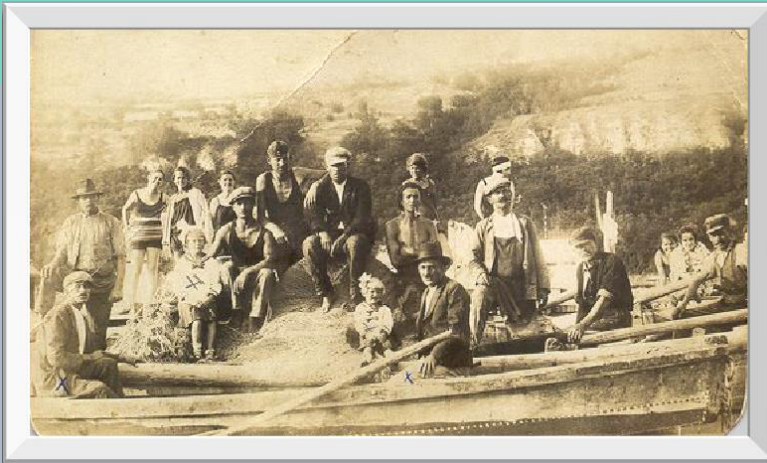
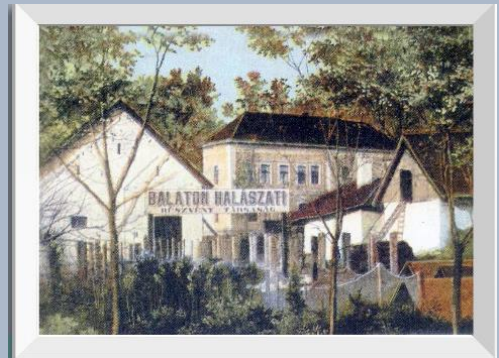


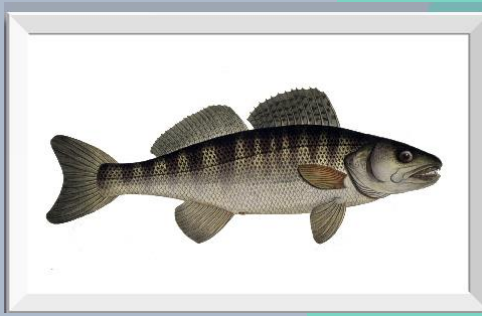
FISHING

In the 1800s, Lake Balaton covered an area of 108,000 cadastral acres, which is about one and a half times its current size. The construction of the Southern Railway in the 1860s brought about a change, and the Siófok Canal's Siófok flood gate was also built.



During this period, fishing in the "Hungarian Sea" was in a state of anarchy, so to speak. The tenants competed with the poachers, even violating each other's rights. The small-scale lease system depleted the fish stock of Lake Balaton in twenty years, so the owners of the rights formed interest groups. The Balaton Fishing Cooperative was founded in Keszthely on June 26, 1885. At that time, Lake Balaton had 32 owners and 47 settlements were affected. In accordance with the 1890 fishing law, the first fishing association in the country was formed on Lake Balaton in 1899. A few years after the association was founded, fishing on Lake Balaton was unified.

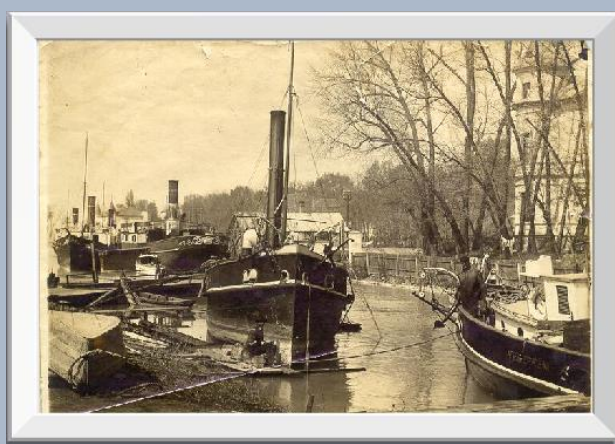




As a result, on January 1, 1900, the Balaton Fishing Association leased the fishing rights of Lake Balaton to the Balaton Fishing Company, which mostly leased the fishing rights from the landowners of Veszprém County.

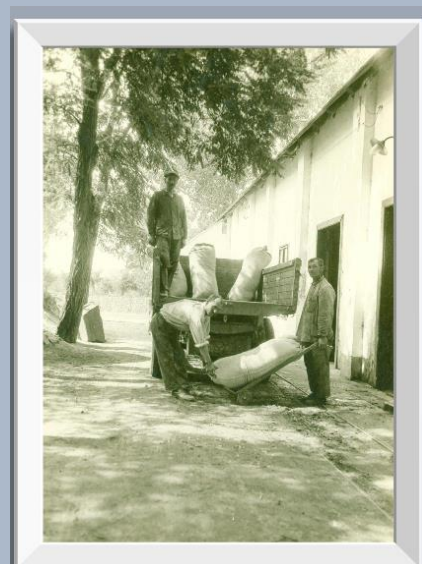
According to the contract, the company was obliged to artificially propagate and breed pikeperch and carp.

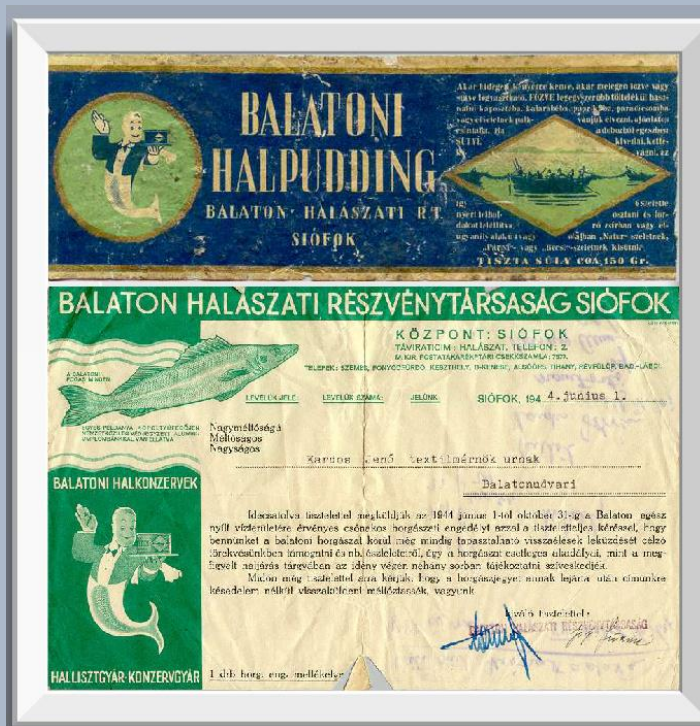
From the 1900s, the fishing fleet of the Company consisted of two steam tugs, "Zala" and "Veszprém", and 42 towed fishing boats, with which 10 fishing teams from Fonyód and 12 fishing "gangs" from Siófok went fishing. Fishing usually took place from 5 pm to 4-5 am the next day. The fishing teams consisted of 9 fishermen each, two boats and a 600 meter long net.



Fishmeal production started first in Siófok at the end of the 1920s, then in Fonyód in 1929. The reason for this was the fish glut during the spring and autumn-winter catches, when up to 300-500,000 kg of fish had to be transported to Budapest every day, which the company was unable to handle. However, this activity was not significant, even including exports to England.

The Balaton Fishing Association extended the lease for another 25 years from January 1, 1925. By 1929, there were already six 1200 m and six 60 m seines, six motor and two steam-powered vessels operating in nine fishing villages where 40-50 permanent and 200 non-permanent fishermen worked.

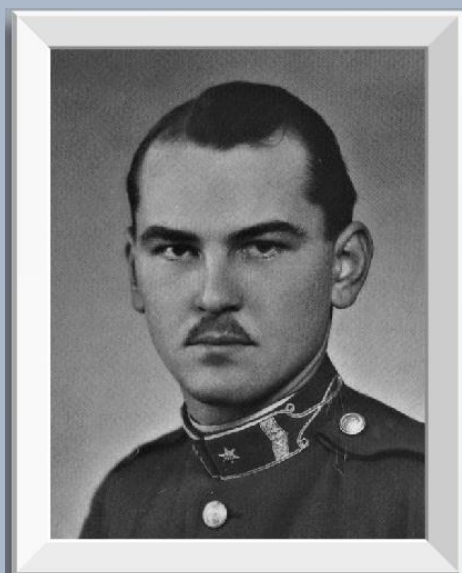
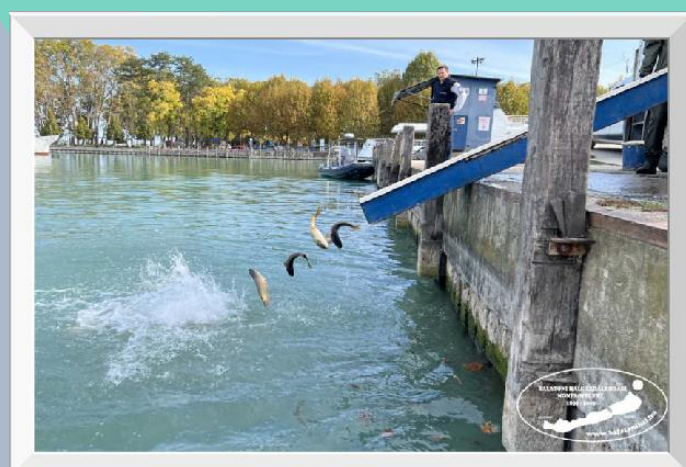




In 1930, the company sold fish in ten places, in the 1940s it was twenty already. Due to the dejecture, it was forced to take action in the 1940s. In 1939, it put into operation the first fish cannery in Siófok, where "fish pâté" and "fish pudding" were produced. The plant operated profitably, thanks to the fact that the bulk of its production was supplied to the army. The factory closed in 1945.

With the end of the large estate system, 70% of the fishing and riverbed rights came into state ownership, while 30% remained in the hands of the common owners. Between 1945 and 1949, fishing operated in the form of a cooperative, as the *Balaton Halászati Termelőszövetkezet* (Balaton Fishing Production Cooperative). From the end of the war, the fishing of Lake Balaton had several owners (the Balaton Plant of the Fish and Reed Farming Enterprise, the Fish Farming Trust, the *Balaton Halászati Nemzeti Vállalat* (Balaton Fishing National Enterprise)). On April 1, 1949, the cooperative became 100% state-owned, as the *Balaton Halászati Vállalat* (Balaton Fishing Enterprise).

Lake Balaton fishing has undergone major changes since the 1950s. Professor Elek Woynárovich developed the artificial reproduction of pike and carp, as well as the technique of semi-artificial propagation of pikeperch.





The centralizations of the 1950s and 1960s also had a serious impact on fishing.

In 1965, and then ten years later in 1975, there was a serious fish kill in Lake Balaton. The devastation affected most severely the pikeperch, the king of the fish of Lake Balaton.

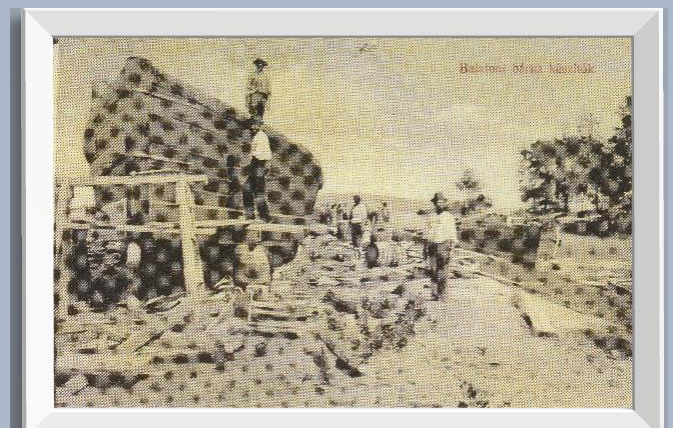
Another profitable activity of fishing is sport fishing. Sport fishing is a leisure activity that affects broad social strata.



Balatoni Halászati Zrt. (Lake Balaton Fisheries Ltd.) was transformed from a state-owned enterprise into a closed joint-stock company on January 1, 1993. Balatoni Halgazdálkodási Nonprofit Zrt. (Lake Balaton Fisheries Non-profit Ltd.) was founded on August 25, 2009 as the legal successor to one of Hungary's oldest agricultural companies, Lake Balaton Fisheries. Balaton Fish Farming Nonprofit Ltd is 100% owned by the Hungarian state. The main task of the company is to implement the ecological-minded fish farming of Lake Balaton. The primary goal is to transform fish farming in such a way that it ensures optimal catches of valuable fish species for fishing - even with the improving water quality - does not threaten the disappearance of the diversity of the fish stock, and also ensures the protection of natural values and the conditions for quality tourism.

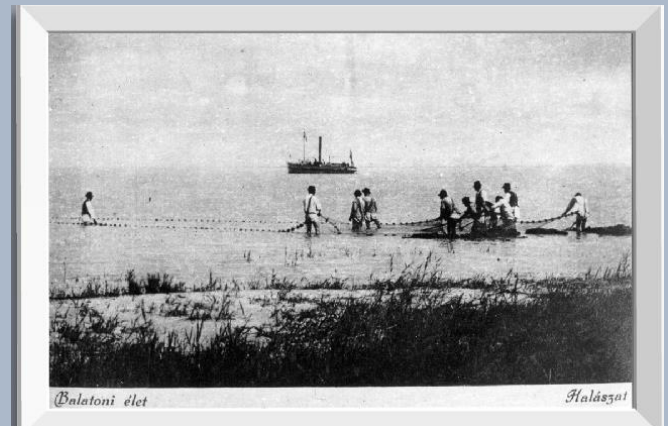
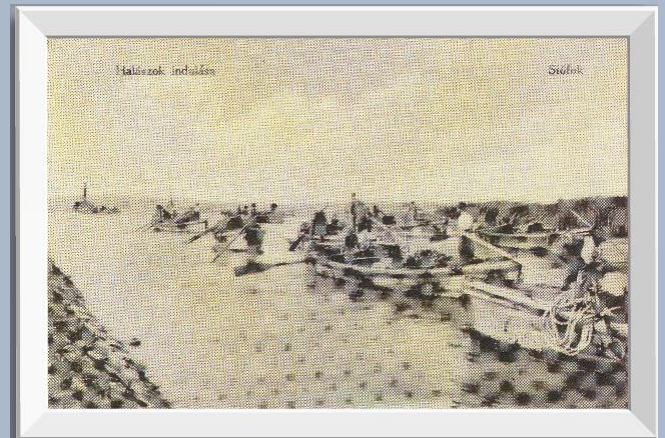
FISHERMEN OF LAKE BALATON

In the first half of the last century, many villages also lived off fishing, or rather there were many villagers who had an important income and daily bread from this water activity. The Balaton fishermen were famous among the fishermen as well as the fishing villages.

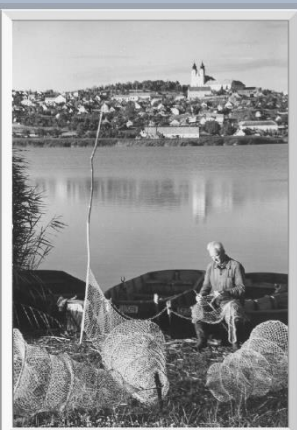


It is quite certain that our ancestors also fished before the conquest of the homeland, since there were supposedly fishing and hunting peoples around the Urals, who did not deal with animal husbandry and agriculture. This is also proven by our ancient words related to fishing and fish names. After the conquest of the homeland, which involved settlement, the country was divided up among themselves within a few decades. The tribe or clan that came to a place near the water could fish at will until feudalism, when even this required the permission of the landowner.

Fishing, as a profession, already appears in one of Saint Stephen's charters, in 1024 the king donated serfs to the Benedictines of Zalavár. In 1055, King Andrew I did the same in the founding charter of Tihany. It is also certain that the "fishing bushes" already existed in the Árpád period, those societies with internal rules that fished on the lake with a division of labor. Balaton seine fishing requires the coordinated activity of more than ten people, and only then is it successful. The net can be several hundred meters long and its width varies depending on the depth of the bed. The point is that the weights pull it down to the bottom so that the fish cannot crawl underneath it.



The essence of the method is that a given water rich in fish is surrounded by boats with a net, trapping the fish there. They are most effective in the case of schools of fish, for example, the famous gardafishing in Tihany is based on this principle, from the abbey they watch the gardas that appear in large numbers and indicate their location to the fishermen sitting in the boats.



When fishing in coastal waters, one end of the seine net is fixed on the shore, and the other is rowed by people sitting in boats. A smaller seine net, varsa, is perhaps only used by poachers on Lake Balaton, and they were once persecuted by the gendarmes, and now by the police in addition to the fish guards. They are still said to be working.

WINTER FISHING, REED HARVESTING AND ICE PITS

The winter Balaton proved to be suitable not only for organizing sports and social events, but guests could also watch ice fishing, reed harvesting and the filling of ice pits.

Ice fishing was an extremely complex and difficult occupation that lasted for 3-5 weeks. In the early morning hours, three fishing bushes set off to map the location of the fish. The icemen – who were also responsible for monitoring the ice – cut holes and then pushed the guide rod under the ice. A very large, 400-meter net was attached to the guide rod with a rope. After several hours of work, the guide rod appeared at the exit hole, and then the fish were driven towards the net bag by pounding the ice.

Lake ice fishing was a dangerous occupation. “We can read about several winter fishing accidents in records and reminiscences from the 18th-19th centuries. The first known case occurred in 1828, when the ice collapsed under the feet of 18 fishermen in Alsóörs – in the middle of a storm coming from Somogy county – and they died in the waves. A similarly tragic story happened to the fishermen in Balatonfőkajár in 1868: the fishing boys were trapped under an ice jam, because instead of fleeing, they tried to save the net at the command of their master. But perhaps the most memorable was the fishing tragedy of Vonyarc and Györök in the middle of the 18th century, where 46 fishermen remained on an ice floe and drifted towards the interior of Lake Balaton. 40 survived the dangerous situation, in memory of which a chapel – the only fishing chapel in the country – was also erected.”



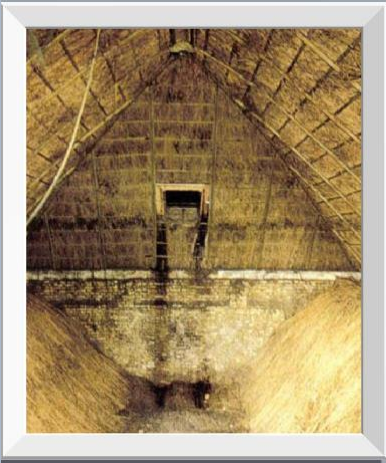
Reed harvesting also required the cooperation of the locals and the application of centuries-old practices. If the ice was covered with snow, it was more difficult to carry out: in this case, a small scythe, called a gyaláska, was used to cut the reed above the ice, and then the harvested reed was pulled out to the shore with a sled. The reed was used for fence building, by housewives for bean growing or for making pits. Sheds, carriage sheds or car sheds could be made of reed, and of course the roofs of houses as well.



The filling of the communal ice pits was announced by the magistrate at the beginning of each January - by which time the lake had already frozen over.

The day laborers had to extract the ice floes, which also proved to be a complex operation: the 40-50 cm wide, 2-3 meter long floes were cut out with picks, pulled out onto the ice, loaded onto a cart and transported to the pit by the carters as soon as possible. The ice cutters tied so-called ice skates to their boots, which prevented them from slipping. At the pit, they crushed the ice with axes and threw it on top of each other, almost filling the pit. When the pit was full, it was covered with straw and then a cone-shaped - 40-50 cm thick - reed roof was pulled over it. This natural insulation kept the ice for up to October-November, and it did not melt even in the summer heat. Filling the communal ice pit was compulsory for the locals, but the ice pits of the butcher and the innkeeper were already filled by day laborers.

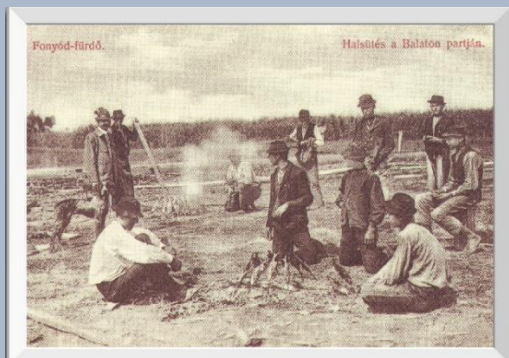
Ice fishing, reed harvesting and pit filling were hard, physical work, that was part of the everyday life of the winter Balaton.



BALATON CUISINE - BALATON GASTRONOMY

Since the beginning, good food and wine have been indispensable requirements for hospitality in Balaton. The region's dishes are very diverse. The lake provides the locals and holidaymakers with a variety of fish, the forests of the region with wild animals, the gardens with good soil with numerous fruits, and last but not least, with excellent grapes. The work of the chefs is then crowned by the winegrowers who produce the famous Balaton wines.

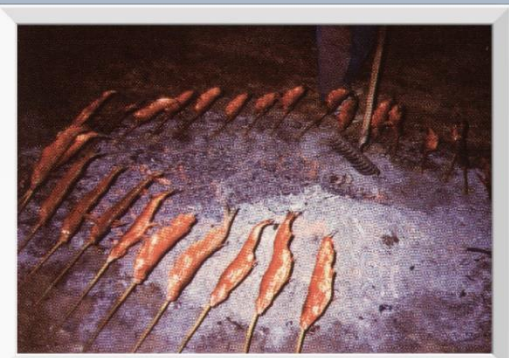
Fish dishes have priority among the dishes of the lake. Fishing was one of the ancient occupations of the population living around the lake, and fish dishes showed significant differences in different periods and in the nutrition of social strata. Different fish dishes were served on the tables of the nobility, later the bourgeoisie - during fasting and on holiday - and different kinds of fish dishes were served in the pots and fish grills of fishermen and peasants.



The way of baking was determined by the financial situation of the family. The wealthier ones fried in butter, the poorer ones in fat, but if they couldn't afford that either, they placed the fish on reed stalks on the bottom of the baking tray, preventing it from burning. The simplest way to prepare it is to make deep cuts in the scaled, gutted, clean fish, salt it, then roll it in paprika flour and place it in a baking tray.

Gourmets also rubbed it with garlic. This is how bream is still prepared today.

Fried fish roe, also rolled in paprika flour and fried, was a favorite delicacy of children. They were mainly baked in spring, during the spawning season, but they were also cooked in fish soup and fish stew.



One of the famous fish of Lake Balaton is the garda: it was consumed fried, similar to bream, but its really famous preparation method was spit roasting. By the end of the 19th century, spit roasting had become one of the social pastimes of the Balaton beach-resort life. The cleaned garda was cut very densely (preferably seventy-seven times!), then salted and rolled in paprika flour and skewered through the eye. The skewered gardas were stuck in the ground on the edge of the twig ember, then patiently roasted until crispy, turning them occasionally.

If the garda hit (the net pull was successful), it was served for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The news of the abundant catch quickly spread among the people of Tihany, and the women, armed with pots, stormed the fishermen of the port. Often the catch was so abundant that even the passengers waiting at the port got some of the fish

According to Ottó Herman's description, the garda "prepared in Balaton style is an excellent, tasty food". And here is the recipe as it was written down in the 1880s:

"Clean the skin of the fish, roll the fish in flour, throw it in a little fat and fry it until crispy, almost dry."

Just like fried bream, garda was also often eaten without bread, with wine.



The fishing season on Lake Balaton lasted from harvest to spring fish migration, and during this period fish could be transported to greater distances without the risk of spoilage, smoking for preservation did not become a practice. The fishermen who arrived from the Tisza seasonally knew about the preservation of fish by drying, but this did not become widespread along the Balaton. The most common form of storage was icing in so-called fish chambers. For this purpose, the ice was "cut" from Lake Balaton in winter, which could last until the next winter with proper straw or reed insulation.

Ice was not even necessary for the preservation method that was widespread everywhere along Lake Balaton. The vernacular simply called it "pickling". The leftovers of larger catches fried in paprika flour in a baking sheet, but not consumed fresh (at first in earthenware pots, later in preserving jars) could be preserved quickly and easily in this way, even in large quantities. In the traditional peasant diet, it was served for dinner during the summer months.

How to make pickled fish:

Depending on the amount of fish, add garlic and onions to the salted, paprika-flour fried fish, pour vinegar and water to taste. You need enough liquid to cover the fish that will be placed in it. Boil the fatty, vinegar-onion juice for a few minutes and pour it over the fish.

Store in a cool place, it can be consumed after a day or two, but after three days it is guaranteed to be boneless, because the vinegar has softened it. Only the spine needs to be pulled out of it, and the meat can be eaten. It can last up to six months.



Carp, although it has always been considered a valuable, well-saleable fish, was only classified as a "noble" fish on Lake Balaton at the end of the 19th century, after the abundance of fish had passed. Fish crackling was a favorite of the fishermen, today it is a specialty in restaurants.

Traditionally, carp was used to make fish stew and fish soup and has always been an indispensable ingredient for them. The frying of meat dishes spread to fish dishes in the 20th century, so it has become a popular way to prepare carp today. It gained popularity among the population around Lake Balaton in the second half of the 20th century and gradually entered the ranks of everyday and then festive dishes.

There are many interesting "gastronomic legends" associated with Lake Balaton - about the favorite dishes of famous people. However, the lake does not only serve "famous" dishes. Among the folk dishes, the traditional lángos, pancakes, fruit strudels, potato pancakes and prószta are the constant favorites of the locals and the guests.



The fruits grown around Lake Balaton are an excellent complements to the baked and cooked dishes. The favorable soil composition and the high number of hours of sunshine give a particularly delicious taste to the stone fruits in the region. In addition to cherries and sour cherries, peaches, plums, currants and raspberries are popular local fruit desserts. Walnuts and almonds are mainly characteristic of the northern shore.

Of course, the wine selection is also a defining part of the region's valuable and interesting gastronomic past. White wines are the best match for fish dishes, and there are plenty of them here, among the valuable vineyards of the six wine regions are the Czerszegi fűszeres, Irsai Olivér, Juhfark and Kéknyelű.

At Balaton, in addition to fish, wild meat is also worth trying.

The meat from the forests Bakony, Somogy hills are also abundantly used in restaurants.