

ESTABLISHMENT OF A LOCAL GASTRONOMIC POINT IN THE NOVACI AREA - RURAL DEVELOPMENT MODALITY

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ABSTRACT: A local gastronomic point (PGL) is a relatively recent legal initiative in Romania, through which small local producers can open small food establishments, where they can serve traditional products, prepared according to hygiene and food safety standards. It encourages the use of local resources, such as vegetables, fruits, dairy products or meat from local producers, while offering tourists the opportunity to taste authentic dishes, made according to traditional recipes. The establishment of a local gastronomic point in the Novaci area is an innovative and effective way to support the development of the rural community and to diversify the local tourist offer.

KEY WORDS: local gastronomic point, Novaci, rural development

1. INTRODUCTION

A local gastronomic point (PGL) is a relatively recent legal initiative in Romania, through which small local producers can open small food establishments, where they can serve traditional products, prepared according to hygiene and food safety standards. It encourages the use of local resources, such as vegetables, fruits, dairy products or meat from local producers, while offering tourists the opportunity to taste authentic dishes, made according to traditional recipes. [1]

The role of a local gastronomic point goes beyond the simple activity of public catering – it functions as a center for promoting cultural identity through culinary traditions. Such spaces can be considered true cultural centers, where tourists and locals alike can explore and appreciate the gastronomic specificity of the place. They are not restaurants in the classic sense, but rural households that cook and serve authentic dishes in a family and small setting.

The ingredients come mainly from their own production or from authorized local producers, and the emphasis is on maintaining the authenticity of the recipes. In addition to the quality of the food offered, gastronomic points actively contribute to the promotion and

preservation of the culture and culinary traditions of rural communities.

Such a place becomes an important cultural center, where people can discover and appreciate the culinary specificity of a region. It is more than a simple restaurant, being a place where the culinary traditions and customs of a community are highlighted and celebrated.

Local gastronomic points can also be described as rural households, where authentic culinary dishes are cooked and served to a limited number of people. The foods used mainly come from the household's own production or from authorized local producers, emphasizing traditional and authentic recipes. These places not only offer quality food, but also contribute to the promotion of local culture and culinary traditions.

The development of rural communities and the promotion of local tourism can be supported by the creation of Local Gastronomic Points in villages in Romania. They offer the possibility of consuming dishes made from local ingredients, using traditional and authentic methods. [2]

The Local Gastronomic Point (LGP) is a concept that meets the growing demand in Romania for forms of family public catering,

capable of offering traditional dishes and products, specific to the various geographical regions of the country.

2. CURRENT STATUS OF LOCAL GASTRONOMIC POINTS

In recent years, in Romania, a significant increase in local gastronomic points has been observed, so that in 2023, there were 316 PGLs (fig.1), and in 2025, 503 local gastronomic points are operating, according to the Register of Local Gastronomic Points in Romania, provided by the National Agency for the Mountainous Area (fig.2.)

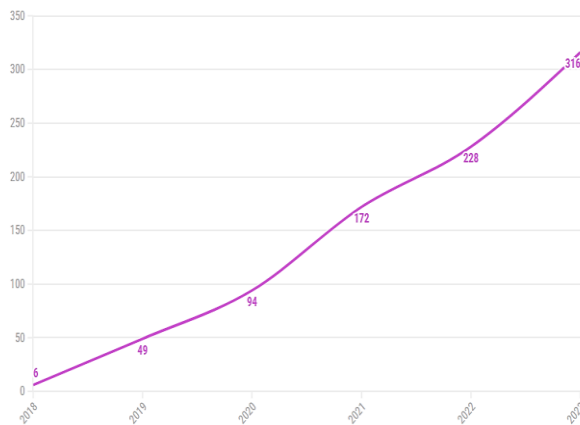


Figure 1. Evolution of the number of PGL type businesses in Romania

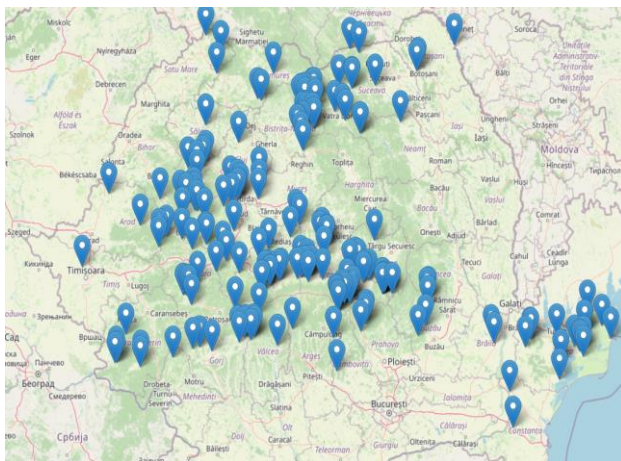


Figure 2. Map of PGL locations in Romania (2025)

In Gorj County, according to the PGL Register, in 2023 there were 8 local gastronomic points operating (fig. 3), and in 2025, a number of 12 PGLs.

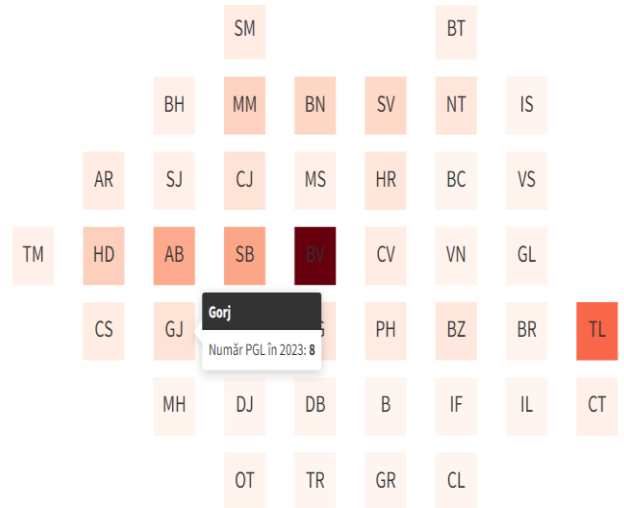


Figure 3. Number of Local Gastronomic Points in Gorj County, in 2023

3. NOVACI - OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH LOCAL GASTRONOMIC POINTS

The Novaci area is a target for agrotourism and mountain tourism in Romania and a place renowned for its natural setting of rare beauty. The traditions and customs of the place are still preserved, but some have undergone changes, as a result of modernism often imported by the departure of the Romanian peasant to the city or around the world in search of a job. [3]

With a real tourist potential, the city of Novaci offers visitors countless points of attraction (fig.4- fig.6).



Figure 4. Transalpine highway



Figure 5. Râncea Resort



Figure 6. Aspects from the "Sheep Climbing to the Mountain" Festival in Novaci

The Novaci area, located at the foot of the Parâng Mountains and near Transalpina, offers a special natural setting and is a place with an untapped tourism potential.

Developing a local gastronomic point in this region can bring numerous benefits to both the local community and tourism through:

- Creating jobs and additional income for locals - setting up a local gastronomic point creates economic opportunities for the community. Families in the area, who already have a lifestyle linked to agriculture and animal husbandry, can capitalize on these resources directly, without intermediaries. This leads to the generation of additional income that contributes to improving the standard of living.

- Strengthening cooperation between local producers - local gastronomic points require the collaboration of several producers in the

region. This interdependence leads to the consolidation of a local production and distribution network, which strengthens the economic resilience of the community.

- Revitalizing local traditions - a local gastronomic point emphasizes the preparation of traditional dishes, which contributes to the preservation and revitalization of gastronomic traditions in the area. Recipes inherited from past generations become a focal point of the culinary offer, attracting tourists eager to experience the authenticity and uniqueness of these dishes.

- Contribution to the development of local tourism - the establishment of a local gastronomic point can transform the Novaci area into a more attractive tourist destination, by creating a package of integrated experiences. Tourists who come for the landscapes and mountain hikes will also have the opportunity to taste authentic local dishes, thus adding value to their experience. Also, the combination of gastronomy and cultural traditions (festivals, local crafts) can attract a wider segment of visitors.

- Promoting the concept of sustainable tourism - local gastronomic points contribute to the development of sustainable tourism, focused on local resources and respect for the environment. By promoting local and seasonal products, the negative impact on the environment caused by the transport and storage of imported products is reduced. Tourists are encouraged to consume local food, thus supporting the community economy and reducing carbon emissions.

- Creating a regional brand - the Novaci area, through local gastronomic points, can become known for its culinary specificity. Creating a local tourist brand that emphasizes gastronomic authenticity and local hospitality can attract not only individual tourists, but also organized groups, such as culinary tours or gastronomic festivals. This helps to strengthen the local identity and increase the notoriety of the region at national and international levels. [4]

Table 2 shows the SWOT analysis.

Table 2. SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAK POINTS
Strategic positioning Quality local resources Rich culinary tradition Low start-up costs Support from authorities	Limited serving capacity (max. 12 people) Dependence on tourist season Lack of qualified staff Limited promotion
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Growth of gastronomic tourism Collaboration with guesthouses and travel agencies Possibility of expansion Online and social media promotion	Strict regulations Competition from guesthouses and restaurants Economic factors and inflation Dependence on weather conditions

4. DEFINITIVE ELEMENTS AND GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OPERATING CONDITIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF A LOCAL GASTRONOMIC POINT IN NOVACI

The steps for establishing a local gastronomic point must include:

- Legal registration (authorized individual, individual enterprise, family enterprise or commercial company; CAEN code 5610 “Restaurants,,)
- Fiscal registration and auditing of the activity (obtaining the Fiscal Registration Certificate from the County Trade Registry Office)
- Sanitary - veterinary and food safety registration (following the visit of inspectors from the county DSVSA)

4.1. Defining elements for the establishment and operation of PGL

- can operate in permanent/seasonal households, agricultural farms, fish farms, sheepfolds, wine/fruit farms, wineries, hunting grounds;
- owners and family members can prepare and serve food products directly to final

consumers (no more than 12 people served at the same time) in their own household;

- food products can be obtained from primary production at the level of their own holding/farm, but also from other local producers;
- the raw materials from which the food is prepared must come only from units authorized/registered sanitary-veterinary and for food safety;
- as regards the proportion of primary products and other raw materials/food, these must come predominantly from their own household or from local producers;
- The Local Gastronomic Point will have a daily menu with a limited assortment (maximum 2 types of soups, 2 main courses and possibly 2 types of dessert), specific to the area in which it operates. It will be mandatory prepared and offered for consumption during the same day; [5]

4.2. General and specific conditions for buildings and annexes

It is recommended that the space include at least the following categories of areas:

- areas for storing raw materials and additions (pantries, shelves, cabinets, refrigerators, freezers, cellars, etc.);

- area for maintenance and sanitation-disinfection materials (storerooms, cabinets);
- area for waste storage (platforms, bins);
- preparation area (table) (can be located outside);
- cooking area;
- toilets / WCs.

The traditional recipes served are prepared using local, natural and seasonal ingredients, many coming directly from the own farm or from small farmers in the area.

The food prepared from own products and sourcing from local producers in Novaci certainly adds an authentic and delicious touch.

Local products can include:

- platters with various snacks, such as cheeses, meat and vegetable dishes;
- soups and broths based on meat or vegetables;
- main courses that can contain vegetables, combinations of meat and vegetables, minced meat, steaks served with side dishes and salads, fish, edible organs, poultry or game dishes;
- various sweets and pastries made according to traditional recipes of the area;
- bread and polenta specific to the region;
- artisanal soft drinks and alcoholic beverages, characteristic of the area;
- fruit and vegetable syrups, as well as fresh or preserved fruits.

The strategy to attract potential guests consists of:

- investigating local culinary traditions and identifying authentic recipes by consulting community elders, studying old cookbooks and other historical sources;
- using local and seasonal ingredients, specific to the area and available at the time, to offer guests authentic tastes from the Novaci region;
- organizing tasting sessions to test various dishes and collect opinions and suggestions from potential customers;
- adjusting the menu according to the season, to capitalize on the freshness of seasonal ingredients (in the warm season, local fruits and vegetables are used, and in the

cold season, traditional products from the butcher shop);

- offering a variety of dishes — from appetizers, to main courses and desserts — to meet the diverse preferences of customers.
- detailed description of the dishes, emphasizing local ingredients and traditional techniques used in their preparation;

The assessment of economic efficiency is done by analyzing the costs, revenues and profits generated, as well as by estimating the business's capacity to support local economic development.

To determine economic efficiency, it is important to consider several key indicators:

- *profitability*

The profitability of the business is an essential indicator for assessing economic efficiency. Depending on the income and expenses of the local gastronomic point, we can determine the level of net profit and, implicitly, whether the business is profitable or not.

- *return on investment*

This measures how long it takes until the initial investment is recovered from profits. A business is considered economically efficient if the return on investment is high, that is, the investment is recovered in a short time.

- *seasonality* is an important factor influencing the economic efficiency of a PGL, especially in tourist areas, such as Novaci, where the flow of tourists varies significantly between summer and winter. During peak periods, the business can reach maximum capacity, but in the off-season the number of customers can drop quite a bit.

To ensure long-term economic efficiency, the PGL must:

- diversify revenue sources: Organize special events (cooking workshops, tastings) or collaborate with local guesthouses to attract consistent customers.
- cost management: Adapt supply and efficiently manage resources during periods of low tourist flow, so that costs are kept to a minimum.

With an effective marketing strategy and an authentic culinary offer, the gastronomic point can generate a consistent profit during

the tourist season, and the return on investment can occur in just a few months.

In the long term, success depends on the ability to consistently attract tourists and keep operational costs under control.

- a visually attractive menu, with appetizing photos and a clear and professional presentation;
- constantly collecting guest opinions and adjusting the menu and recipes according to their expressed preferences;
- an authentic culinary experience, complemented by traditional decorations and warm hospitality;
- integrating stories and explanations regarding the origin of the dishes and the associated culinary traditions, thus providing a complete and educational experience. [6]

4. CONCLUSION

The Local Gastronomic Point (PGL) is a concept that meets the growing demand in Romania for forms of family public catering, capable of offering traditional dishes and products, specific to the various geographical regions of the country.

This type of gastronomic point represents an efficient solution for capitalizing on products from peasant households, by integrating them into family food structures, adapted to the particularities of each tourist area with well-defined culinary traditions.

The Novaci area is a target for agrotourism and mountain tourism in Romania and a place renowned for its natural setting of rare beauty.

The establishment of a local gastronomic point in the Novaci area represents an innovative and efficient way to support the development of the rural community and to diversify the local tourist offer.

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*** Guide to good hygiene and culinary production practices for Local Gastronomic Points

*** Local Gastronomic Point best practices guide

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