

CULINARY (OR GASTRONOMIC) TOURISM

Definition

Gastronomic tourism refers to trips made to destinations where the local food and beverages are the main motivating factors for travel.



Estimate of Global Market Size

Culinary tourism tends to be largely a domestic tourism activity, with consumers travelling to places to eat and drink specific (usually local) produce. A domestic survey of leisure travellers in America found that 17% engaged in culinary related activities. The International Culinary Tourism Association predicts that this will grow rapidly in the coming years. According to USA Today (27 Feb 2007), 27million Americans have made culinary activities part of their travels in the last three years. In the UK, food tourism is estimated to be worth nearly \$8 billion each year.

International culinary tourism is less significant than its domestic counterpart. Whilst consumers do consider food when deciding where to take a holiday, it is not usually the main consideration. The growth in popularity of ethnic cuisines like Thai, Indian, North African, Mexican and Chinese throughout the industrialised countries is attributable to a significant degree to tourism where visitors sample local foods and develop a taste for them.

Food and drink festivals constitute the sole instance where the decision to travel is taken solely on the grounds of the gastronomic experiences offered. These are becoming more prevalent, in particular in Europe. Whilst this segment is growing, at present there are estimated to be no more than one million international culinary tourists travelling each year.

Potential for Growth

Culinary tourism is a growth segment, and typically gastronomic tours are increasingly being combined with other activities such as cultural tours, cycling, walking, etc. Consequently, this is a segment that appeals to a broad range of consumers.

With consumers being increasingly aware of the benefits (economic, environmental and health related) of local produce, there is an increased desire to sample local dishes, foodstuffs and drink. This has led to the emergence of local food and drink festivals, as well as increased interest in local markets.

Growth in this niche market is expected to be strong over the next 5-10 years, although from a relatively small base, so volumes will still be small.

Brief Profile of Consumers

Gastronomic consumers tend to be couples that have above-average income, are usually professionals and are aged 30 to 50. This correlates closely to the demographics of the cultural tourist.

The International Culinary Tourism Association states that on average, food travellers spend around \$1,200 per trip, with over one-third (36% or \$425) of their travel budget going towards food-related activities. Those considered to be “deliberate” food travellers (i.e. where culinary activities are the key reason for the trip) tend to spend a significantly higher amount of their overall travel budget (around 50%) on food-related activities.

Main Source Markets

The main source markets tend to be in Europe and North America, in particular:

- Germany
- United Kingdom
- Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg)
- Italy
- France
- Scandinavia
- United States

Main Competing Destinations

In Europe, the main competing destinations are:

- Spain
- France
- Italy

In Asia, they include:

- Japan
- India
- Thailand

Key Tour Operators

Global Gourmet Tours

United Kingdom

<http://globalgourmettours.co.uk>

12 Hockley Court, Stratford Road, Hockley Heath, West Midlands, B94 6NW

Tel: (+44) 1564 784595

Email: sales@globalgourmettours.co.uk

On the Menu

United Kingdom and Australia

<http://www.holidayonthemenu.com>

United Kingdom

68-70 North End Road, West Kensington, London, W14 9EP

Tel: (+44) 8708 998844

Fax: (+44) 20 7471 6414

Australia

3/690 Brunswick Street, New Farm, QLD, Australia 4005

Tel: (+61) 1300 855 684

Fax: (+61) 7 3358 0905

Cooking Vacations

United States and Italy

<http://www.cooking-vacations.com>

United States

304 Newbury Street, Suite 318, Boston, MA 02115

Tel: 617 247 4112

Fax: 617 247 4850

Italy

Via G. Marconi, 45-84017, Positano

Tel: (+39) 339 604 29 33

Several other more generic tour operators feature gastronomic tours, or incorporate food as a selling point in their holidays. For example, Abercrombie and Kent offer gourmet tours to Alaska, but cater specifically for the luxury market and are not associated with culinary tourism specifically.

Abercrombie & Kent

United States

<http://www.abercrombiekent.com>

1520 Kensington Road, Suite 212, Oak Brook, Illinois 60523-2156

Tel: 630 954 2944

Toll-Free: 800 554 7016

Fax: 630 954 3324

Key Points for Marketing and Distribution

United States: Epicurious (part of CondeNet)

<http://www.epicurious.com/articlesguides/diningtravel>

Food and Wine – Magazine

<http://www.foodandwine.com>

Readers of broadsheet newspapers fit the profile of culinary tourists well, and advertisements – and assisted editorial features - are therefore likely to be one of the most effective ways for tour operators to distribute their products.

United States: USA Today (travel section)

<http://www.usatoday.com/travel>

United States: New York Times (travel section)

<http://travel.nytimes.com>

United Kingdom: The Times (travel section)

http://travel.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/travel

Germany: Bild

<http://www.bild.t-online.de/BILD/lifestyle/reise/home/reise.html>

Germany: Faz Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

<http://www.faz.net>

Social Networks

(The) foodblogblog.com – A directory of food blogs

<http://www.foodblogblog.com>

seriouseats.com – A food blog community

<http://www.seriouseats.com>

Additional Information

General Information

International Culinary Tourism Association

<http://www.culinarytourism.org>

Organisations/Institutions in the Caribbean

Caribbean Food Emporium (CFE), provides information about Caribbean food through its website and through the publication of the Caribbean food and drink magazine. The Caribbean Cuisine Consortium (CCC) is its parent company, and consists of Caribbean food and drink enthusiasts.

<http://www.caribbeanfoodemporium.co.uk>