

Gastronomy and food within the tourism industry tourism essay



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Over the time, the term of gastronomy was defined in many ways and it is constantly changing. There is wide range of definitions but it was initially used to describe sophisticated dishes prepared for the upper class. As Hjalager Richards (2002) show, a different version of the original definition of gastronomy in the early year, the concept is defined as a process of excellence which involve a reflecting eating, cooking and preparation as well as the general presentation and production. As it is generally agreed food is a vital component of our daily life. But as a tourism product, gastronomy is a distinctive experience which involves food and wine tasting of local food and wine productions (Buhalis and Costa, 2006).

A tourist has to eat and somewhat participate in local food experiences; therefore, gastronomy has always been part of a tourist experience. In the recent years, the identification of tourism gastronomy has changed in term of the integration within the tourism industry and as a valued asset. Although, that tourists do not always take part of experiencing local food production due to a lack of interest which lay certain limit on tourism gastronomy experience, its represent a real benefit for some destinations. Tourism gastronomy still a new field of research but as a growing development product, it has opened a new special interest products such as wines routes, food fairs and short breaks. The main keys finding of researches on tourism gastronomy were encompassed in two English literature books, that is Tourism and gastronomy by Hjalager A. M. Richards G. (2002) and Food Tourism Around the world, Development, Management and Markets by Hall M. C. et al (2003). The perspective of food in tourism industry is widely disputed but mostly agreed that tourism product

specialised on food experiences ameliorate the possibility of enhancing the destination marketing opportunities, the economic relation between agricultural production and tourism as well as traditional activities (Buhalis and Costa, 2006 Roberts and Hall, 2001). Moreover, studies have demonstrated that the gastronomy is the core of tourist experience and a source of identity for most of the post-industrial societies (Roberts Hall, 2001).

Van Westering (1999) describes gastronomy has the key of many features of tourism experience and part of the culture which influence other aspects of culture. Furthermore, gastronomy plays a big role in tourism industry as well as cultural development and sustainability of a tourism heritage. The relation between them is a key motivator which influence tourist to travel. Although, the perception of gastronomy is defined as an identity of culture by many authors (Hjalager Corigliano, 2000) and connected to the tourists who use holiday as a way to discover the insight of different cultures. Corriea et al add that gastronomy is not only the central part of culture but an important element of a traditional portfolio of cultural products such as architecture and monuments. Indeed, gastronomy is ranked on the most important attributes of a destination. Due to the implication of gastronomy in decision making of tourist destination, it has become the attention of the marketing of tourist destination as well as tourism policies (Kivela Crofts 2006 and Du Rand Heath 2006). The gastronomy is part of the culture, heritage and history of a country and those aspects influence the tourist choice to choose is future destination. Hall (2003) shows, that the traditional source of revenue in occurrence agriculture is not sufficient enough whereas food

production and tourism are progressively becoming a possible and sustainable source of economy in rural areas. Boyne Hall (2002) cited in Hall (2003) emphasizes the contribution of local community in occurrence businesses which have an important role for the sustainability of the development of food tourism within those areas. Wood (2001) cited in Hall et al (2003) further insists on the role of the food tourism which will benefit economically as well as strengthening local identity and community pride. The WTO (2004) describes the sustainability as values which are connected to tourism development in terms of economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects. The regions which adopted gastronomy as culture identity often associated to regional culture are part of sustainable development of tourism destinations. Scarpato (2000) cited in Hjalager Richards (2002) shows that the sustainability of gastronomy is the importance of producing environmentally sensitive food and preparing it with excellence in order to nourish the mind and body. In the book *Tourism and Gastronomy* by Hjalager Richards (2002), three cases were critically evaluated by Scarpato and she determines that gastronomy researches could provide great influence on communities policies in order to improve sustainable development.

This new form of tourism experience has taken shape during the last decades and emerged with the globalisation of food products, also known as Macdonaldisation (Hall, 2003). Hall (2003) emphasizes that in the post-modern time gastronomy has been affected by the globalisation in terms of blurring the boundary of the cultural and national identity. In fact, the external food imports influence the local level of gastronomy (traditional

cuisine). But Urry (1992) states by defending the post-modernism in term of tourist behaviour than tourists are aware that tourism is a series of games with multiple texts and no single, authentic tourist experience. And tourists allow most of the heritage products to avoid vanishing. Controversy, Cohen and Avieli (2004) stat, that local cuisine should be filtered in accordance to the tourism-oriented culinary establishments in order to become a popular attraction. Moreover, new cultural products are created in tourism cuisine, indeed the local cuisine and foreign dishes are transformed and adapted to the tourist taste by tourism. However, the sustainability of tourism or responsible tourism is neglected if such processes are undertaken in tourism gastronomy. The authenticity of the food experience should be endorsed by the participation of hotels and restaurants by procurement of locally grown product and produce while respecting the protection of the environment.

The degree of integration of gastronomy within the tourism industry could be ameliorate and fully accepted as a tourism and cultural resource as gastronomy contribute already to the sustainability of tourism. The implication of tourism organisation, local communities and producers could take a different approach and all stakeholders should cooperate in order to improve the implantation of sustainable tourism. More research in food and gastronomy tourism will help in the future to identify tourist profiles for each destination or specific region in order to conduct more targeted offers.

Annotated Bibliography

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This article help to understand the relation between gastronomy and heritage and the key motivator which will push the tourist to choose a destination.

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This article help to understand the relation between tourism gastronomy and agricultural production and traditional production.