GAstronomic Specific attributes of Sarajevo Tourism Destination

*LEJLA ŽUNIĆ, SENADA NEZIROVIĆ
Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, University of Sarajevo, Zmaja od Bosne 33-35, Sarajevo 71000, Bosnia & Herzegovina
email: "pmflejazunic@yahoo.com, lejla.zunic@pmf.unsa.ba, senada.nezirovic@pmf.unsa.ba

Abstract: The aim of the article was to identify and evaluate gastronomic attributes at Sarajevo tourist destination. The objectives were to: 1) analyse the development trend in hospitality; 2) analyse the structure of hospitality facilities at destination and their spatial distribution, as well as to identify typical catering units represented on the terrain; 3) evaluate the traditional gastronomy and particular Bosnian & Sarajevo authentic dishes as important part of tourism supply and culture; 4) evaluate the gastronomy of destination by 3 categories: tourism managers and employees, and tourists- the visitors. The positive results were found toward the overall satisfaction with gastronomy and gastronomy as a travel motive. Therefore the culinary and gastro-tourism could play an important role in the further tourism development of Sarajevo destination.

Keywords: hospitality & catering, traditional gastronomy, satisfaction, motive, gastronomic and tourism supply, gastro-tourism.

1 Introduction

Hospitality is an important economic activity of Sarajevo, and lately it has been mostly expanding (Žunić, 2018). The number of employees in the hospitality industry has doubled over the decade from over 3,000 to over 7,000 workers (2006-2020).

Fig.1 Employees in the hospitality industry
(Author; Federal Bureau of Statistics)

Annual indicators of traffic increase in hotel industry and hospitality are positive: the total increase is about 46%, in the field of "accommodation" 60%, and in the field of "beverage preparing and serving activities" 37% (Federal Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Hospitality as well as gastronomy, are the basic components of the tourist reception of the destination. Gastronomy is an elementary, but also an experiential part of the catering (hospitality) and tourism supply. The traditional preparation of food and drinks has a special tourist value, because it is a reflection of the culture of the people and the destination. Gastronomic specialties are served through different types of hospitality facilities, but it is a special experience to taste them in a traditionally preserved environment, such as Sarajevo's Baščaršija-Stari Grad (Old Town). Sarajevo can boast heterogeneous hospitality facilities and a diversified gastronomic supply. Small traditional catering objects (e.g. Ćevabčinice /kebab restaurants, etc.) are especially attractive to tourists, as well as Sarajevo meat and tradition dishes, which use an ideal ratio of spices adapted to everyone's taste. The rating of the gastronomic supply is very high by tourists and tourism managers, so gastronomy is a significant driver of tourism development in Sarajevo, as well as a stimulus for the development of selective forms of tourism (gastronomic, culinary, manifestational, etc.).

1.1 Theoretical Background

Hospitality is the activity of food preparation and provision of food services, preparation and serving of beverages and beverages as well as provision of accommodation services. A hospitality facility is considered to be a hospitality business unit which, in business, construction and functional terms, forms a whole or which, within a wider construction whole, has a separate space and the necessary functionality. Hospitality facilities are classified into the appropriate type, and certain types of hospitality facilities into the appropriate category. Hospitality facilities are classified as accommodation facilities (hotels, motels, boarding houses, etc.) and hospitality facilities, cafes, snack bars (Federal Bureau of Statistics). Piha stated that the hospitality facilities provide accommodation and meals outside the family, space for contacts outside the apartment, a place for recreation and entertainment, a place for treatment and more. These are mostly accommodation facilities, which can be: hotels, motels, boarding houses, hostels, camps and autocamps, resorts, health resorts and more. These facilities always require special buildings or a group of buildings, an appropriate location and are often combined with activities that take place in food facilities (Žunić, 2018). Gastronomy is the art of preparing, producing, serving and enjoying good food (Britannica). Gastronomy takes place in the ambiental space and time, with the application of modern work organization, equipment, techniques and technologies. The basic task of gastronomy is to satisfy the nutritional needs of the population, travelers and tourists. Meals are prepared according to gastronomic principles in specially arranged, built and equipped facilities, spaces and premises. Activity in tourism and hospitality industry through its segments, especially gastronomy, draws on all the existing resources (flora and fauna) of the country, in order to provide quality food to all who occasionally or constantly eat outside their home. Thus, gastronomy in its specificity and attractiveness, along with all other elements, forms an inseparable part of tourism, i.e. hospitality and tourist supply of a particular place, region and country. Approaching gastronomy as a diverse scientific discipline, many experts point out that gastronomy is part of the cultural heritage of the people of the region (Kovačević, 2003). According to sociologist JU McNeal, users of hospitality services in cities, depending on their attitudes towards the type of facility in which they consume products and services, can be classified into the following general profiles: (1) economical users who are guided by price, quality and range; (2) personalized users who take on the relationship and treatment that they have with service staff; (3) ethical users who favor small independent restaurants instead of hotel chains, and (4) apathetic users who care about consuming, no matter where they consume (Lončar, 2005). To this classification are added the so-called users- recreational users who perceive shopping as entertainment and social interaction (Solomon, 1996). According to research in hotel chains in Great Britain and the USA, it has been determined that several profiles of users of hospitality services differ: large customers, hyperemic and local customers. Large customers usually have above-average income and assets, are younger than 45, prefer quality service facilities outside the city center, use services in the late afternoon. Hyperemic users generally do not like shopping, which is justified by the busyness or crowds in restaurants. They often blame facility managers for the range and quality of consumption. They call them reluctant users of catering services. Local users of hospitality services prefer use services in smaller (conventional, classic) hospitality facilities, but consume much more often, spend little and they are usually elderly and in poor financial condition (East, 1997). Kovačević stated that the gastronomic activity is prepared in the kitchen. The main task is the timely preparation and distribution of food, with the application of gastronomic-experiential and scientific methods. According to the type of food preparation, cuisines are divided into: domestic and foreign, classic, national, international, special, diet, vegetarian, etc. Standardization is required for the qualitative and quantitative work (Žunić, 2018). Tojagić and Tešanović stated that quality, health-safe and attractively prepared food in the modern tourism supply could be an important element of the content of offered
services, a strong motive for the arrival of guests and the basis for further development of the tourism supply (Žunić, 2018).

2 Methodology

The paper was based on a qualitative systematic literature research and the fieldwork at Sarajevo destination (area of 5 municipalities: Stari Grad, Centar, Novo Sarajevo, Novi Grad, Ilidža). There were applied terrain observation results toward the gastronomic facilities and its structure, that were supplemented with method of identification of catering units based on the Google Earth Maps. Besides, there were also used available official statistical data from the relevant corresponding bureau offices to get a whole image. The quick survey helped to evaluate the satisfaction with gastronomy supply by the tourism (hotels’, tour agencies’) managers (20), as well as by tourists- the visitors (137) of Sarajevo (tourists from Middle Eastern countries were dmn. represented 40%, Serbian 22%, and others: Turkey, USA, Canada, Malaysia, Japan, etc.). Respondents’ attitudes were measured at the Likert 3-point scale (excellent, good, bad). Plus, complementary interview was completed with the visitors to understand the gastronomic motive’s role in their decision to visit Sarajevo. Besides, the traditional knowledge and local practices helped to complete the research in correlation of its theoretical and empirical nature.

3 Results & Discussion

3.1 Structure of hospitality/ catering objects and their spatial distribution in Sarajevo

Taking into account the East’ classification of types of users of hospitality and gastronomic services, the tourist destination Sarajevo has the capacity to successfully respond to all profiles of guest consumers. The structure of hospitality facilities has a diversity from small traditional facilities (e.g. cevabdzinice) to large and modern restaurants of various types. Hospitality and accommodation units in Sarajevo are: hotels, pensions, motels, lodging, hotel resorts, cafe bars, rent-a-rooms, restaurants, pubs, buffets, cakeries, pubs, fast food facilities, canteens, bars, bistros.

According to the chart of the structure of traffic by type of hospitality facilities, the largest share in the total traffic is realized by hotels 80%, because they have the largest traffic of guests since they provide accommodation, overnight stays and restaurant services.

There were identified a total of 246 typical catering objects in Sarajevo: traditional and other food and beverage restaurants 92, pizzerias 37, fast food 32, cevabdzinice 23, buregdzinice 21 and ascinice 6, and cakeries 35.

3.2 Traffic structure by type of services at catering of Sarajevo

The spatial distribution of the presented catering facilities is quite dispersive. The highest concentration is in the oriental core of Sarajevo- Old Town- Stari Grad 29%, Ilidža 21% and Center 20%. Traditional food facilities (cevabdzinice, buregdzinice, ascinice) are mainly represented in Baščaršija (Old Town)- the most important cultural and historical tourist site. However, a good number of such facilities are in the area of Ilidža, near the geo-traffic terminal and Sarajevo airport- otherwise, a region that has flourished in the last 2 decades, because it is strategically oriented to the development of tourism and hospitality, and has significant tourist attractions, the most important of which are spas, parks and protected areas. CBD zone with large business and market centers (BBI, SCC, UNIS, Alta) has a large number of different restaurants, cafes and cakeries. Restaurants are in the lead in the structure of hospitality and food service units. There are several types of restaurants in the destination: international (“Park prinčeva”, “Dom pisaca”, “Bar Peppers”, “Izvor”, “Esmeralda”), national-international restaurant (“Bosanska kuća”), Turkish- Bosnian Restaurant (“Bijele vode”), Mexican Restaurant (“Hacienda-Cantina Mexicana”), Lebanese Restaurant (“Cita de Bayrouth”), Bosnian and Mediterranean Restaurant (“Blue”), etc. This is a favorable knowledge from the aspect of tourism supply & demand, because in this way it is possible to meet the requirements of guests and tourist clientele (everyone can find something for themselves). The type of restaurant determines the offer of food and drinks- the menu is written bilingual: Bosnian and English, and for some dishes the composition is stated.

3.3 Traffic structure by type of services at catering of Sarajevo

...Most hospitality facilities have a continuous increase in traffic (hotels, camps and other types of accommodation and catering units), restaurants have the most positive development trend, while smaller catering units (bar, buffet, canteens) have regressive traffic growth. Possible reasons are as follows:

a) a smaller catering units are endangered by competition from larger business units (hotels, restaurants);

b) smaller catering units are eventually restructured into larger business units (expansion and transition to a higher category);

c) smaller catering units sometimes cannot resist competition, fall into deficit and shut down.

Hotels make the greatest economic profit, which is logical due to the function of offering food and beverages, as well as accommodation. In the structure of hospitality services, overnight stays and food predominate 80%, while the highest income is from the consumption of hot beverages- tea and coffee” (Žunić, 2018).
Considering that gastronomy is an inseparable part of tourism, an element of hospitality and tourism supply and part of the cultural heritage of the people and destination, Sarajevo can boast of an excellent gastronomic supply, which is also competitive in terms of price of services. Namely, the offer of food and beverages in international restaurants, as well as other hospitality facilities, is more favorable than in neighboring "capital-city" destinations in the region of SE Europe and beyond. In the offer of food and beverages, a wide range of services has been identified: beer, wine, brandy and other spirits, then fruit juices and other soft drinks, mineral water and soda water, food, beverages, tobacco and matches, other goods and non-goods, as well as overnight services.

According to the chart of the structure of the total annual traffic by types of services, overnight stays and food together have the largest share of 78% (56% of overnight stays, 22% of food). Significantly lower percentage falls on other types of services, of which mostly on hot beverages (tea, coffee) 6%. Consumption of beer is 3% higher than consumption of healthy beverages - fruit juices 2%, etc.

3.3 Specific characteristics and categorisation of Sarajevo traditional gastronomy

Origin and regional differences of Bosnian gastronomy

Respecting the allegations regarding the method of preparation of meals and the type of cuisine, the dishes of Bosnian cuisine are similar to the dishes of Turkish, Greek and Mediterranean cuisines. Due to the long-term Austro-Hungarian rule, the influences of Central Europe are also present (Žunić, 2018). However, it should be emphasized that different cultures have shaped Bosnian gastronomy: Turkish-Islamic-Oriental, Austro-Hungarian (Central Europe), Old Balkan (Illyrian), Mediterranean and even Celtic culture, as well as modern processes of globalization (McDonaldization and others). In addition, there are certain regional differences in the names and preparation of the same or similar dishes, which may be influenced by natural-geographical factors and available raw materials, e.g. in central Bosnia (temperate-continental climate) sarma is blanched cabbage rolls with minced beef, while in Herzegovina (Mediterranean climate) a vine leaf is used to prepare this dish (Herzegovинian sarma is called japarak). Urban dishes are richer than rural ones, more complicated preparations and use much larger selection of spices. Bosnian cuisine uses many spices, usually in small quantities. J. Oliver (2011), one of the world's leading chefs, during a visit to Sarajevo and a tasting of traditional Sarajevo dishes, estimated that the ideal ratio of spices is used to please everyone's taste. Most dishes are mild and cooked with a little water. The sauces are almost completely natural. Typical ingredients of Bosnian cuisine are tomatoes, potatoes, onions, garlic, peppers, cucumbers, carrots, cabbage, mushrooms, spinach, pumpkin and beans. The most common spices used are sweet paprika, black pepper, primrose, bay leaf and celery. Milk, cream and sour cream are often used as an addition to Bosnian cuisine. Cinnamon and cloves are added to sweet meals. Meat meals are chicken, beef or lamb. For Bosnian cuisine is specific the preparation of roasted dishes under the baking bell called peka/ sač in the wood & coal-burning oven and embers. Bosnian coffee is served in a „džezva“ (a copper coffee pot) and drink from a „flžán“ (small handleless cup), with „rahatlukum“ candy (sweet made of sugar syrup).

Salty traditional dishes of Sarajevo

Traditional Bosnian and Sarajevo savory dishes are:

- **Soups:** bey's, okra, tarhana, "kalja" made of potatoes and beef, etc. The representative among these dishes is the Sarajevo soup made of veal cubes and okra.
- **Pies:** burek, buredžici, other pies (made of: cheese, potatoes, spinach or pumpkin), kljiška, popara, etc. The most famous Bosnian pie is burek- meat pie baked under bell/ sač, made of flaky dough known as phyllo (or yufka) filled with minced beef meat (main additional spices to the meat are: onion and bieber (black pepper)).

Grilled and barbecue meat dishes:
- **ćevapi**, šiš-ćevapi, sitni čevab (small kebab), ražnjici (veal skewers), janjetina na ražnju (grilled lamb), veal under the baking bell, etc. The representative is "Sarajevo ćevapi" (small kebabs- cylinder shaped) made from minced beef and spices (mainly onion and black pepper), and served in flatbread- somun (the Bosnian pita bread) with a side portion of raw onions. J. Oliver (2014) included them on the top list of ideal meals in the world. He also published his culinary recommendations for the World Cup in Brazil, on whose list Bosnian ćevapi took a special place, because the dish is delicious, high in calories, with specially prepared meat and it is quick to prepare.

**Fig.5 Structure of traffic in hospitality by type of service (Žunić, 2018; ZISKS)**

**Fig.6 Bosnian burek- meat pie under the baking bell/ sač at Baščaršija**

(CA/ Author's Collection)

- **Grilled and barbecue meat dishes:** čevapi, šiš-ćevapi, sitni čevab (small kebab), ražnjici (veal skewers), janjetina na ražnju (grilled lamb), veal under the baking bell, etc. The representative is "Sarajevo ćevapi" (small kebabs- cylinder shaped) made from minced beef and spices (mainly onion and black pepper), and served in flatbread- somun (the Bosnian pita bread) with a side portion of raw onions. J. Oliver (2014) included them on the top list of ideal meals in the world. He also published his culinary recommendations for the World Cup in Brazil, on whose list Bosnian ćevapi took a special place, because the dish is delicious, high in calories, with specially prepared meat and it is quick to prepare.

**Fig.7 Sarajevo/ćevapi in somun-bread with raw onions at Baščaršija**

(Author's Collection)
is baked in an earthen clay pot for 5-6 hours on low heat. It contains quality beef, potatoes, red onions, a few snap beans, carrots, parsley, celery, tomatoes and apple cider vinegar.

- **Moussaka** - a typical example of moussaka is made from potato, beef and eggs.
- **Pilav**. Typical examples are: rice pilav, bulgur pilav, pura, cicvara, etc. Pura is a very high quality dish, which is made from corn polenta.
- **Breads.** Typical examples are: somun, pogača, maslenica, etc. Holiday breads are: somun with čurekot (black seed) among Muslims; hala at Jews; Christmas and Easter bread for Christians. "Bosnian bread is historically known as Bosman, which was made during the Austro-Hungarian Empire" (Jašić, 2009).
- **Chimburi** - a typical example is a chimbur (poached egg) with a leek.
- **Salads.** Typical examples are: roasted paprika salad, sour cabbage. "Salad called Bosnian aphrodisiac is made from shredded celery and beef" (Jašić, 2009).

**Sweet traditional dishes of Sarajevo**

Traditional Bosnian and Sarajevo sweet dishes are:

- **Zahlade (Cold deserts).** Typical examples are: ashura, sutlija (rice pudding), apple jam, bestlj (plum jam), etc.
- **Cakes** - typical examples are: baklava, tufahija, humašice, ruzice, lokumi, kadaž, jabukovača (apple pie), etc. "Bosnian tufahija was declared the best delicacy at Palermo, Italy" (Magazine Hotel "Europa" Sarajevo). Tufahija is a refreshing dessert made from boiled apples filled with steamed walnuts, served in its agda (syrup) and with cream topping.

![Traditional Bosnian coffee ft. rahatlokum, and tufahija dessert at Morica Han, Baščaršija](Author's Collection)

**Traditional drinks of Sarajevo**

- **Traditional drinks.** Typical examples are: djul sherbe from autochthonous rose of intensive rose colour- dubšečerka, mevlud-sherbe from cinnamon and cloves, spruce sherbe, homemade elderberry juice, "šira"- freshly squeezed apple juice, boza, mead, brandy, yogurt, buttermilk, Bosnian coffee.

**Traditional bosnian brands & products at Sarajevo destination**

Beside traditional dishes and drinks of Bosnian cuisine, touristically important are the authentic and traditional Bosnian agricultural food products and processed products:

- **Milk and dairy products.** Recognizable indigenous brands of milk are: whey, Travnik and Livno cheese, which are part of the breakfast menu in Sarajevo hotels.
- **Meat, mixtures and processed products.** Typical examples are salted and smoked beef meat products: Bosnian sađžak, pširt (prosciutto), etc., served as a "cold plate" for guests, and also popular export brands, which can be found on the European market, etc.
- **Fruits, vegetables and processed foods.** In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is a rich wealth of valuable varieties of fruits and vegetables that have been preserved in indigenous forms. Old varieties of apples (senabija, petrovača, lederica) are in demand both for consumption and for the preparation of apple jam, shira-juice, apple vinegar, brandy, and drying. Plum- Požegća, etc. are a product for which Bosnia and Herzegovina was once recognizable in the world and by the economic stability of families in rural areas that was based on the production of prunes and other products. Plums still carry significant potential in the development of typical Bosnian products due to their technological, nutritional and biological properties. Typical examples are: prunes, plum brandy, plum pie, bestlj, etc.
- **Spicy and aromatic herbs, forest fruits.** "Over 5,000 species of vascular plants are known in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 450 are endemic" (Redžić et al., 2008). "Significant gene pool in BiH is contained in various forms of roses: dubšečerka; dulhatma; rutica rejhan or basil; šeka or peony; šeboj and many others. The most important aromatic and medicinal plants sold in Europe, which are available in BiH, are: valerian, wild chestnut, St. John's wort, mint, hawthorn, melissa, nettle, chamomile, etc." (Jašić, 2009).

"The vegetation of the Sarajevo Canton consists of 300 phytocenoses distributed in 80 vegetation associations, 50 rows and 30 classes. These data indicate an extremely high degree of richness and diversity of the plant world " (Đug et al., 2008). In addition, forest and berry fruits (strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, currents, blueberries) grow in the Sarajevo mountains in the immediate vicinity (Bjelasnica, Iman, Trebevic, Treskavica, etc.), and are widely used: fresh consumption, preparation of local jams, juices and compotes, cakes and sweets, syrups and medicinal preparations, sales on the local market, but also export to European countries, because these fruits are highly valued for their health benefits and pleasant taste.

**3.4 Evaluation of Sarajevo gastronomic supply**

The gastronomic supply of Sarajevo has an excellent rating of over 100 tourists and over 50 tourist managers (Žunić, 2018). Traditional Bosnian dishes are mostly high in calories and meat, while for tourists in spa hotels- spa (e.g. Ildža) there is a customized program of healthy food. There are also themed restaurants with specialized vegetarian food in the destination (restaurant "Karuzo", fast food "Veggae"). A large number of restaurants also have a halal certificate (e.g. hotel groups Europa, Ildža, Hotel Boutique Bristol, etc.), which basically means that pork and alcohol-based meals and drinks are not prepared or served. Sarajevo's food and beverage offer has been proven to attract tourists from the region and Europe and beyond. An informal interview with about 30 transit tourists from the Balkan region (Serbia, etc.) made it possible to learn that "ćevapi" are the main motive for visiting Sarajevo, which further confirms their high position on the list of ideal world dishes. The Bosnian tufahija won first place in front of the Europa Hotel and won an award at the Cannelli & Friends International Cake and Culture Festival (2010) in Palermo, Italy, in a competition of fifteen countries. The jury was delighted with the taste and the fact that it is a healthy and simple delicacy. As the gastronomic is an important segment of the tourism supply, traditional and authentic Bosnian dishes represent an important brand, which is why they should be given special attention (Ilićić, 2012).

The gastronomic supply is the initiator of the development of gastronomic and culinary tourism (International Culinary Tourism Association). Gastronomy plays an important role in the function of the development of event tourism (Ivković et al., 2003). With the aim of attracting visitors to the destination Sarajevo, gastronomic festivals are organized. The first international gastronomic festival "Bosanski dukat" - a four-day...
event of an international character - was held in Sarajevo (Holiday Inn) in the period 07-10.11.2012. year (Association of gastronomes "Gastro corner" and the agency Max style). Over 70 competitors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Slovenia, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria and Azerbaijan took part. The aim of the event was to promote the domestic gastronomic supply, the domestic food and wine industry, as well as traditional production (dairy, meat, bakery, confectionery), the promotion of delicacies, and the practice of the tradition of the event. One of the primary goals of the event was to promote festival tourism and enrich the tourist offer of the Sarajevo destination and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Although the gastronomic supply of Sarajevo is mostly excellent, yet the smaller number of visitors assessed it as good. „Reasons for possible dissatisfaction are present among narrowly oriented groups of vegetarian consumers, who believe that the traditional Bosnian high-calorie diet is too dominant, or among guests of certain middle-class hotels, due to the uniform offer of food and drink. Some guests had complaints to the more meager menu in several luxury hotels” (Žunić, 2018). However, all Serbian tourists unanimously agreed that „sarajevski čevapi” are their main motive to visit Sarajevo.

4 Conclusion

Gastronomic tourism should be developed by better valorization of gastronomic potential. Gastro & culinary tourism is a form of tourism that is related to destinations where local food and drink are the main motivating factor for travel (International Culinary Tourism Association, USA). Gastro-tourism is a growing segment, and typical gastronomic tours are increasingly combined with other activities such as cultural tours, walks, rides and more. Consequently, this is a segment that greatly stimulates interest and consumption by tourists. Gastronomic tourism tends to be the largest tourist activity, with a large number of consumers traveling to the destination for specific (usually traditional, local) food and drink. Research in America has shown that gastronomy is a motive for visiting 17% (International Culinary Tourism Association), while in our country 14% (Đišaferović, 2011). The main research markets for gastronomic tourism are in Germany, England, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, Italy, France, Scandinavia and the USA. The most competitive destinations in Europe are: Spain, France and Italy, while in Asia: Japan, India and Thailand (Global Gourmet Tours, United Kingdom). Gastronomic tours can be classified into three types: 1) culinary workshops over the holidays; 2) visits to restaurants famous for their local cuisine or for their famous recognition and visits to catering facilities; 3) visit of food producers with tours specifically related to only one product (eg tour of plantations, tour for lovers of chocolate, wine, etc.). Most gastronomic tours involve a combination of all three types (Shenoy, 2005). Sarajevo, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, has a very rich and recognizable traditional food and beverage preparation. In addition to the offer within the hospitality and accommodation facilities, traditional products can be promoted at thematic fairs, through creative workshops and interesting events (festivals, competitions, etc.). Sarajevo was visited by the world's most popular chefs (Oliver, 2014) who gave the highest rating to Bosnian cuisine, so it is an attributable element of its promotion. Improving supply with new forms of tourism will create an opportunity for new jobs, for better involvement of the local population in the development of the destination and a more diversified approach to the tourist potential of Sarajevo.

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