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**“A COMPARATIVE LOOK AT GAZIANTEP  
GASTRONOMY“**

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## A COMPARATIVE LOOK AT GAZIANTEP GASTRONOMY

### **Abstract:**

Especially for tourists visiting a particular destination, tasting local flavors is often a separate and important motivation. Since Gaziantep is a city known for its gastronomy and unique dishes, due to the increasing attractiveness of the relevant destination in terms of culinary richness and being an essential element of brand identity, it is a matter that academic studies should be conducted, and studies should be added to the literature in terms of gastronomy. In this research, it is aimed to rediscover the concept of gastronomy for Gaziantep, and to try to better understand the elements of Gaziantep comparative local tastes. Gaziantep, a bustling metropolis found between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean, where the first civilizations were born, has a rich history characterized by diversity and multiculturalism. This city, which has hosted many civilizations from the Romans to the Ottomans, from the Hittites to the Assyrians, has become a melting pot of cultures that have combined and shaped its unique cuisine. From the techniques used to the ingredients and recipes used, food in Gaziantep is truly extraordinary. Its cuisine is shaped by four factors; geographic location, climate, resource, and culture. A strategic location on the old Silk Road to Aleppo and the wonderful mix of Mediterranean and Mesopotamia means the food is influenced by a vibrant and rare mix of Turkish, Arabian, Hittite, and Assyrian cuisines. Influencing all this, astronomy in Gaziantep underlines the diverse and diverse nature of the city. Countless civilizations have contributed to its legacy, so today it has responded with open arms to refugees as a city that has historically been enriched by immigration, facing one of the worst civil crises since World War II. Influenced by this lighthearted mantra, local cuisine is consumed communally, and further research is essential.

**Keywords:** *Gastronomy, Gaziantep Gastronomy, Gaziantep Region, Gastronomy and Gaziantep*

### **Local Tastes and Gastronomy**

Tasting local delicacies, especially by people or tourists from other regions, is an important activity for visitors to that destination, but the attractiveness of the culinary richness and brand awareness of that region or destination increase for these reasons. According to the results of this region for tourists visiting the destination, gastronomic identity consists of several dimensions:

- *Gastronomic Culture and Reputation,*
- *Food Quality,*
- *Food Outlets and*
- *Gastronomic Activities<sup>Lonel</sup>*

Again, it should be noted that the differences between tourists and residents need to be considered separately in terms of food and its presentation anyway in terms of choosing or offering. When the dimensions of food quality and gastronomy activities are evaluated, it is not

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a coincidence that many researchers focus on deciding the contribution of local dishes to the quality of life, while traveling to taste the relevant region or its original dishes has become more common.

Although gastronomic tourism is a new understanding and a phenomenon that has just entered the literature, it is defined as a travel to experience the unique culinary features and traditions of a destination (Long, 2004). According to the World Tourism Organization, gastronomy helps to improve communication between distinct cultures by easing multiculturalism (UNWTO, 2016). Gastronomy tourism has become a phenomenon.<sup>[2]</sup> The basic component of travel (Cohen, 2003; Correia et al., 2008; Kivela & Crofts, 2006) and being an important source of motivation to visit a particular destination constitute the main components of the difference we will talk about (McKercher et al., 2008). In fact, when choosing a place to visit, people generally make deep research about the existence and richness of local dishes during the decision-making process, which structures the main element of another basic component (Okumuş et al., 2007; Boyne et al., 2003). Gastronomy and regional dishes that are different from others are important in terms of the main theme of similar proposals, aside from a separate and unique value for the relevant region (Horng and Tsai, 2012). Haugland et al. (2011). Because the competitiveness of the destinations, the activities of the stakeholders and the ability of the place to transform existing resources into competencies through the coordination of the ties between the destinations depend on the local culture and differences we have mentioned. For this reason, it is possible to catch a difference in perspective based on the source of the region, region or destination we mentioned (Barney, 1996; Haugland et al., 2011; Horng and Tsai, 2012). That is, gastronomy and local food culture should be considered as the first part in terms of its potential to contribute to the brand of that destination.

Instead of just the dictionary meaning of gastronomy, it is more useful and important to interpret what it means and what it covers beyond the dictionary meaning (Altinel, 2014). Although gastronomy is defined as the art of eating and drinking in many sources, it is chemistry, literature, biology, geology, history, music, philosophy, psychology, sociology, medicine, nutrition and agriculture (Kivela & Crofts, 2006).

### **Gastronomy with the Example of Gaziantep**

Gaziantep is an important Turkish city in terms of gastronomy and unique dishes and is the most common in the literature. Exploring the concept of gastronomic identity, trying to better understand its constituent elements in the example of Gaziantep and examining the differences between tourists and local people about the gastronomic identity of this city, although similar studies have been conducted in the literature before, are a subject that needs further

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investigation and research. According to the results of the research, the evaluation of the following items in terms of gastronomic identity supports the explanation we mentioned in the first article:

- *Gastronomy Culture and Reputation,*
- *Food Quality,*
- *Meal Outlets and*
- *Gastronomy Activities.*

In addition, it is not a coincidence that both tourists and residents are subject to some differences in terms of quality and evaluation of activity issues. Because local delicacies are the subject of motivation to be tasted. Knowing Gaziantep with its gastronomy and unique dishes makes it essential for the gastronomic concept to be discovered and, if necessary, to be the subject of further research. Trying to better understand the elements that make up this phenomenon is possible in the most obvious and uncomplicated way in the example of Gaziantep. Although it is possible to make a few comparisons from the outside, how the differences between both tourists and local residents constitute the gastronomic identity of this city, this comparison may only be needed in terms of the diversity of Gaziantep diversity.<sup>[3]</sup> It will not be a coincidence that Gaziantep example constitutes a basis and is at the forefront, as there is a need for non-research references about different tastes for the whole world, and there is a need for research on different regions and regions especially for Turkey. will lead the work. Because if a destination is chosen for this pioneering, the fact that this example is Gaziantep, of course, is neither a coincidence nor is it related to the concept of awareness. As our study claims, Gaziantep's geography, the culture it has, and the people who make its continuation possible, set an example for the studies here, is a good literature contribution and pioneer.

### **Preserving the Core Fabric of Traditional Gastronomy**

Gaziantep, which has undertaken a duty to protect the main tissue concept in traditional cuisine culture and does not compromise in fulfilling this duty completely, has been selected as a gastronomy city by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) since December 2015. This has gone as far as Gaziantep's inclusion in the "Creative Cities Network".<sup>[4]</sup> The traditions, customs and beliefs of the people of Gaziantep play a major role in shaping the culinary culture. Again, in terms of culinary culture, the fact that an area that has been ignored until recently has appeared, is an issue that needs to be mentioned due to our subject. To express that cuisine is the mirror of daily lifestyles, religious beliefs, habits, customs and traditions for cuisines where many different identities of a society come together and

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national feelings are felt the most, since culinary culture is always the longest surviving part of a culture and tradition. will be in place.

It is useful to underline that the special food and presentation styles of special days in Gaziantep have a unique style and taste, in fact, it continues here from the past to the present. For example, relationships that are strengthened by people coming together on special days create an increase in the feeling of unity and togetherness. In this context, dishes and tables prepared for special occasions, as a part of the mentioned culture, needed more attention and careful preparation. As a result, the elements that are still tried to be kept alive in this rich culinary culture are, of course, closely related to the economic situation of the people. The fact that the traditions related to eating and drinking come together with the traditionality of the lifestyle, revealing the gastronomic culture and difference, makes Gaziantep not one step but a lot more.

This difference and diversity, which we mentioned on special days, is based on the understanding behind the meals and the preparation of these dishes, on material and spiritual culture, and in terms of keeping these elements together, the traces of the spiritual culture of the past are still examples and are not lost. Now, special day meals of Gaziantep, the gastronomy city approved and registered by the world authorities, are examined in the folkloric context, and the findings contribute to the literature.

### **Destination Concept in Terms of Local Foods**

The concept of destination has become one of the most important tourism activities for tourists in terms of experiencing local dishes, and it has become an information used together with this term for gastronomy. In terms of marketing, the destination also includes information on the stronger presentation of local dishes, the fact that it can be emphasized by having more differences, and thus attracting more tourists. Based on this, the perspectives of domestic and foreign tourists visiting Gaziantep express the difference we have mentioned with a few items. It is correct to list the items that are important to evaluate in terms of food feeling related to this destination, and it will be constructive for future literature studies:

- 1. cultural experience based on the feeling of local food,*
- 2. restaurant service,*
- 3. food taste,*
- 4. health and hygiene, diversity and*
- 5. table setting*

Again, re-visiting the destination by tourists, whether domestic or foreign, is one of the important sensitivities in terms of visitors and the visited destination, including its economic

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return. Here, it cannot be ignored that local foods, which play a key role in marketing, are beneficial for destination development. The fact that Gaziantep was entitled to participate in the "UNESCO Creative Cities Network" in the Gastronomy branch in 2015, which we mentioned above, makes it possible, especially, the perception of local tourists about Gaziantep local dishes and the repetition of this perception.<sup>[5]</sup>

Eating habits, which exist in all societies and many of them have not had the chance to take part in cultural activities for many reasons, affect the tourism activities and cultural mobility of the relevant destination due to both the inability to ensure the continuity of these cultures and the inability to understand the value of eating socially. It is important for the relevant region to use the available opportunities for gastronomic tourism to become important. Based on this, it is a separate issue that this duty should be undertaken by the public.

### **Side Factors in Gastronomy and Gaziantep Example**

The demands of tourists to experience local flavors in destinations and the availability and quality of accommodation facilities are also important for the development of gastronomy tourism, and the necessity of these facilities to reflect the gastronomy difference and awareness is another critical issue. At this stage, tourism businesses should also reflect this awareness in terms of their facilities in gastronomy tourism for both domestic and foreign tourists. Today, the tourism sector, which relates to the food and beverage sector, has led to the emergence of the gastronomy sector and its understanding as a people-oriented sector. Accommodation, whether food and beverage service are provided, generally prefers to eat out. This brings to the fore the phenomenon of recognizing and tasting the local dishes of the region. In other words, the local dishes of the destination have become a valuable tool forgetting to know a different culture and learning more about it (Kastenholz and Davis 1999; Gyimothy et al., 2000; Joppe et al., 2001). Again, it is a matter of separate evaluation that it will contribute to the sustainability of regional resources and alternative tourism facilities that can be built in regions where food culture comes to the fore (Yuncu, 2010). The qualities of gastronomy that are preferred by visitors are closely related to the relationship between gastronomy and tourism.

It is obvious that gastronomic tourism can be an alternative tourism type to sun and sea destinations on its own, as well as serving as a supportive activity (Shenoy, 2005; Kivela and Crofts, 2006; Ulusoy, 2008).

Since it is related to eating and drinking, it is related to nutritional sciences, sense of taste and physiology, wine production, and functions of nutrients in the human body. In this respect, the production process, hygiene and presentation features appear as additional factors in determining the qualifications for the selection of foodstuffs. Again, sanitation norms are

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subject to a separate determinant value chain to prevent physical, chemical and biological deterioration of food (Shenoy, 2005). Tourism is a people-oriented industry by nature (Anatolian: Journal of Tourism Research, 2016). Here, it is extremely easy to see how Gaziantep is subject to differences in terms of gastronomy for destination and cultural components. This is not only a determining feature for Gaziantep and its surroundings in terms of general tourism, but also underlines a determining factor that should be highly evaluated, especially from an economic point of view.<sup>[6]</sup>

Gaziantep, as a foreigner, describes the province of Gaziantep, found in the western part of Turkey's Southeastern Anatolia Region, approximately 185 kilometers east of Adana and 97 kilometers north of Aleppo. The fact that it is probably located where the ancient Antiochia and Taurum is located and at the same time is close to ancient Zeugma requires not considering the region more than just a gastronomic destination. In other words, the activities related to the evaluation and appreciation of Gaziantep in terms of gastronomy are not just a chance, but complementary to many features, including the antiquity.

Gastronomy Tourism means development, as it has a great economic multiplier effect and can cause direct and indirect activation in many sub-sectors, making it an ideal country (Çağlı, 2012). As the needs of people increase, the obligation to produce and offer more goods and services that increase production, investment and income in societies also increases (Akgöz, 2003). The fact that tourism integrates culture, heritage, economy and environment, directing the development of the relevant region, its coordination and control are extremely important issues, as it will affect nations, people and the relations of nations with each other (Çağlı, 2012).

### **Culinary Tourism and Gaziantep in Literature**

Although different terms such as gastronomic tourism, gastro-tourism, wine tourism, food tourism and gourmet tourism are used, it is the commonly used gastronomy term. Gastronomic tourism, which generally expresses the authenticity of a dish and its uniqueness to a place, region or country, covers the main areas of local cuisine and wine tourism (Hall and Mitchell, 2000; Groves 2001, Green and Docherty, 2008; Çağlı 2012, URL 2014). Gastronomy tourism includes visiting food producers, tasting a special dish, seeing the process of making and preparing or eating a special meal, along with festivals, restaurants and special places related to some special foods. it reflects the main elements of the culture as well as seeing how a particular dish is prepared by the hands of an incredibly famous chef (Hall et al. 2003; Hall and Mitchell, 2005). Again, instead of preparing meals for tourists in restaurants and hotels, it is important for tourists to travel in search of gaining experience with local food and beverages, as it includes

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gastronomic tourism (Akgöl 2012). The gastronomic tourism sector, which does not consist of food guides and restaurants, covers all kinds of culinary experiences.<sup>[2]</sup>

In this sector, culinary schools, cookbook shops, gastronomy tour operators and tour guides; There are media, television programs and magazines and events related to gastronomy, wine producers, vineyards, breweries, distilleries, field owners and producers (Çağla, 2012). A crucial point for the development of gastronomic tourism is that the people of a region protect the local products of that region. Some of the stakeholders of gastronomic tourism are individual grape growers, hotels, restaurants, tour operators, package tours or individual tourists and local businesses (Alonso and Yiliu, 2011). Culture, as an element of gastronomic tourism, is generally expressed by people's inner desire to know different cultures (Kozak, 1997; Akgöl, 2012). In addition to the fact that gastronomy tourism is an interest tourism, gastronomy tourists are also cultural tourists by learning the cultural characteristics of the host areas thanks to the local dishes of the region (Akgöl, 2012).

In addition, it has been determined that visits and tours to see and taste special dishes of Turkish cuisine are the third most preferred by foreign tourists (Akgöl, 2012), and foreign tourists find Turkish cuisine delicious and attractive. This information is important for the Gaziantep example. Because supplying a highly competitive advantage by preventing the same products from being produced in other places is a factor that should be evaluated in terms of tourism. (Caliskan, 2013). It will also contribute to the preservation of historical and cultural heritage, its transfer to future generations and its permanence (Hall et al., 2003a).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The first of the conclusions and suggestions is that Gaziantep's regional cuisine richness should be included in the media at the proper level and at the required level. It is important for the relevant region to use the available opportunities for gastronomic tourism to become important. Based on this, it is a separate issue that this duty should be undertaken by the public. In other words, besides the local people, experts, academicians and the power of the state should be felt more in this regard. It also needs many case studies to examine Gaziantep's rich culinary heritage and gastronomy from a culinary resource-based perspective. The aim of gastronomy is to protect human health with the best possible nutrition, to enjoy life and food; The production of food and beverages in a hygienic environment and the dishes prepared to be consumed in a way that appeals to the palate and visual pleasure are also among the working subjects of gastronomy. Although there are some studies on food and culinary tourism in Turkey (Hamlacıbaşı, 2008; Eren, 2011; Demir, 201; Şahbaz, 2011), there are limited studies on gastronomy tourism. Then;

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- *In terms of gastronomic tourism and its development in Gaziantep, research, studies and projects should be done on a national and international basis,*
- *National and international publications should be made to promote gastronomy destinations in Gaziantep,*
- *Panels, workshops and seminars should be organized to promote Gaziantep gastronomy tourism in order to inform local and foreign tourists and attract their attention,*
- *National and international food and gastronomy festivals should be organized to introduce Gaziantep's gastronomy destinations to tourists.*

For the realization of all these events and activities, it is essential to cooperate with non-governmental organizations such as Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorates under the presidency of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and to take part in increasing the related studies of tourism departments of universities, tourism enterprises, associations and federations.

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Hornig and Tsai, 2010; Jiménez-Beltrán et al., 2016a; Kivela, 2017; ai et al., 2018; Okumus et al., 2018; Sirse, 2014; Sormaz et al., 2016; Stavrianea et al., 2017

Although we have expressed the first reason for this with the introduction and the sentences above, it would still be proper to express the complementary reason as the understanding of gastronomy as it is a new understanding and perspective and the lack of literature on this subject.

The Effect of Local Food on Tourism: Gaziantep Case, *Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences*, Ayşe Nevin SERT

It has been determined that the dimensions of cultural experience, diversity and table setting, and food taste have a positive effect on revisit intention. However, it was decided that Gaziantep's membership of UNESCO Creative Cities Network in gastronomy is not known enough.

In addition, tourism not only supplies foreign exchange inflows, but also plays a role in regulating macroeconomic balances by creating many employment opportunities (*International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management Sciences*, 2017).

Ümit Solmaz et al. / *Procedia Economics and Finance*