



Slow Food[®]

Tarnava Mare

The Slow Food Presidium or project, Saxon Village Preserves was created in the Tarnava Mare area of Transylvania to capture the ancient tradition of producing different kinds of homemade 'gem' (jams and compotes) and 'dulceata' (whole fruits in syrup similar to Bosnian slatko) using the fruit that grows in the courtyard or orchard or that is picked in the uncontaminated meadows and woods of this area. These traditional fruits include:

Wild forest fruits: blackberries, cornelian cherries, pears, raspberries, strawberries;

Wild meadow fruits: blackberries, bullace (red and yellow - corcodus / mirabelle), cornelian cherries, rose-hip, sea buckthorn, strawberries;

Orchard fruits: apple, damson, pear, plum, quince, sour cherry, walnut;

Courtyard fruits: blackcurrant, gooseberry, raspberry, redcurrant, rhubarb, strawberry, white currant.

As a result of tasting undertaken by Slow Food experts and with three seasons of market research now completed, the most interesting jams that have found markets are:

- Apple with cinnamon: Made exclusively from the local variety 'Mere de Piele', a sour apple of a greenish/grey colour, ripening at the end of September / beginning of October). The use of cinnamon has an old tradition (this region was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and a great part of its gastronomy is linked to Mitteleuropean traditions). Ideal in pancakes or as dessert topping;
- Bullace (wild red or yellow plums – also known as mirabelle / corcodus): Sharp and plummy, with subtle aromatic flavour. Ideal with bread or pancakes;
- Cornelian cherry: Native to the region, a sour fruit high in vitamin C with luxuriously floral flavours;
- Green walnut: From earliest times, the Saxon villages have always been ringed by rows of walnut trees. Green walnut Gem or 'Dulceata de nuci verzi' is a unique Transylvanian taste. The green walnuts have little flavour themselves, but they add a distinctive, crunchy texture to the jam. It is a sweet jam, best eaten with a product such as Urda (whey cheese) which gives a contrast to the sweetness. Ideal with cheese or as dessert topping;
- Rhubarb: Introduced by the Saxons hundreds of years ago and grown nowhere else in Romania this jam has become a celebrity product, attracting much media attention and public interest;
- Rose hip: Packed with vitamin C and ideal with pancakes or dribbled over cheese;
- Rose petal: Very traditional, but usually tasting mainly of sugar. This Rose Petal Gem or 'Dulceata de trandafiri' from Tarnava Mare has a strong aroma of roses and is bursting with flavour as it hits your mouth. Ideal as a dessert topping;
- Sour cherry: Dark in colour, sweet and sour with intense cherry flavour;
- Quince: Made from whole fruit. Ideal with bread, cheese, pork or as dessert topping;
- Wild harvested forest and meadow fruits in limited quantities based on the season: In particular the meadow blackberry is almost seedless and makes an excellent full fruit and flavour jam, as do the raspberries and strawberries.

Until 2006, the jams were only produced for family use and the Presidium represents a new and interesting source of revenue for people who are reliant on agriculture and whose only other source of income is selling milk at very low prices. The Presidium or group members have gained not only income but pride and confidence, and social benefits from meeting like minded people from neighbouring villages when recipes are exchanged and prices compared.

www.discovertarnavamare.org

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