

## CULINARY TOURISM AS AN IMPORTANT, INTERCULTURAL ISSUE

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- culinary tourism,
- cuisine,
- travel,
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### Abstract:

Nowadays culinary tourism becomes more and more popular and appears more often in various forms of media. Its growing importance we can see through various statistics, research and often by human behaviors. The growing importance is noticeable throughout the world. Also in Poland we are able to see changes. We are willing to participate in food festivals, whose number increased annually all over the world. We pay more attention to the food we eat. A growing number of people eat compatible with a healthy mode of nutrition.

The paper occurs my own research and information about food we choose most frequently during a travel and for what we are able to spend the most amount of money. Another issue concern culinary delights which we gladly take with us from a journey. The study indicates also information about how many of us are willing to change eating habits in favor of taste dishes of the region where we travel.

The end of the work belongs to Poland and to the Subcarpathian Province. It is the richest region in relation to the Polish culinary wealth. The work includes also economic dates pointing at revenue from tourism and its growth amount in recent years. All cases show that the importance of culinary tourism is steadily increasing.

### INTRODUCTION

Lot of us do love travel and make travel. I could dare to say that each of us have been on any trip. More or less frequently, far away or quite near. When you travel, whether it is a journey to a distant place in your country or a travel abroad, all of us have physiological needs. One of them is the need to satisfy your hunger. However, during a travel a type of hunger satisfying is often different than usual, sometimes it has for us a different meaning than an usual meal. How many of us like to make experience? Do experiments? Explore? One of opportunities is to go to the places where we cannot stay every day. And this makes the possibility to enjoy regional delicacies, which we cannot taste in other circumstances.

Culinary tourism is becoming increasingly popular and appreciated as an area of the cultural tourism. Its significance and positive effects that it carries for several years are being increasingly acknowledged and appreciated as well. People interested in travelling for gastronomic motivations were increasing gradually [1]. What exactly a culinary tourism means? *Culinary Tourism* was a term first suggested in 1998 [3]. It expressed the idea of tourists' experiencing the culture of a destination through food. According to the International Culinary Tourism Association, culinary tourism is defined as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking [6]. It means that exist a particular audience of people who are willing to travel the world in order to sample and experience authentic international cuisines, explore the origin of flavors, discover customs of a given region deeper than ever before. The ground here is a human curiosity and constant desire for do action over standards. A standard is no longer

an ordinary tour. The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) characterizes culinary tourism as including: *a variety of culinary, agri-tourism and agri-food activities, developed expressly for tourists, that show case food and beverages and provide an opportunity for visitors to discover dishes indigenous to each region while learning about the talent and creativity of artisans. Visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food and tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a specialist food production region are the primary motivating factors for travel* [5].

Together through changes in the social ground, interest in learning about food is growing. A culinary issue is considered from a historical point of view, analyzing the sociological culinary tourism in the context of globalization and localization. There are even analysis for the individual products and their role in the history of mankind. *Food studies* are the subject of university education, especially in the United States as for instance in Indiana University, New School New York City, Chatman University or in Europe ( in Italy)- Umbra Institute in Perugia, Gustab Institute – Food and Culture Center in Rome. In Poland there are no formed yet.

### **THE AIM OF THE WORK**

The work aims to show how important the culinary tourism is at that time in the world and also its growing importance in Poland. Through the interpretation of economic data, obtained information and my own research I aim to show the growing importance of culinary tourism to the whole field of tourism and realize that culinary tourism is very often a cohesive element of intercultural population.

### **MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY**

The figures necessary to perform the analysis was obtained through a survey conducted on a group of 80 people from different countries (including Portugal, Spain, Brazil, India, Vietnam, Albania, Ukraine and Poland). The survey includes questions about the most important factors determining the choice of travel destination, preferences to spend time during the expedition, a question about knowledge and interest in culinary festivals in the world; moreover how important are culinary values against the overall assessment of a trip, the most common places, where we go to eat while we are far away from a place of residence. Respondents also answered questions about their food preferences and whether they are changing their eating habits in favor of try regional dishes of the place they do travel. One of the most important question was related with the place, where the most of respondents would like to go and where they would like to go taking in account only culinary aspects as a reason of choosing a preferable place. They were also asked to write a reason of the choice. Another question was related with a favorite dish. Thanks to the question we are able to see, which cuisine is the most popular. Respondents are the people who do travel, which is presented below:

- Amount of respondents: 80 people
- Sex:
  - female: 70%
  - male: 30%
- Place of work:
  - students: 81%
  - full-time job: 13%
  - self-employment: 1%
- Frequency of travel:
  - more than 5 times a year: 9%
  - from 2 to 4 times a year: 39%

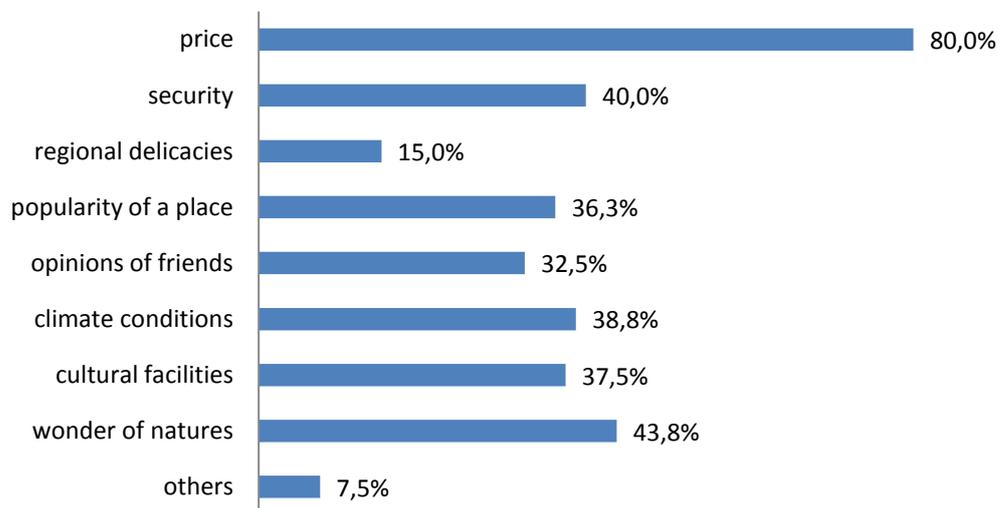
one time a year: 21%  
once every two years: 8%  
difficult to say: 24%

Another source of information are economic data obtained from economic statistics from previous years. The work includes also the information gained from scientific publications and other materials described in the bibliography.

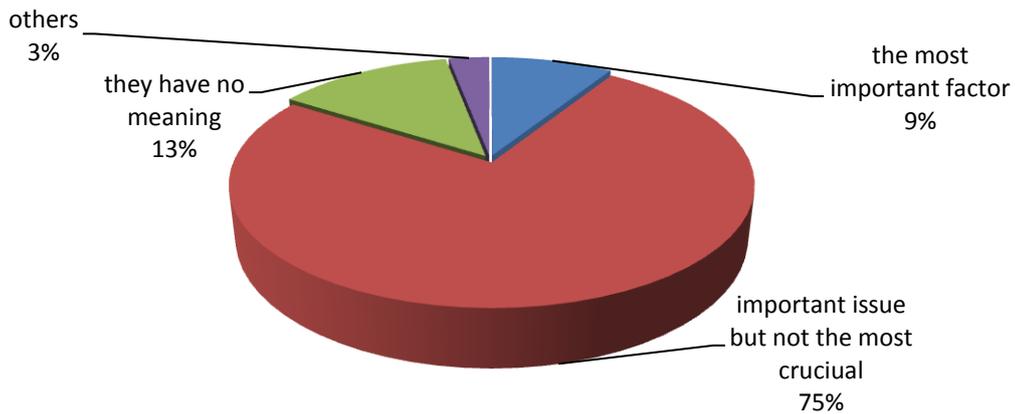
The source of figures it is my own compilation based on the research and data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Each of us is a different person, to some extent with different thinking about an every single thing and to some extent differently deciding about life and factors that affect on it. Each of us has also different expectations about trips. For some people the most important can be a price, for others it can be a convenience, the environment, access to the sea or the ability to entertainment. Some of them may say that the trip was a success when the weather was great or when they visited many historical sites. However, a theme that appears most often is a theme connected with food. When we return from a trip, we talk about what we saw, where we stayed, but the biggest emotion evokes new flavors, what we experienced. According to my own research, the most important factor that determines the choice of destination is definitely the price. 80 percent of respondents admit that price is a crucial factor during a selection of a trip localization. How the Figure 1 shows, on following location we can find: wonders of nature, cultural facilities, popularity of a given place and security. Regional dishes are as a deciding factor only for 15 percent of responders. This is not a huge amount, but the number is steadily growing comparatively with development of the concept. However, as you can see in the following chart (Fig. 2), the question about culinary exploration of new flavors it is definitely an important issue, but it is not the most important- for this option answered 75% of respondents. As we can see it is a huge amount of people who cares about culinary exploration in a huge or lesser degree.

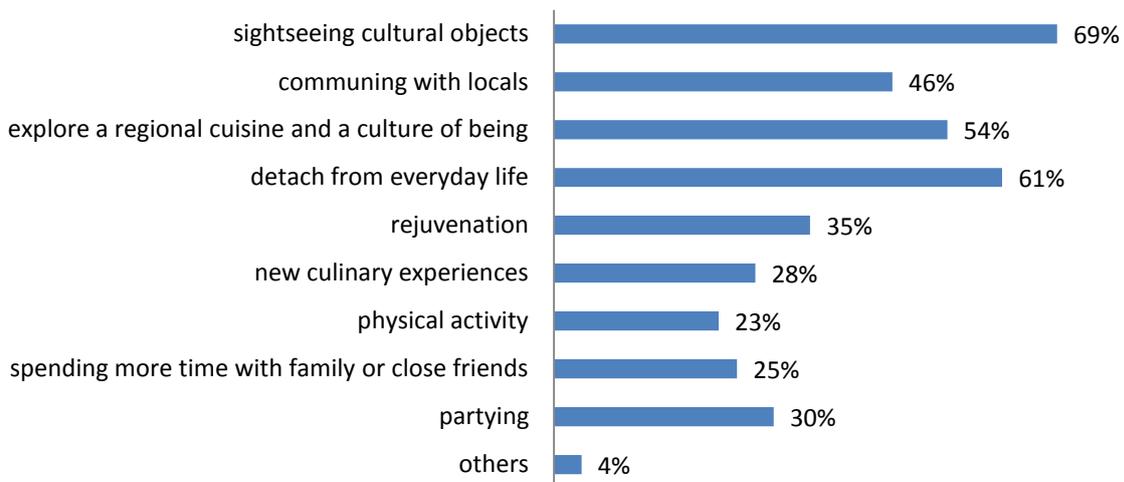


**Fig. 1.** The most important components deciding about place of a trip



**Fig. 2.** How important are for you culinary aspects during a journey?

Directing the question more specifically to selected components of a successful journey, we can see that four options are leading (Fig. 3). The most important factor proved to be quite unexpectedly visiting cultural sites, which progressively is going to be less popular. However, we can see that most of us still attach great importance to a traditional style of travel. Another place took a detour from everyday life, which is appreciated generally most of us and what is usually the obvious cause of a trip planning. On the next position: getting to know a local cuisine, culture of being and communing with locals. As a result we can see that these factors are becoming increasingly popular and for some people constitute an important factor that makes a journey have a different meaning, our experiences are more aware and for longer we will remember the excitement that accompanied us. Evidence of that we can see by increasing popularity of using services as *CouchSurfing*, through which we can spend time with the locals, rather than traditionally in a hotel or other accommodation places. Often due to *CouchSurfing* we know the most interesting places of a given region, try culinary delights, create new tourist trails which then we are willing to share on web pages. Of course it is also the cheapest way to travel, what is appreciated the most by the young generation, students. This fact entails another, that precisely in this group of people the website is the most popular. As *Wikipedia* says, initially (2002/2003 year) on the website peered only friends and friends of friends of the founder. Today, the service has aroused great interest. In 2013 the site boasted by having 7 million users from 100 thousand cities in the world [8].



**Fig. 3.** The most important components of a successful trip

Nowadays people attach more attention to nutrition. Great popularity has gained ecology and healthy lifestyle. More and more information about the food appears on the web, on the television, bookstores. Celebrities are writing and publishing their books, they are talking about eating habits and experiences associated with it. We are an aware society of benefits around the world. It just appreciation of diversity is becoming more and more popular and sometimes it turns into a passion. Popular are phrases such as slow life, tasting, experiencing or discovering. Many of us: 89% of the surveyed people want to experience and is not afraid to explore new flavors. Current trends have taught us to be curious for what is foreign and exotic [10].

Gladly we taste not only those unknown products whose names often we do not even know how to pronounce, but also prior unknown regional dishes from different parts of Poland. Pointing to the high level of importance that has the price during our trips, according to a survey conducted by *Citybell Consulting i ARC Rynek i Opinia* in September, 2013 [2]. on the question: *Which dish would you like to choose having a choice from a wide selection of regional polish meals at the same price?* More than a half of respondents (54%) selected a regional cuisine, which have not eaten before. Dishes made from regional products would like to try as much as 78%. Only 8% would take a well-known polish meal like pork chops, meat-loaf or grilled pork neckof. At least 4% of respondents, having a choice to regional dish that have never tried before, would choose a pizza, pasta or kebab. For instance the validity of research results we can proof by an example: during a stay in Zakopane we definitely prefer to have a meal in highland inn than in the fast-food place or other restaurants where we can eat meals from different region of the word. Consciously we are choosing a place where we can feel the atmosphere of a region, taste delicacies, which every day we are not able to eat.

Being in a particular place in the world we are trying to identify with a region, we are trying to eat as they eat and we are trying to stay with locals as much as possible. *Trendy* are no longer trips organized by a travel agency which allows us to see the main tourist routes. Currently we prefer to follow into places where we do not meet tourists, places that are away from the hustle and bustle. We select interesting places to feel a real atmosphere of a city or region. Nowadays an average culinary tourist is like an individualist. An offer for individualist has no place in travel agencies. This gap fills organizations like Slow Food Polska (since 2002), Polish Association Of Culinary Tourism (since 2011). Thanks to possibilities, what the Internet gives to us we can no longer be addicted to travel agencies. We can not only create a plan of a trip, but also book accommodations or find a place with the best restaurant adapted to individual customer requirements, which firstly we can specify, respectively.

Without any doubt, a process of a hunger satisfaction is one of the basic function in our entire life, which we have to struggle every day. We are always more and more like experts in a culinary theme. It means that we are always more and more demanding. There is no true anymore an old, popular phrase: a lot, cheap and good. Nowadays, more and more people are starting to look at a quality, taste, exotic vacuity. Moreover, during a journey we are able to spend the most amount of money for food, which we have never tried before, in spite of a price is higher and relatively deviates toward favorable for us. However, we are able to pay more for a well-cooked meal, especially unusual meal than a dish that we can eat as well close to our place of residence (source: the own research). Food has a great significance in our life and it is not an issue to discuss. However, the issue related to the importance of tourism development is extremely interesting. Tourism has reached the largest items branch of the global economy, outpacing the industry and the extraction of raw materials. The value of the international tourism is estimated to more than one trillion dollars and his growth rate reach 3-4%. In 2012 Europe was visited by 534 millions of tourists. It is 17 millions more than in 2011 [2].

A current data indicates that total receipts from inbound tourism in Poland reached 39,8 billions of PLN. The receipts has increased to 11,5% in relation to the results achieved in

2012, creating 6% of Polish GDP. Comparing to the GDP of European Union the tourism created 4% of the value (Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism 2014). The biggest profits from tourism reach the United States. Following positions belong to Spain, France, Italy and China. An affect on that has not only the popularity of a place, but also the amount of money that travelers are obliged to spend in the concerned country. Indeed, the most popular destination, visited annually by the highest number of travelers belongs to France [15].

If we are talking about attractive tourist places in terms of culinary, the most popular country, according to the research, it is definitely Italy (source: the own research). Every single year to Italy arrives 5 millions of tourists to spend special holidays there compared with a cooking course. As I found an information, 12% of Americans are travelling only by a reason to try foreign cuisines [12]. Great popularity has also France and some Asian countries like China or India (source: the own research). During a journey there are a lot of food, we are able to spend a lot of money for. What is really interesting, often it is more money than we spend for the accommodation. Travelling to attractive, touristic destinations, where we are able to meet tourists in every seasons of a year, we can find enormous amount of places related to a regional cuisine that serve specific food and drinks, which we cannot find in other part of the globe. There are a lot of food, which we know perfectly and we can find them in our region without any trouble. This is a due to the fact that being in a place from where a specific food comes from, the meal takes for us another matter and other values. We can explore our favorite meal once again thanks to a traditional recipe. It can be for us like a form of identification with an inhabitants of the region. These dishes are unbelievable popular in the home countries. As Benjamin Christie said: *If a person wants the best steak they may travel to Texas, the best barbeque in Louisiana and no visit to New York city would be complete without sampling a piece of New York style pizza. Overseas, a trip to Singapore wouldn't be complete without sampling Singapore chili crab, butter chicken in India, chicken stay in Malaysia, peking duck in China, sushi in Japan, quesadilla in Mexico, Maori cooked hangi in New Zealand and the best pasta would require a trip to Italy, of course. The list is endless when it comes to culinary tourism* [13]. Traveling to mentioned above Italy, we are willing to eat a delicious pizza or pasta, and even more likely to eat a real, Italian ice cream. Despite the fact that these products are highly available in our places of residence, we have to mention that they taste different in their homelands and even the taste is better when they are prepared in the most traditional way.

Planning a trip destination, usually a decisive factor for choosing the right place is an obvious question: what we want to see, discover or explore. However, there are trips, where a decisive factor is an issue related with food. I would like to refer to food festivals. Around the globe exist a lot different food festivals and they enjoy a growing popularity. His recognition is gaining also in Poland. That is the reason we can meet more and more food festivals also in our regions. The most popular in Poland are: Subcarpathia Honey Fest, Pilsen Festival of Dumplings, National Festival of a Good Taste [2]. The figure number 4 shows that the most popular in the World is Oktoberfest festival in Munich. Following places ranked by popularity belong to EuroChocolate (Perugia, Italy) and World Pizza Championship (Parma, Italy). To these festival would like to appear the biggest amount of researched person. Researched person are also showing interest in the festivals like International Festival of Chocolate (Obidos, Portugal), Bordeaux Days (Bordeaux, France), Cheese Festival (Bra, Italy), Strawberries Festival (Mgarr, Malta) and other festivals named before (source: the own research).

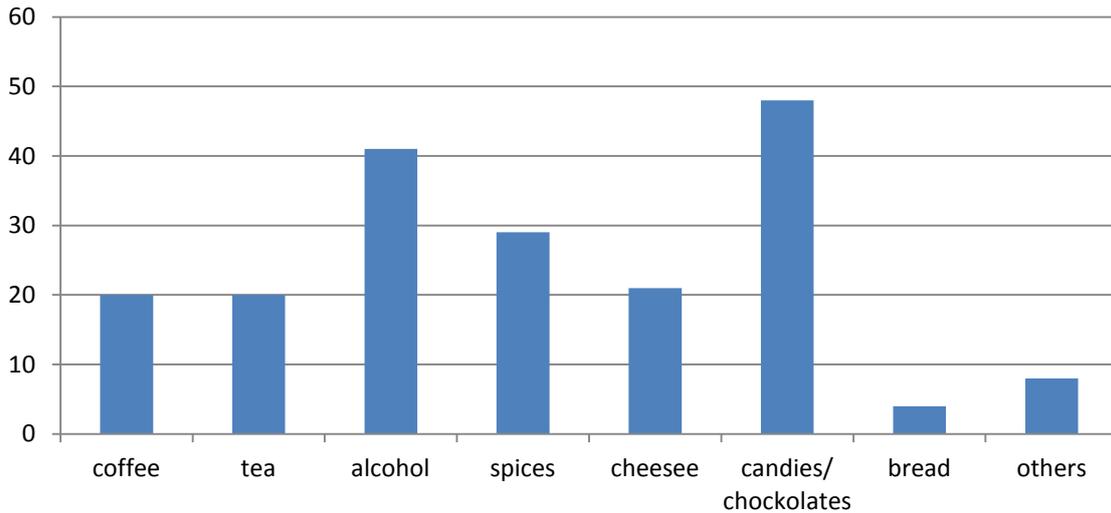
Thanks to the popularity of festivals mentioned above we have the answer for a question, which regions are the most popular for tourists due to the culinary qualities they have. It is impossible not to mention a distinct field of culinary tourism, which is tourism related to the wine industry. The wine routes have become incredible popular last years and their amount is growing also in Poland. The most famous in Poland are Wine and Cheese Festival

in Poznan, Grape Harvest in Zielona Góra and Route of Wine and Honey in Lubuskie region. In Europe we have to take an attention to Geneva's Festival of the Wine and Days of Bordeaux. We have to admit that are developing specific wine organizations. The oldest in Poland are: Association of Winemakers in Zielona Góra (Zielonogórskie Stowarzyszenie Winiarskie, since 2006), Wine Forum in Lesser Poland (Małopolskie Forum Winne, since 2004) and Sommelier Association of Subcarpathia Region (Stowarzyszenie Winiarzy Podkarpacia, since 2006) [4].



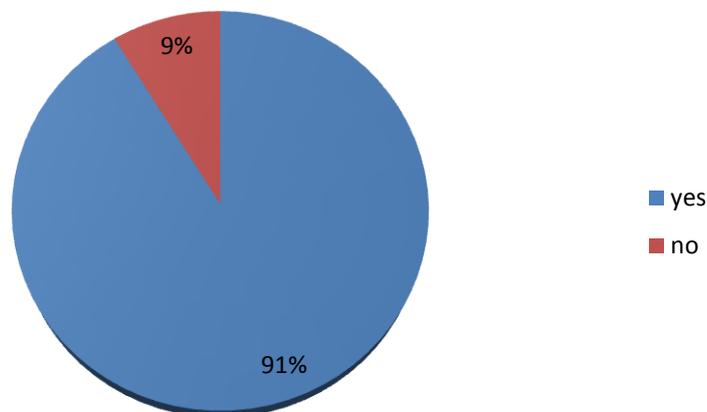
**Fig. 4.** To which festivals would you like to go?

During a time of travelling, experiencing and tasting, often we want to extend this time by taking with us culinary souvenirs from a trip to home. Each of us wants to have in a house traditional spices suitable to the intense taste of Morocco, bar of a real Belgian chocolate straight from these country, mozzarella or parmesan from Italy, fresh coffee from Brazil as a real tea straight after a harvest in India or China. Often we decide to buy an alcohol, mostly it is a wine. However, according to the results of trials, mostly we bring sweets. It is the result, that sweets are very easily to handle. It is much easier than for instance an alcohol, which we take often as well (Fig. 5).



**Fig. 5.** What kind of *culinary souvenirs* you bring back with you from a travel? (in percent)

As I mentioned in the introduction, the current trends are focus on healthy nutrition and ecology. Many of us lead a balanced diet and respects designated by ourselves (or by nutritionist) habits. This issue becomes progressively like a norm. The number of vegetarians or vegans is highly increasing last years. Sometimes for that people it is difficult to locate themselves in areas where they have to deal with a change of nutrition. There are places that these type of proceedings is require. However, in areas attractive for tourists we always find a meal suited to our tastes. But could we stay sure that this is the thing we want? According to the research (Fig. 6) 91 percent of people declared that they change (or that they would change) their eating habits during a travel for a possibility to try dishes that they have a chance to try only during a stay in a particular region of the world (source: the own research). It does not apply to vegetarians (especially vegans) who mostly hold his own rules. Unfortunately, not every cuisine is prepared to find vegetarian substitutes from regional dishes. That is the reason people with these point of view cannot try a lot of delicious meals they have never eaten before like for instance in Portugal where in all restaurants you can find dishes called: francesinha- a [Portuguese sandwich](#) originally from [Porto](#), made with bread, wet-cured [ham](#), [linguiça](#), fresh sausage like [chipolata](#), steak or roast meat and covered with melted cheese and a hot thick [tomato](#) and [beer](#) sauce, served with [french fries](#) [11], bacalhau (codfish) or other meat dishes. For vegetarians we can easily find in restaurants only omelet or salad.



**Fig. 6.** Are you able to change your eating habits to try a traditional dishes in places where you are travelling to?

At the end I would like to submit a few words about Poland and its richest culinary region which is Subcarpathia. It is here the cuisine is the most versatile, thanks to the influence of different cultures and by the fact that none of trends was dominant enough to unify flavors. Influences which affected on the cuisine we can find in different national and ethnic traditions created here from centuries: typical polish courtly cuisine from Kresy, rustic cuisine (The Lasowiacy or Rzeszow), The Vlach shepherds (from which have arisen Lemko and Boykos Cuisines). It is a whole set of diverse traditions, cultures and tastes, where cuisines were in parallel, mutually penetrating, even through intermarriage or service in mansions. It distinguishes the Subcarpathian cuisine compared to other regions, because only here are many other culinary influences [9]. In Poland trends to regional and traditional cuisine is still during a development phase. An interest from that kind of tourism in Polish food market estimate to 250 billion of PLN, it is 3 percent of foods market share (in some country it is 10 percent or more). The number will grow with a constant development trend of culinary journeys and traditional dishes as well as the enrichment of society, which is ready to pay more for healthy, good quality food [10]. We buy regional products more willingly if they are certified, which have confirmed their authenticity and a guarantee of the traditional method of manufacturing combined with high quality. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Poland protect and certificate Polish regional products. The organization leads an official register of distinctive quality products and manufacturing tradition, as well as co-creating the cultural heritage of concerned regions. We can say that a product is a traditional when it has at least 25-years-old tradition of making. Currently in the registry is located more than 1100 traditional products from all regions of Poland and most of them comes from Subcarpathian Province, it is 162 [14]. For customers it is a sign that products have a high quality. As we can see the Subcarpathia is wealthy in tradition and rich in varied cuisine of diverse origins. It is a reason, that only in the Subcarpathia province, which is not a huge area, people do not know all traditional dishes, which are gaining a recognition as a traditional for this region. Indeed, diversity refers to much smaller units than the entire region which is Subcarpathia.



**Fig. 7.** Number of certified regional and traditional products in the various provinces of Poland [Source: <http://www.minrol.gov.pl/pol/Jakosc-zywnosci/Produkty-regionalne-i-tradycyjne/Lista-produktow-tradycyjnych/>]

## CONCLUSIONS

The study, what I conducted and additional informations reassured me that culinary tourism has become increasingly important and becomes more and more popular all over the world, as well in Poland. Purpose of the work, which was to present the growing importance that this type of tourism contributes to the improvement of human relations all over the world. Clearly we can see that it has an impact for a biggest international integration through curiosity to explore foreign cultures and setting new routes. Tourist trails, festivals and other forms of promotion attract more and more numerous audience, becomes every year even more popular. Currently it is a trend to far out from tourist trials, search his own patch to lead, interact with native inhabitants, with nature, learning about lifestyles and cultures. Thanks to the culinary tourism people make new contacts, friendships all over the world; they learn more and more about different nationalities, foreign cultures and at the same time also about themselves. We can be sure that these type of travel helps to improve international relations through the people and allows to know more about the world. It is all connected with our desire to explore and try, what each regions are offering for us. It is a fact that nothing unites people like a common meal. The increase of a culinary tourism importance is also affected by a greater interest in the subject of nutrition and taking care about healthy lifestyle by growing amount of people.

Nowadays, countries which pay much attention to culinary tourism are increasing gradually. Nevertheless, there are still some unclear questions and under-explored issues. For this specific type of tourism, we need to devote more attention and try to figure out more practical suggestions to be proposed in the future. Only in that way, culinary tourism will be able to meet the expectations of increasingly higher group of consciously traveling culinary tourists.

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