



CUISINE – A REGIONAL TOURISM DIFFERENTIATION TOOL

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Abstract

Good for the stomach, but excellent also for business, gastronomic tourism has flourished greatly in the previous year's having an adventurous and exotic side, but at the same time allowing direct contact with the cuisine of a country and a healthy "serving" conditions as it really is and not as often inaccurately describes the dozen brochures or travel guides. Gastronomic tourism addresses both amateurs in search of new recipes and unique culinary indulgences and professionals involved in the food industry or tourism, for both there is currently prime destinations interest either in Europe or overseas or in faraway Asia. Our article tries to find as far as possible the culinary particularities of the various that could generate interest from tourists, and to accomplish this we made a descriptive exploratory research based on the data available online. Finally we present our findings and conclusions.

Key words:

Cuisine, regional cuisine, food, tourism

JEL Codes:

L66, Q00, L8

Cuisine is a language that everyone speaks and understands (Opazo, 2012).

1. Introduction

Countries are often identified by the food eaten when visiting them- its more than a consideration made by foodie travelers; it's almost become a positive (or negative) stereotype. The ever-expanding culinary tourism industry advances both tourist destinations and tourist businesses the chance to create for themselves a unique competitive gain by creating a positive connection between food and particular local and national traits.

"Cuisine" aims on styles of food preparation and cooking alone, while "gastronomy" is involved with the consumption of food and drink in a more general sense, and particularly with the satisfaction of good food and beverages as part of a comfortable or appealingly superior lifestyle (Hornig & Tsai, 2010). "Culinary" is the adjectival form of "cuisine" but it tends to emphasize the actual practice (e.g. "culinary utensils") and style of food preparation and consumption as well as (like the noun "cuisine") the social context in which food is acquired, cooked and eaten. "Culinary" can therefore refer to ingredients, prepared foods, beverages, food production, motivations, activities, institutional structures, and food tourism itself.

Destination product portfolios consist of a variety of tangible and intangible goods and services. Food can form one of the most important of these elements. It can act as either a primary or secondary trip motivator (Bendegul, Fevzi & Bob, 2007) that adds value to the

image of a destination. Food is one of the most pleasing activities that tourists undertake during their holiday, and, interestingly, is the item that they are slightest likely to consider reducing expenditure to consume. Local cuisines represent a core manifestation of a destination's intangible heritage, and through its consumption, tourists can gain a truly authentic cultural experience.

2. Cuisine in the world

They are many different regional cuisines in the world if we take in consideration the distribution of nations and continents. We stop in our research on: European cuisine, on Central America cuisine, on South America cuisine, on North America cuisine, on Asian cuisine, on Australia cuisine, on African cuisine and Middle East cuisine.

2.1. European cuisine

European cuisine is as varied as the many countries that make up Europe. While there are many differences between the various cuisines that fall under the term of European cuisine, there are also similarities (Europe's Food and Drink, 2011). European cuisine employs meat as a central or important ingredient of many of its dishes, be it in the form of seafood or land-based protein. Not only is meat more widely used, but portion sizes also tend to be larger.

Also important to European cuisines are sauces, seasonings and ingredients such as wheat and the humble potato, which are the primary sources of starch. Maize is seen less in Europe than in other parts of the world, though it is the basis of the wildly popular Italian polenta dishes.

The countries in Eastern Europe have many similarities between their respective cuisines and many differences. The differences lie mainly in the location and microclimate of the country. Poland is known for their national dish called bigos and flaki, which is a traditional Polish stew. Kielbasa and pierogies are also popular and are seen throughout other countries as well. Russia is famous for vodka, as well as chicken Kiev, beef stroganoff and blini. In Slovakia you can find bryndzovéhalušky, a dish of potato dumplings served with sheep cheese and bacon. This dish is often accompanied by Žinèica, a beverage made of sheep's milk whey.

The Balkan countries are, however, are much more influenced by the bounty of the Mediterranean and the availability of great produce. Even inside the Balkan Peninsula there are as many differences as there are similarities to the cuisine. According to Bradatan the persistence of similar cooking tastes all over Balkan Peninsula, despite the existence of very different political regimes and levels of development, with low contacts among people from different countries of the region, could be a result of the particular conservative characteristics of eating habits and of a low pressure toward change. Moussaka is the national dish of Greece, and in Albania the national dish is made of fried meat, liver, eggs and tomatoes. In Slovenia you can find horse meat on menus, and can even enjoy a horse burger from the Hot Horse restaurant in Ljubljana.

Northern Europe is another ethnic diversity of various dishes. Here you can find original Dutch dishes in the Netherlands, identified by "NEERLANDS DIS" on dining room signs. In the north you can also find such native specialties such as haggis from Scotland, Irish stew and chicken tika masala which is arguably England's national dish. Icelandic, Finnish and Norwegian cuisines rely thickly on the presence of the sea as do similar northern states bordering the ocean.

Western European cuisine is doubtfully the most familiar, worldwide; from Germany's national dish of sauerbraten to the famous bratwurst. Belgium is well-known for fantastic chocolate, waffles, and mussels with French-fried potatoes. Austria has gifted the humanity with weiner schnitzel and the tafelspitz from the Plachutta restaurant in Vienna. Vienna is also the only world capital which produces large quantities of wine (Vienna: The Wine Capital, 2014). In France, Lyon is considered the food capital of the country. Famous

for their cassoulet, Lyonnais sausage and tripe, it is also well known for their breads and pastry creations. Many famous chefs hail from Lyon.

Southern Europe cuisine covers many countries, but the food of Italy and Spain clearly leads the way. Italy is known for its innovative use of pasta and distinctive types of sauce. The different province of Italy has their own specialties. Some of the inland areas focus almost entirely on different meats while the coastal zone typically offers some wonderful seafood options. Each district has its own particular style of cooking as well (Southern European Cuisine, 2014). What they all have in common is a passion for food and cuisine that reflects that passion. Spain has an impressive food tradition in its own right. Similar to Italy, the type of food is very much based on the region of its origin. One characteristic of the Spanish style is the large stews and food mixtures that are often showcased in intriguing and elaborate presentations. Perhaps the most notorious example of this is the traditional Paella. Portugal and Greece are other countries in the zone that have distinctive and valued culinary traditions.

Anywhere you travel in Europe, you're never far from remarkable cuisine, and great beer and wine. The past of Europe can be tasted in the food, as several of these dishes are thousands of years old. The traditions of European countries are continued in their dishes which are loved not only by Europeans but by people of the world.

2.2. Central American cuisine (Simons, 2013)

The food of Central America is astounding in both its diversity and taste. Some of the world's favorite cuisines - corn, beans, peppers - originated in this part of the world.

Central American cuisine has been very much influenced by the flavor profiles and ingredients of other regions including Spain, Asia, India and the Caribbean. The fusion of international flavors is subtle, and their presence is much more noticeable in larger cities. Despite many gastronomical differences among the countries of Central America, they all have certain indigenous ingredients in common such as corn or maize, peppers, beans and seafood in the coastal regions.

Their breakfasts are usually very abundant, often including a dish with beans and rice, sometimes adding some pork in them. And usually it is not only healthy food but also has good taste, variety and flavor. Rice and beans is popular at lunch time as are regional specialties such as panades (fried corn shells filled with fish or beans), meat pies, or escabeche, an onion soup.

Despite the wide variety of dishes available in Central American cuisine, one thing remains constant: food is

meant to be enjoyed with family and friends, and in many countries the meal is so important that even talking is considered impolite.

2.3. South America cuisine

The foods of South America are as distinct as the countries within the continent's borders. One cause for this vast diversity is that each country in South America has been influenced by external cuisines and ingredients. Flavor profiles and culinary influences from Africa, European countries, Native Americans and even Asia have all had a hand in transforming South American cuisine into what it is today. Even though there are huge distinctions in the use of ingredients and spices from country to country, some commonalities can be found in dishes such as guacamole, salsa, mole, chimichurri, tamales, tortillas and sofritos (Explore South America, 2014).

Argentine cuisine has been heavily influenced by Italian and Spanish cuisines. Some of the world's best beef comes from Argentina. The country is famous for its grass fed cattle and the gauchos who work the open range raising these animals. The meat is normally eaten with very little seasoning, using only salt to bring out the flavor of the beef. All parts of the cow are eaten, nothing going to waste. The most traditional way to eat meat in Argentina is the *asado*, or barbecue. Beef however is not the only meat here. It is common to have an entire body of a lamb cooked over the outdoor camp fire (Typical Food of Argentina, 2014).

The cuisine of Brazil differs widely from state to state, and as a whole the country's dishes have been heavily influenced by many other countries. Brazil's national dish comes from humble origins though today it can be found on even the best menus. Feijoada is this dish, and it is a stewed combination of beef, pork and beans. Peru claims ceviche as its national dish, but this country's cuisine is so diverse that to settle on one single dish to represent it is difficult. Other popular dishes include *papa rellena* which is a dish of mashed potatoes that has been stuffed with ground meat, olives, eggs and spices then deep fried, and *pollo a la brasa*. *Pollo a la brasa* is chicken either grilled or roasted after being marinated. This dish holds the honor of being the most widely consumed dish throughout the country. The *pisco sour* is a famous Peruvian cocktail that combines pisco, lime juice, simple syrup, egg white and bitters.

2.4. North America cuisine

North American food consists of ingredients coming from four areas: Canada, the United States, Mexico, and Central America. The food in North America began with the Native Americans. The three main crops, also called the "Three Sisters", were beans, squash, and

maize. The Native Americans also used salmon, berries, deer, rabbit, and mushrooms in their dishes. When Christopher Columbus came to North America, rum became quite popular in this region. Canada's cuisine was influenced by the French and English cuisines (American Cuisine, 2011). Asian, Scandinavian, and Slavic immigrants also brought new foods with them. These cuisines were fused to make new and unique North American recipes. The cuisine of the United States combines the cuisines of the Native Americans, Asians, and Europeans. When immigrants came to the New World, they introduced new dishes and recipes. The Spanish and Aztecs made Mexican cuisine what it is today. The indigenous people had a diet of corn, tomatoes, peppers, and various herbs. Also, it was the New World that came up with chocolate. The Aztecs drank chocolate during religious rituals. Explorers tried chocolate in Mexico and were so delighted by it that decided to bring it back to their home countries. The conquistadors, on the other hand, contributed animals (chicken, pigs, sheep, and goats), barley, rice, olive oil, wheat, parsley, nuts, and a variety of spices. Central American food was influenced by many cuisines. African, European, Native American, and Asian cuisines all had a role in making Central American cuisine. Africans gave cooking techniques, Europeans brought new fruits and vegetables, Native Americans gave corn and other crops, and Asians introduced food styles and spices.

2.5. African cuisine

African cuisine is the catch-all term for all the cuisines of Africa. With hundreds of different cultural groups and myriad cooking traditions, it is unviable to isolate one particular form of cuisine and call it African. There is, however, an accent is on using locally available fruits, vegetables, grains and milk products.

The various cuisines of the continent can be broken up into geographical areas. The cuisine of East Africa focus on grains and vegetables, with meat rarely consumed. Maize is the primary ingredient in *ugali* which is the national dish of Tanzania. In Uganda, one of the most popular dishes is *matoke*, a dish of steamed green bananas. Pomegranate juice is widely consumed in East Africa.

Central African gastronomy includes ingredients such as cassava and plantains. Spinach stew, peanut stew and *bambara* which is a porridge like dish of peanut butter, rice and sugar, are all very popular. Game meats such as monkey, warthog and crocodile are common sources of protein.

The Horn of Africa is home to the increasingly popular Ethiopian cuisine. Famous chefs such as Marcus Samuelsson have helped to bring Ethiopian cuisine to North America, and now traditional dishes such as *wat*,

which is a thick stew, and injera, a sourdough flatbread, are common (Africa Food and Drink, 2013).

Southern African cuisine is a melting pot of African cuisines with European and Asian influences. A traditional dish is Potjiekos, a stew which is a stew of meat and vegetables cooked in a cast iron pot suspended over coals. Beer has conventionally been ubiquitous in South African cuisine, though mabeu is a popular non-alcoholic drink that is made from mealie pap that has been fermented. Boboti is the national dish, made with baked spiced meat with an egg-based topping. Of course South Africa is also widely known for their wine exports and world famous wineries.

Western African cuisine is heavy with starch, light on meat and generous on fat. Cooks in West Africa often use root vegetables like yams, cocoyams, and cassava, as well as cereal grains, plantains, hot spices, rice, peanuts, black-eyed peas, okra, green peas, citrus fruits, and pineapples (Global destinations, 2010). Couscous is popular, so is fufu, a thick paste made from grinding starchy vegetables or grains. Jollof rice is very popular; a dish including rice, tomatoes and spices. Water, palm wine and millet beer are common beverages.

The cuisine of North Africa is a perfect hybrid of the bounty of the continent and the Mediterranean (Chef, 2011). Meat stews prepared in urns are popular in several countries, and in Egypt koshari, a dish of pasta, lentils and rice is considered to be the national dish. Also popular in Egypt is fulmedames, a dish of mashed fava beans. Interestingly, falafel originates in Egypt.

African cuisine is as varied as the continent itself. A culinary tour of Africa involves myriad exotic spices, game meats, starches, ancient grains and fermented beverages. Cultural cooking techniques have been preserved for thousands of years and while African cuisine has been influenced to a small degree by the outside world, it remains very much as it has since the beginning of time.

2.6. Australian cuisine

Australian cuisine has taken on many international flavors and styles from places like the United Kingdom, Asia, the Mediterranean and other regions. The result is a cuisine that is distinctly Australian, but with subtle reminders of the influences of other global cuisines.

Australia is proud of their wine and beer production, and they have achieved global recognition. Beer in Australia is strong and has an alcohol content of about 5 percent. Coopers, James Squire and of course Fosters, are all well-known brands. Darwin is home to the largest beer bottle available for purchase. At 1.25 liters, this behemoth is called the Darwin Stubby. Wines are mostly produced in the Barossa Valley, Hunter Valley or Yarra Valley and each has varietal specialties (Australia and Oceania, 2010).

Take-away is common in Australia and the British influence is predominant in fish and chips, sausage rolls and other common take-away items. Australia is renowned for its meat pies which are often served with ketchup or on a bed of mushy peas.

Vegemite is uniquely Australian, but so are chicko rolls and Anzac biscuits. Anzac biscuits and Pavlova are arguably the country's national foods.

Kangaroo meat is widely available and is priced comparably to beef, but equally iconic to Australia are the Sydney Rock Oysters, which can be enjoyed in Doyle's in Watson Bay. Brisbane is famous for their Moreton Bay Bugs. These crustaceans are a kind of slipper lobster, and mud crabs and freshwater crayfish (yabbies) are also regarded as regional specialties.

Bush tucker it can refer to any kind of food that might be consumed, such as witchetty grubs and bogong moths. Traditional bush tucker is innovative and unique: food sources extend from the swollen abdomens of honey ants to witchetty grubs; goanna to nectar-bearing flowers such as the bottlebrush. Australia's native foods have seen a revival over the past couple of decades.

This new industry is based on a number of advantages: native foods are naturally adapted to Australia's environment, they are ecologically sound, and they are more resistant to Australia's extremes in temperature and rainfall (Food, 2008).

2.7. Asian cuisine

Like many other global cuisines, Asian cuisine is as varied as the countries on the continent. Asian cuisine is very much a part of the culture and history of the Asian countries but there are some food commonalities between the various cultures. In Asian cooking, the emphasis is on smaller portions, smaller amounts of meats and plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Unlike the Asian-hybrid cooking that can be found elsewhere, traditional Asian food preparation involves very little fat, and very rarely is anything deep fried (Explore Asia, 2013).

While there are few commonalities binding Asian cuisine, there are many more differences that are based primarily on location. East Asian cuisine encompasses Chinese and Japanese cuisines as well as cuisines from Taiwan and Korea. Chinese cuisine is perhaps most famous for its Peking Duck (Peking Duck, 2005) as well as the myriad dumplings, steamed buns and stir-frys that are staples of Chinese cooking. Be sure to try different styles of Chinese cuisine such as Cantonese or Shandong. Chinese usually eat congee porridge for breakfast. China is also renowned for its many varieties of tea; this ancient beverage has been enjoyed for thousands of years in China. Japanese cuisine focuses on the freshness of ingredients and foods that are prepared more simply but with great

finesse. Theirs is a very healthy cuisine, and they are known for eating myriad varieties of fresh fish. A must see market for foodies and culinary travelers in Japan, is the Tsukiji Market which is the world's largest fish market. Have some sushi for breakfast, while watching all the hustle of the market.

South Asian cuisine is also known as Desi cuisine and includes the exotic flavors of India. India has plenty of restaurants but the street food culture remains ever popular. Popular on a more global scale is Thai food. Pad Thai is universally recognized as the national dish of Thailand, and makong is a kind of Thai whiskey that has become much more affordable since the government started taxing beer and thus much more popular. Makong is the primary ingredient in Thailand's welcome drink, the SabaiSabai. The Philippines is well known for the adobo cooking style which is a preparation of chicken or pork that is braised slowly in vinegar, garlic, oil and soy sauce until very tender and nearly dry. In Vietnam, pho is of course the national specialty (Rodgers, 2014). Bali Indonesia's national dish is nasigoreng and in Cambodia one can find amok, a dish of curried and steamed fish, as the national dish. On the islands of Java, or Sumatra, see if you can drink the rarest and most expensive coffee in the world, called Kopi Luwak, it's made from coffee berries that have passed through the digestive system of Indonesian monkeys (also known as a Palm Toddy Cat).

Asian cuisine is exotic and flavorful. The clever use of cooking techniques and spices has transformed what were originally humble peasant food dishes into specialties that are now known the world over.

2.8. Middle East cuisine

Nonetheless the cultures and inhabitants of the Middle East can be quite unique there are remarkable evenness in the kinds of gastronomies that are typically prepared. Ingredients like olive oil and olives, sesame seeds, chickpeas, mint, honey, pita bread and more are seen all over the Middle East and belong to no individual culture.

The Middle East is an area of gastronomic importance, both presently and historically. Fermentation was come into being in this zone allowing for the development of leavened breads and beer. In addition, wheat, pistachios, figs and dates were amongst those items to be cultivated at a very early period in time.

The Middle East is also an area whose cuisine has been inspired by many outside countries and people. The Mongol invaders introduced dumplings, trade with India introduced exotic spices such as garlic, cumin and turmeric, okra came to the area by way of Africa and the New World contributed tomatoes to the development of the regional cuisine.

Middle Eastern food is part of a vibrant cultural experience. The Arabic cultures of the Middle East find great joy in evenings filled with food, family and gregarious conversation. Extended families of over 20 people dining and dancing well into the night is the norm. The people are family centric and exceedingly generous (Middle Eastern cuisine, 2014).

Many local dishes in the Middle East are prepared with tahini which is a sesame seed paste. It is a widespread ingredient in baba ghanoush and hummus, and is often served together with kofta, keftes, falafel and vegetables.

Israel is a melting pot of cultures and while there is no firm consensus on a national dish, many consider falafel and blintzes to be most common (Explore the Middle East, 2014). Coffee is very important in Israel and in much of the Middle East.

Arabic cuisine in general is influenced by the nomadic Bedouins, and especially the cuisine of Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. Jordan's cuisine is part of this culinary heritage, and shares many of the characteristics. Within the Arabic culture food is an important aspect and used to express hospitality and generosity, Arabic cuisine delights the gourmet, and feasting is a preoccupation not only of Jordan, but of the Middle East as a whole. Jordan's cuisine, although unique, is part of this distinctive culinary heritage, which have been savored for well over a thousand years (Jordainien cuisine, 2014).

The Turkish cuisine, which had originated from the blending of the Asian, European, Middle Eastern and African cultures and evolved under the influence of the Seljuk and Ottoman Cuisines over the centuries, offers thousands of various dishes and delicacies (Turkish cuisine, 2014). Turkish cuisine evolved long before the Common Era, during the times of hunting and gathering. Turkey is home to the famous donerkebab, and the entire kebab style of preparing and serving meat. This national dish shares the honor with kofte, which are fried meatballs.

3. Conclusions

The international cuisine varies from country to country and from region to region. From all the cuisine in the world one has a major impact on the others and that is the European cuisine.

Nowadays the local cuisines from different regions are a mix of old cuisine and European cuisine. These combinations of tastes and flavour make this "new cuisine" a uniqueness.

This unique aspect gives to different regions an exceptional tourism advantages.

People like to "explore" this new taste, like to experience this new tendencies offer by the gastronomy sector.

Another world phenomenal that we observed is that cuisine specific to one region is now famous throughout the world. Chinese, Japanese and Lebanon cuisine are a handful of examples for this trend.

People from around the world start to appreciate foreign dishes and so they contribute to the spread of “wealth” in the world.

Some cuisine origin from ancient’s times and that makes this a way to preserve traditions and cultural identity for local inhabitants and a way to promote tourism for food lovers.

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