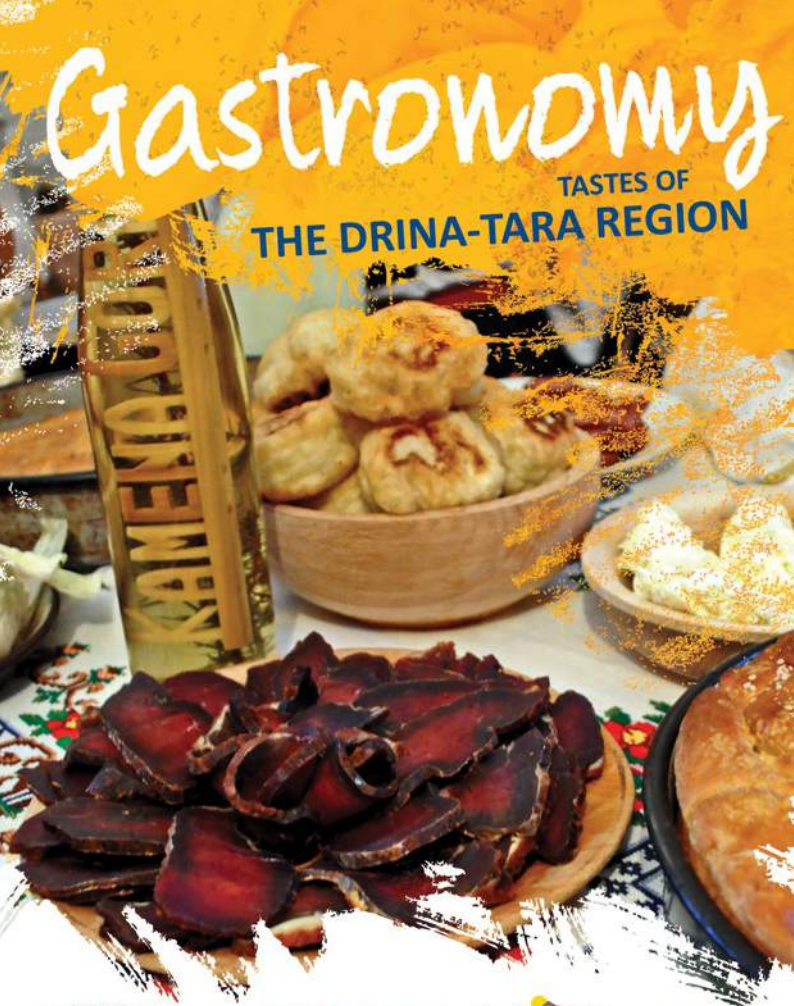
Gastronomy

TASTES OF THE DRINA-TARA REGION



South Eastern Europe
SWG RRD
Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group

ABD PROGRAMME
Area Based Development Programme in the Western Balkan countries

DRINA-TARA
CROSS-BORDER REGION

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The tastes of the Drina-Tara region are just one of the assets which will attract and keep the visitors in the area. Regional cuisine is rich in most diverse delicious specialties mostly made in line with traditional skills, and from homemade products.

You can start tasting the region with some of the traditional drinks, such as šljivovica (plum brandy) or some other fruit brandy produced from a variety of sorts grown in the area. You will feel its full tastes with its simple but delicious dairy and meat products such as komplet lepinja (re-baked small flat bread filled with dairy thick cream, egg and roast meat sauce), traditional pies (cheese (gibanica), meat (burek), buckwheat (heljdopita), etc.), unique dairy product - kajmak (thick milk cream) and cheese, pršuta (pork or beef prosciutto or smoked ham) or sudžuk (dried sausage). As a next step in familiarising with the region's specialties, you should not miss the delicious grilled meat and pork or lamb roast which are considered to be true specialties. You should also taste grilled trout or some other fish living in the region's clear rivers. After all, your impression will not be complete if you don't taste at least one of the region's sweets and desserts (urmašice, baklava), try local honey and jam produced of healthy fruit, and take some of those fruits to remind you of the Drina-Tara region after leaving it.

This brochure provides some information about the region's gastronomic offer, giving a description of some of its typical products and recipes for some of its traditional dishes. Although these meals won't taste the same in your kitchen and at a bank of some of the region's rivers, you should have them at hand either to prepare yourself for visiting the region or to remind your senses of the region's original tastes after leaving it. **Bon Appétit!**

PRŠUTA

SMOKED HAM / PROSCIUTTO

This traditional specialty primarily connected with Zlatibor and Užice region, but typical for the whole area, has long ago exceeded local boundaries and became one of best known Serbian brands.The secret lies in natural surroundings and conditions, traditional craft and dextrous hands of family manufactures that, in addition to smoked ham (pork and beef), produce other specialties as well: sausage, sheep prosciutto, kavurma (lamb or pig intestines).

SUDŽUK

DRY SAUSAGE

This dry salty spicy sausage consists of ground meat (usually beef) with various spices including cumin, sumac, garlic, salt, and red pepper, fed into a sausage casing and allowed to dry for several weeks. It can be more or less spicy, but it is always fairly salty and has a high fat content.

RAKIJA

BRANDY

There is no better regional aperitif than home-made plum brandy. In this region, well known for fruit-growing, people make good rakija-strong (ljuta) and weak (šljivovica). Rakija is produced from other kinds of fruit as well, but none is as famous as plum brandy. Rakija is a folk remedy, ease to the soul; it is music and a pain, inspiration and a problem.

KAJMAK

THICK MILK CREAM

Mountain pastures and clear air explain the irresistible taste of kajmak - thick milk cream resembling creamy cheese, but tasting better. One can distinguish two types of kajmak: young white kajmak with mild taste, and older, with stronger taste and yellowish colour. This high quality creamy product is made in traditional way. Quality milk and peculiar traditional way of its preparation make kajmak a unique delicacy.

PROJA

CORNBREAD

You simply cannot skip proja when visiting the region. Often served instead of bread, made from corn flour grinded in nearby water mills, it collects the reminiscences of mountain rocks and rivers. Baked in a wood stove, with its golden crunchy crust, proja deserves its epithet of homemade specialty.

Ingredients:

5 cups of corn flour
3 cups of wheat flour
3 eggs
3 cups of oil
1 baking powder
1 cup of yogurt
1 glass of mineral water
1 big piece of cheese - smashed
Salt

Preparation

Mix all ingredients, pour them into an oiled baking pan to the hight of 5 cm and bake it at 220°C till it becomes gold yellow. Serve with sour milk.

KAČAMAK

POLENTA

Kačamak - powerful, tasty and healthy! Made from corn flour, it is better than any cornflakes or cerials. It can be consumed either with milk, kajmak, cheese, or all together. As you like it!

Ingredients:
5 cups of water
2 cups of corn flour
1/4 cup of oil
Salt to taste

Preparation:
Bring water with salt to boil. Slowly add the cornmeal, continuing to stir the creamy texture. Remove from the heat before becoming too thick. Add oil and serve hot, with kajmak, cheese, pršuta, or some other local specialty.

LAMB

OR VEAL UNDER SAČ

Meat prepared under sač is soft and juicy and it melts in your mouth. During the consummation of this dish you fall into blissful state of happiness and gourmet pleasure! The taste of meat is complemented with the tastes of rich side dish made of vegetables cooked under the same sač. There only one dilemma a gourmet needs to solve: what to choose to put under sač.

Ingredients:
2 kg of meat
2 kg of vegetables (potatoes, carrots, etc)
garlic
salt, pepper, spices to taste

Preparation:
Put seasoned meat in preheated pot, cover it and and cook for 45 minutes. Add vegetables and spices and turn the meat. Continue cooking in covered pot. After 45 minutes, uncover the pot, turn the meat again and let everything cook for another 10-15 minutes.

SARMA

Sarma means ‘a wrapped thing’ in Turkish language, from the verb sarmak ‘to wrap’ or ‘to roll’, so the origin of this meal can be guessed from its name. Still, this dish has taken on numerous varieties, the most common one being minced meat (and rice) rolled in sour cabbage or grape leafs. What is common for all the forms of sarma is that it’s one of the most loved dishes for the most experienced gourmets.

Ingredients:

oil
large onion
4 garlic cloves
3–4 slices of bacon
500 g beef mince
500 g pork mince
sweet paprika powder
salt and pepper
1 cup of white rice, rinsed
6 bay leaves
large leaves of sour pickled cabbage, plus
1–2 large leaves extra, to line saucepan
1 kg smoked pork ribs

Preparation:

Heat small amount of oil in a deep pot. Add the onion, garlic and chopped bacon and fry until onion is translucent. Then add the beef and pork mince, paprika and salt and pepper. Mix together thoroughly and cook for about 30 minutes or until the moisture evaporates. Rinse the rice in cold water and add to meat mixture along with the bay leaves.

Take the sour cabbage leaves and wash them thoroughly to remove any excess salt. Trim any hard bits of stem and cut in half. Smaller leaves can be left whole.

Place a spoonful of the meat mixture onto each individual cabbage leaf and roll it up, tucking the ends in so that the filling is secure. Lay a couple of large outer leaves on the base of a deep greased pot, then begin packing the cabbage rolls on across the top.

In between each layer of cabbage rolls place pieces of the chopped pork ribs. When the pot is completely filled with the cabbage rolls, pour in water to fill up the pot. Then finally place on top some individual layers of sour cabbage leaves to cover all the cabbage rolls. Place tight fitting lid on top and cook on stove top for about one hour. They can be left to rest while extra seasoning is prepared as the final touch.

This recipe can be made with fresh cabbage leaves. Blanche the leaves in salted water to soften them before using.

KOMPLET LEPINJA

To make one komplet lepinja (re-baked small flat bread filled with kajmak (dairy thick cream), egg and roast meat sauce) you will need:

Ingredients:
1 flat bread bun
1 egg
1 spoonful of old kajmak
4 spoonfuls of mixed pork and lamb gravy
(you can find it in every meat roasting restaurant)
Wood stove (preferably)

Preparation:
Cut off the upper part of the bun. Apply kaymak to the bottom part of the bun. Break an egg and apply it over the kaymak. Use fork to whisk kaymak and egg and carefully smear the mixture all over the bun. Prick the bun with the fork so that it can better absorb the scrambled mixture. Put the bun in the stove. Once it's baked, pour the mixed pork and lamb gravy over the bun as well as its cover.

Ingredients:
1 packet of thin layers of dough used to make a pie
700 g of cheese
5 eggs
1 teaspoon of salt
1/2 cup of oil (sunflower or other bright oil)
1 cup of milk
20 g of butter

Preparation:
Heat the oven to 220°C. Put the cheese into a big bowl, add eggs one by one and stir well, add salt, oil, milk and stir again. Put one layer of dough to the bottom of baking pan. Soak nearly all other dough with the mixture and put it in the pan squeezed. Leave at least three layers of pastry (dough) to cover all this as well as some spoons of mixture. Add a spoon of milk to the mixture and spread it over the pie. Cut the butter to small pieces and put ithem on the pie. Bake the pie for about 40 minutes till it gets yellow. Serve it hot. It is often served with a glass of milk or yogurt.

SOUR CABBAGE

SAUERKRAUT with smoked meat

Ingredients:

3 kg small cabbages
1 kg beef, cut into chunks
2 pig's trotters, cut into pieces
1 pig's ear cut into pieces
200 g smoked bacon, sliced
300 g pig's ribs 3 onions, chopped 4 red peppers, deseeded and sliced
2 tbsp parsley, chopped
2 tbsp coriander, chopped
salt and black pepper

Preparation:

Rinse the cabbage thoroughly and remove outer leaves. Core each cabbage, cut into 8 wedges, then again into three pieces. Put the cabbage with meat, onions, parsley, coriander and black pepper in a large earthenware casserole. Repeat until all ingredients are used up, finishing off with cabbage. Add cold water and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer half covered for several hours.

KEŠKE or ĆEŠKE

Ingredients:

1 larger chicken
800 g of hulled barley
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil (butter or margarine)
salt

Preparation:

Wash hulled barly three times, put in a pan and cook until boiled (do not put salt). Sprinkle the chicken with salt, put in another pot with water and cook on high temperature for approximately one hour until bones start to separate from the meat. Peel the skin from the cooked meet, clean it from the bones

and separate meat with fingers. Put the boiled hulled barley in water where the chicken was cooked, add chicken meat and start cooking on medium temperature (do not stir or add salt). After 30-40 min remove from the heat, add salt and pepper (or chilly-optional), then pour oil, melted butter or margarine, and the dish is ready. Serve hot or cold as a spread on bread.

Stuffed peppers is a famous Balkan dish consisting of paprika/peppers filled with mixture of meat and rice. There are many variations of stuffed peppers across the Balkan countries, and they are often on the menu.

Ingredients:

12 red peppers
1/2 kg minced meat
1 small onion
1 - 2 carrots
1 celery /cut in pieces/
2 cups of soya beans or 1 cup of rice
2 tomatoes
salt, pepper oil
tomato juice or water

Preparation:
Clean the peppers, take out the seeds and put them in a big container. Fry the meat with onion, celery and carrots in a greased pan until brown. Add soya beans or rice and afterward salt and pepper and join all to make a filling. After filling the peppers, finish each top with a piece of tomato. Pour tomato juice or water over stuffed peppers and cook some half an hour on small temperature.

Ingredients:
15 tablespoons
of white flour
4 tablespoons of
buckwheat flour
5 eggs
100 g of cheese
100 g of sour cream
(or kajmak)
oil

Preparation:

Make the pancakes batter by mixing the two types of flour, eggs, mineral water and milk. In a separate bowl mix the cream, cheese, sour cream and yogurt (leave the egg for later).

In a heated pan fry the pancakes. While they are still hot start layering them, adding the cheese filling, and repeat this until you use all the pancakes. Keep some of the filling aside.

Mix 1 egg with the filling that is left, cut the layered pie like a cake or into cubes. Put it into a baking pan and pour the cheese filling mixed with the egg over the pie. Bake in a preheated oven at 200 ^{o}C degrees for 15 minutes.

BOSANSKI LONAC *BOSNIAN POT*

Ingredients:
300 g of beef
300 g of lamb
2 carrots
2 parsley (roots + leaves)
1/2 of cabbage
2-3 green peppers
8 small potatoes
2-3 onions
2 very hot green peppers
1 head garlic
black peppercorns
wine vinegar
2-3 tomatoes
100 g okra
hot paprika
salt

Preparation:
Cut meat into byte sized pieces, carrots and parsley roots into circles, cabbage, tomatoes, peppers and potatoes into larger pieces, onions into quarters and separate and peel garlic cloves.

Put everything into pot in layers. After each layer add salt, a few peppercorns, paprika and a few parsley leaves. The pot should not be filled completely. Leave a few centimeters unfilled. Pour water to fill the pot to the half. Optionally, add a few tablespoons of pork fat, this will make the dish lot tastier. Traditionally, the lamb should be very fat. Note that pork is mostly not consumed in Bosnia.

It is best to use a pot made of terracotta or clay. This is how the dish is made traditionally. Traditionally it should be cooked in a fireplace or a pit in the ground, but, the stove top will work too.

Cover the pot with a baking paper and poke a few holes with a needle in it to let the steam come out during cooking.
Simmer on low heat for 3-4 hours.

Ingredients:
1) 1 previously baked pie dough
2) 6 cups of fresh raspberries
3) 3/4 cup of sugar (or as much as you like)
4) 1/2 cup of cold water
5) 3 teaspoons of lemon juice
6) 3 teaspoons of corn meal
7) 2 cups of cream beaten with 3 teaspoons of sugar

Preparation:
Mix 2 cups of raspberries, sugar, water, lemon juice and corn meal in a middle size dish. Cook and stir at middle temperature till it condenses. Remove from the heater. Mash respberries in the souce and fill the pie dough. Cover the pie and and put it in the refrigerator to cool for two hours. Serve with whipped cream.

Ingredients:

3 cups of sugar
1 cup of cornstarch
4 packets of gelatin
2 3/4 cups of cold water
1 1/2 tablespoons of rosewater
1 cup of broken pieces of walnut
1 cup of confectioners' sugar
Cooking spray

Preparation:

Place a piece of plastic wrap in a rectangular baking pan, and spray it with cooking spray. Mix the gelatin packets with 1 cup of water, and in a separate bowl, mix the cornstarch with 1/2 cup of water, and stir until smooth.
In a saucepan, combine sugar and 1 1/4 cups of water on medium heat, stirring constantly until sugar is dissolved and then comes to a boil. Add in the gelatin and cornstarch mixtures and stir quickly to get the lumps out. Stir for 10 minutes on medium heat, with a wooden spoon. The mixture will become golden in color, and thick and glistening. Once the mixture has become a golden color, stir in the rosewater and walnuts.

Pour the mix into the plastic lined pan and spread evenly, stroking it back and forth, and allow to cool in the fridge for at least 4 hours. Once it has cooled, sift the confectioners' sugar and the remaining 1/4 cup cornstarch. Flip the ratluk onto a clean counter and cut into bite sized squares with an oiled knife.
Toss with the confectioners' sugar mixture. Serve or store in airtight container in layers separated with parchment paper. Keep for up to a week.
Enjoy it for breakfast with a cup of strong traditional coffee!

Ingredients:
1 kg of frozen phyllo dough
3 cups of ground walnuts
3/4 cup of plain bread crumbs
6 cups of granulated sugar
3 tablespoons of butter
or margarine

Preparation:
Thaw the frozen phyllo dough. Have in mind that it's easier to make the baklava if the sheets are relatively sturdy. Melt the margarine or butter in a small bowl. Preheat the oven to 200 ^{o}C degrees.

Place a set of four to six sheets of phyllo on the bottom of a pan greased with additional margarine or butter. Cut or fold the sheets of phyllo to fit. If they are thin or stick together, you can add a layer or two. On top of the phyllo dab margarine until the surface is about half covered. Sprinkle ground walnuts, then plain bread crumbs, making a thin layer over the phyllo. Proportions are relative so suit your personal taste.

Over the phyllo and filling add more layers of phyllo and filling, pressing down a bit with your hand after each layer of phyllo. Finally add one more layer of phyllo on top. Press down the last layer a bit more firmly.

Cut the unprepared baklava into pieces (diagonal) with a sharp thin knife. You can use your fingers to help hold the dough in place while cutting. Bake this in the oven for 40-45 minutes until it is a medium brown.

While the baklava is baked boil 4 cups of water with sugar in a saucepan while stirring gently until sugar is dissolved and the syrup is a light yellow color. With the baklava and syrup both hot, gently pour the syrup all over the baklava being sure to cover each piece. Allow to cool before serving.

HURMAŠICE

Ingredients:

1 egg
150g of butter
350g of sugar
200g of all-purpose flour
7g of baking soda
lemon
16 walnut halves
1 stick vanilla bean

Preparation:
To make dough:
Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Cream 150g sugar with butter until it becomes light and pale. Add egg and mix well.
Stir together flour and baking soda. Add flour mixture into butter mixture and mix throughly.

Divide dough in 16 pieces, form into balls and press them to make eliptical (oval) shape. Put a walnut half on each piece.
Place cakes in rectangle baking tray leaving space between each. Bake them in for about 45 minutes or until golden brown.

To make syrup:
Mix 200g sugar with 400ml water and add vanilla bean. Bring to boil and let it cook for 15 minutes. Cool to luke warm and add juice of one lemon. Pour over the cake and leave it to soak syrup completely.

Ingredients:
5 apples (Golden apples)
700 ml of water
400 g of sugar
1 sachet of vanilla sugar
Half of fresh lemon
100 g of ground walnuts or almonds
150 ml of whipping cream

Preparation:
Put water, sugar, vanilla sugar, lemon sliced into rings in a saucepan and boil. Wash apples, make a hole in the centre and peel them. Put the peeled apples in a saucepan with water, let them cook for 10 minutes, rotating them if necessary. Gently take the apples out of the syrup and leave them to cool completely

Mix ground walnuts with a couple of teaspoons of whipped cream to make the dressing. When apples cool, fill them with dressing.
Serve cold with additional whipped cream.

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The Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe (SWG RRD) is an International Intergovernmental Organization consisting of members from governmental institutions in South Eastern Europe (SEE) responsible for agriculture and rural development in respective member countries and territories. The SWG is a platform for networking and regional cooperation in SEE in the field of agriculture and rural development.

The SWG is carrying out the project Preparation for Implementation of the Area Based Development (ABD) Approach in the Western Balkans - 2nd phase which works on building the capacities and structures within the SWG and selected regions in order to be able to implement the forthcoming ABD programmes. The project's objective is the contribution to sustainable economic growth of the target regions: Drina– Sava (cross-border region between B&H, HR, SRB), Drina- Tara (cross-border region between B&H, SRB, MNE), Prespa (cross-border region between ALB and MK) and Sharra (cross-border region between ALB, MK and KOS*) by strengthening the cooperation of public administrations and other public bodies, the private sector and NGOs in the fields of local development and regional cooperation by building-up local and regional cross-border capacities. The project will create framework conditions within the SWG as organization and the SWG member countries for implementation of the area based development approach and in that way contribute to the sustainable growth of the rural cross-border areas of the SEE region.

This document has been prepared and published with the aim to present the region and its attractions, thus contributing to attracting visitors to the Drina-Tara cross-border area.

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