

# **THE IMPACT OF THE GASTRONOMIC OFFER IN CHOOSING TOURISM DESTINATION: THE CASE OF ALBANIA**

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## **Abstract**

Food structures the tourist day. A large proportion of tourist day are spent either consuming food and drinks, or deciding where and what to consume. One of the essential tasks in developing and marketing gastronomic tourism, therefore, is to find the ways to add value to the eating experience in order to make it memorable. Gastronomic experiences for tourist are usually developed from the prospective of unique aspects of gastronomy that can only be found in that particular location. If gastronomy can be linked to specific countries or regions, it becomes a powerful tourism marketing tool. Many tourism destinations around the world have begun to realize this, and are using gastronomy to market themselves.

This paper, therefore, is going to discuss a number of issues regarding food tourism. The purpose of this research was to determine motivations which influencing tourists' local food consumption. The study involved a multi-method approach undertaken through initiating interviews in 20 restaurants to build inventory of local food of Vlora Region and to find out if local food to Vlora Region take part in the menus of restaurants. Finally a survey applied to the tourists of the area to determine motivations which influencing their local food consumption. From the analysis five motivational factor were identified; Quality of taste, authentic experience, rural development, health concern and knowledge. Authentic experience was chosen as a primary motivational factor by visitors to consume local food during their holiday.

Based on the findings of this research food has a great influence on attracting tourists to a destination from the tourists' point of view.

**Keywords:** food, gastronomic, tourism, cultural, motivations, Vlora Region

**JEL Classification:** L83

## **Introduction**

Culinary tourism is emerging as an important component of the rapidly growing cultural tourism market. Factors affecting their decision to travel and their choice of destination have also changed. An increasing number of tourists are looking for specific experiences – learning vacations, horticulture tours, and gastronomy, among others(Thorne, 2001). In an increasingly competitive world of tourism marketing, every region or destination is in a constant search for a unique product to differentiate itself from other destinations(Hall &Macionis, 1998).

As a developing country, Albania for many years is studying the ways that would generate the Albanian economy, and tourism is considered as one of the top activities. The fact that Albania maintains a cultural "authenticity" with its wide range of historic and natural attractions could hold great allure for the outside world. The variety of climate, geography, and subcultures causes the variety of food, although this important item has been ignored as a tourism attraction in Albania. Culinary tourism in Albania has the potential to offer great variety, quality and value tourism experience.

Local food produce adds authenticity to the tourist experience and provides motivation for visitors to come to a location. In addition, food has an important role in differentiating destination in a

meaningful way. Tourists may even be tempted to stay longer in Albania because of the availability of food products and related activities. More importantly, food has been recognized as an effective promotional and positioning tool of a destination with increasing interest in local cuisine, more destinations are focusing on food as their core tourism product (Corigliano, 2000). This study recommended that food is not only a basic need for tourists in Albania, but also a cultural element that can positively present a destination.

## **Literature Review**

This section provides a review of literature focusing on the culinary tourism phenomenon. It consists of nine sections. The entire part discusses the major factors that have contributed to the increased interest in culinary tourism. It also presents the concept of culinary tourism and its various definitions.

### **Food and tourism**

The increased interest in culinary tourism can be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, today's consumers have become environmentally and health conscious leading to demand for pure, fresh, and healthful ingredients derived through responsible agricultural practices (Getz, 2000; Wolf, 2002). According to Lee (2002), the market for organic foods is growing and is predicted to increase 20 per cent annually because of the affluent aging population concerned about its health and desire to support more environmentally friendly agriculture. Other factors fuelling the culinary tourism phenomenon include growing interest in specialty food and beverages associated with multicultural societies as well as culture-specific product sampling (Getz, 2000; Wolf, 2002). For instance, the mixing of different cultures has led to increased sophistication in tastes and expectations and has raised consumer curiosity about different cuisines and ingredients. According to Wolf (2002), "culinary tourists are born through product sampling". For instance, some hotels or inns may offer their guests samples of local food and drink (e. g. a bottle of locally produced wine) thus helping the customers associate them with the particular culture or destination.

Local food is a fundamental component of a destination's attributes, adding to the range of attractions and the overall tourist experience (Symons, 1999). This makes food an essential constituent of tourism production as well as consumption. However, when it comes to tourists, dining out can both be a necessity and a pleasure. While some tourists dine to satisfy their hunger, others dine at a particular restaurant to experience the local food and cuisine, because for the latter these form an important component of their travel itinerary. This makes the study of tourists' food consumption interesting as well as complex. From an economic point of view, nearly 100% of tourists spend money on food at their destination. According to Pyo, Uysal, and McLellan (1991), among all possible areas of expenditures while traveling, tourists are least likely to make cuts in their food budget. All these suggest that tourists' food consumption makes a substantial contribution to the local restaurants, dining places, the food industry, and thereby the destination's economy.

In addition, food has an important role in differentiating destination in a meaningful way (Okumus, 2007). Food and cooked forms are considered as an important factor of a national cultural identity. Local and regional food can add value to destination because visitors consume the products of a destination; hence the products must be something that satisfies their needs and wants. In addition, Familiarity with local, regional and national cuisine has become interest for tourists (Du Rand et al. , 2003). Local food consumption leads to stimulate and support agricultural activity and food production. Local community can benefit in terms of creating job, generating pride and reinforcing brand identity of the destination with the focus on food experience in that area.

Tourism allows people to discover their world. It provides opportunity for escape from the everyday routine and environment and to immerse in the world of fantasy, freedom, and novelty. It is argued that tourism is the largest and fastest growing industry in the world (Burton & Volpe, 2000). According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourist arrivals amounted to 693 million in 2001 and are forecasted to increase to 1.6 billion in 2020 (WTO, 2002a). International tourism receipts were recorded at 463 billion USD in 2001 and are expected to rise to 2 trillion USD by 2020. Tourism demand worldwide as well as in Albania has changed significantly over the last several years. More experienced travellers with large disposable incomes and more available time for travel have emerged (Thorne, 2001). Factors affecting their decision to travel and their choice of destination have also changed. Therefore, to sustain presence and to compete successfully as a four-season destination in the international and domestic market, Albania needs to develop new innovative products and experiences highlighting its natural and cultural treasures.

This study represents an important database that can be used by tourism organizations to develop marketing strategies and travel products to attract visitors to Albania. The culinary tourism industry in Albania consists mostly of small and medium-sized businesses, restaurants and wineries, local and regional associations, etc. who usually have limited resources for conducting research (Smith & Taylor, 1994). Therefore, research specifically related to the demand for culinary tourism is needed. This study is significant because of its potential to contribute new insights into this tourism niche. Although food has been strongly linked to tourism in some European and Asian destinations for years, culinary tourism is a relatively new phenomenon in Albania and, thus research in this area is scarce.

### **Cultural capital and food consumption**

With respect to food, cultural capital may reside in knowledge about gourmet foods, exotic flavors, foods that are acquired tastes, and familiarity with advanced preparation techniques (Adema, 2000). In addition, the growing popularity of cooking shows, a concern for where the food originates from, a desire to resist the dominant culture of franchised food and restaurants, and the quest for obscure local and regional cuisines and artisan-produced foods are all indicative of cultural capital (Pietrykowski, 2004; Warde, 2004). Cooking can be considered as a cultural consequence rather than a natural one, whereas the natural process makes the raw material into rot (Murcott, 1988). Levi-Strauss's culinary triangle has another aspect too, which is the relationship between different ways of cooking and people cultural characteristics and social status (Fieldhouse, 1995). The relationship between food and culture is very important because by exploring new food, tourists are able to explore novel cultures and lifestyles (Chang & Hsieh, 2006). Food does not only satisfy biological needs because food products can be familiarizing with local culture (Askegaard & Madsen, 1998). Jones & Jenkins (2002, p. 115) mentioned that food has been regarded as not only being a basic necessity for tourist consumption but also an essential element of regional culture. Regional and local products can be a unique feature in destination branding and by using specific food; tourists get acquainted with culture, history and people of a place.

According to Richards (1996), learning is the main characteristic of cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is now viewed as special interest tourism since traveller's motivation and decision making are determined by an interest in a particular subject (Weiler & Hall, 1992; Richards, 1996). It introduces visitors to new and exciting smells, tastes and flavours, to new cultures, and it also provides learning opportunities. Cultural heritage includes not only the physical aspect (e.g. built heritage) but also elements of gastronomy (Reynolds, 1994; Bauer, 1996). Corigliano (2000) suggest that tourism is a "cultural act" and that "food is culture", thus by combining travel with local products (i.e. eating a particular dish and drinking a local wine) means sharing the local culture. Getz (2000) refers to the wine experience as "an exercise in individual cultural tourism" by exploring wine country and the atmosphere of wine villages.

Cultural tourism is not limited to visiting museums, historic sites, or art galleries; it also includes cuisine, gastronomy, and culinary practices. Through cultural tourism, both hosts and tourists have the opportunity to learn about each other, to develop their emotions and tastes, and to improve their quality of life and enhance the tourism experience (Moulin, 1995). An increasingly significant number of travellers are stating that food is a key aspect of the travel experience and that they believe that experiencing a country's food is essential to understanding its culture (The Conde Nast Publications Inc and Plog Research, 2001). According to Richards (2002), gastronomy plays a key role in cultural tourism because it "has become a significant source of identity formation in postmodern society". The cultural capital theory uses a similar perspective with respect to food and views eating as a cultural act. The culinary field functions like other domains of 'high' culture and art such that there is a hierarchy of cuisines and hierarchy of food outlets and there are groups of professional practitioners and critics engaged in aesthetic discourse about restaurants and their dishes (Warde, 2004). The cultural capital theory revolves around the differential ability to control the definition of what is 'good to eat'.

### **Globalization and food consumption**

Combining the macro theory of globalization and the micro theory of cultural capital to explain food tourism, a theoretical framework is proposed in this section. The forces of globalization have exposed people to foreign foods at home and stimulated them to experience those foods when they travel. Moreover, the presence of both local food, and the global in the form of chain restaurants, provides them with more variety than ever. Tourists who possess the cultural capital to appreciate and enjoy foreign food at home are the ones who are more likely to experience the local food at the destination (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). More importantly, since eating out is a necessary element of the vacation experience, and almost all tourists eat out, destinations become a playground for accruing as well as deploying one's cultural capital. Where the tourist eats and what he eats exhibits the socio-cultural echelons he belongs to, and makes food an ideal tool for social cohesion and social stratification.

With respect to food consumption, the homogenizing aspect of globalization has been attributed to economic forces, particularly because the economic process of trade liberalization makes it possible for food to be sourced from any part of the world. This standardization of tastes, although stimulated in the economic sphere, results in cultural phenomena with certain images and symbols accepted the world over as aesthetics / lifestyle (Sklair, 1991). Even though globalization has been accused of suppressing regional food differences, major local and regional variations in our eating patterns remain. The world culture theory of globalization is used as a means of understanding tourists' food consumption. Sociologists studying food consumption (Germov & Williams, 1999; McIntosh, 1996) have used the world culture theory of globalization to explain the patterns of modern food consumption. The theory when applied to food consumption reflects the same dynamics in that there is a dialectical relationship between the global and the local, and convergence as well as divergence of tastes.

Further, the significance of the local as an opposing force to the global is also seen in the movements like the Slow Food Movement in Italy and many small communities of Europe and the USA. In many western countries, extensive efforts are being undertaken by local communities to reconstruct and emphasize local food systems to protect their endangered gastronomic traditions (Henderson, 1998; Mayer & Knox, 2005; Stille, 2001). Thus, even though Mennell (2000) states that globalization is facilitating a trend of 'diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties,' the dynamics of globalization ensures that regional and national differences still exist and there are still more differences than varieties (Nygard and Storstad, 1998). To summarize, the counteracting forces of globalization and localization act simultaneously leading to people becoming familiar with foods and cuisines from different parts of the world and being introduced to a variety of local versions. This has resulted in

convergence in consumptive behaviour on one hand and increased variety on the other. Despite their recent proliferation, ethnic restaurants in Western countries are as yet representative of only a few cuisines. Of the European ones, such “world cuisines” as the Italian and French are most commonly represented; indeed some of the dishes from those cuisines (including pizza or lettuce salad) became so familiar that they are not considered ethnic any more. Other European cuisines, such as the Turkish or Greek are also widespread. It should be noted that such “world cuisines” originate from countries that are major destinations, and thus tourism might very well be the reason behind their popularity and proliferation.

### **Variety-seeking Tendency and Food Tourism**

In tourism literature where food is the focus of study, variety-seeking tendency towards food is seen as an important variable explaining tourist food consumption. According to Shortridge (2004), the diversity of opportunities provided to the tourist to experience varieties of food is seen as the hallmark of food tourism. At the same time, the culinary tourists are characterized by their openness to variety (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004). A tourist’s variety-seeking tendency with respect to food is manifested in a demand for variety of culinary traditions, and/or a demand for variety within a culinary system (Molz, 2004; Reynolds, 1993). To these tourists, eating at a variety of restaurants was more pleasurable and a crucial factor in their overall culinary experience. To summarize, literature suggests that the tourist’s variety-seeking tendency towards food is a form of cultural experimentation. Moreover, according to the literature, a destination’s ability to provide variety of culinary traditions along with a multiplicity of dishes within a culinary tradition, undoubtedly adds to its overall attraction and satisfaction as a holiday destination. Thus, tourism literature pertinent to food consumption shows that variety-seeking tendency towards food plays a crucial role in explaining participation in food related activities.

### **Food Neophobia and Food Tourism**

Food neophobia is one such personal trait that has been proposed as a barrier for tourists to experience the local cuisines (Cohen & Avieli, 2004), affecting the food tourism experience (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). Local food might not be an attraction to many tourists because they are afraid of experimenting with novel foods and ingesting something strange (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). However, the empirical significance of food neophobia in explaining participation in food tourism in a study of perceived risks of travel, Lepp and Gibson (2003) found strange food as being one of the risk factors for tourists. The study revealed that institutionalized tourists, the organized mass tourists, female tourists, and tourists with least experience in traveling abroad perceived strange food to be a risk tourism remains untested. To sum up, food’s capacity to affect the tourist’s physical health makes it one of the risk elements of tourism. In addition, the inherent trait within a person to avoid novel foods plays a crucial factor in determining the extent of participation in food tourism. The proposition arrived as a consequence of the literature review of the concept is stated Cohen & Avieli (2004) believe that the fear of experiencing new food might pose some problems for a number of tourists and finally prevent them from tasting the novel food offered them. The influence of food neophobia is so great that, according to Cohen & Avieli (2004) it has come to be considered as one of the obstacles in the way of tourists’ experience of local cuisines and thus food neophobia affects the food tourism experience in a negative way as Mitchell & Hall (2003) claim.

There is a basic ambivalence in the tourists’ anticipation of a trip to a relatively unfamiliar destination. While excited about the pleasures of novel experiences, they are often worried about the trip’s adaptive aspects: the climate, the accommodations, health risks, and especially the availability of safe, edible, and palatable food and beverage. Such considerations appear to become increasingly

salient as the date of departure approaches and as the vague, pleasing images and fantasies regarding the destination are overshadowed by more concrete and practical preparations for the trip (Reynolds 1993).

### **Hedonic Consumption Attitude and Food Tourism**

In the literature where one sees an interface of food and tourism, food is viewed as an element satisfying the sensation seeking need of the tourists, or something that provides peak experiences to the tourists. Thus, food forms a hedonic component in the overall tourism experience. Analyzing the role of food in tourism, Boniface (2003) posits that the modern tourist is in a constant need for a 'high' and for immediate gratification. Food and drink provide sensory and tactile pleasure and satisfy that need more easily than any other tourist attraction. A special taste and sensation of unusual food and drink, the pleasure of discovering a new food or dish all contribute to hedonic experiences in travel. Quan and Wang (2004) extend this proposition by stating that experiencing food can be a peak experience provided the tourist considers the food of the destination an attraction and activities related to food form a major part of the tourist's itinerary.

With respect to food tourism per se, Mitchell and Hall (2003) state that food tourism is hedonic in nature since food becomes an experiential rather than a functional aspect of travel experience. According to them, tourists are motivated to participate in food tourism because of their hedonic attitude towards food consumption and that the essence of food tourism lies in its ability to satisfy the sensation seeking attitude of the tourist. From the destination's perspective, it is the tourist's hedonic attitudes towards food that makes local food a tourist attraction in its own right and as important as any other attraction of a destination. To sum up, as tourism is developing into becoming more experience oriented, and as something that is more than just 'gaze' oriented (Urry, 2002), food has become a medium of such an experience-based tourism. When the tourist's attitude towards food is hedonic rather than utilitarian, and the tourist views food as a part of the destination's attractions or 'pull factors', food provides a pleasurable and memorable experience. Thus, experiencing the food of the destination becomes one of the motivations to travel, or at least a significant part of the tourist's overall activities, and ultimately provides peak tourist experiences.

### **Enduring Involvement and Food Tourism**

There is a connection between involvement and any special interest tourism, such as culinary tourism, in that the leisure activities enjoyed at home are pursued even while vacationing in the form of niche tourism activities (Brotherton & Himmetoglu, 1997). In the food tourism literature, the different dimensions of enduring involvement (attraction and centrality) are stated as predictors of participation in food tourism rather than enduring involvement per se. Long (2004) states that culinary tourism highlights the complexity of tourist involvement in food consumption in the sense that even though it is a physiological necessity, the culinary tourist perceives food as a social and cultural resource, and his involvement with food is related with those aspects rather than the physiological aspects.

Finally, according to Wilson (2004), culinary tourists attribute sign value to eating food in a multicultural setting and unconsciously or consciously use it as a means of status differentiation. They perceive experiencing local food and cuisines as important enough to make that a key part of their activities at the destination. The perceived sign value attributed by the consumer to the product (food) is one of the dimensions of involvement and is a significant stimulus in participation in food tourism. People who show an enduring involvement with food use it as a cultural and social resource around which they revolve their leisure activities. They are involved with food related activities at home so much that it assumes centrality or salience in their lives, stimulating them to participate in food related



activities during the vacation. Furthermore, people who show enduring involvement with food and food-related activities perceive food as a form of identity expression, identity affirmation and social bonding.

### **Demographic status and food consumption**

Socio-demographic characteristics are important determinants of food consumption. Demographic factors have an effect on food choice. They include gender, age and place of residence, income or education (Verbeke & López, 2005). Some groups of people were likely to eat out more frequently than others. Eating out frequently was associated primarily with having high household incomes, being highly educated, being younger, being a student, having no children in the household, being unmarried, or not living with a partner. Income, age, region, and household composition affect how often people eat out (Warde & Martens, 1999). Social class variables include occupation and education level; cultural and geographical variables consist of race, region and location of residence. Moreover, marital status has an effect on dining-out spending because married couples spend much money on food and dine-out. Level of education is also very significant. Since educated people are more willing to spend much money, so value and quality are very important for them.

### **Food as a motivating factor**

Local food is an authentic experience. Food served in ethnic restaurants is a totally different experience in comparison with the food that one eats at home. Culture of the area and environment in which people eat is an authentic experience. When individuals eat food at home, they are living in an ordinary life. When people eat local food in a local area, they have an authentic and original experience. As a result, authenticity depends on environment, time, local setting, the process of cooking, and local people who prepare food (Wang, 1999). Products of tourism including dress, local food, and ritual can be defined as being authentic depending on whether those are enacted or used by local people according to custom and tradition (Chhabra, 2003; Kim, 2009).

According to Halland Sharples (2003), food tourism is "visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production region are the primary motivating factor for travel" (Hall & Mitchell, 2002). Thus, they narrow the scope of food tourism by stating that food tourism occurs only when the food of a place acts as a primary motivator to travel to the destination.

### **The case of Albania: Vlora Region**

**Vlora city** is a place that holds on its shoulders a natural beauty, history, tradition and antique culture, great potentials for the tourism development. It is the most important city of Albania having a significant tourism and economic potential with its own specific geographical, environmental and protected, untouched natural resources. The city of Vlora has a beautiful connection between its sea coast climate and mountain climate. With a population of 79,948 it is the city where the Albanian Declaration of Independence was proclaimed on November 28, 1912. The city was for a short time capital of Albania and is located in Albania, in the District of Vlora. Vlora is situated in the Bay of Vlora, an inlet on the Adriatic Sea, almost surrounded by mountains. The port of Vlora is closer in proximity than any other to the port of Bari, Italy, and is just 70 nautical miles (130 km) from Salento's coasts. The island of Sazan is nearby, strategically located at the entrance to the Bay of Vlora. The town is surrounded by gardens and olive groves. A new motorway is being constructed linking the city with Fier and Albania as a whole. One of the most panoramic routes of the Albanian Riviera starts to the south of town stretching up to Saranda in extreme southern Albania. Vlora remains a major seaport and commercial centre, with a significant fishing and industrial sector. The city is also the location of

important installations of the Albanian Navy. Vlorahas grown in importance as an agriculturalcentre with very large-scale planting of olive and fruits tree, and as a centre of the food processing, oil and bitumen export industries.

The surrounding district is mainly agricultural and pastoral, producing oats, maize, cotton, olive oil, cattle, sheep, skins, hides and butter. These commodities are exported. Tourism has become a major industry in recent years, with many hotels, recreational centres, and vast beaches. It is a pleasant place to relax, to have a coffee and admire the beautiful view over the Bay of Vlora. The coast of Vlora is distinguished for the fish of high quality related to the taste and the freshness. One of the characteristics of this city is the fact that traditional menu of Vlora is mixed with the traditional menu of the neighbour countries such as Italy and Greece.

**Llogora** or Llogora National Park is a national park in Albania declared since 1966 by Albanian Government. The park covers an area of 1, 010 hectares and protects the forests on the north side of the Llogara offer baked meat in a tipical way, and also Harapash and Revani as well. In this area is used only the traditional way of cooking.

**Orikum** is a municipality in the Vlora District, south-western Albania. It was named after the ancient city of Oricum, which was located 4 km west of modern Orikum. The municipality consists of the town Orikum and the villages Dukat, Tragjas and Radhime. Nearby the modern city is located the only marina in Albania, Marina of Orikum. One of the characteristics of the coast is the fish cooking. Delicious plates are with fish such as blankets, haddock, etc. , and with sea fruits such as common cuttlefish and squids. This area is also distinguished for pie cooking.

Narta Lagoon is a lagoon in the western part of Albania. It is the second largest lagoon in Albania relates to size and is located a few kilometers north of the city of Vlora. The lagoon is connected by two short canals to the Adriatic Sea. Narta Lagoon takes its name from the village of Nartë which is located on the southern shores of the lagoon. There are two islands in the lagoon. The largest is called Zvernecland. A wooden walkway connects Narta to the island, where there is a monastery of the 13rd century. For this area the most tipical kind of food is fish accompanied with the wine of Narta. The most served dishes are those with eel, mullet, koce and lavrak. Eel, mullet and lavrak are cooked in oven and koce is cooked in barbecue.

Any time we behave like tourists in our country or elsewhere, or when we meet with friends, or foreing tourists we think about where to go to relax, to eat well and have fun. Food is thus an important part of the tourists activity in a destination. If the hostevaluates this element of the tourist offer, it may present surprises for the tourists and give them many interesting insights about the characteristics of the country that they are visiting. We can say that the food is representative for the area.

### **Methodology**

In order to explore what extent local foods of Vlora Region take part in restaurants menus' and to determine motivations which influencing tourists' local food consumption, quantitative and qualitative approach were chosen. Firstly, to find out local foods of the Vlora Region semi structured interviews are carried out with Vlora Region restaurants across a range of locations such as Llogora, Radhime, Narte, Orikum and Vlora. Secondly, to find out inclusion level of local food of the destination in restaurants document review method was employed (Patton, 2002; Sterk and Elifson, 2004). Therefore, all the menus of restaurants inVlora Region were reviewed and researchers carefully noted total menu items and local foods, which included in the menu. Lastly, to determine local food consumption motivations and expectation from the restaurateurs, a questionnaire survey way employed to tourists whose visiting to Vlora Region.

**Study1.** The aim of this study was to build inventory of local foods of the Vlora Region. The unit of study were 20 restaurants located in the most typical tourist offer in Vlora, as Llogara, Radhima, Tragjas, Nartë and Vlora. They have been questioned if they use any special traditional dish of the area, and if they use



which are those? The data were identified by us from conversations with experts and from a preliminary exploratory study through semi-structured interviews in local restaurants. Data were obtained through an interview with 20 restaurant owners from 05/2013 to 06/2013.

According to the results of the study, local foods of the Vlora Region include 36 different traditional foods and are grouped under 6 topics (see table 1).

**Table 1.** Local food of Vlora Region

Kind of food	Number of food
Sea foods	5
Meat dishes	5
Different salt pies	10
Different kind of soups	7
Pastry	3
Deserts	6

Under the light of this data gathering study, a document review method was employed with all restaurants (20) in the Vlora Region between from 06/2013 to 07/2013. A list of restaurants was taken from the municipality and from the Tax Office of Vlora. The aim of this study is to reveal to what extent local foods peculiar to the Vlora Region take part in the menus of restaurants. Results for each restaurant are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Rate of Local Food in Restaurants Menus

Restaurants	Local foods in menu	No of total foods in menu	Rate
Rest. 1	31	70	0,44
Rest. 2	27	56	0,48
Rest. 3	24	53	0,45
Rest. 4	18	45	0,40
Rest. 5	23	47	0,49
Rest. 6	4	7	0,57
Rest. 7	5	9	0,55
Rest. 8	33	81	0,38
Rest. 9	23	65	0,35
Rest. 10	14	29	0,48
Rest. 11	24	36	0,67
Rest. 12	32	98	0,32
Rest. 13	30	60	0,50
Rest. 14	26	54	0,48
Rest. 15	28	50	0,56
Rest. 16	27	55	0,49
Rest. 17	30	67	0,44
Rest. 18	17	63	0,27
Rest. 19	30	45	0,66
Rest. 20	9	15	0,60

*Average Rate: 0,48*

**Study 2.** The instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire which was developed and modified by the researchers. Questions are divided into five ranks based on a Likert scale ranging from that is

including: (1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree). 140 questionnaires were distributed among the tourists visiting Vlora Region and yielded 132 valid responses (94, 2%). The survey time extended from 8/2013 to 9/2013. The questionnaire had three parts. In the first part the study was focused on the demographic factors of participants. The second part contained 19 statements that were linked to a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree) to identify what kind of motives impact tourists local food choose on their holiday. And at the end there were some questions regarding the expectations of tourists' from restaurateurs.

In this research, participants are as follows: female 54, 3%; male 45, 7%; age range mostly between 15 and 44 years old (71%); marital status, predominately married (54, 7%); education level predominately over high school degree (81, 2%); and, average monthly income above 900 Euro; %26, 5 of respondents visited Vlora Region before and average staying days of visitor 4.

From data analyses came out that 83, 9% of respondents eat out until to survey and majority of respondents look for local specialties with a local identity restaurants (77, 1%).

In addition, tourists' motives for local food consumption in the Vlora Region, as determined by factor analysis, are identified (KMO =0. 915).

All items with five dimensions i. e. Quality of taste, authentic experience, rural development, health concern and knowledge are found reasonably acceptable based on factor loading with greater than 0. 43. The major tourists' motive, is authentic experience (the variance is 18, 3 %).

However to find out expectations of the tourists from restaurateurs we developed scale which includes 7 item (Cronbach's alpha 0, 792). According to results of the scale all items have very higher scores (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Tourists' Expectations from Restaurateurs

Statements	Means	Std. deviations
More local food should be found in the menus	0, 456	0, 614
Menus must included information about local food	0, 476	0, 645
Traditional methods should be used for to food presentations	0, 432	0, 635
Should have opportunity to taste before ordering	0, 379	0, 603
Food was made from local products must be indicated	0, 424	0, 598
Restaurants must reflect region qualities	0, 435	0, 673
Staffs' knowledge about the foods is very poor	0, 378	0, 876

### Conclusion and Discussion

This study assumes importance because Identify culinary tradition creates opportunities to attract tourists with a new specific element. The current study was undertaken in context of rise of consumption of local food on holidays and increased awareness of local values for tourism. The findings of this study revealed that through interview, document reviewing and questionnaire method, this study not only identified the motivations influencing local food consumption based on the empirical context of local food experiences on trips and holidays, but also built an inventory of Vlora Region's local foods and defines expectations of tourists' from restaurateurs. The findings of this study revealed that motivations to consume local food included five motivational factors: quality of taste, authentic experience, rural development, health concern and learning knowledge. Authentic experience which includes represents to region, distinctive, traditional items, has been chosen as a primary motivational factor to consume

local food by the participants. On the other hand, according to our first research, local foods in the restaurants menus capture 48% of all menu items. The average seems good enough but interactions between close areas to Vlorë Region also have some effects on foods. In Vlorë Region we can find menus that come from Italy, Greece and Turkey. Being so close with the traditions of these countries more for the fact that 1 million of Albanians has migrated in these countries, some foods defined as local food by local people also can be seen in some other destinations around the Vlorë Region. That's why participants want to see more local food in the menus which peculiar to Vlorë Region. Moreover, general perceptions of the participants about local identity of the restaurants are low (see Table 3). However, 77, 1 % of the participants look for local specialties with a local identity restaurant.

This study identifies the local food consumption motivations of tourists during their holiday. This research could assist the local governors and tourism authorities when planning promotional activities to attract more people to visit area or to increase tourists spending in the destination. Additionally, from the perspective of restaurateurs, they should understand tourists' expectations and provide satisfactory service and products to them by bringing to light peculiar foods of area with new flavors and authentic ingredients. Lastly, the current research is conducted with a domestic and international tourists sample, it would be interesting to undertake similar research and examine a sample with only international tourists to see if there are differences in motivations for consumption of local food in holiday. This study assumes importance because identify culinary tradition creates opportunities to attract tourists with a new specific element.

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