

Urban Food Markets and Tourism

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Gastronomy tourism in urban spaces offers not only the attraction associated with food and drink, but also adds historical and social attractions. These urban markets, with a historical role rooted in people's lives, are a tourist attraction for the visitor, where he can experience both the autochthonous products and the authenticity of the place and its people.

food neophilia

cultural attraction

visitor's satisfaction

intention to revisit

1. Introduction

Gastronomy plays an important role in visitor satisfaction, enhancing the image of the destination and improving its economy, especially in those where the gastronomic offer is richer ^[1]. Thus, tourism decision-makers, being conscious of this reality, have been promoting gastronomy as a tourism product in destinations ^[2]. Tourists, who have gastronomic experiences as their main motivation for travel still constitute a niche market ^[3]. The gastronomic tourists are motivated by the desire to understand the residents' way of life through the local cuisine ^[4]. However, gastronomy as a tourist attraction accommodates all kinds of travel motivations because all travelers need to eat ^[5]. Therefore, all travelers end up being food tourists, regardless of their reason for visiting a destination ^[6].

Regarding gastronomic tourism in an urban context, this reality is even more present, since cities offer multi-product tourism, in contrast to rural destinations, which, in general, have less incentives to attract visitors ^{[7][8]}. Accordingly, the concept of gastronomic cities has been gaining momentum worldwide, through successful projects and case studies where gastronomy is at the center of the urban strategy for tourism and employment development ^[9]. In practice, besides the multiple types and concepts of restaurant that cities offer, urban tourism has other particularities such as the large-scale adhesion to gastronomic festivals, which promote regional and international cuisines and, more recently, food and gastronomic markets ^[10].

Food markets have been key forces in the structural and economic development of western European cities even since the classical Mediterranean civilizations ^[11]. Contemporary urban food markets are a recent manifestation of the ancient Greek agoras or Roman forums ^{[12][13]}. Since the end of the last century, across Europe, these markets, once vibrant and essential for supplying cities and their inhabitants, have come to be seen as an outdated and obsolete form of retail, having lost their former relevance ^[14]. However, in the last decade, these European city landmarks have started to be reborn, thanks to a new approach. Food markets, once in decline given the dominance of hypermarkets and shopping centers, gained new life with the inclusion of catering establishments, which cohabitate with the stalls where local products are sold ^[8].

Gastronomic tourism in urban spaces adds not only the food and drink attraction, but also historical and social attractions. These urban markets, with a historical role rooted in people's lives, are a tourist attraction for the visitor, where they can experience both indigenous products and the authenticity of the place and its people ^[15]. The combination of factors that mixes gastronomy, urbanism, and tourism must be achieved through a sustainable balance that benefits the inhabitants, the visitors, and, naturally, the promoters ^[16].

2. Urban Food Markets and Tourism

Markets have been a critical element in the growth of cities and human settlements throughout its history, due to its capacity to profoundly change the vitality and viability of urban centers ^{[14][17]}. Besides their function of warehousing and selling food products, markets have always performed a socializing role as public spaces, where traders, residents, and visitors interact simultaneously ^[18]. This social capacity of food markets enhances tourist visits and contributes to the revitalization of places, especially those that have been transformed into gastronomy markets ^[14]. That is, traditional markets, now revitalized and reconverted into gastronomy markets, have facilitated the development of the process of urban regeneration, as new tourist attractions ^[15]. Furthermore, visitors choose to discover these spaces, not only to have unique gastronomic experiences and social interactions, but also to discover the architecture, history, and culture of each market, and to feel the local atmosphere ^[19].

3. Food Quality in Urban Food Markets

Contemporary consumers are increasingly looking for native ingredients and quality food products ^[20]. This trend also extends to tourists who have a notorious interest in local food as it represents the typicality and identity of a particular place ^[16]. That is, the quality and freshness of food products are attractive for both locals and tourists ^[21]. Gastronomic tourism experiences happen not only in restaurants, but also through visits to food markets ^[22]. Therefore, to be recognized by tourists, food markets must be authentic and genuine ^[16]. In relation to gastronomic markets where both the sale of food products and restaurant spaces coexist, the experience is maximized by the local gastronomic offer, especially when presented with high quality concepts ^[15]. Thus, quality gastronomy is one of the most important assets for tourist destinations, because it promotes participative experiences that bring people closer to the local culture ^[10].

4. Urban Food Market's Location

The location of markets in city centers has always been a strategic factor for supplying the population, as it allows for greater efficiency in the movement of inhabitants ^[23]. Furthermore, due to its location, food markets were, since the beginning, one of the meeting and socializing points in cities ^[24]. The rebirth of historic city centers, in recent decades, enabled the rediscovery and the regeneration of European urban marketplaces, both by locals and tourists ^[25]. Tourists like to visit the historic centers for the unique architectural layout of their streets and buildings, but also because it allows them to experience and mingle with the locals ^[19]. Food consumption does have a highly noticeable and crucial role in the life of a city and in the design of welcoming public spaces, as food acts as a

vehicle that allows for the sustainment and socialization of urban spaces ^[26]. The type of visitor who likes to explore historic centers values culture, culinary art, and social interactions and escapes the crowds to seek out the more touristy neighborhoods, where markets are usually located ^[27]. Hence, typical markets in city centers combine genuine experiences made of interpersonal interactions with the local population and culture, food, and local gastronomy ^[25].

5. Food Market Involvement

The food markets' involvement is achieved through the stalls, food, people's interactions, and the mixture of aromas and colors that each space presents us ^[19]. These gastronomic experiences in urban places have their essence in the production of social relationships resulting from the interaction of customers (tourists and residents) with vendors, creating points of identification with the place ^[28]. That is, the cultural aspects related to each food market define the atmosphere and environment as identifying marks of the place ^[19]. Hence, tourists, when exploring other cuisines, become culturally involved with the place and its people, through the gastro-festive environment that surrounds each market ^[29]. The involvement of tourists with the market atmosphere also extends to the places where markets are built, usually historic centers, which constitute an added value to the experience ^[30]. Urban food markets and their surroundings are therefore places where tourists create affective connections with the surrounding environment, which contribute to the overall satisfaction of the trip ^[19].

6. Revisit Intention and Gastronomy

The importance of gastronomy in the intention to revisit has been widely studied in the context of gastronomic tourism ^{[31][32][33]}. It appears that experiences with local cuisines add value to the overall traveling experience, in such a way that many tourists consider returning to a specific destination to taste its gastronomy ^[31]. These previous experiences relate the place of consumption with the cuisine, art, and local culture, contributing to a favorable image of the destination ^[34]. In this sense, tourists who decide to revisit the destination have a more positive attitude towards the local food because of their prior experience and familiarity with local cuisines ^[35]. The influence of gastronomy in revisiting the destination is related to the security and confidence acquired in previous positive experiences ^[36]. Due to its natural aptitude, which combines local cuisine with art and culture, food markets are privileged places for the promotion of unique gastronomic experiences ^[24].

7. Food Neophilia and Tourism

From the tourist's perspective, experiencing the unique food of a destination is both a necessity and a pleasure ^[37]. The search for new gastronomic experiences is one of the most important motivations for tourists ^[38]. Food neophilia is based on the trend to try new foods, commonly known as novelty seeking ^[19]. Tourists as neophiliacs are more likely to experience positive emotions through unfamiliar foods and flavors that they recognize as typical of the destination ^[39]. Food neophiliacs view the experience of seeking out new flavors and ingredient combinations as a positive adventure, and as a natural part of the trip ^[40] and will try any kind of food since their

choices are mainly generated by curiosity [\[41\]](#). Hence, experiencing local cuisine novelty ends up making a decisive contribution to the positive experience at the destination [\[5\]](#).

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