



Culinary tourists in the Spanish region of Extremadura, Spain

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Abstract

Food and wine are considered to be part of the cultural identity of an area. In recent years, this identity has been getting stronger and creating possibilities for tourist destinations which, in turn, is supporting the economic development of certain regions. This paper presents a study into the relationship between wine, food and culture in the Spanish region of Extremadura. As part of this study, a survey of tourists dining in restaurants of the city of Cáceres was carried out. The main results of this study show that food and wine are closely linked to culture; cuisine and culture are the resources which tourists value most highly and desire most; and culinary tourists are distinguished by their high cultural and income levels, which make them an attractive market segment for tourist destinations.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is constantly changing and at present is seeking to meet the needs of increasingly demanding tourists. Modern tourists are able to choose from a wide range of destinations and want to have active experiences instead of playing a passive role. As a result of these changes, thematic tourism has become more popular, in which everything linked to the recovery and enhancement of the cultural, social and environmental heritage of different geographical regions plays a key role. Therefore, in recent years there has been a firm commitment to everything linked to culinary traditions and wine or, in other words, with cultural and historical resources which reflect the identity of a specific geographical area. In this sense, wine,

cuisine, culture and tourism appear to form a perfect symbiosis for tourists, allowing them to appreciate different products and get to know different destinations, therefore promoting the sustainable economic development of certain areas (López-Guzmán and Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012).

According to Stewart et al. (2008), this type of tourism promotes the idea that wine and food can act as the main attractions for visiting a region and are not necessarily secondary or additional attractions. Wine and local cuisine are reflections of the cultural and social heritage of places, which in themselves represent the idiosyncrasies of their inhabitants. This kind of tourism offer can be broadly defined as the ‘wine landscape’ (Brunori and Rossi, 2000).

The aim of this paper is to present an analysis of how food and wine can strengthen a specific cultural destination, such as the city of Cáceres in Spain. The city, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, is located in the south west of Spain, in the region of Extremadura. This area boasts the *Ribera del Guadiana* Designation of Origin (DO) for its wines, among others. In this paper, the results of a study carried out in this city are presented, the aim of which is to identify the profile of tourists for whom the main motivation of their trip was to learn about the wine culture of the area. Tourists were

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approached whilst eating in certain restaurants in the city which had been previously selected by the researchers. More concretely, this paper is focussed on an analysis of the profile of tourists visiting a cultural destination, as is the city of Cáceres, and for whom the main motivation for travelling was to gain a cultural understanding of the city which includes enhancing their interest in local wine and culinary culture. Due to its rich cultural and culinary heritage, Cáceres appears to be an ideal location to carry out this research. Following this introduction, this paper is divided into distinct sections. Next, the relationship between food and wine tourism is discussed, followed by an analysis of the development of wine tourism in Spain. The geographical area is then described, paying particular attention to the *Ribera del Guadiana* Designation of Origin. The methodology used will also be presented, as well as the main results of the research, followed by conclusions and references.

2. Literature review

According to [Getz and Brown \(2006\)](#), wine tourism can be simultaneously defined as a consumer behaviour, a strategy for the development of a given region and its wine market, and an opportunity to allow wineries to sell their products directly to consumers. [Hall et al. \(2000:3\)](#) consider wine tourism to consist of visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows, for which wine tasting and experiencing the attributes of a particular wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors. The origin of research in the field of wine tourism dates back to the mid 1990s, with the primary focus being the New World ([Beverland, 2000](#); [Charters and Menival, 2011](#)). These early works focussed on two aspects: the study of the behaviour of tourists visiting wineries ([Alebaki and Lakouidou, 2011](#); [Sampaio, 2012](#)) and the analysis of the socioeconomic impact the development of this kind of tourism has in rural areas ([Getz, 2000](#)). The studies which marked the beginning of research into this field are as follows: *Wine tourism around the world* ([Hall et al., 2000](#)), *Explore wine tourism* ([Getz, 2000](#)), *Wine, food and tourism marketing* ([Hall, 2003](#)), *Global Wine Tourism* ([Carlsen and Charters, 2006](#)) and *Food and wine tourism* ([Croce and Perri, 2010](#)).

Wine tourism is not defined or conceptualised in a uniform manner in the existing literature in this field and it has been analysed from many perspectives. A review of the various definitions and conceptualisations of wine tourism has been developed by [Clemente-Ricolfe et al. \(2012\)](#). Similarly, [Mitchell and Hall \(2006\)](#) believe there are seven key topics within the field of wine tourism: wine tourism as a product and its development; wine tourism and regional development; the size of the winery visitor market; winery visitor segments; the behaviour of winery visitors; the nature of the visitor experience; and the biosecurity risks posed by visitors.

There exist several studies which have focused on analysing the demand for wine tourism. [Charters and Ali-Knight \(2002\)](#) proposed that tourists can be classified using three different dimensions: the purpose of their visit, their general motivation

for travelling and the relationship they have with other tourist activities. However, other studies look into the different motivations and profiles found amongst specific groups, such as for example national and international tourists ([Alonso et al., 2007a](#)), male and female ([Fraser et al., 2008](#)), age groups ([Alonso et al., 2007b](#)) and region of origin ([Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias, 2012](#)).

Profiling of wine tourists and analyses of their motivations have been carried out in various geographical areas including Champagne ([Charters and Menival, 2011](#)), Calgary ([Getz and Brown, 2006](#)), Madeira ([Sampaio, 2012](#)) and northern Greece ([Alebaki and Lakouidou, 2011](#)).

Food and wine tourism has been studied applying a variety of different concepts (gourmet tourism, cuisine tourism, gastronomic tourism, culinary tourism, etc.) which imply higher or lower levels of motivation ([Hall and Sharples, 2008](#)). In this particular study, the term of culinary tourism is adopted. Using this concept, food is considered to be a major motivator and a significant part of the overall tourist experience ([Hall and Sharples, 2008](#)).

Culinary tourism assumes a relationship between food and tourism. Therefore, in accordance with the work of [Henderson \(2009\)](#), it is possible to identify three different lines of research: firstly, the role of food as a tourism product, which encapsulates matters such as food festivals and farmers' markets; secondly, the use of food as a marketing tool to strengthen the appeal of a tourism destination, such as in the case of food festivals; and thirdly, the establishment of culinary tourism as a vehicle for economic development within a given geographical area, as is the case with cluster strategies when applied to the agricultural industry. Therefore, the scientific literature (above all [Tikkanen, 2007](#)) states that cuisine (and wine) provides a synergy with tourism through a series of variables. Firstly, it acts as an attraction, which means the destination can use its local cuisine as a resource in promoting and advertising that specific region. Secondly, it can be a component of a more generic tourism product, of which the focus would be the design of culinary tourist routes ([Hillel et al., 2013](#)). Thirdly, it may be an experience, dealing with the existence of one or several places where the cuisine has attained a level of excellence and has therefore become an attraction in itself. Fourthly, it may be considered a cultural phenomenon, which is sustained by the presence of culinary events ([Smith and Costello, 2009](#)). Consequently, culinary tourism demonstrates a greater or lesser degree of development depending on the intensity of the connection between culinary traditions, local culture, agricultural production and the natural resources found in the area in which tourism is being developed ([Riley, 2005](#); [Smith and Costello, 2009](#)) since cuisine becomes the link between a satisfactory experience for the tourist and the sociocultural heritage of the destination ([Ignatov and Smith, 2006](#)).

Wine tourism in Europe has been structured primarily through the design and creation of tourist routes, which have been given intriguing names such as *La Strada del Vino* (Italy), *Routes des Vin* (France), *Rutas del Vino* (Spain) and *Rota do Vihno* (Portugal). Given that Europe is a continent rich

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