

Chapter 3

Cheese Tourism Destinations and Routes

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ABSTRACT

This section aims to discuss cheese tourism destinations and routes with case studies only in terms of supply and demand. More clearly, it is envisaged to examine the prominent destinations in cheese tourism worldwide and the routes of these destinations that have been successfully established in terms of tourism. Furthermore, whether Turkey can be a new destination in cheese tourism is evaluated through cheese tourism products. In light of this information, it becomes necessary to define the concept of cheese tourism, explain cheese tourism products, and address these relationships through destinations such as Spain, France, the Netherlands, and Italy, which are prominent in cheese tourism in the world.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Tourists travel to discover, experience, or purchase cheese and cheese-related gastronomic products specific to a particular destination (Fusté-Forné, 2015a; Ermolaev et al., 2019). Such tourists want to learn about the processes involved in the production, preparation, presentation, or consumption of cheeses, or to learn about eating styles, table manners, or culinary cultures (Soltani, 2019). Similarly, they can visit cheese producers, factories, or firms in the destination and participate in cheese-related festivals and tours (Fusté-Forné, 2015a; Folgado-Fernandez et al., 2019). They can even have an active experience by attending cheese production and making courses that go beyond consumption. Therefore, cheese tourism destinations and routes become unique and memorable gastronomic experiences for such tourists (Moreno-Lobato et al., 2023).

Cheese tourism contributes to destinations, local producers, local people, and the environment in various aspects, as well as to tourists (Fusté-Forné, 2016c). In this context, destinations can differentiate themselves from their competitors by using cheese tourism products in their marketing and promotional activities (Fusté-Forné, 2021). At the same time, it can extend the stay of tourists, increase their spending, or contribute to the emergence or development of alternative gastronomic products. For local people, it can strengthen local identity, create new job opportunities, develop the local economy, and

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increase intercultural interaction (Fusté-Forné, 2020a; Magri-Harsich et al., 2024). On the other hand, it can contribute to local producers such as developing agricultural activities, supporting local animal husbandry, increasing the production and sales of local cheeses, and increasing the diversity and quality of products and services (Fusté-Forné, 2020b). Finally, it is important for the environment in terms of raising awareness for the protection of natural resources, contributing to the development of environmentally friendly infrastructure and superstructure, and ensuring sustainability (Fusté-Forné, 2020c).

In light of this information, this section aims to discuss cheese tourism destinations and routes with case studies only in terms of supply and demand. More clearly, it is envisaged to examine the prominent destinations in cheese tourism worldwide and the routes of these destinations that have been successfully established in terms of tourism. Furthermore, whether Turkey can be a new destination in cheese tourism is evaluated through cheese tourism products.

Cheese Tourism

Travels to discover, experience, and purchase cheeses or cheese-related activities specific to a particular destination or community are expressed as cheese tourism (Yonzon and Hunter, 1991; Agudelo-López et al., 2016). Cheese tourism brings together the natural, cultural, local, and traditional elements of the destination (Fusté-Forné, 2016a). Cheese tourism is explained as visiting cheese-making and dairy production areas (Fusté-Forné, 2015a; 2020a) and traveling to destinations where cheese-making tradition is intense (Fusté-Forné, 2020b). Based on this information, cheese tourism is defined as (i) activities that include the production, presentation, and tasting of cheeses (Soltani, 2019; Čaušević and Hrelja, 2020); (ii) reflecting the eating and drinking styles, table manners, and culture of the region or community where it is produced (Fusté-Forné, 2020c; Fusté-Forné and Cerdan, 2021); (iii) travel that includes one or more of the cheese tourism products, such as visiting producers, factories or workshops, farmers' markets, participating in festivals and events, participating in tours, following routes, pairing with various beverages such as wine, attending production and tasting courses (Fusté-Forné, 2015b; Ermolaev et al., 2019), and (v) travels for enjoyment and learning, including co-creation processes (Yılmaz, 2024) (Fig 1).

Figure 1. Characteristics of cheese tourism



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