



Gastronomy and cultural heritage guidebook





Gastronomy & tourism



CHAPTER 6

Objectives

- Understand the link between local gastronomy and tourism.
- Analyse the impact of gastronomy on the choice of tourist destinations.
- Explain the importance of preserving and enhancing traditional gastronomy in tourism development.

Requirements

- To know basic elements about gastronomy in Europe





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CHAPTER 6

Introduction to gastronomy & tourism

The synergy between tourism and gastronomy has been a key direction for the development of the tourism economy since the early 20th century, notably highlighted by the Global Report on Food Tourism (UNWTO, 2012). Gastronomy, although variably defined, is central to promoting tourist destinations and designing specialized tourism products. Eating and drinking are not merely natural needs but are deeply intertwined with social life and the environment. Culinary tourism fosters interaction between tourists and local communities, creating opportunities for cultural exchange and economic development. It diversifies the range of experiences available to tourists, enhancing the overall appeal and competitiveness of destinations. By valuing local gastronomy, it helps preserve cultural heritage and local food traditions. In this document, we will explore the special link between gastronomy and tourism, from History to special customer needs.

History of the relationship between gastronomy & tourism

The synergy between tourism and gastronomy has been identified as a key direction for the development of the tourism economy since the beginning of the 20th century. This partnership has been strengthened over time, particularly at the end of the 20th century, with the implementation of specific strategies, as evidenced by the Global Report on Food Tourism (UNWTO, 2012). Gastronomy, although its definition is still largely open to debate, has become a central element in the promotion policies of tourist destinations, sometimes even as the main argument or fundamental pillar in the design of specialized tourism products. We know that eating and drinking are not just natural needs that produce basic forms of cultural and appetitive behaviors. There are also needs linked to social life and the environment.

From the time of medieval trade routes such as the Silk Road, travellers exchanged food products and recipes, helping to spread culinary traditions across Europe. In the first travel guides, which were designed to identify travel routes, information was already given on local food production and where to stop to eat and sleep since the Middle Ages (Csergo, 2016). This was followed by the development of the culinary arts in Europe's royal courts, where chefs competed to create more sophisticated dishes. Grimod de la Reynière in France (1758-1837) wrote the *Almanach des gourmands*, arguably the first gastronomic guide in history.

Over time, each region of Europe developed its own culinary specialties, often based on locally available produce, helping to shape each region's culinary identity, and attracting travellers curious to discover new flavors.

During the 19th century, the preoccupation with eating and drinking well when travelling meant that, for the most enlightened of travelers, gastronomy could find a place among the motivations for undertaking a trip, although it never appeared to be the main motivation (Csergo, 2011). Still, this has fueled tourism with the improvement of transport infrastructures, particularly the development of railways, making it easier for wealthy travelers to travel around Europe and discover different regional cuisines. In the 20th century, governments and tourism bodies recognized gastronomy as a major tourist attraction. Gastronomic festivals, culinary itineraries and restaurant guides were created to promote destinations by highlighting their gastronomic heritage.



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Introduction to gastronomy & tourism

Travelling & culinary experience

Travel and the culinary experience are closely linked, forming an essential aspect of the world's tourist appeal. Paul Bocuse, famous French chef, used to say "Cuisine is the reflection of a country's culture". Well, it's true. Cultural discovery is at the heart of this relationship, with food being a living expression of the identity of a region or country. European gastronomy is rich and varied, with dishes ranging from the simplest to the most elaborate, from the most rustic to the most refined, from the lightest to the heartiest. Each country has its own specialities, often the result of ancestral heritage, regional influence, or adaptation to local produce. Among European cuisines, we can cite French cuisine, characterised by its creativity, finesse and diversity; Italian cuisine, gourmet and Mediterranean; Spanish cuisine, recognisable by its taste for tapas, paellas and tortillas; Greek cuisine, distinguished by its use of olive oil, cheese and vegetables; Bulgarian cuisine, with its cold soups and salads; and Portuguese cuisine, with its sunny flavours influenced by the Atlantic Ocean.



Travellers aspire to authenticity and immersion, often preferring to forgo standardised restaurants to savour genuine local cuisine, a true reflection of the traditions and way of life of the local people. This culinary adventure nurtures a sense of adventure and discovery, offering travellers the chance to sample new flavours and create lasting memories. What's more, sharing meals is a great opportunity for socialising and cultural exchange, encouraging encounters between travellers and local people. Culinary tourism fosters interaction between tourists and local communities, creating opportunities for cultural exchange and economic development. Finally, gastronomy has a significant influence on the choice of destination, with travellers drawn to destinations renowned for their quality cuisine and unique culinary experiences. The sector is booming, a recent [market research by Brainy Insight](#) predicted that the global market of culinary tourism will grow by almost 19% between now and 2033. Travel and the culinary experience complement each other, offering travellers a window onto the diversity of cultures around the world, while fostering intercultural links. To preserve this diversity, the EU has introduced certifications such as Protected Designation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indication, which make it easier for consumers to identify the origin of the products they eat. The EU has launched the "[EuroFoodArt](#)" campaign to promote these two labels in the 2021-2023 period.



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Gastronomy as a tourist attraction

Analysis of tourist motivation linked to gastronomy

From February to April 2016, the World Food Travel Association (WFTA) conducted a survey of 2,527 leisure travellers living in ten different countries to gain a better understanding of the food and beverage industry. The WFTA defines culinary tourists as leisure tourists who have participated in unique and memorable food and beverage experiences during a recent trip, and for whom these activities are a primary motivation in choosing a destination. In this study, the culinary activities most likely to motivate a trip were tasting local produce, visiting a famous restaurant, taking part in a culinary, beer or wine festival or going on a guided tour. The culture of culinary tourism is growing. Among all respondents (all leisure tourists), 59% say that food and drink are more important when travelling than they were five years ago.

Culinary activities:

Memorable experience in restaurant	Famous restaurant or bar	Food truck – Street food	Gastronomic restaurant
Cooking lessons	Culinary tour	Culinary festival	Wine routes or vineyard
Farm or orchard	Farm market	Microbrewery or beer circuit	Distillery or drinks circuit

(World Food Travel Association, 2016)

The profile of travellers attracted by culinary experiences does not generally differ from that of other types of tourists. It is almost similar in terms of age and gender, although the majority are in the 30–60 age bracket. However, they can be classified into three distinct groups according to their interest in and expectations of the experience: the volunteer, the opportunistic and the accidental. Volunteers are most of the culinary tourists. Their main objective is to explore local cuisine and learn more about it. They therefore choose their activities with this in mind. Generally, from a high socio-economic background, they combine their passion for culinary culture with their desire to travel, which leads them to allocate a significant proportion of their budget to food, up to 50%. Opportunists, on the other hand, take the opportunity of their trip to discover the local cuisine, but this is not their main motivation for choosing a destination. On an adventure trip, for example, they may include a unique culinary experience. These tourists account for around a quarter of culinary travellers. Lastly, accidental visitors take part in culinary activities only because they are accessible or part of the initial offer.



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Gastronomy as a tourist attraction

Impact of gastronomy on local tourism

Culinary tourists have many expectations, but they all focus on the authenticity of the place, its culture and its history, through the meals they eat throughout their stay, and the products they buy and consume on their return, thus prolonging the memory of their holiday. Hall (2006) points out that culinary tourists contribute in their own way to the diversification and maintenance of a diversity of local fruit and vegetable varieties, and even to the reintroduction of old varieties that have been abandoned by mass production in favour of higher-yielding specimens. For culinary tourists, there's no point in going on holiday with the same food they eat every day at home. Local restaurateurs have an important role to play here, as they can be the first to help bring these local foods and products together with culinary tourists. In a more general sense, culinary tourism is very important for rural areas as it can be a way of diversifying economic activities & resources. Furthermore, culinary tourism also helps to strengthen the sense of belonging to a region and to promote local identity and culture (Hall, 2006). The promotion of local food products is thus becoming an essential element in the preservation of a region, thanks to the use of labels and controlled or protected designations of origin. As these products become symbols of their region, they play a crucial role in maintaining the diversity of regional cultures over the long term. Hall uses the term Slow Tourism to describe this form of tourism, which is aligned with the principles of the Slow Food movement.

Incorporating local gastronomy into tourism offerings diversifies the range of experiences available to tourists and enhances the overall appeal of the destination increasing its competitiveness. Moreover, by highlighting and valuing local gastronomy, tourism maintains cultural heritage and preserves local food traditions.



foto credit: Pexels



CHAPTER 6

Initiatives by EU / UNESCO & ONU

Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in the Tourism Sector

A consistent framework for Tourism stakeholders to embrace the sustainable management of food so that it never becomes waste “Action on food waste must be a top priority for the tourism sector. The Roadmap provides the framework within which tourism organizations can play their part whilst bringing benefits to their own operations, guests, the environment, and the sector as a whole.” (Zurab Pololikashvili, UNWTO Secretary-General).

The objective of the Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in the Tourism Sector is to accelerate the uptake of food waste reduction strategies by tourism stakeholders. The Roadmap aims to raise awareness among tourism stakeholders of the opportunities deriving from a more sustainable and circular management of food, with special emphasis on reducing food waste as a cost-effective and environmentally responsible strategy.

12.3: “By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses”.

The Roadmap sets out how the tourism sector can contribute to the achievement of target 12.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aims at halving food waste globally by 2030. It provides an action framework to accelerate food waste reduction in tourism, sharing practical insights and guidance for the sector.

All in all, the Roadmap aims to guide the tourism sector to make a contribution towards a more sustainable and regenerative global food system, reflecting the sector’s role in the food value chain and its potential to shape production and consumption patterns. The Roadmap proposes a consistent framework for tourism stakeholders to reduce food waste based on prevention, redistribution and diversion (circulation).

Rooted in the principles of the food waste hierarchy, the Roadmap sets out an action framework with the prevention of food waste as the primary strategy to avoid food surplus and waste being generated in the first place. In a second instance food surplus needs to be redistributed to feed people, followed by animal feed or reuse in biomaterial processing. Thirdly, where food waste can no longer be prevented, it should be diverted from landfill or discharge to sea by applying circular and value added processes, such as recycling, (i.e. composting, anaerobic digestion and land spreading) or energy recovery; so as to avoid disposal (i.e. to landfill, incineration –without energy recovery-, sewer or discharge to sea, or littering).

Tourism businesses are involved in various stages of food management: procurement; inventory management, preparation and presentation of menus; consumption by the guests; and waste management, with food waste occurring at each of the stages and hence being a cross cutting issue. Therefore, by addressing food waste, changes at all stages can be triggered, leading to a more sustainable management of food.



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Initiatives by EU / UNESCO & ONU

#TravelTomorrow, Tourism & Gastronomy

Gastronomy is about much more than food. It reflects the culture, heritage, traditions and sense of community of different peoples. It is a way of promoting understanding among different cultures, and of bringing people and traditions closer together. Gastronomy tourism is also emerging as an important protector of cultural heritage, and the sector helps create opportunities, including jobs, most notably in rural destinations.

As part of the UNWTO #TravelTomorrow campaign, chefs from around the world show us how to prepare local dishes at home. We are also proud that the UNWTO Ambassadors for Gastronomy Tourism have joined this initiative. Also, UNWTO Secretary-General shared a typical dish of his native Georgia. All of these are dishes to enjoy while planning our next trip and getting ready to travel again once it is safe to do so[1].



<https://www.breakingtravelnews.com/images/sized/images/uploads/logos/TravelTomorrow - UNWTO-700x350.jpg>



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Initiatives by EU / UNESCO & ONU

INTERNATIONAL CODE FOR THE PROTECTION OF TOURISTS

Adopted by the Resolution A/RES/732(XXIV) of the General Assembly of UNWTO at its twenty-fourth session As a soft-law instrument of non-legally binding nature, the ICPT does not create obligations for states nor imposes additional burdens on them. To the contrary, it intends to support the efforts taken by Member States in restoring tourists' trust and assist them in accelerating tourism recovery by providing guidance to governments as to proposed policy, legislation and regulatory practice at the national level.



Source: UNWTO



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Practical examples

- Several examples on culinary and proximity tourism experiences and enterprises presented in this Youtube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/@CulinaryandProximityTour-ku5vt>
- ‘Spanish Capital of Gastronomy’ initiative: it is a competition that was launched in 2012 by the FEPET (Spanish Federation of Tourism Journalists). It is a unique event that stands out for its continuity for 365 days and which represents a special promotion for the city’s restaurants. The cities that have held the title are Logroño/La Rioja (2012), Burgos (2013), Vitoria-Gasteiz (2014), Cáceres (2015), Toledo (2016), Huelva (2017), León (2018), Almería 2019, Murcia (2020/2021), Sanlúcar de Barrameda (2022) and Cuenca (2023). In 2024 it will be the city of Oviedo.
- Good practices about culinary tourism: [Food Tourism Fundamentals: Seven Global Best Practices to Celebrate & Develop Your Destination’s Cuisine | Miles Partnership](#)
- Itinerary route for french culinary tourism: [Parcours \(valleedelagastronomie.com\)](#)
- Itinerary route for spanish culinary tourism in Andalusia: [Gastronomic Routes – Official Andalusia tourism website \(andalucia.org\)](#)
- Tips for european foodie itinerary by train : [Ultimate Foodie Itinerary \(interrail.eu\)](#)
- The European region of gastronomy is an european initiative to enlight regional richness and culinar heritage in Europe: [EUROPEAN REGIONS OF GASTRONOMY \(europeanregionofgastronomy.org\)](#)

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- Project [EUREGA](#), the project objective was to have food, food habits and gastronomy included and recognised in EU, regional and nation strategies and policies.
- Project [Culinary Trail](#), the project aims to improve connectivity and collaboration among tourist destinations, services, products, and stakeholders, promote short value chains, and advertise quality products from the Danube region.
- Project [BASCIL](#). The project BASCIL helps local food producers in rural areas diversify their business into sustainable culinary tourism services, and thus reach new customers.
- UN Tourism dashboard including trackers to follow tourism trends: [The UN Tourism Data Dashboard | Tourism Data \(unwto.org\)](#).
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