



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

Department of Agronomy, Food, Natural Resources,
Animals and Environment

Second Cycle Degree (MSc)
in Italian Food and Wine

Beyond the Meal: Uncovering the Learning Potential
in Culinary Tourism

Supervisor

Prof. Matthew J. Stone

Submitted by
Sara Kalami

Student No.
2040539

ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Matthew J Stone, for his guidance and support throughout this journey.

I am deeply thankful to my sister Soodeh whom I love the most for always being there for me.

I sincerely appreciate my mom for her patience and encouragement.

I am truly grateful to my dad for his endless love and unwavering support.

A heartfelt thank you to my grandma for her kindness and prayers, which have always given me strength.

Special thanks to Milad for his endless help and support.

I would also like to thank all my friends in Italy and Iran for their presence, help, and energy.

This thesis would not have been possible without them.

Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Abstract | 6 |
| 1. Introduction | 8 |
| 2. Literature Review | 10 |
| 2.1. A Brief Overview of Culinary/Food Tourism | 10 |
| 2.2. Why is Culinary Tourism Important? | 10 |
| 2.2.1. Economic Impact..... | 11 |
| 2.2.2. Leads to Economic, Socio-Cultural, and Environmental Sustainability | 11 |
| 2.2.3. Benefits to the Traveler | 13 |
| 2.3. Learning Through Travel | 14 |
| 2.3.1. Learning | 14 |
| 2.3.2. Experiential Learning..... | 14 |
| 2.3.3. Learning from Travel: A Historical Perspective..... | 15 |
| 2.3.4. Educational Tourism..... | 15 |
| 2.3.5. Cultural and Personal Growth | 16 |
| 2.4. Learning Through Food/Culinary Tourism | 16 |
| 2.4.1. Defining Culinary Tourism..... | 17 |
| 2.4.2. Food Tourism and Cultural Learning..... | 17 |
| 2.4.3. The Educational Aspect of Culinary Tourism..... | 17 |
| 2.4.4. Sustainability and Global Impact | 18 |
| 2.4.5. Authenticity and Cultural Immersion..... | 18 |
| 2.4.6. Hands-On Engagement in Food Experiences | 18 |
| 2.4.7. Sensory and Emotional Aspects | 19 |
| 2.4.8. Lifelong Learning through Food Tourism | 19 |
| 2.5. Intercultural Competence | 19 |
| 2.6. Conclusion | 21 |
| 3. Research Methodology | 23 |
| 3.1. Research Approach..... | 23 |

| | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 3.2. | Survey design..... | 23 |
| 3.2.1. | Demographic factors..... | 24 |
| 3.2.2. | Awareness and interest in culinary tourism | 24 |
| 3.2.3. | Personal outcomes of culinary tourism | 24 |
| 3.2.4. | Intercultural competence | 25 |
| 3.2.5. | Barriers and Challenges | 26 |
| 3.2.6. | Learning from culinary tourism | 26 |
| 3.2.7. | Personal experience learning from culinary tourism..... | 27 |
| 3.3. | Data Collection | 27 |
| 3.4. | Data Analysis | 28 |
| 4. | Results | 30 |
| 4.1. | Demographics | 30 |
| 4.2. | Awareness and Interest in Culinary Tourism | 31 |
| 4.3. | Personal Outcomes of Culinary Tourism..... | 36 |
| 4.4. | Intercultural Competence | 39 |
| 4.5. | Barriers And Challenges | 43 |
| 4.5.1. | Language Barriers | 44 |
| 4.5.2. | Cultural Barriers..... | 44 |
| 4.5.3. | Cost of Food and Drink Activities | 44 |
| 4.5.4. | Time Constraints..... | 44 |
| 4.5.5. | Health and Sanitation Concerns | 44 |
| 4.6. | Learning From Culinary Tourism..... | 46 |
| 4.6.1. | Dining Experiences..... | 46 |
| 4.6.2. | Food and Beverage Tours & Workshops | 47 |
| 4.6.3. | Visiting Production Sites..... | 47 |
| 4.6.4. | Food Production & Markets..... | 47 |
| 4.6.5. | Specialty Food Experiences | 47 |
| 4.7. | Personal experience learning from culinary tourism | 50 |
| 4.7.1. | Traditional Dishes and Regional Ingredients | 50 |

| | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 4.7.2. | Culinary Markets and Local Producers | 51 |
| 4.7.3. | Guided Food Experiences and Hands-On Learning | 51 |
| 4.7.4. | Social, Historical, and Economic Influences on Food..... | 52 |
| 4.7.5. | Unexpected Cultural Realizations | 52 |
| 5. | Discussion | 54 |
| 6. | Conclusion | 58 |
| 6.1. | Conclusion | 58 |
| 6.2. | Limitations..... | 59 |
| | References | 60 |
| | Appendix | 71 |

Abstract

This research explores culinary tourism as a pathway for educational engagement. Culinary tourism (also called gastronomic tourism or food tourism), encompassing immersive experiences such as cooking classes and food tours and unique local experiences like dining at landmark restaurants, allows travelers to forge deep connections with their destinations' cultural identities and traditions (Wolf, 2014; Stone et al., 2020). This sector significantly benefits local economies, promotes cultural preservation, and aligns global sustainability goals by enhancing awareness of socio-cultural and environmental issues (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Bertella & Vidmar, 2019). In addition to providing economic benefits. Research on culinary tourism has considered a variety of perspectives, including those of businesses, destinations, and tourists.

Travel has been associated with learning (Stone & Petrick, 2013), and culinary tourism emerges as a potent mechanism for education and cultural exchange, benefiting both travelers and the destinations they explore (Du Rand & Heath, 2006; Stone, Migacz, & Wolf, 2022). However, there is limited empirical evidence on how culinary tourism may contribute to learning and intercultural competence, barriers to learning, and combining fun and education. By highlighting these underexplored aspects, the research seeks to enhance the understanding of culinary tourism's educational and cultural significance, offering a more comprehensive view of this evolving domain.

This exploratory study surveyed travelers (N= 112) from many countries. The survey results highlight key aspects of food tourism involvement, intercultural competence, learning barriers, and the balance between enjoyment and education. Over two-thirds of respondents had a medium or high involvement level with culinary tourism, and over 86% agreed that food and drink activities while traveling help to increase knowledge of different cuisines and cultural food practices.

Respondents expressed gaining Intercultural competence from food and drink activities while traveling, and this was measured in three components (intercultural responsibility, understanding, and appreciation) (Fan et al., 2022). Intercultural responsibility was reflected in participants, who reported greater openness and cultural tolerance through

food tourism. Intercultural understanding was also found, as travelers noted increased awareness of cultural differences and self-reflection. Intercultural appreciation was evident with the finding that culinary experiences strengthened their cultural connections.

Several barriers to learning were identified, with financial constraints (51.79%) as the most significant, followed by health and sanitation concerns (44.65%) and language barriers (37.50%). Cultural barriers were the least restrictive, impacting 20.53% of travelers. The study also assessed enjoyment and education in culinary tourism, finding that culinary tourism activities blend fun and learning. Most activities were viewed as both fun and educational, with visiting a cheese maker (86.61%) and a chocolate maker (85.71%) ranked highest. Eating at a food truck (55.36%) was perceived as the least educational while visiting a food museum (12.5%) was considered the least fun. These findings emphasize the role of interactive experiences in enhancing both engagement and learning in culinary tourism.

1. Introduction

Culinary tourism, commonly called food or gastronomic tourism, has developed into a unique and fascinating type of travel focused on discovering food and beverages as a means of cultural immersion and personal development. Culinary tourism is a subset of cultural tourism (Stone, 2022). It is characterized by the quest for exceptional and unforgettable food and drink experiences, involving various activities such as dining at local restaurants, cooking classes, following food trails, and visiting markets, breweries, and farms (Wolf, 2014; Stone et al., 2020). This travel style enables tourists to engage with local "foodways," encompassing food consumption, preparation, and presentation as cultural expressions (Long, 2004). Culinary tourism fulfills physical appetites and offers a rich social and cultural experience, frequently intersecting with cultural tourism by promoting meaningful interactions with local customs and communities (Long, 1998; Ellis et al., 2018).

Culinary tourism's significance goes beyond personal enjoyment, as it plays a crucial role in local, regional, and national economic development. According to the UNWTO, food tourism boosts agriculture and food production sectors and significantly contributes to tourism spending, with a considerable proportion of travelers' expenses allotted to food-related activities (OECD, 2012; Resmi, Dhewanto, & Dellyana, 2023). Moreover, it generates business prospects and supports local businesses, driving economic advancement while highlighting the distinctive culinary identity of various destinations (Putra, 2021; Everett & Aitchison, 2008).

In addition to its impact on economic sustainability, culinary tourism supports cultural sustainability and enriches regional identity by keeping culinary traditions alive. It also raises awareness of environmental and socio-cultural issues, promoting a deeper understanding of the complex relationships among food, culture, and the environment (Stone, Migacz, & Wolf, 2022). For the sustainable advancement of food tourism, collaboration among local stakeholders, governmental bodies, and community members is critical to balancing commercialization with preserving genuine culinary practices (Ellis et al., 2018; Mizal, Fabeil, & Pazim, 2014).

For travelers, culinary tourism provides impactful experiences that transcend simple food consumption. Through sensory experiences like tasting, smelling, and handling food—travelers engage with local traditions and cultural stories, enhancing their appreciation of a destination's character (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Ellis et al., 2018). These interactions create enduring memories, build emotional bonds, and often prompt repeat visits (Ji, Wong, Eves, & Scarles, 2016; Stone, Migacz, & Wolf, 2019). Food tourism also allows travelers to participate in cultural learning by examining local cuisines' historical and social significance, participating in practical activities like cooking classes, and interacting with local producers (Organ et al., 2015; Luoh, Tsaur, & Lo, 2020).

Despite the acknowledged significance of culinary tourism, there are considerable gaps in understanding its full potential as a medium for education and cultural interaction. Much existing research implies that culinary tourism is educational without researching in what ways. Important questions include how tourists perceive learning during culinary tourism, whether these experiences improve their intercultural competence, and the obstacles they encounter in accessing authentic and educational culinary experiences. Furthermore, little is known about the effectiveness of combining educational and entertaining aspects of culinary tourism or if travelers actively view these activities as opportunities for learning (Cela & Knowles-Lankford, 2007; Kim & Eves, 2012).

This thesis aims to fill these gaps by emphasizing tourists' viewpoints and investigating how travelers experience and perceive learning within culinary tourism. It will explore how food and beverages shape cultural understanding, assess food tourism's emotional aspects, and identify potential barriers tourists may encounter, such as language barriers, accessibility issues, or cultural differences. By concentrating on these neglected elements, this research aims to offer a thorough understanding of culinary tourism's role as an educational and transformative travel experience, underscoring its capacity to cultivate deeper connections between travelers and the destinations they visit.

2. Literature Review

2.1. A Brief Overview of Culinary/Food Tourism

Culinary tourism, often referred to as food tourism or gastronomic tourism (Horng & Tsai, 2012; Sanchez-Canizares & Lopez-Guzman, 2012), focuses on the concept of traveling primarily to enjoy food and beverages (Kivela et al., 2005). as well as participating in intentional, exploratory, or reflective food and drink activity while traveling (Stone, 2022). At its essence, culinary tourism is described as "the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experiences, both near and far" (Wolf, 2014, p. 12). World Food Travel Association's (2024) definition characterizes it as "the act of traveling for a taste of place in order to get a sense of place" (WFTA,2024). The terms food tourism, culinary tourism, and gastronomic tourism are frequently used interchangeably (UNWTO, 2012; Wolf, 2014), and following Stone (2022), the terms will be considered the same in this thesis.

As UNTWO outlines, this type of tourism encompasses a wide range of activities, such as dining at local restaurants and bars, visiting breweries and wineries, shopping at farmers' markets, touring farms, attending cooking schools, and participating in culinary events and festivals. However, food tourism is more than just eating; it connects to a destination's culture, heritage, and identity. (Ellis et al., 2018) As Long (2004) defines it, tourists immerse themselves in local "foodways," which include food consumption, preparation, and presentation as cultural expressions.

Food is not merely sustenance; it is a social and cultural experience. Food tourism is considered a subset of cultural tourism (Stone, 2022), which offers travelers a way to engage with local traditions and communities meaningfully.

2.2. Why is Culinary Tourism Important?

2.2.1. Economic Impact

As the UNWTO states, food tourism plays a significant role in fostering economic development at local, regional, and national levels. It can potentially stimulate agricultural and food production industries (Resmi, Dhewanto, and Dellyana, 2023) and contribute significantly to tourism expenditures (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). A substantial portion of what tourists spend during their travels goes toward food-related activities (OECD, 2012; OMT & BCC, 2019). Moreover, food tourism creates business opportunities and provides crucial support to local enterprises (Putra, 2021). Putra (2021) also emphasizes that the food sector is an increasingly important part of the economy, contributing to local, state, and national growth.

2.2.2. Leads to Economic, Socio-Cultural, and Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability in food tourism involves the responsible use of natural resources while minimizing tourism's ecological footprint. Key practices include reducing food waste, promoting organic and local food sourcing, and lowering carbon emissions through sustainable transportation and energy-efficient food production methods (Sutton, 2004). Local sourcing reduces transportation-related carbon footprints while supporting local farmers and food producers (Sutton, 2004). Farm-to-table initiatives, seasonal menus, and using locally sourced ingredients help minimize environmental impact by preserving regional ecosystems and reducing energy use for transportation (Dong & Hauschild, 2017; Worrachananun, 2023). Sustainable food tourism also encourages biodiversity conservation, efficient water usage, and the reduction of harmful chemicals in agriculture (Worrachananun, 2024). Additionally, incorporating local ingredients into culinary tourism enhances regional identity and fosters awareness of environmental concerns, reinforcing responsible travel and sustainable consumption (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Stone, Migacz, & Wolf, 2022).

It serves as a pillar for cultural sustainability, actively preserving culinary traditions while adding depth to a destination's character (Du Rand & Heath, 2006; Stone, Migacz, and Wolf, 2022), all while nurturing local food cultures (Stone, Migacz, and Wolf, 2022). For food tourism to thrive sustainably, it is crucial to balance the commercialization of food

heritage and the effective management of food supply, requiring collaboration with local stakeholders and government bodies (Ellis et al., 2018). This approach ensures the preservation of local food cultures (Mizal, Fabeil, & Pazim, 2014). It educates community members about their culinary heritage (Stone & Wolf et al., 2020), safeguarding authentic traditions (Stone & Wolf et al., 2020).

From an economic perspective, culinary tourism drives local development, meets travelers' diverse expectations, and bolsters regions' self-sufficiency (Briassoulis, 2002). Gastronomy tourism supports economic sustainability by attracting tourists, generating financial growth, and creating jobs (Sorcaru, 2019). It enhances regional identity, strengthens local businesses, and preserves cultural heritage while promoting sustainable practices (Sorcaru, 2019; Ellis et al., 2018). Tourists' spending on dining and culinary experiences benefits small businesses and expands market opportunities for locally sourced products (Dougherty, Brown, & Green, 2013). Additionally, food tourism contributes to the growth of rural economies by providing new income streams for farmers and producers, helping them maintain traditional food practices while adapting to modern demands (Joy et al., 2018). It fosters skill development, encourages responsible agricultural practices, and reinforces economic resilience in rural and urban areas (Sims, 2009; Stalmirska & Ali, 2023). A well-managed food tourism sector enhances destination appeal, secures long-term benefits for local communities, and supports environmental and socio-cultural sustainability, ensuring a balanced approach to tourism growth (Ellis et al., 2018; Sigala, 2020).

Implementing a holistic strategy for food tourism management highlights the importance of sustainable practices (Ellis et al., 2018). Engaging in these experiences fosters skill development and has the potential to reshape perceptions and values (Joy et al., 2018), ultimately providing lasting benefits that reinforce a destination's economic, socio-cultural, and environmental pillars (Sigala, 2020).

2.2.3. Benefits to the Traveler

Food and drink experiences while traveling can lead to many benefits, including educational and learning outcomes. Food tourism allows travelers to discover new tastes, flavors, and textures while participating in genuine food and beverage experiences (World Food Travel Association, 2019). It offers valuable chances to explore local food heritage (Farsani, Zeinali, & Moaied-nia, 2018) and link food consumption to a destination's cultural setting (Wijaya, 2019). Long (1998) and Horng and Tsai (2010) stress that food tourism enables travelers to encounter "the other" through culinary and cultural education.

Furthermore, food tourism can deliver unique and unforgettable experiences beyond merely satisfying basic needs, thus enriching the overall tourism experience (Wolf, 2014). Luoh, Tsaur, and Lo (2020) indicate that knowledge about local cuisines can enhance the connections between travelers and locals. Food acts as a cultural medium, fostering a sense of place and reinforcing cultural identity (Ellis et al., 2018); as Graham (2021) notes, food and drink experiences can cultivate deeper connections with the local populace, culture, and traditions. Moreover, these experiences are crucial in creating lasting memories for tourists (Stone, Migacz, and Sthapit, 2022) and can elevate the chances of return visits (Shoukat et al., 2023).

Sensory features, including taste, smell, and touch, play a significant role in tourists' enjoyment of food-related activities (Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Ellis et al., 2018). For numerous travelers, experiencing local cuisine is a significant source of satisfaction (Getz, 2000; Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Stone, Migacz, & Wolf, 2018). Culinary experiences also offer a meaningful method to engage with the cultural authenticity of a destination (Kala, 2020a, 2020b; OMT & BCC, 2019), granting a deeper and more genuine travel experience (du Rand et al., 2003; Everett & Aitchison, 2008).

In addition to sensory and cultural engagement, food tourism has the capacity to transform travelers (Ateljevic, 2020) internally. It encourages sharing traditions, narratives, and symbols tied to a destination (Ellis et al., 2018), providing tourists with a means to engage in local culture actively (Ellis et al., 2018). Moreover, culinary tourism functions as an educational resource, enhancing travelers' appreciation of cultural traditions and food practices (Stone, Migacz, and Wolf, 2022). Food tourism is a swiftly

growing sector within the tourism industry, significantly influencing travelers' experiences, local communities, and regional economies.

2.3. Learning Through Travel

2.3.1. Learning

The learning process in tourism encompasses both practical skills and knowledge acquisition, which can happen naturally or through planned experiences, highlighting its importance in lifelong education (Falk et al.; Mitchell, 1998). Tourism is a powerful agent for learning and shaping decisions about travel destinations and activities while promoting critical thinking and cultural sensitivity (Crompton, 1979; Pearce & Foster, 2007; Wu et al., 2021). Local cuisine is essential in this educational journey, fostering connections with locations and locals, as learning occurs intentionally and coincidentally through immersive experiences (Luoh, Tsaur, & Lo, 2020; Tomasi, Paviotti, & Cavicchi, 2020). By integrating culinary experiences into travel, tourists gain a richer understanding of local traditions, enhancing cultural immersion and broadening their appreciation of global diversity.

2.3.2. Experiential Learning

Experiential learning, which highlights the importance of observation and active participation, is especially pertinent in the tourism sector, as travelers gain knowledge and skills by directly engaging in social and cultural activities (Kolb, 2005; Stone & Petrick, 2013; Toker & Rezapouraghdam, 2021). This learning method sets itself apart from traditional education by prioritizing hands-on experiences, allowing individuals to interact with their environment actively. Travel acts as a distinctive platform for experiential learning, providing chances to observe and engage in various places' social and cultural practices (Toker & Rezapouraghdam, 2021). Kolb's experiential learning model is commonly used to analyze how people learn through travel experiences (Stone & Petrick, 2013). Therefore, Kolb's experiential learning model is appropriate for learning from

tourism (Stone & Petrick, 2013). These learning encounters often go beyond formal arrangements, as travelers instinctively connect with local communities and traditions, enhancing their cultural awareness and personal development.

2.3.3. Learning from Travel: A Historical Perspective

Learning through travel has long been recognized as a valuable form of education, with historical perspectives emphasizing its role in personal and intellectual growth (Brodsky-Porges, 1981; Beeton, 2006; Eder, Smith, & Pitts, 2010). Ancient Chinese and Western philosophers acknowledged the educational benefits of travel, shaping early perspectives on tourism as a means of acquiring knowledge. Modern research supports this notion, revealing that travelers develop a range of transferable skills, including decision-making, critical thinking, and cross-cultural understanding (Pearce & Foster, 2007). Studies have also demonstrated that international travel enhances learning, with increased exposure to different cultures fostering independence, autonomy, and self-confidence (Stone & Petrick, 2013; Scarinci & Pearce, 2012). These findings highlight that travel, whether for leisure or education, serves as a significant path for lifelong learning and skill development. The historical emphasis on learning through travel underscores its continued relevance as contemporary travelers seek experiences that contribute to their personal, cultural, and intellectual enhancement.

2.3.4. Educational Tourism

Educational tourism is a specialized form of travel that integrates structured learning experiences such as study tours, cultural exchanges, and practical workshops (Pearce & Foster, 2007; Yu et al., 2023). It often occurs in college or university settings. It attracts knowledge-seeking individuals and fosters cognitive growth, skill development, and cultural interaction (Torabi Farsani, Zeinali, & Moaiednia, 2018). This form of tourism encompasses various learning types, including informal, transformative, and free-choice learning, each offering valuable insights and educational experiences through travel (Falk et al., 2012; Rezaei, 2021; Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). Educational tourism enables individuals to gain new perspectives while immersing themselves in different cultural

settings, enhancing their personal and intellectual development. Additionally, it serves as a platform for advancing cross-cultural communication, allowing travelers to engage with diverse communities, thus expanding their global awareness and adaptability. Although not all tourism can be educational tourism, looking at educational tourism can provide insight into how people learn from travel. Researchers have proposed that educational tourism includes many types of learning. Informal Learning is knowledge gained outside formal educational environments, which offers valuable lessons and insights through travel (Falk et al., 2012; Pung, Gnoth, & Del Chiappa, 2020)

2.3.5. Cultural and Personal Growth

Tourism serves as a powerful tool for accepting cultural awareness, self-exploration, and personal development. Memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) contribute to emotional and intellectual growth by exposing new social and cultural environments (Huang & Liu, 2018; Kim & Chen, 2019; Liu et al., 2019). Memorable tourism research has been expanded to culinary tourism by many researchers (e.g., Sthapit, 2017; Stone et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2019). Engaging with local customs, cuisine, and traditions enables travelers to deepen their understanding of destinations, leading to increased cultural sensitivity and adaptability. Research indicates that travelers develop essential skills such as problem-solving, adaptability, tolerance, and interpersonal communication, reinforcing the educational potential of travel (Pearce & Foster, 2007; Stone & Petrick, 2013; Scarinci & Pearce, 2012). These personal growth outcomes align with the benefits of studying abroad, demonstrating that learning is an inherent aspect of travel, regardless of the initial motivation (Laubscher, 1994; Falk et al., 2012). Furthermore, cultural immersion's emotional and psychological impact fosters long-term changes in perception, ultimately shaping travelers into more globally conscious individuals.

2.4. Learning Through Food/Culinary Tourism

2.4.1. Defining Culinary Tourism

Long (1998) articulates culinary tourism as an intentional exploration and participation in another culture's foodways. This encompasses activities such as the consumption, preparation, and presentation of food items, cuisines, meal systems, or eating styles that are distinct from one's own. As a subset of cultural tourism, it provides a conduit for deeper cultural understanding through engagement with food. Similarly, Stone et al. (2020) assert that food tourism is characterized by travel aimed at experiencing the culinary aspects of a place, which includes visiting farms, exploring food trails, and attending culinary events. Their survey reports that 79% of leisure travelers learn about local food and drink when they visit a destination. Culinary tourism, food tourism, and gastronomic tourism are considered the same in this research (Stone, 2022).

2.4.2. Food Tourism and Cultural Learning

Food tourism fosters cultural learning and personal growth by allowing tourists to encounter other cultures through food. Food tourism transcends mere consumption, delving into food cultures and their intricate connections to a region's heritage, identity, and character (Jones & Jenkins, 2003; Du Rand & Heath, 2006). Tourists are frequently motivated to connect with local heritage and traditions, utilizing food as a gateway for understanding these elements (Stone, Migacz, & Wolf, 2022). Such engagement not only bolsters cultural sustainability by safeguarding culinary heritage but also enriches the identity of destinations (Du Rand & Heath, 2006). Local cuisines generate significant learning experiences that cultivate visitors' appreciation for the host culture (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011).

2.4.3. The Educational Aspect of Culinary Tourism

A crucial aspect of food tourism is its educational component, as highlighted by Cela and Knowles-Lankford (2007) and Kim and Eves (2012). Tourists often seek knowledge regarding food origins and culinary traditions. Activities such as food trails, cooking classes, and tasting events deliver opportunities for connecting with local producers and gaining insights into regional food cultures (Organ et al., 2015; Luoh, Tsaur, & Lo, 2020).

Such experiences encourage personal development, enabling individuals to acquire new skills, broaden their knowledge, and attain a sense of fulfillment (Ellis et al., 2018).

2.4.4. Sustainability and Global Impact

Beyond individual enrichment, food tourism addresses global challenges and aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as Zero Hunger, No Poverty, and Good Health (Bertella & Vidmar, 2019). It serves as a platform for discourses surrounding global food challenges and promoting sustainable practices (Bertella & Vidmar, 2019). The convergence of food, travel, and culture creates a unique context for meaningful engagement, wherein food tourism evolves into an immersive experience that links individuals with a destination's historical, cultural, and identity narratives while contributing to local economies and cultural preservation.

2.4.5. Authenticity and Cultural Immersion

Tourists increasingly prioritize authenticity, seeking avenues to learn about local food history and to experience genuine flavors (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Sims, 2009). Culinary tourism enables visitors to immerse themselves in local cultures, whether by dining in "local only" establishments or participating in hands-on food preparation activities (Ellis et al., 2018; Hall & Sharples, 2003; Okumus, 2020; Soltani et al., 2021). These interactions facilitate connections with local traditions through activities, including market visits, participation in food festivals, and exploration of local cuisines' historical and cultural significance (Andersson & Mossberg, 2017; Wijaya, 2019).

2.4.6. Hands-On Engagement in Food Experiences

Active engagement in culinary environments represents another defining trait of food tourism and represents potential learning environments. Activities such as cooking classes and immersion in food preparation enable tourists to forge deeper connections with local traditions (Richards & Raymond, 2000; Yiğit, 2022). Engaging with the daily life

of a destination through food experiences fosters a sense of place and promotes collaboration in creating distinct tourism experiences (Richards, 2020; World Food Travel Association, 2023).

2.4.7. Sensory and Emotional Aspects

Interactions with locals further enrich the food tourism experience. Tourists cultivate meaningful connections with the destination's culture by visiting markets, purchasing local food, and learning traditional recipes (Sthapit, Björk, & Coudounaris, 2017). The sensory and emotional dimensions of tasting local specialties enhance the memorability of these experiences, often influencing tourists' intentions to return (Ji, Wong, Eves, & Scarles, 2016; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012).

2.4.8. Lifelong Learning through Food Tourism

Food tourism offers dynamic learning opportunities by immersing travelers in local cultures through interactive and memorable experiences. Engaging with authentic culinary traditions enables visitors to explore the history, customs, and values of a destination in an educational and hands-on way. Through this experience, individuals cultivate a deeper appreciation for cultural heritage while enhancing their knowledge and personal growth.

2.5. Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence refers to communicating and behaving effectively and appropriately in cross-cultural situations. According to Deardorff (2006), it is not a static skill but a dynamic process involving continuous learning and adaptation. While some researchers, such as Spitzberg and Cupach (1984, 1989), consider intercultural competence a universal skill applicable across various cultural contexts, others argue that it is highly dependent on specific situations. Intercultural competence is a multifaceted combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enables effective interaction in

culturally diverse settings. According to Byram (2009), it is not a fixed ability but an evolving process requiring continuous adaptation and growth.

Key elements of intercultural competence include effective and appropriate communication. According to Byram et al. (2002), this involves adapting communication styles to align with the audience and the cultural environment. Additionally, Suh (2004) highlights the importance of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills, noting that intercultural competence goes beyond cultural knowledge to include positive attitudes and culturally appropriate behavior. The ability to adapt to different cultural settings, as emphasized by Ye, Zhang, and Yuen (2013), is another essential component. Self-awareness, which involves understanding one's cultural values and biases, and perspective-taking, the ability to consider other viewpoints, are also critical (Urry, 1995; Ye, Zhang, & Yuen, 2013).

Byram (2009) identifies openness, curiosity, and empathy as key attributes of intercultural competence, describing them as a willingness to engage with diverse cultures, openness to new information, and the ability to understand others' emotions. Managing psychological stress when dealing with cultural uncertainties is another essential skill, according to Wang, Yang, and Chen (2023). Furthermore, Byram et al. (2002) emphasize relational skills, which involve building and maintaining meaningful relationships in diverse cultural contexts. Intercultural sensitivity, or the ability to respect and recognize cultural differences, is also crucial, as Kirillova, Lehto, and Cai (2015) noted.

Intercultural competence involves integrating knowledge, skills, and attitudes to ensure effective and culturally appropriate interactions. According to Byram (2009), this requires the ability to apply these elements in practice. Different models have been proposed to conceptualize intercultural competence. Chao (2014) describes compositional models, which focus on components like knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Process models, as highlighted by Wang, Yang, and Chen (2023), view intercultural competence as an ongoing process of adaptation. Kirillova, Lehto, and Cai (2015) propose developmental models that describe intercultural competence as evolving along a scale.

Intercultural competence is essential across various fields, including business, education, healthcare, social work, and study-abroad programs. According to Wang, Yang, and Chen

(2023), its significance extends to the tourism industry, where it contains several dimensions:

- Intercultural responsibility: behaving ethically, respecting local cultures, and maintaining an open and tolerant mindset (Fan et al., 2022; Nowaczek & Smale, 2010).
- Intercultural understanding: identifying and interpreting cultural differences while reflecting on one's cultural norms and practices (Fan et al., 2022; Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2015).
- Intercultural appreciation: demonstrating interest in and valuing local cultures and traditions (Fan et al., 2022).
- Intercultural action: participating in local cultural activities, learning about traditions, and engaging with authentic cultural experiences (Fan et al., 2022).

Researchers have frequently connected tourism to intercultural competence as it is vital in tourism, as it enhances interactions among people from diverse national and ethnic backgrounds (Luka, Sundars, and Vinklere, 2010). This skill entails understanding cultural contexts, acknowledging and valuing cultural differences, and interacting appropriately in various situations to avoid offending (Stier, 2006). Moreover, providing individuals with the ability to navigate different socio-cultural settings is key to achieving professional success in the tourism sector (Wang, Yang, and Chen, 2023). Research shows that cultural tourists need to have a certain degree of intercultural competence to engage effectively with cultural materials (Fan et al., 2022). Additionally, this competence helps tourists enrich their travel experiences, making them more impactful and memorable (Fan et al., 2022).

2.6. Conclusion

The research highlights the deep influence of culinary tourism on enhancing travel experiences and facilitating educational opportunities. Culinary tourism, characterized by journeys aimed at discovering distinctive and memorable culinary traditions, extends

beyond mere consumption to offer immersive activities, including cooking classes, gastronomic trails, and expeditions to local markets. Such activities stimulate connections with local heritage and customs, adopting both cultural appreciation and personal growth. The experiential nature of food tourism enriches the overall traveler encounter.

Nonetheless, significant gaps persist in the current academic discussion. While there is evidence that culinary tourism is educational, the educational dimensions of culinary tourism have not been thoroughly examined, particularly from the tourist's perspective. Questions remain unresolved about how travelers perceive the learning aspects of these experiences. There is also a critical need for further exploration into culinary tourism's potential enjoyment with educational outcomes.

This thesis focuses on the tourist's perspective to address gaps in research on learning in culinary tourism. It examines how travelers engage with food and beverage experiences and how these interactions shape their understanding of intercultural competence. The study also explores whether culinary travel can simultaneously offer both enjoyment and education, emphasizing often overlooked aspects of the tourism experience. By focusing on the tourist viewpoint, this research aims to highlight the transformative and educational potential of culinary tourism.

Additionally, it examines how elements such as hands-on participation contribute to learning, influence memory preservation, and encourage return visits. The research also considers challenges that travelers may face, including language barriers, accessibility issues, and cultural differences. Understanding these obstacles can provide valuable insights into making culinary tourism more inclusive and enriching for a diverse range of tourists. Through this approach, the study seeks to enhance knowledge of the link between travel, gastronomy, and education.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Approach

This study adopts a survey-based approach to examine the educational and transformative aspects of culinary tourism from the traveler's perspective. Drawing on frameworks such as Fan et al. (2021) on intercultural competence, Stone and Castillo-Ortiz (2024) on food traveler segmentation, and Stone et al. (2016) on food travel behavior, the research applies a similar model using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The survey measures involvement in food tourism, participation in food tourism activities, perceptions of outcomes and barriers, intercultural competence, and education through food tourism.

The questionnaire primarily includes structured questions to collect quantitative data alongside one open-ended question for qualitative insights on memorable food experiences and cultural learning. The analysis is enriched by personal knowledge gained through interactions with travelers worldwide, providing a detailed understanding of how culinary tourism advances learning, cultural engagement, and meaningful travel experiences.

3.2. Survey design

The questionnaire consisted of 13 questions that investigated aspects of involvement in food tourism, food tourism activities, perceptions of food tourism's outcomes, perceptions of barriers to food tourism, measures of intercultural competence, measures of education through food tourism, and socio-demographic characteristics. Twelve closed-ended questions and one open-ended question were included. The questionnaire was conducted in English.

The survey is divided into multiple sections and can be found in the Appendix at the end of the research. The main sections are presented.

3.2.1. Demographic factors

Gathering demographic information is essential to understanding who the travelers and tourists are. This survey included the participants' age, gender, nationality, and education.

Individuals' ages were categorized into generational age cohorts - groups of people distinguished by their birth year. The groups are Generation Z (born 1997–2012), Millennials (born 1981–1996), Generation X (born 1965–1980), Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964). (Pew Research Center, 2015).

In this survey, the generational age cohorts were listed as Generation Z (13–28 years old), Millennials (29–44 years old), Generation X (45–60 years old), and Baby Boomers (61–79 years old and older).

3.2.2. Awareness and interest in culinary tourism

The survey assessed awareness and interest in culinary tourism by evaluating participants' involvement in activities such as dining at fine restaurants, visiting food trucks, attending festivals, and taking cooking classes. Respondents indicated whether they had participated in these activities and rated the importance of food and drink experiences when selecting travel destinations.

Interest was further measured by asking participants to rate their agreement with statements about food's role in travel, such as carefully choosing dining locations or using food-related media for inspiration. Additionally, respondents rated the motivational significance of food and drink activities when selecting a destination. on a scale from "never a motivator" (1) to "always a motivator." (10). These measures from Stone et al. (2016) provide insights into how culinary travel motivates behavior. Involvement was measured using three items from Stone and Castillo Ortiz (2014).

3.2.3. Personal outcomes of culinary tourism

The third section of the survey examined the personal outcomes of culinary tourism, focusing on how participants' food and drink experiences influenced their understanding of local cultures and their perceptions of travel destinations. Questions measured whether

culinary tourism activities enhanced participants' knowledge of local cuisines and cultural food practices, with statements such as "Food and drink activities while traveling have increased my knowledge of different cuisines and cultural food practices" and "These experiences have positively changed my perception of a particular culture."

This section also explored how culinary tourism contributed to personal growth, including encouraging respect for cultural diversity. By evaluating these outcomes, this section provided valuable insights into the ways culinary tourism activities can be both educational and transformative for travelers.

3.2.4. Intercultural competence

The fourth section of the survey focused on assessing participants' intercultural competence, particularly how their culinary tourism experiences shaped their ability to engage with and appreciate different cultures. Respondents were asked to evaluate their agreement with statements designed to measure respect for cultural heritage, tolerance for cultural differences, and openness to new cultural experiences. For instance, statements included, "Food and drink activities while traveling have helped me respect a destination's heritage" and "These experiences have improved my understanding of cultural differences."

Fan et al. (2022) measured intercultural competence using four constructs. Intercultural action was omitted from the current research due to survey length. Three constructs were retained, and each was measured with three questions. These questions in the survey were modified from the original research.

Intercultural responsibility was measured with three questions: 1) "Food and Drink activities while traveling have helped me to respect a destination's heritage." 2) "Food and Drink activities while traveling have helped me to respect and tolerate cultural differences." 3) "Food and Drink activities while traveling have helped me to be open-minded while traveling."

Intercultural understanding was measured with three questions: 1) "Food and Drink activities while traveling have helped me to be aware of the differences between cultures." 2) "Food and Drink activities while traveling have helped me to compare the differences

between cultures.” 3)“Food and Drink activities while traveling have helped me to reflect on my own culture.”

Intercultural appreciation was measured with three questions: 1) “Food and Drink activities while traveling have helped me to discover unique and new cultures (at a destination).” 2) “Food and Drink activities while traveling have helped me to make contact with a different culture.” 3) “Food and Drink activities while traveling have helped me to be interested in a destination's culture. “

This section also explored whether culinary tourism encouraged participants to reflect on their own cultural practices and values or compare them with those of other cultures. Questions addressed whether food and drink activities raised greater cultural awareness and the ability to make meaningful connections with local communities. By focusing on these aspects, the fourth section provided insights into the role of culinary tourism in promoting intercultural understanding and personal growth.

3.2.5. Barriers and Challenges

The fifth section of the survey explored challenges participants faced during culinary tourism, focusing on factors like language barriers, cultural differences, financial constraints, time limitations, and health concerns. Respondents rated their agreement with statements such as “Language barriers make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling” and “The cost of food and drink activities makes it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling.” These questions provided insights into how these obstacles impacted travelers’ ability to fully engage in culinary tourism, highlighting limitations that may complicate their educational and cultural experiences.

3.2.6. Learning from culinary tourism

The sixth section of the survey examined how participants' culinary tourism experiences contributed to their learning. It focused on the perceived educational value of various food and drink activities, assessing whether they were considered fun, educational, or both.

Respondents rated activities such as dining at fine restaurants, visiting food markets, attending festivals, and participating in cooking classes based on their perceived balance of fun and educational dimensions. The data helps evaluate whether travelers view culinary experiences as opportunities for cultural and educational enrichment and whether the fun factor influences their likelihood of participation.

3.2.7. Personal experience learning from culinary tourism

The final section of the survey included an open-ended question aimed at collecting qualitative insights into participants' culinary tourism experiences. Respondents were asked to describe one food or drink-related activity while traveling and explain how these experiences shaped their understanding of local culture. This open-ended question was included to provide deeper insight than the quantitative data collected in the survey.

3.3. Data Collection

The survey used in this study was conducted electronically, targeting both domestic and international travelers. Participants represented various age groups, categorized into generational cohorts as specified in earlier thesis sections, including Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers. The survey was created using Google Forms, conducted in English, and distributed across various LinkedIn and Facebook groups related to culinary tourism, hospitality, and travel between December 29, 2024, and January 30, 2025. On LinkedIn, it was shared in Wine & Culinary Tourism Worldwide by #IWINETC, Council for Adult & Experiential Learning (CAEL), "Sustainable" Travel & Tourism by the World Tourism Network, Rural Tourism: Sustainable Local Development, European Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism Projects, Travel & Tourism Industry Professionals Worldwide, and Food Tourism: A Piece Of Cake? On Facebook, the survey was posted in International Food Lovers Culinary Federation (IFLCF) Culinary Tourism, Culinary Arts, Culinary Entrepreneurs - A Food & Tourism Group (An FEA Initiative), Events, Food and Tourism, European Tourism Press: News Magazine Turismo, Cultura, Arte, Travel, Tourism, & Food Lovers, and Mediterranean Cooking. These groups were

selected to engage professionals, enthusiasts, and travelers with experience in food tourism, ensuring diverse perspectives on culinary travel experiences. It was also distributed to university students. Because this is an exploratory study, the sample is not intended to be representative of the entire traveler population.

The questionnaire comprised 13 questions, including 12 closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. It was designed to gather data on participants' socio-demographic characteristics, involvement in food tourism, participation in culinary activities, perceptions of outcomes, barriers encountered, intercultural competence, and educational aspects of food tourism. The electronic distribution method facilitated broad accessibility, ensuring responses reflected varied perspectives across different cultural and geographical contexts.

3.4. Data Analysis

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of the educational and experiential aspects of culinary tourism. The quantitative analysis utilizes descriptive statistics to summarize socio-demographic data, including age, gender, and country of origin. Regularity distributions highlight key trends, while Likert-scale responses (ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree") are analyzed through percentage distributions, mean values, and standard deviations to measure participants' engagement, perceptions, and barriers in food tourism. Cross-tabulation is applied to examine how responses vary across different demographic groups, helping to identify patterns in motivation levels, involvement in food tourism activities, and perceived learning outcomes.

The qualitative analysis focuses on responses to the open-ended question, which provides deeper insights into participants' experiences, motivations, and challenges in culinary tourism. Responses are examined using thematic coding, identifying recurring themes such as authenticity, cultural appreciation, and experiential learning. These

qualitative insights complement the numerical findings, allowing a richer understanding of how participants perceive and engage with food-related travel.

Additionally, a comparative analysis is conducted to explore variations between participant groups, assessing differences in motivation, engagement levels, and perceived learning outcomes. This method provides a detailed examination of how diverse factors, including age and cultural background, influence experiences in food tourism. The integration of these analytical approaches ensures a holistic perspective on how culinary tourism raises cultural awareness, education, and personal transformation while also identifying barriers that may limit travelers' full participation in food tourism activities.

4. Results

The online survey gathered 115 responses, 112 of which the researcher considered valid.

4.1. Demographics

The sample consisted of 112 participants (N=112), with 80 females (71.4%), 30 males (26.8%), one non-binary/other (0.9%), and one participant preferring not to disclose their gender (0.9%). The participants' ages ranged from 13 to 71 years, with the majority belonging to Millennials (55.36%) and Generation Z (29.46%), followed by Generation X (9.82%), with a smaller representation from Baby Boomers (1.79%). These findings align with Stone et al. (2020), highlighting the significant interest of younger generations in food tourism. In terms of nationality, the majority of participants were from Iran, followed by Italy, the United States, and the Netherlands, with other countries contributing smaller proportions. Regarding educational background, 49.1% of respondents were not students, while 31.3% were master's students, 12.5% were bachelor's students, and 7.1% were PhD students. respondents were younger and more likely to be students than the general population.

Table 1. Demographics of Participants

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Percentage of sample | | N=112 | 100% |
| Gender | Female | 80 | 71.4% |
| | Male | 30 | 26.8% |
| | Prefer not to say | 1 | 0.9% |
| | Non-Binary/Other | 1 | 0.9% |
| Age Median age (33) | Gen Z (13-27y) | 40 | 49.11% |
| | Millennials (29-44y) | 67 | 46.43% |
| | Gen X (45-60y) | 4 | 3.57% |
| | The Baby Boomers (61-79y) | 1 | 0.89% |
| Citizenship | Iran | 61 | 54.5% |
| | Italy | 12 | 10.7% |
| | United States | 10 | 8.9% |
| | Netherlands | 5 | 4.5% |
| | Other Countries | 24 | 21.4% |
| Education | Student | 57 | 50.9% |
| | Not a student | 55 | 49.1% |
| Participation In an International Trip | Yes | 92 | 82.1% |
| | No | 20 | 17.9% |

4.2. Awareness and Interest in Culinary Tourism

To measure involvement, the survey utilized in this study incorporated three questions adapted from Stone and Castillo-Ortiz (2024), derived initially from Mittal and Lee (1989). These questions, "I would choose where to eat on a trip very carefully," "Deciding where to eat on a trip would be an important decision for me," "Where I eat on a trip matters to me a lot," and "I learn about local food & drink when I visit a destination" were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Among the respondents, 46.43% (52 out of 112) scored 18–21 points, showing high involvement in choosing where to eat while traveling. This suggests that dining is a key part of their travel experience. A moderate level of involvement (15–17 points) was reported by 25% (28 respondents), meaning they consider food in their plans but are more flexible. Meanwhile, 28.57% (32 respondents) scored below 15, indicating low involvement, where dining choices are less important. These findings highlight that while food is a significant factor for many travelers, others prioritize different aspects of their trips.

The findings indicate a significant level of engagement in culinary tourism, with 83.04% of respondents having participated in at least one food or drink tourism activity while traveling, whereas 16.96% had not. Additionally, food and drink availability was a critical factor in travel destination selection, with 26.79% of respondents rating its importance as an 8, making it the most common response. Another 16.96% assigned it a 10, indicating the highest level of importance, while 13.39% rated it at 7. Lower ratings were less frequent, with only 1.79% selecting 2 and 5.36% selecting 1, demonstrating that food and drink availability applies moderate to high influence over travel decisions for most respondents. Overall, 62 participants (55.36%) rated the importance of food and drink availability at levels 8, 9, or 10, identifying them as potential culinary tourists who prioritize gastronomic experiences when selecting destinations.

The data further supports the perception that dining decisions play a crucial role in travel experiences. For instance, 81.25% of respondents agreed, to varying degrees, that they carefully choose where to eat, while only 10.71% disagreed. Similarly, 77.68% considered deciding where to eat an essential aspect of their trips, with only 13.4% disagreeing, reinforcing the significance of food selection in travel planning. Additionally, 74% agreed that where they eat on a trip matters to them, whereas 12.5% disagreed, demonstrating that dining location plays a substantial role in their travel experiences.

Regarding engagement with food-related media, 63.39% of respondents expressed some level of agreement with watching food-related content, while 28.57% disagreed, indicating that there is an interest in culinary media. A significant 78.57% admitted that they enjoy learning about local food and drink while traveling, with only 12.5% disagreeing,

suggesting that food tourism often includes cultural education. Similarly, 80.35% of participants agreed that their eating and drinking experiences enhanced their understanding of the local culture, whereas only 12.5% disagreed, emphasizing the role of gastronomy in cultural learning. Finally, 75.89% of respondents acknowledged the importance of learning about local food while traveling, with minimal disagreement at 8.93%, highlighting the strong educational aspect of culinary tourism.

Table 2. Awareness and Interest

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Participation in the past two years in a culinary tourism activity | Yes | 93 | 83.04% |
| | No | 19 | 16.96% |
| When selecting a travel destination, how important is the availability of food & drink or food & drink-related activities (Where 1 = never a motivator to 10 = always a motivator) | 1-7 (not highly motivated) | 50 | 44.64% |
| | 8-10 (highly motivated) | 62 | 55.36% |

Table 3. Involvement and Interest of Participants

| | Freq. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------|----------------|
| | % | | | | | | | |
| Choose where to eat on a trip carefully | Freq. | 1 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 29 | 41 | 21 |
| | % | 0.89% | 4.46% | 5.36% | 8.04% | 25.89% | 36.61 | 18.75% |
| Deciding where to eat on a trip: an important decision | Freq. | 3 | 6 | 6 | 10 | 27 | 42 | 18 |
| | % | 2.68% | 5.36% | 5.36% | 8.93% | 24.11% | 37.5% | 16.07% |
| Where to eat on a trip matters a lot | Freq. | 2 | 6 | 6 | 14 | 22 | 37 | 25 |
| | % | 1.79% | 5.36% | 5.36% | 12.5% | 19.64% | 33.04% | 22.32% |
| often watching shows, movies, or documentaries about food and drink (on TV, streaming, or YouTube) | Freq. | 10 | 11 | 11 | 9 | 29 | 21 | 21 |
| | % | 8.93% | 9.82% | 9.82% | 8.04% | 25.89% | 18.75% | 18.75% |
| Learning about local food & drink when visiting a destination | Freq. | 3 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 16 | 40 | 32 |
| | % | 2.68% | 4.46% | 5.36% | 8.93% | 14.29% | 35.71% | 28.57% |
| Eating & drinking experiences help to understand the local culture when traveling. | Freq. | 3 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 19 | 29 | 42 |
| | % | 2.68% | 5.36% | 4.46% | 7.14% | 16.96% | 25.89% | 37.5% |
| Learning about local food and drink is important when traveling. | Freq. | 3 | 3 | 4 | 17 | 16 | 28 | 41 |
| | % | 2.68% | 2.68% | 3.57% | 15.18% | 14.29% | 25% | 36.61% |

Table 4. Involvement and Interest of Participants: Mean and Standard Deviation

| Questions | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Choose where to eat on a trip carefully | 5.38 | 1.34 |
| Deciding where to eat on a trip: an important decision | 5.23 | 1.48 |
| Where to eat on a trip matters a lot | 5.31 | 1.49 |
| Often watching shows, movies, or documentaries about food and drink (on TV, streaming, or YouTube) | 4.64 | 1.89 |
| Learning about local food & drink when visiting a destination | 5.49 | 1.55 |
| Eating & drinking experiences help to understand the local culture when traveling. | 5.58 | 1.61 |
| Learning about local food and drink is important when traveling. | 5.57 | 1.53 |
| Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree to 7=Strongly agree | | |

Table 5. Involvement percentage of respondents

| Questions | Sum Range | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| I Choose where to eat on a trip carefully | 18–21 (high Involvement) | 52 | 46.43% |
| Deciding where to eat on a trip is an important decision for me | | | |
| Where to eat on a trip matters to me a lot | | | |
| I Choose where to eat on a trip carefully | 15–17 (medium involvement) | 28 | 25.00% |
| Deciding where to eat on a trip is an important decision for me | | | |
| Where to eat on a trip matters to me a lot | | | |
| I Choose where to eat on a trip carefully | < 15 (Low involvement) | 32 | 28.57% |
| Deciding where to eat on a trip is an important decision for me | | | |
| Where to eat on a trip matters to me a lot | | | |

4.3. Personal Outcomes of Culinary Tourism

In general, respondents felt that culinary tourism activities are educational. About 86.61% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that food and drink activities while traveling enhanced their understanding of different cuisines and cultural food practices, with 55.36% agreeing and 31.25% strongly agreeing. A small percentage (10.71%) remained neutral, while 2.68% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates that culinary tourism is widely viewed as an educational experience related to food knowledge.

Regarding perceptions of a particular culture, 62.5% of respondents reported that culinary tourism positively influenced their cultural views, with 44.64% agreeing and 17.86% strongly agreeing. However, 28.57% were neutral, while 8.93% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates that while culinary tourism advances cultural appreciation for most travelers, a notable portion remains unaffected.

When asked if they learned about new foods and drinks while traveling, 89.29% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (55.36% agreed, 33.93% strongly agreed). Only 7.14% remained neutral, while 3.57% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates a strong consensus that culinary tourism exposes travelers to new food experiences.

For understanding and respect for different cultures, 66.07% agreed or strongly agreed, while 25% neither agreed nor disagreed. A smaller portion (8.93%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating that while culinary experiences contribute to cultural understanding for most, some travelers may not perceive food as a significant factor in cultural learning.

Lastly, regarding whether culinary tourism increased their level of education, 58.04% agreed or strongly agreed, while 25% remained neutral. A significant portion (16.97%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating a more diverse view on how food tourism contributes to personal education.

Table 6. Personal Outcomes of Culinary Tourism for Travelers

| N=112 | Freq. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|--------|----------------|
| | % | | | | | |
| Food and drink activities while traveling help to increase knowledge of different cuisines and cultural food practices. | Freq. | 2 | 1 | 12 | 62 | 35 |
| | % | 1.79% | 0.89% | 10.71% | 55.36% | 31.25% |
| Food and drink activities while traveling positively change the perception of a particular culture | Freq. | 3 | 7 | 32 | 50 | 20 |
| | % | 2.68% | 6.25% | 28.57% | 44.64% | 17.86% |
| Learning about new foods and drinks while traveling | Freq. | 3 | 1 | 8 | 62 | 38 |
| | % | 2.68% | 0.89% | 7.14% | 55.36% | 33.93% |
| Food and drink activities while traveling improve understanding and respect for different cultures. | Freq. | 2 | 8 | 28 | 50 | 24 |
| | % | 1.79% | 7.14% | 25% | 44.64% | 21.43% |
| Food and drink activities while traveling make travelers more educated person. | Freq. | 6 | 13 | 28 | 44 | 21 |
| | % | 5.36% | 11.61% | 25% | 39.29% | 18.75% |

Table 7. Personal Outcomes of Culinary Tourism: Mean and Standard Deviation

| Question | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Food and drink activities while traveling help to increase knowledge of different cuisines and cultural food practices. | 4.13 | 0.77 |
| Food and drink activities while traveling positively change the perception of a particular culture | 3.69 | 0.92 |
| Learning about new foods and drinks while traveling | 4.17 | 0.81 |
| Food and drink activities while traveling improve understanding and respect for different cultures | 3.77 | 0.92 |
| Food and drink activities while traveling make travelers more educated person | 3.54 | 1.08 |
| Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree | | |

4.4. Intercultural Competence

Three components of intercultural competence are measured in this study: intercultural responsibility, intercultural understanding, and intercultural appreciation. Respondents indicated that food and drink activities while traveling helped to increase all three levels of intercultural competence.

Intercultural responsibility involves behaving ethically, respecting local cultures, and maintaining an open and tolerant mindset (Fan et al., 2022; Nowaczek & Smale, 2010).

Travelers are expected to honor culinary heritage, follow cultural norms, and maintain a respectful attitude toward food practices. This fosters meaningful exchanges and supports the sustainability of culinary tourism for both visitors and host communities (Fan et al., 2022). The survey included four questions adapted from Fan et al. (2022) to assess this dimension. "I respect a destination's heritage," "I respect the differences between cultures", "I tolerate the differences between cultures," "I'm open-minded when traveling,"

Intercultural understanding involves recognizing, interpreting, and reflecting on cultural differences, enabling meaningful interactions between tourists and host communities (Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2015). By identifying cultural distinctions and evaluating one's own norms, travelers gain deeper awareness and appreciation of diverse traditions, fostering respect and reducing misunderstandings (Ye, Zhang, & Yuen, 2013; Gnoth & Zins, 2013). To measure this definition, three additional questions were included in the survey: "I am aware of the differences between cultures," "I compare the differences between cultures," and "I try to reflect on my own culture after a cultural experience at a destination." The data reveals that 65.18% of respondents (47.32% agree, 17.86% strongly agree) believe that food and drink activities while traveling have helped them respect a destination's heritage, while 28.57% remained neutral, and 6.25% disagreed. Regarding respect and tolerance for cultural differences, 70.53% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 21.43% were neutral, and 8.04% disagreed. These findings suggest that culinary tourism helps advance cultural tolerance, although some participants remain indifferent. Regarding openness while traveling, 72.32% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 22.32% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 5.35% disagreed. Similarly, 87.5% of respondents recognized an increased awareness of cultural differences, with 53.57% agreeing and 33.93% strongly agreeing, while only 3.58% disagreed. When asked about comparing cultural differences, 82.14% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 13.39% remained neutral, and 4.47% disagreed. This suggests that food-related travel experiences contribute to cultural comparisons for the majority of participants. In terms of self-reflection on one's own culture, 69.64% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 22.32% were neutral and 8.04% disagreed. The findings suggest that while culinary tourism fosters cultural appreciation, self-reflection is not as widely recognized.

Intercultural appreciation in culinary tourism involves recognizing and valuing diverse cultural traditions through food. Engaging with local cuisines, ingredients, and dining customs enhances tourists' understanding of a destination's culinary heritage, fostering cultural awareness and meaningful connections with host communities (Fan et al., 2022). This appreciation contributes to respectful and enriching travel experiences that promote cross-cultural understanding and engagement (Fan et al., 2022). To discover unique and new cultures, 82.15% of participants agreed or strongly agreed, while 12.5% were neutral and 5.35% disagreed. Similarly, 80.36% agreed or strongly agreed that culinary tourism helped them contact a different culture, while 14.29% remained neutral and 5.35% disagreed. Finally, 78.57% of respondents indicated that culinary tourism increased their interest in a destination's culture, while 16.07% were neutral, and 5.35% disagreed.

Table 8. Intercultural Competence Outcomes

| "Food and Drink activities while traveling have helped me..." | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|--------|----------------|
| N=112 | Frequency | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| | Percentage | | | | | |
| Intercultural Responsibility | | | | | | |
| To respect a destination's heritage | Frequency | 4 | 3 | 32 | 53 | 20 |
| | Percentage | 3.57% | 2.68% | 28.57% | 47.32% | 17.86% |
| To respect and tolerate cultural differences | Frequency | 3 | 6 | 24 | 57 | 22 |
| | Percentage | 2.68% | 5.36% | 21.43% | 50.89% | 19.64% |
| to be open-minded while traveling | Frequency | 1 | 5 | 25 | 49 | 32 |
| | Percentage | 0.89% | 4.46% | 22.32% | 43.75% | 28.57% |
| Intercultural Understanding | | | | | | |
| to be aware of the differences between cultures | Frequency | 2 | 2 | 10 | 60 | 38 |
| | Percentage | 1.79% | 1.79% | 8.93% | 53.57% | 33.93% |
| to compare the differences between cultures | Frequency | 2 | 3 | 15 | 57 | 35 |
| | Percentage | 1.79% | 2.68% | 13.39% | 50.89% | 31.25% |
| to reflect on my own culture | Frequency | 0 | 9 | 25 | 52 | 26 |
| | Percentage | ---- | 8.04% | 22.32% | 46.43% | 23.21% |
| Intercultural Appreciation | | | | | | |
| to discover unique and new cultures (at a destination) | Frequency | 1 | 5 | 14 | 55 | 37 |
| | Percentage | 0.89% | 4.46% | 12.5% | 49.11% | 33.04% |
| to make contact with a different culture | Frequency | 1 | 5 | 16 | 59 | 31 |
| | Percentage | 0.89% | 4.46% | 14.29% | 52.68% | 27.68% |
| to be interested in a destination's culture | Frequency | 1 | 5 | 18 | 56 | 32 |
| | Percentage | 0.89% | 4.46% | 16.07% | 50% | 28.57% |

Table 9. Intercultural Competence Outcomes: Mean and Standard Deviation

| Question | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Intercultural Responsibility | | |
| To respect a destination's heritage | 3.73 | 0.91 |
| To respect and tolerate cultural differences | 3.79 | 0.91 |
| To be open-minded while traveling | 3.95 | 0.87 |
| Intercultural Understanding | | |
| To be aware of the differences between cultures | 4.16 | 0.80 |
| To compare the differences between cultures | 4.07 | 0.84 |
| To reflect on my own culture | 3.85 | 0.87 |
| Intercultural Appreciation | | |
| To discover unique and new cultures (at a destination) | 4.09 | 0.84 |
| To make contact with a different culture | 4.02 | 0.83 |
| To be interested in a destination's culture | 4.01 | 0.85 |
| Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree | | |

4.5. Barriers And Challenges

While previous questions assessed perceived learning, there are many barriers to learning. Several questions tried to identify how much these barriers made it difficult to learn more about food and drink. In general, respondents acknowledged that there are moderate barriers and challenges. The largest were cost and health concerns.

4.5.1. Language Barriers

The data indicates that 37.50% of respondents (29.46% agree, 8.04% strongly agree) believe that language barriers make learning about food and drink while traveling difficult. However, 33.93% disagreed (32.14% disagreed, 1.79% strongly disagreed), and 28.57% neither agreed nor disagreed. The relatively high percentage of neutral responses suggests that while language presents a challenge for some travelers, others do not see it as a significant obstacle.

4.5.2. Cultural Barriers

Regarding cultural barriers, 20.53% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that these barriers hinder food-related learning while traveling, while a larger proportion (50%) disagreed. Meanwhile, 29.46% remained neutral, indicating that cultural barriers are viewed as less significant than language barriers. The small percentage of strong agreement (0.89%) implies that for most travelers, culture does not greatly limit their ability to engage with food tourism.

4.5.3. Cost of Food and Drink Activities

A significant 51.79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the cost of food experiences presents a barrier to learning about food while traveling. 25% disagreed, and 15.18% remained neutral. The data suggests that financial constraints are a substantial obstacle for many travelers interested in food-related tourism.

4.5.4. Time Constraints

Time constraints were identified as a barrier by 34.82% of respondents (24.11% agree, 10.71% strongly agree), while 32.15% disagreed. Meanwhile, 33.04% remained neutral, indicating that time limitations are viewed as a moderate challenge that varies based on individual travel plans.

4.5.5. Health and Sanitation Concerns

Concerns about health and sanitation were identified as a barrier by 44.65% of respondents (30.36% agree, 14.29% strongly agree). However, 32.14% disagreed, while 23.21% remained neutral. These results indicate that, although many travelers are cautious about food safety, a substantial portion do not view it as a significant limitation

on their food-related experiences. Among the five barriers examined, cost (51.79%) and health concerns (44.65%) were the most frequently mentioned obstacles to engaging in food tourism. Time constraints (34.82%) and language barriers (37.50%) presented moderate challenges, whereas cultural barriers were perceived as the least restrictive, with only 20.53% of respondents considering them difficult.

Table 10. Barriers and challenges for travelers

| | Frequency | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|--------|----------------|
| | Percentage | | | | | |
| Language barriers make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling. | Frequency | 2 | 36 | 32 | 33 | 9 |
| | Percentage | 1.79% | 32.14% | 28.57% | 29.46% | 8.04% |
| Cultural barriers make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling | Frequency | 5 | 51 | 33 | 22 | 1 |
| | Percentage | 4.46% | 45.54% | 29.46% | 19.64% | 0.89% |
| The cost of food and drink activities makes it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling. | Frequency | 9 | 28 | 17 | 41 | 17 |
| | Percentage | 8.04% | 25% | 15.18% | 36.61% | 15.18% |
| Time constraints make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling | Frequency | 6 | 30 | 37 | 27 | 12 |
| | Percentage | 5.36% | 26.79% | 33.04% | 24.11% | 10.71% |
| Concerns about health and sanitation make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling | Frequency | 4 | 32 | 26 | 34 | 16 |
| | Percentage | 3.57% | 28.57% | 23.21% | 30.36% | 14.29% |

Table 11. Barriers and Challenges for Travelers: Mean and Standard Deviation

| Question | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Language barriers make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling. | 3.10 | 1.00 |
| Cultural barriers make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling | 2.67 | 0.87 |
| The cost of food and drink activities makes it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling | 3.26 | 1.22 |
| Time constraints make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling | 3.08 | 1.07 |
| Concerns about health and sanitation make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling | 3.23 | 1.12 |
| Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree | | |

4.6. Learning From Culinary Tourism

The data indicates that culinary tourism activities are perceived differently in terms of their educational value and entertainment. While learning is a key part of culinary tourism, educational activities are not always seen as fun. Many travelers prefer experiences that are engaging and entertaining rather than strictly educational. This study explores whether learning activities in culinary tourism can also be considered fun. Understanding this balance can help determine if travelers are more likely to participate in experiences that combine both fun and education.

4.6.1. Dining Experiences

69.64% of respondents rated visiting a restaurant as both a memorable experience and educational, with 30.36% considering it fun but not educational. 51.79% viewed dining at

a fine dining (gourmet) restaurant as both fun and educational, while 41.96% saw it as merely fun, and 6.25% classified it as educational but not fun. Furthermore, 62.5% regarded eating or drinking at a famous or landmark restaurant or bar as both fun and educational, while 32.14% found it only fun, and 5.36% thought it educational but not fun. In contrast, 55.36% of respondents rated eating at a food truck, food cart, or food stall as fun but not educational. In comparison, 41.96% considered it both fun and educational, indicating a shift in perception compared to traditional dining experiences.

4.6.2. Food and Beverage Tours & Workshops

88.39% viewed participation in a food and beverage tour as both fun and educational, while only 6.25% considered it fun but not educational, and 5.36% regarded it as educational but not fun. Additionally, 82.14% found taking a cooking class or workshop to be both fun and informative, with 14.29% seeing it as educational but not fun and 3.57% rating it as fun but not educational. Similarly, 72.32% of respondents viewed attending a food or beverage festival as both fun and educational, while 20.54% considered it only fun, and 7.14% perceived it as educational but not fun.

4.6.3. Visiting Production Sites

81.25% found visiting a winery both fun and educational, while 10.71% saw it as only fun and 8.04% as only educational. 80.36% viewed visiting a brewery as both fun and educational, while 10.71% found it only fun, and 8.93% rated it as only educational. 83.04% of respondents considered visiting a distillery both fun and educational, while 8.93% rated it as educational but not fun, and 8.04% saw it as fun but not educational.

4.6.4. Food Production & Markets

75.89% rated visiting a farmer's market as both fun and educational, 14.29% as only fun, and 9.82% as only educational. 78.57% saw visiting a farm orchard as fun and educational, while 11.61% found it only fun and 9.82% found it only educational.

4.6.5. Specialty Food Experiences

85.71% of respondents rated visiting a chocolate maker as both fun and educational, while 10.71% saw it as fun but not educational, and 3.57% as only educational. 86.61% considered visiting a cheese maker both fun and educational, while 7.14% found it only

educational, and 6.25% as only fun. 80.36% rated visiting a food, drink, or wine museum as both fun and educational, while 12.5% found it only educational, and 7.14% as only fun. Culinary tourism activities involving direct participation or production site visits (e.g., food/beverage tours, cooking workshops, winery/brewery/distillery visits) were rated highly educational with over 80% agreement. In contrast, activities centered around dining and street food experiences had a higher percentage of respondents rating them as only fun rather than educational, with food trucks being the least associated with educational value. These findings highlight that interactive and immersive culinary experiences are perceived as both enjoyable and informative, reinforcing their role in cultural learning through food tourism.

Table 12. Learning Outcomes of Food Tourism

| N=112 | Freq. | Fun, But Not Educational | Both Fun & Educational | Educational, But not Fun |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| | % | | | |
| Going to a restaurant for a memorable experience | Freq. | 34 | 78 | 0 |
| | % | 30.36% | 69.64% | ----- |
| Eating at a fine dining (gourmet) restaurant | Freq. | 47 | 58 | 7 |
| | % | 41.96% | 51.79% | 6.25% |
| Eating or drinking at a famous or landmark restaurant or bar | Freq. | 36 | 70 | 6 |
| | % | 32.14% | 62.5% | 5.36% |
| Eating at a food truck, food cart, or food stall | Freq. | 62 | 47 | 3 |
| | % | 55.36% | 41.96% | 2.68% |
| Participating in a food/beverage tour | Freq. | 7 | 99 | 6 |
| | % | 6.25% | 88.39% | 5.36% |
| Taking a cooking class or a workshop | Freq. | 4 | 92 | 16 |
| | % | 3.57% | 82.14% | 14.29% |
| Attending a food or beverage festival | Freq. | 23 | 81 | 8 |
| | % | 20.54% | 72.32% | 7.14% |
| Visiting a winery | Freq. | 12 | 91 | 9 |
| | % | 10.71% | 81.25% | 8.04% |
| Visiting a brewery | Freq. | 12 | 90 | 10 |
| | % | 10.71% | 80.36% | 8.93% |
| Visiting a distillery | Freq. | 9 | 93 | 10 |
| | % | 8.04% | 83.04% | 8.93% |
| Visiting a farmer's market | Freq. | 16 | 85 | 11 |
| | % | 14.29% | 75.89% | 9.82% |
| Visiting a farm or orchard | Freq. | 13 | 88 | 11 |
| | % | 11.61% | 78.57% | 9.82% |
| Visiting a chocolate maker | Freq. | 12 | 96 | 4 |
| | % | 10.71% | 85.71% | 3.57% |
| Visiting a cheese maker | Freq. | 7 | 97 | 8 |
| | % | 6.25% | 86.61% | 7.14% |
| Visiting a food, drink, or wine museum | Freq. | 8 | 90 | 14 |
| | % | 7.14% | 80.36% | 12.5% |

Overall, most activities were seen as both fun and educational. However, a few activities particularly stood out. Visiting a cheese maker (86.61%), a chocolate maker (85.71%), a distillery (83.04%), and a winery (81.25%) ranked as the top four activities. Each of these choices was made by over 90 respondents, highlighting their strong interest in blending fun with learning. The top three least educational activities, based on the highest percentages in the "Fun but Not Educational" category, are: Eating at a food truck, food

cart, or food stall 55.36%, Eating at a fine dining (gourmet) restaurant 41.96%, Eating or drinking at a famous or landmark restaurant or bar 32.14%. These activities are primarily centered around enjoyment rather than structured learning experiences, making them the least educational among the listed options.

The top three least fun activities, based on the highest percentages in the "Educational but Not Fun" category, are Visiting a food, drink, or wine museum 12.5%; Taking a cooking class or a workshop 14.29%, and Visiting a farmer's market 9.82% (tied with Visiting a farm or orchard). These activities, while considered educational, were rated as less enjoyable by respondents.

4.7. Personal experience learning from culinary tourism

Finally, an open-ended question asked, "Briefly describe a food or drink experience that helped you understand the local culture." The responses emphasize how food and drink experiences enhance travelers' understanding of diverse cultures. Several key themes appear, explaining how culinary tourism promotes cultural awareness.

4.7.1. Traditional Dishes and Regional Ingredients

Many respondents highlighted those consuming traditional foods offered valuable insights into local traditions and customs. Experiences like eating bread with red soil, exploring Sri Lankan food customs, and observing Italian coffee-drinking habits enabled travelers to engage with cultural heritage. Likewise, bone stuffing in Spain and Vienna's historic potato-based meals illustrate historical and geographical influences on culinary practices.

Representative comments included: "Eating bread with red soil in it" (Female, 29 years old, Iran). "In Sri Lanka, I got familiar with various kinds of Sri Lankan food and the way they eat each food according to their culture (by hand, for instance)" (female, 28 years old, Iran). "In Italy, the culture of drinking coffee is very different from where I was born." (female, 28 years, Iran). "In Spain, I ate the stuffing in a bone (which was considered a pricey meal)" (female, 28 years, Iran). "In Vienna, the schnitzel and beer came from their culture alongside the potato, which was in every meal as a sign of what they used to feed soldiers in WW II" (female, 28 years, Iran).

4.7.2. Culinary Markets and Local Producers

Some responses noted farmers' markets, vineyards, and food stalls as immersive cultural experiences. Travelers who explored green tea plantations in South Korea, street food vendors in Mexico, and traditional markets in Singapore and Tokyo discovered that these settings were crucial in showcasing local food preparation and consumption habits, highlighting food as a form of cultural exchange medium.

Representative comments included: “enjoyed visiting the brewery, vineyard, chocolate workshop, cooking workshop, traditional restaurants” (Female, 33 years old, Netherlands), “Going to a green tea plantation in South Korea and attending the brewing ceremony afterward.” (Female, 26 years old, Poland). “While in Mexico, I visited various food carts that allowed me to meet locals, learn about popular foods, and engage with the community (though I speak Spanish, so there wasn't a language barrier)” (Female, 26 years old, United States). “Went to a hawker center in Singapore” (Male, 59 years old, United Kingdom). “I went to Tokyo and went to street market that had so many different types of food and I was able to try many things. This helped me learn more about the local culture” (Female, 23 years old, United States).

4.7.3. Guided Food Experiences and Hands-On Learning

Respondents often highlighted food tours, winery visits, and cooking workshops as effective means to deepen cultural knowledge. Engaging in activities such as making khinkali in Georgia, participating in a chocolate workshop, or dining at local restaurants that focus on storytelling enhanced their appreciation of food as an educational resource. Experiences like learning the history of Asiago cheese or fasting during Eid provided further insights into local traditions and beliefs.

Representative comments included: “Tour of a vineyard on protected land in Lanzarote” (Female, 40 years old, United States). “Breaking fast for a day in the Eid festival of Dubai helped me understand the concept behind the festival and a lot about their culture.” (Female, 22 years old, India). “Making khinkalis on tour in Georgia as part of a supra. And a wine tour with lunch on Vesuvius” (Female, 72 years old, United States).

4.7.4. Social, Historical, and Economic Influences on Food

Some responses linked food consumption to social structures and historical factors. One traveler noted that Ireland's diet is influenced by its climate, limiting fruit and vegetable availability. Additionally, spice trading and meat consumption patterns were identified as historical indicators of national identity.

Representative comments included: "In Ireland, I was hosted by a family for two weeks, and I could experience that they do not eat fruit or vegetables that much. This sounds a bit unbelievable to me, as an Italian, but if I think about it, I realize that it's probably because of the weather: the lack of sun makes agriculture not that important in that Country." (Male, 31 years old, Italy). "It helps to understand if a nation is adventures and a bit on histories and origins, e.g., spice trading or specific meat consumption" (Male, 37 years old, Netherlands).

4.7.5. Unexpected Cultural Realizations

A few respondents noted unexpected insights gained through culinary experiences. One realized how culinary school in Sonoma, California, had shifted to serving high-end tourists, reflecting broader socio-economic changes. Another observed how super-rich migration patterns influence dining culture, while some travelers connected fasting during Eid to a deeper understanding of spiritual food traditions.

Representative comments included: "I visited Santa Rosa Junior College culinary school's restaurant near Sonoma, California, United States. I found out that the place I grew up has become completely obsessed with pleasing rich people. As super-rich tourists decide to move there and become super-rich residents, students must focus on how to serve them and please them. It's taking over our culture!", (Female, 41 years old, United States). "The local festivals I have been to, helped me to understand those countries culture from the way they eat or the way their food might be related to their history." (Female, 21 years old, Iran).

The findings suggest that culinary tourism acts as a bridge for cultural understanding, connecting food, history, and social dynamics. Whether through markets, hands-on workshops, guided food tours, or historical food narratives, travelers gain deeper insight

into the traditions and customs of the places they visit. These experiences reinforce the educational value of food tourism, highlighting its role in cultural exchange and personal enrichment.

5. Discussion

Culinary tourism has become an important pathway for cultural learning, personal growth, and economic development (Wolf, 2014; Stone et al., 2020). The study's findings underscore how food experiences significantly enhance travelers' cultural insights and influence their understanding of local customs. The writings suggest that culinary tourism is not just about food consumption; it offers immersive, sensory-filled experiences that foster deeper connections with places (Ellis et al., 2018; Kivela & Crofts, 2006). This is supported by survey data, which shows that most participants recognized how food and drink activities broadened their knowledge of various cuisines and cultural food practices. Over 86% of respondents agreed that their culinary experiences enriched their understanding of diverse food cultures, highlighting the educational benefits of food tourism.

The survey findings align with Fan et al.'s (2022) three dimensions of intercultural competence: responsibility, understanding, and appreciation. Intercultural responsibility, which involves ethical engagement and respect for cultural differences, was evident as 70.53% of respondents agreed that culinary tourism helped them respect and tolerate cultural differences. In comparison, 72.32% reported becoming more open-minded while traveling. Intercultural understanding, the ability to recognize and reflect on cultural differences, was highlighted by 87.5% of respondents who stated that culinary tourism increased their cultural awareness. Additionally, 82.14% agreed it helped them compare cultures, and 69.64% reported that it led them to reflect on their own culture. These findings reinforce the role of food as a medium for cultural learning (Kim & Eves, 2012).

Intercultural appreciation, reflecting interest in and value for cultural diversity, was supported by 82.15% of participants who stated that culinary tourism helped them discover new cultures. Additionally, 80.36% reported that it facilitated cultural contact, and 78.57% said it increased their interest in local traditions. These results highlight how food experiences create lasting cultural connections and encourage return visits (Ji et al., 2016). Despite these benefits, barriers such as cost (51.79%), health concerns (44.65%), and language barriers (37.50%) were identified. However, culinary tourism remains an effective way to blend enjoyment and education, with visits to a cheese maker (86.61%),

chocolate maker (85.71%), distillery (83.04%), and winery (81.25%) rated highest in both categories.

This research investigates the role of culinary tourism in facilitating intercultural understanding. It posits that culinary tourism ought to offer immersive experiences such as cooking classes, food festivals, and market tours to enhance this understanding. By engaging with chefs, farmers, and artisans, individuals can gain deeper insights into diverse cultures. Besides, the presence of multilingual guides and the application of storytelling techniques can help in bridging language barriers. An exploration of food history and traditions further improves this appreciation. Additionally, implementing cooking classes and workshops for children can promote early cultural awareness, enabling them to recognize and appreciate various culinary traditions from a young age.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study also highlights several barriers to fully participating in culinary tourism. Cost emerged as the most significant challenge, with over 51% of respondents citing financial constraints as a limiting factor in their food-related travel experiences. This supports prior research indicating that economic factors often dictate access to gourmet dining, food festivals, and other culinary activities (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). Additionally, 37.5% of respondents reported language barriers as a challenge, aligning with studies that discuss the difficulties tourists encounter when navigating food experiences in foreign environments (Fan et al., 2022). Health and sanitation concern also represented a notable barrier, with 44.65% expressing hesitation due to food safety issues. These concerns reflect the broader discourse on the sustainability and hygiene standards of food tourism (Bertella & Vidmar, 2019).

There are many ways to overcome these barriers. To overcome barriers to intercultural experiences in culinary tourism, businesses, and destinations should focus on accessibility and engagement. Food markets, public festivals, and street food hubs provide authentic, open-access opportunities for cultural exchange. For example, night markets in Taiwan or hawker centers in Singapore allow visitors to experience diverse cuisines in an informal setting. Businesses can enhance intercultural learning by offering interactive experiences such as food tastings with cultural storytelling or hands-on workshops. Cooking classes adapted for children can introduce young learners to global

food traditions, encouraging intercultural competence from an early age. Additionally, combining multilingual signs, digital translation tools, and translated or multi-lingual menus can help moderate language barriers, making food tourism more inclusive. Providing guided culinary tours with local experts can further enrich the experience, ensuring that travelers gain deeper insights into cultural traditions while maintaining business profitability.

Because learning may be considered to be boring, this study also measured the balance between fun and learning. This recognizes that travelers want to participate in fun activities while also recognizing the benefits of learning. Regarding learning from culinary tourism, the study results highlight that interactive and immersive experiences such as food tours, cooking classes, and visits to production sites were perceived as the most educational. Over 80% of respondents viewed these activities as both fun and educational, supporting the idea that experiential learning is a key driver of knowledge acquisition in tourism (Kolb, 2005; Stone & Petrick, 2013). However, more passive experiences, such as dining at restaurants or food trucks, were primarily rated as enjoyable but not necessarily educational. This distinction suggests that structured, guided food experiences provide a richer cultural learning opportunity than casual dining, a point reinforced by previous studies on food-related travel behavior (Ellis et al., 2018).

This indicates that destinations and businesses have some opportunities to balance fun and learning. Businesses can enhance culinary tourism by blending fun and education through interactive and immersive experiences. For instance, food tours can incorporate trivia games where participants guess the origins of ingredients or the history behind traditional dishes. Cooking classes can include cultural storytelling, where chefs share the historical significance of recipes while participants cook. Markets and food festivals can host scavenger hunts, encouraging visitors to find specific local ingredients or regional specialties, making learning both engaging and hands-on. For children, workshops can introduce food-themed games like "Guess the Spice," where kids identify different seasonings by smell and taste, or hands-on baking sessions where they learn how traditional sweets are made. Festivals like the Carnevale of Venice provide a great example of how fun and education unite; visitors dress in historical costumes, engage in

traditional activities, and learn about the origins of the celebration. Similar approaches can be applied to food festivals, where attendees participate in cultural cooking competitions or guided tastings with historical narratives. Wine and cheese pairings can also integrate blind taste tests, allowing tourists to learn about flavors, regions, and food pairings while making the experience engaging.

The findings of this study confirm that culinary tourism serves as a powerful tool for education, cultural immersion, and personal growth. By engaging in food-related activities, travelers gain deeper insights into local traditions, enhance their intercultural competence, and develop meaningful connections with destinations. However, financial, linguistic, and health-related barriers continue to prevent full participation in culinary tourism, suggesting that future efforts should focus on improving accessibility and communication in food-related travel experiences. The study contributes to the growing dialogue on food tourism by reinforcing its dual role as both a cultural learning tool and a source of entertainment, ultimately shaping how travelers interact with global culinary landscapes.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Conclusion

Culinary tourism is a key driver of cultural exchange, personal growth, and economic sustainability, highlighting its importance in global travel (Richards, 2012; Kivela & Crofts, 2006).). This exploratory study used a convenience sample to learn more about attitudes toward culinary tourism and culinary tourism activities. This study's findings reinforce existing literature, showing that food experiences deepen understanding of local traditions, cuisine, and heritage (Mak et al., 2012). A considerable number of participants reported that engaging in culinary tourism expanded their cultural knowledge and increased their appreciation for diverse food practices, supporting the notion that food serves as a cultural bridge (Hall & Sharples, 2003).

Respondents found food and drink activities to be important in their travels indicating varying levels of involvement in culinary tourism. Nearly half (46.43%) showed high involvement, prioritizing food experiences in their travel plans. Additionally, over 86% agreed that food and drink activities while traveling help to increase knowledge of different cuisines and cultural food practices.

These results highlight the necessity of active participation in food-related experiences, reinforcing research emphasizing culinary tourism's transformative power (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Additionally, food experiences were shown to cultivate intercultural competence, as respondents reported increased awareness of cultural differences and an intensified bond with the communities they explored (Byram, 1997; Kim & Eves, 2012). Three aspects of intercultural competence (Fan et al., 2022): intercultural responsibility, understanding, and appreciation were explored. Food and drink activities promoted intercultural responsibility by encouraging travelers to respect local traditions and cultural differences. Intercultural understanding was fostered as participants reflected on their own culture and compared it to others through culinary experiences. Intercultural Appreciation developed as travelers engaged with local food heritage, deepening their emotional connection to the destination. These findings highlight the role of culinary tourism in shaping cultural awareness and meaningful cross-cultural interactions.

Despite these benefits, challenges like financial limitations, language barriers, and health issues continue to affect culinary tourism access (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Bertella, 2019). The study reveals that while many see culinary experiences as enjoyable and educational. Respondents identified financial constraints (51%) as the most significant challenge, followed by health concerns (44.65%) and language barriers (37.5%). These factors delay travelers' ability to engage with culinary experiences and gain cultural insights fully. Improving infrastructure, offering translation services, and implementing pricing strategies can enhance food tourism's inclusivity, making it more available to a larger audience (Stone, Migacz, & Wolf, 2022).

In summary, culinary tourism raises cultural appreciation and global connection. This was also supported by qualitative data recalling learning experiences. This research confirms that engaging with food while traveling offers more than just sensory enjoyment; it serves as a gateway to understanding history, tradition, and identity. Future studies should further explore the long-term impacts of culinary tourism on cultural perception and sustainable tourism development (Hall & Mitchell, 2001)

6.2. Limitations

While this survey provided valuable insights, it remains an exploratory study with several limitations. The sample size was relatively small and not fully representative of the broader population of travelers, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data, introducing the possibility of response bias, as participants may have interpreted questions differently or provided socially desirable answers. The recruitment of respondents through specific online platforms and travel-related groups further narrows the scope, as it may not reflect the perspectives of all culinary tourists. Furthermore, the study primarily focused on the tourist perspective, excluding insights from local communities, tourism operators, and other industry stakeholders. Despite these constraints, the research serves as a foundation for future studies exploring the relationship between culinary tourism and intercultural competence, with the potential for further refinement through larger and more diverse participant samples.

References

1. Avcikurt, Cevdet, Mihaela S. DINU, Necdet HACIOĞLU, Recep EFE, Abdullah SOYKAN, and Nuray TETİK. "Global issues and trends in tourism." Bulagaria: Sofia University (2016).
2. Baghdadi, Ibrahim. "Innovation Networks: A Tool for Food-Culture Preservation and Sustainability in the Era of Globalization." *Journal of Sustainable Development* 12, no. 1 (January 31, 2019): 10. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jsd.v12n1p10>.
3. Berk, Zulfikar. 2017. "Short Term International Study for Teachers as a Form of Experiential Learning: A Case Study of American Educators in Turkey." PhD Thesis, University of South Carolina. <https://search.proquest.com/openview/8a1bdc45818e83b71f02c2e1becf32f6/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>.
4. Bertella, Giovanna, and Benjamin Vidmar. "Learning to Face Global Food Challenges through Tourism Experiences." *Journal of Tourism Futures* 5, no. 2 (June 3, 2019): 168–78. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-01-2019-0004>.
5. Bertella, Giovanna. "Exploring the Role of the University in the Creation of Knowledge Networks in the Aso Valley, a Rural Area in Marche Region (Italy)." Routledge EBooks, 2022.
6. Björk, Peter, and Hannele Kauppinen-Räsänen. "Culinary-Gastronomic Tourism – a Search for Local Food Experiences." Edited by Dr. Claire Seaman and Mr. Bernie Quinn. *Nutrition & Food Science* 44, no. 4 (July 8, 2014): 294–309. <https://doi.org/10.1108/NFS-12-2013-0142>.
7. Cavender, RayeCarol, Jason R. Swanson, and Kendall Wright. "Transformative Travel: Transformative Learning through Education Abroad in a Niche Tourism Destination." *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education* 27 (November 2020): 100245. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2020.100245>.
8. Chang, Richard C.Y., Jakša Kivela, and Athena H.N. Mak. "Attributes That Influence the Evaluation of Travel Dining Experience: When East Meets West."

- Tourism Management 32, no. 2 (April 2011): 307–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.02.009>.
9. Chau, Salott. “Antecedents and Outcomes of Educational Travel in Higher Education.” *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education* 29 (November 2021): 100331. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100331>.
 10. Che Ishak, Farah Adibah, Nur Atiqah Lokman Muhammad, Shahrim Ab Karim, Ungku Fatimah Ungku Zainal Abidin, Nor Atiah Ismail, and Mohd Hafiz Hanafiah. “Staging Memorable Dining Experience in Food Tourism: A Narrative Literature Review of Ethnic Restaurants.” *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 13, no. 5 (May 5, 2023): Pages 282-304. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i5/17021>.
 11. Deardorff, Darla K., ed. *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009
 12. Dougherty, Michael, and Gary Green. “Local Food Tourism Networks and Word of Mouth.” *Journal of Extension* 49, no. 2 (April 1, 2011). <https://doi.org/10.34068/joe.49.02.05>.
 13. Dougherty, Michael, Laura Brown, and Gary Green. 2013. “The Social Architecture of Local Food Tourism: Challenges and Opportunities for Community Economic Development.” *Journal of Rural Social Sciences* 28 (January):1–27
 14. Ellis, Ashleigh, Eerang Park, Sangkyun Kim, and Ian Yeoman. “What Is Food Tourism?” *Tourism Management* 68 (October 2018): 250–63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.03.025>.
 15. eMohammed, Dina, Ahmad Albattat, and Norhidayah Azman. “The Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior to Visit Gastronomy Tourism Destination.” *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Studies* 7 (February 13, 2024). <https://doi.org/10.33826/ijmras/v07i01.4>.
 16. Eriks, Niedritis, Ineta Luka, and Agita Donina. *Developing Students’ Leadership Skills in Tourism Studies*, 2010.
 17. Esau, Darcen, and Donna M. Senese. “Consuming Location: The Sustainable Impact of Transformational Experiential Culinary and Wine Tourism in Chianti Italy.”

- Sustainability 14, no. 12 (June 8, 2022): 7012.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su14127012>.
18. Fan, Daisy X. F., Sheng-Hshiong Tsaur, Jo-Hui Lin, Te-Yi Chang, and Yun-Ru Tsai Tsa. "Tourist Intercultural Competence: A Multidimensional Measurement and Its Impact on Tourist Active Participation and Memorable Cultural Experiences." *Journal of Travel Research* 61, no. 2 (February 2022): 414–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520982372>.
 19. Ferraro, Aimee. "Evaluation of a Temporary, Immersive Learning Community Based on Worldscooling" 10, no. 20 (2016).
 20. García-Pérez, Luis Enrique, and Ismael Castillo-Ortiz. "Memorable Gastro-Tourism Experiences: A Systematic Literature Review." *Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights* 5, no. 2 (November 2024): 100158.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annale.2024.100158>.
 21. Garibaldi, Roberta. 2016. "Food Travel Monitor 2016." Roberta Garibaldi. July 19, 2016. <https://www.robertagaribaldi.it/food-travel-monitor-2016/>.
 22. Getz, Donald. *Foodies and Food Tourism*. Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers Ltd, 2014.
 23. Gooch, Christina. "Food Studies Abroad: Identity, Consumption, and Learning in Italy." Master's Thesis, University of Oregon, (2015).
<https://search.proquest.com/openview/bf356e460b713de6c981e85e89e1aeeb/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>.
 24. Graham, Susan C. "Authentic Culinary Tourism Experiences: The Perspectives of Locals." *Journal of Gastronomy and Tourism* 5, no. 2 (February 26, 2021): 65–82.
<https://doi.org/10.3727/216929720X15968961037926>.
 25. Green, Gary Paul, and Michael L. Dougherty. "Localizing Linkages for Food and Tourism: Culinary Tourism as a Community Development Strategy." *Community Development* 39, no. 3 (July 2008): 148–58.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330809489674>.
 26. Hanna, Barbara E. "Eating a Home: Food, Imaginary Selves and Study Abroad Testimonials." *Higher Education Research & Development* 35, no. 6 (November 2016): 1196–1209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2016.1160876>.

27. Hjalager, Anne-Mette, and Greg Richards, eds. *Tourism and Gastronomy*. 0 ed. Routledge, 2003. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203218617>.
28. Hjalager, Anne-Mette. *Tourism and Gastronomy*. 1st ed. Routledge Advances in Tourism Ser. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2002.
29. Huang, Xingyu, Peihao Wang, and Laurie Wu. "Well-Being Through Transformation: An Integrative Framework of Transformative Tourism Experiences and Hedonic Versus Eudaimonic Well-Being." *Journal of Travel Research* 63, no. 4 (April 2024): 974–94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00472875231171670>.
30. Johnson, James R., Ronald J. Kovach, and Patricia N. Roberson. "Campus Stories: Three Case Studies: Part C: Putting Experiential Education into Practice: Using Kolb as a Learning Model for Implementing Organizational Change." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 2010, no. 124 (December 2010): 81–87. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.425>.
31. Jonas, Altouise G., Laetitia Radder, and Marlé Van Eyk. "The Influence of Cognitive Dimensions on Memorable Experiences within a Marine Tourism Context." *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences* 23, no. 1 (October 27, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajems.v23i1.3579>.
32. Kivela, Jakša, and John C. Crotts. "Tourism and Gastronomy: Gastronomy's Influence on How Tourists Experience a Destination." *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* 30, no. 3 (August 2006): 354–77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348006286797>.
33. Koerich, Guilherme Henrique, Fernanda A. Ferreira, José António Costa Alves Da Silva, and Araci Hack Catapan. "Learning Experiences in the Culinary Classroom: Identifying Barriers and Enablers in the Practical Teaching-Learning Process in Gastronomy." *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education* 35 (November 2024): 100508. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2024.100508>.
34. Kolb, Alice Y., and David A. Kolb Reviewed work(s): "Learning Styles and Learning Spaces: Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education." *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 4, no. 2 (2005): 193–212.

35. Kolb, David A., and Linda H. Lewis. "Facilitating Experiential Learning: Observations and Reflections." *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 1986, no. 30 (June 1986): 99–107. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.36719863012>.
36. Lee, Ching-Sung, Yen-Cheng Chen, Ming-Chen Chiang, and Chen-Jin Lin. "Unforgettable Food Experiences: A Model for Constructing Rural Tourism Cooking Experience Classrooms." *Quality & Quantity* 58, no. 6 (December 2024): 5445–62. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-024-01903-z>.
37. Lee, Kai-Sean. "Culinary Aesthetics: World-Traveling with Culinary Arts." *Annals of Tourism Research* 97 (November 2022): 103487. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2022.103487>.
38. Li, Guiqing, Chaozhi Zhang, Ding Xu, and Lixing Wang. "How Emotions Catalyse Learning through Study Tours: Evidence from Panda Ambassador." *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 60 (September 2024): 322–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2024.08.006>.
39. Lin, Bingna, Saerom Wang, Xiaoxiao Fu, and Xiaoli Yi. "Beyond Local Food Consumption: The Impact of Local Food Consumption Experience on Cultural Competence, Eudaimonia and Behavioral Intention." *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 35, no. 1 (January 2, 2023): 137–58. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-01-2022-0099>.
40. Lin, Lin, and Pei-Chuan Mao. "Food for Memories and Culture – A Content Analysis Study of Food Specialties and Souvenirs." *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 22 (March 2015): 19–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2014.12.001>.
41. Lin, Yi-Chin, Thomas E. Pearson, and Liping A. Cai. "Food as a Form of Destination Identity: A Tourism Destination Brand Perspective." *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 11, no. 1 (January 2011): 30–48. <https://doi.org/10.1057/thr.2010.22>.
42. Magri-Harsich, Gabriela, Francesc Fusté-Forné, Carlos Fernandes, and Dolors Vidal-Casellas. "Artisanal Food Production in Rural Argentina: Finding Solace in Cheese Tourism?" *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science* 35 (March 2024): 100888. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2024.100888>.

43. Mair, Heather, and Jennifer Sumner. "Critical Tourism Pedagogies: Exploring the Potential through Food." *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education* 21 (November 2017): 195–203. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2017.06.001>.
44. McCarthy, Mary. "Experiential Learning Theory: From Theory to Practice." *Journal of Business* 8, no. 5 (2010).
45. Mohammed, Dina Ahmed, Albattat Ahmad, and Norhidayah Azman. "FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TO VISIT GASTRONOMY TOURISM DESTINATION, MODERATING ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING" 6, no. 1 (2024).
46. Molina-Collado, Arturo, María Leticia Santos-Vijande, Mar Gómez-Rico, and Jesús Santos Del Cerro. "Sensory versus Personal Environment as Antecedents of the Creative Food Tourism Experience." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 118 (April 2024): 103688. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2023.103688>.
47. Mottiar, Ziene and MacConiomaire, Mairtin (2024) "The Individual, Collective, and Cyclical Transformational Learning Created by Food Tourism Education," *European Journal of Food Drink and Society*: Vol. 4: Iss. 1, Article 3. <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ejfds/vol4/iss1/3>
48. Okumus, Bendegul. "Food Tourism Research: A Perspective Article." *Tourism Review* 76, no. 1 (February 26, 2021): 38–42. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-11-2019-0450>.
49. Organ, Kate, Nicole Koenig-Lewis, Adrian Palmer, and Jane Probert. "Festivals as Agents for Behaviour Change: A Study of Food Festival Engagement and Subsequent Food Choices." *Tourism Management* 48 (June 2015): 84–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.10.021>.
50. Pachmayer, Ara, and Kathleen Andereck. "Enlightened Travelers? Cultural Attitudes, Competencies, and Study Abroad." *Tourism Culture & Communication* 19, no. 3 (September 1, 2019): 165–82. <https://doi.org/10.3727/194341419X15554157596092>.
51. Park, Eerang, and Andy Widyanta. "Food Tourism Experience and Changing Destination Foodscape: An Exploratory Study of an Emerging Food Destination."

- Tourism Management Perspectives 42 (April 2022): 100964.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2022.100964>.
52. Putra, Aditya, Sundring Djati, and Saptarining Wulan. 2024. "Food Tourism Development Model: Exploring Stakeholders' Perspective and Ethnic Food Influence on Tourists' Revisit Intention in Indonesia's Chinatown" 7 (July):11–31.
- Quintero.d Karla, and Konstantina Zerva. "Educational Travel: The Role of Gender Stereotypes Shaping Students' Transformative Experience." Journal of International Migration and Integration, December 19, 2024.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-024-01217-x>.
53. Resmi, Irma Citra, Wawan Dhewanto, and Dina Dellyana. "Gastronomy Tourism: Local Food and Tourism Experience in Bandung." The Journal Gastronomy Tourism 10, no. 2 (November 17, 2023): 195–202.
<https://doi.org/10.17509/gastur.v10i2.63659>.
54. Richards, Greg. "Evolving Gastronomic Experiences: From Food to Foodies to Foodscapes." Journal of Gastronomy and Tourism 1, no. 1 (July 15, 2015): 5–17.
<https://doi.org/10.3727/216929715X14298190828796>.
55. Rojas-Barreto, Lisseth S. "The Intercultural Competence in Colombian University Teachers - Analysis of a Questionnaire." English Language Teaching 12, no. 1 (December 6, 2018): 30. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n1p30>.
56. Rusu, Virginia, Cristian Rusu, Nicolás Matus, and Federico Botella. "Tourist Experience Challenges: A Holistic Approach." Sustainability 15, no. 17 (August 23, 2023): 12765. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151712765>.
57. Scheyvens, Regina. "Ecotourism and the Empowerment of Local Communities." Tourism Management 20, no. 2 (April 1999): 245–49.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(98\)00069-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00069-7).
58. Snyman, Sue, and Kelly S. Bricker. "Living on the Edge: Benefit-Sharing from Protected Area Tourism." Journal of Sustainable Tourism 27, no. 6 (June 3, 2019): 705–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2019.1615496>.
59. Sorcaru, Iulian. 2019. "Gastronomy Tourism - A Sustainable Alternative for Local Economic Development." Annals of Dunarea de Jos University of Galati. Fascicle

- I. Economics and Applied Informatics 25 (April):103–10.
<https://doi.org/10.35219/eai1584040912>.
60. Sotiriadis, Marios D. “Culinary Tourism Assets and Events: Suggesting a Strategic Planning Tool.” *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 27, no. 6 (August 10, 2015): 1214–32. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-11-2013-0519>.
61. Stalmirska, A. M., & Ali, A. (2023). Sustainable development of urban food tourism: A cultural globalization approach. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14673584231203368>
62. Sthapit, E. (2017). Exploring tourists’ memorable food experiences: A study of visitors to Santa’s official hometown. *Anatolia*, 28(3), 404-421.
63. Stier, J. (2006). Internationalization, intercultural communication, and intercultural competence. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 6(1), 1–06. <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v6i1.422>
64. Stone, M. J., & Petrick, J. F. (2013). The Educational Benefits of Travel Experiences: A Literature Review. *Journal of Travel Research*, 52(6), 731-744. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287513500588>
65. Stone, Matthew J. "Culinary Tourism". In *Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing*, (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022) accessed Jan 31, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800377486.culinary.tourism>
66. Stone, Matthew J., and Erose Sthapit. “Memories Are Not All Positive: Conceptualizing Negative Memorable Food, Drink, and Culinary Tourism Experiences.” *Tourism Management Perspectives* 54 (November 2024): 101296. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2024.101296>.
67. Stone, Matthew J., Joelle Soulard, Steven Migacz, and Erik Wolf. “Elements of Memorable Food, Drink, and Culinary Tourism Experiences.” *Journal of Travel Research* 57, no. 8 (November 2018): 1121–32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287517729758>.
68. Stone, Matthew J., Roberta Garibaldi, and Andrea Pozzi. “Motivation, Behaviors, and Travel Activities of Beer Tourists.” *Tourism Review International* 24, no. 2 (August 4, 2020): 167–78. <https://doi.org/10.3727/154427220X15912253254437>.

69. Stone, Matthew J., Steve Migacz, and Erik Wolf. "Learning through Culinary Tourism and Developing a Culinary Tourism Education Strategy." *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 20, no. 1–2 (March 4, 2022): 177–95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2021.1876078>.
70. Stone, Matthew J., Steven Migacz, and Erik Wolf. "Beyond the Journey: The Lasting Impact of Culinary Tourism Activities." *Current Issues in Tourism* 22, no. 2 (January 20, 2019): 147–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2018.1427705>.
71. Stone, Matthew J., Steven Migacz, and Erose Sthapit. "Connections Between Culinary Tourism Experiences and Memory." *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* 46, no. 4 (May 2022): 797–807. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348021994171>.
72. Thelen, Timo, and Sangkyun Kim. 2024. "Towards Social and Environmental Sustainability at Food Tourism Festivals: Perspectives from the Local Community and Festival Organizers." *Tourism Management Perspectives* 54 (November):101304. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2024.101304>.
73. Toker, Burcu, and Hamed Rezapouraghdam. "Intangible Cultural Heritage and Management of Educational Tourism: An Experiential Learning Approach." In *Advances in Hospitality, Tourism, and the Services Industry*, edited by Vânia Gonçalves Costa, Andreia Antunes Moura, and Maria Do Rosário Mira, 199–216. IGI Global, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-4318-4.ch010>.
74. Tomasi, Sabrina, Alessio Cavicchi, Gigliola Paviotti, Giovanna Bertella, and Cristina Santini. "Assessing the Learning Outcomes of Food-Related Educational Tourism Events for University Students: The Case of the International Student Competition of Fermo, Italy." *International Studies. Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal* 24, no. 2 (December 30, 2019): 95–125. <https://doi.org/10.18778/1641-4233.24.07>.
75. Tomasi, Sabrina, Gigliola Paviotti, and Alessio Cavicchi. "Educational Tourism and Local Development: The Role of Universities." *Sustainability* 12, no. 17 (August 20, 2020): 6766. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12176766>.
76. Torabi Farsani, Neda, Hossein Zeinali, and Maedeh Moaiednia. "Food Heritage and Promoting Herbal Medicine-Based Niche Tourism in Isfahan, Iran." *Journal of*

- Heritage Tourism 13, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 77–87.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2016.1263307>.
77. Trivette, Shawn A. “The Importance of Food Retailers: Applying Network Analysis Techniques to the Study of Local Food Systems.” *Agriculture and Human Values* 36, no. 1 (March 2019): 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-018-9885-1>.
78. Wang, Mei-jung (Sebrina), Li-Zu Yang, and Tzu-ling (Charline) Chen. “The Effectiveness of ICT-Enhanced Learning on Raising Intercultural Competencies and Class Interaction in a Hospitality Course.” *Interactive Learning Environments* 31, no. 2 (February 17, 2023): 994–1006.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2020.1815223>.
79. Wijaya, Serli. “Indonesian Food Culture Mapping: A Starter Contribution to Promote Indonesian Culinary Tourism.” *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 6, no. 1 (September 18, 2019): 9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-019-0009-3>.
80. Williams, H. A., Yuan, J., & Williams Jr, R. L. (2019). Attributes of memorable gastro-tourists’ experiences. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 43(3), 327–348.
81. World Food Travel Association. 2024. World Food Travel Association. Accessed December 5, 2024. <https://www.worldfoodtravel.org/>.
82. World Tourism Organization. 2025. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Accessed January 30, 2025. <https://www.unwto.org/>.
83. WORRACHANANUN, M. (2024). SUSTAINABLE FOOD TOURISM: IMPACTS, OPPORTUNITY, AND CHALLENGES IN THE MODERN ERA. *Asian Administration and Management Review*, 8(1), Article 3.
<https://doi.org/10.14456/aamr.2025.3>
84. Yiğit, Serkan, and Onur Akgül. “A NETNOGRAPHY APPROACH ON THE GUIDED PUB CRAWLS EXPERIENCES OF TOURISTS: THE CASE OF ISTANBUL.” *Journal of Gastronomy Hospitality and Travel (JOGHAT)*, December 30, 2023, 4. <https://doi.org/10.33083/joghat.2023.371>.
85. Yiğit, Serkan. “Is It Possible to Get to Know a Culture through Cooking Classes? Tourists’ Experiences of Cooking Classes in İstanbul.” *International Journal of*

Gastronomy and Food Science 28 (June 2022): 100527.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2022.100527>.

86. Yu, Zhicheng, Keyi Guo, Songshan (Sam) Huang, Zhiyong Li, Yumei Du, and Meng Yu. "Tourist Emotion-Learning Nexus: A Case of Sertar, China." *Annals of Tourism Research* 102 (September 2023): 103618.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2023.103618>.

Appendix

Survey for culinary tourism experience

This survey is conducted as my master's thesis at the University of Padua. It is about food and drink experiences while traveling. It will take less than 10 minutes to complete. No personally identifiable information is collected in this survey. All responses are confidential. If you do not want to participate in this survey, you may exit the study at any time, and your responses will be deleted.

1. What year were you born?

2. What is your gender?

Female

Male

Nonbinary/Other

Prefer not to say

3. What country are you from?

4. Are you:

A Bachelor Student

- A Master student
- A PhD student
- I am not a student

5. Have you taken an international trip in the past 2 years?

- Yes
- No

SECTION 2: AWARENESS AND INTEREST IN CULINARY TOURISM

Culinary or Food and Drink Tourism includes all of these activities: Going to a restaurant for a memorable experience; Eating at a fine dining (gourmet) restaurant; visiting a famous/landmark restaurant or bar; eating at a food truck, food cart, or food stall; going to a food, wine, or beer festival; taking a food or drink tour; visiting a production facility (brewery, winery, chocolate maker, cheese maker), taking a cooking class, or visiting a food or drink museum.

-
6. In the past 2 years, have you participated in at least one food/drink tourism activity while traveling?
- Yes, I have done at least one of these activities while traveling
 - No, I have not done any of these activities while traveling.
-

7. When selecting a travel destination, how important is the availability of food & drink or food & drink-related activities (Where 1 = never a motivator to 10 = always a motivator)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Never a motivator ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always a motivator

8. Please choose your level of agreement with each question about dining while traveling.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| I would choose where to eat on a trip very carefully. | | | | | | | |
| Deciding where to eat on a trip would be an important decision for me. | | | | | | | |
| Where I eat on a trip matters to me a lot | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| I often watch shows, movies, or documentaries about food and drink (on TV, streaming, or YouTube) | | | | | | | |
| I learn about local food & drink when I visit a destination. | | | | | | | |
| I believe my eating & drinking experiences help me to understand the local culture when I travel. | | | | | | | |
| Learning about local food and drink is important to me when I travel. | | | | | | | |

SECTION 3: PERSONAL OUTCOMES OF CULINARY TOURISM

9. What is your level of agreement with each of these statements:

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Food and drink activities while traveling have helped to increase my knowledge of different cuisines and cultural food practices. | | | | | |
| Food and drink activities while traveling have positively changed my perception of a particular culture | | | | | |
| I have learned about new foods and drinks while traveling | | | | | |
| Food and drink activities while traveling have improved my understanding and respect for different cultures | | | | | |
| Food and drink activities while traveling made me a more educated person. | | | | | |

SECTION 4: INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

10. What is your level of agreement with each of these statements:

Food and Drink activities while traveling have helped me:

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| to respect a destination's heritage | | | | | |
| To respect and tolerate cultural differences | | | | | |
| to be open-minded while traveling | | | | | |
| to be aware of the differences between cultures | | | | | |
| to compare the differences between cultures | | | | | |
| to reflect on my own culture | | | | | |
| to discover unique and new cultures (at a destination) | | | | | |
| to make contact with a different culture | | | | | |
| to be interested in a destination's culture | | | | | |

SECTION 5: BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

11. What is your level of agreement with each of these statements:

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Language barriers make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling. | | | | | |
| Cultural barriers make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling. | | | | | |
| The cost of food and drink activities makes it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling. | | | | | |
| Time constraints make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling. | | | | | |
| Concerns about health and sanitation make it difficult to learn about food and drink while traveling. | | | | | |

SECTION 6: LEARNING FROM CULINARY TOURISM

12. Please rate each of these activities that you may do while traveling:

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Fun But Not Educational | Both Fun and Educational | Educational, But not Fun |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Going to a restaurant for a memorable experience | | | |
| Eating at a fine dining (gourmet) restaurant | | | |
| Eating or drinking at a famous or landmark restaurant or bar | | | |
| Eating at a food truck, food cart, or food stall | | | |
| Participating in a food/beverage tour | | | |
| Taking a cooking class or a workshop | | | |
| Attending a food or beverage festival | | | |
| Visiting a winery | | | |
| Visiting a brewery | | | |
| Visiting a distillery | | | |
| Visiting a farmer's market | | | |
| Visiting a farm or orchard | | | |
| Visiting a chocolate maker | | | |
| Visiting a cheese maker | | | |
| Visiting a food, drink, or wine museum | | | |

13. Briefly describe a food or drink experience that helped you understand the local culture. (If you have not had this experience, skip this question).