

PARTICULARITIES OF WINE AND GASTRONOMIC TOURISM IN ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT

Romania features an extensive wine tradition and culinary culture, presenting substantial potential for the advancement of wine and gourmet tourism. The country's viticultural surfaces are varied, with eight wine regions spanning three EU-designated growing areas. Notwithstanding structural limitations, Romania possesses significant potential for high-quality wine production. Wine tourism, while still in a developing phase relative to other European nations, exhibits potential for expansion, especially in areas such as Dealu Mare. Wine tourism can act as a spur for conservation initiatives and rural development in viticultural areas. To leverage this possibility, Romania must address critical characteristics that entice and engage wine tourists, including enhancing infrastructure and developing themed routes. Romanian food embodies a fusion of traditional and contemporary elements, with initiatives aimed at preserving and promoting local culinary heritage through festivals and events. The combination of wine and culinary products establishes Romania as an emerging destination for food enthusiasts and wine lovers. With the appropriate tools, wine tourism in Romania can serve as a benchmark for sustainable rural tourism, emphasizing economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

Keywords: wine tourism, culinary heritage, sustainability, rural development, conservation

INTRODUCTION

Wine tourism has emerged as a popular form of travel, combining culinary experiences with vineyard visits. Several countries, including France, Italy, Spain, and the United States, are recognized as leading destinations for wine and gastronomic tourism [1]. Studies have identified various tourist segments, including wine enthusiasts, beginners, and occasional visitors. The integration of wine and gastronomy has become a key factor in attracting tourists and promoting regional development. For instance, the Veneto region in Italy has successfully combined wine festivals with local culinary offerings to enhance its agrotourism sector [2].

Romania possesses considerable potential for viticulture. From 2007 to 2021, the vineyard area in Romania diminished by 11.8%, although grape yield and overall production experienced a rise [3]. The country ranks 12th globally and 6th in the EU for wine production [4]. The wine industry has evolved in recent years, with an increase in niche producers alongside traditional large-scale producers [5]. Climate change poses