

A mushroom restaurant in a protected area in Greece



Kanela & Garyfallo

Keywords

edible mushrooms

wild mushroom picking

gastronomy

tourism

truffles

NWFP

Wild Mushrooms & Truffles

Scale

Local



Context

Kanela & Garyfallo is located in Zagori, a municipality in the Pindus mountains that is part of Northern Pindos National Park. It is in close proximity to the entrance to Vikos gorge and many of the region's natural wonders of great beauty. Zagori has witnessed moderate tourist development in the last 2 decades as a seasonal destination for Greek visitors and more recently as an increasingly popular destination for international nature lovers. Gastronomy is an important experiential aspect of travel, yet little was done to promote local cuisine and local resources. This observation is at the origin of the creation of a mushroom themed restaurant.



Objective

In 2005, Kanela & Garyfallo was founded in the village of Vitsa, in the mountainous region of Zagori in NW Greece, as a thematic restaurant specializing in edible mushrooms. Considering that Greece is a country where mushrooms are considered largely unsafe and / or unsavory, this was a bold move. The objective difficulties in turning this bold move to a success story were acknowledged from the start and the proprietor set out as his objective to educate the public and rely on the positive personal experience of his clients to overcome prejudice and recognize the value of an important local resource.



Results

Since its inauguration in 2005 Kanela & Garyfallo's reputation has grown exponentially. The restaurant provides a full menu ranging from appetizers to main courses as well as desserts and home-made liquors based on mushrooms. Overall, the restaurant serves more than 30 species of collected wild mushrooms from the forests of the greater Zagori region including, truffles, boletus, chanterelles and morels as well as shiitake mushrooms grown at its own farm.



Recommendations

Educational field trips in nearby forests combined with tasting events at the restaurant as well as in-store presentations are regularly provided to clients eager to discover the ecological significance as well as the gastronomic value of mushrooms. Apart from staff employed at the restaurant, more than a dozen locals are employed to collect, clean and sort the necessary quantities of mushrooms. On April 20, 2016, we held in Kanela & Garyfallo the official dinner of the European working meeting "Mushrooms (including truffles) regulating policies", held in Ioannina under the COST FP1203 action. Similarly, on June 8, 2019, the same place hosted the event "Meet a mushroom chef. A discussion with Vassilis Katsoupas", part of the workshop: "Mushrooms and truffles: ways to improve the quality and state of the market" organized by the University of Ioannina and CESEFOR in the framework of INCREDible project.



Impacts and weaknesses

Since Kanela & Garyfallo started, more Zagori restaurants are including wild mushrooms in their menus and more amateurs are mushroom hunting in the local forests. As this is largely an unregulated environment and there exists little concerted effort to properly educate amateurs in mushroom identification there is an increased risk for poisonings which may occur anywhere but could have severe negative impacts on a restaurant known as "the" mushroom place. Moreover, the lack of a comprehensive regulatory framework remains a challenge for commercial collectors who run the risk of excessive administrative penalties and fines.



Future developments

The growth of local amateur mycophile associations and the proliferation of annual mushroom festivals in Zagori and throughout Greece in recent years will continue to foster greater awareness of the value of mushrooms. The development of a comprehensive regulatory environment including a more vigorous training regime for amateur and professional collectors will help make mushroom hunting a safer and more sustainable activity.



Kanela & Garyfallo mushroom restaurant in Vitsa, Zagori, N. Pindos National Park, Photo credits: Costas Zissis

Further information

<https://kanela-garyfallo.gr/en/>

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About INCREDIBLE Project

INCREDIBLE project aims to show how Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFP) can play an important role in supporting sustainable forest management and rural development, by creating networks to share and exchange knowledge and expertise. 'Innovation Networks of Cork, Resins and Edibles in the Mediterranean basin' (INCREDIBLE) promotes cross-sectoral collaboration and innovation to highlight the value and potential of NWFPs in the region.



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