

Gastronomic tourism in Greece and beyond: a thorough review

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Abstract

It may be the case that the world is gradually becoming global (and somehow unified), but tourists are more and more looking for experiences based on ‘divergence’, on destination identity and culture. One such strong ‘diversity’ feature is the regional gastronomy. According to Y. Perdomo of UNWTO, each dish conveys a story and each ingredient relates to the story of a touristic destination. In this extensive review of the relevant bibliography and online sources an attempt is made to capture the current situation in the gastronomic tourism globally and specifically in Greece. The review includes introductory material and historical information, reference to the international and regional studies on gastronomic tourism and tourism resources, and an overview of the specificity of the situation in Greece. The study closes by providing a list of promising trends for the future.

Keywords: Gastronomy, gastronomic tourism, culinary tourism, food tourism, review

1. Introduction

Tourism is a phenomenon that dates back to ancient times. Ancient Greek philosophers recognized, adopted, and promoted the concept of rest based on tourism. During the Dark Ages (since 500 AD) tourism took the form of festivals and event participation. An aristocratic form of tourism appeared in the 16th century. The privileged classes were transferred to important destinations for the pursuit of both culture and education. Until the 18th century, emerging middle classes formed an ever-evolving element of tourism. In the early 1970s, tourism used the natural and cultural resources of a destination as a tourist attraction. It was therefore regarded as a ‘smoke free industry’ (Saveriades, 2000).

Clarke et al. (2001) note that tourism has increased rapidly in recent years in many areas around the world (Christou, 2010). In practice tourism is an amalgam of tangible and intangible entities involved in various forms of experience. Today, the scientific community as well as tourism professionals recognize many different aspects or types of tourism, such as the gastronomic tourism, and embrace and try to provide means to support the rapid development of tourism worldwide. This development is obviously related to the economic benefits and local and regional development, although significant negative social and environmental effects associated with uneven development have also been reported. Sustainable development policies have already been implemented to minimize those negative effects. In this context, gastronomic tourism is a form of alternative sustainable tourism, which may also contribute to a solution for the problem of seasonality.

Food is an essential commodity as well as being social and cultural heritage. According to Morgan (2010) food is as vital to human health and well-being as any other product and this is the main reason so much importance is attached to it. It has been suggested that food plays a multifunctional connective role in society and that sustainable food systems support sustainable communities. Food influences lifestyles, health and habits as well as the design model for land, water, energy, transport and ecosystem services. Cooking and gastronomy are gradually becoming more and more important in modern societies. In 2014, the European Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education adopted a movement for a European Parliament

48 resolution on “European gastronomic heritage: cultural and educational aspects”¹. It recognizes
49 the importance of nutrition and gastronomy as an artistic and cultural expression and proclaims
50 them fundamental pillars of family and social relationships². The S3 Platform³ organized a
51 thematic workshop on “Smart specialisation and food: food, gastronomy and bio-economy as
52 elements of regional innovation strategies”. The workshop focused on nutrition, gastronomy
53 and bio-economics as areas of smart specialisation in EU countries and regions and
54 international experts identified them as genuine elements of smart specialisation. Participants
55 dealt with innovation issues in food as a driving force for smart regional development, with the
56 role of public and private actors in supporting priorities in the agri-food sector as well as
57 differences in the culture and approaches of gastronomy (Cavicchi & Stancova, 2016).

58 According to Hall et al. (2003) gastronomic tourism is the visit to primary and secondary food
59 and drink producers, gastronomy festivals, dining venues and specific locations, where tasting
60 and experience of special local food features are a prime motivation for the visit. Although this
61 definition emphasises that gastronomy is a prime motivation for tourists, there is a wide range
62 of tourists’ preferences regarding the level of interest and importance of gastronomy in a
63 journey, from visits to restaurants only for the basic nutrition, to planning the whole trip
64 according to gastronomy-related activities.

65 Today’s interest in local food is explained by issues related to the environment, ethics,
66 sustainability and local health issues, as well as consumers’ desire to support local networks
67 and economies, and to reduce their carbon footprint (Pesonen et al., 2011). In addition,
68 consumers perceive those products to be more ‘fresh’, ‘tasty’ and ‘reliable’ (Roininen et al.,
69 2006). Studies also show that local food is considered ‘authentic’, ‘clean’ and ‘traditional’.
70 However, local food is also considered both ‘simple’ and ‘distinct’ (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al.,
71 2013; Sims, 2009).

72 Furthermore, every local food market is unique. Food markets in Paris differ from those in New
73 York or Helsinki and are all major attractions for tourists (Richards, 2003). Differences depend
74 on local culture and history, socioeconomic and environmental conditions, food varieties and
75 dietary preferences. Therefore, because of these local specialties, local food has become a
76 means of tourist attraction (S. Smith & Costello, 2009; Tikkanen, 2007). The importance of the
77 search for particular flavours, tastes and eating experiences is constantly increasing (Gyimóthy
78 & Mykletun, 2009). In addition to valuing local food as authentic and traditional, it is an
79 attraction for travellers because of the new experience they promise to offer (Kauppinen-
80 Räsänen et al., 2013; Sims, 2009). Indeed, local food can act as a ‘trigger’ for the destination,
81 which means that travellers can choose a particular destination because of the local food and
82 their expected gastronomic experiences.

83 An interesting recent research that examined the association of gastronomy with the brand-
84 name and the identity of a region, investigated the aspects of the influence of food identity
85 categories adopted by branding campaigns and programs. This influence is graphically shown
86 in Figure 1, as adapted from (Flora Somos & Sin Yiu Rachel Li, 2016). An important finding
87 of this research, as illustrated in this diagram, is that the largest proportion (33.96%) of the
88 content analysis of the promotional material appears to relate the branding with the popularity
89 of food-related places (like restaurants) and, indeed, with a large percentage difference from
90 other factors. It is noted that the content analysis conducted was intended to identify the
91 existence and frequency of keywords, phrases and content associated with any aspect of a site’s
92 culinary identity. The case study was the city of Copenhagen and the content analysed was
93 taken from the site <https://www.visitcopenhagen.com/>. The researchers found that there are

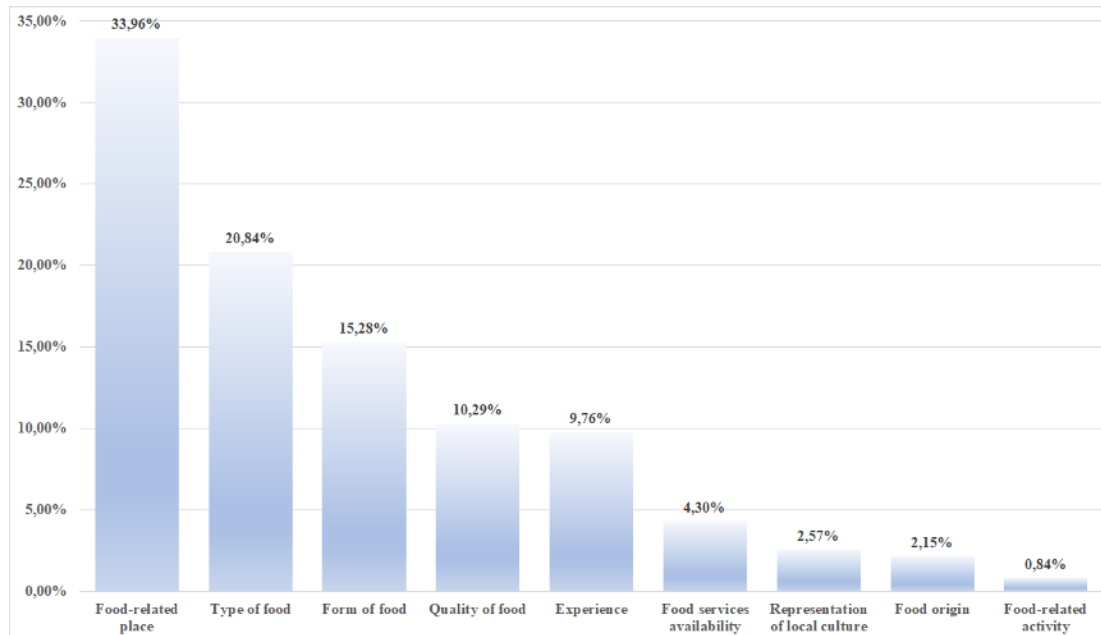
¹ European gastronomic heritage: cultural and educational aspects,
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2014-0211&language=EN&ring=A7-2014-0127>

² European gastronomic heritage: cultural and educational aspects,
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2014-0211&language=EN&ring=A7-2014-0127>

³ The S3 Platform aids EU countries and regions to develop and implement research and development strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3), <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3-platform>

94 many reasons why food or food-related experiences are and should be a desirable tool to use in
 95 the branding of a destination. Food is an important tool for storytelling, as through food one
 96 can tell stories about the values and culture of the destination, especially in destinations that do
 97 not have significant historical monuments and sights. The study also found that the promotion
 98 strategy may be based on factors that are otherwise insufficient to capture the full culinary
 99 identity of the destination. The Copenhagen case study found that dining places bear the brunt
 100 of the promotion, while other public opinion polls also highlighted more important factors, such
 101 as the origin of food, or the way food reflects local culture (Flora Somos & Sin Yiu Rachel Li,
 102 2016).

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Figure 1. Contribution of the food identity categories in region branding.

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107 The kitchen, the place in which many different identities of a society come together, is a mirror
 108 of everyday life, religious beliefs, habits, traditions and customs (Sormaz et al., 2016). Many
 109 types of food and gastronomy habits relate closely to regions and countries. Italy is easily
 110 associated with pizza and pasta, or England with fish and potatoes, Greece with souvlaki and
 111 moussaka, Sweden's western coast with shellfish and Voss in Norway with smalahove
 112 (Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2009). Local food is dynamic, in a process of constant change, as it
 113 also has an international dimension, and is a matter of debate and exchange of views from
 114 around the world. For example, moussaka is not only a local dish in Greece, but can be found
 115 in various variations in the Balkan countries and the Middle East. In addition, food entices all
 116 senses and not just the taste, including vision, odour, hearing and touch. A local food market,
 117 for example, offers multiple experiences for the eyes, nose and ears. In addition, food and
 118 gastronomy meet other needs and desires, such as socialization and learning (Hegarty &
 119 O'Mahony, 2001; Tikkanen, 2007). Food-related experiences are particularly characteristic and
 120 may be personal or even related to a situation. The fact that the experiences are personal means
 121 that the overall perception of a culinary-gastronomic experience varies (Schembri, 2006;
 122 Sfantla & Björk, 2013). It is noteworthy that the level of subjectivity in the gastronomic
 123 experience may lead some travellers to consider rather trivial ('regular') a moussaka in a local
 124 restaurant, or a 'poikilia' ('variety') in a traditional cafe in Greece, while others consider it to
 125 be a great experience. On the other hand, even a 'regular' dish can provide an excellent
 126 gastronomic experience because it may be of excellent quality (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen,
 127 2014).

128 The word ‘gastronomy’ was formed by the merger of the ancient Greek word ‘γαστήρ’ for
129 stomach and the ending ‘-onomy’, which as a second synthetic of abstract feminine nouns that
130 denote science, a scientific field or knowledge. It also appears as a combination of the words
131 ‘gastric’ and ‘νέμω’ (‘nehmo’), in which the latter implies division, arrangement.

132 In many resources, gastronomy is defined as the art of eating and drinking. In fact it is an
133 interdisciplinary branch of art and science that is directly related to chemistry, literature,
134 biology, geology, history, music, philosophy, psychology, sociology, medicine, nutrition and
135 agriculture (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). As far as food and drink are concerned, it covers, inter alia,
136 topics in the sciences of nutrition, the sense of taste and physiology, the production of wine,
137 nutritional functions in the human body, food selection properties, development of production
138 processes according to hygiene standards, and more (Shenoy, 2005).

139 The purpose of gastronomy is to preserve human health with the best possible nutrition and to
140 ensure the enjoyment of life and food. Foods and drinks that are produced in a healthy
141 environment and are ready to be offered in a special way that satisfies other senses (such as
142 vision and touch) are also among the topics closely related with gastronomy (Sormaz et al.,
143 2016). The multidimensional nature of gastronomy and its relationships with other sciences was
144 analysed and graphically depicted in (Zahari et al., 2009).

145 Although various terms are being used in the literature, such as ‘culinary tourism’, ‘gastronomic
146 tourism’, ‘gastro-tourism’, ‘wine tourism’, ‘food tourism’ and ‘gourmet tourism’, the widely
147 used term ‘gastronomic tourism’ is typically defined as the pursuit of *a unique experience of*
148 *eating and drinking*. Gastronomic tourism, which generally refers to the originality of a dish
149 and is indigenous to a place, region or country, covers the basic themes of local dishes and
150 wines (Green & Dougherty, 2008; Groves, 2001; Hall & Mitchell, 2007).

151 There are many approaches to the definition of gastronomic tourism throughout the world.
152 According to the Travel Industry Dictionary, ‘gastro-tourism’ is any leisure trip made
153 exclusively or mainly for the experience of a region’s food and wine (Travel Industry
154 Dictionary, 2014). In addition to differentiating the use of the term ‘gastro-tourism’ from
155 ‘gastronomy tourism’, this dictionary also goes on to introduce the term ‘gastronaut’ for the
156 person that engages in such an activity.

157 Sharples & Hall (2004) define gastronomic tourism as a travel experience in an area with
158 distinct gastronomy, with recreational purposes that include visits to primary or secondary food
159 producers, gastronomic events, rural markets, culinary events and quality tastings, and
160 generally any kind of food-related activity. In this case, gastronomy is the main motive for
161 choosing a tourist destination or at least one of the most important.

162 Smith & Xiao (2008) define gastronomic tourism as any travel experience through which the
163 traveller learns, appreciates and enjoys well-known local gastronomy products. According to
164 the authors, the term ‘gastronomic tourism’ refers to both the travel, the main motives of which
165 is gastronomy, and to the journeys in which tourists strive to experience different and excellent
166 eating experiences, even if this is not the primary purpose of the journey.

167 Other researchers (Long, 2004) argue that gastronomic tourism refers to travellers seeking to
168 explore new flavours, using food as a means of getting to know different cultures and lifestyles.

169 Many researchers and writers view gastronomy as closely linked to cultural tourism, viewing
170 food as a manifestation of the culture of a destination (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Van
171 Westering, 1999).

172 Gastronomic tourism includes visits to food producers, participation in gastronomy festivals,
173 visits to restaurants and special places related to special local food, tasting special dishes,
174 observing production and preparation processes, tasting special dishes by famous chefs, as well
175 as exploring how a particular dish is prepared (Hall & Mitchell, 2007; Mitchel Hall et al., 2003).
176 In addition, the realm of gastronomic tourism also includes tourist trips in seek of personal
177 experience in local food and drink, in addition to the classic visit to restaurants and hotels. The
178 gastronomy tourism industry, which is not only comprised of food guides and restaurants,
179 covers all types of culinary experiences, including cooking schools or seminars, cookbooks,

180 culinary travel agencies and guides, related TV programs, magazines and activities, wineries,
181 vineyards, breweries, distilleries and agricultural producers.

182 One of the world-wide bodies of tourism that one can look for in retrieving the definitions
183 involved in gastronomy and gastronomic tourism is none other than the World Food Travel
184 Association (WFTA). Terminology and basic statistics can be found on its website. The WFTA
185 has identified at least 12 categories of gastronomic tourism experience,

- 186 • Cooking schools and seminars
- 187 • Gastronomic sights
- 188 • Gastronomic destinations
- 189 • Gastronomic events
- 190 • Means of gastronomy
- 191 • Accommodation related to gastronomy
- 192 • Gastronomic markets
- 193 • Gastronomic tours, guides, tour packages and agents
- 194 • Dining areas
- 195 • Cottages, farms and related agri-food markets
- 196 • Gastronomy clubs and associations
- 197 • Gastronomy processing

198 As the WFTA states about the adoption of terms relating to the food tourism industry, there is
199 a constant shift in the trend. The following paragraphs briefly review the history of gastronomic
200 tourism terms according to the WFTA.

201 In the early days of the food tourism industry (2001-2012), the WFTA defined ‘culinary
202 tourism’ as the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and unforgettable food and drink experiences,
203 both far and near (Wolf, 2002). In essence, this publication was the first white paper on the
204 culinary tourism industry for the WFTA, which defined culinary tourism and how it could
205 benefit industry stakeholders. For the WFTA, the distance travelled by the tourist is not as
206 important as the fact that everyone, regardless of age, is constantly on the move. All are
207 ‘travellers’ in some way and obviously everyone needs food. As a result, everyone can be
208 regarded as a ‘food traveller’. On the other hand, for many organizations and tourism agencies,
209 the definition of tourism must include traveling some distance (often 80 km / 50 miles) or at
210 least spend one night to a lodging.

211 The WFTA stopped using the term ‘culinary tourism’ to describe the food tourism industry in
212 2012 because its research revealed an underlying misleading impression. While the term
213 ‘cooking’ can technically be used for anything related to food and drink, the prevailing
214 perception gave it an air of elitism. So, the WFTA coined the term ‘food tourism’, which is still
215 the general term we use today.

216 Since 2018, the official position of the WFTA is that the three most used terms, ‘food tourism’,
217 ‘culinary tourism’ and ‘gastronomy tourism’, are functionally equivalent. WFTA recognises 20
218 involved industry domains in gastronomy tourism including production, cooking and cooking
219 schools, farms and agri-food, events and symposia, dining places, markets, distribution and
220 chains, travel agencies and transportation, entrepreneurship, trade associations, technological
221 platforms, academia, governance and more (World Food Travel Association, 2018). In this
222 description, the main axes are the production, the hospitality and the services.

223 According to the WFTA, a common misconception or misunderstanding among industry
224 professionals is that rural/agritourism and gastronomic or food/culinary tourism are
225 interchangeable terms. Agritourism includes experiences in farms such as overnight stays,
226 harvest festivals and dining in the farm, with some types of agritourism popular with internal
227 tourists and others more attractive to visitors from other countries. Recently, there has been a
228 growing interest among tourists in food pedigree and traceability, composting, sustainability
229 and animal welfare, as, although these parameters are more related to the food industry and less
230 relevant to the tourism, tourists carry with them their behaviours and values and want to see
231 those values reflected in the place they visit. The economic impact of gastronomic tourism as a

232 whole can be far greater than that of agritourism, as it includes a wider variety of
233 complementary businesses that attract more travellers than farms and rural markets.

234 **2. Studies on gastronomic tourism**

235 **2.1 Scientific studies**

236 Scientific research on local food as a feature of a tourist destination has revolved around various
237 management issues and consumer understanding. These studies included local foods in
238 restaurant menus (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011), local foods as a means of destination
239 differentiation (Boyne et al., 2003), branding and marketing (Forristal & Lehto, 2009; Lin et
240 al., 2011; Meler & Cerovic, 2003; F. Okumus et al., 2013; Pestek & Nikolic, 2011), tourism
241 food product development (Meler & Cerovic, 2003) and related challenges (Cohen & Avieli,
242 2004). Consumer studies on the topic have documented that the consumption of food by tourists
243 in a destination serves many purposes (Tikkanen, 2007), is multidimensional and dynamic
244 (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016a) and, above all, contributes to the travel experience
245 (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2013). However Kim et al. (2009) argue that local food requires
246 more scientific attention, as many questions about the consumption of local food by tourists
247 remain unanswered. It has also been reported that eating-related experiences have behavioural
248 implications, as living experiences can create important memories. However, even without
249 particular experiences from the past, local foods and eating habits can influence destination
250 choices (Henderson, 2009). Therefore, it has been found that local food markets can form
251 expectations of destinations (Pestek & Nikolic, 2011), which means that local foods may
252 influence *pre-trip* behaviours, (Duarte Alonso, 2010; Quan & Wang, 2004; S. Smith &
253 Costello, 2009). In addition, food influences behaviour *in the destination area*, as eating is an
254 important part of the tourist's travel expenses and are part of their daily routine. Local
255 gastronomic experiences can also influence *post-trip* behaviour, as travellers have been shown
256 to share their experiences, either positive or negative (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2012).

257 Research has found that a destination's food and eating habits can attract tourists looking for
258 experiences, as well as those seeking authenticity and local specialty (Pesonen et al., 2011).
259 Thus, travellers can be attracted to a destination because of the gastronomic experiences gained,
260 e.g. through Michelin-starred high-end restaurants. Travellers can also be fascinated by local
261 and national specialties and dishes. However, gastronomic experiences may also include
262 aspects related to more trivial eating practices, such as those offered by cafes and other types
263 of graphic or charming cafes and restaurants.

264 Obviously, food tourism refers to the journey for the personal experience of tasting local and
265 authentic food, attending events, festivals and food festivals, and tasting local and international
266 cuisine (Sharples & Hall, 2004). However, it also refers to culinary, gastronomic and gourmet
267 tourism (B. Okumus et al., 2007). Food tourists are classified into different groups according
268 to the importance of food in their journey, from those who do not care about local food to those
269 who travel exclusively to try local and unique cuisines (T. D. Andersson & Mossberg, 2017;
270 Boyne et al., 2002; McKercher et al., 2008). Studies have found that the majority of travellers
271 recognize local cuisine as a major factor influencing destination choice, travel experience and
272 decision to re-visit the same destination (Karim & Chi, 2010; Silkes et al., 2013).

273 Culinary products, services and food culture in one destination can be considered as unique
274 strategic resources, without the possibility of being imitated by other destinations (Horng &
275 Tsai, 2010; B. Okumus et al., 2007). First of all, food, as a defining social indicator, represents
276 the region and its citizens (E. N. Andersson, 2014; Gillespie & Cousins, 2012). In addition,
277 tourists can look for indigenous, national or local food. Although some travellers avoid looking
278 for local foods (e.g. food neophobia), they may still be curious about local food and nutrition
279 experiences (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016b). Tangible features of local and international

280 foods, such as their taste and ingredients, can contribute to the cognitive and emotional elements
281 (e.g. feelings and experiences) of the destination image (Silkes et al., 2013).

282 There are different levels of interest in local and authentic cuisines. For tourists, local food has
283 social, psychological, cultural, and experiential meanings (Bell & Valentine, 1997; Caplan,
284 1997). According to (Frochot, 2003), by eating local food, tourists can satisfy their needs related
285 to relaxation, excitement, escape, social status, education and lifestyle. While the reasons for
286 eating local and international food may vary (e.g. satisfying hunger, tasting local culture, social
287 interaction), the availability of local and international food can affect the visitor's travel
288 experiences and their intention to return (Henderson, 2009). The experience of local food can
289 be a cultural experience and a form of entertainment (Fields, 2003; Quan & Wang, 2004; Ryu
290 & Jang, 2006; Sparks et al., 2003). Place-specific food and nutrition can attract more tourists
291 when integrated into a strategic promotion plan that includes periodic events, festivals or social
292 media platforms (Viljoen et al., 2017). While some food lovers may not believe that they have
293 the qualities of a taster, they may find local food an important factor in their decision to visit
294 and re-visit the destination. Therefore, the sector of gastronomic tourism should aim at a much
295 broader target than a limited elite (Boniface, 2017; McKercher et al., 2008).

296 Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen (2014) conducted a research aimed at quantifying the factors that
297 contribute to travellers' gastronomic experiences with emphasis on the local food market. This
298 study found that local food is an important tourist attraction and is central to the tourist
299 experience. The study supported previous findings that gastronomy, as experienced in tourist
300 destinations, contributes to tourist satisfaction and influences behaviour. The study has shown
301 that, although most travellers may have a casual attitude towards food, they greatly appreciate
302 the aspects the destination has to offer. Therefore, evidence has shown that travellers enjoy the
303 consumption of local culture, of which local foods, on-site food consumption and local eating
304 habits are essential ingredients. Specifically, the study indicates that food experiences on the
305 destination are considered almost as important as the other motivations analysed in the study,
306 namely 'relaxation', 'socialization', 'new experiences' and 'culture'. The study though
307 identified differences among the ages, with an apparent shift in preference from 'new
308 experiences' for younger ages to 'relaxation' for adults and 'culture' for older people. The study
309 identified the main contributing factors to the gastronomic experience and classified them into
310 three main categories, namely:

- 311 • **Foods:** 'local food', 'local food culture', 'new food experiences', 'original food', 'food
312 authenticity', 'home-made food'.
- 313 • **Environment:** 'restaurant environment', 'restaurant atmosphere', 'restaurant dining',
314 'aesthetics' and 'slow food'.
- 315 • **Behaviour:** 'familiar food', 'food preparation' and 'different eating style'.

316 The study showed that among the factors contributing to the gastronomic experience, 'slow
317 food', 'restaurant atmosphere / environment' and 'original food' are the most important.

318 2.2 Studies of the World Food Travel Association

319 WFTA has done extensive research in an attempt to trace the profile of a gastronomy tourist
320 and presents important statistics in its 2016 food travel monitor research report. According to
321 the findings of this research, by the research participants (World Food Travel Association,
322 2018):

- 323 • Over 60% said they photograph food or gastronomy products and share their
324 experiences on social networks (61%) on at least half of their trips.
- 325 • 47% made purchases of gastronomy products in local markets.
- 326 • 45% participated in at least 5 different types of cooking or gastronomy activities.
- 327 • 81% learned about local foods and drinks.
- 328 • 81% believe that through gastronomy they better understand local culture.
- 329 • 82% spent more on their diet while on a trip than in any ordinary day, with this rate
330 going up further for gastronomy tourists.

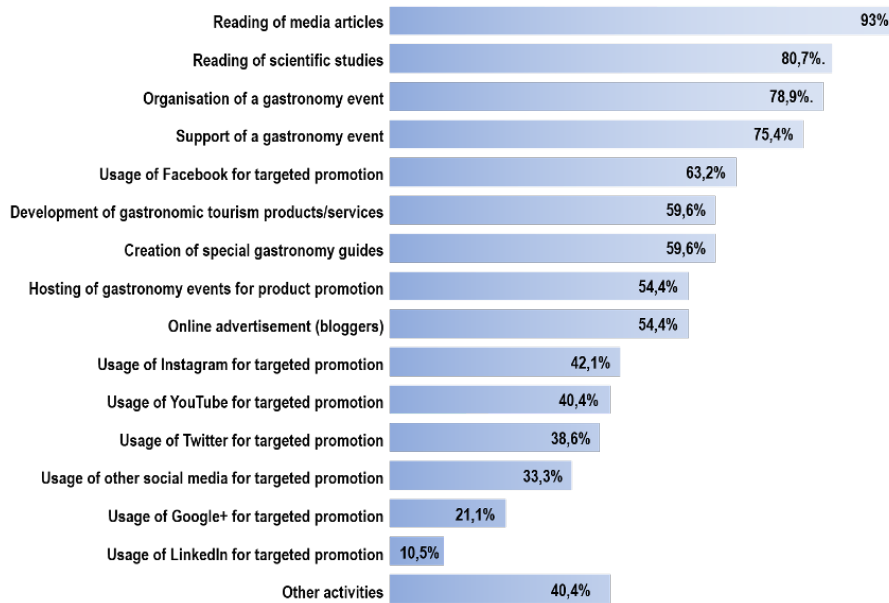
- 331 • 83% believe that gastronomy experiences help create more indelible impressions and
332 memories of the destination they visited.
333 • Tourists spend about 25% of their travel budget on food and beverages; this percentage
334 can reach 35% on more expensive destinations, or reduced to 15% on more budget
335 destinations.

336 In this report WFTA goes on to state that 93% of tourists can be considered ‘gastronomic
337 tourists’, when this term covers those involved in any form of gastronomic experience apart
338 from the simple daily dining, during the last 12-month period covered in the report. Tourists
339 may, for example, have visited a culinary school, participated in a gastronomy tour, or made
340 purchases at a local grocery or gastronomy store. Also, guided tours in food or beverage
341 factories, participating in wine/beer/spirits tasting, dining in unique or important restaurants,
342 visits to chocolates, bakeries or pastry shops that may be reference points for a destination.
343 These are indicative types of activities in which gastronomy tourists are involved.

344 **2.3 Studies of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation**

345 Between June and September 2016 and announced in 2017, UNWTO conducted a survey
346 among its members from 29 countries, including tourism professionals (United National World
347 Tourism Organization, 2017). The most important findings of the research are related to the
348 perception of the importance of gastronomic tourism. Specifically, the majority (with a very
349 large 87%) of the stakeholders expressed that gastronomy is a distinctive and strategic element
350 in defining the image and trademark of a destination. The remaining 13% of respondents
351 answered alternatively that visiting friends and relatives is the main motivation. Regarding the
352 issue of gastronomy as a driving force for tourism development, the average response was 8.19
353 on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 representing ‘complete agreement’). In general, the primary motivation
354 for visiting a destination is cultural, with nature as the second and gastronomy as third, albeit
355 somewhat distant from the first two. In this research, the motivations that also emerged include
356 market, wellness, sports, religion and health, in order of importance. In relation to promotion
357 strategies, research has shown that among the participants

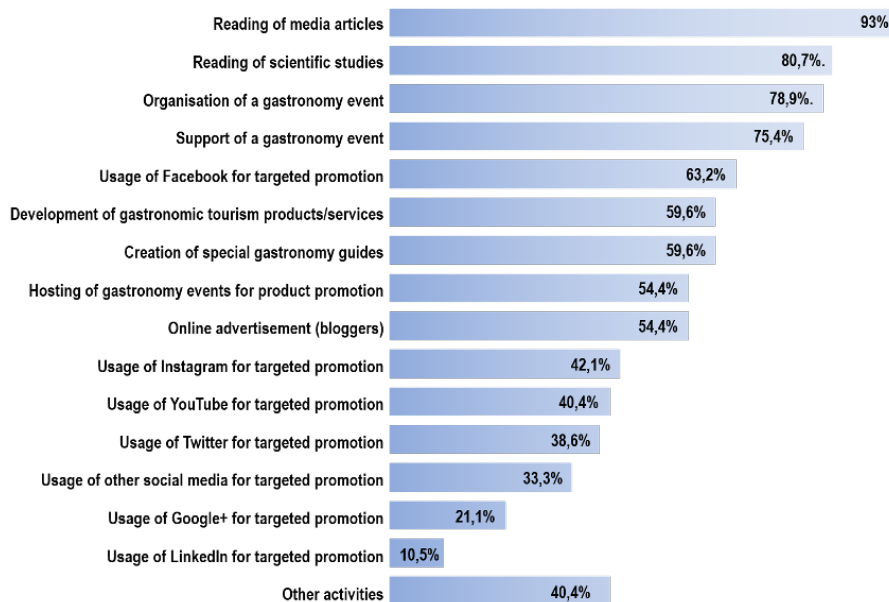
- 358 • about 70% have already targeted gastronomic tourists as part of the market, however,
359 only 10% believe that gastronomic tourism has enough involvement in promoting a
360 destination
361 • 65.5% believe that gastronomic tourism is promoted, albeit inadequately
362 • 46.5% have a gastronomic tourism strategy in their respective destination general
363 action plan
364 • all respondents have undertaken activities to promote gastronomic tourism, and none
365 of them believe that targeting this section of tourists had any negative impact in any
366 way
367 • 24.6% allocates a budget specifically to attract gastronomic tourists
368 • the percentage devoted specifically to gastronomic activities within the organisation’s
369 annual budget is very heterogeneous: 31.2% indicates that it ranges between 1% and
370 9%, while 6.3% indicates a 100%, resulting in an average of 20.2%.
371 • 12.5% believe gastronomy contributes less than US \$10,000, while 3.1% believe
372 gastronomy contributes more than US \$1 million.



373

374 Figure 2 (adapted from (United National World Tourism Organization, 2017)) shows the
 375 breakdown of activities undertaken to promote gastronomic tourism as captured during the
 376 survey. With regard to measuring the tourism experience, the study has shown that promoting
 377 gastronomic tourism before and during the tourist experience is considered essential for the
 378 development of this type of tourism. However, it has been observed that different organizations
 379 value experiences with different approaches. It is certain that an objective measurement of the
 380 impact of the tourism experience is needed to improve, develop, understand and address the
 381 challenges, as well as seize the opportunities.

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383

384 *Figure 2. Types of activity used in the promotion of gastronomic tourism during 2016.*

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386 In this study,

- 387 • 68.5% of the participants evaluate and measure the tourist experience, while 30% do
 388 not.

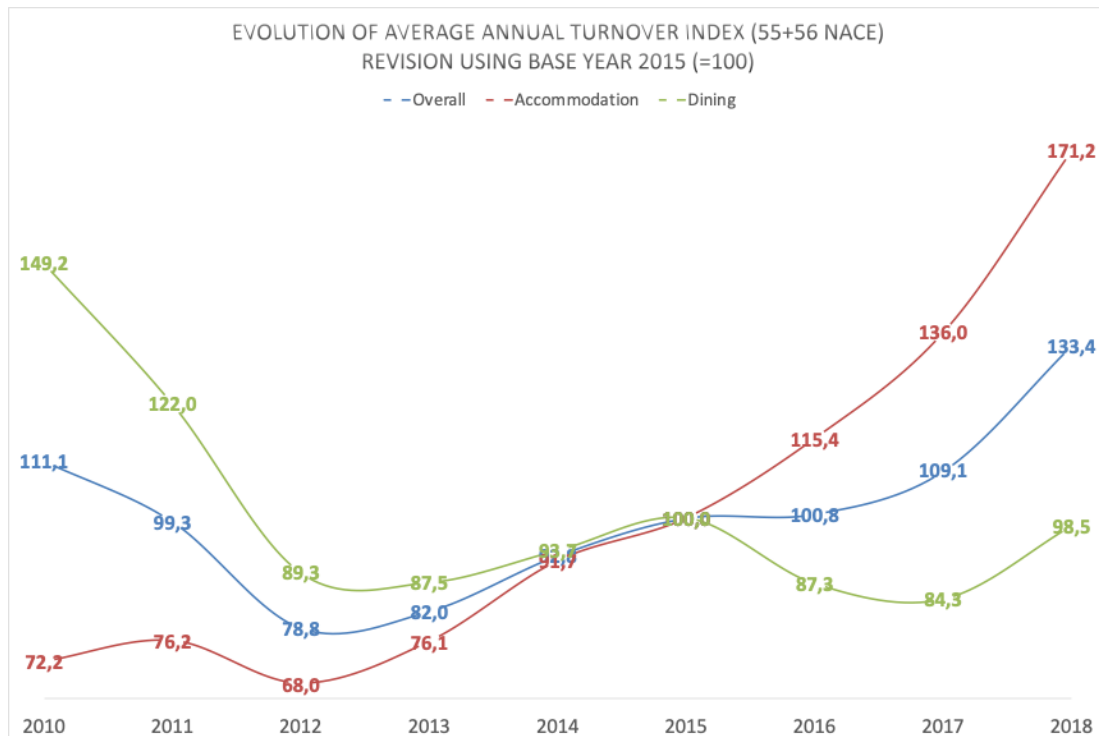
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- The most commonly used measuring tools are:
 - surveys (79.5%)
 - direct feedback from tourists (77%)
 - monitoring of indirect feedback and evaluation (from social networks) (61.5%)
 - The participants consider a variety of evaluation indicators:
 - the number of visitors (84%)
 - expenditure (daily expenditure on food/beverages) (68.5%)
 - development/initiatives (63%)
 - private investment (44%)
 - the number of gastronomy related events (42%)
 - other indicators (12.5%)
 - 44% of the participants develop public-private partnerships.
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401 **3. The specificity of Greek gastronomic tourism**

402 Figure 3 presents the evolution of the average turnover index in the accommodation and dining
403 services sector as an indicative overview of the sectors over the period 2010-2018, including
404 the revised data with a base year in 2015 (period: 1st Quarter 2010 - 3rd Quarter 2018), as
405 displayed on December 25, 2018⁴. The analysis of these data is provided by the Hellenic
406 Statistical Authority. At the same time, useful conclusions can be drawn from the Survey of
407 Quality Characteristics of Domestic Tourists (Vacation Survey) of the Hellenic Statistical
408 Authority. The following subsections review the cases of two regions in North Greece where
409 gastronomy and culinary culture is exceptional.

410

⁴ As shown on the page of the Hellenic Statistical Authority, <https://www.statistics.gr/statistics/-/publication/DKT51/>.



411
412 *Figure 3. Evolution of the annual average turnover in accommodation and dining between 2010-*
413 *2018 according to the Hellenic Statistical Authority.*

414 3.1 Case study #1: Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Greece

415 According to the Enterprise Greece study (Enterprise Greece, 2017), among the reasons for
416 investing in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (EMT) are

- 417 • natural and cultural treasures: unique natural beauty combined with long history,
418 religious treasures and friendly people;
- 419 • tourist destination: a popular destination offering an upgraded and diversified tourism
420 product including hiking, sightseeing, local gastronomy, water sports etc.

421 EMT offers almost all types of tourism activities including

- 422 • cultural tourism (Drama Archaeological Museum, Philippi Archaeological Museum,
423 Kavala Archaeological Museum, Port of Thassos Archaeological Museum);
- 424 • religious tourism (the Eikosifoinissa Monastery on Mount Pangaeo, the monastery of
425 Agios Silas, the Baptistery of Hagia Lydia, the Monastery of Taxiarches, the Monastery
426 of Panagia Kalamos);
- 427 • conference and exhibition tourism (Conference Centre in Lydia, Nea Karvali
428 Exhibition Centre, Komotini Exhibition Centre, Thracian Art and Tradition
429 Foundation, hotels in each city provide facilities for various events);
- 430 • ecotourism (Elati forest, Fraktou forest, Rhodope mountain range, Nestos Delta, Evros
431 Delta, Pomakohoria, beautiful beaches on the coast, impressive mountains and forests);
- 432 • therapeutic tourism (baths in Krinides, spa in Thermi and Potamia in Xanthi,
433 Samothrace and Traianoupolis);
- 434 • agritourism (many agritourism farms and hostels have recently developed in all the
435 prefectures of the area).

436 Key products and some unique features in EMT:

- 437 • Prefecture of Drama: The prefecture's economy is mainly based on agriculture, while
438 the plains of the southern part of the prefecture produce seeds, cotton, tomatoes,
439 tobacco, vineyards, fruits and vegetables. Agriculture makes the most of water
440 resources.

- 441 • Prefecture of Evros: The economy of Evros is mainly based on the cultivation of
- 442 cereals, legumes, fruits and vegetables, as well as the systematic cultivation of certain
- 443 plants used in industry such as sunflower and sesame. Sugarcane production supplies
- 444 the sugar factory in north Evros, and the asparagus plant is systematically cultivated.
- 445 Also, molasses, almond trees, apples and pears are grown, while olive trees grow in
- 446 Samothrace.
- 447 • Kavala Prefecture: Fish are exported and marketed throughout Greece and abroad.
- 448 Agriculture also produces tobacco, but also seeds, rice, legumes, kiwi, cotton, grapes
- 449 and vegetables. There are also olive groves, which produce large quantities of olive oil,
- 450 vineyards and cultivation of asparagus and rice.
- 451 • Xanthi Prefecture: The region of Xanthi produces the famous aromatic tobacco, cotton,
- 452 wheat, corn, kiwi and vegetables. Fish are abundant in Vistonida Bay and there are fish
- 453 farms in Porto Lagos Lake. Xanthi is famous for local sweets, such as coriander, sutzuk
- 454 lukum, halva, syrups, etc.
- 455 • Rhodope Prefecture: Agriculture dominates in Rhodope Prefecture, cotton, tobacco,
- 456 wheat, corn, sugarcane, sunflower oil, cherry, kiwi and vegetables are the main
- 457 agricultural products.

458 Recent developments and new opportunities in EMT:

- 459 • The Rural Development Program 2014-2020 focuses mainly on enhancing farmers’
- 460 viability and competitiveness, preserving and enhancing ecosystems, and enhancing
- 461 local development in rural areas.
- 462 • Investments in wheat, tobacco, cotton, asparagus, potatoes, wine, rice and kiwi.
- 463 • Further investment in livestock and aquaculture.
- 464 • Growing demand for eco-friendly agricultural products.

465 3.2 Case study #2: Central Macedonia, Greece

466 According to the Enterprise Greece study (Enterprise Greece, 2018), among the reasons for

467 investing in the Region of Central Macedonia are

- 468 • natural and cultural treasures: unique natural beauty combined with long history,
- 469 religious treasures and friendly people;
- 470 • tourist destination: a popular destination offering upgraded and diversified tourism
- 471 product including hiking, sightseeing, local gastronomy, water sports etc.

472 Key products and some unique features in the region include:

- 473 • The products of Central Macedonia are highly valued, both in the Greek and worldwide
- 474 markets. The dedication and capacity of the producers, together with the concerted
- 475 efforts of local and national organizations managing and promoting agricultural
- 476 products, have helped to make the public aware of these unique, primitive, local
- 477 products.
- 478 • Honey: With 6,500 honey workers (32% of the country total) and 1,910 tonnes of
- 479 premium quality honey annually, it is characterized as a honey production centre in
- 480 Greece.
- 481 • Virgin olive oil - Olives: The region produces oil and olives that are distinguished for
- 482 their taste and quality, with high nutritional value.
- 483 • Goat cheese - feta cheese: Goat cheese is the traditional cheese of the region, which is
- 484 made from non-blended goat milk and has an increased protein content.
- 485 • Ouzo-tsipouro: The region is famous for the production of ouzo and tsipouro (a strong
- 486 alcoholic beverage distillate containing 40-45% by volume alcohol produced from
- 487 either the pomace or the wine after the grapes and juice have been separated).
- 488 • Fish: In a 10-acre marine area with a capacity of 3,470 tonnes per year, Mediterranean
- 489 fish are raised in floating farms, 95% of which are exportable.

490 3.3 The online promotion of the Greek gastronomic tourism

491 At the end of this review an attempt is made to give a brief overview of the presentation and
492 promotion of Greek gastronomy and Greek gastronomic tourism on the World Wide Web.
493 Initially the official promotion strategy is presented through the practices of the Greek National
494 Tourism Organisation, and of relevant tourism websites, followed by references to articles
495 published on sites and portals related to Greek gastronomy, in English. Officially, the current
496 promotion strategy of the Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO) for the two-year
497 current period of 2019-2020 (Greek National Tourism Organization, 2019; Ministry of
498 Tourism, 2019), as prepared and approved by the Ministry of Tourism, includes among the
499 tourism products that need to be emphasized the gastronomic tourism. In this strategy, the
500 vision of tourism in Greece focuses on the concepts of ‘classic’, ‘historical’, ‘anthropocentric’,
501 ‘authentic’, ‘traditional and at the same time modern’, as a destination for all seasons, offering
502 unique experiences.

503 **The GNTO website**⁵ is the official website for the promotion of Greek tourism, with a lot of
504 information on tourist destinations in Greece. This guide includes ‘gastronomy’ as one of the
505 topics of central interest in the ‘See and go’ category. It also offers a special interactive online
506 brochure dedicated to Greek gastronomy, with brief references to the main and most recognized
507 products such as feta, olive oil, ouzo, wine, fresh fish and meat, Chios mastic and honey, as
508 well as special recipes and dishes, such as Cretan delicacies, egg rolls, saganaki and halva
509 (Greek National Tourism Organization, 2018). In terms of places of interest, the site offers
510 specific guides, like, for example, for the case of Thrace (Greek National Tourism Organization,
511 2016), but has no specific reference to gastronomy in the area. In the special topic ‘Gastronomy’
512 the site presents the philosophy and ‘atmosphere’ of Greek gastronomy, as well as its essential
513 ingredients. It also provides links for further information on the gastronomy of specific selected
514 destinations. A search in the site using the term ‘gastronomy’ reports 465 articles. The site ranks
515 gastronomy as a ‘see and go’ topic and presents a total of relevant information through 6 axes:

- 516 • Recipes (<http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/gastronomy/recipes>), where general reference is
517 made to the use of local traditional products in various regions of Greece and links to
518 selected recipes.
- 519 • Regional cuisine (http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/gastronomy/regional_cuisine), which
520 provides a brief overview of Greek traditional cuisine and presents traditional cuisines
521 of selected destinations.
- 522 • Traditional products (http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/gastronomy/traditional_products),
523 where a brief overview of the main traditional products of Greek gastronomy, such as
524 olive oil, cheese and wine, are presented, with links to traditional products in selected
525 areas.
- 526 • Fruits (<http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/gastronomy/fruits>), where special reference is
527 made mainly to the fruits of the Summer-Autumn season, as well as special reference
528 to selected fruits of particular interest, such as chestnuts and pomegranates.
- 529 • Greek wines (http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/gastronomy/greek_wines), which gives a
530 brief description of Greek wines and their use at the Greek table.
- 531 • Zythos - The Greek Beer (<http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/greekbeer>), where a brief
532 reference is made to the history of the Greek brewing (with reference to Homer’s ‘wine
533 made of barley’) and the use of beer in modern Greek gastronomy.

534 It is worth emphasizing that the importance which the Greek state now attaches to gastronomic
535 tourism is also illustrated by the fact that the South Aegean Region has been proclaimed as the
536 European Region of Gastronomy in 2019⁶.

⁵ Visit Greece, <http://www.visitgreece.gr>.

⁶ Press release on the website of the Ministry of Tourism @ <http://www.mintour.gov.gr/PressRoom/Press-Releases/h-y-poyrgos-toyristoy-ka-elena-koyntoyra-ekproswphse-thn-kybernhsh-sthn-teleth-aponomhs-toy-titloy-european-region-of-gastronomy-2019-sthn-perifereia-n-aigaioy>, official site of the European Gastronomy Regions Proclamation @ <https://www.europeanregionofgastronomy.org/platform/south-aegean-2019/> and the

537 **The Greek Gastronomy Guide** (Pittas & Tsoukala, 2018) is a fairly extensive and up-to-date
 538 guide to Greek gastronomy with a view to linking it with tradition, events, markets, flavours
 539 and recipes. The guide structure consists of 4 sections and 12 main axes as follows:
 540

General	Products/Producers	Dining places	Culture/Festivals
Places – History	Products	Tavernas	Festivals
Traditional cuisine	Producers	Restaurants	Markets
Accommodation	Dishes	Traditional Cafes	Sights

541

542 This website offers access to rich content either horizontally or vertically, or through a selection
 543 of three key information points that guide through ‘what to eat’, ‘where to eat’ and ‘where to
 544 go’, or by choosing a site of visit respectively. The information provided (for the horizontal
 545 access mode) is configured in the following structure:
 546

What to eat	Where to eat	Where to go
National products	Tavernas	Accommodation
Regional products	Restaurants	Festivals
Producers	Traditional cafes	Markets
Dishes		Sights
		‘Serviroume Aigaio’ by Blue Star*

547 *This Greek transliterated phrase (literary meaning ‘we serve the Aegean’) is used by the Blue Star Ferries company
 548 to promote the Greek gastronomy aboard their ferries across the Aegean Sea.

549

550 The website includes a list of 50 places in both mainland and island Greece (as of March 2020).
 551 It is worth noting that at the time of writing this review, this guide presented the most complete,
 552 up-to-date and comprehensive structure and content on Greek gastronomy from all the sites
 553 reviewed. The site is available in two languages, English and Greek and includes a blog where
 554 relevant articles and news are posted.

555 **Wikipedia** has a corresponding article on Greek Cuisine in both Greek (Wikipedia, 2018b) and
 556 its English version (Wikipedia, 2018a). The content is different and so are the articles about
 557 local Greek cuisine, such as the (Greek) Macedonian Cuisine in English (Wikipedia, 2018c), or
 558 the Cretan Diet in Greek (Wikipedia, 2017). A similar differentiation exists for other topics
 559 related to Greek gastronomy.

560 An article titled “Starting with 100 Greek meze” is featured on **the Taste Greece Online** portal,
 561 featuring 100 typical Greek ‘meze’ categorized into categories such as salads, fries, sandwiches,
 562 etc (Taste Greece Online, 2018).

563 An article titled “An expert’s Greek food experience” is presented at the **Greece Is** portal, where
 564 the famous chef Diane Kochilas presents the Greek gastronomic tradition and some typical
 565 recipes from selected places (Kochilas, 2017).

566 The **Travel for Food Hub** portal features an article titled “8 food festivals you can’t miss in
 567 Greece” that aims to highlight 8 selected gastronomic festivals across Greece, such as the
 568 ‘Mushroom Festival’ in Grevena, or the ‘Sardine Party’ in Mytilene (Travel for Food Hub,
 569 2017). The list is obviously indicative.

corresponding page of the South Aegean Region - European Region of Gastronomy@
<http://www.aegeangastronomy.gr>.

570 **Bucketlist Journey's** portal features an article titled “29 traditional Greek foods you must eat
571 in Greece” highlighting the value of the taste of Greek food and presenting 29 selected dishes
572 that each visitor should try (BucketListJourney, 2016). The description is also supported by
573 feature photos.

574 On the **Rough Guides** portal, Esme Fox signs an article titled “Greek food: 11 delicious dishes
575 you need to try”, in which he goes on to introduce 11 selected Greek dishes. The presentation
576 includes description and photographic material (Fox, 2016).

577 At the **Eater** portal, Kate Soto presents an article titled “A Big Fat Guide to Greek Wine:
578 Everything You Need to Know”, where a reference is made to wine production by geographical
579 region of Greece with its special features (Soto, 2016).

580 The **Telegraph** portal features an article titled “The 10 best food and wine holidays in Greece”,
581 which selectively refers to gastronomy in regions of Greece, such as Santorini with its white
582 eggplant and fava, or the culinary educational activities in Thessaly (Telegraph, 2016).

583 The **USA Greek Reporter** portal features an article titled “Learn and Travel Through Greece
584 by Eating its Cuisine”, which highlights the relationship of nutrition to the geography, history
585 and culture of an area and uses this approach to cite examples of recipes or ways of preparation
586 across Greece (USA.GreekReporter, 2014).

587 The **Cooksinfo** portal features an interesting article titled “Food in ancient Greece”, which
588 attempts to highlight the great history of nutrition since ancient Greece. Through historical
589 sources the article summarizes the role of basic foods such as bread, milk, fish and meat in the
590 lives of ancient Greeks (Amos, 2010).

591 The **Travel Weekly** portal features an article titled “Greece: A regional guide to Greek cuisine”,
592 with a brief description of the Greek menu and the main products of the Greek diet, as well as
593 the most popular dishes by geographical region of the country (Kelso, 2008).

594 **4. Trends for the future of gastronomic tourism**

595 **4.1 Psycho-culinary profiling**

596 A tool called PsychoCulinary Profiling – a proprietary methodology developed by the WFTA⁷,
597 provides a unique way to categorise gastronomy tourists and foodies in general. In total, 13
598 different types of tourists are proposed, including the adventurer, the ambience, the authentic,
599 the budget, the eclectic, the gourmet, the innovative, the localist, the novice, the organic, the
600 social, the trendy and the vegetarian. While only 8.1% of foodies initially chose the gourmet
601 category, other choices were much higher, such as authentic (8.8%) and local (11.0%). Even
602 the novice occupied a higher position (10.7%). The research revealed another unique
603 phenomenon: cities have their own Psycho-Culinary Profiles. For example, respondents in New
604 York City ranked gourmet, trendy and social in top-3 positions, whereas respondents in Toronto
605 ranked localist, eclectic, and organic in top-3 positions. In other words, specific cities are
606 attracted to a particular kind of foodie rather than just foodies in general. The important thing
607 here is that there really needs to be knowledge of both the destination and the visitors in order
608 to create the right message for the right type of visitors or customers (Wolf, 2015).

609 **4.2 Intergenerational gastronomy**

610 The biggest trend in gastronomic travel today is the growing variety of tourist profiles and how
611 travel agencies adapt to this growing segmentation. A man from the Baby Boomers generation
612 looking for truffles in Provence has a different profile to a Millennial woman navigating the
613 Denver Beer Trails, or a Generation-X family with two kids exploring food stalls in Singapore.

⁷ As presented at <https://www.worldfoodtravel.org/cpages/psychoculinary-profiling>.

614 However, they all share the same passion for local restaurant experiences and are willing to
615 spend extra money on travel agencies that fit their personal preferences. So, tour operators today
616 are trying to identify and define emerging food tourists and their individual preferences. The
617 rise of ‘Meal Sharing’, which is based on online platforms that match food tourists with local
618 chefs, homeowners and tour operators, in the same model as platforms like Airbnb do it for
619 accommodation, is rather significant. People can record gastronomic experiences ranging from
620 two hours to two days, from home-made meals to cheese-making lessons on a farm or
621 sustainability trips to a cattle farm. There is also a growing request for cooking storytelling,
622 with content produced by publishers, agents and by teams of experts worldwide. Super local
623 food is the biggest trend in culinary tourism, based on two different factors, the success of local
624 restaurants and the success of the Airbnb platform (Greg Oates, 2016).

625 **4.3 Food sharing**

626 A new trend strongly active in recent years is that of food sharing. Below are some of the
627 platforms that support this activity.

- 628 • La Belle Assiette <https://labelleassiette.co.uk>
- 629 • Share homemade meals for \$ 6 <https://shmeal.co>
- 630 • OLIO - The Food Sharing Revolution <https://olioex.com>
- 631 • Share Meals <https://sharemeals.org>
- 632 • Shareyourmeal.net, what's your neighbor cooking? <https://www.shareyourmeal.net>
- 633 • ShareTheMeal <https://sharethemeal.org/en/index.html>
- 634 • Feastly: Best places to eat in your area <https://eatfeastly.com/>
- 635 • Eatwith: Food Experiences With Locals Around The World <https://www.eatwith.com>
- 636 • Meal Sharing - Eat with people from around the world <https://www.mealsharing.com>

637 **4.4 Meal planning**

638 Another new trend in recent years is that of meal planning through the internet and smart mobile
639 applications. Below are some of the platforms that support this activity.

- 640 • Mealime - Mealime Planning App for Healthy Eating <https://www.mealime.com>
- 641 • The Automatic Meal Planner - Eat This Much <https://www.eatthismuch.com>
- 642 • Paprika Recipe Manager for iOS, Mac, Android, and Windows <http://paprikaapp.com>
- 643 • Meal Planner and Grocery Shopping List Maker - Plan to Eat
644 <https://www.plantoeat.com>
- 645 • Pepperplate <http://www.pepperplate.com>
- 646 • Cook Smarts: Kitchen inspiration and weekly meal plan service
647 <https://www.cooksmarts.com>
- 648 • Prepear: The Complete System for Meal Planning and Recipe Management
649 <https://prepear.com>

650 **5. Conclusion**

651 Gastronomy is steadily becoming an important factor in destination branding and identify. It
652 provides the ‘divergence’ factor that is so significant for the people who travel in seek of various
653 new experiences. The gastronomic tourism has already been recognised by a sector on its own,
654 and travel agencies, tourist operators and regional economies integrate it to their tourism
655 portfolio. In this extensive review an attempt was made to summarise the current situation in
656 the gastronomic tourism globally, with a bit of focus in Greece. The review was an essential
657 part of a study on the subject within a Greek national research and innovation project that aimed
658 at the promotion of gastronomic tourism of particular regions of North Greece. The review
659 begins by trying to clarify the terminology and how the term evolved in time along with some

660 important historical milestones. The review highlights the numerous studies that have been
661 published by individual researchers and relevant global organisations, like the WFTA and
662 UNWTO, and lists the most important results in their studies. It particularly focuses on the
663 situation in Greece and highlighted the strategies adopted, the media and channels preferred,
664 and the ‘divergence’ offered by different regions within the country. The review concludes with
665 current trends that focus mainly on online actions, dissemination and participation, particularly
666 within the trend of ‘crowd economy’.

667 **6. Acknowledgements**

668 - removed for anonymity preservation -

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