámbor and Dubi, 2020, p. 7).

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