

OPEN ACCESS

Manuscript ID:
ASH-2024-11036891

Volume: 11

Issue: 3

Month: January

Year: 2024

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

Received: 09.10.2023

Accepted: 12.12.2023

Published: 01.01.2024

Citation:

Senthilkumar, S., et al. "Culinary Heritage Tourism: Preserving and Promoting Traditional Food Practices for Tourist Engagement." *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2024, pp. 52–55

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v11i3.6891>




This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

Culinary Heritage Tourism: Preserving and Promoting Traditional Food Practices for Tourist Engagement

S. Senthilkumar

Assistant Professor, Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education (Deemed to be University), Krishnankoil, Tamil Nadu, India

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-9928-4919>

J. S. Satish

Assistant Professor, T. John College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

P. Manikandan

Assistant Professor, T. John College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Abstract

The World Food Travel Association reports that 80% of travellers actively seek out culinary experiences while away from home, highlighting the inseparable link between food and tourism. This paper focuses on unravelling the influence of gender on tourists' preferences for local cuisine. Employing a random sampling method, respondents were selected, and structured questionnaires were administered to collect data. The subsequent analysis involves utilizing descriptive statistics to present a comprehensive overview of participants' food preferences and paired sample t-tests to discern potential gender-based variations. By exploring this intersection of gender and gastronomy in travel, the research aims to contribute nuanced insights into how diverse preferences shape the overall culinary tourism experience, providing valuable knowledge for both academic and practical considerations in the field.

Keywords: Culinary Tourism, Gender Influence, Tourist Preference, Local Cuisine, Madurai.

Introduction

Culinary heritage tourism has emerged as a dynamic and multifaceted domain within the broader field of cultural tourism, captivating the senses and imaginations of travellers worldwide. As the World Food Travel Association reports that 80% of travellers actively seek out culinary experiences, the intersection of traditional food practices and tourist engagement becomes increasingly critical. This research endeavours to delve into the intricate relationship between culinary heritage and tourism, specifically focusing on the preservation and promotion of traditional food practices for enhanced tourist engagement.

The rich tapestry of culinary heritage, intricately woven into the cultural fabric of destinations, faces the challenge of preservation in the face of globalization and mass tourism. Scholars like (Hall and Mitchell) underscore the pivotal role of culinary heritage in shaping the uniqueness of a destination, offering a sensory and cultural experience that goes beyond conventional tourism (p. 234). The act of preserving traditional food practices becomes an imperative strategy in sustaining a region's cultural authenticity amid the evolving landscape of culinary globalization (Richards and Munsters).

As tourists increasingly seek authentic and culturally rich experiences, food emerges as a significant driver of destination choice (Long). Culinary heritage, therefore, serves as a gateway for tourists to explore and understand the cultural nuances of a destination, making it an integral component of the overall tourism experience (Hjalager and Richards).

This study aims to contribute to the academic discourse by exploring effective strategies for the preservation and promotion of culinary heritage, considering the intricate balance between safeguarding authenticity and engaging tourists. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, the research seeks to provide valuable insights for destination managers and policymakers navigating the complex terrain of culinary heritage tourism. In an era where tourists seek genuine and culturally immersive experiences, understanding how to showcase and protect culinary heritage becomes imperative for the sustainable development of tourism destinations.

Literature Review

Culinary heritage tourism has gained increasing attention in scholarly discourse, reflecting a growing recognition of the intrinsic link between cultural identity, traditional food practices, and tourist engagement. As identified by (Hall and Mitchell) culinary heritage plays a pivotal role in shaping the uniqueness of a destination, offering a sensory and cultural experience that transcends the boundaries of traditional tourism (p. 234). The act of preserving and promoting traditional food practices becomes crucial in sustaining a region's cultural authenticity amid the globalization of culinary landscapes (Richards and Munsters)

One key aspect is the impact of culinary heritage on tourist decision-making. According to (Long), tourists are increasingly seeking authentic and culturally rich experiences, and food is a significant driver of destination choice (p. 112). Tourists view traditional food practices as a gateway to understanding the cultural nuances of a destination, making culinary heritage an essential component of the overall tourism experience (Hjalager and Richards). Furthermore, scholars have explored

the role of gastronomy as a tool for destination differentiation. In their seminal work, (Hall et al.) highlights how culinary heritage distinguishes a destination from others, fostering a sense of place and attracting tourists seeking unique experiences (p. 56). The preservation of traditional food practices thus emerges as a strategic imperative for destination managers keen on creating a competitive edge in the global tourism market (Connor)

However, challenges exist in balancing preservation with tourism development. (Butler and Hinch) caution that unchecked tourism can lead to the commodification and commercialization of culinary heritage, potentially diluting its authenticity (p. 172). Striking a delicate balance between preservation and engagement is, therefore, a complex task faced by destination stakeholders.

Recent literature emphasizes the transformative potential of culinary heritage tourism in fostering community development and cultural preservation. (Carlsen) contend that when effectively managed, culinary tourism can contribute to community empowerment, economic development, and the preservation of culinary traditions (p. 189). The active involvement of local communities in the process is highlighted by (Jamal and Robinson) who argue for a community-based approach to culinary heritage tourism to ensure its sustainability and authenticity (p. 67).

Moreover, the evolving role of technology in shaping culinary tourism experiences has been explored by researchers. (Kim) delve into the influence of social media and digital platforms on culinary tourism, noting their role in disseminating information, shaping perceptions, and influencing travel decisions (p. 325). The intersection of technology and culinary heritage presents opportunities for destinations to reach wider audiences and engage tourists in innovative ways.

However, challenges persist in measuring the impact and success of culinary heritage tourism initiatives. (Hall et al.) emphasize the need for comprehensive evaluation frameworks that consider both economic and socio-cultural impacts to gauge the effectiveness of preservation strategies (p. 90). This aligns with the broader call for more rigorous assessment methodologies in cultural tourism research (Richards and Munsters)

In the context of culinary heritage tourism's global evolution, certain studies explore regional variations and unique challenges. For instance, (Hall et al.) provide insights into the distinctive features of food tourism in different regions, recognizing the diversity of culinary heritage and the necessity for tailored preservation approaches (p. 124).

Objectives of the study

1. To comprehend the choices of indigenous cuisine among travellers.
2. To investigate whether the culinary experience has the potential to influence the overall satisfaction of the travel experience.

Hypothesis of the Study

- H_0 : There is a significant relationship between gender and preferring local food during travel.
- H_1 : There is a no significant relationship between gender and preferring local food during travel.

Result and Analysis

The analysis of results was conducted using SPSS version 25. The frequency distribution of participants is presented in Table 1. A total of 74 respondents took part in this study, with 59.5% (44) being male and 40.5% (30) female. The largest portion of respondents, accounting for 39.2%, falls within the 36–40 age group. Following this, 20.3%, 14.9%, and 17.6% belong to the 41–45, 25–35, and 46–50 age groups, respectively. Only 8.1% are categorized as

above 50 years old. Concerning travel frequency, 45.9% of respondents indicated traveling once in 2–3 months. Additionally, 40.5% mostly selected 'sometimes,' 27% 'rarely,' and only 24.3% 'very often' for their preference of local food during travel. Notably, 21.6% (16) of respondents mentioned that they travel specifically for the purpose of exploring different cuisines.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of the respondents

Frequency Statistics			
		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	44	59.5
	Female	30	40.5
Age Group	25-35	11	14.9
	36-40	29	39.2
	41-45	15	20.3
	46-50	13	17.6
	Above 50	6	8.1
How often do you travel	Rarely	16	21.6
	Once in 2-3 months	34	45.9
	Once in a Month	15	20.3
	More than once in a month	9	12.2
Preference of Local Foods	Very often	18	24.3
	Sometimes	30	40.5
	Rarely	20	27
	Never	6	8.1

Table 2 Frequency Count of the Respondents

Do you Agree Experience on Local Food Can Change Overall Experience of the Travel					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	34	45.9	45.9	45.9
	Not sure	28	37.8	37.8	83.8
	Disagree	12	16.2	16.2	100.0
	Total	74	100.0	100.0	

Above Table 2 illustrates that a significant portion of the participants concurs that their food preferences while traveling can significantly impact their overall travel experience, with approximately 45.9% expressing agreement with this statement.

The subsequent paired sample t-test table delineates the correlation between gender and food preferences during travel, examining the notion that food preferences have the potential to influence the overall travel experience.

Table 3 Paired Sample T-Test Results

Paired Differences						
		Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Pair 1	Sex-Do you prefer local food during your Travel	-.78378	1.076	.125	73	.000
Pair 2	Sex-Do you ever travel especially for food	-.37838	-6.26	.078	73	.000
Pair 3	Sex - Do you agree experience on local food can change overall experience of the travel.	-.29730	-4.81	.091	73	.002

Table 3 presenting the paired sample t-test results, indicates a lack of a notable association between gender and food preferences, as evidenced by the t-value $\{t(0.125), p(0.000) < 0.05\}$. Similarly, there is no significant correlation between gender and the belief that experiences with local food can impact the overall tourism experience, as indicated by the t-value $\{t(0.786), p(0.000) < 0.05\}$. Consequently, it can be concluded that both food preferences and travel experiences do not exhibit variations based on gender.

Conclusion

This research indicates that there is no substantial correlation between gender and the inclination towards local food when traveling to different destinations. Moreover, the study uncovers that a significant number of travellers acknowledge that their preference for local cuisine is not consistent. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the culinary experience significantly influences the overall travel experience, prompting travellers to share their experiences with friends and family. Therefore, it is imperative for the hotel industry to prioritize customer satisfaction concerning food preferences and recommendations, as these factors can profoundly influence the overall customer experience and contribute to shaping the industry's image.

Author Details

S. Senthilkumar, Assistant Professor, Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education (Deemed to be University), Krishnankoil, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email ID:** ssenthilkumar@klu.ac.in

J. S. Satish, Assistant Professor, T. John College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India, **Email ID:** satishjs@tjohnngroup.com

P. Manikandan, Assistant Professor, T. John College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India, **Email ID:** manikandan@tjohnngroup.com

References

- Butler, Richard, and Tom Hinch. *Tourism and Indigenous Peoples: Issues and Implications*. Elsevier.
- Carlsen, Jack. *Global Wine Tourism: Research, Management and Marketing*. CAB International, 2006.
- Connor, Justin O. *The Cultural and Creative Industries: A Review of the Literature*. Creativity Culture & Education, 2010.
- Hall, C. Michael, and Richard Mitchell. *Wine Marketing: A Practical Guide*. Routledge, 2008.
- Hall, C. Michael, et al. *Food Tourism around the World: Development, Management and Markets*. Routledge, 2003.
- Hjalager, Anne-Mette, and Greg Richards. *Tourism and Gastronomy*. Routledge, 2002.
- Jamal, Tazim, and Mike Robinson. *The SAGE Handbook of Tourism Studies*. SAGE Publications, 2009.
- Kim, S. S. *A Review of Tourism Research on Food*. 2013.
- Long, Lucy M. *Culinary Tourism*. The University Press of Kentucky, 2012.
- Richards, Greg, and Wil Munsters. *Cultural Tourism Research Methods*. CAB International. 2010.