

## ГОТЕЛЬНО-РЕСТОРАННА СПРАВА

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**Vishnikina Olena**

Ph.D., Associate Professor,  
University of Customs and Finance

**Nebaba Nataliia**

Doctor of Economics, Associate Professor,  
Oles Honchar Dnipro National University

**Baranets Yevheniia**

Higher Education Student,  
University of Customs and Finance

**Вишнікіна О.В., Баранець Є.**

Університет митної справи та фінансів

**Небаба Н.О.**

Дніпровський національний університет імені Олеся Гончара

### EXPERIENCE OF USING THE LOCAL MENU AS A MODERN TREND ON THE EXAMPLE OF LEADING DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN RESTAURANT ESTABLISHMENTS

### ДОСВІД ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ЛОКАЛЬНОГО МЕНЮ ЯК СУЧАСНОГО ТРЕНДУ НА ПРИКЛАДІ ПРОВІДНИХ ВІТЧИЗНЯНИХ ТА ЗАРУБІЖНИХ ЗАКЛАДІВ РЕСТОРАННОГО ГОСПОДАРСТВА

*The research examines aspects that study in detail the concept of a local menu, its advantages, challenges and opportunities for implementation, as well as practical examples and recommendations for restaurateurs. Concepts such as “local cuisine”, “local menu” and the possibility of its implementation in domestic restaurants are considered. Outstanding local dishes of different countries of the world and regions of Ukraine were studied. The concept of food “from the farm to the table” is considered and its characteristics are provided. It has been established that price is one of the key factors affecting competitiveness. It has been proven that developing a menu based on local and farm products is a real and promising strategy based on small conceptual establishments that will be able to more easily adapt to all the nuances of localization. Practical recommendations are provided that can help to correctly and effectively implement the “local menu” strategy, and the positive impact of the implementation of this strategy is given, which is reflected not only in the restaurant industry, but also reflects the importance of local products, promotes culinary diversity and supports the local community and develops the economy. The restaurant industry is constantly developing and changing, and modern trends affect its dynamics and direction. One of the most relevant and significant trends of recent years is the popularization of local menus in restaurants. Consumers are increasingly interested in the origin and quality of the products they consume. The local menu meets this need as it offers dishes made with local, fresh and quality ingredients. Restaurants that offer a local menu can have a competitive advantage because they meet consumer demand and differentiate themselves in the market. This can lead to an increase in the popularity of the establishment, an increase in the number of customers and an increase in profits. The obtained results of this study can have important practical significance for restaurateurs and restaurant industry specialists to improve business strategies, develop new menus and attract more customers, meet modern consumer needs for quality and authentic food products.*

**Key words:** local menu, locavore, local producer, organic products, restaurant business.

*У дослідженні розглядаються аспекти, які детально вивчають концепцію локального меню, його переваги, виклики та можливості впровадження, а також практичні приклади та рекомендації для рестораторів. Розглянуто такі поняття, як «локальна кухня», «локальне меню» та можливості його впровадження у вітчизняних ресторанах. Досліджено видатні місцеві страви різних країн світу та регіонів України. Розглянуто концепцію їжі «від ферми до столу» та надано її характеристику. Встановлено, що ціна є одним з ключових факторів, що впливають на конкурентоспроможність. Доведено, що розробка меню на основі локальних і фермерських продуктів – це реальна і перспективна стратегія, розрахована на невеликі концептуальні заклади, які зможуть легше адаптуватися до всіх нюансів локалізації. Надано практичні рекомендації, які можуть допомогти правильно та ефективно впровадити стратегію*

*«локального меню», а також наведено позитивний вплив впровадження цієї стратегії, що відображається не тільки на ресторанній індустрії, але й відображає важливість місцевих продуктів, сприяє кулінарному розмаїттю та підтримує місцеву громаду і розвиває економіку. Ресторанна індустрія постійно розвивається та змінюється, а сучасні тренди впливають на її динаміку та напрямки. Однією з найбільш актуальних і значущих тенденцій останніх років є популяризація локальних меню в ресторанах. Споживачі все більше цікавляться походженням та якістю продуктів, які вони споживають. Локальне меню задовольняє цю потребу, оскільки пропонує страви, приготовані з місцевих, свіжих та якісних інгредієнтів. Ресторани, які пропонують локальне меню, можуть мати конкурентну перевагу, оскільки вони задовольняють споживчий попит і диференціюють себе на ринку. Це може призвести до зростання популярності закладу, збільшення кількості клієнтів та збільшення прибутку. Отримані результати дослідження можуть мати важливе практичне значення для рестораторів та фахівців ресторанного господарства для вдосконалення бізнес-стратегій, розробки нових меню та залучення більшої кількості клієнтів, задоволення сучасних потреб споживачів у якісних та автентичних продуктах харчування.*

**Ключові слова:** локальне меню, локалорство, місцевий виробник, органічні продукти, ресторанне господарство.

**Introduction.** The concept of a local menu focuses on utilizing local produce and creating dishes that reflect regional culinary traditions and culture. It caters to consumers' need for more sustainable and authentic food products while also supporting local producers and the regional economy.

For contemporary restaurateurs, there is an urgent need to acquaint themselves with global trends in the restaurant business, notably with the trend of the “local menu,” which has recently emerged within domestic restaurant enterprises, posing certain challenges in its effective implementation.

**Literature review.** The article utilized literature encompassing research from academic sources, scientific articles, and other publications reflecting the current state and trends within the restaurant industry, specifically focusing on the role of the local menu. Works by both domestic and foreign scholars in the restaurant field were reviewed and analyzed, including those by T. Voronyuk, Y. Klopotenko, I. Kulish [1], Y. Parfinenko, A. Poplavskaya, D. Steshenko [3], V. Tkach, J. Dunnea [5], Chambers K.J., H. Han [6], among others.

**Identification of previously unresolved parts of the overall problem.** One of the primary challenges in implementing a local menu is ensuring the supply of fresh and high-quality local products for restaurants. Some restaurants may encounter difficulties in finding local suppliers or face a limited range of raw materials produced within the territorial community. Depending on the geographical region, restaurants may encounter insufficient choices of local products. This limitation can restrict opportunities for creating a diverse and creative local menu.

**Formulation of article objectives.** The main goal of the article is to investigate and elucidate the role and significance of, as well as propose the development and implementation of, a local menu as a modern trend in restaurant management. Accordingly, the following objectives were set:

1) Examination of current trends in restaurant management: analysis of the popularity of a local menu and its influence on consumer choices.

2) Analysis of the economic efficiency of implementing a local menu in restaurant business: studying the costs and revenues associated with menu changes.

3) Investigation of the impact of a local menu on the sustainable development of restaurant management: analysis of its influence on environmental sustainability, support for local suppliers, and the community.

**Results.** Any field of activity tends to specialize. In the restaurant business, this tendency is known as “localization,” as dishes often vary depending on the region of origin. The closer a restaurant dish matches the characteristics of the region where it is prepared, the more trust and interest it can generate. This is a modern trend that is increasingly ingrained among enthusiasts and connoisseurs of gastronomic culture.

In the 1980s, the idea emerged in the USA to grow food products and sell them near the place of production. Several factors contributed to this idea. Firstly, people became weary of fast food and unhealthy eating. Simultaneously, there was a growing emphasis on green technologies and the preservation of humanity's future in society. It turned out that small farms had the potential to meet these new needs.

Selling environmentally friendly produce at local markets, located within a radius of several hundred kilometers from the production site, allowed for reduced transportation costs. This contributed to environmental conservation, as there were fewer energy resource expenses and lower levels of exhaust emissions.

If explaining what “local cuisine” entails, one can provide examples of local dishes from countries and regions (see Table 1).

“Local” refers to the products grown in the fields and orchards of a specific region, including all vegetables and fruits, as well as river fish found in nearby water bodies, and meat from farmers within that particular area.

Local producers tend to harvest their crops at an optimal ripeness and promptly supply them for sale. Production also occurs on a small scale, ensuring a consistent availability of fresh produce [3].

However, when people opt for farm-fresh, artisanal, or local products, it's essential to understand that these

Outstanding Local Dishes of Countries and Regions

Country or Region	Local Dish
North America	Burger – consists of a patty (typically made of meat but can also include fish, chicken, vegetables, or plant-based meat substitutes) placed in a bun. The patty is often accompanied by ingredients such as cheese, tomatoes, lettuce, onions, and sauces.
Indonesia	Fried Rice – a dish prepared by cooking pre-boiled rice in a heated skillet or wok with added oil and various ingredients.
Morocco	Couscous – prepared from a special type of wheat flour mixed with water and salt, processed to form small balls or granules
France	Bouillabaisse – a soup made from a fish broth with added fish, seafood, and aromatic herbs.
Israel	Shakshuka – made with eggs baked in a sauce of tomatoes, peppers, onions, and spices.
Italy	Risotto – prepared with arborio or carnaroli rice, which have a high starch content capable of absorbing liquid. The key feature of risotto is its texture – rice is cooked in broth or other liquid until it reaches a creamy consistency.
Ukraine	Borscht – a soup made with basic ingredients such as fresh or pickled beets, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, onions, and other vegetables often combined with meats like pork, beef, or chicken.
Spain	Paella – rice (usually short-grain) cooked together with vegetables, meats or seafood, spices, and broth.

Source: compiled by the author based on data from [5; 6]

terms don't inherently guarantee the safety of the product. In reality, the safety of food products depends not only on whether they are labeled as farm-fresh, artisanal, or local but also on the responsible approach to the production process, the place of distribution, and the presence of appropriate documentation. New food legislation establishes basic requirements for food safety. The primary demand is the responsibility of each local producer for the safety of their food products and their obligation to take all necessary measures to ensure the product's safety and prevent potential risks to consumers.

Most countries that serve as examples of professionalism, concepts, style, and techniques in the gastro industry value their history, explore and use local products, while also creating new, modern cuisine. According to experts' observations, people are increasingly inclined to alter their diet by incorporating new products that are not typical for their regions. However, these new products might lose their appeal quickly, and consumers eventually revert to their familiar foods, dishes, and flavor combinations that are ingrained in their genetic preferences.

Ukrainian producers stand as experimenters and innovators adeptly merging ancient traditions with the creation of modern and healthy products. The wealth of technologies and recipes possessed by Ukrainians forms the basis for the development of local production, while global standards for certification and quality control pave the way for Ukrainian producers in both domestic and international markets. Currently, the primary goal of local cuisine is to craft a distinct culinary identity that will signify the Ukrainian nation and Ukraine in the world of gastronomy.

Local food fosters community creation and strengthens bonds among people. Farmers, artisans, and crafts-

men belong to a small, closely-knit circle of individuals who know each other. They are open to interactions and willing to spend hours discussing their recipes, farming practices, and the pedigreed animals they raise. One of the rapid trends in the gastronomic sphere is personal contact among people. Purchasing food products is no longer merely a financial transaction but a communicative process: the consumer gets the chance to identify who precisely produced the goods they purchased.

Focusing on local cuisine in establishments is also a significant step in supporting the local economy. Money spent on local products stays within the community and is likely to be reinvested in the needs of local residents. Furthermore, many imported goods have domestic alternatives. Purchasing products made in the region or province contributes to the development of the entire country, as consumers support local production.

The locavore movement, which involves consuming products grown at the nearest possible distance to the consumer, is gaining popularity in many European countries, the USA, and Canada, aligning with the global trend of ecological conservation. The term "locavore" was introduced by Jessica Prentice in San Francisco in 2005. By 2007, it was named the "word of the year" by the Oxford University Press in the USA [5].

In European and American countries, restaurants have been successfully using food products from local producers for over 25 years. Local food production, or "local food," is one model of production and consumption that is developing within agricultural sectors as an eco-trend, running parallel to organic production and eco-farms [4].

Contemporary trends toward consuming healthy food and sustainable development provide a promising foundation for implementing local menus in restaurant establishments. Ukraine, with its rich agricultural poten-

tial, has all the opportunities to successfully introduce the local food trend into public dining establishments to its fullest extent.

When it comes to determining the distance within which products can be transported from their place of manufacture to be considered local, each country has its own criteria. For instance, the European Union does not specifically rely on a set distance but rather emphasizes adherence to a particular geographical region. In the United States, the radius defining “local produce” is 500 kilometers, and this produce must also be manufactured and harvested without the use of heavy machinery, with packaging, if present, being recyclable.

In Ukraine, there has been a growing preference for organic products that do not pose health risks. According to the new presidential program “On the Strategy of Sustainable Development,” Ukraine is also committed to improving the standard of living for its citizens, thereby making health and safety issues significantly important. However, the actual plans outlined in the head of state’s program do not entirely align with the goals of sustainable development; they require revision while consulting experts [7].

Despite the absence of a legislative definition of “local food products” in Ukraine, regions such as the West, East, Transcarpathia, Bessarabia, and Bukovina are witnessing increasing popularity each year for festivals celebrating local cuisine. Additionally, the implementation of local menus in restaurant establishments is occurring nationwide. In Ukraine, locally produced items are considered those that are environmentally friendly and grown or manufactured within our country’s territory. Each region of Ukraine boasts its own local dishes

(see Table 2), prepared from ingredients characteristic of specific localities.

However, it’s worth noting that not all Ukrainian eco-farms can be considered producers of local food. To determine the criterion of locality, Ukraine can follow the American example and introduce a specific distance. For instance, a distance of up to 150 km from the farm to the end consumer could be acceptable [1].

Globally, including Ukraine, there is a trend towards increased demand for healthy, organic, and environmentally friendly food and produce. Consumers are becoming more conscious about the origin of the products they use and consume.

In large cities in Ukraine, food fairs are often held. For urban dwellers, it’s an excellent opportunity to buy quality seasonal food products at affordable prices. However, eventually (which is already happening), farmers’ markets might disappear, as even pensioners have learned to buy products online. In the United States, the Farmigo website has become a popular electronic resource for purchasing local products. In Ukraine, the internet startup “Local Food” has been operating for two years. Through the website, one can monthly buy a surprise box containing a selection of healthy and tasty Ukrainian products [7].

There are successful initiatives at the restaurant level, exemplified by “Klukva & Brukva” in Kyiv and Dmitry Borisov’s restaurant chain “Family of Restaurants,” present not only in Ukraine but also in Spain. They exclusively use local products for preparing food and beverages. Cooking dishes from local products has become a fashionable phenomenon, providing farmers with the opportunity to supply their produce directly to restaurants.

Table 2

**Local Dishes of Ukrainian Regions**

Ukrainian Region	Local Dishes
Odessa Region	Tyulka patties, fish-fish, and forshmak
Donetsk Region	Donbas-style pork ribs, Donbas-style cutlet, okroshka
Kyiv Region	Chicken Kyiv (Kyiv-style cutlet)
Lviv Region	Halych syrnyk (Lviv cheesecake) and strudels
Transcarpathian Region	Zavyvantsi and bograch
Bukovina Region	Chynakhy and mamaliga
Dnipropetrovsk Region	Signature fish soup
Khmelnysky Region	Meat rolls, sausages, pies with peas in garlic dressing
Carpathian Region	Banosh and mushroom soup
Chernihiv Region	Baked meat in pots and pies with viburnum
Kherson Region	Eggplants Kherson-style and eggplant caviar
Kharkiv Region	Sloboda-style borscht and buckwheat cakes
Volyn Region	Mazuryky (Volyn pancakes)
Poltava Region	Poltava dumplings and pundiky
Rivne Region	Kartoplanyky and matsyk (potato pies)
Zhytomyr Region	Deruny (potato pancakes)
Galicia	Yavoriv pie

Source: compiled by the author based on [3]

Chef Evgen Klopotenko and his establishment “100 Years Ago in the Future” in Kyiv have made a significant contribution to Ukraine’s culinary culture by reinterpreting ancient Ukrainian culinary traditions. In his recipes, Evgen strives to use local products specific to a certain region.

A more detailed implementation of the local menu in restaurant establishments is considered using the example of the “Toloka” restaurant. The establishment is located in Vyshneve, near the serene central city park.

When developing the restaurant’s menu, preference was given to dishes made from local products, hence the restaurant’s cuisine is locally sourced. To categorize the type of cuisine prepared at “Toloka,” the founders coined the term “Pan-Ukrainian cuisine,” analogous to Pan-Asian cuisine. It encompasses several different culinary directions, including Galician, Sloboda, Odessa, Jewish, Bessarabian, and others [8].

The founders’ objective was to use local produce within a radius of 100-150 kilometers in their dishes. In the menu, dishes made entirely from local products are marked accordingly.

In the Kyiv region, there is a significant number of new producers, providing the opportunity to choose suppliers among local entrepreneurs and farms. It’s interesting that the main menu at the establishment changes with each season, while the business lunch menu changes weekly. Additionally, the restaurant often hosts gastronomic evenings where new menu items are tested. Only those dishes that receive the most positive feedback and preferences eventually make it to the menu. The restaurant’s guests consist of local residents, inhabitants from the western suburbs of Kyiv, as well as Kyivans seeking local culinary delights. The establishment gathers friends, families, acquaintances, and business partners. The primary goal is for guests to experience aesthetic and flavorful enjoyment while within the premises.

In today’s competitive restaurant business, the increase in competition means that customers have more dining options than ever before, ranging from fast food to upscale restaurants. Consequently, customer expectations regarding restaurant offerings are constantly rising, and they are now more discerning in choosing the best restaurant based on what they can get from their decision. Considering the growing trend of eating out, understanding the criteria that customers use when selecting a restaurant is strategic for understanding food consumption trends [6]. Therefore, it’s particularly important for restaurateurs to be aware of consumer behavior in the restaurant industry so that they can adequately meet the needs and desires of their clients.

Today, the farm-to-table dining concept (local menu) continues to gain momentum, and the younger generation is significantly more aware of the importance of un-

derstanding where their food comes from compared to previous generations. According to the National Restaurant Association, 38% of surveyed individuals state that the presence of local dishes would more likely compel them to choose one restaurant over another; similarly, 20% responded the same regarding local beer, wine, and alcoholic beverages

According to a ThoughtWorks survey conducted at the end of 2021, 39% of consumers reported considering supporting local farmers by purchasing food products, marking a substantial leap compared to 27% in 2018. The origin of food products has also become more crucial: 40% of respondents stated that knowing where their food comes from is important to them [2]. Considering the significant consumer demand and increased urgency driven by the pandemic, now exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine, the origin will continue to remain a key trend in the future.

Price is one of the key factors influencing competitiveness. A restaurant should offer reasonable prices for its dishes, considering quality and service. Competing in the market may require setting competitive prices, discounts, or special offers.

Summarizing and analyzing the real experience of restaurant establishments that have chosen to localize their menus, it is worth noting that building an assortment solely based on local production is quite challenging. If a restaurant is large and caters to a very high volume of guests, it is unlikely to afford predominantly using local produce – this requires an individual approach and additional costs for logistics development. Moreover, it demands constant adjustment of menu items according to the seasonality of products and poses difficulties in shaping pricing policies.

**Conclusions.** The modern restaurant industry has experienced significant changes in recent years, and one of the main trends is an increased interest in local menus. A local menu reflects the culinary culture and traditions of a specific region or country.

Restaurants are increasingly focused on using local produce in their dishes. This involves the utilization of seasonal vegetables and fruits, locally sourced meats and fish, as well as dairy products and cheeses produced within the same region. This allows restaurants not only to emphasize the unique flavors of local ingredients but also to support local farmers and producers. The local menu provides restaurants with the opportunity to introduce guests to new tastes and dishes they may not have been familiar with before. These might be dishes that are traditional to a certain region or local cultures but are not as widely known to a broader audience. Restaurants leverage this opportunity to impress guests and provide them with a unique culinary experience.

Restaurants are increasingly partnering with local food producers. This collaboration may involve work-

ing with farms, fishing fleets, small-scale cheese makers, and wineries. Such partnerships aid restaurants in ensuring the availability of high-quality and fresh produce, supporting the local economy, and engaging guests in understanding the origins of their food. The implementation of a local menu contributes to the sustainable development of the restaurant industry. By reducing transportation costs associated with importing products from other regions or countries, it helps decrease carbon

emissions and environmental impact on both the local region and the planet as a whole. Additionally, collaborating with local producers supports sustainable agriculture, promotes responsible resource utilization, and reduces waste.

Therefore, the local menu is becoming increasingly popular in the modern restaurant industry and calls for active implementation in domestic restaurant establishments.

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