

The Role of Gastronomic Tradition and Culture in the Development of Tourism

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Abstract

This paper aims to present gastronomy tourism, which is a new concept and form of tourism, treated independently of other forms of tourism, combining characteristics of cultural, thematic and sustainable tourism, aiming at satisfying and educating tourists in traditional culinary arts, bringing benefits to the local population and maintaining various sectors of the economy. Gastronomy tourism, a new form of tourism, is part of cultural tourism, which addresses the culture of a region, especially through its artistic and traditional values, including tourism in rural areas, with its specific activities such as: agrotourism, outdoor gastronomic festivals, product tasting, etc.

Gastronomy tourism, as a distinct form of cultural tourism, is based on the discovery of the traditions and values of local communities and entities, whether it is local tradition, gastronomy or rediscovery of values, folklore or old crafts, 80% of Romanian rural pensions being based on such an approach.

Key words: marketing, agrotourism, agricultural product, demand, satisfaction

J.E.L classification.: L83, M10

1. Introduction

Gastronomy tourism, as a new form of tourism, is part of cultural tourism, both in its culinary and traditional values, including tourism in urban and rural areas with various activities specific to it. Gastronomy tourism as a distinct form of cultural tourism is based on discovering the traditions and values of local communities and entities, combining the elements of local tradition, the gastronomy treasures by rediscovering local or regional values.

According to the definition given by the World Tourism Organization UMWTO, gastronomy tourism is the form of tourism where tourists and/or visitors plan their journeys partly or totally for the purpose of tasting local cuisine and/or conducting gastronomy activities.

In another scientific approach, gastronomic tourism is integrated into thematic tourism, based on traditional events with a gastronomic component, organized to preserve and continue the traditions. In the literature, gastronomic tourism is also called culinary tourism or travel for pleasure taste.

From the etymological point of view, the word gastronomy is derived from ancient Greek, γαστήρ (gastér) meaning "stomach" and νόμος - "knowledge" or law. (<http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gastronomie>).

Gastronomy is the study of the relationship between culture and nutrition and studies various cultural components that have food as a basic element, also meaning the rational knowledge of everything that signifies and has to do with feeding people, thus incorporating the customs and local traditions.

Gastronomy enthusiasts are looking for culinary treasures, satisfaction from the taste buds, and not just the pleasure of the visual analyzer, searching for the restaurants with tradition where they can taste something authentic in the culinary field.

Local gastronomic experiences can turn into true memorable moments, which is why gastronomic tourism has become a niche market with great potential. The roots of gourmet tourism are found in the days when Europeans traveled in the search for Asian spices.

Another peculiarity of gourmet tourism refers to its development, following the aspiration for healthy food and bio-gastronomic values.

Through its basic components, gastronomy and tradition, gourmet tourism has to develop and strengthen the so-called local brand, which forms the basis of gastro-touristic product development.

2. Materials and methods

In the literature, gastronomic tourism is also called culinary tourism or travel for pleasure taste. Gastronomic tourism "based on experiences and the desire of tourists to understand the culture and specifics of an area, give rise not only to tourist activities or attractions, but also to a particular style or type of tourism: Culinary Tourism" (<http://www.turismmarket.com/>)

Culinary tourism is a specific tourist form in the field of travel, the purpose which animates its followers is the discovery of the beauties of the world according to the traditions and secrets specific to the gastronomy of different countries.

Changes in the tourism sector, largely due to the competition between tourism products/destinations, as well as the increasingly complex requirements and expectations of all categories of tourists, and especially those with high incomes, determine tourist destinations to become brands necessarily managed from a strategic perspective (Stăncioiu, et. all., 2011).

According to the website [turism.biz.ro](http://www.turism.biz.ro), "the aim that animates its followers is the discovery of the beauties of the world in terms of the specific secrets of the cuisine of different countries." (<http://www.turismmarket.com/turismul-culinar-sau-calatoriile-pentru-placerea-gustului>)

The gastronomic circuit is a type of tourist activity created especially for tasting typical dishes for the local cuisine (Diaconescu, Moraru, Stanciulescu, 2016).

Gastronomy-the basic component of the gourmet tourist product, determines the quality of the tourist product and tourism performance as a whole, and the reflection of local traditions influences the content and attractiveness of the gourmet tourist offer as major implications for the size and orientation of tourist flows.

Tradition is the active part of the cultural heritage, which remains alive from the past, the elements that act as modelers on the cultural present.

Tradition also means a symbolic practice, such as popular traditions, incorporating and impressing gastronomy, and vigorously marking the existence and our identity.

Local tradition as intangible heritage can be the vector of the identity of a human community in the design of the tourist product, ensuring its individuality.

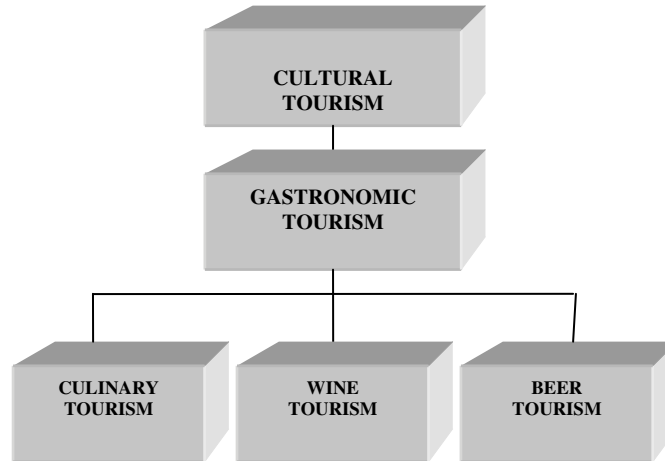
Tradition and gastronomy are a key element in diversifying tourism, contributing to stimulating and developing the economy, adding sustainable values based on tradition and authentic local products while respecting the concordance, trends and demands of cultural consumption. The relationship between gastronomy and tradition is complex, profound, of mutual inter-conditioning and synchronous development (Boiță M., coordinator, 2015).

Since 2003, the gastronomic tourism industry has experienced an acceleration and annual exponential growth worldwide. The International Culinary Tourism Association (ICTA) states that "culinary tourism is the search for unique and memorable culinary experiences" (<http://www.turismmarket.com/turismul-culinar-sau-calatoriile-pentru-placerea-gustului>).

This experience is most often done through a travel-tourism. Eating a meal is a ritually meaningful activity in a culture, and according to experts in the field, gastronomic tourism is

considered a subgenus of cultural tourism, while culinary tourism, wine tourism and beer tourism are subgenres of gastronomic tourism.

Figure no.1. Gastronomic tourism



Source: Processing by the authors

Gastronomic tourism does not just mean exclusivity and snobbery, luxury or pretentiousness, the tourist trying unique and memorable rewards, not necessarily in luxury restaurants or wine cellars, but also in small restaurants, boarding houses or gastronomic events and festivals.

3. Results and discussions

The preference and consumption of extremely demanding and luxurious culinary products gave birth to another subgenus of gastronomic tourism, the one for gourmets: "gourmet tourism", a subgenus of culinary tourism.

As a main feature of gastronomic tourism, we can say that it includes unique and authentic experiences, related to the preparation and manner of consumption of food and beverages, exceeding the limits of information from guides and restaurant menus, differing such from other forms of tourism.

The brand naturally promoted and developed becomes an independent tourist attraction.

The main function of a local gastronomic brand is to give birth to curiosity and to make the tourist visit a particular place in order to enjoy the local gastronomic products.

The smaller the region, the more concrete is the local gastronomic brand.

The larger the region, the more difficult it is for the brand to fulfill its basic function to attract.

A gastronomic brand is even stronger the harder it can be to reproduce, and thus remains alone on the market. Statistics show that initiatives based on the idea of promoting a local brand are much stronger/more sustainable, and have more customers.

The impact of gastronomic tourism as an independent tourism subbranch, has an impact:

- booster of the global economic system;
- macroeconomic;
- social.

Main implications and benefits of gastronomic tourism:

- extra income from tourism activity;
- valorization of local products;
- valorizing the resources of the area;
- banishing boredom and monotony.

At the same time, we can state that the gastronomic tourism activity highlights: the less busy periods of time, while attenuating the tourist seasonality. The above issues highlight the importance of direct involvement in the local economic environment of the gastronomic tourism.

Under these circumstances, a realistic and coherent approach to economic activity is required, starting from the principles of marketing.

4. Conclusions

Gastronomic tourism is a new concept and form of tourism, treated independently of other forms of tourism, combining characteristics of cultural, thematic and sustainable tourism, aiming at satisfying and educating tourists in traditional culinary arts, bringing benefits to the local population and maintaining various sectors of tourism economy.

Consequently, ensuring conditions for the development of gastronomic tourism and, in particular, for capitalizing on its full potential, requires a balanced distribution of tourism infrastructure. In this respect, it is not a matter of equalizing the areas with regard to the material endowments, but of their rigorous correlation with the potential and tendencies of the demand, with the requirements of a sustainable development.

It can therefore be said that gastronomic tourism plays an important role in strengthening the image of the local and European brand in the world, in protecting our values and in promoting the attractiveness of the European model.

Like all other sectors of the economy, gastronomic tourism is facing increasingly fierce competition in the world, emerging or developing countries attracting more and more tourists. In front of this competition, gastronomic tourism has to present a genuine local, sustainable and of quality tourist offer, relying on its comparative advantages, especially on local tradition and culture.

Destinations wishing to develop and promote gastronomic tourism must give great importance to product quality as it ensures the identification and recognition of local products, the development of competitive products.

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