

## Regional Food in Modern Tourism Industry – Role and Importance

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**Abstract: Purpose of the paper and literature addressed:** To analyse barriers and facilitators for regional food and draft the potential of regional food over tourism industry. This paper will also be investigating the motivational factors of the role that food plays in tourism and also to highlight the fact that food is one of the essential elements in motivating tourists to travel to various destinations across the world. **Social Implications:** The study will give a clear insight to motivate the local people towards the regional and local food. This can create a motivational factor to the people those who are involved in food business. **Research method:** This paper is based upon secondary data which will be collected through various newsletter, different research paper, magazine and newspaper, researcher's and scholar's articles related to culinary tourism. **Research findings:** results emphasize the importance of regional food in any tourist place. Sometime regional/local food businesses are often small and micro in size and participants are likely to be individualistic, as the nature of niche specialism may decree. This individualism determines a positive approach in some via inventiveness and willingness to engage. However, others may be motivated by caution and feel isolated and disconnected from other network members.

**Keywords:** Food, Motivational factors, cultures, Destination marketing.

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### I. Introduction

This paper explores the role and importance of regional food/ cuisine and the development of local and regional food businesses which promote any tourist destination. The initial section reviews the regional food, its impact on tourism industry, meaning of regional and local food network development and related literature. To analyse the barriers and facilitators to regional food and evaluate the contribution of a multiplicity of governmental, commercial and voluntary support agencies, quantitative method is used to gather the data on these cases.

Food tourism is one of the most dynamic sectors within the tourism market which has grown in popularity over the past decade (Mintel, 2014). Food is a vital part of the tourist experience, while regional cuisine contributes to regional development and diversifies the existing tourism 'product-service' offering (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; McKercher et al., 2008). Nevertheless, to maximise the potential of food tourism development and gain a competitive advantage, destinations must reach and engage with tourists to attract them. Today's tourists are empowered by digital media communications throughout all stages of travel, which have a significant impact on their overall visitor experience and provide tourists with the opportunity to co-create travel related content (Hudson and Thal, 2013).

**Regional food/cuisine** is cuisine based upon national, state or local regions. Regional cuisines may vary based upon food availability and trade, varying climates, cooking traditions and practices, and cultural differences. Moreover regional food/cuisine is based on the local grown food, hence based on agriculture.

One noteworthy definition is based upon *traditional cuisine*: "A traditional cuisine is a coherent tradition of food preparation that rises from the daily lives and kitchens of a people over an extended period in a specific region of a country, or a specific country, and which, when localized, has a notable distinction from the cuisine of the country as a whole." Regional food preparation traditions, customs and ingredients often combine to create dishes unique to a particular region. Regional cuisines are often named after the geographic areas or regions that they originate from.

I really liked the words of the Spanish chef (and Michelin star winner) María José San Román, who said that the main challenge for every destination is to offer "**gastronomy based on their own roots, in their most deep identity**". We don't need to try being someone else. Travelers want to create a true connection with the culture they visit. They want to establish a bond stronger than the one a travel guide book offers. They want to **understand, feel, and taste the essence that makes this region unique**. Food is widely accepted as of great importance in tourists' experiences by researchers. However, few studies allow tourists themselves to indicate the importance of food for their travel. In the meanwhile, the argument regarding the overestimation of the importance of food tourism to attract tourists is on the increase. This study aims to critically assess the

importance of food tourism from domestic tourists' perspectives. In particular, it fills the gap by providing a thorough exploration of tourists' food experiences at different stages of their travel. A quantitative research methodology involving a structured questionnaire has been adopted. The results reveal that food plays different roles in different travel stages. In order to achieve effective marketing conduct, Mitchell and Hall (2003) stated that it is significant to understand tourists' food-related behaviors. "Food is one of the essential elements of the tourist experience. Yet it is such an integral part of the experience that it is only in recent years that it has become a subject of study in its own right" (Hall and Sharples, 2003:1).

### **1.1 What Is A "Local (Or Regional) Food System"?**

The term "local food system" (or "regional food system") is used to describe a method of food production and distribution that is geographically localized, rather than national and/or international. Food is grown (or raised) and harvested close to consumers' homes, then distributed over much shorter distances than is common in the conventional global industrial food system. In general, local/regional food systems are associated with sustainable agriculture, while the global industrial food system is reliant upon industrial agriculture.

### **1.2 What Is Local? What Is Regional?**

Commonly, "local food" refers to food produced near the consumer (i.e., food grown or raised within X miles of a consumer). However, because there is no universally agreed-upon definition for the geographic component of what "local" or "regional" means, consumers are left to decide what local and regional food means to them. A 2008 survey found that half of consumers surveyed described "local" as "made or produced within a hundred miles" (of their homes), while another 37% described "local" as "made or produced in my state." The ability to eat "locally" also varies depending on the production capacity of the region in question: people living in areas that are agriculturally productive year-round may have an easier time sourcing food that is grown or raised 100 miles (or even 50 miles) from their homes than those in arid or colder regions, whose residents may define "local food" in a more regional context.

### **1.3 Is Local Food The Same As Sustainable Food?**

Not necessarily. Many people now equate the terms "local food" and "sustainable food," using local as a synonym for characteristics such as fresh, healthful, and produced in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. Technically though, "local" means only that a food was produced relatively close to where it's sold - the term doesn't provide any indication of food qualities such as freshness, nutritional value, or production practices, and can't be used as a reliable indicator of sustainability. For instance, while meat from a factory farm could be accurately marketed to a nearby community as "local," the meat would certainly not be considered sustainable. Furthermore, as noted above, the maximum acceptable distance from a "local" food's point of production to its point of sale isn't actually defined or regulated - it's left up to the interpretation of whoever is using the term.

Unfortunately, in order to capitalize on increased consumer demand for local food, less scrupulous producers have begun to use the term to "greenwash" (or "localwash") their products. By taking advantage of the ambiguity regarding the term's definition, these producers can mislead consumers by using the local label to imply that their foods are grown closer and/or more sustainably than they actually are. Of course, it's important to note that food marketed as "local" isn't always industrial food in disguise; indeed, plenty of local food is produced according to the highest sustainability standards. Nonetheless, since local is not defined or regulated, consumers should always be prepared to find more information about production practices in order to determine whether a local food is sustainable.

### **1.4 Importance Of Cuisine:**

Cuisine is a characteristic style of cooking practices and traditions, often associated with a specific culture. Cuisines are often named after the geographic areas or regions that they originate from. A cuisine is primarily influenced by the ingredients that are available locally or through trade. Religious food laws, such as Islamic dietary laws and Jewish dietary laws, can also exercise a strong influence on cuisine. Regional food preparation traditions, customs and ingredients often combine to create dishes unique to a particular region. [Wikipedia]

### **1. Objective Of The Study:**

- ✓ To investigate key trends impacting on the regional food in modern tourism industry;
- ✓ To analyse the impact of regional food in current time over the tourism industry
- ✓ To identify the importance of regional & local food in promoting the tourist destinations
- ✓ To find out the relation between regional food and tourism industry
- ✓ To prepare a structure and guidelines for future strategy development; and
- ✓ Key recommendations for future research.

## **II. Research Methodology**

To address the above objectives a deep literature reviewed to find out the role and importance of regional food in tourism industry. Hence, the paper is based on secondary data which is collected form the various websites, research paper, articles, case stud and reference books.

### **1.1. Chemistry Of Food And Tourism**

Eating is a physiological need which requires fulfillment whether at home or during travel. The consumption of food in travel is unique because it occurs in a foreign environment (Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). Recent research has shown that tourists spend almost 40% of their budget on food when traveling (Boyne, Williams, & Hall, 2002). The 2004 Restaurant & Foodservice Market Research Handbook states that 50% of restaurants' revenue was generated by travelers (Graziani, 2003). It shows that there is a symbiotic relationship between food and the tourism industry. Reynolds (2004) asserts that food, like other elements of travel transportation, accommodation, activities, and attractions plays an essential role in the travel experience. As an attribute or creation of a destination, cuisine bears symbolic meaning and is a determinant of overall travel satisfaction (Henkel, Henkel, grusa, Agrusa & Tanner, 2006; Rimmington & Yüksel1998), when other forms of tourism has been saturated by the tourist. More importantly, food has been recognized as an effective promotional and positioning tool of a destination (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Similarly, with increasing interest in local cuisine,

more destinations are focusing on food as their core tourism product. For example, France, Italy, and Thailand have been known for their cuisine. Javier Blance Herranz has classified the motivations of tourists into two broad categories – the internal stimulier the push and the external stimulier the pull. According to him: The former are considered from the perspective of demand, and they lead the tourist to travel to gastronomic tourism destinations that often includes desires as well as psychological, social and ego-centric needs such as escapism from the daily routine, relaxing with family, rest, exploration and social interaction and affective or emotional bonding. The resources considered pull factors are cultural and natural attractions, special events and festivals, experiences with food products in the destinations and other opportunities for leisure and entertainment, value, friendliness of residents, gastronomic diversity and variety, attributes or the characteristics of the destination such as proximity etc. (Herranz 8) .

Whether one looks at the subject of food from the perspective of a philosopher, an economist, a nutritionist or a historian one thing must be accepted that food shapes the cultural identity of a race. Albert Sonnefield has said: Man forges in the smithy of the fire the created consciousness of human environment, his mythology, his history, his economy, and his gastronomy. (Dutta x).

### **1.2. 'Regional foods' and 'regional food networks**

'When regional food is referred to, it is often used as a short hand for foods whose qualities are attributed to a distinctive geographic origin (Tregear et al., 2007). Much of the uropean research literature has been concerned with the efforts of small agro-food producers and processors located in marginal rural areas, to carve out niche market opportunities by selling high-quality, 'speciality' products through 'short' supply chains and more direct, sometimes re-localized relationships with consumers (Renting et al., 2003; Sonnino and Marsden, 2006). The types of products involved have a distinct place of origin, are of high quality, often artisanal, and are contrasted to the 'placeless', standardized foods marketed through mass retail outlets.

Larger scale food systems, like the national food system, operate at a scale that is not place-based. "National" and "global" food systems are based on geographic scale and political jurisdictions. The terms "agro-industrial" or "conventional" food systems generally refer to the methods used in agricultural production and processing. These terms often assume high-efficiency, large-scale production based on the industrial principles of economies of scale, narrow diversity of crops, and a scientific approach to nutrition and food processing (Hanson & Hendrickson, 2009). The many definitions and names for large-scale food systems are highly interrelated and often used interchangeably.

Overall, it is important to note that the categories of local, regional, and large-scale food systems are interconnected and evolving. The varying definitions of food systems illuminate the diversity of ways we can access our food, and they reflect historical trends and new consumer demands.

## **III. Expected Research Findings**

It is expected that the proposed research will provide an understanding of the Characteristics and motivations of food tourists, and explore the importance of regional food in tourism industry in current scenario. These insights will be used to contribute to a development of the regional food tourist industry. Furthermore, the research will help to understand the impact of regional or local food on food tourists, Hence will help to identify the importance of regional food in tourist destination which will help to develop the potentiality of food tourist in any region.

#### **IV. Conclusions And Research Contribution**

The importance of regional food in development in tourism industry, destination marketing and its vital role in tourists' experience has been acknowledged. However, to date little is known about the food tourist within the context of regional food and its importance. Consequently, the research will contribute to new knowledge within the literature and help to gain a better understanding of the role and importance of regional food at current time and upcoming years. It is believed that the study will provide valuable insights into the food tourist and help tourism industry stakeholders to gain a better understanding of how the regional or local food help to develop the tourist attraction in any region, as well as contribute to the development of food tourism policies and encourage the improvement of govt. policies.

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