

Food Tourism: An emerging concept in Pune region**Gauri Darshan Shah¹, Rina M. Dongre²**^{1, 2} AISSMS' College of HMCT

University of Pune

Abstract

Tourism is a major part of the contemporary experience economy, in which food plays an important role. Food is a key part of all cultures, a major element of global intangible heritage and an increasingly important attraction for tourists. The linkages between food and tourism also provide a platform for local economic development. The role of food in tourism has recently received increased attention within the Pune region. This research article addresses and unfolds the potentiality of culinary tourism in Pune, showcasing the Pune's rich cultural heritage that's intertwined with its traditional Maharashtrian cuisine, how it is emerging from its old undiscovered history to the novelty, how it would challenge itself as new form of tourism in destination marketing promotion. This research will also throw little light on the concept of food tourists and the reason for Food Tourism to take birth as a separate branch of tourism. This research will give enough reasons to explore Food Tourism and how it can be converted into experiences. Food is a major part of everybody's lifestyle. It appears in many forms like, experiencing food festivals, attending talk shows, following regular food shows on television, practicing different recipes from all over the world just to experience the cultures and food of those countries. In Pune, it is gradually making its impact through different Food Tourism avenues and food trails. This attracts the local people to explore their own food as well as the outsiders to explore the delicacies of local cuisines and its features. It also helps to understand how food can create marked impact on tourists mind.

Keywords: Specialty Food, Food Tourism, Culinary Experience, Cuisine, Exploratory**1 Introduction**

Pune is a growing city in relation to tourism as it has a rich historical back ground. When the tourists visit any destination, they want to gather as many experiences as possible to make that tour memorable from all angles. At times, due to shortage of time, tourists are not able to visit all the places of the region they are travelling. They are pleased to experience the culture and cuisine of the region during their stay in the very popular city they have visited. Pune welcomes the business travelers, tourists travelling for education. It is cultural hubs of Maharashtra, so many artists, writers visit Pune with different reasons.

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The people from Pune visit fort Sinhgad and without fail they eat crisp Khekadabhaji of onion; they love to eat Pithala-Bhakari made on chulla and enjoy the nature. This is a form of Food Tourism. There is an annual event which is organized by the agricultural promoters known as Bhimthadi fair. This fair mostly enlighten the local people on the rural culture and food of Maharashtra, There people experience and enjoy Mande from Vidarbha, Gawran Kombadi Rassa and Bhakari from Khandesh, Ukadiche Modak and Ghawan from Konkan etc. This also can be considered under Food Tourism because people of Pune who cannot go too far off places in Maharashtra get an opportunity to explore Maharashtrian food. The food also gets recognition in the tourism market when these people recommend their guests or friends from other region to experience the same. Pune city is surrounded by many small villages with strong agricultural support. so they also try to give the same experience to those who have been always brought up in cities and never seen farms or rural life. This takes place during early winter when the new crops starts budding. This season in Pune is very popular as Hurda party season. People travel to different farms, stay whole day, enjoy traditional Maharashtrian food along with Hurda (tender seeds of jowar - a local staple cereal) and its accompaniments.

The above stated are few bold and prominent examples of how Food Tourism is making its way in Pune region. Apart from this, there are many students who come to Pune from all corners of India to study, as Pune is number one Education Hub of India. During their stay of 3 to 4 years they try to search food in Pune which can give them feel of home. Similarly other people eat the Maharashtrian food for a new experience. Hence there are many specialty restaurants in Pune from different areas of Maharashtra for example- Kolhapuri Katta, Khandeshi Zataka, Konkan Café, Nagpuri Specialty Mess etc.

This way these unexplored cuisines of Maharashtra also come in picture and people can know more about it.

Pune Magic: Pune Magic is a food tour organized by Incredible India!

In this tour, tourists visit a local home in Pune for an interactive cooking session and lunch/dinner. They will pick tourists from the hotel for the tour. The cooking session will be led by the lady of the house. There is no "standard menu" for the meal; it is based on the season and what's available in the market.

Pune Food Trails - Day Tours : Pune Food Trails are walking trails across the city to explore the traditional eating joints in Pune. These food trails are in the old city area and the cantonment areas of Pune. Additionally these food trails will also be conducting seasonal food walks during Indian festivals - Ganeshostav, Navratri, Durga Pooja, Diwali, Christmas and others! The food trails will be a guided a team of quintessential.

Old city food walk: These walks are customizable, but generally the old city walk covers the following restaurants/destinations with their respective specialities. Shri Krushna Bhuvan – Puneri Misal, New Sweet Home - Sabudana Wada & Upvaas Kachori, Poona Guest House – Puran Poli & Thalipeeth, Sujata Mastani House - Mango Mastani.

Cantonment food walk: The cantonment food walk covers the following destinations/ restaurants. But they can be easily customized as per the group's requirements. Kayani Bakery – Shrewsbury Biscuits, Cakes and other bakery products, Marz-O-Rin – Vegetable and Chicken Sandwiches, Mona food – Chana Bhatura, Garden Wada Pav – Wada Pav, Coffee House – Coffee and Milkshakes.

2 Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the awareness levels of the concept "Food Tourism" among the local citizens of Pune region.
2. To identify various avenues for exploring Food Tourism and its contribution in promoting local food.

3. A comparative study of judging the popularity of common *Food Tourism* avenues between Maharashtrian and non- Maharashtrian people.
4. To understand the popularity of food for any tourist as an experience.
5. To enlighten the readers about growth opportunities in Pune city for Food Tourism and to measure the benefits of Food Tourism.

3 Understanding the Relationship Between Food and Tourism

Eating is a physiological need which requires fulfillment whether at home or during travel. The Consumption of food in travel is unique because it occurs in a foreign environment. Recent research has shown that tourists spend major amount of their budget on food while traveling. The 2004 Restaurant & Foodservice Market Research Handbook states that 50% of restaurants' revenue was generated by travelers. It shows that there is a symbiotic relationship between food and the tourism industry. Reynolds (2004) asserts that food, like other elements of travel transportation, accommodation, activities, and attractions plays an essential role in the travel experience. It is a most memorable creation of a destination. Cuisine bears important meaning and is a determinant of overall travel satisfaction and experience when other forms of tourism has been already experienced or enjoyed by the tourist. More importantly, food has been recognized as an effective promotional and positioning tool of a destination (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Similarly, with increasing interest in local cuisine, more destinations are focusing on food as their core tourism product. For example, France, Italy, and Thailand have been known for their cuisine.

4 Concept And Definition Of Food Tourism

1. Food Tourism means travelling to seek enjoyment via eating and drinking experiences at the destination. (World Food Travel Association 2013a)
2. Gastronomic Tourism as defined in the "Global Report on Food Tourism is trips in which part of or all activities are related to food. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 6)
3. Another definition of Food Tourism is tourists visit to places where food is produced and promoted, or participating in food festivals , food demonstrations , festivals and fairs.

Concept of Food Tourism: It goes without saying that food is an essential part of human life because food is crucial in maintaining human's life. It is a daily social topic; and furthermore, it represents cultures and countries. Likewise in tourism, food is an indispensable element not only because food is a part of travelling experience but also because it is often the main reason to visit a destination. Food Tourism, for this report context, has to do with how food influences travellers' motivation and behaviors. (Boniface 2003, 27; Hall & Sharples 2003, 9; Mitchell & Hall 2003, 60)

There are many terms used to express a close relation between food and tourism, such as: gastronomic tourism, culinary tourism or as simply as Food Tourism. There are slight differences among those terms regarding the contexts in which they are used and level of eating and drinking experience concerned. For instance, "Gastronomic Tourism" was rooted from the word "gastronomy" which was defined in Encyclopedia Britannica (2000) as: "the art of preparing, serving, and enjoying fine food." This definition entails a sense of nobility and is not considered suitable in modern context. However, it has gradually been widely accepted as a more general sense of food enjoyment. Besides, to some extent, "Gastronomic Tourism" also implies a hint of culture aspects that tourists nowadays encounter, such as: food culture, eating culture and so on. (Haulage & Richards 2002, 3)



5 Methodology Used

Data collection: Primary data is collected through feedbacks, Questionnaires, and one to one interviews.

Sampling Techniques: This topic of research is associated with the local tourists and local travelers of Pune regions who would like to explore food through various sources like visiting specialty food outlets, restaurants, fairs, or travelled destinations within the Pune city.

So the sampling technique followed is RANDOM SAMPLING.

Sample Size: 75 Questionnaires were collected from the population and the analysis for the same is done to support the objectives of this research paper.

Population: Educated, mid age, salaried/entrepreneurs people selected from the four corners of Pune to understand their opinion on the concept of Food Tourism.

Scope: The research paper is on the emerging concept of Food Tourism in Pune city, as the title suggests the scope of the paper is limited to Pune city and the outskirts avenues of Food Tourism in the region of Pune city.

6 Literature Review

According to "Global Report on Food Tourism" of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Food Tourism is commented as a fast growing segment of tourism industry. As a matter of fact, many countries, tourist destinations, tourism stakeholders, tourist offices, event companies, tour operators and travel agents have recognized the importance of Food Tourism in local, regional and national tourism development. The report also reveals results from a survey on Food Tourism marketing promotion, from which internet marketing tools, such as websites have been effectively utilized to promote Food Tourism in a particular destination. (UNWTO, 2012)

This paper, therefore, is going to discuss a number of issues regarding Food Tourism and its promotion, the research aims to find if there is enough awareness amongst local people concerning Food Tourism in the Pune city.

Origin of Food Tourism

Foods, eating habits and cultural differences among tourists and consumers around the world are the factors summarized as Urbanization. This Urbanization is a main cause for human's separation from agricultural and rural culture where food is originally rooted. (Farm visit, fruit picking, vineyard, etc.). Agriculture industry is now changing towards tourism alternatives. (Food Tourism as a subset of rural tourism).

Consumers are increasingly knowledgeable in consuming food and drinks, Consumers find curiosity in cultural differences and exchanges, consumers consume food and drinks as a form of cultural consumption to enhance individual identity (Boniface 2003, 14, 15, 16)

There has also been a strong wish among people nowadays to seek the lost bond between human and natural surroundings. This can be illustrated by the fact that many people enjoy the natural ambience, eager to make food and eat freshly made produces right from the farms. Food, now, as argued by Boniface has become an item of "pleasure and indulgence, "matter of enjoyable tourism". Moreover, Boniface (2003) and Jane (2001) shared a common view on the shift within agriculture industry and rural areas towards diversification. They both agreed on emergence of world's agriculture in terms of product surpluses and overproduction. A hint of development towards tourism is suggested. Innovative businesses are generating from augmented products and services for both local inhabitants and tourists" consumption. They are formed into *core activities*, for instance tourism attractions, accommodation (cottage houses, farm hostels) and food establishments (local eateries, ranches, vineyard, etc.) and *non-*

core activities which include visits to rural shops, food manufactures and farms. (Boniface 2003, Eastham, 2003 in Hall & Mitchell et al 2001)

Apart from these, a matter of globalization and localization has been merrily discussed in recent years, especially under tourism context. Both are leaving impact on people`s eating culture these days and age. While some tourists support the globalised food phenomenon, specifically the empire of McDonald`s fast-food chain; because of it is convenient, budget-wise costs and availability in almost any corner of the world; others protest and see fast food as unacceptable, spoiling one`s health and taking a “sense of place” from the locals and the tourists. The local food, on the other hand, can be seen as a counter reaction toward the global and the standardized food consumption. The local food, as promoted by the Slow Food Movement – an international movement, based in Italy, encourages local consumption of the local products and tourists contributing to a sustainable tourism. The two phenomena, however as argued by Richards (2003), are not pole apart but are companions in creating “new foods and eating experiences”, products can be globalised yet the experience is local. (Richards 2002, 6, Scarpato 2002 in Hjalager& Richards 2002, 138)

Another pull factor mostly contributing to the birth of Food Tourism is from the consumers. They become more knowledgeable; more sophisticated and are always hungry for more. People know what is essential of “eating out” in terms of where to eat, what to eat and how to eat in a proper manner. Consumer desire for food novelty in form of new recipes and ingredients, innovative cooking techniques and so on. For many people, having a rich cultural asset of food and drink is rewarding and is a way to enrich one`s identity. For instance, eating exotic food or being at a local restaurant where only the indigenous go are experiences that differentiate a traveler from a mass tourist. (Boniface 2003, 16, Richards in Hjalager& Richards 2002, 10, 11)

Food Tourism Experiences

This section is exploring how Food Tourism is delivered as an “experience” under a concept of “experience economy” developed by Pine and Gilmore (1999). As the world is moving toward an era of the “experience economy” in which what is offered is experience. As Richards and Hjalager (2003) agree that the basis of tourism is to deliver experiences through consumption of products and services. They also point out that eating and drinking contributed largely to tourists` experiences at the destination. (Richards & Hjalager 2003, 11) If the two researchers see a parallel development between tourism and gastronomy, then Figure 1 below illustrates how food as an element of tourism is delivered into experience as defined by Pine and Gilmore. (1999)

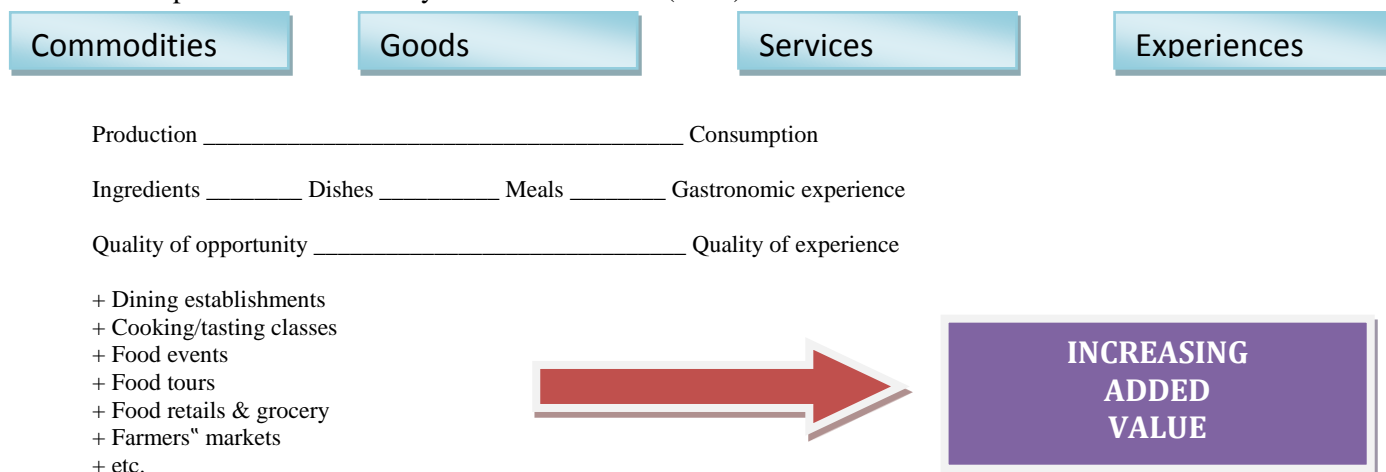


Figure: 1. Relating consumption and production in Food Tourism experiences (Readapted from Richards & Hjalager 2003, 19)

Obviously, food, as illustrated in Figure 1 is delivered from raw ingredients to dishes. Next, it proceeds into meals which tourists enjoy during their stays at the destination. At last, it creates what Richards & Hjalager et al. named gastronomic experience. The transformation of food (as a general term) proceeds according to the economic theory. However, the opportunities to engage in food related activities are what Food Tourism reflects in the experience economy. It can be seen that there are many opportunities to engage in Food Tourism. The International Culinary Tourism Development (2009), later promoted itself as World Food Travel Association, has identified 12 categories of Food Tourism experiences. They are presented in the following list :

1. Cooking schools & classes
2. Culinary attractions
3. Culinary destinations
4. Culinary events
5. Culinary media
6. Culinary lodging
7. Culinary retail & grocery
8. Culinary tours, guides, packages & agents
9. Dine & drink establishments
10. Farms, ranches & farmers' markets
11. Food & drink clubs
12. Food manufacturers

(Alberta Culinary Tourism Alliance, 2013)

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Emerging concepts in Food Tourism

Having discussed the above matter concerning the birth of Food Tourism as well as the possibilities to engage in multiple forms of food experiences, this section will shortly report on emerging trends in Food Tourism. It is believed that these trends are recipes for tourism businesses' success as more and more travellers are attracted by food of a particular destination.

According a report on Food Tourism from UNWTO, Food Tourism is an answer to new consumption trends in tourism. Today's tourists are adventurous, both culturally and environmentally conscious. As a matter of fact, they expect to experience local culture, a healthy lifestyle and authenticity but at the same time to sustain the environment. Needless to say, the food trends are rising thanks to a group of affluent consumers who are well-educated and sophisticated when choosing Food Tourism products at the destination. Among households and families, democratic choices on food are opened to every single individual. Furthermore, the celebrity chefs and media are playing an increasing role to spur demand on Food Tourism. Moreover, an issue of hygiene and quality of food product rising among health conscious consumers is challenging businesses. The issue has also opened a new page of organic products, especially those made locally. In association with businesses in Food Tourism, there is no denying that Internet is inevitably important to provide information regarding food availability, special

offers, testimonials, reservations or even discounts despite travellers' locations. (World Tourism Organisation 2012, 12)

Many countries have recognised their potentials concerning Food Tourism and have put concrete efforts to promoting their images as Food Tourism destinations. However, the road to success requires joint contribution of business owners, marketers, policy makers, etc. The upcoming chapter will go into a discussion of Food Tourism marketing which is one of crucial aspects of destination marketing. (World Tourism Organisation 2012, 12, Hotel & Resort Insider LLC, 2007)

7 Who are food Tourists

The question is obvious, however the answers are vague. Are food tourists all those who love food and drink? It is likely a yes. Certain scholars and researchers, such as Boniface (2003) and Yeoman (2008) have vigorously discussed and stated their perception on type of food tourists.

According to Boniface (2003), food tourists are people, who are "well-educated, discerning sort of person". Especially, they want to experience their tourism "slowly and deeply". This group is probably the main one as she suggests. The second group are those whose focus is on gourmet food, are outgoing type of individuals. They are searching for a change of daily routine to enjoyment during holidays. This group is called "party animal". Their concerns are placed on "bars, pubs, nightclubs and up-scale restaurants" more than the rural, the local specialty foods. The middle group, lying between the previous groups, is called "design enthusiasts". They are in favour of food which well-matched with a fashionable lifestyle. A diner in a trendy hotel or a restaurant is what the group is hunting. Obviously, Boniface has classified food tourists based on how their lifestyles have reflected food consuming experiences. Each group displays their characteristics in everyday consumption which later mirrors their choices in holidays. (Boniface 2003, 19, 20)

Professor Ian Yeoman, a guru in tourism industry, also conducts a research on the future of Food Tourism, in which he sorts food tourist by eleven (11) drivers:

1. Disposable income and spending patterns
2. Demographics and household change
3. Individualism
4. The multi-cultured consumer
5. The role of the celebrity chef and media
6. Well-being and food
7. Time pressures
8. Internet usage
9. The desire for new experiences and cultural capital
10. The science of food
11. The consumer is a hypochondriac

8 Analytical Finding

- **To understand the awareness levels of the concept Food Tourism among the local citizens of Pune region.**

According to the analysis of samples which are in the form of questionnaire ,the people were asked whether they are aware of the term Food Tourism.They were also asked whether they travel within the city for the purpose of exploring food. Most of the people know about the term Food Tourism. The Puneites are very much aware of the avenues to

explore various types of food but many a times are not able to identify this as Food Tourism.

▶▶ **To identify various avenues and its contribution in promoting local food**

Bhimthadi Jatra, farm house visits for *Hurda* parties, visits to Sinhagad fort, speciality restaurants were few of the identified avenues for Food Tourism. Except speciality restaurants, rest of the avenues need to improve their contribution towards promoting local food. Lack of hygiene, accessibility, carrying capacity, were few of the reasons cited by the respondents for not visiting the avenues to explore the local food. In few cases insufficient marketing is responsible for the promotions of the avenues.

▶▶ **Comparative study of judging the popularity of local Food Tourism avenues between Maharashtrian and non- Maharashtrian people.**

The survey was conducted in all four corners of the city including Maharashtrian and non-Maharashtrian local people. The non-Maharashtrian population is very much interested in exploring different local food avenues but is unable to do so because of lack of sufficient information about the same. The findings shows that the local food promoters are taking less efforts to reach the people of the city. That is one of the major reason behind the failure to attract these people towards local food avenues.

Therefore creating awareness about local delicacies is the major requirement which might be done through visual advertisements, uploading information on the internet, showing the preparations on the TV shows etc.

▶▶ **To understand the popularity of food for any tourist as an experience**

50% of the respondents feel that food is not the major criteria to decide upon the destination, however claims that food has a major impact on the overall tourism experience.

90% of the respondents want to explore the local food –in the form of visiting local specialty restaurants or visiting local people`s house as a part of their tourism experience. The food gain popularity through books and TV shows. Food festivals and fairs play an equally important role in promoting and popularizing the food.

Most of the respondents feel that they are willing to explore food either because they are passionate about food or they want to gain more knowledge regarding cooking techniques, ingredients and cuisines.

▶▶ **To enlighten the readers about growth opportunities in Pune city for Food Tourism. and to measure the benefits of Food Tourism**

Food Tourism is in its nascent stage in Pune, however, it has a vast potential for growth. Right now it will be too early to measure its benefits .Collective efforts needs to be taken to improve the awareness of food tourism in the city so as to reap its full benefit.

9 Conclusion

Out of 75 respondents, 43 respondents were aware about the concept of food tourism. Bhimthadi Jatra, Maharashtrian Specialty restaurants, Kiosks at fort Sinhagad, Farm visits are some of the avenues identified by the researcher for exploring local food , however their contribution towards promoting local food is comparatively less due to inadequate promotional activities undertaken to reach a larger mass. Maharashtrian population is more willing to explore the above mentioned food tourism avenues as compared to non-Maharashtrian population. 50% of the respondents claim that food has a major impact on the tourism experience. They also feel that food is not the major criteria to decide upon the destination.90% of the respondents want to explore the local food – in the form of visiting local specialty restaurants or visiting local people`s house as a part of their tourism experience. Food tourism



has a multiplier effect in the economy. It creates employment opportunities at various levels, encourages entrepreneurship, and helps in conserving the local culture by giving recognition to local cuisine.

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