

Producers of fresh fruit and vegetables, herbs, honey and dairy products will present their products at the two-day festival “Eco-basket, please!” in Elhovo

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Honey from Christ's thorn and coriander, Strandzha Grandpa, cheeses and yellow cheeses from real milk, organically grown fruit and vegetables, organic rosehips and other herbs will be offered by the farmers participating in the two-day festival "Eco-basket, please!" on 6 and 7 September in the town of Elhovo. Children's culinary workshops, master classes in making Bulgarian folk embroidery, knitted yarn flowers and greeting cards will entertain even the youngest guests of the festival.

The opening of the festival is at 11:00 a.m. on 6 September, and immediately afterwards the participants will be

presented – the beekeepers Georgi Georgiev, Stoyan Moldovanov and the bee farm „Trake“, the dairies „Sitos“, „Arachievi“ and the dairy in the village of Pchela, the meat and meat product producers „Elhovo Mes“ and the pig complex in the village of Granitovo, the producer of organically grown rosehips Yani Ispirov, the farms for fresh fruit and vegetables from the municipalities of Elhovo and Tundzha „NorDig“, Petrov family, Minka Todorova, Gabriela Gecheva. Some of the producers are hereditary farmers, but there are also young families who, after many years of seasonal work abroad, have decided to devote themselves to farming and the production of pure, natural foods.

At 11:30 a.m. on 6 September the concert of the folk singer Liliya Semkova will begin. The angel-voiced singer, who also took part in the television format „The Farm“, will perform some of her most beautiful songs. She has been living in Bulgaria for nearly 10 years, but was born in the village of Chiishiy – the most Bulgarian village in Bessarabia, where people speak the Bulgarian language and observe all Bulgarian traditions and customs.



At noon the culinary demonstrations will begin, led by Uti Bachvarov. Chef Petar Petrov from the village of Galabintsi will cook traditional village kavarma with fresh pork, and chef Georgi Sabev from the village of Khanovo will prepare blini with local cheeses and amuse-bouche – a more modern interpretation of local products.

In the early afternoon there will be a quiz with questions about traditional local production and foods.

On 7 September the programme starts at 10:00 a.m., and the vocal group „Elhovo Nightingales“ will give a

concert. At 11:00 a.m. the culinary workshops for children will start, in which master chefs will teach the youngest how to prepare foods with products such as cheese, yellow cheese, fruit, vegetables, sausages.

The master embroiderer Stanka Nikolova will teach the children to sew embroideries traditional for the Elhovo region – hand embroidery with domestic Bulgarian motifs. Radost Kukova is the craftswoman who will show the children how to make hand-knitted flowers from colourful yarns. Ivanka Koicheva is a master of modern greeting cards and will demonstrate her craftsmanship during the festival. She decorates them with hand-cut paper elements, ribbons, pearls and crystal stones.

Exactly at 12:00 p.m. a raffle will be held among the participants who have purchased products, and the prizes will include baskets with traditional local and organic products. The programme will end with a concert by the children's and youth dance ensemble „Yanitsa“ from the town of Elhovo.

The event is part of the project „Eco-basket, please!“, in which the LAG – Elhovo – Bolyarovo is a partner. In parallel with the event, the twelfth edition of the festival of the traditional Thracian banitsa „Banitsa vita, dva pati previta“ (Coiled banitsa, folded twice) will also be held. This year again, dozens of types of banitsa prepared according to authentic recipes will be presented, and the programme will be rich in folklore performances. The traditional competition for the most delicious banitsa will be judged by Uti Bachvarov.

The project „Eco-basket, please!“ is for joint actions for transnational cooperation and is implemented in partnership by three Bulgarian and five Slovenian Local Action Groups. Bulgarian partners are LAG Tundzha (lead organisation), LAG Elhovo-Bolyarovo and LAG Balchik-General Toshevo. Slovenian partners are LAG Upper Savinja and Saleška Valley, LAG From Pohorje to Bohor, LAG Obsotelje and Kozjansko, LAG Diversity of the Foothills, LAG Lower Savinja Valley. The project is aimed at engaging producers, processors and other stakeholders with the objectives of the EU strategy „From Farm to Fork“, which supports the development of a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food chain.

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