

THE VALUE OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF BIODIVERSITY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Traditional knowledge in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) plays a crucial role in preserving biodiversity, cultural heritage, and sustainable use of resources. This knowledge, passed down through generations, connects deeply with BiH's natural environment and local communities.

MEDICINAL VALUE

Medicinal Plants: Around 256 plant species are used in traditional medicine for various treatments.

Mushrooms: Have both nutritional and medicinal values, i.e., boletus, milkweed and morels.

Herbal Remedies: Traditional herbal treatments used for various ailments and are transmitted through folk medicine.



- Many communities in BiH still use traditional medicinal practices in addition to modern medicine. Herbalists, known for their expertise, are highly valued.
- Women regularly use traditional medicine, while men primarily use this method of treatment only when sick.
- The use of medicinal floral is declining despite its wide availability.

FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Wild Edibles: Ancient BiH diets valued wild plants like spinach, sorrel, and primula for their nutritional benefits. Although less common now, wild fruits such as hazelnut, sweet chestnut, and dogwood continue to feature in traditional recipes, preserving BiH's culinary heritage.

Nutritional Benefits: 103 mushroom varieties used in various forms, including dried, pickled, or as extracts.

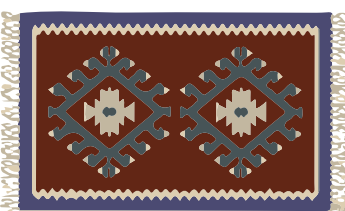


Ingredients for Beverages and Salads: 24 spice species and 16 wild fruit species are used in the Central region.

Traditional Beverages: 67 wild fruit species in the Eastern region used for preserves, teas, syrups, and traditional brandy, preserving unique flavours and nutrients.

Indigenous Vegetables: 49 wild vegetable species used in the Central region and 63 in the Eastern region.

CULTURAL HERITAGE



Traditional practices such as craft-making and animal husbandry are part of the BiH cultural identity.



Culinary Practices

The practices of drying fruits, i.e., plums and preparing traditional dishes such as cicvara, puree, livno cheese, sauerkraut, and drinks such as dogwood pickle, liqueurs have been preserved.

Women are the guardians of traditional recipes through their regular application.

Crafts and Materials

Historically, many crafts relied on plant-derived materials. Plants like oak and chestnut provided tannins for leatherwork, and local woods were carved into musical instruments and household items.

Ritual and Symbolic Uses

Plants were also embedded in spiritual and social rituals, i.e., the immortelle symbolized life transitions like marriage readiness.

Intangible Heritage

Encompasses rituals, beliefs, and values linked to the environment, passed through generations.

Heritage Preservation Efforts

In BiH, intangible cultural heritage is safeguarded for its essential skills, values, and historical practices vital to local identity.

Women play a key role in preserving traditional practices, especially in sustainable natural resource use and traditional diets.

BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

Species Diversity
BiH is home to an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 fungi species and 5,000 vascular plants, many of which have cultural and ecological importance.



Ecological Role
Biodiversity in BiH is closely linked to traditional practices, including the use of edible and medicinal plants.



Sustainable Practices
Traditional knowledge supports biodiversity through practices like sustainable harvesting, crop rotation and limited hunting, signifying ecological interdependence.



Biodiversity-Culture Nexus
Conservation efforts in BiH highlight the role of biodiversity in cultural practices and ecological sustainability. Preserving biodiversity also safeguards traditional knowledge essential for sustainable resource management.