

Chapter 11


Mapping the Food Tourism Literature in India and Greece Through Multimethod Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to enhance the knowledge by offering perspectives from two developing nations India and Greece by reviewing the existing literature on food tourism. This study adopted a multimethod analysis using descriptive and narrative analysis to analyze research papers published on food tourism in India and Greece. The findings of the research are discussed in the shadow of chapter theme. By proposing ideas and constructs for future research, this study provides directions for future food tourism research from these two major contributors' perspective. Findings will also assist managers and stakeholders in comprehending the factors influencing tourists, destination marketing and branding, aiding in effective planning and executing food tourism strategies to promote destinations.

INTRODUCTION

Food tourism, also known as culinary or gastronomic tourism (Long, 2012), has emerged as a rapidly growing segment within the broader tourism industry. It involves traveling primarily or secondarily to experience the cuisine of a particular place, offering tourists a unique way to connect with the culture, history, and traditions of a destination through its food and beverages.

Food is a universal language that transcends cultural barriers (Monin & Szczurek, 2014). It offers a direct connection to a region's heritage, traditions, and local way of life (Bessiere, 1998). Travelers increasingly seek authentic culinary experiences (Robinson & Getz, 2014) that provide a deeper understanding of the culture they are visiting. The proliferation of food-related television shows, documentaries, blogs,

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and social media content has fueled interest in culinary experiences (Kirkwood, 2018). Popular media have made destinations known for their food, creating a global audience eager to experience these places firsthand. Modern travelers are moving away from traditional tourism focused solely on sightseeing and relaxation and are instead seeking experiences that are immersive and engaging (Research & 2020, n.d.). Culinary tourism provides an opportunity to engage all the senses, making it a highly appealing option (Stone et al., 2018a).

Food tourism contributes significantly to local economies by supporting a wide range of businesses, including restaurants, markets, farms, and food producers (Foodies et al., n.d.; Meethan, 2015; Nemes et al., 2008; Privitera et al., n.d.). This has made it an attractive segment for tourism development, particularly in regions looking to capitalize on their unique culinary offerings. There is a growing trend towards sustainable travel, where tourists are more conscious of their impact on the environment and local communities (Edgell, 2019). Food tourism often emphasizes local produce, traditional cooking methods, and farm-to-table practices, aligning well with the principles of sustainable tourism.

The trend towards experiential tourism, where tourists seek meaningful and memorable experiences, has contributed to the growth of food tourism (Stone et al., 2018b). Activities like cooking classes, food tours, wine tastings, and visits to local farms or markets offer tourists hands-on experiences that enrich their travel (Mitchell & Hall, 2004). Globalization has made diverse culinary traditions more accessible to travelers. However, it has also sparked a desire to experience the “real” and “authentic” flavors of a destination (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). This has led to a surge in food tourism as travelers seek to taste traditional dishes prepared in their place of origin (Tsai et al., n.d.).

Importance of India and Greece as cultural and culinary destinations

India and Greece are two of the world's most vibrant cultural and culinary destinations, each offering a unique blend of history, tradition, and gastronomy that captivates travelers from across the globe. The importance of these countries as cultural and culinary hubs lies in their rich heritage, diverse food traditions, and the integral role food plays in their cultural identities.

India's culinary landscape is a reflection of its vast and diverse cultural tapestry. With a history that spans thousands of years, India's cuisine is a melting pot of influences from various regions, religions, and historical periods. From the aromatic spices of the north to the coconut-infused dishes of the south, Indian cuisine is known for its complexity, variety, and depth of flavor. The importance of food in Indian culture is deeply rooted in its traditions and rituals, where meals are often prepared and consumed as a form of devotion, celebration, and social bonding. Festivals like Diwali, Holi, and Eid are marked by special dishes that symbolize prosperity, unity, and joy. As a culinary destination, India offers an unparalleled experience, with street food, regional specialties, and traditional cooking methods that draw food enthusiasts from around the world. The country's emphasis on spices, vegetarianism, and Ayurveda-inspired diets also adds a unique dimension to its culinary appeal.

Greece, on the other hand, is renowned for its Mediterranean cuisine, which is celebrated for its health benefits, simplicity, and connection to the land. Greek food is characterized by the use of fresh, local ingredients such as olive oil, fresh vegetables, legumes, and seafood, making it a cornerstone of the Mediterranean diet. The culinary traditions of Greece are deeply intertwined with its history and mythology, with dishes that have been passed down through generations. Greek cuisine reflects the country's regional diversity, from the hearty stews of the mountainous north to the seafood specialties of the Aegean islands. The importance of food in Greek culture is evident in the way meals are shared

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