

## MAIZE FAIR – A MUSEUM PRODUCT WHICH REVEALS IMMATERIAL CULTURAL VALUES TO THE PUBLIC

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**Rezumat:** Când vorbim de prezentarea valorilor muzeale ca produs turistic se pune și întrebarea cum să fie prezentarea valorilor culturale imateriale supuse atenției fiecărui vizitator, turiștilor și specialiștilor. Rolul muzeelor este să conducă popularizarea acestei moșteniri. Evenimentele de popularizare a acestor moșteniri și obiceiuri trebuie să fie făcută împreună cu chitaliste (casele de cultură), școli, autoritățile locale și instituțiile de stat.

Din anul 2005 Muzeul de istorie Ispernih organizează diferite evenimente cu scopul de a populariza tradițiile locale etnografice legate de porumb, produs tradițional pentru zona Ispernih. Acum târgul porumbului este un eveniment tradițional în programul Zilele Culturale Ispernih, care se organizează în ultimile zece zile ale lunii octombrie. Anual se organizează o revigorare a obiceiului tradițional “belenka”, au loc concerte cu grupuri folclorice, jocuri și concursuri tradiționale, degustare de produse din porumb ș.a. Din anul 2009 Târgul porumbului se organizează în piața publică.

When we are talking about presentation of the museum values as a tourist product, it is the question of presentation of the immaterial cultural values to the attention of each visitor and tourist as well as specialists that arises. Undoubtedly, the museums as institutions have a leading part in the popularizing of these values. But it will be difficult to organize such action without co-operation with community centers, schools, municipal and state institutions.

The territory of Bulgaria is set with many and different ethnographical groups which have kept somewhat their traditions. But the popularizing of their way of lives and culture within the range of such activity as a fair, contributes to go deep in the problem of preservation of the material and immaterial cultural values including music, songs, dances, rituals.

Different religious and ethnographic groups from almost all regions of Bulgaria live on the territory of Ispernih Municipality. No matter what's the reason of their migration – demographic, economic or political – it contributes to preservation of the folklore and traditions of those regions. At the same time these ethnic groups borrow from each other their traditions.

In 2005 the Historical museum in Ispernih has taken the first steps in keeping the immaterial cultural values on a large scale such as the fair is. Semantics of the

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\* The Historical museum – Ispernih.

word 'fair' can be considering on the one hand as a place where products and goods are sold. On the other hand it is a place where the traditions and culture are revealed as a tourist product. Initially the concept of the Maize fair was to be an attendant activity in the Days of the Cultural Historical Heritage. Gradually it differentiates as a separate activity which is held on the last week in October.

Basileva, T. – Museums' place within the cultural tourism – Round table – Presentation of the museum values as a tourist product, organized by the Historical museum Ispereh

The aim of the fair consists mostly of presentation of the traditions and the popularizing of a traditional agricultural product – the maize - among the local population and their attitude in preservation, managing and realization of the immaterial cultural heritage. Along with the traditional scientific conference held by the Historical museum Ispereh, this fair is the activity that brings together the people from different districts of Bulgaria who want to know in particular the means of living and culture of the population in Ludogorie district.

When the fair was held for the first time it was restored a custom 'belenka'. The custom was performed by an authentic folklore group pertained to the Historical museum Ispereh. The performers showed not only their authentic costumes as an immaterial value but also the whole custom 'belenka' with songs, dances and the dialect which is typical for a part of the local population which are descendants of settlers from the North Dobrudga. At the same time it was performed a tourist animation of cooking hominy by Todorka Ivanova. The hominy was tasted during the fair. The visiting exhibition of matting from the Architectural and Ethnographic Complex Etar and the guest animator Bera Tsaneva contributed to the visitor's interest.

During the second implementation of the Maize fair it had been decided to extant its activity in order to include people advanced in years as well as the rising generation. In one day it was arranged a cookery show prepared by maize products which revealed the abilities and skills of the Bulgarian women.

In the third year the fair's activity was more extended. Competitive games for children were added to the previous undertakings. These games were connected with maize products – corn-cobs, corn, and popcorn, etc.

In the fourth year the children were benefactors. They made objects and souvenirs from maize leaves and arranged an exhibition which could be seen by everyone. The chorus pertained to the Historical museum Ispereh "Beli karamfili" and the singers Yanka Rupkina, Kalinka Zgurova and Irena Stankova gave a concert devoted to the Days of the Cultural and Historical Heritage as well as to the Maize fair. It was issued a folder which showed the growth of the maize on our lands, attendant activities during the fair as well as different culinary recipes with meal.

In 2009 the framework of the fair was broadened and it was brought out the museum. Children's entertaining and competitive games connected with maize

provoked immense interest among the public. The participants were awarded with prizes and charters which quickened their wish to take part in the fair again. A new activity which enriched the fair was the Maize party. The purpose of that activity was to attract not only the children but also the whole public in the town and everyone could feel the festive mood during those days. Participants in this party were folklore groups from Isperih and Razgrad. The performance was not only an additional attraction but it also filled with joy all those present. The evening ended with people's merriment. Cooking and tasting hominy is a traditional activity during the fair and it has always been an attraction for the visitors.

The fair has shaped as a peculiar bridge between two generations. During the fair older people handed their knowledge, ability and experience down to the rising generation whose representatives were students from the town and municipality. They took an active part in different restored customs connected with the agrarian calendar. Restoration of customs is a successful form for presenting the traditions because the richness and coloring of the national costumes, the songs, the dances and different dishes shown on the table impress the visitors. Thus through provoking the senses, the interest of the visitors who want to receive particular information about the way of life and the means of life of the population in the region in particular the means of producing and using maize is being instigated. In the form of games the children succeed in knowing the maize's place and its use in our daily round as in the past as well as today. For some years the fair has been extended and went out of the museum. With our new friends and followers we have managed to turn the Maize fair from a museum product to a town fair. Thus we hope to attract tourists' attention as well.

Undoubtedly, it should be mentioned the work and assistance of each museum official who participate in the organization and implementation of the fair. Conforming to the interests of tourists and visitors we should not emphasize on the theoretical treatment but on the visual and sense perception of each tourist according to his own perceptions – touch, taste, etc.













