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„HARMAN – THE TOURIST STATION FOR CULTURE AND HISTORY OF THE NATIONS“,

financed under the Interreg-IPA Program for cross-border cooperation Bulgaria - Turkey, subsidy contract № RD-02-29-248 / 27.09.2019,

TRANS GOURMET CATALOG

on local wine-producers offering alternative forms of tourism in the Municipality of Harmanli



The project is co-funded by the European Union through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria –Turkey Programme.



Priority axis 2: Sustainable tourism



PROJECTS WITHOUT BORDERS

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1. History of wine production and borders of the region

The roadside character of the Municipality of Harmanli is expressed in the words:

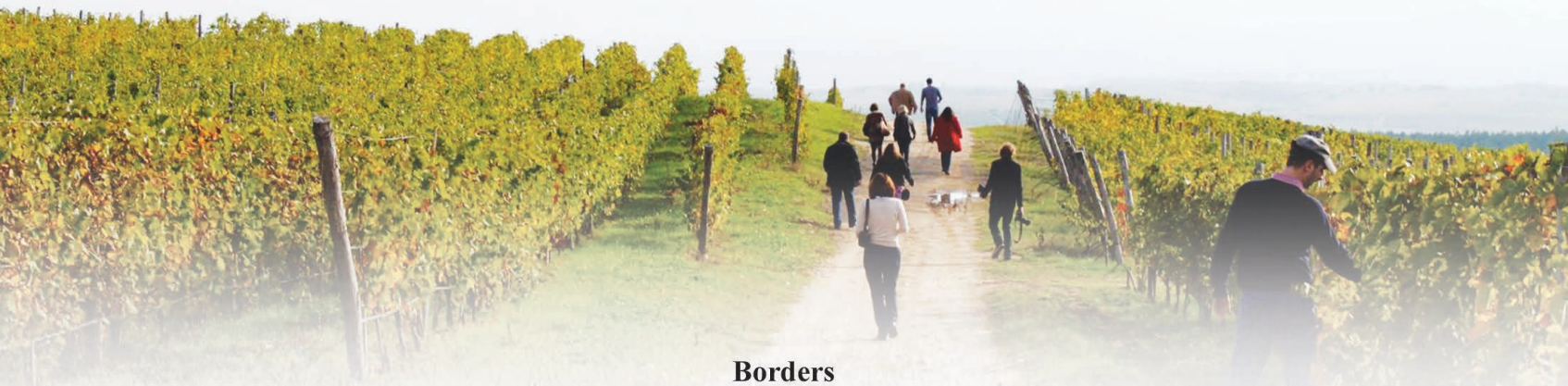
„The people from Harmanli don't have to travel because the world passes through their town.

The specific geographical location has determined the history of the region. Right here, between the Rhodopes and Stranzha

Mountain was the "entrance" to the central and northern parts of the Balkan Peninsula. This region is extremely important in the history of the Thracians. Here in the region of Sakar and Strandzha in the Vth century BC. the first Thracian state – the Edirne State emerged. Viticulture and wine-making were developed in these lands thousands of years ago. Here was one of the centers of worship of the god of wine Dionysus. Evidence of this was found near the village of Voyvodovo where artifacts from the 4th century BC were excavated, as well as in the village of Bryastovo and the village of Kravevo.

Viticulture has established deep traditions in Bulgaria over the centuries - the area has been known for its production of good wine since Thracian times and the Roman Empire. Around the town of Harmanli the most finds of Thracian heritage are located and every second dolmen in Bulgaria has been discovered near here. Thousands of Thracian monuments - mounds, rock shrines, dolmens, caves, fortresses, etc. present points of interest for researchers and lovers of this culture.





Borders

Haskovo District and Harmanli Municipality, respectively, fall within the Southern vine region "Thracian Lowland". The name "Thracian lowland" comes from the name of the Upper Thracian lowland, which is part of the historical - geographical region of Thrace - the cradle of wine-making on the Balkans.

Due to the size of its territory and the small but significant differences in relief and climatic conditions, the area is divided into three smaller parts. The Upper Thracian lowland is quite naturally divided by Chirpan Hills and Dragoyново Heights into 2 parts - Eastern and Western. To the south of them and to the east of the majestic Rhodopes stretches Sakar Mountain, which, together with the foothills of the Eastern Rhodopes can undoubtedly be classified even as an independent unit. The territory of the Eastern Upper Thracian lowland includes Stara Zagora plain and Sliven plain. The Western Upper Thracian lowland includes the field of Pazardzhik-Plovdiv, with the Rhodope Mountains to the south and Sredna Gora to the north.

* visualized with a map



The territory of Harmanli Municipality is located in the third sub-region of the Thracian lowland – Sakar and the foothills of the Eastern Rhodopes. It is located on both sides of the lower reaches of the Maritsa River. To the west are the Eastern Rhodopes, and to the east – Sakar Mountain. In this part, the terrains are unusually diverse in character and perfect for growing incredible grapes.



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1. Production

The territory of Harmanli Municipality and the whole region around Sakar Mountain is one of the regions in which viticulture has been developing the fastest in the country. In the district, between 70 and 80% of the local population is engaged in agriculture as a main or ancillary activity, with viticulture emerging as a major agricultural sector.

The potential of the region did not remain hidden for foreign investors. There are also examples of producers from other regions of the country who direct resources and production to the region of Harmanli. Along with some new vineyards, some of the oldest vineyards on the Balkans are located here.

In the region of South Sakar mainly red wines are grown. Merlot is emblematic for the region, and over the last decade other French varieties have been grown more and more successfully as well – Syrah, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon, and from the Bulgarian ones - Tamyanka (white variety), Ruby and Mavrud.

Since no separate statistics have been kept for Harmanli region on occupied areas and varietal diversity, the information below is based on data from the statistical report of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry ('Grape and wine production - Harvest' 2018).

As already mentioned, the Municipality of Harmanli falls within the Southern vine-growing region "Thracian lowland". The relative share of the areas with vineyards in the Southern wine-growing region compared to all the areas in Bulgaria is 33%.

Every 3 rd bottle of wine in Bulgaria is made from Sakar grapes.

The plantations in this region with harvested vineyards are 10,354 hectares. Total for Bulgaria - 31,320 ha. The relative share of grapes produced is 31%. Out of a total of 195,470 tons produced in the country, for the the South-Central region the figure is 60,762 tons. Of all grapes produced, the predominant share is of the wine varieties - 54 649 tons, compared to the dessert ones - 6 113 tons or 90% of the produced grapes are intended for wine-making.



2. Wine-producers and routes

Route „On a transport-free wine tour“ (3 sites)

Sites on this route:

Site 1 – 8 Kosta Andreev Street, 6450 Harmanli 088 888 7934

Site 2 - 41°55'29.9"N 25°55'11.7"E, 9 Bulgaria Blvd, 6450 Harmanli 088 856 6438

Site 3 – 3 Kosta Andreev Street, 6450 Harmanli 088 888 7934





Route description:

Even if you are staying in Harmanli and you have no transport, you can easily visit two wineries and taste the rest at the regional wine-cellar. All three sites are located in close proximity to each other.

First, you can stop at 8 Kosta Andreev Street in the town of Harmanli and get inspired by the Thracian history and traditions. Here you will see the fruits of a dream - to produce small batches of wines with a distinctive character from local grapes, combining modern technology with traditions, bequeathed by generations.

Grapes from the region (mainly from near the village of Izvorovo and the village of Kolarovo), grown by prominent local vine-growers, are used to make each of the wines. Some of the massifs are more than forty years old, which ensures the distinctive character of the wines produced on the grounds of classical technologies with a lot of manual labor involved.

The winery is located next to the newly built Maritza Highway and is only eight kilometers away from the ancient Roman road Via Diagonalis.

Here you can taste single-variety wines from Syrah, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Tamyanka, as well as the experimental for the winery - Cabernet Sauvignon, maturing in a cherry barrel.



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The second winery is located only about 200 meters from the first one. There, you will be able to get acquainted with the story of two brothers and their father, who decided to restore the hereditary viticulture tradition after more than 50 years interruption. The winery has its own 240 decares of vineyards near the village of Shishmanovo on sandy-clay, slightly stony soils without any drip irrigation. The aim is to produce wines using a terroir-craft approach by applying fermentation with wild yeast. The young Merlot has a noble cause - through its sale the project for protection of the population of the imperial eagle is supported.

The winery produces wines from Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay, Tamyanka and Ruby varieties. The winery has merits in the revival of the Tamyanka variety, which features one of its emblematic wines.

The third stop on this route is the regional wine-cellar, located next to the first winery on the tour. It offers wines from all producers in the region and if you do not have another day available for a tour around Harmanli, here, you can get a full idea of the style and variety of wines, produced in the Sakar region. The wine-tasting is topped-up with the typical for the region dairy specialty – katak cream cheese, as well as with the local version of “guyzleme” - a pastry dish with cheese, prepared on a hot plate.



Other landmarks on this route:

-  The town of Harmanli– The Hump Bridge
-  The town of Harmanli – Caravanserai

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Wine route - Via Diagonalis – 3 sites

Sites on this route:

Site A – Start of the tour – the centre of the town of Harmanli

Site B – 41.920487, 26.136227, 6460 Kolarovo (Contacts: +359 89 551 8688)

Site – 41.9722789, 26.0014766, 6450 Harmanli, 62 Neofit Rilski Street,
+359 89 339 2573

Site D – +359 88 867 8878

Site E – (for groups of more than 10 people) 088 867 8878

For defining distances on the map :

Route:

From Harmanli to Site B – 10 km

From Site B to Site C – 3 km

From Site C to Site D – 80 metres

From Site D to Site E – 140 metres

Winery with accommodation in the village of Glavan



Route description:

We named this route after the ancient Roman road Via Diagonalis. It is one of the main roads that crossed the entire Roman Empire from west to east, connecting Rome with Byzantium, later Constantinople, and on which Europe's main connection with Asia Minor and the Middle East was located.

In the municipality of Harmanli not only are there traces left, but, also, entire sections of the road - preserved - a few meters into the land of the village of Branitsa and the land of the village of Ovcharovo. Shortly before you reach these villages, you will find yourself in the largest vineyard in the region - Kolarovski. Here are the oldest vineyards with Merlot in Bulgaria grown for about 40-50 years.

The village of Kolarovo has a winery, with appended to it 150 decares of well-maintained vineyards with Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Petit Verdot and Melbec varieties, as well as 50 decares with 40-year-old Merlot vineyards, which are part of the massif of Kolarovo. The winery produces pure varietal wines, maturing in oak barrels from 12 to 18 months, which are preferred by the connoisseurs of Sakar's typical thick wines with a pronounced character and structure.

The second winery on this route is located in a place called "the little star" - the crossroads of old Roman trade routes, one of which is "Via Diagonalis". Tradition has preserved the name of the place over the centuries and even today in front of the winery there is a crossroads with five rays and a star shape. The abandoned former dairy is now completely converted into a stone building where wines are produced from the following varieties - Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah (on their own vineyards of 160 acres), and from the whites - Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. These wines are the works of a young technologist who combines modern ways with family traditions.



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The third winery on this route is the oldest in the region. It was established in 2000, when the owners invested and planted their own vineyards, initially with the intention of growing dessert grapes. Its vineyards are located on the south-western slopes of Sakar Mountain along the Maritsa River and boast an impressive variety: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Mavrud, Ruby, Syrah, Melnik 55 and Pinot Noir, and the whites - Chardonnay, Traminer, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, Semillon, Tamyanka.

This winery is also a pioneer in growing vines organically and producing organic wine.

A new modern complex with a hotel part is to be built.

If you are a larger group, you can visit another close-by winery. It was inspired by the nearby excavations of the fortress "Castra Rubra" (The Red Fortress), which dates from the early Byzantine period. It was discovered during archaeological excavations in 2007 on the territory of South Sakar. The fortress was a refuge for people crossing the Great Diagonal Road (Via Diagonalis). Almost all wines feature a precise blend between the varieties Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Ruby and Mavrud, but at the heart of all there is always Merlot. Of the white wines, the predominant ones are Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.





Note: The wine tour can be realized within a day since the wineries are only a few kilometers from each other.

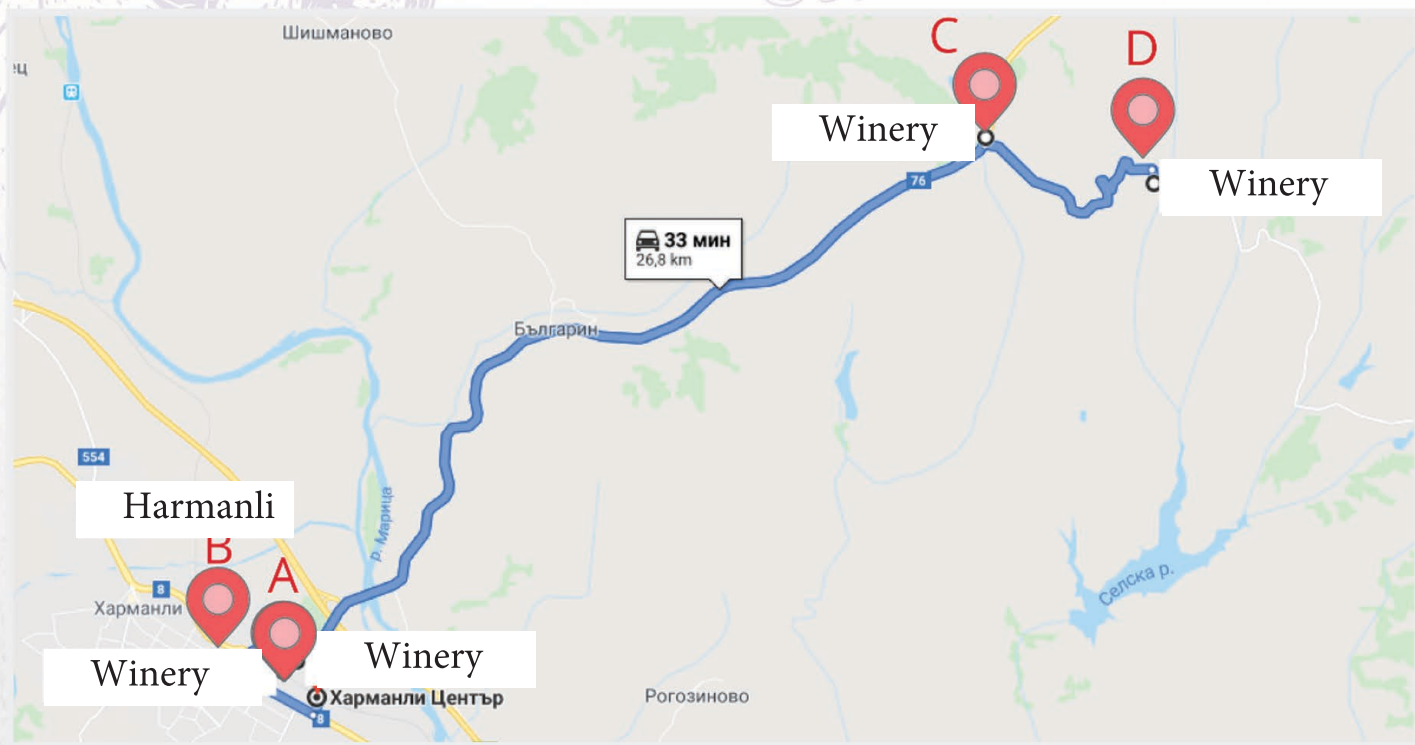


The wine sites from this region could be seen in two days and you can stay in the hotel-winery in the village of Glavan. The boutique wine complex has a hotel, restaurant and a relaxation center, located in the picturesque Sakar Mountain. Apart from experiencing solitude in nature, guests can also visit the winery and enjoy wine tasting from the appended vineyards (150 decares).



Other landmarks on this route:

The Village of Ovcharovo - Menhir Chuchul stone
The Village of Cherepovo – Dolmen
The Village of Izvorovo – Fortress “Kastru Rubra”
The Village of Hlyabovo – Rock sanctuary “ The Stone mound
The Village of Glavan - Fortress „Balzena“





Sites on this route:

Site A – 8 Kosta Andreev Street, 6450 Harmanli
Site B - 41°55'29.9"N 25°55'11.7"E, 9 Bulgaria Blvd, 6450 Harmanli
Site C - 41.9722789, 26.0014766, 17, +359 89 851 1939
Site D - 41.920487, 26.136227 6460, Karlovo, +359 89 361 0082

Taking note of map distances:

Route:

From Site A to Site B – 60 metres

From Site B to Site C - 10 km

From Site C to Site D – 3 km

From Site D to Harmanli - 13 km



Route description:

This wine tour is traditionally organized during the festival "On Harmana" (the second weekend in September). It includes 4 wineries that offer 4 wines for tasting. It is also called "extreme" because it takes place in one day and the experience is full of many emotions, superb wines and often surprises from the hospitable wine-makers. It can be held at any other time by prior arrangement.

During this tour you will be able to try 3 Bulgarian varieties in 3 different styles - white wines from Tamyanka variety from two producers, a rose wine from Pamid and a thick red wine from Mavrud. In addition, the tour includes tasting of Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and, of course local appetizers.



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Other landmarks on this route:

The town of Harmanli – The Hump Bridge
The town of Harmanli – Caravanserai
The Village of Izvorovo - Fortress “Kastru Rubra”

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4. Terroir and vines

The vineyards are located on the southern slopes of Sakar Mountain in the valley of the Maritsa River. Their position is to the south, southwest and southeast. The river valley and the diverse mountain relief form different micro plots with their own specific characteristics and distinctive wines.

The climate in the region is continental-Mediterranean with mild winters, occurring in early spring, hot and dry summers and prolonged warm autumns. An important pre-requisite for the favorable development of the vineyards in the region is the peculiar air corridor, which is formed between Sakar Mountain and the Eastern Rhodopes.

The soils in the region are brown to brown-forest with low to medium rock content. The reproductive layer of the soil is very deep and high in nitrogen - warm, moisture-retaining and well-aerated.

All these factors support the cultivation of high-quality white and red varieties of vines, giving rich-tasting wines with a dense body. People produce wines for quick consumption as well as wines with potential to mature in a bottle for up to 10-15 years.



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5. Grapes varieties

Merlot

Merlot variety is emblematic for the region of the villages of Kolarovo and the South Sakar. Vineyards of more than 40 years of age are found here. The climatic and especially the soil conditions in the southernmost part of the valley of the Maritsa River are optimal for the expression of the varietal qualities of Merlot.

Merlot wines are rich in aromas of ripe red fruits, with a dense and soft body, high alcohol and often mature in oak barrels. The tannins are palpable and their structure is velvety and delicate. The color is ruby with medium intensity. The aromatic profile of the wines is characterized by black cherry, blackberry, blueberry, mulberry, fig, rosemary and mint, and with old wines – by plum flavour. Maturing in oak barrels develops notes of coffee, vanilla and smoke in Merlot.



Syrah

Another emblem of the region for the last 10 years has been the Syrah variety. It is grown with great success by the wine-makers near Harmanli. The traditional type of the wine here has a solid color, rich juicy fruity aroma with earthy tones and spice traces. The body is dense and the tannins are powerful but soft. These wines often mature in new French or Bulgarian oak barrels. Some of the best wines of this variety in the region have a maturity potential of 10-15 years.



Caberne Franc

Although Cabernet Franc is more common as part of blends, in South Sakar it is increasingly appearing on its own. According to some wine-makers, the variety has the potential to become the new emblem of the region.

The wines are characterized by a ruby color of medium intensity, aroma of red fruits, sometimes plant and spicy notes, and mature wines develop aromas of smoke, game, jam, toast. Excellent rosettes are also made from Cabernet Franc.



Cabernet Sauvignon

One of the most popular grape varieties has not missed out on the region of Sakar Mountain. The variety requires a long warm season to ripen well. That is why the continental -Mediterranean climate here with its warm summers and long autumns is ideal for growing high-quality Caberne Sauvignon grapes.

We often find this variety in high-end blended wines along with Merlot and Cabernet Franc. With its well-defined tannins, it gives structure to the blend and complements the aromatic profile.

On its own, Cabernet Sauvignon wine is characterized by a powerful body, good freshness and tannin structure and distinctive aromas of black cherry and blackberry jam. In cooler years, aromas such as mint and cedar wood can also develop in it.

White varieties

Harmanli region is mainly associated with red wines. Among the white varieties with a higher share are Chardonnay, Viognier and the local variety Tamyanka.

Tamyanka is a white variety that is experiencing its renaissance in Sakar today. Forgotten and even almost obliterated due to increased demand for Merlot from this region in the 70s of the last century, the variety is now produced by almost every winery in the region.

It is characterized by an intense aroma with hints of citrus, spring flowers, fresh grass and herbs. The acids are moderate, and the body is medium and with intense fruity and floral aromas. The wine is not suitable for maturing in barrels, but matures well in a bottle with a potential of up to 3-4 years.

Cheese and wine. How to combine them?

The combination of wine and cheese has been raised almost to a gastronomy cult. The variety of styles and the origins of both products make this combination even more exciting and surprising.

Examples of some of the most famous cheeses to the style of wine and its representatives from the region of Harmanli:

Type of cheese	Type of wine	Combinations with wines from the region of Harmanli
Cheddar	Thick white, rosette, young red wines	Chardonnay, Syrah Rosette, Mavrud Rosette, Young Merlot
Gorgonzola	Sweet white wines	Sweet wine from Tamyanka
Brie	Thick red wine	Syrah Reserve
Blue cheese	Sweet aromatic white wine	Sweet wine from Tamyanka
Goat cheese	Aromatic white wine	Tamyanka, Viognier
Camembert	Thick red wine	Syrah Reserve, Cabernet Sauvignon
Mozzarella or fresh cheese	Fresh white wines or rosettes	Tamyanka, Pamid Rosette
Gouda	Thick white, rosette, young red wines	Chardonnay, Syrah Rosette, Mavrud Rosette, Young Merlot
Edam	Fresh whites	Muskat
Feta	Thick white wines, young red, mature red	Chardonnay, young Merlot, Cabernet Franc Reserve

EDIRNE - KESHAN OVER THE YEARS

The province of Edirne is a place where civilizations have come to life. The city of Edirne was the capital of the Ottoman state for 92 years. History is preserved from the time of the Thracians. Three rivers run on here.

It is close to Istanbul, one of the most important cities in the world and a link between Europe and Asia.

It is also close to the town of Chorlu, which also plays an important role in the Turkish economy.

The proximity of Edirne to those industrial regions where the intensity of manufacturing enterprises, as well as those in the city of Luleburgas, also increases the importance of Edirne.

In Edirne, in addition to the Selimiye Mosque, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, there are also synagogues and churches belonging to different cultures. Edirne has important geographical, cultural and historical significance since BC and is the founder of various civilizations and societies. The way of life of the population here has shaped the traditions of the region and developed their food culture that has survived to this day.

Edirne can be a sustainable image of established potential with its historical richness, geographical location, architecture, diverse art and cuisine.

The economy of Edirne has been based on agriculture and animal breeding for centuries. The production of milk and dairy products in the region of Thrace is growing, as the region is suitable for breeding grazing animals. The population is interested in sheep and cattle breeding, as well as land cultivation. It is known that in the past milk and dairy products were produced by craftsmen in the region of Thrace.

The state encourages large owners of land and animals as well as entrepreneurs to produce dairy products, thus milk production has become widespread throughout the whole region.

The city of Keshan served as a bridge to the transition of cultures to the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. The name of the area in ancient times was called "Cerlanis". It becomes clear from the sources that the tribes that settled here for the first time gave this name, which was also used in the Roman period. Later, the region remained under Greek, Persian, Macedonian and Byzantine administration and in the second half of the XIVth century it was under the Ottoman rule.

Keshan became a district in 1877. The population of the city of Keshan is 54 367 as of 2019, depending on the season. The total population of the district, which consists of 5 towns and 45 villages, is 77 442 people.

The typical climate of Marmara allows the development of agriculture in the region and helps it take first place in the economy of the district. Thanks to the irrigated agricultural facilities for wheat, sunflower and barley, the production of vegetables and fruit, fish and sugar beet is also increasing. Development in the field of greenhouse agriculture and viticulture has been established. Tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, eggplant and fruits such as apples, pears, almonds, plums and peaches are among the most grown crops.

Another feature that further increases the importance of Keshan is the bay of Saros, the forests and coasts of Thrace and the Aegean Sea. With hundreds of plant species and more than 40 animal species, the Koru Mountains are an oxygen reservoir, and Saros Bay provides an opportunity for regional tourism.

Geographically Keshan is located in a special place. In terms of transport, daily bus services are organized in the area and serve as a link to Tekirdag, Istanbul and Edirne.

In Keshan, livestock farming has an important part in the economy. The production of milk has a special place in the sector, which has been developed in parallel with the measures that provide animal feed and the development of animal breeds.

Based on these circumstances, Keshan, where dairy animals are widely bred, also has important dairy market potential. Due to the fact that cattle and sheep are raised together, dairies have been set up to produce different types of cheese and create new tastes. Many dairies in Keshan, which is an important production site of the famous Edirne cheese, work subject to this principle.

WHITE CHEESE EDIRNE - KESHAN

Edirne cheese is produced mostly in Edirne. Edirne - Keshan is a region famous for its cheese. Half of the amount of cheese in Turkey is produced by large cheese dairies, located in the Edirne-Keshan region.

The region of Thrace and especially Edirne - Keshan is characterized by clean air, which has an enormous contribution to the green areas, used for grazing dairy animals. The large number of aromatic plants and herbs in the region make Edirne cheese different in taste, smell and texture.

No additives are used in the preparation of white cheese, and the production process is in compliance with the 19th century traditional methods. Edirne cheese has declared in front of the whole world a full-fat and tasty qualities, as the milk in the region is plentiful and with high quality, and the processed milk has a long shelf life when stored in cold conditions.

The process of making white cheese in Edirne is unique:

Milk is first boiled to 70 degrees. It is left to cool to 30 degrees and left to ferment. The fermentation temperature varies depending on the weather conditions. After 1,5 hours, cottage cheese is obtained. It is pressed and left to drain. This process takes about 3,5 hours, after which it is placed in forms in brine and put in special tins. It cools down, ripens in 45 days and then it is ready to be sold.

Characteristics of the Edirne cheese:

Edirne cheese is prepared with only one type of milk. Cow's milk is mainly preferred and it is not mixed with sheep's or goat's milk. Milk has different nutritional values according to the season. For example, the nutritional characteristics (protein, calcium, fat, etc.) of cow's milk are different in the different months, in May or November. This is because the vegetation varies. The feeding of dairy animals according to the variability of natural vegetation ensures the different cheese values. Therefore, Edirne white cheese has the characteristic features and aroma in the different months of the year. Thus, it ranks among the perfect taste products.

Cheese that has completed the ripening process must be consumed within 3 months after having had its first contact with the air.

Edirne cheese is consumed with pleasure at every meal of the day

KESHAN CHEESE

In the past, people considered cheese to be very important. It was seen as a food of the nobility in Babylon and became a symbol of civilization and wealth of the people of those times. Cheese production also gained importance in the Ottoman Empire. It included white cheese, yellow cheese and cheddar cheese.

According to various sources, it has been estimated that there are between 1 000 and 4 000 types of cheese in the world. The reason why there are so many types of cheese, even though the raw material is only milk, is the difference in the production technologies such as type of milk, processing method, fat content, yeast used, storage method, ripening process and conditions, form of salting.

Cheese producers, operating in the region of Keshan, are closely specialized in the production of natural white cheese made from cow's, sheep's and goat's milk. In addition, they also produce old and new cheddar cheese, yogurt, buttermilk, butter, cream, cottage cheese and mozzarella cheese.

In the Edirne-Keshan region, where milk and dairy products are very important and valuable to humans, white cheese dairies continue their traditional production.

Once white Edirne cheese is included in the scope of alternative tourism, it emerges as an intertwined tourist product based on culture, art, trade and natural resources. Edirne white cheese, produced in the region of Keshan, is becoming increasingly important as an alternative or an addition to other tourist products, such as wine for the region of Harmanli, Bulgaria.

As a component of alternative tourism, Edirne cheese is a gastronomic tourist product that can create added value to the preserving of the natural and cultural heritage, as well as to the sustainable marketing of the destination.

It is a full-fat white cheese produced when mixing sheep's, goat's and cow's milk from animals raised with natural vegetation from the villages, located in the district of Keshan, in certain proportions according to the season.

Although dairies produce many different types of cheese, in Keshan the most common cheese is full-fat, which can be stored in cold conditions for at least 6-8 months.

The largest raw material in the production of cheese is milk, and the delivery of milk is carried out in 3 ways: milk from the dairy producer; supplies from cooperatives, associations or farms, located in the region.

Dairies that produce cheese in the Keshan region are in a more favourable position than these located in other regions in terms of providing both short-chain process and modernization of the production methods.

There were 39 dairies that produce cheese, cottage cheese, butter, yogurt, buttermilk, cream and other dairy products as of 2019 in the region of Thrace. There are about 10-15 cheese companies in the province of Edirne.

Dairies in Turkey are engaged in the production of natural cheese with milk from the Keshan region. Factors such as the geographical conditions of the region, the habitat of the plants, the way the animals are raised and the applied various technological processes are important for the formation of the aroma, smell and structure of the cheese. The raw or pasteurized milk used to make white cheese is brought to the fermentation temperature and the yeast is added to ferment.

One of the most important elements in the white cheese technology is its structure - porous or not. The development of microorganisms from the group of coliforms in feta, produced from raw milk, causes the formation of pores in the cheese and gives a spongy structure. However, taking into account other pathogenic microorganisms, such products should be kept in brine for 8 months. The most famous white cheese in Turkey is known as Edirne cheese, made with a mixture of full fat sheep's and cow's milk.

Edirne cheese from Keshan is known throughout Turkey. White types of cheese on the market have been called Edirne cheese for many years. Edirne cheese is known for its nourishing and fatty milk from the region of Keshan, as the milk is abundant and with high quality, and the processed milk is stored cold for a long time. It is a well known fact that an average of 2,000 tons of white cheese was produced annually in Thrace in the 1930s.

Moreover the fact that most companies are third-generation manufacturers shows that they have the potential to keep up with innovations and technology. These members of generation Y state that they strive to make their business not only known in the local market, but also to have their products recognized throughout the country. In the event of this development, Edirne cheese, which is the most important geographical indication of Edirne, will be introduced throughout the country.

Keshan dairies produce kefir, cream, mozzarella, cottage cheese and butter, especially the classic types of white cheese, cheddar cheese and yoghurt. However, the classic production of white cheese comes to the fore in the region. Dairy owners report that the classic white cheese they produce is of much better quality than the white cheese produced by national producers in other regions of Turkey, both in terms of the amount of milk it contains and in terms of its taste. It has been established that 145 kg of milk are necessary for the production of an 18 kg tin of the highest quality white cheese. White cheese in Edirne has a registered geographical indication. The fact that a product made by the sector in the region has a registered geographical indication shows its high quality and standard.

CHEESE FROM THE VILLAGE OF MAHMUTKYOI, KESHAN

Rashid Kahya, who emigrated with flocks of sheep from Bulgaria, began making his first cheese in the village of Mahmutkyoi, where he settled down. Traditionally producing cheese for three generations, the production of his cheese is carried out in a dairy, combining technology and naturalness. Working with a daily processing capacity of 20 tons of milk collected from Mahmutkyoi and the villages nearby, the dairy farm produces the traditional Edirne cheese in the heart of nature with its own taste and milk characteristics. In addition, this dairy also produces butter, cottage cheese, cream cheese. The products comply with the Turkish Food Code. The dairy farm, located at the entrance of the village, provides a variety of experiences, opening its doors to guests who come. The dairy products are sold in Edirne and mainly in Istanbul, and are also sold online.

The main characteristics of white Edirne cheese;

The milk of the animals (cow, sheep, goat), that is used, is fermented and turned into cheese within a maximum of 1 hour after milking. One kilogram of white cheese is made from 6 kilograms of milk.

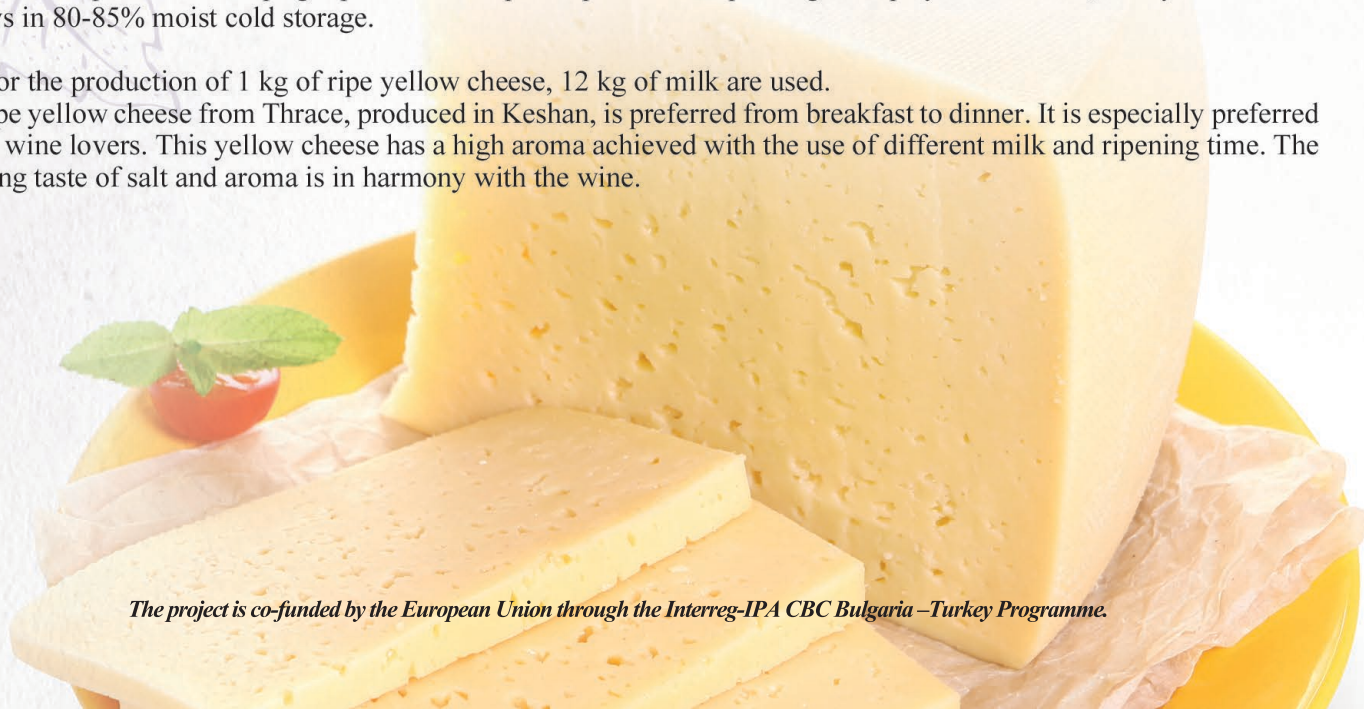
- Edirne cheese is full-fat. It absorbs its unique aroma and taste from its butter.
- The regional dairy, which processes whole sheep's milk, opens every year in April and starts processing the milk. Depending on the supply, cheese can sometimes be fresh on the market without ripening.
- Edirne white cheese has a bright white color.
- It does not have any pores.
- The maturing in brine is finished at different times. The average ripening time depends on the used milk - if cow's milk is used it lasts for 6 months, goat's milk - 8 months, sheep's milk lasts 12 months.
- The ripening process is very important for the cheese. Cow's milk cheese absorbs and releases brine 3 times in 6 months.
- Maturation conditions require separate conditions. The cheese matures in cold brine in special cold rooms at temperatures from +4 to +6 degrees and at a certain height from the ground. Cheese from each type of milk matures differently.
- In addition, cheese is often inspected during the ripening stage. Depending on the progress, the situation changes from horizontal to vertical movements.

YELLOW CHEESE FROM THRACIA

Thrace cheese is also one of the important dairy products of Keshan. It is prepared subject to the traditional methods. Pure milk, sea salt, natural yeast are used. Milk is filtered through special filters and cleaned. It is heated to 32 - 34 degrees and left to ferment. When the milk turns into cottage cheese, it is cut into pieces and filtered. It is stored in a container for 24 hours, salted in a dimly lit room until a crust is formed.

This salt does not penetrate into the cheese, but serves to dry it. It begins to form mold, absorbing moisture. Finally, it is dried and packed in an upright position in a special place. After packing the ripe yellow cheese, it stays for at least 60 days in 80-85% moist cold storage.

For the production of 1 kg of ripe yellow cheese, 12 kg of milk are used. The ripe yellow cheese from Thrace, produced in Keshan, is preferred from breakfast to dinner. It is especially preferred by red wine lovers. This yellow cheese has a high aroma achieved with the use of different milk and ripening time. The resulting taste of salt and aroma is in harmony with the wine.





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GASTRONOMIC TOURISM

In the global tourist market, where competition is constantly increasing, all regions and destinations are trying to create their own products to differentiate themselves from their competitors. Local cuisines, on the other hand, are unique sources of marketing. Gastronomic richness is a factor that can attract a wide range of tourists, as it shows cultural experience, cultural identity, communication and sharing, and is an important factor that must be taken into account directly or indirectly in destination marketing.

In international tourism, new destinations must create competitive and region-specific sustainable product combinations for different target groups, as the form of tourism based on the trio of sea, sun and sand begins to lose its appeal.

Gastronomic tourism allows cultures to get to know each other better thanks to local cuisine. In addition, the abundance of tourist resources in a place, region or country providing more active and entertaining services provides tourists with a need for satisfaction, regional hospitality, local production, development of trade in products as well as sustainability.

Gastronomy is an attraction for tourists and ranks first in the ranking of expectations regarding the destination to which they travel. Gastronomic identity has a major role to play in helping destinations cope with growing competition and create a different and inimitable place for them. Gastronomic identity differs depending on the cultural, geographical, ecological, economic structure and historical process. It is not possible to imitate the characteristics belonging to the region.

Gastronomic tourism is an important tool in the marketing of the place, as gastronomic tourism is a type of tourism that can be implemented 12 months a year. Therefore, the place can benefit from the economic, socio-cultural, infrastructural and other advantages for twelve months. Gastronomic tourism is an effective alternative for new destinations that cannot take advantage of "sea, sun, sand" tourism.

Gastronomic tourism occupies an important place in the development and marketing strategies in the region. Gastronomic activities have a direct or indirect impact on destinations. For example, it prevents the monotony and simplicity of the destination with its authentic, regional property. It increases the interest of the attraction and contributes to the economic, socio-cultural development of the society. Gastronomic tourism increases the popularity of this destination, makes this place a favorite for tourists. It plays an important role in shaping the brand identity of the destination with the positive dining experiences, provided for the visitors. It creates a strong source of income for destinations and has an important power to increase the competitiveness of the destination and to ensure its sustainability.





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