

BLACK SEA CUISINE

(A trans-regional cluster initiative,
coordinated by the International Transcoast
Executive Committee (BSC ITEC)
<https://blackseacuisine.world/contact-us/>)

Location: Black Sea region

Key words: cuisine, traditions, culture



The countries in the Black Sea Basin avail of unique culinary traditions and authentic cuisines. Many tourist products and services are organized based on the culinary traditions of the specific places and areas. Yet, many studies indicate that none of the cuisines of the countries bordering the Black Sea features in the TOP-20 of the most popular cuisines. Some of them are not in the TOP-40, even in the TOP-50. Further research has shown that Black Sea Cuisine as a title does exist in the majority of consumers' minds, however, people are hardly able to name the dishes and tastes that are associated with it.

That is why a voluntary team of chefs, hotel and restaurant managers decided to launch the initiative "Black Sea Cuisine" and establish a new a culinary brand that is to turn the Black Sea Coast into an internationally attractive destination for gastronomic tourism.

The idea was first launched by the Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers in Russia after Sochi was elected to host the Winter Olympic Games in 2014. Afterwards, partner from Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine joined. The initiative is managed by the Black Sea Cuisine.

The mission of the initiative is to develop and offer to final consumers as well as involved small, medium and big size enterprises a distinct and accomplished Brand - the Black Sea Cuisine - and make it well recognizable and appreciated worldwide.

The main trait of the Black Sea Cuisine Initiative is that it is a non-formal cross-border cooperation of like-minded experts and professionals in hospitality and gastronomy who share the same passion for the food and eating traditions in along the Black Sea Coast. It resembles very much a community of practice where the members interact regularly to improve their knowledge and skills, to revive and compare the indigenous recipes across borders, as well as to organize and participate in various publicity events in order to introduce and promote the new brand.

The main elements and activities of the Black Sea Cuisine include:

- gathering a common data-base of dishes that are typical for the Black Sea area and organizing it along the different geographic and cultural zones along the coast - east, west, north and south;
- selection of 50 dishes and 25 original food products that form the Black Sea Cuisine, including fish, meat, fruits, vegetables, cheeses, herbs and spices;

The culinary selection is complemented by drinks. The experts have had the difficult task of screening over 650 collected proposals to elaborate a representative selection of dishes that fulfil the criteria for the brand.

- development and offering of a menu of food and traditional recipes that are classified as Black Sea Cuisine in the establishments of the members of the initiative;
- The selection of the most marketable dishes from Common Database form the Short Integrated Menu (SIM) as an undisputed core of Black Sea Cuisine Brand.
- organization of promotional and awareness-raising events for the culinary traditions and the traditional food along the Black Sea coast;
- sustaining a blog of the brand, production and dissemination of video-material;
- enlarging the informal team of the initiative with experts, practitioners and entrepreneurs from all Black Sea countries;
- mobilizing the local and regional potential to include the Black Sea Cuisine in the list of top-15 most popular cuisines in the long run.

Marketing approach

The Black Sea Cuisine brand was initially promoted via informal communication channels and on-line media. It has a website and blog that publish information not only on the brand, but also on the development trends in the food sector as well as on hospitality. The initiative caught the attention of regional media, which developed reports on it.

In the next stages, concepts will be developed for many format promotional events - festivals, fairs, exhibitions, gala evenings, culinary master classes, etc., aimed at promoting Black Sea Cuisine. The promoters of the initiative believe that these activities will help to improve the quality of the tourist flow and reduce the anthropogenic impact on coastal areas in the region.

Financial situation

The promoters of the idea for the establishment of the Black Sea cuisine brand have organized themselves as regional horizontal cluster and function as an informal network and community of practice. The members are distinctive restaurants, hotels, wineries and producers that are working to implement the Black Sea Cuisine strategy as an added value to their regular offer. The sustainability of these ventures guarantees the sustainability of initiative.

Key success factors and challenges

Key factors for success of the initiative are:

- Community of like-minded experts, professionals and entrepreneurs in culinary arts and hospitality representing different Black Sea countries;

- Diversity of cultures presented;

- Established need, demand and niche for locally-based gastronomic tourism in the Black Sea region;

- Based on shared interest and bottom-up cooperation among professionals and entrepreneurs;

- Shared regional identity and genuine cross-cultural collaboration.

Plans for future development

The future development refers to the establishment of the Black Sea Cuisine brand on the market and creating a network of establishments (restaurants, hotels, guesthouses, etc.) where the brand menu is offered on a permanent basis. The overall aim is to position Black Sea Cuisine Brand in the list of 15 internationally most



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recognizable world cuisines by the end of 2025. Another aim is to create a Black Sea Cuisine Recipes Directory as a guide with clues for professional chefs and non-

professional enthusiasts alike. Even at this early stage, the Brand could provide benefits to a number of stakeholders, including franchising operations

among Black Sea Cuisine Branded restaurants, street food vendors, food and wine producers and retailers, etc.

GALLERY:



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