

FOOD - THE HISTORY OF A SOCIETY

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Background: Ever since Homo sapiens discovered the fire, a greater interest occurred in the minds of the human beings of that time that transcended beyond the simple reason of eating because of hunger. Food rapidly became a way of showing power or seeking acceptance from a particular community. Therefore, we can see different dietary patterns in today's nutrition as well as in the ancient one. Food finds itself at the crossroads between nutrition and pharmacology and the old diets can confirm this. From the consumption of molded bread for healing wounds to the tapeworm diet or the use of radium in many products for everlasting health and youth, the history of food and society probably has not seen everything yet.

Aim: The community has a major impact on the nutritional human behavior and I will outline its importance over ages in my presentation.

Method: To find out more about the relationship between individuals and the medium in which they are raised, I conducted a small qualitative and quantitative study, materialized in a questionnaire disseminated among different ethnical communities residing in Romania. The questionnaire consists of 17 items of different types (open-ended questions, close-ended questions and ratio-scaled questions), including 6 items regarding a series of data about the respondents (age, gender, ethnical community etc.). The questionnaire was administered to a number of 72 people, aged between 18 and 73.

Results and discussion: Among the respondents, the majority ethnic percentage was that of Romanians, with a percentage of 97.22%. Among other ethnic communities found in this questionnaire, there are Hungarians, in percentage of 2.77%. As secondary ethnicity of the respondents, there are Ukrainians and Russians, Germans and Austrians, as well as others, such as the Romanians from the Republic of Moldova, Greeks, Hebrews and Azerbaijani. The predominant geographical areas of the participants were Muntenia and Transylvania, a percentage of 81.94% of the respondents coming from the urban environment. From an anthropological point of view, approximately 50% of respondents stated that their family's favorite recipe comes from their ancestors' recipe book, predominating in dishes such as various traditional soups (*ciorbă*), as well as cabbage rolls (*sarmale*) and cakes, which have

been in the family for at least 4 generations. Also, a percentage of 47.22% of those surveyed claim that traditions are a factor influencing their diet, closely followed by vacation destinations (36.11%) and medical conditions (33.33%). A percentage of 5.55% of the respondents are ovo-lacto-vegetarians and vegetarians and the rest are omnivores. Favorite drinks, considered specific to the area, are coffee, tea, plum brandy (*țuică*), wine and edelberry cordial (*socată*). The commercial network is the predominant choice for purchasing food, being selected by 66.66% of respondents, followed by local producers (20.83%), small farming (12.5%) and the local community. Also, 54.16% of respondents rarely eat in gastronomic establishments, 34.72% a few times a month, 5.55% a few times a week, 1.38% daily and 2.77% never. A percentage of 67.92% of respondents use various foods for healing purposes, ranging from tea to certain fruits or vegetables. From the point of view of food patterns, the majority of respondents consume red and white meat and charcuterie several times a week, fish is consumed weekly, milk, dairy products, fruits and vegetables and flour products 1-2 times a day, sweets and peanuts, nuts and so on several times a week.

Conclusion: These findings lead to a better understanding of the nutritional habits of today's population residing in Romania, from an anthropological point of view.

Keywords: nutrition, dietary patterns, tracking nutrition trends