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Gastronomy in Tourism

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Abstract

Culinary culture has been an area that has been ignored until recently. However, culinary culture is always the longest-surviving part of a culture and tradition. To put it in a different way, cuisines where many different identities of a society merge together and national feelings are felt most are a mirror of daily life styles, religious beliefs, habits, traditions and customs. Changes of eating style in societies and rising the value of eating socially have been one of the reasons for movements in tourism activities. Gastronomy tourism has become major and has become a rapidly growing component of the attractiveness of tourism destination in recent years. The marketing opportunities to gastronomy tourism are being developed by the countries given importance to that issue. Tourists' wishes to experience the local tastes in the destinations and accommodation facilities have prepared the ground for the development of gastronomy tourism. Tourism businesses that realized the importance to gastronomy tourism given by local and foreign tourists have featured the gastronomic factors in their facilities. Therefore, it is ensured that to take attention for gastronomy, tourism should be managed in coordination with all tourism- related foundations and civil society organizations and with the encouragement of relevant ministries. In addition, the promotional activities are required to be taken in measurable ways by gastronomic tourism developers.

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1. Introduction

Eating, which in today's world is one of the physical needs and in relation with the developing tourism sector and food and beverage industry, has led to the emergence of a sector that has become to be seen as leisure time activities and desired to be met outside. Almost all tourists, no matter the accommodations at which they are staying provide food and beverages services or not, prefer to eat outside; and get to know and taste the local dishes belonging to the region. Within this context, local dishes of a region have become important means to get to know and learn more about a different culture (Kastenholz & Davis 1999; Gyimothy et al., 2000; Joppe et al., 2001).

A tourist might want to visit an area to have some new cultural experience, or they just want to try local dishes and different tastes belonging to that area as well. As a result of this, such reasons as trying local dishes of an area and observing production phases of and tasting a local dish which is made of a raw material available only in that specific region have now begun to be among the main reasons that affect tourists' preferences for destinations to visit. Moreover, this will contribute to the sustainability of the regions' resources and also to alternative tourism facilities that can be structured in regions with food culture coming into prominence (Yuncu, 2010).

Gastronomy is now seen as a determinant factor in attracting tourists while they choose destinations. Gastronomic tourism can become an alternative tourism type on its own to sun and sea destinations, and it can also serve as an activity supporting these destinations (Shenoy, 2005; Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Ulusoy, 2008).

2. Gastronomy

The word "gastronomy" was formed by merging the Greek words "gaster" (stomach) and "nomas" (law). However, it is more useful and important to interpret what it denotes and covers beyond its dictionary meaning, instead of its dictionary meaning only (Altinel, 2014).

Although "gastronomy" is defined as the art of eating and drinking in many sources, it in fact is an inter-related branch of art and science that has a direct relation with chemistry, literature, biology, geology, history, music, philosophy, psychology, sociology, medicine, nutrition, and agriculture (Kivela & Crofts, 2006). As the topic is about eating and drinking, this covers such issues as nutritional sciences, sense of tasting and its physiology, wine production, functions of nutritional elements in human body, specifying qualities in choosing food stuffs, and developing production processes in accordance with hygiene and sanitation norms to prevent foods from going off physically, chemically, and biologically (Shenoy, 2005).

The purpose of gastronomy is to maintain human health with best nutrition possible and ensuring enjoying life and eating; food and beverages' being produced in hygienic environments and prepared to be consumed in a way that will address to palatal and visual pleasure are also among the study topics of gastronomy.

3. Gastronomic Tourism

Tourism in today's world is one of the most important economic sectors and leisure time spending activities, and the facts that it has a great multiplier effect economically and can cause directly and indirectly an activation in many sub-sectors make it an ideal development means (Cagli, 2012).

Tourism, which has a driving role in development of societies, is a source of income for those providing services as people spend to meet their needs when they are travelling. As people's needs increase, so does the obligation of producing and offering more and more goods and services, which increases production, investment, and income in societies (Akgoz, 2003). Tourism affects nations, people and nations' establishing relations with one another, and it also integrates the phenomena of culture, heritage, economy, and environment; therefore, orienting its development, and its coordination and control are highly crucial issues (Cagli, 2012).

Although such different terms like "culinary tourism", "gastronomy tourism", "gastro-tourism", "wine tourism", "food tourism", and "gourmet tourism" are used in literature to define it, the widely used term "gastronomic tourism" is defined as "being in pursuit of unique experience of eating and drinking." Gastronomy tourism, which generally refers to the originality of a dish and its being indigenous to a place, a region or a country, covers the main areas of indigenous dishes and wine tourism (Hall & Mitchell, 2000; Groves 2001, Green & Dogherty, 2008; Cagli 2012, URL 2014).

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