

## HEURISTIC TOURISM TREND AND GASTRONOMY TOURISM IN ISTANBUL

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### **Abstract.**

*Gastronomical products are among the most important cultural values of a destination. Local gastronomic culture differentiate one destination from the other. Gastronomical values of a destination reflects the identity of its local culture. The visitors consume the products of a destination. Local gastronomic products are the reflections of local cultural identity and add value to a destination These tangible and intangible products must fullfill the wants and needs of the visitor. The uniqueness of its local intangible cultural values like gastronomic culture supports the sustainable competitiveness of a destination and makes it easier for marketers to promote.As the new tourist is after exeperience, gastronomy offers it very well.*

*Istanbul is a multicultural destination and has a diverse cuisine. As a multi cultural destinaion, culinary culture represent a core element of the destinations' invisible cultural heritage. The city has sufficient attraction factors for gastronomy tourism. Different cultures of the country living in the city, has different culinary characteristics like Ottoman, Anatolian, Byzantine, Sephardic, Eastern Anatolian, Black Sea, Aegean etc. In destination marketing, destination has to be differentiated from the competitors and the destination culture has to be blended with the gastronomical identity/culture. New generation tourist is after new and unique experiences. People are not satisfied with ordinary tours and travelling with big groups. Through gastronomy tourism heuristic tourism demand can be fulfilled.*

*In this study, heuristic tourism and gastronomy tourism has been studied in the light of TURSAB gastronomy tourism report and Trip Advisor guest comments. New suggestions has been developed to increase gastronomy tourism as a part of heuristic tourism. The methodology primarily involved in-depth interviews and document analyses.*

**Key words:** heuristic tourism, gastronomy tourism, destination marketing, gastronomy

**Jel Classification:** Y8

### **Introduction**

As global tourism is on the rise the competition between destinations increases. The unique and intangibile cultural heritage of destinations become more important factor for attraction of tourists. Nowadays people have fast going lives between office an home. Especially people living in big cities spend alot of time in the traffic and in their offices. People take short breaks in betwen their rush and routin. They want to do different things in these small breaks. They want to get through the crowds, and have special and extraordinary memories in the tours they take, in the hotels they stay, in the destinations they visit. People are not content with regular tours planned for everyone else. They want something special, they want to feel special. In this context, travel agencies organize tailor made tours for special interest groups. In these tours people can experience their interests. As the competition increases, the experiences agencies present to differenciate their services becomes ordinary. People look for unique things, new things because new tourist is after innovation, diversity, authenticity and experience. For a destination or a hospitality establishment to be preferable they have to fullfill the needs and wants of their customers. In new generation tourism they have to offer them unique and new experiences.

Traditional culture tourism is based on seeing, watching and observing activities. On the other hand heuristic tourism is based on experience, active participation and learning. In these kind of practices the important part is having the pleasure of experiencing the creation/ production of the product or service in person, by learning through experience.

In this regard a destination or a nation's culinary culture reflects the authenticity of its folk culture and cultural heritage. Culture is directly linked to motivations, physical, rural and regional development, heritage, identity and cultural tourism which then links into concepts such as authenticity and culinary tourism. Food is a "cultural reference point", which, within it, contains entirely unique information about the production and culture and geography of the destination from which it originates [1] Tourists consumption of food and gastronomy has increasingly been turned into an "attractionized" experience that provides high contrast and symbolic values [2] the trend is furtherly fueled by the growth of the "experience economy" [3] where by tourists actively search for a broad range of cultural experiences that are original and authentic to enrich their cultural capital [4] [5].

In new generation tourism concept individualism, experiential practices are encouraged. The changing production-consumption pattern and practices in tourism industry carry the contemporary tourists from "sight collector" position to "experience hunter" position. As a result of this transformation; tangible cultural content like the natural and historical sites, museums, ancient ruins, immovable cultural heritage etc. which are the sources of culture tourism leave their place to a structure based on creativity and experience. This interactive structure is based on places, practices, representations, informations, skills and experiencing the equipment related to these. This new approach or trend converts tourism to a personal activity. At the same time enables tourists to try out the curiosity, knowledge, skills and creativity other than just seeing the cultural heritage. Heuristic tourism is culture focused new generation tourism, based on experience.

Gastronomy embodies the traditional values of a culture. Includes culture, tradition, authenticity and sustainability. It enables revitalizing and diversity of tourism. Authentic and interesting food can attract visitors to a destination [6]. Helps the local development of local economy with involving different sectors. Gastronomy tourism enables, cultural environment, natural habitat, various traditional practices, and cultural memory to be consumed simultaneously, agriculture provides the product, namely, food; culture provides the history and authenticity; and tourism provides the infrastructure and services and combines the three components into the food tourism experience.[7].

Food tourism has recently drawn much attention as a tourism product [8][9] [10] It is seen as one of the most essential of the tourist experience [9] and therefore as an important factor in determining visitor satisfaction. Destinations are increasingly using food as a means to differentiate themselves and broaden their market base[11].

Gastronomy can play an important role in tourist destination choice and also in visitor satisfaction. The desire to try different food and beverages maybe a primary motivator for some people or secondary motivator for others. Some people may travel to try different cuisines this elevates food from more than from an enjoyable activity to a major attraction. (Kercher, Okumus & Okumus, 2008)

According to Jenkins (1999), gastronomy is believed to rank along side climate, accommodation and scenery in importance to tourists as destination attributes. (Jenkins, 1999) Remington and Yuksel 1998 found that food was the fourth most important contributor to the satisfaction of visitors and the most important factor why tourists return to Turkey. [11]

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The methodology primarily involved in-depth interviews and document analyses. Turkish Travel Agencies Association (TURSAB) Gastronomy Tourism Report, UNWTO Second Global Report on Gastronomy Tourism, Trip Advisor guest comments for Istanbul has been analyzed, interview with the Gastronomy Tourism Department of TURSAB has been done. Data has been analyzed.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

According to the TURSAB (Turkish Travel Agencies Association) Gastronomy Tourism Report 2015, 88.2% of tourists declare that "food is very important in destination preference" Visitors coming to Turkey spend 828 dollars per person and spend 157.5 dollars for food. This means they spend 1/5 of their expenses on food. Which is much, but it has to be mentioned that many of the hotels on the Mediterranean coast are all inclusive. There are only 94 groups and establishments including hotels, travel agencies, cook schools, restaurants which deal with gastronomy tourism in Turkey. Turkey is on the 23rd place in the world with these groups.

The population of Istanbul is just over 15 milyon. It was the capital of three big Empires . Roman Empire 325 AD- 395 AD, Byzantine Empire 395 - 1453, Ottoman Empire 1453- 1923, since 1923 economy capital of modern Turkey. The population of the city originates from all over the country. All these people brought their own local culture and cuisine. So as a multi cultural city it has a diverse cuisine for different tastes and allows different experiences for heuristic tourism. It is one of the biggest cities in the world and a big tourist attraction. In 2018 Istanbul welcomed 12 million 355 thousand 122 tourists.

1. 991,017 Germany
2. 872,560 Iran
3. 586,814 Saudi Arabia
4. 571,000 Russia
5. 564,000 Iraq
6. 424,000 England

First 5 months of 2019 the number of tourists visiting Istanbul was 5 million 415 thousand 916.

There are 28.650 restaurants in Istanbul. These restaurants are in various classes. Unfortunately there is no exact percentage of the types of these restaurants. The theme of the restaurants change suddenly and continuously. You can visit a restaurant as an international cuisine restaurant a month later it can be a pizza restaurant. But some of these restaurants are classy restaurants with world famous chefs.

In recent years gastronomy tourism is promoted by Turkish Ministry of Tourism. There are 63 travel agencies organize gastronomy tours . 80% of these agencies are in Istanbul, a few in Antep, Adana and Konya. As the importance of gastronomy tourism is seen by the tourism sector more agencies are interested about it. According to TURSAB, in 2019, 100 travel agencies participated in gastronomy tourism trainings. These agencies will start promoting gastronomy tours for 2020. Through gastronomy tourism past can be preserved and also authenticity can be maintained for the future. The economy of gastronomy tours are high, too. A regular culture tour for a week costs approximately \$1000 but a gastronomy tour for same period is \$2000. Gastronomy tourism on one hand helps to increase the demand as an heuristic tourism type also, on the other hand important economical income.

These gastronomy tours include cooking classes which is a part of the gastronomic experience. Cooking local food with local ingredients and then eating the cooked food gives the pleasure of authentic experience. Fauna flora is a part of local gastronomy, the tours to vineyards and orchards, tasting the herbs, fruits etc. and getting information about them. Degustation of different local dishes and wines, market tours are all gastronomic experiences presented by the local agencies.

To give the tourists a unique gastronomic experience and to develop gastronomy tourism the experience should not only be enjoyable but also match the marketing promise. Authenticity is a must in gastronomy tourism. The agency should take or help the tourists to find an amazing local restaurant, food market, winery, a production facility or people involved in food business. The tourist should be satisfied. He experience has to be fulfilling. The TripAdvisor comments of guests

were also analyzed on gastronomy bases. The negative comments on gastronomy were mainly on disappointment of the quality of food in touristic parts of Istanbul- Sultanahmet and Beyoglu districts. Negative comments are; high prices, low quality food, lack of hygiene, bad service, no matching description, photo and food served.

## **CONCLUSION**

Gastronomy tourism is important in promoting and branding of destinations. Through gastronomy tourism local traditions and diversities can be maintained and preserved. Since the authenticity and harnesses of gastronomy attracts people who are looking for heuristic tourism. The unique cuisine and dishes of a destination can be used for giving the experience that the tourists are looking for.

The development of regional and local cuisines became tourist attractions in recent years. Gastronomy or culinary tourism emerged to be a major travel activity. Travelling for food has become a trend in the world. In many places around the world destinations local food and cuisine became an important market niche. It helps the sustainable competitiveness of a tourist destination.

In recent years alternative tourism activities has attracted the attention of marketers as new tourism products. Sports, health, cultural, religion and gastronomy tourisms are the new emerging tourism products. Plenty of tourism literature and promotional material of various destinations show that especially the role of gastronomy in destination marketing has been recently taking the attention of marketers both locally and internationally. Gastronomy is not only an art of eating and drinking, it's also an interaction of food and beverage with art, culture, science.

In modern globalized world international food chains are all around the world, people eat standardized food. People who are tired of their standardized lives travel with the dream of experiencing intangible local cultural assets like; local cultures, life styles, food etc. Local also has the potential to enhance sustainability in tourism. Many tourists travel for finding different culinary for experiences. Food is an important motivator for travellers. There are many people travelling to special destinations for the reason of seeking food.

As it strengthens the local economy also contributes to the authenticity of the destination.

Gastronomical products are among the most important cultural values of a destination. Local gastronomic culture differentiate one destination from the other. Gastronomic values of a destination reflects the identity of its local culture. The visitors consume the products of a destination. Local gastronomic products are the reflections of local cultural identity and add value to a destination These tangible and intangible products must fulfill the wants and needs of the visitor. The uniqueness of its local intangible cultural values like gastronomic culture supports the sustainable competitiveness of a destination and serves the heuristic tourism.

To give fulfilling experience to visitors and customer satisfaction the negative behavior of the employees has to be changed. Customer satisfaction and fulfilling experience should be adopted by all the people in the gastronomy sector primary objective. The quality of the food in touristic districts like Beyoglu and SultanAhmet has to be upgraded, price-quality balance has to be done, service employees has to be trained to give service, better communications, must speak at least one foreign language, hygiene is very important factor. The hygiene of the restaurant must be controlled frequently, the pictures and the descriptions of the food on the menu has to match. Other than solving these problems and upgrading the quality of service of gastronomy tourism to promote it agencies and tour operators should;

- Be aware of the changing trends in gastronomy not in local also worldwide,
- Organize specialised workshops,

- Use digital marketing and help food and beverage industry to use the digital platforms, put their information on digital media,
- Gastronomic experiences which suit different budgets like street food, food markets to high-end restaurants should be easy to find and go with public transportation,
- Use WOM, viral marketing, since no prebuying experience in gastronomy tourism, the experiences of the people who consumed the service/product are important during the buying behavior process. The advice and comments of people who had experience with the product has an guiding effect.
- Events are also important attraction for heuristic tourists. Events like Byzantine food week, Roman food week etc. catch the attention of people who are looking for new experiences and try new things.

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