

***ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING EXCHANGE INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE HOSPITALITY  
SMEs IN THE BALKAN-MEDITERRANEAN REGION***

Subsidy Contract No. BMP1/1.3/2616/2017

**Company name: Pod Lipite restaurant (Under the Linden Trees)**



Source: <http://www.podlipitebg.com/en/gallery>

**Country/region of operation:** Sofia, Bulgaria

**Sustainability dimension:** social, cultural, environmental

**Description of the enterprise/initiative:** Located under the linden trees in the Lozenets neighborhood, on the quiet and green Elin Pelin street, in close proximity to the Borisova Gradina park and only 7-8 minutes by car from the Sofia city center this traditional Bulgarian restaurant is a real living legend with a 90-year-old history. It is one of the oldest restaurants in Sofia well preserves its history, following up its tradition to offer traditional Bulgarian dishes prepared with Bulgarian products, most of which are own production.

Initially the restaurant was known as Select tavern. It opened its doors in 1926 and quickly became appreciated by Sofia intellectuals and bohemians alike. Its regular clientele consisted of notable people such as Angel Karaliychev, Sirak Skitnik, professor Aleksandar Balabanov, and the actress Elena Snejina. Elin Pelin, who was also a regular visitor of the establishment, gave its poetic name Pod Lipite, a name that is used with pride to this day. In the early 30s, Dora Gabe moved into the rental quarters above the restaurant and the impromptu literature readings quickly relocated from her home into the restaurant. This pub was a part of the daily grind of those who occupy their deserved indisputable place in Bulgarian classics nowadays.

Today the restaurant caters not only to Bulgarian intellectuals, politicians, and stars but also to world famous people such as Eric Roberts, Tom Berenger, Robert Knepper, and Paulo Coelho. Among the guests there have been kings, presidents, and ambassadors.

The restaurant offers traditional Bulgarian dishes and appetizers: from cured meats and sausages such as lukanka, sujuk, and pastarma to the eggplant spread kyopolou made with roasted fresh vegetables, homemade yogurt and lutenica (Bulgarian vegetable relish), and last but not least the oven-baked loafs and banitsa (Bulgarian filo dough with feta cheese and eggs).

Almost all the products used in the restaurant's kitchen are produced in own farm located in an ecologically clean region. The farm is located in the village of Osoitsa, on the southern slopes of Stara Planina. On an area of 1067 acres of farmland the cereals, used to prepare desserts, delicious bread, main courses, and starters are grown. The farm also has two livestock facilities, registered with the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency. Agronomists, veterinarians, breeders, and machine operators take care of the land and the animals. Their skills and knowledge are complemented by modern equipment, thus allowing them to perform their duties with ease. The produce and dairy products from the farm are certified organic.

**Social/ community impact sought:** Preserving the history, the tradition, exhibiting the culture and the culinary habits of Bulgarians and though self-production of ingredients/products guaranteeing the quality, health benefits and taste of dishes, as at the same time ensuring environmental protection.

**Stakeholders:** intellectuals, politicians, stars, ordinary people, kings, presidents, and ambassadors

**Approach applied:** cultural-culinary heritage preservation, self-production;

**Innovation applied:** Own, certified organic farm producing the ingredients and the products for the restaurant.

**Social impact and business results achieved:** At Pod Lipite restaurant, the guests appreciate the rich variety of the Bulgarian cuisine. The secret is not only in the cooks – masters, who knead homemade filo dough for banitsa and prepare fancy dishes with great passion but also in the products with which they cook – organic products from the Pod Lipite's farm. The restaurant has cultural and culinary heritage significance as a memory from the past.

**Financial situation / sustainability of the business model:**

The sustainability of the business model is guaranteed by the rich exhibition of traditional dishes, prepared with home-made, organic products from the farm of Pod Lipite restaurant.

Wheat, barley, millet, corn, triticale, sorghum, flax, oats, peas, spelt - these are just some of the crops that are grown. The entire plant production of the farm is organic and has a certificate attesting to its purity and quality. At the farm certified organic milk is produced from which homemade yogurt, feta cheese and kashkaval (Bulgarian yellow cheese) is made. All the meat including the ground meat and the cured meats, served at the restaurant is also being produced in the farm.

Moreover, the cultural heritage is being preserved, as the restaurant is like a museum of the Bulgarian life back in the days – clothes, furniture, dinnerware, overall appearance of the place gives a feeling for being and dining in the past, being able to experience the customs of eating.

**Key success factors:** cultural heritage preservation in combination with environment protection measures /organic agriculture/

**Challenges and problems:** A challenge is seen in preserving the restaurant's uniqueness over the past 90 years.

**Year when the enterprise was created:** 1926

**References (web-site, intent links, video, etc.):** <http://www.podlipitebg.com/en>