

INTRODUCTION

Drinking natural healthy water is now fashionable in the whole world. Also, 100 years ago it became a custom to visit spas because of treatments, drinking of water, or even losing weight.

The use of natural healthy water for health maintenance and treatment entered into the history of mankind long before the new era. We know of these waters from the data mentioned even 8,000 years B.C. with the Chinese, Egyptians, Arabs Celts and other ancient peoples.

Great number of natural mineral waters were discovered in our region during the Roman Empire. These waters are used in Vrnjacka banja, Gamzigrad banja, Sokobanja, Brestovacka banja, Vranjska banja and others even today.

Traditional reason for drinking of mineral waters, especially in Europe, was their mineral composition and bacteriological quality which is important for maintenance and improvement of health. Some famous mineral waters like Evian in France, Fiuggi in Italy and others, were known for successful treatment of kidney patients.

Other waters were known for high content of bicarbonate in treatment of digestive organs, such as Faschingen in Germany, while the others, like Apollinaris, are used with respiratory diseases.

Bottling and exporting of natural mineral waters began long time ago. The water from the Spa in Belgium was coming to main cities in Europe already in the 16th century, while the Italian mineral water known as "Aqua dei Navigatori" was used by sailors on ships heading to the New World.

Many of the French, Italian and German waters were widely distributed by the 19th century. In the French colonies, the French used to drink Vichy water as an important food reminding them of their homeland.

German water Apollinaris was trendy in England, and also in western parts of America.

After emergence of railway, it was much easier to transport mineral waters, and people could more easily travel to the spas.

Today, the French are returning an old popularity to their spas with designed new programs for patients, both for spa patients and healthy visitors who wish to pay more attention to their health. In such way, they attract a number of French women who, in order to lose weight, use diuretic water in combination with jogging, physical therapy and diet.

So, the participants in weight loss programs start the day with a glass of mineral water, then spending their mornings swimming, exercising or relaxing until lunch, when getting again to drink another glass of mineral water.

In Serbia, at the request of Prince Milos Obrenovic the first chemical analyses of our six spa waters were performed in Vienna with Professors F. Hruschauer and Hage in 1834. After that, Herder Z.A. visited Serbia and analyzed waters from all spas, giving them high grades.

Our natural mineral waters and spas were liked and appreciated by the Karadjordjevic family as well: Prince Alexandar attended Brestovacka banja, whereas King Petar Karadjordjevic went to Koviljaca, Ribarska and Vrnjacka banja.

After the World Wars I and II, our spas were adapted for healing and rehabilitation of war participants and sick population.

Industrial production of table mineral water started in the second half of the 20th century and they were used more and more with other refreshing, energetic and vitamin drinks.

Fast industrial development in the whole world and various technologies caused contamination of air, earth and waters, especially the drinking ones.

