

# Using examples, critically discuss the importance of gastronomy to at festivals

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The local cultural elements are increasingly turning to be rich resources as viable tourism products for destinations all across the world. Gastronomy plays an important role here as a cultural element which can attract tourists (Hjalanger et al, 2003). Food festivals play a reciprocal role in the identity of a tourist destination as on one side it attracts the tourists and at the same time gastronomy plays a central role in the formation of a society (Hjalanger et al, 2003). Culinary experience as a contextual and evolving social practice is being increasingly recognized by researchers (Mak et al, 2012). In today's tourism industry, destinations are presenting food as a key element of their package to attract tourists. The objective of this essay is to analyze the role of gastronomy at festivals.

A very good example of festival and trade based on gastronomy is Whitstable Oyster Festival in Kent. It is one of the ancient food festivals in the UK (Hall et al, 2008). It celebrates the tradition of the oyster industry in Kent. Haven-Tang et al (2006) have discussed the role of food festival in developing a sense of place. In the context of Monmouthshire food festival, the focus on local food and drink has been reported to have significant positive impact on the local economy Haven-Tang et al (2006). Moreover, it has proved that the emphasis on local food and drink through these festivals improve the visitor experience as well.

A very interesting gastronomy project that was customized and exclusively designed for the promotion of local food and community was the 'Eat the View' project developed by the UK countryside agency. The festivals as part of this are reported to have created awareness among the travelers on the local food and culture and have had substantial positive influence on the

promotion of local food ventures (Hall, 2005). The Great British Food Festival - Staffordshire, The Colchester Food and Drink Festival are some among a lot of food festivals coming up in the UK confirming the increasing role of gastronomy in tourism. Wine festivals are reported to be of great potential in the context of the United Kingdom (Hall et al, 2008). The 'Taste of London Festival' which was conducted in Regent Street in the summer of 2007, was a gourmet festival which is reported to have important role in improving awareness among the tourists on British Food. This brand of food festival was later replicated in the cities of Bath, Edinburgh, Birmingham and Dublin (Hall et al, 2008).

The impact of culinary experiences in attracting tourists is being increasingly acknowledged by the tourism industry. In UK, new food festivals are coming up and the food media is offering wide coverage for these events. In the globalised context of the industry, taking into consideration the fact that can food can travel to any corner of the world, the scope of gastronomy in festivals becomes more relevant. The role of these festivals in contributing to local economy and the local community also has been well established. Thus it can be concluded that the role of gastronomy in festivals is increasing and the same is being recognized by tourism industries and related festivals worldwide.

#### References

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