

## FOOD TOURISM OVERVIEW OF NEPAL

**Subhadip Majumder**

Silver Mountain School Of Hotel Management, Kathmandu, Nepal

### **Abstract**

Tourism is a significant service industry in Nepal which generates revenue for locals. Tourism has evolved from a focus on sight-seeing to a more holistic approach, incorporating taste, touch, sound, and smell. Food tourism is a new form of travel that values diverse experiences and appearances, transforming the way people travel and creating new identities. Researchers study the connection between tourism and food, examining topics like caterers' use of local foods, competition for land and workers, and tourists' food choices. Food tourism promotes cultural awareness and understanding of place and identity through the consumption of food, protecting natural resources, improving people's lives, and preserving traditional foods and methods. Food tourism strategies are crucial for regional growth, as they can work together to improve both sectors (Hall, 2004). Gastronomy tourism involves traveling to destinations primarily for the purpose of experiencing local cuisine and beverages. Gastronomy tourists can be classified into gourmet tourists, gastronomic and culinary tourists, and gastronomic tourists. Postmodern tourists increasingly prioritize food and cooking as a means of self-definition, with locally sourced cuisine allowing travellers to directly experience and immerse themselves in a particular area and its cultural heritage. Whatever may be the attraction, food remains the key factor in selecting a destination, as it reflects the culture and traditions of a community. Native cuisine attracts foreigners due to its native resources and presentation. Food serves not only as a source of revenue but also as a tool to safeguard tourism in certain countries. The presence of food as a tangible manifestation of cultural and traditional identity is a major draw for tourists worldwide.

### **Conceptualisation**

According to the Business Dictionary, food, derived from animals or plants, contains vital components like carbohydrates, lipids, proteins, minerals, and vitamins, supporting overall well-being, energy, growth, and health once digested. Food is a universally understood and appreciated concept, influencing language, religious beliefs, and ceremonial practices, and serves as a metaphor for internal self-transactions.

Folklorists and food scholars are fascinated by exploratory eating, particularly in "ethnic" restaurants, international cookbooks, and folklife festivals, which offer new, different, or strange experiences (Updhyay & Sharma, 2013). The pleasure of food extends beyond taste, as sharing it with others fosters conversation about

kindness and the history of a place, people, or culture. The food industry, dominated by multinational corporations, provides the majority of the world's food energy, highlighting the importance of sharing and enjoying food.

According to Doshi (1995), individuals have fundamental needs that include physiological well-being, safety and security, social connections and belonging to self-esteem and recognition, and personal growth and self-actualization. So, the idea of food covers a lot of ground. Physiologically, the most important thing for all humans is to stay alive. Anything that people think might be good for them will be eaten. On a personal level, food and how people deal with each other in a society are connected to (a) meeting basic human needs and (b) how people think they should relate to their food, which can be summed up as a list of foods that are okay to eat in certain situations. Study has made the case that food's main purpose in a society is to keep people alive. He said that the simple fact that people need food has had a big impact on society through all the activities that involve making, distributing, and using food. When there is enough food to meet the body's nutritional needs and ensure survival, people start to think about safety and protection. So, someone is thinking about how to tell the difference between "food" and "poison" when it comes to health. So, the meaning of "food" is limited to things that are least likely to make you sick, or things that look like they would be least poisonous and reliably not poisonous. The meaning of "poison" is widened to include things that are new or unusual as well as things that are prescribed.

Food gives people a sense of who they are, which is at the heart of their freedom. Eating has a certain meaning and societal power because it fulfils our biological need for food and brings people together. A popular theme and main focus of many tourist destinations is food as a central part of traditional values and regional identity (Lin et al., 2011).

As has been said, every social act can be judged by its cultural background. In countries that are no longer industrialised, food is more than just food for survival, and pleasure is valued more than needed.

Different countries have different views on food consumption, with Japan and the UK valuing food more than Australians and Germans. Cultures with a high level of uncertainty tend to dislike pre-cooked food due to their focus on quality and purity. Eating habits also vary across cultures, with some people consuming snails while others eat locusts. Food transactions, such as exchange of food, result in an increase in the donor's status and a decrease in the recipient's status.

It has been looked at and compared caste hierarchies in "other communities and regions of South Asia" in order to find out how people are ranked by caste at the village level. In the setting of food ideology, food preferences, and food avoidance, what is most important to be learned is: how ethnic foods can help set a community apart (Zelinsky, 1985). Types of food and their position as food are useful ways to figure out how a caste or class society ranks. For example, in the study of tribalism, food production, food intake, and status food can be used to rank people within a group. As suggested by Doshi (1995), the interrelated social function of food in society are as follows:

1. Gastronomic function
2. Means of cultural identity
3. Religious and magic function
4. Means of communication
5. Expressions of economic wealth and status
6. Means of exercising influence and power"

Food taste is influenced by its organoleptic features, with pleasure varying based on smell, taste, temperature, appearance, structure, or texture. Food also reflects social psychology and culture, with different parts of the world having different tastes. Eating reflects national identity, religious and symbolic purposes, and social interactions. Food is also used for communal gatherings, such as feasts and celebrations, and can be influenced by an individual's economic situation (A Distant Feast, n.d.).

In general, eating not only makes you feel full, but it also makes you friendlier and warmer with other people. It can be used for ceremonies and to show hospitality (Kunwar, 2017). In addition, it helps the buyer get ahead. Some things are more important than others because they make a person or a group look better in society.

To consumers, food serves many purposes: it keeps us alive; it's an important part of events; it brings people together; it's fun; it's sensual and enjoyable; it lets us experience other cultures and countries. For many people, travelling with food makes it much more than just something to eat. It can become sensual and sensual, symbolic and ritualistic, and it can take on new meaning and importance. When eaten in the middle of beautiful scenery or at the end of a special day exploring a new city, even the simplest meal can stay in your mind forever.

People are starting to realise that food has been a way of communicating meaning for a long time. It can also be used as a theoretical starting point to do

work that takes into account the fact that landscapes are seen as personally experienced and culturally encoded.

### **Classification of Foods**

With the help of secondary sources, Doshi (1995) put food into science groups in his book. There are "proximate principles" that describe most foods. "Proximate principles" are things like proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. They are burned or oxidised in the body to make energy for different tasks. Because of these eating habits, cereals, beans, nuts, oil seeds, fruits, veggies, milk, milk products, and meat are the main types of food found in India.

"According to Frederick J. Simoons, an expert on Chinese food habits, the Chinese eat the following: (1) cereals and pulses; (2) roots and tubers; (3) other cultivated vegetables; (4) seaweeds and other algae; (5) fruits; (6) edible nuts, nut-like fruits, and seeds; (7) meat and poultry; (8) fish, turtles, and tortoises; (9) eggs; (10) spices and flavourings; and (11); drinks, including dairy products".

Another way to group foods is based on what few researchers have noticed in the real world, not on scientific concepts. They put foods into the following groups: (a) cereals and grains; (b) starchy roots, tubers, and fruits; (c) pulses, nuts, and oilseeds; (d) vegetables; (e) fruits that aren't starchy; (f) foods that come from animals; (g) fats and oils; (h) sugars and syrups; (i) spices and other condiments; and (j) other foods that aren't in the other groups, like yeast, algae, and fermented goods. The authors note that the way people in the same country eat tends to make certain food groups a good place to start. Furthermore, it is said that food groups like the "basic seven" (US) or "eight" (Chinese society) don't really apply to these groups.

Passion and Bennett, who are said to have worked in southern Illinois, USA, came up with a broad way to group foods into three groups: (1) core foods, (2) secondary core foods, and (3) outlying foods. Core foods are the foods that everyone eats and that are important and always used. Secondary core foods are foods that a lot of people use but not everyone eats. They can be used and shaped in more ways, are less important emotionally, and include new things like packaged food bought at provision shops (Stockebrand et al., 2011). When it comes to foods, peripheral foods are the ones that don't happen very often. They are more often used by individuals than by groups.

In India, food intake is a good way to tell what caste or tribal group someone belongs to. A number of scientists have also looked into how people eat during Hindu rituals (Food, Ritual, and Society, n.d.). One example is the practice of giving food to gods and spirits and getting prasad in return, which has been

studied in depth. Few people notice that the fact that the followers accept prasad shows how low they are compared to the god.

The Vaisnavite culture in India categorizes food into three groups: sattvic, rajasic, and tamasic. The sattvic diet is lacto-vegetarian, excluding certain vegetables. The rajasic diet is suitable for strong individuals and royalty, allowing goat and chicken meat, eggs, and buffalo meat. The tamasic diet, on the other hand, includes buffalo meat, pickled foods, alcohol, garlic, onion, and other unapproved foods. The belief is that food affects men's moods and behaviours, with sattvic food transforming a person into holy, rajasic food transforming a person into a ruler or fighter, and tamasic food transforming a person into a demon or titan.

In the past, both academics and the travel business itself didn't give food enough credit for its role in tourism. However, food has always been an important part of travel. Even in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which was written at the end of the 1400s, food was an important part of the characters' pilgrimages and, by extension, an important part of their experiences as tourists (The Tourist, n.d.). Food tourism, a subfield of tourism, has been studied by researchers in various social sciences, but a universally accepted definition remains challenging. Despite its potential, culinary tourism research in Nepal remains unexplored (Harrison, 2010). Only a few authors have compiled a comprehensive collection of Nepalese culinary delights and techniques, making kitchen table tourism a viable alternative to armchair tourism. The Nepal Tourism Board and Silver Mountain School of Hotel Management have created a list of 100 traditional Nepalese recipes, known as the Nepal Culinary Book. This study is useful for tourism and hotel management professionals, restaurants, researchers, and those working in farm tourism, agri-tourism, and country tourism (Joys of Nepalese Cooking, n.d.)

### **The relationship and character of Traditional and Indigenous food of Nepal with Tourism**

Nepal has a long history of good food. Food is a way to show your culture. NTIFs come in a lot of different forms and can be found in different areas. They also have different tastes, shelf lives, and uses (Sheringham & Daruwalla, 2007). Nepalese native foods and drinks are praised for their unique flavours, preparation methods, and level of difficulty. There are certain nutritional components, functions, and sensory qualities that make them special. Tibetan and Nepalese foods are high in fibre and not junk food. The tables below show some of Nepal's native and traditional foods that are made in different parts of the country (Table 1), foods that are grouped by how healthy they are (Table 2), types of snacks (Table 3) and foods that can be kept for a long time (Table 4). The best places to get snacks during hiking and sports are away from hotels and

restaurants. Foods that don't go bad quickly are useful for long treks and exploring on foot in very remote areas.

**Table 1:** Nepalese traditional and indigenous foods prepared in different geographical regions

East Mountain	Chyakhla, Jand, Khareng, Kinema, Lung-ghakcha, Manda, Mesu, Murcha, Papanda, Penagolya, Pena Sargyangma, Phando, Sejangwa, Singolya, Tongba, Womyuk, Yangben
East Terai	Adauri, Amat, Arikanchan, Bagiya, Bhakka, Bhusba, Bidia, Khajuri, Perukiya, Sattu, Thekuwa, Tilauri (Phulauri)
Central Mountain	Bara, Chatamari, Chakumari, Choyala, Furaula, Golphuki, Gundpak, Hyantho(n), Ju Ju Dhau, Kachila, Khamir Mana, Khatte, Kheuni, Laba, Lakhamari, Manapu, Pustakari, Silaura, Syabji, Yamar
Central Terai	Tha(e)kuwa
West and Far West Mountain	Galeue, Pina pani, Puri, Titaudo
West and Far West Terai	Anarasa, Bara, Dabbe, Dhik(u)ri, Kalipapro, Kaliroti, Malpuri, Phini roti, Sinkamari
Highland (Himalaya)	Momo, Tea momo, Gheu tea, Khapsa
Inter-regional traditional foods	Achar, Chiura, Chuk, Churpi, Dahi, Dhindo, Gheu, Gundruk, Kwati, Maseura, Mohi, Murai, Raksi, Sakhar, Sekuwa, Selroti, Sukuti

**Table 2:** List of foods based on their nutritional characteristics

Carbohydrate and energy rich food (cereal, fat and sugar based)	Anarasa, Bhakka, Bhusba, buote ko makai (puffed corn), Chakumar, Chaaku, Chatamari, Chyakhla, Chiura, Dabbe (Dabbiya), Dhido, Dhik(u)ri, Gheu, Golphuki, Gundpak, Hakuwa, Jhilinga (Khiuni), Kaliroti, Kasar, Khajuri, Khapsa, Khatte, Laba, Lunghakcha, Murai (Bhuja), Nauni-gheu, Perukiya, Phiniroti, Pustakari, Sakhar, Selroti, Silaura, Sinkamari, Sirimla, Syabji, Tilauri (Phulauri), Yomari
Protein rich foods (pulse, legume, milk, meat, fish based)	Adauri, Bara, Bari, Furaula, Kinema, Kwati, Maseura, Phando, Churpi, Dhaukho, Durkha, Galeue, Choyala, Kachila, Momo, Sargyangma, Sukuti, Womyuk
Fruit and vegetable based	Achar, Amat, Arikanchan (Aarkanchan, Aarkoch), Bid(r)ia, Chuk, Gundruk, Kalipapro, Khalpi, Kumbhauri, Latteppapro, Mada, Nimki, Sinamani, Sinki, Titaura

Probiotic and functional food	Dahi, Ju Ju Dhou, Mohi, pickle
-------------------------------	--------------------------------

**List 1:** Nepalese traditional snacks suitable for carrying during journey

Adauri, Anarasa, Arsa, Bagiya, Bara, Bari, Bhakka, Chaku, Chakumari, Chatamari, Chiura, Dabbe, Furaula, Galeue, Gundpak, Kaliroti, Khajuri, Khurma, Lakhamari, Malpuri, Murai, Nisoshya, Perukiya, Pustakari, Sakhar, Selroti, Sukuti, Tilauri, Yomari

**List 2:** Shelf stable traditional foods

Achar, Adauri, Amat, Arikanchan, buote ko makai, Bid(r)ia, Chaku, Chakumari, Chiura, Chuk, Churpi, Durkha, fish cake, Gundpak, Gundruk, Hakuwa, Jhilinga, Khajuri, Khurma, Kumbharauri, Lakhamari, Lattepapro, Mada, Maseura, Mesu, Murai, Pustakari, Sakhar, Sattu, Sidra, Sinki, Sukuti (meat, fish), Tilauri

**Food Tourism**

The visual sense is crucial for understanding the environment, and tourism activities can be analysed through visual-centred methodologies (Environment and Tourism, n.d.). However, techniques focusing solely on the visual sense are insufficient for addressing postmodern activities involving the entire body.

Tourism now encompasses more than just sight-seeing, with researchers recognizing the importance of taste, touch, sound, and smell in the holiday season. Food and beverages provided by attractions can impact operational efficiency, cultural heritage, and environmental protection.

Food tourism is a new form of travel that values diverse experiences and appearances, transforming the way people travel and create new identities (Eastham, 2003). Researchers study the connection between tourism and food, examining topics like caterers' use of local foods, competition for land and workers, and tourists' food choices.

Food has always been an important part of tourism, but until lately, not much was said about it. It is even strange that taste, and especially eating and drinking, haven't been studied much in the social and anthropological study of tourism, even though they are so important to the experience (Taste of Nepal, n.d.).

For tourists, food is an important part of the experience. Finally, people are realising how important food is to society and culture. One example is how important food is to tourists. Because of this, it is a key part of both selling tourism and figuring out how happy visitors are, as well as a key part of studying hospitality.

In the publication of Hall (2003), explore the concept of gastronomic tourism, which focuses on the exploration of different tastes and culinary experiences. Their summary highlights the significance of researching food tourism in the following manner:

1. Food itself can be a compelling reason to travel, whether it is for a particular occasion or to visit establishments such as wineries or breweries.
2. Certain destinations may have a renowned reputation for specific products, such as Tuscany's wine, which serves as an example of special interest tourism (Special Interest Tourism, 3rd Edition, n.d.).
3. Food has become a significant factor in the promotion of tourism and in influencing visitor satisfaction as it is an integral aspect of the tourist experience (RiMmiNgton & Yüksel, 1998).

In the past, both academics and the travel business itself didn't give food enough credit for its role in tourism. However, food has always been an important part of travel. Even in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which was written at the end of the 1400s, food was an important part of the characters' pilgrimages and, by extension, an important part of their experiences as tourists.

Food tours are an embodied type of tourism that emphasizes the process of experiencing, making sense, and knowing through practice as a sensual human subject in the world. It involves visiting primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, and restaurants to taste food and experience specialized production areas (Kodas, 2023). Some people find food tourism to be a special interest for serious leisure. Gourmet or culinary tourists visit specific food and drink tourism sites.

Food tourism, also known as culinary tourism, is the deliberate participation in another's foodways, including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style (Kunwar, 2017). This can involve traveling to other countries to try their food and exploring the world of the strange. Cooking tourism is a profitable job that connects the everyday and the unusual.

The word "foodways" makes it sound like food is a web of physical, social (communicative), cultural, economic, spiritual, and aesthetic processes and activities (Waits, 2000). The word "culinary complex" was first used by anthropologist John J. Honigman in 1961 and was later used by folklorist Don Yodor in 1972. It means the whole set of cooking and eating habits in a society, including attitudes, taboos, and meal systems. In this way, food affects every part of our lives.



Long (2013) says that someone can be a culinary tourist if they go to an ethnic restaurant in their area, look through a cookbook, cook a meal from a different food culture, or walk through an ethnic grocery store in their area. "Culinary tourism is more than just trying new and strange foods," says Long.

As for foodie tourism, it is "travel or tourism that is at least partly driven by an interest in food and drink, eating and drinking." It also says that food tourism is about being a part of another culture that is connected to a certain place and people. These reasons for using food in tourism make it clear that food can improve the sustainability and authenticity of a destination, make the economy of a place stronger, and make an area more welcoming.

Food tourism involves visiting food makers to try and learn about the entire process, from raw materials to finished products. It distinguishes between tourists who eat as a normal part of their trip and those whose interests, behaviours, and location choices are shaped by their love of food (Cook & Crang, 1996).

Food tourism promotes cultural awareness and understanding of place and identity through the consumption of food. It protects natural resources, improves people's lives, and preserves traditional foods and methods. Examples of renowned food destinations include Napa Valley in California, France, Tuscany in Italy, Niagara in Ontario, and Yara Valley in Australia.

Wine tourism involves visiting wineries, attending festivals, and tasting wine. Food tourism and wine tourism are interconnected, with viticulture blending agriculture, tourism, and industrial activities (Ainley, 2011). Developing regional or local labels and brands can differentiate products and enhance rural areas. The fascination with unique food items can be analysed from multiple perspectives, including the relationship between food products and geographical features and agriculture's impact on visitors (Sidali et al., 2011).

Regional identity can be used to tell the difference between goods like wine, food, and tourism. For example, wine is often recognised by where it comes from, like Burgundy, Champagne, or Rioja. These regions have often been made official through a set of appellation controls that are based on certain geographical features of a place (Bell & Valentine, 2013). The place where a food, like cheese, comes from is also used to identify it. Similarly, the appeal of regional or local places also helps to boost tourism.

These people are called "food tourists," and the food in a place is a big part of why they choose to visit. For "interested purchasers," food is an important part of a vacation, and they try local food whenever they can. People who are

"un-reached tourists" think that food can make their vacation more fun, but they don't buy local foods very often. People who don't want to or don't plan to try local food groups are called "un-engaged" or "laggards." (Sims, 2009)

Different types of researchers have looked into the connections between food and tourism or between tourism and food. The effects on the economy, society, culture, and the environment can also be seen in food and tourist situations. These effects can be seen and felt on both the supply side and the demand side at the same time. Some food and tourism projects, for instance, aim to make things better for both the tourism and food production industries by boosting the economy and for tourists by making their trips more enjoyable (Bélisle, 1983).

Why is food becoming more and more important in travel studies? There are a few possible answers. Since the early 1970s, Europe's rural areas have become more industrialised, and societies have been greatly changed by many rounds of economic restructuring. Loss of services and established markets, as well as the removal of tariffs and regional support mechanisms, has caused rural areas to try to diversify their economies. Two examples are the development of new agricultural products and tourism (Novelli, 2007). Because of this, food tourism strategies are an important tool for regional growth, especially since products from the two sectors can work together to make each other better.

### **Food Tourism As A Form Of Consumption**

As Western cultures have moved further along the path to capitalism, "consumption" has become an important part of everyday life. Going out and getting something to satisfy basic psychological needs, like when you're hungry and need bread, is not the same thing as consumption. Consumer behaviour studies look at things from the social and psychological points of view (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). They know that buying a certain good or service can meet a lot of needs that go beyond our most basic bodily needs.

Sociologists argue that consumption is a way to distinguish oneself and define one's personality. Thorstein Veblen, an American economist, coined the term "conspicuous consumption" to describe the wealthy middle class in America who used leisure and spending to set themselves apart from the average (The Nepal Cookbook, n.d.). Travel also played a role in this, as it allowed people from different social classes to stand out.

In western society, using travel as a way to set yourself apart from others has become more common. The French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu gave us the word "habitus," which people use to say that the different types of tourism we do have cultural meanings and symbols attached to them (The Encyclopedia of Ecotourism, n.d.). Habitus is the skill and desire of people from different social

classes to pick up things and habits that set them apart from others in society (Tourism and Social Identities, n.d.). There isn't as much social differentiation in modern society because of the ability to travel internationally as there was in Veblen's time, but where we can go and what we do on vacation does send culture messages and set us apart from others in society.

### **Gastronomical Understanding**

"Eating is a form of agricultural action," stated Wendell Berry, an American poet and farmer born in 1934. As a result, the act of preparing food should be regarded as a "gastronomic act" ([www.slowfood.com](http://www.slowfood.com)). Gastronomy tourism refers to the act of travelling to destinations primarily for the purpose of experiencing and indulging in the local cuisine and beverages.

The tourism school should explore food tourism, a concept that has been overlooked in existing studies on food, society, culture, and the economy. Gastronomy studies can enrich tourism discourses and provide novel perspectives. This study uses food tourism as an example of evolving tourist studies, focusing on cultural analysis and postmodern consumption patterns (Everett, 2008). Few social scientists consider food and drink as fundamental organizing elements.

Contemporary definitions of gastronomy mostly emphasise its scientific aspect, defining it as the art and/or science of refined and enjoyable eating (Tourism: The Key Concepts, n.d.). Art and science can be equated to talent and knowledge, aligning with the perception of these disciplines in the early 1800s. Nevertheless, contemporary interpretations of gastronomy are far more limited in scope compared to Brillat-Savarin's. He believed that gastronomy encompassed a broad array of topics including natural history, physics, chemistry, cuisine, commerce, and political economy (Tourism and Gastronomy, n.d.).

Brillat-Savarin's understanding of gastronomy's origins is rooted in ancient Greek terms *gaster* and *nomos*. Food studies examine principles guiding consumption, including what, where, when, why, how, and with whom. Brillat-Savarin's concepts align with Archestratus, who wrote a guide on Mediterranean food and beverage choices (Key Concepts in Tourist Studies, n.d.). *Gastronomia* could be a potential title for this book.

"Gastronomy" is a complex concept that encompasses high-quality dining, pleasure from food and drinks, and enjoyment in pleasant company (Scarpato, 2003). It is often compared to the French term "cuisine," which reflects its unique qualities like cost, quality, and attention to detail. However, elevating ordinary dishes to a distinguished status can evoke suspicions of culinary deception.

Gastronomy, a term referring to high-quality food and excellent wine, is crucial in the context of hospitality and management (Brotherton, 1999). It holds significant importance in the Western world due to economic and cultural factors. For over four centuries, chefs and the hospitality sector have been influenced by intricate cooking techniques.

Brillat-Savarin's gastronomy goes beyond food and drink, focusing on our eating and drinking habits, consumption patterns, and communal activities (Lashley et al., 2007). It encompasses the study and appreciation of food and beverages, with a particular emphasis on creation, preparation, categorization, and evaluation. Gastronomy is a cultural domain that encompasses activities, values, behaviour, rules, conventions, institutions, and concepts associated with food production and consumption within a social context (Key Concepts in Hospitality Management, n.d.). The French led three distinct periods of gastronomy: ancient regime, classical cuisine, and nouvelle cuisine. The French introduced the concept of transgression and acclimatisation, challenging established culinary norms and innovating new gastronomic creations. Nouvelle cuisine revolutionized culinary practices by introducing a contemporary and individualistic approach to cooking.

The fourth era of molecular gastronomy or avant-garde food is debated. Professor Nicholas Kurti and physical scientist Herve This established molecular and physical gastronomy in 1988, focusing on the chemical and physical processes involved in creating nourishing, visually appealing, and superior quality food. Kurti's death in 1998 led to the use of the term "molecular gastronomy" by This (Molecular Gastronomy, n.d.).

Regrettably, both the media and certain chefs began to employ the phrase "molecular gastronomy" in an inappropriate manner. The individuals were attempting to achieve the desired aesthetic appeal associated with the phrase "after effect." However, their culinary creations, such as strawberry risotto with salmon, were too innovative and prioritised visual presentation, particularly for photographic purposes, rather than emphasising flavour.

Gastronomy comprises the entire process of food production and the techniques used in food preparation. The field of study covers a range of topics, including the political economy of food, different aspects of food handling, storage, transportation, and processing, methods of food preparation and cooking, social aspects of meals and manners, scientific study of food chemistry, process of digestion, physiological impacts of food consumption, and factors influencing food choices, traditions, and customs.

Gillespie's focus on the physical properties of food and how it is prepared, usually in a restaurant, not only limits the field of gastronomy too much, but also ignores the important roles of the critic, guide, and advisor, which were originally performed by Grimod de la Reyniere and Brillat-Savarin in the 1800s.

The culinary offerings of a place serve as a captivating motivation for drawing tourists to a location. The cultivation of food in a particular area is shaped by various elements, including the environment, society, and historical context. Food tourism is often linked to cultural or historical tourism because of this aspect. The tourist industry has effectively used the connection between place and cuisine by promoting unique or "authentic" gastronomic experiences that are specific to a particular region or country. Food can also serve as a method of leading individuals around various locations and countries, typically in the form of trails. According to Hall and Mitchell (2004b), gastronomy tourists can be classified into the following categories:

- Gourmet tourists are individuals who specifically seek out and patronise upscale or highly acclaimed restaurants or vineyards.
- Gastronomic and culinary tourists are individuals who are specifically interested in the broader aspects of food and wine production, such as the culture and scenery associated with it.
- Gastronomic tourists - those who are specifically interested in the culinary traditions and dishes of a certain country or region.
- Gastronomic tourists, like other specialised travellers, generally have higher levels of affluence and education compared to the average childless traveller. These individuals are typically categorised within the AB (upper/middle) or CL (lower-middle-class) socioeconomic brackets.

Hall and Mitchell (2004b) state that just 3 percent of overseas tourists may be classified as culinary tourists. Nevertheless, Enteleca Research & Consultancy (2000) did an analysis of tourists which indicates that a significant proportion of tourists find cuisine to be a secondary source of enjoyment. This suggests that food producers or suppliers have the capacity to reach a wider range of consumers.

- Approximately 6-8% of tourists are specifically interested in food.
- Prospective buyers (30-33%)
- The population that has not been contacted or accessed, estimated to be between 15-17%.
- The un-engaged individuals make up approximately 22-24% of the population.
- Laggards (17-28%): Individuals or groups that are slow to adopt or embrace new ideas, technologies, or trends.

"Gastronomic tourists" are the most dedicated, and a crucial aspect of their decision-making process is the cuisine offered in a certain location. When "prospective buyers" travel on vacation, consuming food brings them greater happiness, and they make an effort to sample local cuisine whenever possible. "Untapped tourists" believe that incorporating native cuisine into their holiday can enhance their overall experience, although they typically refrain from purchasing indigenous culinary items. "Un-engaged" and "laggards" refer to individuals who have no intention of attempting local cuisine or only plan to do so infrequently.

In 2008, Erik Wolf, the president of the International Culinary Tourism Association, discussed the findings of World Travel Market Research, which indicated that consuming traditional cuisine was deemed a "very important" or "important" aspect of over 50% of tourists' holidays (International Tourism, n.d.). The International Culinary Tourism Association is a non-profit organisation that represents over 500 tourism enterprises in 19 countries (Lockwood, 2008). Among British individuals who travelled abroad, 86% expressed a favourable opinion towards the local cuisine and indicated a preference for dining at local establishments rather than eating meals provided by hotels or resorts. This indicates that the underlying inclination for food tourism may be greater than previously believed.

While some travellers relish the opportunity to sample unfamiliar cuisines as a significant aspect of their journey, others may find it exacerbates their sense of not belonging.

Postmodern tourists increasingly prioritise food and cooking as a means of self-definition. In regions where food holds significant cultural value, it derives its growth and characteristics from the "terroir," which refers to the specific combination of soil and climate in that area. Consuming locally sourced cuisine allows travellers to directly experience and immerse themselves in the essence of a particular area and its cultural heritage.

Authenticity in meals is influenced by three factors: "The Self" and cumulative impact, "The Thing" being experienced, and "The Others." Heritage food, such as historic British pubs and historic restaurants, plays a significant role in the relationship between food and travel, focusing on the lives of ordinary individuals (Hughes, 1995).

The growing number of tourist destinations globally has led to a growing competition for unique products, with food being a key tool for capturing and monetizing experiences. Food also plays a significant role in personal and

cultural identity, as dietary choices and eating habits are crucial to our cultural heritage.

### **Movement Of 'slow Food'**

Slow food tourism, cookery, and culinary tourism are being explored by scholars. The term "fast" in fast food is often associated with modern Western culture, while slow food represents a counteracting trend (In Praise of Slow, n.d.). The Slow Food Movement, originating in Italy in 1989, was coined during a demonstration against McDonald's in Rome. The movement, launched in Paris in 1989, has grown to 100,000 members from 132 countries worldwide.

Slow Food, established in 1989, aims to combat fast food and promote local food traditions, promoting ethical consumption of uncontaminated, ethically sourced food that considers the well-being of all, including animals and the planet.

A French sociologist discusses "gastro-anomy," referring to the abundance of food and slow food. In 1989, globalization led to a need for identity and distinction, resulting in national and ethnic assertions. Tourism and food play a significant role in defining identity and economic position (Porter, 2024).

The Slow City movement, an urban social and governance paradigm, aims to extend the principles of the Slow Food movement to urban life, promoting local culture and enhancing environments (Hannerz, 1990). It has spread across various sectors, inspiring individuals to incorporate slowness into literature, education, finances, and daily routines. The movement's potential applications include the travel and tourist industry, overcoming time scarcity and establishing connections with individuals and experiences.

The "Slow Cities" movement promotes leisurely food, focusing on tradition, charm, and diversity. It opposes homogenization and promotes a slower pace of life. Food consumption, like tourism, balances spatial dimensions and contributes to a postmodern world. Rural capital plays a significant role in sustainable rural tourism, utilizing local resources to attract and provide an enjoyable experience for visitors. This movement challenges the constant 24-hour work culture and lifestyle (Santini et al., 2011).

Wine tourists can be categorized into general and specialist visitors. General tourists visit vineyards, wineries, and festivals for recreational purposes, while specialist wine tourists have a specific interest in grape wine. Food tourists, particularly those with fine cuisine and wine, make up 19.6% and 14.2% of American and Canadian tourists respectively.

Culinary tourism focuses on sampling distinctive cuisine or wines at specific restaurants or wineries, while rural tourism attracts tourists who prioritize

activities other than food. The plan explores the interrelation between rural tourism and gastronomy, and highlights the distinctions in culinary tourism. Terror products, a blend of physical, climatic, historical, and cultural characteristics, serve as cultural symbols and contribute to local welfare (Rural Tourism, n.d.).

It delineated three cognitive elements that describe terroir items in the customer's mind:

- Trade - a skill that encompasses knowledge of recipes and traditions
- Time and culture - encompasses the categories of history and rituals
- Origin - includes the categories of territory, region, and land

Cuisine shapes a place's identity, impacting land features. Distinguishing foodscapes from agricultural concerns is challenging. Geographical location, climate, and seasonal changes are crucial for food travel, with the stationary nature of products being a key aspect.

Travel involves encountering experiences that differ from one's familiar surroundings, and the geographical characteristics of a region contribute to its identity and attractiveness as a vacation destination. Geographical knowledge, rooted in cultural significance, is used to distinguish food commodities and differentiate them from generic products. Terroir, such as climate and scenery, is crucial for regional tourist branding. "Touristic terroir" refers to the unique appeal of a region due to its combination of physical, cultural, and natural elements. The quality of a travel experience depends on the expertise of various individuals and organizations.

Clusters are the concentration of several firms and industries in a specific geographic area, interconnected by clients, products, suppliers, trade associations, and educational institutions. These clusters are catalysts for economic growth and are essential for building companies. They also include enterprises that offer goods and services within and beyond the region, and those that supply them with resources. Facilitating the exchange of information and knowledge enhances collaboration and financial performance.

Cluster creation is crucial for generating favourable external economics for farms, especially in the wine industry. Tourism is also significant. Telfer (1996) highlights the importance of cluster development in Canada's Niagara area. Key factors contribute to cluster expansion and external economy. Contradicting himself, Hashimoto & Telfer, (1999) states fostering awareness about the preservation and sustainable use of regional environmental and cultural assets,



particularly in culinary tourism, is crucial for generating revenue, enhancing local quality of life, and preserving traditional foods.

Food tourism research focuses on food safety, cleanliness, participation in food and wine festivals, economic connections, and the influence of tourism on culinary traditions (MacLaurin, 2001). Consumer behaviour research is crucial for wine tourism industry participants, helping understand demographics and motivations of tourists (Wine Tourism Around the World, n.d.). It helps marketers identify and broaden target markets, and is essential for restaurant owners, culinary educators, food festival organizers, hotel administrators, and food manufacturers. Consumer behaviour studies the decision-making process and motivations behind purchases, examining internal and external factors. Various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, marketing, cultural anthropology, economics, media studies, and geography, are used to understand consumer behaviour (Companion Encyclopedia of Geography, n.d.).

Tourists are increasingly concerned about food quality and safety due to BSE crises, foot and mouth outbreaks, and bird flu. Environmentally conscious shoppers are drawn to natural and organic products, leading to increased demand for locally sourced food (Research Themes for Tourism, n.d.). Tourism and environmental preservation are crucial for sustaining local communities, generating employment opportunities, and allowing residents to serve as landscape stewards or environmental engineers. Local cuisine in a region contributes to tourism by offering authentic specialties and locally sourced produce. Italy's tourists seek authentic cuisine, while Nepal's 500,000 tourists annually enjoy Nepalese dishes like dal, bhat, tarkari, and achar (Canavari et al., 2011). However, catering to health-conscious guests and promoting natural, unprocessed cuisine is crucial for success. Recent academic discussions highlight the connection between food, landscape, and tourism. Traditional food conservation is crucial for sustainable tourism (Reynolds, 1993). Globalization and localization are important, and using locally sourced food can be a significant part of a region's marketing plan to attract tourists.

In 1978, Levi-Strauss argued that cooking and language are universal human endeavours. However, "kitchen table tourism" has replaced "armchair tourism" in engaging with diverse cultures through culinary traditions, dining at restaurants, cooking from cookbooks, and watching TV programs (The Origin of Table Manners, n.d.).

Tourism is driven by the desire to discover novel experiences, with individuals with allocentric dispositions seeking unfamiliar or novel locations, and psychocentric dispositions preferring familiar, less intimidating ones. This concept, particularly in food, is discussed in the literature. Neophilia, a

preference for new and innovative experiences, is a conflicting tendency with neophobia, a fear of new and unfamiliar things. Food neophilia has influenced the development of new cuisines and travel experiences, making it crucial to consider these concepts in culinary tourism experiences.

Food tourism experiences involve pre-trip dining, dining out, local cuisine, vacation experiences, and post-trip culinary experiences. The concept of "performance" has gained popularity, encompassing multimodal encounters like adventure and sex tourism. Examining taste-scapes, smell-scapes, sound-scapes, and touch-scapes can provide diverse sensory environments and non-representable knowledge. Addressing the ontological blind spot, which refers to the limited understanding of how metabolic processes and physical interactions between individuals and food influence their embodied knowledge, is crucial.

### **Economical Understanding Of Rural Business**

The "experience economy" suggests that rural tourism firms should design exceptional experiences based on customer contact and environmental relationships (Pine & Gilmore, 2013). Passive participation and active participation are key aspects, while absorption and immersion are the extremes. Experiences can be categorized into four groups: entertainment, education, escapist, and aesthetic. Passive participation involves less active engagement, while active participation involves more involvement. The level of engagement varies depending on the level of interaction with the unfamiliar person. The authors provide a recipe consisting of five steps to create unforgettable experiences. (a) Establish a central theme for the experience, (b) Align the overall impressions with good signals, (c) Remove any negative signals, (d) Incorporate personal mementos, (e) Stimulate all five senses.

The chosen theme should guide the entire experience, creating a single story that grabs customers' attention and makes them feel involved. Negative cues should be avoided to strengthen the theme. Souvenirs can help bring back memories. Using all five senses is crucial for a powerful and memorable experience. Smells, tastes, and sounds should be carefully examined to align with the theme. Sensory research is essential for marketing and communication efforts in the food and wine business and tourism sector.

### **Knowledge Acquired**

In 1999, Slow Food launched a project to protect and promote traditional foods in Italy, using the Ark of Taste and Presidia Projects to attract food tourists (Rombach et al., 2016). Ark of Taste aimed to preserve obsolete products, while Presidia targeted collectives to improve production and marketing methods,

leading to increased profitability. Both initiatives directly assist farmers in marketing and selling their products.

The presidia aim at four main objectives: economic, social, environmental, and cultural, focusing on increasing revenues, preserving biodiversity, enhancing social status, and promoting cultural identity.

**The primary objectives of the Slow Food Association are as follows:**

- To preserve the cultural and traditional heritage of food, as well as diverse local cultures
- To advocate for the preservation of food biodiversity
- To protect the environment and the land
- To promote education on taste, enabling individuals to make informed and responsible decisions regarding their daily food choices
- To support and promote environmentally-friendly farming practices •  
To safeguard the interests of small-scale farmers and their local communities
- To celebrate and preserve culinary customs from around the globe

Promoting local foods is crucial in the connection between food, tourism, and area growth. Utilizing local food production and branding menus can boost business and customer satisfaction, leading to continued consumption of regional foodstuffs. Food tourism is linked to sustainable tourism, aiming to minimize cultural and environmental disruptions, enhance tourist satisfaction, and foster long-term economic growth (Nummedal & Hall, 2006). Postmodern festivals and events allow communities to showcase cultural identities and values, while tourists can immerse themselves in local food culture, learn about produce origins, and contribute to the local economy through shopping, dining, and farm shopping (The Origins of Hospitality and Tourism, n.d.).

**Happy Conclusion**

Food is an exchange between the inner self and the outside world, providing energy and preserving identity. People link food to customs and heritage, with holy and secular food serving as cultural artifacts. Understanding how people eat, drink, and sit is crucial for understanding human society and culture.

Food tourism is a new type of tourism that aims to make travel more culturally aware by offering tourists the opportunity to try different food types, as many tourists seek realism and are tired of eating the same food repeatedly.

Food tourism encompasses culinary and dining tourism, with slow food, slow city, and slow food being linked. This movement is centred on social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Food is used for tourist marketing, but safety

and protection are crucial. The term "holy trinity" refers to foodscapes, drinkscapes, and restscapes in business and management.

According to The SAGE Handbook of Tourism Studies, (n.d.), food tourism studies in Europe are highly sought after, but Nepal, a costly destination with diverse ethnicities, has not yet explored this topic due to the lack of scientific development of food as a tourist product.

**Contributors**

Dr. (Chef) Subhadip Majumder, Silver Mountain School of Hotel Management, Kathmandu, Nepal.

**Corresponding Author**

Dr. (Chef) Subhadip Majumder, Silver Mountain School of Hotel Management, Kathmandu, Nepal. Contact: [subhadip.majumder@silvermountain.edu.np](mailto:subhadip.majumder@silvermountain.edu.np)

## References

- Ainley, S. (2011). Food, agri-culture and tourism. Linking local gastronomy and rural tourism: Interdisciplinary perspectives. *Leisure/Loisir*, 35(4), 481–482. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2011.648407>
- Bélisle, F. J. (1983). Tourism and food production in the Caribbean. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 10(4), 497–513. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(83\)90005-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(83)90005-1)
- Bell, D., & Valentine, G. (2013). *Consuming geographies*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203349656>
- Brotherton, B. (1999). Towards a definitive view of the nature of hospitality and hospitality management. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 11(4), 165–173. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596119910263568>
- Burns, P. M., & Novelli, M. (2006). *Tourism and social identities*. Routledge.
- Canavari, M., Huffaker, C., Mari, R., Regazzi, D., & Spadoni, R. (2011). Educational farms in the Emilia-Romagna region: Their role in food habit education. In *Food, Agri-Culture and Tourism* (pp. 73–91). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-11361-1\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-11361-1_5)
- Cook, I., & Crang, P. (1996). The world on a plate. *Journal of Material Culture*, 1(2), 131–153. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135918359600100201>
- Dashper, K. (2015). *Rural tourism: An international perspective*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Doshi, S. L. (1995). *Anthropology of food and nutrition*. Rawat Publications.
- Douglas, I., Douglas, I., Hugget, R. J., & Robinson, M. (2003). *Companion encyclopedia of geography: The environment and humankind*. Routledge.
- Eastham, J. (2003). Valorizing through tourism in rural areas: Moving towards regional partnerships. In C. M. Hall, L. Sharples, R. Mitchell, N. Macionis, & B. Cambourne (Eds.), *Food Tourism Around the World* (pp. 228–248). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-7506-5503-3.50016-6>
- Everett, S. (2008). Beyond the visual gaze? *Tourist Studies*, 8(3), 337–358. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468797608100594>
- Hall, C. M. (2000). *Wine tourism around the world*. Routledge.
- Hall, C. M. (2003). The consumption of experiences or the experience of consumption? An introduction to the tourism of taste. In C. M. Hall, L. Sharples, R. Mitchell, N. Macionis, & B. Cambourne (Eds.), *Food Tourism Around the World* (pp. 1–24). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-7506-5503-3.50004-x>
- Hall, C. M. (2004). *Food tourism around the world*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780080477862>
- Hall, C. M., Sharples, L., Mitchell, R., Macionis, N., & Cambourne, B. (2004). *Food tourism around the world*. Routledge.
- Hannerz, U. (1990). Cosmopolitans and locals in world culture. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 7(2–3), 237–251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327690007002014>
- Harrison, D. (2011). International tourism: Cultures and behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(1), 340–342. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2010.11.009>

- Hashimoto, A., & Telfer, D. J. (1999). Marketing icewine to Japanese tourists in Niagara: The case of Inniskillin winery. *International Journal of Wine Marketing*, 11(2), 29–41. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb008694>
- Hjalager, A. M., & Richards, G. (2003). *Tourism and gastronomy*. Routledge.
- Holden, A. (2007). *Environment and tourism*. Routledge.
- Honore, C. (2010). *In praise of slow*. Hachette UK.
- Hughes, G. (1995). Authenticity in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22(4), 781–803. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(95\)00020-x](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(95)00020-x)
- Jamal, T., & Robinson, M. (2009). *The SAGE handbook of tourism studies*. SAGE.
- Kodas, D. (2023). The role of culinary festivals in building destination brand equity. In M. D. F. Al-Abdullah, & M. A. M. Masadeh (Eds.), *Global Perspectives on the Opportunities and Future Directions of Health, Medical, and Wellness Tourism* (pp. 95–109). IGI Global.  
<https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-6692-7.ch006>
- The Nepal cookbook. (n.d.). Google Books.