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# THE IMPACT OF THE BANAT BRUNCH EVENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRITOURISM IN THE SILAGIU HILLS AND THE NITCHIDORF AREA

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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### Abstract

*This study analyzes the impact of the "Banat Brunch" event, organized by the My Banat Association in partnership with the Association for the Promotion and Development of Tourism in Timiș County, on the development of agritourism in the Silagiu Hills area, with a special focus on the locality of Nitchidorf. The event, dedicated to promoting traditional gastronomy and local products, represents an opportunity for rural communities to capitalize on natural and cultural resources through sustainable tourism [4, 8]. The study explores the number of participants and the economic impact on the local community, as well as the benefits for local producers and service providers, highlighting the event's success in attracting visitors and strengthening the region's image as a tourist destination. [1]*

*The research methodology includes both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with Banat Brunch organizers, local producers, and tourism operators in the area to identify the benefits and challenges of the event. [7, 10] Additionally, questionnaires were distributed to participating tourists to assess their experience and the impact on their perception of the region as a tourist destination. In parallel, a statistical analysis of the number of participants and the local economic evolution was conducted based on data provided by the organizers and local authorities.*

*Finally, the research identifies the challenges encountered and the opportunities for the long-term expansion and development of agritourism in this rural area.*

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**Keywords:** agritourism, "Banat Brunch", rural development, sustainable tourism

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### INTRODUCTION

Agrotourism is an essential component of rural tourism, playing a significant role in the economic and social development of local communities. Gastronomic and cultural events are effective tools for promoting rural regions, providing opportunities for local producers and tourism operators to capitalize on their resources [6, 9]. In this context, "Banat Brunch" is a key event organized in multiple locations across the Banat region, including the sheepfold on Lunca Pogănișului in Nitchidorf, in the village of Duboz, and in Dealul Silagiu at Agape Arta & Natura winery.

Previous research has highlighted the positive impact of gastronomic events on rural tourism, demonstrating that such initiatives contribute to increasing destination attractiveness and stimulating the local economy [2, 5]. However, few studies specifically analyze the influence of such events on the development of agrotourism in rural areas of Romania.

This research aims to analyze the impact of "Banat Brunch" on the development of agrotourism in the Silagiu Hills and the locality of Nitchidorf, focusing on the economic, social, and cultural benefits generated by this event. The hypothesis underlying this study is that "Banat Brunch" significantly contributes to increasing the region's visibility as a tourist destination, supporting local producers, and strengthening the cultural identity of the community.

The main objective of this study is to assess the effects of this event on the development of rural tourism and agrotourism in the studied area. Specific objectives include analyzing the number of participants, evaluating the economic impact on the community, and identifying opportunities for expanding such initiatives to support the sustainable development of the region [3].

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

To assess the impact of the "Banat Brunch" event on the development of agritourism in the Silagiu Hills and the locality of Nitchidorf, the research adopted a mixed methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Data were collected during the period 2024-2025 through semi-structured interviews conducted with event organizers, local producers, and tourism operators, providing a detailed perspective on the benefits and challenges associated with this type of initiative. In parallel, tourists participating in the editions held at the sheepfold on Lunca Pogănişului (Nitchidorf), in Duboz, and at the Agape Arta & Natura winery (Silagiu Hills) completed questionnaires designed to capture their experience, perception of the region, and interest in rural tourism.

For a more comprehensive analysis, data on the number of participants at each edition of the event were collected from organizers and local authorities, along with relevant economic information, such as the impact on local product sales and the increasing demand for tourism services. The qualitative data obtained from interviews were interpreted through thematic analysis, highlighting common perspectives and encountered challenges, while responses from questionnaires were subjected to statistical analysis to identify trends related to visitor satisfaction and the effects on local tourism development. The results were compared with previous studies on the impact of gastronomic events on rural tourism, thus providing a broader reference framework for data interpretation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The **Banat Brunch** event, organized in the **Silagiu Hills** area, has demonstrated a significant impact on the development of agritourism, stimulating both the local economy and the promotion of gastronomic and cultural traditions. During this event, participants had the opportunity to discover authentic local products, interact with producers, and take part in themed activities that highlight the unique character of the region.

The brunch is designed not only as a **culinary experience** but also as an opportunity for **interaction and engagement**. Participants have the chance to visit local farms, cheese producers, and take part in unique activities such as transportation by hay carts or visits to

livestock farms. The event has become a well-appreciated annual tradition, strengthening the connection between visitors and the local heritage.

A complementary project, "**A Day on the Wine Road – Buziaş, Silagiu**," has contributed to increasing the region's visibility as a **sustainable agritourism destination**. This themed route promotes both **traditional winemaking** and local producers, offering tourists an **authentic experience**. Within this project, visitors can explore **local wineries** producing wines from native grape varieties, as well as other local producers specializing in cheese, cured meats, and honey. Some of the key locations on this route include:

- **Wineries in Silagiu** (*Crama Aramic, Crama Dealul Dorului, Crama Thesaurus, Domeniile SERA, Crama Varvara*) – where tourists can **taste wines** and learn about the winemaking process.

- **ApiDor Beekeeping Farm** – offering **high-quality honey and bee products**.

- **Mangalita Traditional NIA** – specializing in **traditional cured meats** made from Mangalitsa pork.

- **Curtea Culorilor Association in Sârbova** – producing **artisan cheeses** based on Italian recipes using **local milk**.

These initiatives contribute to diversifying the **tourism offer**, attracting visitors interested in **authentic experiences, local gastronomy, and picturesque landscapes**. Additionally, the events organized as part of the **Wine Road – Silagiu Buziaş** are supported by the **TimCultura 2023 program**, co-financed by the **Timiş County Council**, highlighting the authorities' interest in the **sustainable development** of the region.

By analyzing data collected from organizers and participants, a **steady increase in visitor numbers** at these events can be observed, generating **significant economic benefits** for local producers. **Participant testimonials** emphasize the **quality of products** and the **authenticity of the experiences**, further solidifying the region's image as a **noteworthy agritourism destination**.

The **Banat Brunch** event, together with the **Wine Road – Silagiu Buziaş**, represents **concrete examples** of initiatives supporting **sustainable tourism**, stimulating the local economy, and promoting the region's **authentic traditions**.

### Banat Brunch and Hiking with Lunch at the Sheepfold Events

Since 2023, **Banat Brunch and Hiking with Lunch at the Sheepfold** events, organized in **Lunca Pogănișului** and **Nitchidorf**, have become **tourist attractions** and **drivers of local economic revitalization**.

The **brunch event** held at **Stâna de pe Lunca Pogănișului** on **July 15, 2023**, showcased **traditional dishes**, **cultural activities**, and **authentic experiences** for participants. Set in a **picturesque natural environment**, visitors had the opportunity to taste **local specialties** such as **balmoș**, **homemade sausages**, **aged cheeses**, **roasted lamb**, **apple cake**, and **fruit syrups**. The program also included **guided hikes**, **craft workshops**, and **local product fairs**, further strengthening the **touristic identity** of the region.

Furthermore, the **Hiking and Lunch at the Sheepfold** event series, held between **February 25** and **May 1, 2024**, attracted a **significant number of tourists**, highlighting the **Fritillaria Meleagris Natural Reserve** and **local traditions**. Participants enjoyed **guided walks**, **historical storytelling**, **farm visits**, and **tastings of authentic products**.

A particularly significant moment occurred on **March 10, 2024**, when the event gathered **120 participants**, demonstrating the growing interest in this type of **sustainable tourism**.

#### Economic and Community Benefits

The consistent participation in these events has contributed to:

- **Increasing the visibility of local producers**, providing them with opportunities to market their products (cheese, syrups, honey, etc.).
- **Generating a positive economic impact** on the community by attracting tourists, increasing sales, and developing **complementary services** (transport, accommodation, guided tours).
- **Revitalizing local traditions** through the **promotion of authentic gastronomy** and **pastoral customs**.

#### Future Prospects for Agritourism Development

The success of these events highlights the region's **tourism potential**, suggesting the need for additional initiatives, such as:

- **Extending the tourist season** by organizing **thematic brunches year-round**.

- **Creating integrated tourism packages**, including **farm stays**, **guided tours**, and **interactive workshops**.

- **Improving access infrastructure** to facilitate travel to event locations.

The **Banat Brunch** and related events in **Nitchidorf** and the **Silagiu Hills** have demonstrated that **agritourism** can become a **key driver of local development**, blending **authentic culinary experiences** with the **promotion of traditions** and the **preservation of natural heritage**.

Each edition of the **Banat Brunch** event has recorded **steady growth in attendance**, reaching approximately **150 participants per edition**. This trend reflects the increasing **interest in authentic local experiences** and the rising popularity of **agritourism**. The continued growth in participant numbers underscores the **growing appreciation** for the region's **cultural offerings** and **high-quality local products**.

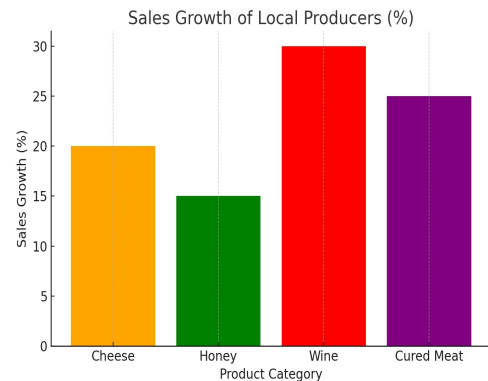


Figure 1 Sales Growth of local Producers

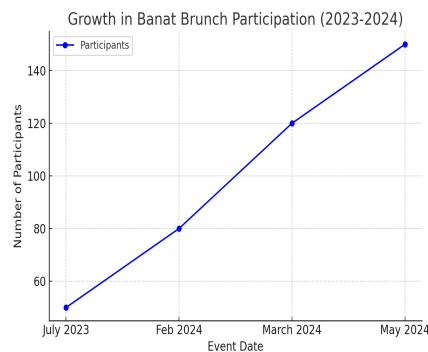


Figure 2 Growth in Banat Brunch Participation



Figure 3 **Banat Brunch Event**



Figure 5 **Brunch**



Figure 4 **Variegated Tulip**



Figure 6 **Sheepfold, Lunca Poganisului**





Figure 7 Wine Road

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the Banat Brunch event has proven to be much more than just a culinary gathering. By harmoniously integrating local gastronomy, culture, and tourism, it has succeeded in bringing together the local community and visitors from various parts of the country, promoting the traditions and products of the region. The steady increase in the number of participants and the significant economic impact on the community highlight the success of the event and its importance for the development of agritourism. Each edition has not only brought an economic contribution but also helped strengthen the bond between tourists and the cultural heritage of the region, offering an authentic and memorable experience. Banat Brunch continues to serve as a successful example of promoting sustainable tourism, and its positive impact on the local economy and the region's image is a clear indicator of the value of such events for long-term development.

The event had a significant economic impact on the local community. Local producers, from artisans to winemakers, actively participate, offering their products to visitors. This direct interaction between

producers and consumers contributes to the economic development of the region, with many visitors purchasing high-quality local products. In addition to direct sales, the event stimulates the local economy by increasing the flow of tourists, which benefits local businesses, including accommodations, restaurants, and transportation services.

Banat Brunch is not just a gastronomic event but also an opportunity to discover the traditions and culture of the region. As part of the Wine Route project, supported by the Timiș County Council through the #TimCultura2023 program, the event encourages exploration of the picturesque landscapes of the Silagiu Hills area and familiarizes participants with the history of local wine production.

Participation data shows a steady increase in the number of visitors, with a growth rate of about 10-15% per year, demonstrating the growing popularity of the event. Additionally, feedback from local producers indicates a positive economic impact, with many reporting a 20-30% increase in sales during the event. These figures highlight the mutual benefits of the brunch for both visitors and the local economy.

Banat Brunch represents a successful integration of culture, gastronomy, and tourism, with its continued growth serving as evidence of the value of promoting regional heritage and supporting local economic development.

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