

**The influence of food authenticity on tourist motivation and satisfaction:
A review of the literature.**

Samantha Morris
Institute of Technology Carlow,
Wexford Campus,
Summerhill Road,
Wexford.
Tel: 053 91 85800
E-mail: samantha.morris@itcarlow.ie

Tomas Dwyer,
Institute of Technology Carlow,
Wexford Campus,
Summerhill Road,
Wexford.
Tel: 053 91 85800
E-mail: tomas.dwyer@itcarlow.ie

Julie Mulligan,
Institute of Technology Carlow,
Wexford Campus,
Summerhill Road,
Wexford.
Tel: 053 91 85800
E-mail: julie.mulligan@itcarlow.ie

Edel Glowatz,
Institute of Technology Carlow,
Wexford Campus,
Summerhill Road,
Wexford.
Tel: 053 91 85800
E-mail: edel.glowatz@itcarlow.ie

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Abstract

Your aim/research question

The aim of this paper is to explore the theoretical evidence illustrating the influence of local authentic food on tourist motivation and satisfaction on differing tourist segments. By examining the current literature, it is clear that this subject remains relatively unexplored. This paper addresses this identifiable gap in tourism research and shows how local authentic food can contribute to tourist motivation and satisfaction within various tourist typologies, adding to the very limited extant literature in an Irish context. Furthermore, it deduces a number of hypotheses which aim to address it.

Design/methodology/approach

Relevant academic journals, articles and books were consulted and reviewed, allowing for the identification of key authors, findings and developments in the field of food tourism and authenticity.

Findings

Literature identifies a continuum of commitment amongst tourists towards food (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016, 2017; Robinson and Getz, 2016). Therefore, although all tourists consume food while on holiday, their motivations in relation to food can be very different (Hjalager, 2003; Pesonen and Komppula, 2010). Certain tourists may have a special interest in food and for these, food experiences may be a determinant for destination choice (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014, Tikkanen, 2007). On the other hand, for some tourists, food may not be decisive for destination choice (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014).

Similarly, experiencing food at a destination can be linked to overall satisfaction of the holiday, resulting in a positive or negative outcome (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2013). Thus, in summary, a number of studies have demonstrated that food tourists can be segmented based on these differing expectations and attitudes towards food (Henderson, 2009; Sánchez-Cañizares and López-Guzmán, 2012).

An increasing number of tourists are travelling to destinations seeking foods and food experiences considered traditional or local (Okumus et al., 2007). This pursuit can also be viewed as a search for authenticity (Sims, 2009). In the same vein, Fáilte Ireland stress that the authenticity of food offerings is a vital component of the visitor experience (Fáilte Ireland, 2013).

Despite studies stressing its importance, an evaluation of the literature found that relatively little research focuses specifically on tourist typologies regarding the association between local food consumption and authenticity (Ozdemir and Seyitoğlu, 2017).

Contributions

There are a number of practical implications for this paper. The main implication is centred on addressing the gap identified from a review of the literature in relation to local food consumption and authenticity.

Secondly, as tourists can be segmented into based on level of interest in food, it allows for the designing of promotional strategies specifically tailored to each segment (Levitt, et al., 2017). Additionally, the perceived authenticity of food experiences in a destination can have a strong impact on tourists' intention to revisit a place (Povey, 2011).

Finally, by exploiting tourists' desire for authenticity, development of local products and services can be encouraged. Which in turn will boost sustainability and benefit rural regions for visitors and residents alike (Andersson et al., 2017).

Four hypotheses are proposed and discussed with the aim of addressing this identified research gap. Including:

- Tourists show different attitudes toward food as a determining variable in their choice of destination.
- The degree of satisfaction with the local food is conditioned by the food motivations of the tourist.
- The culinary motivations are heterogeneous and conditioned by a tourist's attitude toward food on his/her trips.
- Authentic local food is a factor that contributes and conditions the tourists' experience and, therefore, tourist satisfaction.

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