

Chapter 3

Food tourism offerings

Overview

Food tourism is an umbrella concept comprising a number of viable food-based tourism opportunities and on-farm enterprises. This chapter defines and discusses a variety of food tourism activities and products, including agritourism, culinary tourism and food trails, food and drink events and attractions, food souvenirs, and local sourcing. Each aspect of food tourism has advantages and disadvantages depending on community or destination attributes and the businesses and facilities available. The roles of authenticity and commodification in food tourism offerings are also covered.



Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable students to:

- 1 Define authenticity and commodification as they apply to food tourism offerings.
- 2 Understand and explain the differences between the various types of food tourism offerings.
- 3 Evaluate and explain the challenges and opportunities facing different food tourism strategies.
- 4 Explain how competition and cooperation can exist simultaneously to vet cooperation.

Authenticity and commodification in food tourism offerings

As mentioned in Chapter 1, food tourism is “the desire to experience a particular type of food or the produce of a specific region” (Hall & Sharples, 2003, p.10). Food tourism implies cultural distinctiveness, a quality, experience, or product unique to a specific region. These experiences can be exotic, like eating ostrich at the Carnivore Restaurant

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1 in Nairobi, Kenya, or they involve attending an event centered on a regional specialty,
2 such as garlic ice cream at the Garlic Festival in Gilroy, California, USA.

3 Food tourism should promote the **authenticity** of food, meaning that food should be
4 true to place, based on historically accurate understandings of periods and cultures, and
5 uncontaminated by market forces (Scarpato & Daniele, 2003). In other words, authenticity
6 is the idea that something is true, accurate, or real. But authenticity is much more
7 complicated than this simple definition implies.

8 For example, tourists expect people in rural areas to be hospitable. They also believe
9 the pace of life is much slower than in urban areas and feel that visiting rural areas offers
10 an opportunity to go back in time (McGehee & Kim, 2004). Obviously, this idyllic per-
11 spective of rural life does not address many of the economic hardships associated with
12 rural communities, such as low pay, limited job opportunities, and an aging population.
13 Managing the tourists' expectations and the authenticity of rural lifestyles can be difficult.

14 From a production standpoint, authenticity can incorporate traditional materials,
15 traditional production processes, or traditional modes of delivery. An example might
16 be delivering a traditional meal accompanied by dancing and art. The ingredients may be
17 traditional, although they may be prepared or cooked in a microwave. The cooking
18 techniques may be traditional (roasting over an open fire), but the variety of food may
19 be a recent import (maybe a new breed of pig). Or maybe the process of sitting on the
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Image 3.1 Open food market in Bangkok, Thailand

Source: Kynda R. Curtis

floor and eating communally without utensils is traditional, regardless of how the food is prepared.

From a consumer perspective, tourists may often have preconceived ideas about what is authentic; variations from those ideals may feel inauthentic. In other words, culture is often perceived as static (never changing), and authenticity implies that there is only one “real” way to do something. Reality and the forces of globalization as discussed in Chapter 2 means that culture is actually ever-changing and authenticity (like beauty) is in the eye of the beholder.

The very process of producing and selling food to tourists commodifies culture. **Commodification** refers to the process of transforming goods, services, ideas, and people into commodities or objects of trade in an effort to support economic growth or profit (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). Commodification naturally alters the authenticity of a cultural good. Take for example a local Chinese restaurant. Mostly likely, the flavor of the food has been altered to accommodate local tastes and preferences and is different from food found in China. If local residents do not like the food, the restaurant will go out of business. The process of adjusting to customer preferences alters the food and makes it inauthentic.

Tourism often results in adjustments to local culture. First, local culture changes to meet the expectations of the tourist and match what the tourist believes to be authentic. Second, tourism defines authenticity through basic supply and demand interactions. What is “good” or authentic will sell better, and what is “bad” or inauthentic will be unprofitable. Managing authenticity and commodification is an important part of developing food tourism because the long-term sustainability of any tourism product or destination depends on economic success. At the same time, making sure that locals feel that the tourism product is authentic is vital if tourism is to be used to preserve cultural traditions and develop community pride (as in sustainable tourism). Chapter 9 discusses collaboration in more detail, but stakeholders should come to a common understanding of authenticity when developing a tourism destination.

Types of food tourism

As tourism destinations become increasingly competitive, it is vital to find ways to differentiate them through authenticity. Food tourism comprises a variety of different types of food and tourism business opportunities and tourism experiences, each with their own necessary resources, management challenges, and clientele. While the number of potential food tourism activities is extensive, this chapter looks at five specific types:

- agritourism;
- culinary tourism (including drink tourism);
- food and drink events and attractions (including food and drink trails);
- food-based souvenirs; and
- local sourcing and value-added products.

Although these types share many similarities (and some offerings may fall into multiple categories), the overall goal is to understand each sector’s unique traits and be able to evaluate which food-related opportunities best fit local tourism development goals.

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of different types of facilities, events, activities, and products that fall under the umbrella of “food tourism.” Keep in mind that many types of food tourism opportunities can fit into multiple categories. For example, a winery is a

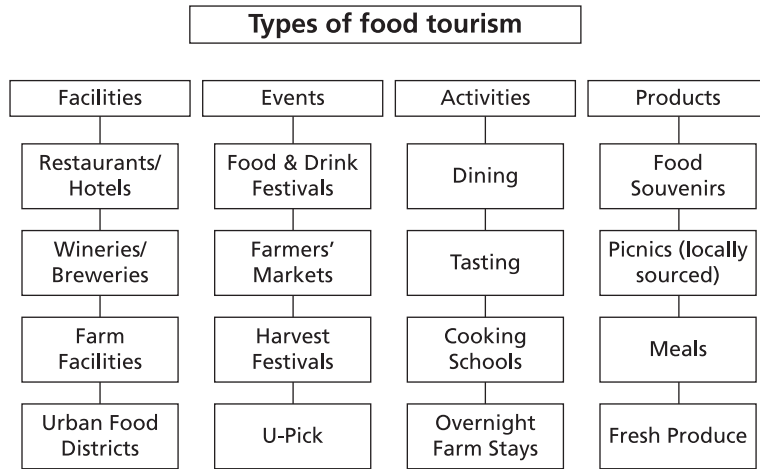


Figure 3.1 Types of food tourism

Source: Adapted from Everett & Slocum (2013)

type of facility, but it is also a culinary activity that allows tourists to experience wine tastings and pairings; wine is also a product that tourists may want to buy as a souvenir. Each of the following sections highlights the needs and considerations unique to businesses and destinations in each sector. Local populations may also be potential food tourists, and many of the tools provided apply to local customers, excursionists, and tourists visiting from farther away.

Agritourism

As students in a food tourism class, it is reasonable to assume that many of your grandparents lived or worked on a farm when they were young. It is also safe to say that many of your fellow students have never lived on a farm. If you are an agriculture student, you may be the exception, or perhaps you have worked on a farm or visited farms owned by family members. If you are a tourism student, odds are that you have never even visited a farm. You are not alone. The industrial development of farming (covered in Chapter 4) and rural-to-urban migration that has dominated development since the end of World War II has isolated recent generations from food production (Sims, 2009). Farm-based activities provide a way for urban and suburban dwellers to reconnect with the land, nature, and rural people (Petty, 2002).

From an agricultural perspective, **agritourism** is “rural tourism conducted on working farms where the working environment forms part of the product from the perspective of the consumer” (Clarke, 1999, p.27). More broadly, agritourism incorporates farming activities into the tourism experience. Other parts of the world may have different definitions, some referring specifically to farm stays, as in Italy, or a wide variety of other activities, such as buying produce directly from a farm stand, navigating a corn maze, picking fruit, feeding animals, farm tours, related farm-based special events, or staying at a bed-and-breakfast on a farm. Other terms associated with agritourism are “agritainment,” “value-added products,” “farm direct marketing,” and “sustainable agriculture.”



Image 3.2 A tobacco farm open for tourism in Cuba

Source: Kynda R. Curtis

Agritourism most commonly occurs in rural areas with working farms. These areas may have limited opportunities to participate in tourism (due to a lack of “traditional” tourist attractions), and the primary draw to tourists is open space and idyllic communities.

Often visitors want to participate in farm-based activities, whether harvesting vegetables and fruit (pick your own), interacting with farm animals (petting zoos or cattle ranching), or hiking through the open space surrounding agricultural communities. Agritourism also offers an opportunity for visitors to engage in **voluntourism** (often called volunteer tourism), which is a holiday that involves working alongside local residents, usually in an effort to give back to communities or help alleviate poverty (Wearing, 2004). Since rural areas face a number of economic challenges (see Chapter 5), voluntourism on working farms can be beneficial to rural communities where labor is scarce and can offer authentic opportunities for tourists.

Planning is one of the most important steps when starting a new farm-based venture or a rural agritourism destination. It is important to assess the properties on which agritourism will occur and ensure that tourists will be able to find the properties offering farm-based activities. Participant safety must be a primary concern (see Chapter 11). It is also necessary for the farm enterprise to offer something unique and fun, as tourists desire activities, not just tours. They expect to learn something new, so educational or interpretive programs are helpful. Table 3.1 provides a list of important consideration for any agritourism enterprise.

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Table 3.1 Planning an agritourism enterprise

<i>The plan</i>	<i>The activities</i>
Determine what will be offered	Identified some activities that seem doable, that fit with the goals and resources of the farm. List all the tasks or steps to get started. Once done, have someone else review it.
Protect the investors and the visitors	Make sure to understand the regulatory and legal aspects of any new enterprise. Develop a risk assessment plan.
Make sure the ideas are good ones	Call the agricultural or tourism office for input, or enlist the help of a business counselor or event planner. What may sound good to one person may not sound good to others.
Start small	Develop a launch date for the activity, then work backwards and list all the resources needed and the tasks that need to be performed to be ready for the launch.
Get the word out	Make sure publicity figures prominently into all plans as it takes a lot of promotion to get the attention needed to launch a new enterprise. Advertising and promotion costs may outpace returns initially. Remember that word of mouth is a key way to build business, so if it is done right the first time, the next visitors will not be so hard to attract.
The soft opening	A way to get started without a big launch is to plan a small activity targeted at a select group to test the ideas. The use of local customers can provide valuable insight.
Take it slow	Take time to get feedback from visitors about what else they might like to see, do, learn or buy at the farm. Then each year, add in another attraction. Don't forget to plan with the big picture in mind.

Source: Adapted from Ochterski & Roth (2008)

Culinary tourism

As discussed in Chapter 2, food can be an expression of **culture**, which is defined as learned knowledge based on material and non-material elements such as beliefs, art, morals, customs, laws, behaviors, values, traditions, and folklore (Timothy & Ron, 2013). Food traditions are often based on sociocultural traditions, climate, migration patterns, local varieties of ingredients, and history (Timothy, 2011). However, the flavor of our food is changing. Not only has industrialization created the “McDonaldization” of recipes (fast, greasy, and always the same), but the globalized food chain requires fruits and vegetables to be harvested prior to ripening (and chemically ripened during transport) and ethnic food to be altered to support the tastes of mainstream consumers (Delind, 2006). The globalization of food has given rise to the revitalization of tasting traditional foodways.

Another type of food tourism—**culinary tourism**—is “the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences” (Long, 2004). Tourists believe that experiencing a region or country’s food is essential to understanding its culture (Boyne & Hall, 2003). Culinary tourism is more than just trying new and exotic foods; it unites anthropology, folklore, and history and can comprise ethnic recipes, international cookbooks, folk and food festivals, cooking shows, cooking schools, specialty food stores, food tours, breweries, wineries, and historical attractions. Many related businesses across the globe have capitalized on their regions’ culturally unique cuisines.



Image 3.3 Culinary tourism event highlighting specialty meats in Australia
Source: Kynda R. Curtis

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Food tourism and sustainable rural development

Culinary tourism requires a destination approach to tourism that involves numerous businesses and community organizations working together. While local residents may have a clear understanding of local cuisine, tourists may not understand specific cultural or historical cooking recipes or techniques. It is not only important to establish a destination image that ties into culinary heritage but also to communicate these characteristics to visitors who may have little or no experience in the area. By partnering with other food and cooking establishments, tourists find common cultural threads that encourage experimentation with new foods or recipes. Other examples of culinary tourism include visiting restaurants specializing in local foods or attending cooking schools. Table 3.2 highlights a few tourism destinations and their culinary specialties.

Drink tourism

Drink tourism focuses on beverages rather than food as the key element of the tourism experience. Drink tourism is most commonly associated with alcoholic beverages—

Table 3.2 Culinary destinations and food specialties

<i>Destination</i>	<i>Specialties</i>	<i>Environment</i>
Louisiana Cajun	Gumbo Jambalaya Dirty rice Boudin sausage Po'boy sandwiches	French and Caribbean influences with local ingredients (shrimp, pork sausage, celery, cayenne pepper).
Mediterranean	Greece – Moussaka, pita breads, feta Turkey – Baklava, pilaf, couscous Italy – Ribollita, parmigiano reggiano, antipasto Spain – Tapas, paella, gazpacho	Common climate results in similar ingredients, such as fresh vegetables (tomatoes, onions, cucumbers), olive oil, sundried tomatoes, dates, lamb/goat, mild cheeses, and yogurt.
Scandinavian	Fish Berries Venison	Harsh climate without fruits or vegetables for 9 months of the year. Food consist of tubers (turnips, parsnips), dried berries (bilberries, lingonberries), wild game (reindeer, moose), and fish (salmon, pike, herring).
Brazilian	Feijoada Caruru Caipirinha (sugar, lime and distilled Cachaça)	Native ingredients influenced by European and African cooking technique. Staples include cassava, guaraná, açai, cumaru and tacacá, and tropical fruits such as mango, papaya, and guava.
Vietnamese	Stir fried fish, meat, tofu Dipping sauces – garlic, ginger, soy sauce Canh or Pho type soups	Comprises a combination of five fundamental tastes: spices, organs, colors, senses, and nutrients. Contrasting texture and flavors are an important part of Yin Yang balance.

examples include visiting a winery, exploring a whiskey trail, or watching craft beers being made—but other types of drink experiences are gaining popularity. It is now possible to visit tea or coffee plantations in Costa Rica or Sri Lanka or experience afternoon cream tea (and accompanying scones) in Devonshire, England. Coffee houses, such as those in Europe or the Middle East, have also gained popularity. Understanding the subtle difference between Greek coffee and Turkish coffee is as rewarding as tasting the difference between a Petite Sirah and a Cabernet Franc or learning which rice wines of Japan, Korea, and China should be consumed warmed versus iced.

Food-based events and attractions

Historically, food choices were often dictated by social status or environmental landscapes reflecting lifestyles. Celebrating these unique lifestyles and the annual cycle of food production gave rise to special events and later, event tourism (Getz et al., 2014). Food and drink have always been a part of cultural celebrations and religious holidays, such as Thanksgiving in the United States, or Eid al-Fitr (the end of Ramadan) in Muslim communities.

Modern events or attractions are generally more commercial in nature, although they are still useful in showcasing local distinctiveness. **Food-based events**, which are closely related to culinary tourism, are special events focusing on food or drink and can include food festivals, farmers' markets, wine regions, and food trails. **Food-based attractions** include museums (such as the Lindt Chocolate Museum in Cologne, Germany), famous markets (such as Pike's Place Market in downtown Seattle, Washington, USA), or food-processing plants (such as the Dole Pineapple factory in Hawaii, USA). Food-based attractions are generally permanent structures that operate all year, whereas special events are temporary gatherings offered cyclically (weekly, monthly, yearly, etc.).

It is important to ensure that events do not compete with other fairs in the same region; establishing a distinct theme or targeting a specific audience can help avoid duplication. While food events may start out small, long-term growth planning is important. Food events are rarely profitable on their own, but they offer new avenues for sponsorship and marketing outlets for local businesses, so managing sponsorship is an important consideration. Communities may start non-profit or charity groups to run special events and hire event managers with specialized skills. A regional board of directors can support further community collaboration and inclusion to ensure that the festival remains true to the heritage it was designed to support rather than excluding local attendees. Event managers are responsible for planning and executing the festival or fair, specifically overseeing site preparation, staging and production, event support, sponsorship, and security. Figure 3.2 provides additional considerations for food and drink festivals.

Marketing a food event starts months before the festival and may continue right through to the following year's event. Tourists usually plan ahead and want to know what activities to expect in their intended destination months before they arrive. Media partners and sponsors can help reduce advertising expenses and can support early marketing when cash flow is tight. They can incorporate festivals into existing advertising, public relations, and marketing campaigns and around major nearby tourism destinations. A well-planned event brochure print-production schedule helps drive festival planning deadlines, and the creation of individual press releases ensures that visitors keep the festival on their travel itineraries.

Starting a food and drink festival

Establish a theme that enhances your destination image

If a similar program already exists, avoid duplication

Gain buy-in where you want to hold the event

Vary the programming for a general audience

Make sure the space can accommodate the crowds

Make sure vendors can handle attendee volumes

Create a budget and get bids from reputable companies

If this is your first time planning the event, hire an outside festival vendor

Market through traditional tourism channels, partnering with tourism area businesses

Figure 3.2 Starting a food and drink festival

Food and drink trails

A **food or drink trail** is a linear route primarily intended for recreational and educational travel involving the consumption of local food or drink (Marsh, 2004). Related local businesses may establish trails or other joint products in order to market them together. Even if one brewery competes with another brewery, it is to both brewers' advantage to work together to enhance the visitor experience when forming a drink trail, a phenomenon referred to as "coopetition" (Larsen & Hutton, 2011). **Coopetition** allows stakeholders in a particular industry to simultaneously cooperate and compete in order to support joint community-building projects. By differentiating their products (one offering tours, the other offering brewing classes), tourists can visit both breweries and have unique opportunities to learn more about brewing. Table 3.3 shows some well-known food and drink trails.

Another option is to think about offering special, focused, low-cost events, such as guided tastings, to bring people in, or offering large-scale events that highlight regional varieties and provide an opportunity for coopetition behavior. All tourism stakeholders must be invited to participate in order to ensure community buy-in and that the event accurately represents community heritage. Chapter 9 includes further discussion on collaboration and networking, but it is important to note that food and drink trails require especially cooperative attitudes.

Food-based souvenirs

Souvenirs—"commercial objects usually purchased during travel that remind people of past experiences and places visited" (Collins-Kreiner & Zins, 2013, p.30)—offer opportunities for small businesses to make additional sales. Most food-based souvenirs are value-added items produced by local businesses and sold at tourist attractions, local retail outlets, farms, or special events. Examples include homemade jams and salsas,

Table 3.3 Unique food and drink trails

<i>Location</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Specialty</i>	<i>Website description</i>
Ireland	Irish Food Trail	Urban restaurant trail	On the Irish Food Trail you will experience the best Irish food, restaurants and pubs in Ireland. This is an exciting walking food tour of Irish cities, in which 'craic agus ceol' is the main course.
Louisiana, USA	The Cajun Boudin Trail	Traditional cooking	The Cajun Boudin Trail puts you on the path to discovering Louisiana's best boudin and other regional specialty items, be they pork chop sandwiches, beef jerky, cheesy boudin balls, specialty sausages, cracklin, smoked meats, plate lunches, stuffed chickens, or chili dogs.
Singapore	Food Safari	Urban restaurant and market tour	Little India, Chinatown, Geylang Serai, and Katong each offer distinctive, delicious cuisines. Penetrate them with local experts from Makansutra, who organize "mainstream" and "off the beaten track" food safaris, plus a fascinating midnight tour.
Bregenzwald, Austria	The Cheese Road	Dairy tours and special events	The Bregenzwald area is famed for its ski routes, its mountain walks, and its cheese trail. The Cheese Trail comprises 69 alpine cheesemakers, innkeepers, and grocers, each marked with a large K.
Tasmania, Australia	Cradle to Coast Tasting Trail	Regional self-drive tours	By using interactive maps and itineraries you'll unfold the delights of the Cradle to Coast Tasting Trail. With rolling green hills and stunning coastal vistas as a backdrop you will be welcomed into a world of berry-sweet possibilities, paddock to plate dairy, dark fudge desires, and malty cheer.
Coorg, India	Coffee Trails	Farm stays and tours	When you visit a plantation, you can join hands with expert coffee pickers. They entertain you with never-heard-before information on the techniques of coffee picking.

honey, cheese, or handcrafts made from farm scraps (baskets made from corn stalks or mats made from coconut leaves).

Traditional souvenirs provide opportunities for visitors to support artisan products, such as value-added food items. Healy (1994) suggests that souvenirs offer a number of advantages for rural business development. Residents do not need to leave the local area to make money from souvenir production; they offer opportunities for women, the elderly, and the infirm in areas where these individuals may be marginalized; producing souvenirs requires low levels of capital investment; and locally-made souvenirs have low levels of economic leakage. Furthermore, food-based souvenirs can be produced during the

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1 growing season but stored and sold throughout the year. The food safety aspects of
2 producing value-added foods are covered in more detail in Chapter 11, but businesses
3 that engage in value-added food production should pay close attention to local regulations,
4 as food safety is of critical concern in such endeavors.

5 Food offers unique opportunities as souvenirs because it allows tourists to relive a
6 particular memory through the re-consumption of culture. Tourists can also take food
7 souvenirs home to share with loved ones who may not have traveled. Purchasing souvenirs
8 falls within the activity of shopping, one of the most common tourist activities, and food-
9 based souvenirs are gaining in popularity.

Local sourcing

11 The food service industry is highly competitive, and businesses attempt to differentiate
12 themselves from their competition in a variety of ways. Some use price as a distinguishing
13 feature (family-style versus high-end) and may not be receptive to more expensive food
14 offerings. Others, however, may use local food as a distinctive feature; they may be willing
15 to cook using local and seasonal products, which may cost more than other options. **Local**
16 **sourcing**—selling local agricultural products to tourism establishments, such as restau-
17 rants, hotels, and conference centers—is often considered a component of culinary
18 tourism. Local sourcing requires food establishments to buy produce that is in season,
19 requiring menu options to change throughout the year. Restaurants that cater to tourists
20 may be more flexible with seasonal varieties, although sometimes patrons may expect
21 their favorite menu item to be available year-round.

22 Local includes **value-added products**, which “have experienced some type of post-
23 harvest processing” (Curtis et al., 2015, p.50). Examples include turning raspberries
24 into jam or drying beef for jerky. Value-added could also refer to specialty items such
25 as regional labels that promote local products or organic vegetables. In general, any-
26 thing that adds value to basic food supplies is considered value-added. These products
27 generally cost more than unprocessed food items. Value-added can also refer to cooking
28 of regional food items using specific regional recipes. Local sourcing may include raw
29 goods (fruits, meats, cheeses)—to which a restaurant adds value through preparation—
30 or locally produced hot sauces that restaurants buy directly and make available to their
31 patrons.

Restaurants

32 Consistency and reliability are important to food service establishments, which require
33 fresh food, especially fruits and vegetables, to be delivered several times each week.
34 Farmers may have difficulty competing with large-scale producers with large-scale
35 marketing budgets. Dealing with multiple farmers requires considerable time, something
36 that chefs lack. If a farm is unable to source enough food to meet demand, one solution
37 may be to partner with neighboring farms.

38 Another option is using drop-off points, such as **food hubs**—centrally located facilities
39 with business management structures that aggregate and distribute local foods—which
40 can consolidate and transport agricultural products in bulk to food service establish-
41 ments. Food hubs provide logistical support, marketing savvy, and food safety expertise,
42 and they deliver a steady supply of “locally grown” products that can be channeled into
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the large-scale purchasing systems that restaurants, hotels, and institutions already use to source their ingredients. Food hubs also help match supply with demand so that if a temporary surplus exists in one location, the hub can make that excess available to dealers in other market areas through reciprocal purchasing agreements. The result is stable prices and predictable income for farmers.

Many hotels or conference facilities may be limited in their ability to purchase directly from farmers. These venues—often multinational corporations—may be expensive or bureaucratic to work with, requiring extensive certifications, paperwork, and rigorous safety standards. Partnering with a major distributor, such as Cisco or Avendra, can mitigate some of these issues. Major distributors have recognized the value in sourcing locally and have programs to provide local food. These companies have a wide reach and often hold contracts with hotels or conference facilities.

Hotels and conference centers

Hotels and conference centers may operate jointly but have different requirements for their unique sets of customers. Hotel operations require larger supplies of food during the peak seasons, usually summer, when people are traveling recreationally and farmers are at their busiest. Conference centers need larger supplies in the off-season when people travel for business and when farms are idle (often without produce). Hotels and conference centers usually know in advance the number of guests they expect and, therefore, the quantity of food they need. Hotels require a more consistent supply while conferences may be more randomly scheduled.

Remember that many hotels and conference centers are owned by multi-national corporations, which means that supply chains are complex. These companies partner with suppliers across multiple countries for purchasing food and beverages, heavy equipment, linens and pillows, and personal toiletries. Additionally, sourcing options for most hotels and conference centers are constrained by national sourcing contracts with major distributors.

Summary

In order for food tourism to be successful, tourists and locals must perceive experiences to be authentic. As food becomes commodified, maintaining authenticity becomes more difficult. While tourists have expectations about what is authentic, destinations need to incorporate educational opportunities to ensure that tourists learn about cultural practices and ensure that food opportunities remain authentic for local residents as well.

A variety of food tourism types can highlight regional distinctiveness and provide economic opportunities for both rural and urban areas. This chapter described five primary types of food tourism, although there are many others. Food tourism provides business development opportunities, whether they occur on a farm (agritourism) or in urban restaurant districts (culinary tourism). Businesses may, at first, consider other food tourism enterprises to be competition, but food tourism destinations must find ways to develop cooperation, or co-competition, to compete against other food-based destinations.


Study Questions

- 1 Which types of food tourism enterprises complement one another? Which ones would be difficult to combine? Why?
- 2 Consider your hometown. How would you define authentic food from your area? What types of food tourism would complement your town's image? Why?
- 3 Categorize the following types of food tourism experiences (there may be more than one good choice):
 - a Visiting a farmers' market
 - b Attending a wedding in an elaborate barn
 - c Visiting a winery for a tour and tasting
 - d Driving along Scotland's Malt Whiskey trail
 - e Watching a cooking demonstration at a county fair
 - f Having a romantic dinner at a five-star restaurant
 - g Watching chocolate being made at a Swiss chocolate factory
- 4 Go to <http://wwwoof.net>, the site for World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms. Find a specific volunteer opportunity. What attracted you to this opportunity? What aspects do not appeal to you? How could it be improved?

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Definitions

- Agritourism**—rural tourism conducted on working farms where the working environment forms part of the product from the perspective of the consumer.
- Authenticity**—the idea that something is true, accurate, or real.
- Commodification**—the process of transforming goods, services, ideas, and people into objects of trade in an effort to support economic growth or profit.
- Cooperation**—simultaneously cooperating and competing in order to support joint community-building projects.
- Culinary tourism**—the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences.
- Culture**—learned knowledge based on material and non-material elements such as beliefs, art, morals, customs, laws, behaviors, values, traditions, and folklore.
- Drink tourism**—tourism focused on beverages rather than food as the key element of experience.
- Food hub**—a centrally located facility with a business management structure that may aggregate, store, process, distribute, and/or market locally or regionally produced food products.
- Food or drink trail**—a linear route primarily intended for recreational and educational travel involving the consumption of local food or drink.

Food-based attraction—a permanent structure that draws tourists and operates all year.

Food-based events—special events focusing on food or drink that include food festivals, farmers' markets, wine regions, and food trails.

Local sourcing—sale of local agricultural products to tourism establishments such as restaurants, hotels, and conference centers.

Souvenirs—commercial objects usually purchased during travel that remind people of past experiences and places visited.

Value-added products—products that have experienced some type of post-harvest processing that adds value to the basic food item.

Voluntourism—holidays that involve working alongside local residents, usually in an effort to give back to communities or help alleviate poverty.

CASE STUDY 3.1

Building food experiences: The case of food events in small regions

Cristina Barroco, Luísa Augusto, and Lurdes Martins

The Dão Lafões and Alto Paiva Region (DLAPR) of Portugal includes five municipalities: Oliveira de Frades, S. Pedro do Sul, Vila Nova de Paiva, Viseu, and Vouzela. This region has a total area of 1,372,000 km² and approximately 142,000 inhabitants.

The DLAPR offers a set of differentiating local products, associated mostly with agricultural and animal production. These are promoted through different strategies, with special emphasis on organizing food events. These events can play a vital role in promoting small regions with fewer tourism opportunities.

Current situation and main goals

In the DLAPR, there are seven traditional products classified as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and three products classified as Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). Other local products of excellence can also be found and are widely used in regional dishes. Themed food events—festivals, presentations of new products, innovative food processing methods, developing regional specialties tours, restaurants and famous chefs—can effectively promote these products.

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3 This study aimed to identify all of the food events taking place in the five
4 DLAPR municipalities and analyze their role in communicating the local products
5 and gastronomic identity of the DLAPR.
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7 8 9 Research components

10 Food tourists want contact with local products (methods of production and
11 preparation). They also like to get to know producers, interact with them, and, of
12 course, take part in food events. This type of event is seen as a chance to experience
13 and develop awareness about the region. Food events also play a key role in
14 communicating local products to visitors. To identify and characterize food events
15 in the DLAPR, we interviewed a few stakeholders linked to the organization of
16 these events. We also analyzed the promotional posters of 30 different events.

17 18 19 Food events as an effective communication practice of local products

20 Thirty gastronomic events are held every year in the DLAPR. The diverse events
21 take place throughout the year and include fairs, festivals, parties, shows, markets,
22 and congresses. Some of the events are based on a single local product (oranges,
23 chicken, lamb, trout, corn bread, beans) or on one typical regional dish (Regedora
24 stew, Lafões veal, Alcofra dry soup, “Rancho” Viseu style). Some of these events
25 promote several products in a single place, usually combining Portuguese smoked
26 sausages (“fumeiro”) and sweets, for example, while others take advantage of
27 festive seasons, such as the Easter Flavors Festival. The duration of the events
28 ranges from 1 to 3 days (usually Friday to Sunday).

29 The Terras do event organized by the municipality of Vila Nova de Paiva
30 should be highlighted, as it is a demonstration showcase for gastronomy and
31 seasonal products. The events take place at different times of the year according
32 to the seasonal products of the region (Regedora stew in February, mutton/lamb in
33 August, Relão (a type of porridge) and pumpkin in October, rabbit in December
34 and January, capretto in April).

35 Municipalities are the main sponsors of these events. Occasionally they may
36 be sponsored by brotherhoods, cultural and solidarity associations, parishes or
37 unions, professional schools, the DLAPR regional government, or private entities.
38 Several events are held regularly: the Lafões Veal Fair is held annually in Vouzela
39 and is currently in its seventeenth season, the Chestnut and Honey Festival
40 in Macieira de Sul is in its sixteenth season, the Orange Fair in Sejães is in its
41 fourteenth season, and the Corn Bread Festival in S. Pedro do Sul in its eleventh
42 season.

43 We discovered that of the 30 events listed, posters were the most popular means
44 of promotion. Poster analysis (such as finding common festival topics) allows us to
45 have a better understanding of how events are publicized and whether the theme
46 of the event identifies local products. In general, posters mention the date, location,
47 and main sponsors.
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Conclusions and recommendations

Food events in the DLAPR appear to use effective communication practices since they represent and promote local products, allow for authentic food experiences, and are seen as extremely important to support the value of local products and the creation of the “regional gastronomy” brand, providing positive economic impacts for the region.

Increasing the duration of these events and diversifying the program could encourage tourists to stay longer at local accommodations, increasing the money they spend in the economy. Finding new ways of communicating food events, such as using Internet sites or social media is also very important. Finally, we think that promoting food events in the DLAPR in a more integrated way would be positive for the five municipalities, helping to support a regional gastronomic identity.

Questions

- 1 How can food events enhance the development of small towns? What economic impacts might they have?
- 2 What other tools could have been used to promote the DLAPR food events? Would they have communicated the same message?
- 3 What other types of tourism could complement these festivals? How can different types of food tourism be packaged together?

CASE STUDY 3.2

Connections between agritourism and urban food markets: The case of La Boqueria in Barcelona, Spain

Montserrat Crespi-Vallbona and Darko Dimitrovski

Food markets are interesting tourist resources for those who like culture and gastronomy. In Barcelona, La Boqueria is not only the most popular and frequently visited food market, it is also one of the most famous in the world. Multiple websites, tourist guides, and blogs designate it a highly recommended attraction. It has existed since the twelfth century, when it was an open-air market outside the walls of the medieval town. Today, it is located in a nineteenth-century arcade, recently remodeled, in the Rambles, just inside the historic center and one of the most popular walking areas in the city. Fifteen stalls are located near the arcade at

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Image 3.4 Local produce at La Boqueria market, Barcelona, Spain
Source: Monserrat Crespi Vallbona

the Sant Galdric Square. Fifteen additional stalls located along the Rambles' avenue provide plants and bouquets of flowers. These stalls have expanded their business, selling souvenirs for tourists—magnets, ceramic ware, flowerpots, and silk flowers. Inside the venue itself are 257 establishments that mix traditional, international, and delicatessen products. Locals have traditionally purchased their fresh produce, meat, fish, and other wares here as it was considered a good value for the money. Visitors also shop here, and a few of the stalls market their products to these customers. Tourism products include juices, fruits cut into pieces, take-away and ready-prepared meals, sweets, candies, and chocolates. These stalls are heavily photographed due to the colors and the goods displayed, causing serious congestion and disturbing residents' shopping. Other stalls combine local and traditional products and sell to both visitors and residents. These booths use just 5% of the total space and display prepared meals for take-away and food sampling.

A few establishments sell their own locally grown products—mainly fresh produce. At present, these are located at Sant Galdric Square and are called the “Farmers’ Market.” All the vendors reject tourism because they feel tourists are not real customers. They may buy strawberries, peas, or small broad beans, but only if they are staying in nearby apartments. These vendors also struggle with foreign language skills. Vendors have expressed that they feel like “monkeys in a circus” or decorative elements in a picture. These owners refer to the vegetable patch as an enslaved job without holidays because vegetables grow and must be sold all year long. Most of them will retire in few years, and no relatives are interested in carrying on the small business as the younger generations place high value on leisure time. In the past, the Sant Galdric market was much larger. It most likely will continue to decline. While farmers will continue to grow vegetables, it will become harder to find shop assistants to work in the market.

The dilemma is clear. Tourists search for authenticity, but the presence of stalls focused on tourism at urban food markets and their relationship with local residents and tourists need to be redefined. Farmers have a chance to promote their activities to tourists, improve cultural understanding, and promote agritourism



Image 3.5 The fish stalls at La Boqueria market, Barcelona, Spain

Source: Monserrat Crespi Vallbona

in the surrounding areas, but there are many barriers to success that could jeopardize the market's existence.

Questions

- 1 Taking into account some of the issues facing public markets, how can sustainability be achieved to ensure adequate working conditions, farmer profitability, and the future success of the market?
- 2 How can the markets preserve and promote local heritage to tourists if local producers are neglected?
- 3 How can tourists be more engaged in supporting local urban markets?

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