



NATIONAL PARK PRODUCTS

A SLICE OF TRADITION



DR. SÁNDOR FAZEKAS
Minister of Rural Development

Dear Reader,

In the publication you hold in your hands we have undertaken nothing less than to show you the National Park Products. We present you what is the aim of this brand, why was it created and which are the values that these products represent. This is how we show you the Hungarian quality.

Many of those familiar with the brand might think that it is mostly awarded to foods and drinks, but only a few know that a significant number of additional specialities are also to be found amongst National Park Products. There are also services and accommodations which earned to be proud owners of the National Park Product title, as their activities are exemplary for others regarding the protection of natural values and in the practical implementation of the principle of sustainable development.

The brand desires to support the local enterprises and husbandry operated within nature conservation areas by extending their products' recognition. To reach this purpose the boards asked to evaluate do so by being especially thoughtful during the selection of services and products which are awarded the brand.

With its limited volume the publication you hold in your hands is not able to give a comprehensive, one-by-one display of all of the numerous exceptionally high quality products – or services – and their providers. Through the review of various product categories, it still provides an insight for all of those willing to learn more about the brand system and also about those who received the honour of using the brand.

Reading may be followed by experiencing and tasting – I sincerely hope that by the time you reach the end of this publication, you will have a desire to further explore the countless fruits and products of our unique natural heritage by visiting our national parks.

Dr. Sándor Fazekas



RENEWING ENVIRONMENT FULL OF LIFE

Today most of our meals, drinks and personal articles are mass-produced, arriving from remote locations – nature is merely an exploited resource in their creation, its real importance is de-emphasized. Nowadays humanity is not able to sustain itself on what nature provides by “itself” – we have to utilize our environment, but it does matter how we do so. The protected areas of our national parks and the Natura 2000 areas are also exceptional from this point of view, as those operating there may only do so in compliance with the rules initiated for the protection of nature. This ensures a harmonious co-existence and co-operation of nature and man, which results in a fruitful relationship, both literally and figuratively. Thanks to the sustainable landscape utilization, the nature, spared from damaging effects and helped in its renewal, fills the locally produced goods with life and strength.





QUALITY, LOCAL INGREDIENTS

Nowadays the products made of natural ingredients are increasingly popular. Those who have already tasted the traditionally produced and prepared food will most probably find the mass produced goods on the shelves of supermarkets tasteless and boring. The National Park Product brand is a guarantee that qualified products are made using fresh, local ingredients without the use of additives. More and more people are aware of the close relation of health and the quality of the food consumed, therefore they are specifically looking for pure products made using natural ingredients. Even if we are unable to exactly judge the role of nature in the production process, we can still instinctively feel that if we entrust ourselves upon nature and use healthy ingredients then the food and drinks produced also contribute to the preservation of our health.





WORK DONE WITH HEARTH AND SOUL

Any real agricultural and handicrafts product encapsulates the skills of its producer, and what is even more important, it also bears professional devotion, esteem and emotional connectedness towards the product. Food, drinks and handicrafts products created with love are all having unique characteristics, forming a special, personal bond between the producer and the consumer. This type of craftsmanship and attitude may be the strongest within people living in harmony with their environment, who appraise natural values. The National Park Product brand system also qualifies the producers, acknowledging that they are not only avoiding the damaging of the environment, but they specifically operate by means to preserve the valuable habitat and to contribute to the preservation of protected species. Customers buying these branded products are to a certain degree also becoming members of this community which lives from and with nature.





WELL-GUARDED RECIPES

During the last few years the knowledge and purchase of original local products have become an integral part of the travel culture. Instead of buying cheap souvenirs, the visitors of our national parks tend to increasingly prefer the really unique products and creations which represent traditional values. They are also keen to visit the local product creators, the handicrafts masters of the settlements. Numerous goods are only produced in small quantities, therefore they are rare and special. Most of the visitors consider only these products, which embody local traditions and are made using special recipes, as real values, regardless of their real price.

Products branded as National Park Products fulfil all aspects of these requirements, as during the qualification process it is a priority that the quality, appearance or other exceptional property of the product should well represent the natural, landscape and cultural specialities of the area.



WINES AND PÁLINKAS



A variety of noble drinks have been an integral part of our tradition for a long time, some of these are also “Hungaricums”, strengthening the image of Hungary. Grape and fruit production has extensive, long-standing traditions in multiple protected areas, therefore pure and natural ingredients are available in many locations for the production of first class wines and spirits. Our distillers process cultivated fruits (for example plum, quince, apple) and wild grown ingredients (crab apple, wild pear, elder, sloe, cornel) as well to produce their spirit offerings. In addition to grapes, wine may also be produced from strawberry as a speciality.





Fruits grown in national parks are also perfectly suitable for the production of non-alcoholic drinks. In contrast with industrially-made soft drinks, fruit juices made using natural products are especially healthy, they provide numerous favourable physiological effects. They strengthen the body with vitamins, assist the operation of the digestive system and also contribute to the energy intake with their natural sugar content, not to mention that fruit juices are delicious and refreshing. A wide selection of delicious drinks made using cultivated and wild fruits (sloe, whitethorn, red currant, cornel, raspberry, strawberry, elder) is available in our national parks.



SALAMIS AND SAUSAGES



Built on the foundations of the historic tradition of animal husbandry, many Hungarian regions have their quality meat products, some of which are internationally renown export goods. In addition to the protection of wild animals, national park directorates also work on the conservation of ancient Hungarian animal breeds. Animals held in an environmentally friendly way in the open air are not only playing a primary role in the handling of grasslands by their grazing, but they also provide quality ingredients for special, local meat products. The product range of our national parks includes salamis and sausages in a variety of flavours, made from Hungarian grey cattle, mangalica pig and buffalo. Products made by wild boar and deer have also become available as a speciality.





Dairy products play an important role in our everyday nourishment, either by themselves or as ingredients of other products. Among these it is the cheese which became popular by itself at the first place, due to its especially broad range of flavours. Cheese production opens up a range of creative options for the producers, who create cheeses in a broad range of physical states, aromas and flavours – all for the delight of customers. The cheese-makers of our national parks highly utilize the favourable environmental conditions in the processing of cow's, goat's and ewe's milk. The wide selection of product offerings includes – among others – specialities such as cottage cheese with ramson or charcoal cheese matured in a tuff cellar.





Jams, which preserve the fruits' flavour for a long time, are the favourite of children and adults. They can act as morning delicacies or as ingredients of a variety of dishes. Even though jam is a typical home-made product – many think that nothing is better than the recipe of grandma –, its flavour composition may still be greatly extended by the special processes and tricks of a producer who uses the most natural ingredients. Hungarian national parks have all the necessary preconditions for the production of jams of exceptional quality. The list of possible ingredients include cultivated and wild fruits, such as black-currant, strawberry, apple, blackthorn, cornel and whitethorn.





Some people say that honey incorporates the spring and summer vitality and strength of nature, as its flavours include the diverse aromas of wood and field flowers, its golden glory looks as if the sparkles of the sun were trapped within. It is not accidental that many of our foods and drinks are enriched by honey; and it is by no accident either that the expression “sweet as honey” can also depict emotions in addition to flavours. The countless blossoming plants of our national parks enable the production of real honey-specialities: visitors may taste honey made for example from whitethorn, chestnut, sage, ramson or a special Hungarian type of sea lavender, limonium gmelini.





Our national parks offer additional food products which utilize the characteristics of a small region and embody the special skills and creativeness of just a few producers. The list of these products includes rare delicacies which may by themselves make a visit of a national park worthwhile for a real connoisseur. The selection includes a variety of dried mushrooms and mushroom-based products such as forest mushroom seasoned salt; ramson salt, flavoured butter, bean pesto; fresh and smoked trout from the Szalajka Valley; herbal tea blends; manually pressed pumpkin seed oil or famous dishes such as the “dödölle” of Őrség.





The Hungarian national park directorates do not only protect our national treasures but also preserve our traditional cultural values, an integral part of which is the handicrafts trade. Handicrafts products, made from local materials, are characterized by practicality, ingenuity and aesthetics. The various kinds of handicrafts products – used as ornamental pieces or everyday tools – preserve the memory of the visit of the national park for an extended period of time. Examples of such items include the lavender bags from Balaton Uplands, reed, sedge and bulrush products of the wetlands of Fertő-Hanság, “náduvარი” ceramics or shepherd’s tools available at the Hortobágy National Park and the distinctive potteries of Órség.





Hungarian national parks also pay an increased attention to the preservation and sustainable utilization of traditional cultural values when considering services. Within this approach, multiple national parks offer guest houses constructed from historic folk buildings or other, traditionally styled village houses, operated by locals in an environmentally friendly manner. Housing services are supplemented by local programmes, walks and meals. Providers operating in line with national park regulations and recommendations are ideal for those who would like to visit our protected natural areas as real eco-tourist, nourishing traditions and supporting the livelihood of locals.





DÖDÖLLE

AS ENDORSED BY ANDRÁS SZÓKE

I have a “sparhert”, a traditional range cooker here in the village, I make “dödölle” using that, but it can also be made using a gas stove with three burners in a housing estate. In the old times, this was a popular meal for poor people and peasant families. This basic meal offers an exciting range of combination options.

Ingredients serving four:

1 kg potatoes
250 g flour
3 yellow onions
salt

Secret ingredients for vegetarians:

4 garlic cloves
50 cc pálinka
1 tablespoonful of honey
10 cc pine bud syrup
pumpkin seed oil
quince or dandelion jam to the top, to taste

Secret ingredients for meat-eaters:

50 g smoked bacon or a slice of grey cattle salami as “binding agent”
1 coffee-spoon ground caraway
mangalica pig fat

For the dressing:

1 slice of grey cattle salami and a mug of sour cream
1 coffee-spoon quince jam

Now we set off along two different routes, one for meat-eaters and another for vegetarians.

MAIN STREET TILL THE ROAD FORK Dice the washed potatoes and put them into a pan. Cook it in water to cover. Use low flames or leave your “sparhert” on the “cook” setting and put the pan towards the stove-pipe. Put a spoonful of cheap salt into the juice, not the expensive, as that will dissolve even later.

Now we are at the road fork:

Secrets for vegetarians: Put 4 garlic cloves which you left overnight soaking in 50 cc Karcag pálinka with honey and pine bud syrup into the pot. Add also the juice.

Secrets for meat-eaters: Put 50 g smoked ham from yesterday’s bean soup, if you have it, or a slice of grey cattle salami and ground caraway into the pan.

After boiling, stir it in its own juice with a wooden spoon, adding as much flour as to get a non-clotting material similar to the bricklayers’ mortar. Take it off the fire.

Heat mangalica pig fat in a frying pan, or use pumpkin seed oil if you are vegetarian.

Drop in the fine-chopped yellow onions, roast them until they are semi-transparent then add the “mortar” in small pieces using a spoon.

Roast it to golden.

For meat-eaters:

Mix the mug of sour cream with fine diced grey cattle salami, and also add a pinch of quince jam. Stir, stir and keep on stirring!

Then pour it to the golden “dödölle”. Serve as a garnish.

For vegetarians:

Put quince or dandelion jam to the “dödölle”.



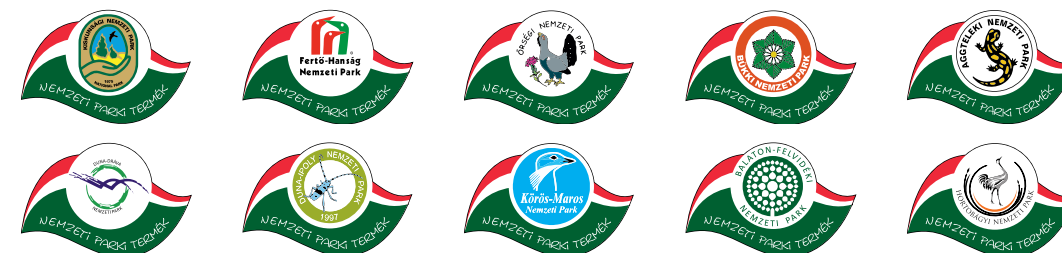
THE NATIONAL PARK PRODUCT BRAND – AND ITS BACKGROUND

National park directorates allow the use of the brand in their region by publishing invitations and judging the incoming applications handed in by those who operate in protected natural areas or Natura 2000 areas.

A fundamental requirement for products is to be primarily made from local materials and ingredients, using plant or animal products foreign to the region and habitat to the smallest possible extent. A priority judging aspect is that the product shall appropriately represent the natural, landscape and cultural characteristics of the area by its quality, appearance or other exceptional attribute. It is also important that the applicant shall operate based on local traditions and characteristics, relying on the locally available workforce of the area. By all means it is essential for the product and its production to be in line with the principles of sustainable development. When awarding the use of the brand it is also important that the work of the applicant could be used as a model for other producers and service providers. The National Park Product brand badge is graphically unified, but always includes the emblem of the corresponding directorate.

A priority objective of the creation of the brand is to extend the sales opportunities and market success of producers creating quality products in low quantities; for which an important element is the presence during events and the assistance of sale. For this purpose the branded products are not only directly available at the producer but can also be bought at the visitor centres of national park directorates and at various events. In addition to the introduction of branded products and producers, the website of National Park Products (www.nemzetiparkitemek.hu) also contains more information on the complete brand system.

The brand system wants to show that in numerous cases the nature conservation efforts are not best served by defining a range of prohibitions and restrictions, but by the sustainable support of landscape and natural characteristics. This means that the most important aim of the brand is to provide distinguished attention and honour to all of those who base their operation on the foundation of respect of natural values. Customers of National Park Products are therefore not only taking a slice of flavours, heritage and traditions of the area with them, but also have the pleasant feeling that their selection contributed to the preservation of natural values.



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Text:
Bertalan Balczó
András Jancsik
Emília Kissné Dóczy
Ágnes Pandi
Erzsébet Pénzes

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