

GASTRONOMIC TOURISM AS A FACTOR IN PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND FORMING NATIONAL IDENTITY

The purpose of this research is to analyze gastronomic tourism as a socio-cultural phenomenon and to determine its role in preserving intangible cultural heritage and strengthening national identity in the context of globalization. The relevance of the topic is determined by the growing importance of cultural components in tourism and the increasing interest of modern travelers in authentic experiences.

In the modern context of globalization, tourism is increasingly moving beyond traditional leisure and becoming a tool for understanding the culture, history, and lifestyle of nations. One of the most dynamic sectors is gastronomic tourism, which combines travel with an introduction to national cuisine, culinary traditions, and local products. Researchers define this phenomenon as a form of "cultural consumption," where food serves as more than just a biological necessity [1, c. 24].

Gastronomy is a vital component of intangible cultural heritage. Historical experience, values, and worldviews are transmitted through traditional dishes, cooking methods, and ceremonial culinary practices [1, c. 30]. A significant milestone for Ukraine was the inclusion of the "Culture of Ukrainian Borscht Cooking" on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This decision emphasized that gastronomic traditions are the foundation of national resilience and cultural sovereignty.

A special role in the development of gastronomic tourism is played by the stimulation of the local economy through the concept of 'short supply chains' from farm to table [2, c. 45]. This not only ensures high quality and environmental sustainability of dishes but also creates new jobs in rural areas, promoting self-employment among the population. Furthermore, the promotion of authentic culinary brands (such as honey, cheeses, or wines with protected geographical indications) shapes a unique image of the destination. In this way, gastronomy transforms into an effective tool for territorial marketing [2, c. 52], allowing communities to preserve their identity even under the pressure of global unification processes, turning local traditions into a competitive international product.

At the same time, the development of gastronomic tourism requires a comprehensive approach: supporting small and medium-sized businesses, preserving traditional recipes, creating high-quality tourism products, and actively using digital platforms for promotion [3, c. 112]. It is also crucial to train tourism industry professionals capable of integrating the cultural component into travel itineraries.

Therefore, gastronomic tourism acts as an important humanitarian factor contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage, the formation of national identity, and the development of intercultural dialogue [2, c. 18]. It becomes a bridge between the past and the future, where every local dish is part of a grand national narrative.

REFERENCES

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