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# Tradicionalna prehrana i turistička ponuda Istre: obilježja istarskoga regionalnog identiteta

*Obilježja istarskoga regionalnog identiteta, na prijelazu stoljeća, možemo razmatrati i u kontekstu tradicionalne prehrane kao turističke ponude Istre. Osnovne su karakteristike istarskih tradicionalnih jela jednostavnost i skromnost te simbioza romanske, germanske i slavenske kuhinje. Globalni trend vraćanju izvornosti i zdravoj prehrani umješno primjenjuju u svom radu i turističke zajednice u Istri. U tradicionalno-vjerskim feštama prehrana zauzima sve važnije mjesto i to upravo ona jela koja su se konzumirala u prošlosti. U novije vrijeme organiziraju se fešte isključivo u čast tradicionalnim jelima kako bi se sačuvala od zaborava, ali i kao specifična turistička ponuda poluotoka.*

Ključne riječi: tradicionalna prehrana, turistička ponuda, Istra, regionalni identitet

## Uvod

Kulturni je identitet promjenjiv. Svaka generacija ima svoj doživljaj prenošenog iskustva. Tu razliku uočavamo u tradicijskim činjenicama, koje jesu objektivno promjenjive u datosti vremena, ali ponekad i pogrešno interpretirane ili naglašene, ovisno o potrebama. Slično se događa, pored svih ostalih simbola i/ili etnodiferencirajućih čimbenika, i s hranom koja se “u antropologiji mora promatrati kao sredstvo izražavanja identiteta grupe” (Mennell, Murcott, Otterloo, 1998:40).

U ovom će se radu istražiti prehrambeni identitet Istrana u Istarskoj županiji. Drugim riječima, pokušat će se sagledati suvremeni istarski identitet kroz gastro-ponudu uvjetovanu sadašnjim potrebama, primarno turističke Istre, koje se oslanjaju na tradicijske prehrambene navike žitelja Istre. Pritom se polazi od pretpostavke da se fešte u Istri povezane s hranom organiziraju iz tradicionalnih prehrambenih navika, ali i političkih (pridavanje važnosti regionalnim, romantičnim, tradicijskim vrijednostima) te turističkih uvjerenja (odnos ponude i potražnje). Uočava se potreba naglašavanja tradicionalne prehrambene ponude istarske regije, po kojoj će se razlikovati od ostalih turističkih regija. Turisti očekuju izvorno i drugačije. No, zbog nemogućnosti konzervacije izvornog “*ono staro što je trebalo prikazati strancima moralo se iznova stvoriti*” (Bausinger, 2002:187).

Prehranu, u kontekstu propitivanja identiteta, možemo promatrati s dva stajališta: kao objektivni diferencirajući čimbenik koji uistinu ukazuje na razliku između pojedinih skupina; te kao subjektivne karakteristike koje “*počivaju na želji skupine da bude drukčija i da se razlikuje*” (Čapo Žmegač, 1997:72). Kalapoš naglašava važnost hrane i kao označitelja etničkih granica, kulturnog identiteta, kao simbol bitnih događaja i emocionalnih stanja, te posebice ističe dugu tradiciju izučavanja prehrane u etnografskom smislu koju pripisuje i Radićevim pitanjima u *Osnovama za sabiranje i proučavanje građe o narodnom životu* (Kalapoš, 1998/1999:97-98). Costantinides pak smatra gastronomiju najbržim i najizravnijim činiteljem preispitivanja povijesti i tradicije, te ističe njenu važnu ulogu u sakupljanju, arhiviranju i prenošenju tradicijske građe (Costantinides, 1996:VII). Problematika prenesena u sadašnjost otvara nova pitanja. Ponekad u nastojanju skupine da se izdvoji u odnosu na druge, izvornost ostaje u drugom planu, a suvremene potrebe zauzimaju primarno mjesto. Izvorna narodna kultura prebiva u svojoj punini isključivo “*u izvornom kontekstu svog nastanka*” (Rihtman Augustin, 1991:81), dok prenesena u suvremena okruženja, “*izvan svojih izvornih funkcija, dakle na scenu, u industriju zabave i turizma, čak i u politički život*” (ibid., 81), poprima nova obilježja, a pitanje autohtonosti gubi na značenju. Izvornost sadržaja ostaje samo kao temelj za nadogradnju suvremenog, bez ikakvih negativnih konotacija, jer je to jedna od rijetkih mogućnosti življenja tradicije. O ovome potonjem načinu egzistiranja folkloru, odnosno o njegovoj drugoj egzistenciji Bausinger piše kao o folklorizmu i njegovoj pitoresknoj strani zbog koje se lako zaboravlja “*sasvim opipljiva ekonomska pozadina, a isto tako i njegove političke implikacije*” (Bausinger, 2002:174).

U narednim poglavljima bit će riječi o tradicionalnim istarskim jelima i njihovim novim načinima življenja u suvremenom kontekstu. Nepotrebno je ponovno isticati šarolikost istarskog etnikuma koja se prenosi i u sfere prehrane nekada i sada, te nemogućnost preciznog pripisivanja određena jela nekoj regiji na što upozorava Rittig-Beljak navodeći da ne smijemo olako odbaciti globalne stavove strukturalista “*da se ukus formirao kroz kulturu i da je pod kontrolom društva. Društvo može promijeniti ukus, posebice danas kada mu na raspolaganju stoje brojni mehanizmi nuđenja i nagovaranja*” (Rittig-Beljak, 1998/1999:122).

Promjenjivost identiteta jedne regije možemo promatrati i kroz mijenu prehrambenih navika. Povratak tradicionalnoj prehrani, koji ponajprije zamjećujemo u javnosti

- na feštama i u restoranima, a onda i na intimnom polju pojedinca, podudara se s jačanjem regionalnog identiteta. Istrijanstvo, kao regionalno opredjeljenje, naspram hrvatstva, kao državnog opredjeljenja, osjećalo se sredinom 1990-ih godina u svim segmentima življenja. Euforija regionalnog opredjeljenja polako opada u skladu s decentralizacijom vlasti hrvatske države. Čini se da isticanje istarskih obilježja gubi na popularnosti i značenju. Sve je manje dijalekta u glazbi, medijima i u drugim segmentima zabave, bedževa ili znački u obliku kože i sl. Mišljenja sam da ostaju ona prepoznatljiva obilježja regionalnog identiteta koja su materijalno isplativa i koja donose prosperitet regiji u skladu sa svjetskim, globalnim trendovima. To se događa upravo s prehranom, i to posebice u turizmu.

## Karakteristike istarske prehrane

Svaki osebujni zemljopisni dio Istre nastoji istaknuti svoje gurmanske blagodati. Iako mala, regija može raznolikost u ishrani ponajprije zahvaliti blagoj mediteranskoj klimi. Istru presijeca 45. paralela, što uvjetuje jasna godišnja doba, idealna za poljodjelstvo. Istra je poluotok nevjerojatne raznolikosti tla i konfiguracije terena. Zbog toga je čovjek na tome malom prostoru živio vrlo raznoliko: bio je ribar uz more, ratar po poljima, ovčar na obroncima Čićarije. Povrh toga, Istra je bila povijesna vjetrometina, pa su i česte kuge, naseljavanja, ratovi i glad iskristalizirali osebujnost te kuhinje. Stvorio ju je nagon za preživljavanjem, bijeda, neimaština. Naravno, tijekom povijesti, miješaju se različiti narodi i etnije koji su svoje specifičnosti ostavljali i ugrađivali i u prehrabene navike svojih potomaka. Oni su se potom asimilirali s nekim novim došljacima stvarajući tako bogato kulturno, pa i prehrabeno nasljeđe današnje Istre. Okosnicu tradicionalnih, izvornih jela Istre 20. stoljeća, na koju se mi danas pozivamo, čini siromaštvo i bijeda uzrokovana ratovima i nesređenim političkim pitanjima. Ni iz čega učiniti koliko-toliko ukusna i hranjiva jela umijeće je kojim su se mogle dičiti istarske žene toga vremena.

Kada govorimo o današnjoj istarskoj kuhinji, onda je riječ o sukusu i simbiozi triju kuhinja: romanske, germanske i slavenske. Prosijavalo se stoljećima i stvaralo osebujan "talog" kao izvorište gastronomije. Iako su vremena Mletaka i Austrougarske davno prošla, još su očite njihove raznolikosti. Od Poreča (dvorišta Serenissime) do Pazina (sjedišta austrijskih grofova) jedva je trideset kilometara. I jedni i drugi za Uskrs će jesti plečku, *špaletu* (šunku – prednje svinjske noge). No, kako je još nedovoljno suha, ne može se jesti *friška*, sirova. Porečani će je pripremiti na takozvani način *diravolta* (obrnj-okreni). *Fete* šunke bacit će na toplo maslinovo ulje, dvaput okrenuti, te zaliti bijelim vinom. Mještani Pazina cijelu će plečku skuhati.

Dolaskom blagostanja koje se podudara s razvojem turizma u drugoj polovici 20. stoljeća, javlja se i stig zbog ne tako davnog siromaštva koje za sobom nužno vuče i asocijaciju na hranu. Gostima se ne nudi *maneštra* i sardele, već ponuda *a la carte*, a što se tiče vina, stanje je još teže. Upravo su "a la carte gosti" (koji sami odabiru hranu u

hotelima), za razliku od “pansionskih gostiju” (koji u aranžmanu imaju već određen jelovnik), nezadovoljni hotelskom ponudom odlazili u obližnje gostione i *oštarije* i otkrivali tradicionalna istarska jela. Još do prije petnaest godina bilo je gotovo nemoguće u Poreču naručiti *maneštru* u restoranu. Danas je prehrambena slika Istre u potpunosti izmijenjena, a karakterizira je globalni trend vraćanja izvornom i lokalnom.

## Istarska tradicionalna jela i suvremene gastronomske fešte

Doista je velik broj istarskih fešta. Svako mjesto ima svog sveca zaštitnika, gradskog patrona kojeg mještani istinski slave. Pripreme za te lokalne blagdane traju gotovo cijelu godinu, a rezultat su jednodnevna, dvodnevna ili trodnevna slavlja tijekom kojih se održavaju sportski turniri, koncerti popularnih pjevača, ples, konzumacija najrazličitija jela i pića itd. I dok su se donedavno od jela najčešće nudili čevapčići i pljeskavice, unazad nekoliko godina sve se više pažnje pridaje autohtonim jelima. Međutim, u intimnom obiteljskom krugu svetac zaštitnik odvajkada se slavi uz domaća jela.

Zanimljivost je istarskih svetkovina i njihov naziv. Iako slave muškog sveca kao svog zaštitnika, naziv im je uvijek u ženskom rodu. Tako se fešta posvećena svetom Roku (zaštitniku Nove Vasi pokraj Poreča) naziva Rokova, svetom Bartolu (zaštitniku Žminja) Bartolja; svetom Petru (zaštitniku Svetog Petra u Šumi) Petrova itd. Dakle, u Istri se nikada ne kaže Rokovo, Bartoljevo, Petrovo itd. Pretpostavljam da je pučanstvu od sveca zaštitnika bila važnija sama fešta.

Osim vjerskih blagdana, Istra je u novije vrijeme preplavljena turističkim feštama koje se temelje na tradicionalnim jelima. Tradicionalna jela pokušavaju se ukomponirati i usuglasiti s vjerskim blagdanima, što je nekada manje, a nekada više uspješno. Jedna je od najpoznatijih fešta od tartufa, a slijede fešta od palente, *brodeta*, *maneštre* (lončanice), šparoga, *pomidora* (rajčice), puževa, sardela, gljiva, slastica, *ombola* (zarebnika) i kobasica te jedna od mlađih – *gramperijada*,<sup>1</sup> tj. fešta od krumpira. Organiziraju se natjecanja za odabir najkvalitetnijeg vina (Vinistra), ulja, najukusnije pancete itd.

### Fešta istarskih maneštra

*Maneštre*, odnosno lončanice, osnova su istarske kuhinje. Velik broj poslovice, od kojih će se ovdje spomenuti samo neke, kazuje o važnosti i vječitom prisustvu ovog jela u životu Istrana:

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<sup>1</sup> *Gramper* je izraz za krumpir u Kašteliru.

*Žlica je gospodarica dobre kužine.* (Žlica je gospodarica dobre kuhinje.)

*Žlica je za stepliti dušu, pirun je za tilo.* (Žlica grije dušu, vilica tijelo.)

*Brodo de verdura xe medicina che dura.* (Juha od povrća medicina je koja traje.)

*Micisia refada xe la minestra riskaldata.* (Obnovljeno je prijateljstvo podgrišana maneštra.)

Osnovu ovih “juha” od povrća čine grah i krumpir, a po trećoj vrsti povrća *maneštra* dobiva naziv i specifičan okus. *Maneštra* od *bobića* ili *trukinje* (mladog kukuruza) slatkasta je okusa. Postoji i *stupana trukinja* koja se jede zimi. Ona pretvara *maneštru* u sjajnu gustu krem-juhu (za razliku od *maneštre* od *bobića* koja je najrjeđa). *Maneštra* od koromača osebujna je gorka okusa. *Jota* je kiselkasta *maneštra* od kiselog kupusa koja se priređuje zimi. *Maneštra* od *slanca*, slanutka blago je slana. Najviše naziva ima *maneštra* od ječma (*maneštra* od *fara*, *šena*, *orza*, *jačmika* itd.). Čuvena je zbog svoga blagotvornog djelovanja na probavu, jer *učisti čriva*, a najčešće se jede za *Sensovu* (Uzašašće, Spasovo). *Pašta-fažo* najpopularnija je i najrasprostranjenija *maneštra*. Umjesto trećeg povrća, stavlja se tjestenina. *Miništron* je *maneštra* od sezonskog povrća.

Kada je riječ o *maneštri*, najvažnije je pitanje kako *maneštru* *zabiliti*, odnosno *zapariti*, zamastiti: *peštom* (kosanom slaninom), *zaprškom* ili samo maslinovim uljem? I čime je “pojačati”: svinjskom pancetom, djelićem kože preostale od pojedene pancete, kostima, kobasicom ili s kosti od pršuta.

I upravo je, u jednom trenutku zaboravljena *maneštra*, ponovno doživjela svoj gurmanski procvat. Vjerujem da su razlozi tome svijest ili trend o zdravoj prehrani, potenciranje lokalnog identiteta uzrokovano raznim političkim manipulacijama koje su se osjetile i u prehrani, globalni trend vraćanju izvornosti te uvijek prisutan turistički motiv. Zbog svih tih razloga ovo je jelo zaslužilo svoju feštu.

Sredinom lipnja 2004. godine održana je prva gastro-manifestacija domaće *maneštre*, koja je bila popraćena i napisima u dnevnom tisku. Jedan od osvrtâ kritički se odnosi na nepoštivanje godišnjih doba pri spravljanju *maneštre*. Primjerice, domaća *maneštra* od *bobića*, skuhana najvjerojatnije od konzerviranog kukuruza koji bitno mijenja okus, može se u restoranima naručiti i zimi: “*Cilj akcije, što je organizirao županijski TZ je evocirati uspomene na one stare maneštre koje su othranile brojne generacije Istrana, te ukazati da bi se danas, posebno u objektima seoskog turizma, trebale na stolu naći prave istarske maneštre, a ne ono što se pod tim nazivom danas nudi u istarskom ugostiteljstvu.*” (Benić, 2004).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Biralâ se najbolja *maneštra*. Pitanja kojima su zaokupljeni folkloristi mogu se prenijeti i na prehranu. Da bi glazba, ples i narodne nošnje bile prisutne i izvan muzeja, organiziraju se smotre. Da bi kulinarska umijeća naših predaka opstala u sadašnjosti, organiziraju se fešte u čast pojedinih jela. Bitno je uočiti da u ocjenivački sud, osim kuhara, polako ulaze i etnolozi.

U sklopu Fažanskog kulturnog ljeta 18. srpnja 2004. osmišljena je gastronomska večer pod nazivom *Fešta od kuhine*, te organizirano natjecanje u kuhanju istarske *maneštre*. Osvrt na ovu feštu dala je Šjora Špia u svojoj kolumni *San čula, san vidila ...*<sup>3</sup> Pitanje je li uopće moguće u današnjim uvjetima skuhati *maneštru* iz prošlosti, može se prenijeti i na sva ostala jela. Na primjeru koji iznosi Špija vidimo da je to nemoguće. Nemoguće je jer žena današnjice nema više vremena za kuhanje, a pogotovo *maneštre*. Današnji tempo života nameće brzu ili smrznutu hranu ili, u najboljem slučaju, *maneštru* koju je dan prije skuhalo nečija baka, a mlada domaćica podgrijala i poslužila dan poslije. Uočava se i problem pronalaženja namirnica koje su bitne za kuhanje tradicijske hrane.

## Fešta od brodet

*Brodet* u Istri, isto kao *brujet* u Dalmaciji, preuzet je iz talijanske kuhinje, o čemu govori njegov naziv nastao od talijanske riječi *brodo*, što znači juha. Dakle, *brodet* je juha od morskih plodova - riba, školjaka i rakova. Priča kaže da se *brodet* može skuhati i od umješno odabrana morskog kamena obrasla morskom travom i školjkama. Spominje ga i Mate Balota u *Tijesnoj zemlji* (usp. Balota, 1983:38,280), gdje opisuje skromnost i siromaštvo istarskog čovjeka početkom 20. stoljeća.

Koje su tajne *brodeta*? Miranda Buršić, rođena 1923. u Novoj Vasi pored Poreča, kaže: “Ča više ribe to bolji brodet. Brodet je kako juha od ribe: juha more biti od jedne ribe, ma je bolja od dvi diverše, još je bolja od tri ... Ki se kapi to čuje pod jezikom. Od zelenjave dojde kapula, inšoma dosta kapule, česan, se kapi ulje, papar i so, peršin ... Brodet, ko nimate vrime-na, ko vam je preša, bolje ne delati. Ne morete ga učiniti tik-tak, triba biti zavajk za špaherom ... Brodet se ne pušta sam kako ni malo dite ...”<sup>4</sup>

Osim u odabiru sastojaka, tajna je uspješnog *brodeta*, kako kaže šjora Miranda, u vremenu i strpljenju. Nepomirljivost prošlosti i sadašnjosti, tradicionalnog i suvremenog ponovno uspijeva naći zajedničku točku u fešti.

U Medulinu je, 25. srpnja 2004., održan 6. *brodet cup*. Ovu gurmansku zabavu posebnom čine osobe iz javnog života koje pripremaju *brodet*. Turistička zajednica Medulin, kao organizator, osigurava potreban pribor i namirnice, a sudionici moraju doni-

<sup>3</sup> Vrlo popularni lik *Šjore Špije* temelji se na načinu na koji Talijani govore hrvatski. Naime, koliko je (bilo) uobičajeno da Hrvati brzo i lako nauče talijanski, toliko je bilo neobično da Talijani govore hrvatski. No, ponegdje, na tržnici, primjerice, pokoja Talijanka, da bolje proda svoju robu, progovorila bi hrvatski, mišešajući padeže i rodove.

<sup>4</sup> Što je više ribe, to je bolji brodet. Brodet je juha od ribe: juha može biti od jedne ribe, bolja je ako su dvije različite ribe, a još je bolja od tri ... onaj tko se razumije u brodet osjeti kvalitetu pod jezikom. Od povrća koristi se: luk, u stvari dosta luka, češnjak, razumije se ulje, papar, sol, peršin ... Brodet, ako nimate vremena, ako vam se žuri, bolje je ne pripravljati. Ne možete ga učiniti na brzinu, treba uvijek biti za štednjakom ... Brodet se ne pušta sam kao ni malo dijete ...”

jeti izvorne sastojke zbog kojih će upravo njihov *brodet* osvojiti prvo mjesto. Za Rijeku se takmičila zamjenica gradonačelnika Vesna Lukanović, a izvornost njezinom *brodetu* trebala je donijeti palenta *krompirica*. Labin je predstavljao gradonačelnik Tulio Demetlik koji je donio *kapare* (mediteranska biljka kapar) kao tajni sastojak. Gosti su kupa bili glumci Helena Minić i Vedran Živolić koji su uz pomoć publike skuhalo svoj prvi *brodet*. Prošlogodišnji pobjednik, načelnik općine Medulin Emil Jukopila, donio je nekoliko *grancipora* (morski rak) i očišćene morske pužice. Načelnik općine Lovran Edvard Primožić kao izvorne sastojke donio je škampe i škarpine i izjavio da je pravi *brodet* gotov već za četrdeset i pet minuta, što se nikako ne poklapa s teorijom šjore Mirande koja sat i pol samo *friga kapulu* ... Ovogodišnji pobjednik, načelnik Bala Edi Pastrovichio, pohvalio se da je donio *grancipore*, dobro vino i kamen u kojem je dio kosti dinosaura. Predstavnici radio Pule Mario Benčić i Alferdo Kocijančić uzdali su se u domaće *pomidore* i zabavljali mnogobrojnu publiku, a načelnik općine Vodnjan Klaudio Vitasović koristio je kao tajni sastojak vrlo poznato i priznato vodnjansko maslinovo ulje (Sofić, 2004).

Ovogodišnje takmičenje između gradonačelnika i načelnika općina duž istarske obale ocjenjivao je, pored ostalih, i poznati kuhar Stevo Karapandža. Publika, domaći i strani turisti, uživala je a, prema novinaru Žižoviću, “u jedva pola sata, svi lonci bili su prazni” (Žižović, 2004).

## Fešta od šparuga

O prehranbenim kvalitetama šparoga govore sljedeće poslovice:

*I sparisi e i bruscandoli i xe del sangue i meio santoli.* (Šparoge i bljušt najbolji su kumovi za krv.) *Co fiorissi la sanestra i sparisi xe boni piu che manestra.* (Kada cvate brnistra, šparoge su bolje od maneštre.)

Od tradicionalnog sakupljanja hrane, do danas je ostalo najuvjerljivije – branje šparoga. Zbog svoje profinjene gorčine šparoga je jedan od vrhunaca istarske kuhinje. Narod, ali i suvremena medicina, pripisuje joj ljekovitost za mokraćne kanale i bubrege. Spomenute poslovice otkrivaju nam njezin utjecaj na kvalitetu krvi, te da je u proljeće čak i bolja od *maneštre*. Osim pripravljanja najrasprostranjenijeg jela od šparoga – *fritaje s šparugama* (kajgana sa šparogama), šparoge se mogu kuhati kao prilog, ali i kao juha, mogu se pohati, te spravljati kao ukusan namaz. Osobno su mi najdraži *pljukanci* (vrsta tjestenine) sa *šparugama* i pršutom.

Da šparoga ne bi bila zaboravljena, ponajviše se brine općina Buje. Ona već sedmu godinu u mjesecu travnju organizira pučku feštu *Šparogadu* u sklopu crkvenog blagdana Otave (koja se slavi osmi dan nakon Uskrsa) u Kaštelu. Fešta je 2004. započela prvim međunarodnim gastronomskim natjecanjem u pripravljanju jela od šparoga i *špaleta* pod nazivom *Zlatna šparoga*. Suorganizatori su bile turističke zajednice Buja i Istarske županije, čiji je predstavnik cilj natjecanja opisao kao oplemenjivanje i obožavanje ponude tradicionalne istarske proljetne kuhinje naviknute na *fritaju* (Koci-

jančić, 2004). Prema ocjeni žirija, titulu najboljeg osvojio je talijanski lokal *Ca dei boci* iz Trenta. O dobrom marketinško-turističkom potezu ove fešte govori i članak koji je izašao u talijanskim novinama *l'Adige* koji spominje Hrvatsku, Istru, Buje, Kaštel te kvalitetnu tradicionalnu kuhinju (Casagrande, 2004). Da bi fešta bila što zanimljivija, osmišljena je i nagrada za najdužu šparogu. *Špaleta* od sedam kilograma pripala je vlasniku šparoge duge 283 centimetra.

## Fešta istarskih kolača

Uvriježeno je mišljenje da istarska kuhinja ne obiluje kolačima. Iako je u vrijeme gladi i siromaštva zasigurno bilo tako, istarske tradicionalne slastice uvijek su bile prisutne na svim vjerskim obredima (krštenja, vjenčanja i sl.), kao i na dva najznačajnija vjerska blagdana -Božić i Uskrs.

Mikac spominje *štruklje* koje su karakteristične za sjevernu Istru, a spremale su se od pšeničnog brašna. Tijesto se razvlačilo u dvije plohe. Na manju se plohu slagao usitnjeni pršut, slanina, kuhana jaja i luk. Pošto bi se posolila, popapрила i polila mašću, prekrivala se većom plohom. Potom bi se učvrstili rubovi te gotov pripravak premažan žumanjkom stavio peći. *Štruklje* se mogu pripremati i s grožđicama. Tada se posipaju šećerom, a može se dodati i pekmez ili marmelada (Mikac, 1977:286). *Štruklje* se u raznim dijelovima Istre nazivaju *povetice*, *strukolo*, a danas sve češće i savijača.

*Hrostole*, *brošule*, *kroštule*, *fjoketi* jednostavan je kolač koji se zamijesi od brašna, jaja, maslaca ili ulja. Takvo, razvučeno, tijesto nožem se reže u rezance duge oko deset, a široke pet centimetara, koji se isprže u kipućem ulju i pospu šećerom.

*Fritule* se pripremaju od brašna, ulja, nekoliko žumanjka, šećera, grožđica i rakije. U posebnoj posudi rastopi se malo šećera, kvasca i mlijeka te ostavi na toplom da se kvasac dignu. Obje se smjese dobro i dugo miješaju kako bi se dobila homogena smjesa koja se ostavlja oko pola sata da odstoji, a potom se žlicom stavlja u kipuće ulje. *Fritule* su slične krafnama nepravilna oblika, a Mate Balota opisuje ih na sljedeći način: "A i nisu ti mlinci bogzna kakav dar. Obično kiselo tijesto, nešto nabubrela, sa malo smokava, suhog grožđa i rakije, fritule, kako ih zovu ljudi iz grada, od pšeničnog brašna, vadene žlicom iz tijesta i pržene u ulju. Ali kako se čisti pšenični kruh mijesio samo tri puta godišnje, o Božić, Uskrs i Maloj Gospi, i pšenično brašno bilo je rijetko, i kako boljega jela i bolje omeštenog nije bilo preko cijele godine, osim uskršnjeg jagnjeta i dana kad se klala svinja, mlinci su cijenjeni visoko i sjećanje prilikom maštenja ulja slanjem mlinaca rodbini bio je znak dobrog i čvrstog prijateljstva i uzajamnosti." (Balota, 1983:119).

*Landice*, *motanice*, *fritule na kušine*, koje se ponajviše spremaju u sjevernoj Istri, vrlo su jednostavni kolači. Kruh narezan na kriške umoči se u mlijeko i nekoliko istučenih jaja te preprži na ulju ili masti.



*Pandešpanja* slatki je kruh koji se pripravlja tako da se smjesa od žumanjaka, brašna i šećera dobro izmiješa, u koju se zatim lagano umiješa dobro istučen bjelanjak. Smjesa se izlije u zamašćenu posudu i peče.

I tradicionalne istarske slastice zaslužuju svoj dan za sjećanje. *Slatka Istra* naziv je fešte od kolača koja se održava tijekom pučke proslave svete Marije Vele u Vižinadi. Izložba kolača po prvi je put organizirana prije devet godina, i to kao “kroštulijada” u sklopu pjesničkih susreta *Verši na šterni*. Lokalna turistička zajednica ocijenila je izložbu kao zanimljivu turistima te je, promijenivši datum održavanja, uključuje u sastavni dio spomenute fešte. Dana 14. kolovoza 2004. izloženo je 127 kolača iz raznih krajeva Istre, a po prvi put i iz Slovenije. Nagrade su se dijelile u sljedećim kategorijama: *kroštule*, *fritule*, *pandešpanj*, *bucolaj*, *povetice*, *istarska užanca*<sup>5</sup> i *cukerančiči* (Flegar, 2004).

Od Ane Pahović (rođene 1964. u Poreču), pobjednice 2004. godine u kategoriji *bucolaj*, saznajemo da se ovaj kolač pripravlja od dizanog tijesta. Od razvaljanog tijesta izrežu se vrpčice koje se spoje u krug te zarežu na nekoliko mjesta kako bi ljepše izgledale. Nakon što se ispeku u pećnici puste se ohladiti, te na kraju umoče u bijelo vino i pošecere. Ovaj se kolač pekao za svadbe, krizme, krštenja, a prodavao na feštama. U Motovunu su prodavačice svoj proizvod reklamirale uzvicima “*Cukerani i iznutra i izvani!*”. Djeca su ih često stavljala na ruku kao narukvicu, a žene koje su ih prodavale *nadivale* su ih na *fiok* (mašnu) ili *naštro* (vrpču, špagu) i tako spojene, odnosno vezane u krug nosile oko ramena da se ne bi slomili. *Cukerančiči* su vrlo slični današnjim keksima. Jaja, brašno i masnoća dobro se izmiješaju, a u smjesu se doda mlijeka u kojem se otopio tzv. amonijak<sup>6</sup>. Tijesto se ostavi da otpočine, izvalja na deblinu malog prsta te reže i oblikuje u razne oblike. Ispeku se, ohlade i umoče u vino, rakiju ili rum te pospu šećerom. Umočeni u vino, malo su gorkasti pa je bolja rakija ili rum. Mogu trajati i do mjesec dana.

## Fešta od puževa

U dostupnoj literaturi puževi se kao tradicionalno istarsko jelo gotovo i ne spominju. Jedan je od mogućih razloga i to što se konzumiranje puževa pripisuje isključivo talijanskim žiteljima Istre koje hrvatski istraživači nisu konzultirali kao kazivače zbog otežanog sporazumijevanja, ali i zbog politike iz sredine 20. stoljeća kada se javlja tendencija prikazivanja općehrvatske Istre.

Pulska je tržnica prije pedesetak godina u svom izobilju nudila i puževe. Nudili su se živi, sakupljeni u prirodi. Danas više nema puževa iz vodnjanskih i galižanskih vi-

<sup>5</sup> Istarska *užanca* naziv je za različite autohtone kolače. Ovaj naziv čula sam isključivo u Vižinadi za potrebe ocjenjivačkog suda.

<sup>6</sup> Radi se zapravo o amonijevom hidrogen karbonatu, sredstvu za ‘dizanje’ tijesta (poput praška za pecivo).

nograda, polja i livada. Za pretpostaviti je da će ih se vrlo skoro (i zbog farmi puževa kojih ima u Istri) moći kupiti na tržnicama.

I Rimljani su uzgajali puževe na farmama. Zbog vrlo cijenjenog mesa puževa, nisu se mogli osloniti na godišnje doba i prirodne uvjete. Oni su puževe vjerojatno hranili njihovom prirodnom hranom, ali i dohranjivali smjesom od kuhanog vina i mekinja, kako bi postigli što veću težinu i dobili željeni okus (Bistričić, 1994:86).

Priprema puževa nije jednostavna. Nakon prikupljanja, puževi se ostavljaju u kutiji ili u mreži kako bi izbacili sluz. Nakon tjedan dana više se puta operu u vodi te stave u lonac s vodom u kojoj se kuhaju pola sata. Nakon kuhanja se ocijede, izvade iz kućice viljuškom ili iglom te ponovno isperu. Tako pripremljeni dodaju se umaku priređenom od maslinovog ulja, luka, češnjaka, peršina, svježih rajčica i mente. Uz papar i sol, umaku se doda i malo malvazije. Kuhaju se dva sata a najčešće se jedu uz palentu (palenta *con le cioche*) (Barbalich–Geromella, 1994:90). Osim na ovaj tradicionalan način, puževi se još mogu peći na žaru, spravljati kao salata, pržiti, pohati ili se od njih mogu spravljati odresci (*polpete*).

U današnje vrijeme tradicionalno pripremanje puževa pripisuje se mještanima Vodnjana i Galižane talijanskog podrijetla (*bumbarima*). I upravo je u Galižani osmišljena *Fešta od puževa*. Šesta po redu održana je u kolovozu 2004. u sklopu obilježavanja blagdana Svete Marije Velike. Čak se i glavna nagrada na lutriji zvala *Ciochia d'oro* (Zlatni puž). Za tu se prigodu spremilo trideset i pet kilograma puževa.

## Fešta od palente

Frane Lovljanov u uvodu teksta o Boljunu piše: “*Grada ovog prinostnika pisana je po ‘Osnovi’ A. Radića (na žalost samo manji dio) 1905. godine.*” (Lovljanov, 1949:125). Dalje, opisuje pripravljanje palente: “*Na vode se kuha palienta i skrop od žute muoki. Va kotle – posode ot kotlovini s kračnuon – zakuha se vodi. Unput se zamete z muokuo: z jenuo ruokuo se muoko siplje, a z drugon se mieša z gumuoljnarico – palico za tiesto takat – ali pak s kakovo prusto palico. Ku se zamete guosto, skuha se palienta, a ku rietko, umput skrop. Paliento se vis kotla znimlje na kusi žlico, a skrop se razliiva.*”<sup>7</sup> (Lovljanov, 1949:131).

Od svih nabrojanih jela ipak su se najviše konzumirale kaše priređivane od kukuruznog brašna. Mogle su se kuhati urijetko, skrob ili ugusto (palenta) (Muraj, 1998: 102). Upravo kroz palentu i njene dodatke može se ispričati socijalna, etnička i geografska priča istarske prehrane.

<sup>7</sup> “Na vodi se kuha palenta i rijetka palenta od žutog brašna. U kotlu – posudi s ručkom koja je na lancu zakvačena iznad vatre – zakuha se voda. Tada se pospe brašnom: jednom se rukom sipa brašno, a drugom miješa s *gumuoljnaricom* – drvenom palicom za mješanje tijesta – ili nekom običnom palicom. Ako se zamiješa gusto, skuha se palenta, a ako rijetko tada skrop. Palenta se iz kotla vadi žlicom, a skrop se razlijeva” (Lovljanov, 1949:131).

Palenta se jela s mlijekom, crnim vinom, ovčjim sirom, skutom, grahom, divljim radićem, zeljem, *črčkima* (komadićima slanine) i sl. Težacima se pripravljala s kobasicama, pancetom, umakom od svinjskih rebara. Na obali najčešće se kuhala kao prilog *brodetu*.<sup>8</sup>

Bogatiji stanovnici Istre (trgovci i veleposjednici) palentu su jeli uz divljač i ptice (srnu, zeca, prepelice). U novije vrijeme, palenta se jede s bakalarom, a danas i s tartufima. Prepržena i pošećerena palenta posluživala se i kao slastica. Palenta je opjevana i u narodnoj pjesmi:

**La mula de Parenzo**

*Se el mare fossi de tocio*

*E i monti de polenta*

*Oh mama che tociade,*

*Polenta e baccala!*

*Perche non m' ami pou?*

(Pauletich, 2003: 253).

**Djevojka iz Poreča**

*Kada bi more bilo od umaka*

*A planine od palente*

*O mama, kakva li umakanja,*

*Palenta s bakalarom!*

*Zašto me više ne voliš?*

I upravo je u Poreču organizirana *Fešta od palente*. Po treći je put organizirana u sklopu fešte posvećene svetom Mauru, zaštitniku grada Poreča. Ova kulinarska gozba sastavljena je od dva dijela: prvi, namijenjen pučanstvu, odvija se na porečkom središnjem trgu gdje pet ugostitelja sprema palentu na pet različitih načina; drugi se dio odvija u odabranom restoranu gdje se u pripremanju palente takmiče predstavnici iz Italije, Slovenije i Hrvatske. Svaka država predstavljena je s dva jelovnika. Žiri odabire između šest jela, a nagrade su Zlatni, Srebrni i Brončani *palentar*.<sup>9</sup>

## Zaključak

I tradicionalna kuhinja, koja više ne egzistira u svakodnevnom životu, postaje važno uporište u konstrukciji istarskog identiteta. U suvremenom se identitetu, pored ostalog, isprepliću blagodatni turizma i autohtonost specifičnih folklornih sadržaja u koje sve češće ulazi i kulinarstvo. U turističkim promidžbama sve se češće naglašava istarska gastronomija, odnosno Istra se predstavlja kao turističko odredište vrijedno kulinarskih istraživanja (Prodan, 2004). Na atraktivnim turističkim sajmovima širom

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<sup>8</sup> "Osim s brodetom, palenta se, primjerice, u Fažani jela s bijelom morskom ribom, u Galižani s puževima, u Rovinju s miješanom ribom (najčešće sardelama) u malo vode, na blagoj vatri, u Novigradu s listovima te u Premanturi s rakovicom" (Lukež, 2002:238).

<sup>9</sup> *Palentar* je podeblji štap, istanjen od polovice prema jednome kraju, zaobljena završetka. Služi za miješanje palente.

svijeta predstavljaju se istarski kulinarski specijaliteti, te sudjeluje na sve prisutnijim kulinarskim natjecanjima regija. Turistička zajednica Istarske županije kao i turističke zajednice pojedinih gradova, općina i mjesta u Istri sponzorstvom i organizacijom potvrđuju tezu o tradicionalnom kulinarstvu kao važnom segmentu turističke ponude, koja je drugačija od gastronomskih ponuda susjednih turističkih zemalja. To je ponuda koja mora zadovoljavati objektivne potrebe suvremenog turizma, isticati svoje objektivne različitosti kao prednost u odnosu na druge, te svoju osebujnost naslanjati na subjektivnim okusima istarskoga tradicionalnog kulinarstva.

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# Traditional Food and Tourist Offer of Istria: Characteristics of Istrian Regional Identity

*Characteristics of Istrian regional identity at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be considered in the context of traditional food as a tourist offer of Istria. The main characteristics of Istrian traditional meals are simplicity and modesty as well as togetherness of the Roman, German and Slavic cuisine. The global trend of coming back to authenticity and health food are cleverly used by the tourist communities from Istria in their work. In traditional-religious celebrations, nourishment takes over a more important place each day, especially for those meals that were consumed in the past. In newer times there are festivals organized exclusively to honour the traditional meals so they would be preserved from oblivion, but also as a specific tourist offer of the peninsula.*

Key words: traditional food, tourist offer, Istria, regional identity

## Introduction

Cultural identity is changeable. Every generation has its own view of the experience that is passed on. That difference can be seen in the facts of tradition, objectively changeable with time, but sometimes also interpreted or emphasized in the wrong way, depending upon the situation. Similar things happen, in addition to all the other symbols and/or ethno-differential factors, with the food that “...in anthropology has to be considered as means of expressing group identity” (Mennell, Murcott, Otterloo, 1998:40).

In this work we will investigate the nutritional identity of the Istrians who settled on the territory of the Istrian County. In other words, we will try to see the big picture of contemporary Istrian identity through the gastronomic offer conditioned by today's needs, primarily within the tourist industry, that leans on the traditional feeding habits of the citizens of Istria. Starting with the presumption that celebrations in Istria connected with food are organized from traditional nutritional habits, as well as political (giving significance to regional, romantic, traditional values) and tourist beliefs (with relation to supply and demand), there is a need to emphasize the traditional nutrition offer of the Istrian region that wants to be different from other tourist regions. The tourists expect something authentic and different, but because of the impossibility of preserving the original "...*something old that needed to be shown to foreigners, had to be made all over again...*" (Bausinger, 2002:187).

Nutrition, in the context of questioning identity, can be looked at from two points of view: as an objective differential factor that really shows the difference between certain groups but also as a subjective characteristic that "...*lays in the wish of a group to be different and not alike...*" (Čapo Žmegač, 1997:72). Kalapoš emphasizes the importance of food as a marker of ethnic boundaries, cultural identity and as a symbol of important events and emotional states. She especially points out at a long tradition of studying nutrition in the ethnographic sense, which is credited also to Radić's questions in *The Basics for Gathering and Studying the Documentation on Folk Life* (Kalapoš, 1998/1999:97-98). Costantinides considers gastronomy the fastest and most direct factor in the reexamination of history and tradition, and emphasizes its important role in gathering, archiving and transferring traditional documentation (Costantinides, 1996:VII).

Problems transferred to the present time raise some new questions. Sometimes, in a group's effort to separate itself from others, the authenticity gets pushed into the background by contemporary needs. Authentic folk culture lives in its true essence exclusively "...*in the authentic context of its creation...*" (Rihtman Auguštin, 1991:81), while being transferred into contemporary surroundings. "...*outside its authentic functions, on the stage, into the industry of fun and tourism, even into political life...*" (ibid., 81), it acquires new characteristics, while the question of its nativeness loses its significance. The authenticity of the substance is left only as a foundation onto which the contemporary is built. There are no negative connotations, of course, because this is one of the rare possibilities for keeping the tradition alive. Bausinger writes that the picturesque side of folklore leads us to easily forget "...*the fully tangible economical background as well as its political implications*" (Bausinger, 2002:174).

In the following chapters we will talk about traditional Istrian meals and their way of existing within a contemporary context. It is unnecessary to emphasize again the wide variety of Istrian ethnicity that is transferred into the spheres of nutrition in the past and present. The impossibility of precisely attributing specific meals to a certain region is brought to our attention by Rittig-Beljak. She mentions that we should not easily throw away the global views of the structuralists in nutrition "...*that the taste was formed through the culture and that it is under the control of the society. The society can change*



*the taste, especially today when there are numerous mechanisms of offering and persuasion at their disposal” (Rittig-Beljak, 1998/1999:122).*

The variability of identity of a certain region can also be observed through the change of its feeding habits. The return to traditional food, at first noticed in public - at festivals and in the restaurants, and again in the intimate life of the individual, corresponds to the strengthening of regional identity. Istrianism – a regional orientation, as opposed to Croatianism – the state orientation, was felt in all segments of life throughout the middle 1990s. The euphoria of regional orientation slowly fades in harmony with the decentralization of the Croatian state government. It seems that the emphasizing of Istrian characteristics - the dialect in music, media and other segments of fun - loses its popularity and meaning; there are less “goats” (goat is the regional symbol of Istria) in the form of a badge or a pin... In my opinion, the recognizable characteristics of regional identity which are profitable, will survive global trends. That is the story of nutrition, especially the one connected with tourism.

## The characteristics of Istrian food

Every particular geographic part of Istria tries to emphasize its own gourmand blessings which this, although a small region, really can offer. Istrians can thank the mild Mediterranean climate for their diversity in nutrition. Istria is on the 45<sup>th</sup> parallel with the perfect condition of clear seasons throughout the year, which is ideal for agriculture. Istria is also a peninsula of incredible diversity in regards to the soil and to the configuration of the land. Men lived very diverse lives on such a small space: a fisherman next to the sea, a ploughman working the fields, a shepherd on the hills of Čićarija. And above all, Istria had a historically exposed position, therefore frequent plagues, colonizations, wars and hunger also played the role in giving distinctiveness to this cuisine. It was made by their survival of misery, wars and poverty. Naturally, with the course of time, there was mixing of the population from different ethnic groups and each of them left some specific marks that were also built into the feeding habits of its descendents. Later on they assimilated with other newcomers, thus creating the rich cultural, as well as a nutritional, heritage of today’s Istria. The framework of traditional authentic meals of 20<sup>th</sup> century Istria, that we refer to today, was formed by poverty and misery caused by wars and the unstable political situation. The art of making tasteful and nutritional meals from almost nothing was a true art and skill attributed to Istrian women at that time.

When we speak of Istrian cuisine today, it is a matter of the essence and union of three cuisines: Romanic, Germanic and Slavic. A lot of sifting through the centuries made this particular “sediment” a source of gastronomy. Although the time of Venice and Austria-Hungary has long since passed, their contribution to culinary diversity is still visible. Poreč (a courtyard of Serenissima) and Pazin (a residence of the Austrian counts) are only thirty kilometers away. For Easter in both of these towns pork sho-

ulder (*špaleta*) will be eaten, but since the shoulder-joint is not dry enough it can not be eaten fresh or raw. In Poreč it will be prepared in the so called flip-turn way (*diravolta*). Slices of ham will be thrown on hot olive oil, flipped twice and then white wine will be poured over them. Citizens of Pazin will boil the whole pork shoulder.

With the arrival of welfare that corresponds to the development of tourism, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can notice shame on account of the former poverty that existed not so long time ago. This necessarily drew along associations with food. The guests are not offered soup (minestrone, *maneštra*) and pilchards (*sardele*), but meals *à la carte*. It gets even worse with wine. It was exactly those “*à la carte* guests” (the ones who choose themselves the meals in a hotel) as opposed to the “board and lodging guests” (the ones that have the menu arranged within the package deal), who unsatisfied with the hotel offer went to the inns and eating-houses nearby to discover some traditional Istrian meals new to them. Only fifteen years ago it was almost impossible to order minestrone (*maneštra*) in a restaurant in Poreč. Today the nutritional picture of Istria has completely changed, characterized by the global trend of coming back to what is authentic and local.

## Istrian traditional meals and contemporary gastronomical festivals

There are really a great number of festivities in Istria. Every place has its own protecting saint, the town's patron who is beloved and praised on local holidays. The preparations for these local festivities last all year long, resulting in one-, two- to three-days-long celebrations which include sport tournaments, concerts of popular singers, dancing and the consuming of a great variety of food and drinks. While only until recently the offer of the meals was mostly represented with grilled minced meat fingers (*čevapčiči*) and hamburgers (*pljeskavice*), in the past few years more significance has been given to native meals. Naturally every family within its own intimate circle celebrated the holy patron with domestic meals that have been prepared since the early days.

The interesting thing about Istrian celebrations is also their name. It is always adjusted to the feminine gender, while the patron is, of course, a male saint. Therefore the festival dedicated to Saint Rocco (the patron of Nova Vas near Poreč) is called “Rokova”, to Saint Bartholomew (the patron of Žminj) “Bartolja”; to Saint Peter (the patron of Sveti Petar u Šumi) “Petrova”... So, in Istria the festivities are never called Rokovo, Bartoljevo, Petrovo... I presume that is because the festival (the Istrian name for the festival is *fešta*, which is a feminine noun) was more important to the people than the patron himself.

Besides religious holidays, Istria is in the newer times flooded with tourist festivities based upon traditional meals. Attempts are made to harmoniously incorporate tradi-

tional meals with the religious holidays, which can be more or less successful. One of the most famous is the festival of truffles (*tartufi*). Then there is the festival of a maize porridge (*palenta*), of fish stew (*brodet*), of soup (*maneštra*), asparagus (*šparoga*), tomatoes (*pomidori*), snails (*puževi*), pilchards (*sardele*), mushrooms (*gljive*), sweets (*slastice*), pork loin (*ombolo*), sausages (*kobasice*) and a younger festival, called “*gramperijada*”<sup>1</sup> – the festival of potatoes. Contests are organized to pick the best quality wine, called “*VinIstria*”, the best oil, the tastiest pancetta...

## The festival of Istrian soups (*maneštra*)

Soup, a meal that is cooked in a pot, is the base of Istrian cuisine. A great number of proverbs, of which only some will be mentioned here, speak about the importance of this dish and its eternal presence in the lives of the Istrians:

*Žlica je gospodarica dobre kužine* - The spoon is a mistress of good cuisine.

*Žlica je za stepliti dušu, pirun je za tilo* - The spoon heats the soul, the fork heats the body.

*Brodo da verdura xe medicina che dura* - Vegetable soup is a medicine that lasts.

*Micisia refada xe la minestra riskaldata* - A restored friendship is like a reheated soup.

The basic components of these vegetable soups are beans and potatoes, while the third vegetable gives the actual name and specific taste to the soup. Young corn (*bobić*, *trukinja*) gives minestrone a sweetish taste, but there is also crushed corn (*stupana trukinja*) eaten in the wintertime, that turns minestrone into a splendid thick cream soup, as opposed to the young corn (*bobić*) which makes it clearer. The taste of fennel minestrone (*maneštra od koromača*) is distinctly bitter. *Jota* is minestrone with a sourish taste, made from sauerkraut, prepared in the winter. Minestrone made of chick-peas (*slanac*) is slightly salty. The one made with barley has numerous names (*maneštra od fara, šena, orza, jačmika...*). It is well known for its beneficial effect on digestion. Actually, it cleans the intestines, and it is mostly eaten for the Ascension of Christ called “*Sensova*”. The bean-and-pasta soup is the most popular minestrone. Instead of the third vegetable there is pasta. *Miništron* is a soup made from the season’s vegetables.

The main topic when it comes to minestrone is: how to season it? With chopped bacon (*pešt*), browned flour or just with some olive oil? And how to make the soup “stronger”: with pancetta or just with some pancetta rind left over, or with some bones or a sausage or, of course, the bone from prosciutto ham.

Once forgotten, minestrone has now started to experience its gourmand renaissance. I believe that the reasons for this are the trend towards healthy foods, the stressing

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<sup>1</sup> *Gramper* is the name for potato in Kaštelir (Istria).

of local identity caused by political manipulation, the global trend of coming back to the authentic and the always present tourist motive. Because of all of these reasons, this dish really deserves to be celebrated.

In the middle of July 2004, there was a gastronomic manifestation of domestic soup, recorded in the daily press. One of the articles critically points at the practice of non respecting the seasons when preparing minestrone. For example, the co-called domestic minestrone soup from young corn, most probably made from canned corn which significantly alters the taste of the soup, can be ordered in restaurants during the winter period too: “*The aim of this action, organized by the county Tourist bureau, was to evoke the memories of those old minestrone that fed the numerous generations of Istrians, and to emphasize that today, especially with the object of agro tourism, there should be real Istrian minestrone on the tables, and not those that are offered today by that name in the Istrian catering.*” (Benić, 2004).<sup>2</sup>

On July the 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004, during the ‘Cultural summer in Fažana’, there was a gastronomic evening organized by the name of “A Festival of Cuisine” with a competition in cooking Istrian minestrone. A review of this celebration was given by Mrs. Snitch (Šjora Špia) in the column “I heard, I saw...”<sup>3</sup> The question whether it is possible at all in today’s conditions to cook the soup that should taste exactly like the minestrone of the past, can be transferred to all other meals as well. In the example from Mrs. Snitch we can see that it is impossible. It is impossible, because the woman of today has no time for cooking, especially for cooking soup. To live in the fast lane today, a young housewife must rely upon fast food or frozen food or at least some heated up minestrone that somebody else’s grandmother cooked a day earlier. We can also observe the problem of finding the right ingredients important for cooking traditional food.

## The festival of fish stew (*brodet*)

Fish stew (*brodet*) in Istria, as well as a *brujet* in Dalmatia is brought to us from Italian cuisine. We can see that in the name itself, because the Italian term *brodo* means ‘a soup’. It is a soup made with sea food - fish, crabs or other shellfish. The story goes that fish stew can even be cooked from a skillfully chosen sea rock covered with some

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<sup>2</sup> The best *minestrone* was being chosen. The problems that the folkloristic researchers deal with, can be observed in traditional cuisine too. In order to help the music, dance and folk costumes find their place outside of the museums, folk festivals are organized. In order to help the culinary art of our ancestors survive in the present, festivities are organized honouring specific dishes. It is important to mention that, besides chefs, ethnologists are slowly finding their way in to the juries.

<sup>3</sup> A very popular character “Šjora Špia” is based on a talk that Italians use when they speak Croatian. Namely, as much as it was/is usual for the Croats to learn quickly and easily the Italian language, it was/is as unusual for the Italians to speak Croatian. But, here and there, on the market, for example, one could hear some Italian women, in order to sell their products better, start talking Croatian, mixing cases and genders.

sea grass and shells. Mate Balota writes about it in his “Tight land” (Balota, 1983:38, 280) describing the modesty and poverty of the Istrian man at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

What are the secrets of fish stew? Here is what Miranda Buršić, born in 1923 in Nova Vas near Poreč, has to say about it: *“The more fish, the better the fish stew. Fish stew is a soup made from fish: the soup can be from one fish, but it is better if there are two different kinds, and even better if there are three...someone who knows fish stews can feel the difference of the quality under his tongue. From the vegetables you can use: onions, actually a lot of onions, garlic, naturally, some oil, pepper, salt, parsley... The fish stew, if you have no time, if you are in a hurry, better don’t make it. You can’t make it faster; you have to be near a stove all the time... Fish stew is never left alone, just like a little child...”*

In addition to choosing the ingredients, the secret of a successful fish stew is, according to Mrs.Miranda, time and patience. Incompatibility of the past and the present, the traditional and the contemporary, share the same point together in a celebration.

On July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2004, in Medulin, the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Fish Stew Cup was organized. This gourmet celebration is unique in the fact that famous people from public life prepare the fish stews. The Tourist bureau from Medulin, acting as a coordinator, is responsible for the cooking utensils and the groceries, while the contestants have to bring the specific ingredients that will make their fish stew win first prize. Rijeka was represented by the deputy mayor, Vesna Lukanović, and the special ingredient of her fish stew was potato-maize porridge. Labin was represented by its mayor Tulio Demetlik who brought capers (*kapari*), a Mediterranean plant, with him as a secret ingredient. The actors Helena Minić and Vedran Živolić as guests of the gathering were helped by the audience in cooking their very first fish stew. Last year’s winner, a district council chairman of Medulin, Emil Jakupila brought a few sea-spiders (*grancipori*) and some cleaned sea snails. The district council chairman of Lovran, Edvard Primožić, brought, as his original ingredients, some scampi and groupers, saying that a real fish stew is done already in 45 minutes, which does not go hand in hand with the theory of Mrs. Miranda who only fries her onions for an hour and a half... This year’s winner, the mayor of Bale, Edi Pastrovichio, boasted of bringing sea-spiders, some good wine and a rock in which there is a piece of dinosaur bone. Representatives of Radio Pula, Mario Menčić and Alfredo Kocijančić, relied upon domestic tomatoes and entertained a large audience, while the district council chairman of Vodnjan, Klaudio Vitasović used as a secret ingredient - their very famous and much heralded olive oil (Sofić, 2004).

This year’s competition between the mayors and the district council chairmen along the Istrian coast was graded, among others, by the famous chef, Stevo Karapandža. The audience, comprised of both domestic and foreign tourists, enjoyed themselves, and according to the reporter, Žižović *“...in hardly half an hour all the pots were empty”* (Žižović, 2004).

## The festival of the wild asparagus

The following proverbs talk about the nutritional qualities of asparagus:

*I sparisi e i bruscardoli i xe del sangue i meio santoli.* – Asparagus and black bryony are the best godfathers for the blood.

*Co fiorissi la sanestra i sparisi xe boni piu che manestra.* – When the Spanish broom blooms, asparagus is better than minestrone.

One of the best preserved traditional gatherings of food still active today is the picking of the wild asparagus. In its delicate bitterness, the asparagus is one of the highest points of Istrian cuisine. People, but also contemporary medicine, ascribe to asparagus healing characteristics for safeguarding the urinary tracts and the kidneys. Proverbs reveal to us its beneficial influence on the quality of the blood and they tell us that in the spring time wild asparagus tastes even better than minestrone. Besides the most wide-spread asparagus dish – fried eggs with asparagus (*fritaja sa šparugama*), asparagus can be boiled and offered as a side dish, as well as a soup, and you can fry them in batter, or make a tasty spread out of them. My personal favorite, however, is a type of pasta with wild asparagus and prosciutto (*pljukanci sa šparugama*).

The district of Buje takes the greatest care, so that the wild asparagus will not be forgotten. For seven years now, each April, they organize a folk festival called 'Šparogada' within the church holiday *Otava*, celebrated eight days after Easter in Kaštel. This year the festival of wild asparagus started with the first international gastronomic competition in making meals from wild asparagus and pork shoulder (*špaleta*). It was held under the name 'Golden asparagus'. Co-organizers of this festivity were a tourist bureau from Buje and the Istrian County, whose representative described the aim of this competition as the refinement and enrichment of the offer of traditional Istrian spring cuisine already used to the *fritaja* (Kocijančić, 2004). According to the judgment of a jury the title of 'best' was won by the Italian bar 'Ca dei bocci' from Trento. An article from the Italian newspaper 'L'Adige' proves this marketing-tourist connection with the festival a good one, mentioning Croatia, the peninsula of Istria, the district of Buje, the town of Kaštel and the quality of the traditional cuisine (Casagrande, 2004). In order to make this festival even more interesting, there is also an award for the longest wild asparagus picked. A pork shoulder that weighed seven kilos was awarded to the owner of a 283 centimeters long wild asparagus.

## The festival of Istrian cakes

The common opinion says that Istrian cuisine is not one of cakes. In the times of hunger and poverty it was that way for sure, but Istrian traditional sweets were present in all of the religious ceremonies (during christenings, weddings...) and at the two most important religious holidays of the year - Christmas and Easter.

Mikac lists a type of strudel (*štruklje*) that is characteristic for the northern part of Istria. It is made from wheat flour by stretching the dough into two planes, putting on the smaller one chopped prosciutto, bacon, hard boiled eggs and onions, adding then some salt and pouring grease on top of it. After all that it gets covered with the bigger plane, the edges get adjusted and the cake, spread with some egg yolk on top, is put into the oven to bake. These strudels can also be made with raisins, sprinkled with sugar, while some jam or marmalade can be added (Mikac, 1977:286). In some parts of Istria, strudel is also called *povetice*, *štrukolo*, and today, even more often, it is known as *savijača*.

Fritters (*hrostole*, *brošule*, *kroštule*, *fjoketi*) are a simple cake made from flour that is mixed into dough with eggs, butter or some oil. The stretched dough then gets sliced with a knife into strips 10 centimeters long by 5 centimeters wide, fried in the boiling oil and then sprinkled with some powdered sugar on top.

A type of doughnuts called *fritule* are also made out of flour, oil, a few egg yolks, sugar, raisins and some brandy. In a special bowl a little amount of sugar is melted together with yeast in some warm milk. It is left on a warm spot until the yeast starts to rise. The dough is beaten well and long in order that it becomes homogeneous and it is left for about half an hour until it starts rising. Then small lumps are formed with a spoon and fried in hot boiling oil. At the end they are similar to doughnuts but shaped irregularly. And here is how Balota describes this cake: *“And those ‘mlinci’ are not a worthy gift. A plain fermented dough, somewhat raised, with a small amount of figs, raisins and brandy; ‘fritule’ is how the people in towns call them now; from wheat flour, drawn out from the dough with a spoon and fried in oil. But considering that plain wheat bread was made only three times a year: at Christmas, Easter and the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, and considering how rare wheat flour was, and how there was no better meal nor a better prepared one all year round, except the Easter lamb or a day when a pig was slaughtered, ‘mlinci’ were highly praised and a remembrance of the occasion when oil was being pressed. Sending the cake to relatives was a sign of a good and solid friendship and interconnectedness”* (Balota, 1983:119).

Mostly prepared in northern Istria, *landice*, *motanice* or *fritule na kušine*, are a very simple ‘cake’. Sliced bread is dipped into milk and several beaten eggs and fried on oil or fat.

*Pandešpanja* is a sweet bread made in such way that the egg yolks, flour and sugar are well stirred, and then well beaten egg whites are slowly added. The mixture is poured into a greased pan and baked.

So, the traditional Istrian sweets deserve their day to be remembered. ‘Sweet Istria’ is a festival of cakes held during folk celebration in Vižinada, connected with the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The exhibition of cakes started nine years ago as “Kroštulijada” with the poetry reading “Verses on the Cistern” (Verši na šterni). The local tourist bureau, recognizing the event as an interesting moment, decided to change the date of the exhibition and include it as a part of the festivity. On August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004, there were 127 kinds of sweets exhibited, from many different parts of Istria and for the first time from Slovenia as well. The prizes were given in these

categories: *kroštule*, *fritule*, *pandešpanj*, *bucolaj*, *povetice*, *Istrian užanca* and *cukerančići*<sup>4</sup> (Flegar, 2004).

From Ana Pahović (born in 1964 in Poreč), the 2004's winner in the category *bucolaj*, we find out that this cake is made out of fermenting dough rolled out flat, cut into strips and connected into a circle. The cakes are cut at a few spots in order to look nicer. After being baked in the oven, they are left to cool off. At the end they are dipped into white wine and sprinkled with some sugar. This type of cake was usually made for weddings, first communions, christenings, and was sold on festivals. In Motovun saleswomen would advertise their product by shouting "Sugared inside and outside!" (*Cukerani i iznutra i izvana!*). The children have often put them on their hands like a bracelet, and women that were selling them would put them on a string and connected like that, actually tied in a circle, they would carry them around their shoulders so that the cakes would not get crushed.

The 'sugar cookies' (*cukerančići*) are very similar to today's cookies. The eggs, flour and grease should be well stirred; then milk is added, in which the hydrogen carbonate of ammonia has been melted (serving as the raising agent). The dough is left to rest, and then it is rolled out flat as thick as the little finger and cut into a variety of shapes. After they are baked and cooled off, cakes are dipped into wine, brandy or rum. From wine they become a little bitter, so brandy or rum are better. Then they are sprinkled with sugar. They can last up to a month.

## The festival of snails

In the literature available to me snails are almost not mentioned at all as a traditional dish. One of the possible reasons is the attribution of that kind of food exclusively to the Italian citizens of Istria. Perhaps they were not mentioned by the storytellers because of the difficulty in correspondence with the mostly Croatian researchers, as well as because of the political situation back then (in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) when there was a tendency to show Istria as all-Croatian.

Half a century ago the market in Pula in its bounty also offered the snails. They were sold alive, gathered in nature. Today there are no more snails from the vineyards, fields and meadows of Vodnjan and Galžana. I presume there will be some available very soon (because of the snail farms that exist in Istria) for sale on the markets again.

The ancient Romans also raised snails on their farms. Because of the highly prized snail meat, they could not rely only on the time of season or the conditions in nature. They probably fed the snails with their natural food, but they also fed them supplemental food from boiled wine and bran in order to make them weigh more and taste better (Bistričić, 194:86).

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<sup>4</sup> *Istarska užanca* is a name for different native cakes. I heard this name only in Vižinada for the necessity of the grading jury.



The preparation of snails is not simple. After gathering them, the snails are left in the box or in the net so they would throw out their slime. A week later they should be washed several times and then put into a pot of water. They are cooked for half an hour, drained off, taken out of their shells with a fork or a needle and rinsed again. Prepared like that, they are added to a sauce made out of olive oil, onions, garlic, parsley, fresh tomatoes and mint. A small amount of malvazija wine is added, together with salt and pepper. Snails are then cooked for two more hours and mostly served with maize porridge (*palenta con le cioche*) (Barbalich – Geromella, 1994: 90). Besides being prepared in this traditional way, snails can be grilled on the open fire, made in salad, fried in flour, batter or in breadcrumbs, and even made into steaks.

Today in Istria the traditional preparation of snails is ascribed to the citizens of Vodnjan and Galižana, specifically to the citizens of the Italian origin called The Bumble-bees (*bumbari*). A Festival of snails is held in Galižana. The 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive one was organized this year, in August of 2004. It is connected with the holiday of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Even the main award of their lottery was named the 'Golden snail' (*Ciochia d'oro*). There were 35 kilos of snails prepared for that occasion.

## The festival of maize porridge (*palenta*)

In the introduction of the text about the town of Boljun, Frane Lovljanov says: "*The material of this attribution is written according the instructions from the "Basics" by A. Radić (unfortunately only a smaller part) in the year 1905*" (Lovljanov, 1949:125). The preparation of the maize porridge is described accordingly: "*Maize porridge is made from yellow flour cooked on water. The water is boiled in a big kettle – a pot with a handle that hangs on a hook above the fire. Then some maize flour is poured in: with one hand we sip the flour, while with the other we stir it with a wooden bat for mixing the dough (gumuoljnarica) or just with a simple bat. If the mixture is thick it is called a maize porridge – 'palienta', and if it is thin – 'skrop'. The maize porridge is taken out of the kettle with a spoon while the thin "skrop" is poured out*" (Lovljanov, 1949:131).

From all the meals listed above, the one most often consumed was definitely a porridge made out of maize flour. Porridge could have been cooked thin (*skrob*) with more water or thick (*palenta*), with less (Muraj, 1998:102). It is exactly through maize porridge and its supplements that we can tell the social, ethnic and geographic story of Istrian nutrition.

Maize porridge was eaten with milk, red wine, sheep cheese, curds, beans, wild chichory leaves, cabbage, and pieces of bacon (*črčki*). For the workers in the fields it would be prepared with sausages, pancetta, and with a sauce made from pork chops. On the coastal region it was mostly a side dish to fish stew.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "*Besides with fish stew, maize porridge was, for example, in Fažana eaten together with whitebait, in Galižana with snails, in Rovinj together with mixed fish (mostly pilchards) cooked in some water on a light fire, in Novigrad with soles and in Premantura with sea-spiders*" (Lukež, 2002:238).

The richer inhabitants of Istria, like the merchants and the owners of large estates, would eat maize porridge together with game and birds (a deer, a hare, a quail). Nowadays maize porridge is eaten with cod or truffles. Toasted and sugared maize porridge was served even as a pastry. Maize porridge was also sung about in a folk song:

La mula de Parenzo	<b>A Girl from Poreč</b>
<i>“Se el mare fossi de tocio</i>	“If the sea would be the sauce
<i>E i monti de polenta</i>	And mountains the maize porridge
<i>Oh mama che tociade,</i>	Oh mama what dipping,
<i>Polenta e baccala!</i>	The maize porridge with cod!
<i>Perche non m’ami pou?”</i>	Why do you love me no more?”
(Pauletich, 2003: 253).	

It is in Poreč that the Festival of the Maize Porridge is held. It took place for the third time on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004, within the Festivity of Saint Mauro, the patron of the town Poreč. This culinary feast consists of two parts. The first part takes place at the main square in Poreč in front of a lot of spectators, where five caterers prepare the porridge in five different ways. The second part takes place in a chosen restaurant where the representatives of Italy, Slovenia and Croatia have a contest in preparing the maize porridge. Every country is represented with two menus. A jury picks between six meals, while the awards are a golden, a silver and a bronze *palentar*.<sup>6</sup>

## Conclusion

Traditional cuisine, which does not exist any more in everyday life, has also become an important stronghold upon which the Istrian identity is constructed. A contemporary identity, among other segments, entwines the benefits of tourism with nativeness of the specific contents of folklore. The culinary art is one of those elements that is getting more important each day. In tourist advertisements for Istria, gastronomy gets emphasized more often. Actually, Istria is represented as a tourist destination valuable to culinary investigation (Prodan, 2004). Istria is nowadays represented with its culinary specialties at attractive tourist fairs around the world. It takes part in the growing number of culinary competitions amongst regions. A tourist bureau of the County of Istria, as well as the tourist bureaus of towns, districts and smaller places in Istria, confirm (with their sponsorship and the organization of their work) the thesis that traditional cuisine is an important part of the tourist offer. Their offer is different from the other similar gastronomic offers of neighbouring countries. The

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<sup>6</sup> *Palentar* is a wooden bat thinned from the middle towards one end, used for stirring the porridge.

offer needs to satisfy the objective needs of contemporary tourism by emphasizing its own objective differences as an advantage compared to the other offers, and by allowing its own distinctiveness to lean upon the subjective tastes of Istrian traditional cooking.

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