

## Gastronomy Tourism Promotion: The Uniqueness of Culinary Attraction and Storytelling

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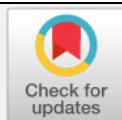
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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Publication Info:

Research Article



#### How to cite:

Nurwitasari, A., Gaffar, V., Wibowo, L. A., & Sultan, M. A. (2024). Gastronomy Tourism Promotion: The Uniqueness of Culinary Attraction and Storytelling. *Society*, 12(2), 943-960.

DOI: [10.33019/society.v12i2.758](https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v12i2.758)

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Received: December 24, 2024;

Accepted: December 31, 2024;

Published: December 31, 2024;

### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to identify and analyze the critical success factors for promoting gastronomic tourism, focusing on the role of local culinary attractions and the compelling power of storytelling. A systematic literature review was conducted, utilizing databases such as Google Scholar to gather relevant publications from 2020 to 2022. Key terms like "gastronomy," "tourism," and "promotion" guided the search, and only high-quality articles published in reputable journals were included, resulting in twenty selected publications for analysis. The findings reveal that tourism-related factors are the most frequently mentioned in the literature, highlighting their significance in shaping the overall gastronomic tourism experience. Additionally, local cuisine and destination image were identified as crucial elements, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to promotion strategies. This approach should integrate various aspects, including food, destination appeal, and positive imagery, to create compelling and memorable tourism experiences. The study concludes that an effective gastronomic tourism promotion strategy must integrate these critical success factors, with storytelling playing a key role in connecting tourists to a destination's cultural and culinary heritage. This research contributes to the literature by comprehensively analyzing the essential elements in promoting gastronomic tourism. It offers insights for developing strategies that promote gastronomic tourism, preserve cultural heritage, support local economies, and create a deeper connection between tourists and their destinations.*

**Keywords:** Culinary Attraction; Gastronomy; Indonesia; Promotion; Story Telling; Tourism

## 1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, gastronomy is closely related to tourism, opening up new opportunities and contributing to the unique characteristics that make tourist destinations more competitive. The culinary landscape plays an essential role when tourists visit a destination, as many are motivated to explore local cuisines, and some even return to the same place solely to experience its unique gastronomy. This underscores the notion that the motivation to travel for gastronomic reasons is a valid construct, as highlighted by Berbel-Pineda et al. (2019). The evolution of the gastronomic tourism sector heavily relies on designing effective promotion strategies focusing on visitors' experiences as they enjoy traditional food and beverages in various tourist destinations (Sarioğlu, 2015).

According to the World Tourism Organization, gastronomy is recognized as a form of tourism that aids in diversifying the local economy, extending travel durations, and promoting regions simultaneously (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2012). This recognition emphasizes the importance of culinary offerings as key attractions that can draw visitors, enhancing the overall tourism experience. Previous studies have indicated that establishing partnerships among tourism stakeholders, including residents, farmers in rural communities, local governments, and other economic actors, is crucial for planning and developing culinary tourism in rural districts (Privitera et al., 2018). Such collaborations not only enhance the economic viability of these areas but also help preserve and promote local culinary traditions.

Additionally, regional image and identity can be strengthened by creating and marketing local culinary products that showcase local culture and heritage richness while contributing economically (Recuero-Virto & Valilla Arróspide, 2024). For example, rather than merely focusing on designing a gastronomic tourism promotion strategy, it can be more effective to create tourist routes in regions like Catalonia that offer gastronomic experiences to those interested in tasting local products. About 16 gastronomic routes are currently designed by the Catalan Tourism Board to introduce tourists to the region's rich culinary diversity (Londoño, 2011).

Research conducted on the promotion of gastronomic tourism in Macau indicates that imagery from gastronomy and electronic word-of-mouth promotion significantly impact gastronomic tourism (Wang & Jie, 2013). This suggests that visual representation and personal recommendations are crucial in attracting tourists. Seyitoğlu and Ivanov outline three theoretical foundations of strategic management—resource-based view (RBV), emergent strategy (ES), and positioning strategy (PS)—to explain how destinations can gain a competitive advantage by transforming resources into effective gastronomy strategies (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020). By integrating these three approaches, a comprehensive framework can be developed to understand the strategic role of gastronomy within tourism destinations.

In Indonesia, the growth of culinary tourism as a prominent segment of special interest tourism has received significant support from the government. To effectively promote culinary tourism in Indonesia, it is vital to convey information to tourists about the essence of Indonesian gastronomy (Wijaya, 2019). Previous research suggests that a successful strategy for designing gastronomic tourism involves culinary attractions that engage tourists in preparing, processing, and serving local dishes, combined with delivering gastronomic philosophy through storytelling. This approach can serve as a powerful promotional strategy for Indonesian gastronomy.

Indonesia's gastronomic assets present immense potential for tourism promotion, as it is often regarded as the largest gastronomic kitchen in the world, boasting approximately 3,259 varieties of food and beverages that span from Sabang to Merauke. This diversity includes over

three thousand dish names, comprising main foods (208 kinds), vegetable and animal side dishes (1,800 kinds), nearly a thousand types of snacks (both wet and dry), and around 150 kinds of beverages sourced from across the archipelago (Gardjito et al., 2018). This rich tapestry of culinary offerings is compelling evidence of Indonesia's status as a global gastronomic powerhouse.

This study seeks to identify and analyze the key success factors in promoting gastronomic tourism, particularly emphasizing the significance of local culinary attractions and the power of storytelling. By integrating these elements, the research aims to support the sustainable growth of Indonesian gastronomic tourism, ensuring the preservation and celebration of the region's cultural heritage and culinary traditions while creating economic opportunities for local communities. This research contributes to the existing literature on gastronomic tourism by offering a structured strategy for promoting Indonesian culinary attractions through storytelling. While previous studies have underscored the importance of imagery and strategic management in gastronomic tourism, this study provides a deeper exploration of the specific elements that can effectively elevate Indonesian gastronomy (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020; Wang & Jie, 2013). Through innovative marketing strategies and collaborative efforts, Indonesia can establish itself as a premier destination for culinary tourism, attracting visitors eager to explore its rich and diverse gastronomic heritage.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Gastronomy Tourism**

Gastronomy is an increasingly integral aspect of the tourist experience, with a significant portion of tourist expenditure being on food and drink (Putra, 2021). Gastronomic tourism, also called culinary tourism, offers a unique way to enjoy tourist destinations while preserving the cultural heritage of food and drink (Lubis et al., 2023). WTO defines gastronomic tourism as a type of tourism activity characterized by the visitor's experience derived from food and related products and activities during their trip (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2012). This encompasses authentic, traditional, and/or innovative culinary experiences and related activities such as visiting local producers, participating in food festivals, and attending cooking classes.

Promoting gastronomy to the general public raises awareness. It encourages future generations to invent high-quality local products with authenticity and value, utilize natural resources, and maintain environmental sustainability. According to Richards, designing a gastronomic tourism model begins with understanding the processes of food production, consumption, and the overall experience of enjoying gastronomic products (Richards, 2015). Gastronomic tourism can be linked to various parts of the production chain, leading to consumption and highlighting its comprehensive nature.

Gastronomic tourism has become an increasingly important element of the overall tourism experience (Richards, 2015). Marketing strategies for gastronomic tourism are crucial for enhancing the image of tourist destinations and increasing the number of tourist visits to an area. By focusing on unique and compelling culinary experiences, destinations can differentiate themselves in the competitive global market. This differentiation is vital for attracting tourists seeking memorable and enriching experiences beyond traditional sightseeing (Riptiono et al., 2023).

Moreover, gastronomic tourism provides an avenue for cultural preservation. As tourists seek authentic culinary experiences, there is a renewed interest in traditional recipes, cooking techniques, and culinary customs. This resurgence helps preserve these traditions for future

generations and facilitates cultural exchange and understanding. Through food, tourists can gain deeper insights into a destination's cultural fabric, fostering a greater appreciation and respect for its heritage.

Additionally, gastronomic tourism supports local economies by creating demand for locally produced ingredients and culinary services. This demand helps sustain local producers, farmers, and artisans, contributing to the economic growth and sustainability of the community. By emphasizing local ingredients and promoting farm-to-table practices, gastronomic tourism can highlight the importance of sustainable and ethical food production.

Incorporating gastronomic tourism into a destination's overall tourism strategy can bring numerous benefits. It can enhance the destination's attractiveness and competitiveness, offer tourists a richer and more diverse experience, and contribute to the region's socio-economic development and cultural preservation. Gastronomic tourism, therefore, plays a vital role in shaping the future of tourism by integrating culinary experiences with travel, culture, and heritage.

Furthermore, gastronomic tourism involves various activities that enrich the tourist experience. For instance, tourists can visit local food markets to explore and purchase fresh, locally-produced ingredients. They can also participate in cooking classes to learn about traditional cooking techniques and recipes, offering a hands-on experience that deepens their understanding and appreciation of the local cuisine. Food festivals provide another avenue for tourists to immerse themselves in the culinary culture of a destination, offering opportunities to taste a variety of dishes, meet local chefs, and learn about the region's culinary traditions.

Gastronomic tourism also significantly impacts national branding and positioning (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020). Destinations known for their culinary excellence can leverage this reputation to attract tourists who are specifically interested in food and drink experiences. This form of tourism can create a strong and positive image for the destination, associating it with high-quality and authentic culinary experiences. As a result, gastronomic tourism can become a key driver of tourism growth, drawing visitors from around the world who seek unique and memorable culinary adventures.

## **2.2. Promotion of gastronomic tourism**

The concept of gastronomic tourism has evolved into a highly sought-after area of tourism research, particularly in utilizing food as a key mechanism for developing and promoting emerging tourist destinations (Richards, 2015). Local gastronomy and tourism integration has become a crucial component of modern destinations' marketing strategies (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020). The importance of gastronomic destinations in the face of global competition has highlighted essential topics such as marketing, branding, and the overall image of these destinations. Studies have established that gastronomic tourism is a significant strength and a unique competitive advantage for destinations worldwide (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019; Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2019).

Furthermore, the roles of food reputation and food identity are crucial in shaping the experiences and satisfaction levels of tourists engaged in gastronomic tourism. Previous studies emphasized that these elements influence tourists' gastro-nomic satisfaction (Bonaiuto et al., 2012; Richards, 2015). Gastronomic experiences can significantly enhance the value of tourism by creating strong connections between local culture, the surrounding landscape, and the food itself. Such experiences are enriching and help create lasting and memorable experiences for tourists.



To achieve the desired outcomes, the design and development of gastronomic tourism products must align with tourist expectations, providing a fulfilling and satisfying experience in a highly competitive global travel market. Daries et al. argues that meticulous planning and execution of gastronomic tourism products are essential to meet these high expectations and to ensure that tourists have a superior gastronomic experience (Daries et al., 2021).

In addition, Lin et al. discussed in their research that city destinations boast unique gastronomy and distinctive characteristics that set them apart (Lin et al., 2021). This uniqueness adds to the destination's appeal and enhances its attractiveness to tourists seeking authentic and novel culinary experiences. The distinct flavors, cooking techniques, and cultural narratives associated with a city's gastronomy contribute significantly to its tourism appeal.

Moreover, gastronomic tourism intertwines with a destination's identity and economy. Local food markets, traditional cooking methods, and regional specialties become attractions in their own right, drawing tourists eager to explore and savor these unique offerings. This form of tourism supports local economies by creating demand for locally produced ingredients and culinary services, fostering economic growth and sustainability within the community.

Gastronomic tourism also plays a vital role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. As tourists seek authentic dining experiences, there is a renewed interest in traditional recipes, cooking techniques, and culinary customs. This helps preserve these traditions for future generations and provides a cultural exchange and understanding platform.

Furthermore, effective marketing and branding strategies are essential to highlighting a destination's unique gastronomic offerings. By leveraging digital platforms, social media, and targeted marketing campaigns, destinations can effectively communicate their culinary appeal to a global audience. Visual storytelling, showcasing local dishes, and engaging narratives about the food culture can entice potential tourists and build a strong brand image.

### 3. Research Methodology

Since this is a review paper, a search of the literature for papers on gastronomy tourism promotion was conducted. The following databases were used in conjunction with Google Scholar to locate publications related to this research. The search's key terms included: "gastronomy," "tourism," and "promotion." The words "marketing" or "gastronomy tourism" had to appear in the publication's text. Articles that were unavailable in English and only available in other languages were not excluded if they described the techniques used. Only works published in well-regarded periodicals were included in the analysis. Twenty relevant publications between 2020 and 2022 were collected through these searches and utilized for the analysis. This rigorous selection process ensured that the literature reviewed would provide a comprehensive understanding of the current trends and strategies in gastronomy tourism promotion, enabling insights into effective practices and potential gaps in the research. By synthesizing the findings from these publications, this paper aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and highlight areas for future research in this rapidly evolving field.

### 4. Results

The results were presented by examining how papers were distributed among journals over time, categorized by research focus, year of publication, journal name, and keywords. This analysis highlights the distribution patterns across various journals.

The previous study found that Iberian ham is emerging as a tourist product, with visits to pastures and ham dryers becoming attractions in rural Andalusia (Millán Vázquez de la Torre et al., 2022). The authors suggest creating routes combining ham with well-known gastronomic

products, like wine, and launching targeted marketing campaigns. Similarly, according to Pilis et al., the gastronomic services market is segmented due to diverse consumer needs, and it recommends developing a food service market with a marketing strategy tailored to these specific needs (Pilis et al., 2022).

Prasongthan and Silpsrikul identified the underlying dimensions of Thailand's food destination image, revealing that food identity and reputation significantly predict behavioral intentions (Prasongthan & Silpsrikul, 2022). Grubor et al. emphasized Vojvodina's potential to attract tourists interested in authentic food, highlighting the importance of preserving traditional dishes (Grubor et al., 2022).

Michael and Fusté-Forné examined how luxury hotels in the UAE manage their image on social media, identifying key visual storytelling features (Michael & Fusté-Forné, 2022). The study by Vukolic et al. found that social networks significantly influence the choice of restaurants and gastronomic offerings in Serbia, underlining their role in developing gastronomy and tourism (Vukolic et al., 2022).

Yusuf et al. proposed halal tourism could address halal certification in hospitality and gastronomy services, focusing on empowerment in amenities, human resources, and events based on Islamic principles (Yusuf et al., 2021). Oliach et al. analyzed the evolution of the truffle market, noting shifts in traditional supply chain roles due to increased cultivation and the need to promote truffle consumption (Oliach et al., 2021).

Michelin-starred restaurants are a strong attraction for foreign tourists, with quality being more important than quantity in the gastronomy-tourism relationship (Castillo-Manzano et al., 2021). Pamukçu et al. found that local products registered with geographical indications are the most effective in developing gastronomy tourism (Pamukçu et al., 2021).

Millán Vázquez de la Torre et al. noted that despite the presence of quality products with Protected Designations of Origin, the demand for gastronomic tourism in Andalusia is low and heterogeneous, suggesting the need for synergies between food products (Millán Vázquez de la Torre et al., 2022). The study by Pasco et al. focused on innovation practices in Peruvian restaurants, particularly in Cuzco, a major tourist destination (Pasco et al., 2021).

Sio et al. revealed evolving trends and the significance of food tourism in shaping destination images (Sio et al., 2024). Soonsan and Somkai found that entertainment, escapism, education, and aesthetic dimensions influence the sharing of gastronomic experiences, with the length of stay acting as a moderator (Soonsan & Somkai, 2023).

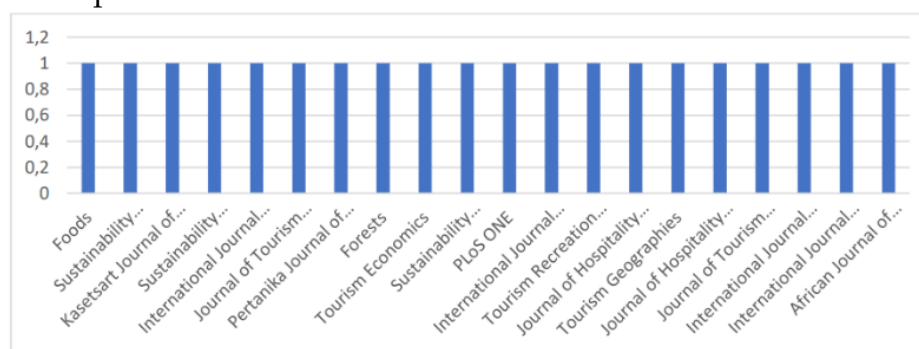
Park et al. identified key drivers of food experiences in a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, emphasizing the importance of local food heritage and identity (Park et al., 2023). Suna and Alvarez found that food culture, quality, and culinary activities significantly influence Gaziantep's brand identity, with notable stakeholder differences (Suna & Alvarez, 2021).

Forgas-Serra et al. highlighted the importance of marketing local cuisine for tourism in the Costa Brava region of Spain (Forgas-Serra et al., 2021). Castillo-Villar analyzed how promoting new cuisine can transform a negative destination image into a positive one (Castillo-Villar, 2020). Finally, Seyitoğlu and Ivanov discussed how gastronomy could be a strategic resource for tourism destinations, forming a differentiation strategy (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020).

In the study by Tunming et al., the potential of Tai-Dam's ethnic identities—including rituals, food, weaving, and house styles—for developing gastronomic tourism was explored. However, the community lacks knowledge in managing tourist attractions (Tunming et al., 2020).

#### 4.1. Distribution of Articles Among Journals

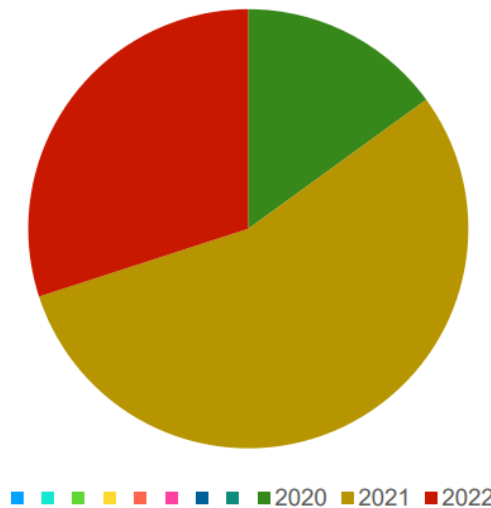
The journal that published the most articles were found in the research focus on gastronomy, as illustrated in **Figure 1**. Notable journals include *Foods*, *Sustainability*, *Kaset-sart Journal of Social Sciences*, *Tourism Economics*, *International Journal of Sustainability in Economic, Social, and Cultural Context*, *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, and *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure*. Among these, two articles were published in *Sustainability*, while each of the remaining journals published only one article related to the topic. This distribution indicates that publications in this field span various journals, each contributing unique perspectives on gastronomy, tourism, promotion, and marketing. The variety of journals underscores the interdisciplinary nature of gastronomy research, attracting interest from various academic domains, including food science, sustainability studies, tourism management, and hospitality marketing. This diversity enriches the gastronomy discourse and highlights the growing recognition of culinary tourism as an essential aspect of the broader tourism ecosystem. Scholars can engage with a wider audience by disseminating research across multiple platforms, fostering collaboration and innovation in gastronomic tourism promotion.



**Figure 1. Distribution of Articles Among Journals**

#### 4.2. Distribution of Articles Over Time

In 2020, three articles were published; the remaining ones were all published after then, with the most recent one appearing in 2021, which saw a significant increase with eleven articles released. This marked a pivotal moment for gastronomy tourism, reflecting a burgeoning interest among researchers in exploring the connections between food, culture, and travel. As depicted in **Figure 2**, this influx of publications underscores the growing recognition of gastronomy as a vital element of the tourism experience. It highlights the need for effective marketing strategies to promote culinary tourism in various destinations. However, since 2022, there has been a noticeable decline in the number of articles published, with only six articles released thus far. This decline could indicate various factors, including a possible saturation of the initial research themes or a shift in focus toward emerging trends within the broader tourism landscape. Nonetheless, the foundational studies published during this period continue to provide valuable insights, paving the way for future research opportunities to explore further the intricate relationship between gastronomy and tourism, particularly in sustainability, local culture, and economic development. As the field evolves, it will be essential for researchers to adapt their inquiries to address these new challenges and opportunities, ensuring that gastronomy tourism remains a vibrant area of study.



**Figure 2. Distribution of Journals Over Time**

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Review of the Keywords of the Articles

It is clear that the five primary aspects of gastronomy – cuisine, destination, marketing, and image – were the focus of the majority of studies. Each of these elements plays a crucial role in shaping the overall experience of gastronomic tourism, influencing how destinations are perceived and how effectively they can attract visitors. The cuisine is the centerpiece, highlighting the unique flavors and culinary traditions that define and set a region apart. The destination aspect emphasizes the geographical and cultural context, showcasing how local customs, landscapes, and attractions intertwine with food offerings to create a holistic tourist experience. Marketing strategies are pivotal in promoting these unique culinary experiences, ensuring potential travelers know about gastronomic opportunities. The image of the destination, often built through storytelling and branding efforts, significantly impacts tourists' perceptions and decisions, driving interest and, ultimately, visitation. Together, these components create a complex interplay that influences tourist satisfaction and loyalty, underscoring the need for continued research to explore innovative approaches to enhance the synergy between gastronomy and tourism. By addressing these five aspects comprehensively, researchers and practitioners can develop more effective strategies that promote gastronomic tourism and contribute to the sustainable development of local economies and cultures.

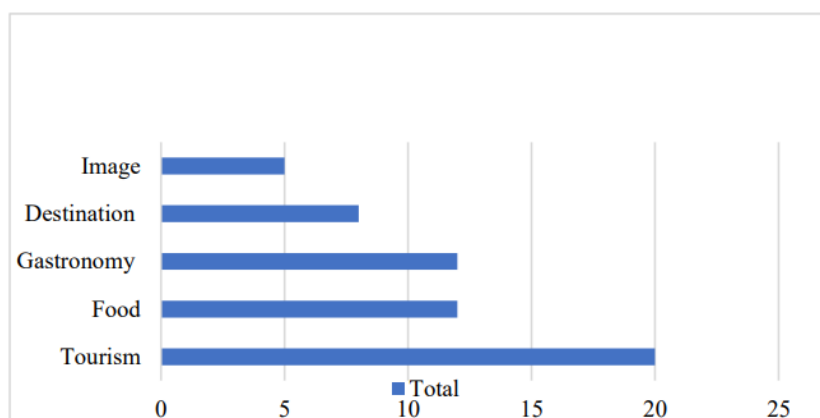




No.	Word	Total	No.	Word	Total
26	Analysis	1	88	Panel	1
27	Approach	1	89	Personal	1
28	Arab	1	90	Place	1
29	Attachment	1	91	Plant-based	1
30	Attraction	1	92	Positioning	1
31	Authentic	1	93	Practices	1
32	Behavior	1	94	Protein	1
33	Behavioral	1	95	Proteins	1
34	Brand	1	96	Regions	1
35	Branding	1	97	Registered	1
36	Catalonia	1	98	Resourced-based	1
37	Cuisine	1	99	Restaurants	1
38	Cultural	1	100	Review	1
39	Culture	1	101	Role	1
40	Cultured	1	102	Safety	1
41	Customer	1	103	Satisfaction	1
42	Customer-focused	1	104	Single-cell	1
43	Data	1	105	Social	1
44	Demand	1	106	Stakeholders	1
45	Digital	1	107	Stay	1
46	Economic	1	108	Strategic	1
47	Economy	1	109	Structural	1
48	Edible	1	110	Sustainability	1
49	Emergent	1	111	Supply-chain	1
50	Emirates	1	112	Swot	1
51	Environmental	1	113	Systematic	1
52	Equation	1	114	Tai-dam's	1
53	Ethnic	1	115	Tijuana	1
54	Ethnicity	1	116	Travel	1
55	Experience	1	117	Truffle	1
56	Experiences	1	118	Tuber	1
57	Foods	1	119	United	1
58	Forest	1	120	View	1
59	Gaziantep	1	121	Visual	1
60	Geographical	1	122	Vojvodina	1
61	Growth	1	123	Wine	1
62	Halal	1	124	Wood	1

The first finding reveals that identifying critical success factors is a popular field of study within gastronomy tourism promotion. The implication of this finding suggests that the methodology used could lead to different outcomes, and researchers must be cautious not to compare results without considering the context. Critical success factors identified through descriptive analysis are outlined in **Table 1**, which depicts the factors found most frequently in

the reviewed articles. As indicated, factors related to tourism were frequently mentioned, appearing 20 times, highlighting their significance in shaping the overall experience of gastronomic tourism. This emphasis on tourism factors underscores the interconnectedness between travel motivations and culinary experiences, reinforcing that successful gastronomy tourism relies on understanding the broader tourism landscape. Following tourism, the element of food was identified 12 times, illustrating the central role that local cuisine plays in attracting visitors and enhancing their experiences. Gastronomy was mentioned 14 times, further underscoring its importance as a distinct tourism segment. Destination factors were identified 8 times, reflecting the need for effective promotion and marketing strategies that showcase unique local offerings. Finally, factors related to image were identified 5 times, emphasizing the importance of a positive and appealing image in attracting tourists to gastronomic destinations. Collectively summarized in **Figure 4**, these findings highlight the multifaceted nature of gastronomy tourism and the necessity for a holistic approach that considers various interrelated factors to develop effective promotional strategies. Understanding these critical success factors can guide stakeholders in creating more compelling culinary experiences that resonate with travelers.



**Figure 4. Critical Word Most Frequently Found**

## 5.2. Tourism

Tourism development in a tourist destination is closely related to cuisine. Food tourism is a great way to take a location's traditions and cultures and transform them into tourist attractions. Tourism promotion helps to draw potential tourists' attention, modify the behavior of existing buyers, and influence them to visit a destination. Culinary tourism has been developing in the tourism sector, providing new experiences for tourists seeking food and beverage delights in their holiday destinations. Culinary tourism affects emotional experiences and satisfaction as well as the behavior of society through food promotion offered to tourists. By highlighting local culinary traditions and unique dishes, destinations can foster a deeper connection between visitors and the local culture, enriching their travel experience.

Furthermore, culinary tourism encourages travelers to engage with local communities, participate in cooking classes, attend food festivals, and explore farmers' markets, contributing to the local economy. As travelers increasingly seek authentic experiences, integrating local cuisine into tourism strategies becomes essential for creating memorable visits. This shift enhances the overall appeal of a destination and supports the preservation of cultural heritage and traditional cooking methods, ensuring that they are passed down through generations. Ultimately, culinary tourism is a vital tool for sustainable development, promoting economic

growth while celebrating the rich culinary landscapes that define each region.

### 5.3. Food

Food is important in attracting tourists to a particular destination because it reflects a region's culture and lifestyle. One of the most exciting opportunities food tourism presents is the opportunity to differentiate the unique aspects of the local environment through food and flavor. Tourism promotion helps attract potential tourists' attention, modify existing buyers' behaviors, and influence them to visit a destination. Food tourism can be an excellent way to stand out from the crowd, especially for small or remote locations that may struggle to draw in visitors. Additional findings that can be made from this paper include: (1) One of the primary reasons people travel is for food and drink; (2) Food plays a significant role in people's decision-making when considering the reasons they choose to travel to a particular location; and (3) Food must be viewed in the context of the whole picture, including how it is prepared and presented in light of cultural, demographic, and technological advancements, or, to put it another way, social, environmental, and digital skills.

Furthermore, the rise of social media has transformed how food is perceived and marketed (Ng et al., 2023), as visually appealing dishes can quickly go viral, prompting potential tourists to seek out these culinary experiences. The integration of local food into the overall tourism strategy not only enhances the destination's appeal but also fosters sustainable practices by encouraging the use of local ingredients and promoting farm-to-table initiatives. As a result, food tourism satisfies the palates of travelers. It contributes to the economic and social vitality of the regions they visit, making it a vital component of contemporary tourism development.

### 5.4. Gastronomy

Gastronomy tourism offers great potential to enhance destination management, promote cultures, and support industries like agriculture and food production. From this point, gastronomy can be discussed as the specific segment of the tourism sphere that can be used effectively to influence the general progress of tourism as an economic sector. Today, the emphasis on gastronomy tourism should be discussed due to intensive economic and social development, with references to rising living standards and increased travel opportunities. Gastronomy has always been closely connected with tourism because, when visiting new places, people also pay much attention to the local culinary habits and traditions of the population. The situation has shifted, and gastronomy has become the primary reason for tourists visiting specific countries and cities. Gastronomy tourism has emerged as an important protector of cultural heritage, helping create economic opportunities, including jobs, most notably in rural destinations. Much attention should be paid to molecular gastronomy as the new wave in the field of gastronomy is rather revolutionary and can influence the tourism industry significantly. The new conceptualized restaurants are organized to respond to the trend, and these new experiences also affect tourism. Furthermore, gastronomic tourism enhances the travel experience by immersing tourists in the local culture through food.

This culinary exploration offers a unique understanding of a destination's heritage, traditions, and innovations. As tourists seek authentic and memorable experiences, gastronomy tourism allows destinations to showcase their culinary diversity and creativity. Effective marketing strategies, including social media and digital platforms, are crucial in promoting these gastronomic experiences to a global audience. By highlighting local ingredients,



traditional recipes, and modern culinary techniques, destinations can attract food enthusiasts and travelers who prioritize culinary adventures. This way, gastronomy tourism boosts the local economy and fosters cultural exchange and appreciation. As the industry continues to evolve, integrating gastronomy into tourism strategies will play an essential role in differentiating destinations and driving sustainable tourism development.

### 5.5. Destinations

Destination marketing aims to create a positive and memorable perception of a destination in the minds of potential visitors (Tanihatu et al., 2021). The most crucial element of a destination marketing strategy for culinary tourism is how visitors perceive the local cuisine. The prevalence of food images in the constructs under consideration results from contextual variance, typically accompanied by insufficient data to draw any firm conclusions. In the case of the destination food image, the construct itself is the subject of the ongoing investigation, with the main focus being on a multidimensional perspective of its cognitive and affective components. Cognitive components relate to the tangible attributes of the cuisine, such as the quality, presentation, and variety of dishes.

In contrast, affective components pertain to the emotional responses and personal experiences associated with food. Understanding how tourists perceive and emotionally connect with the local cuisine is vital for developing effective marketing strategies. Destinations can create compelling narratives that resonate with potential visitors by emphasizing local dishes' sensory appeal and cultural significance. These narratives highlight the unique culinary offerings and evoke a sense of adventure, curiosity, and desire to explore the gastronomic landscape. In this way, a well-crafted food image can significantly enhance the overall attractiveness of a destination, encouraging tourists to choose it over others and contributing to sustainable tourism growth.

### 5.6. Image

In culinary tourism, the perception of the destination's food image is the most important component of a destination marketing plan. The incidence of food image in the constructs involved is the product of the contextual variation that usually coincides with insufficient evidence to conclude in one way or another. In the case of the destination food image, the construct seems subject to continuous exploration, structured mainly around a multidimensional perspective of its cognitive and affective components. This exploration involves understanding how tourists process and internalize their experiences with local cuisine on both an intellectual and emotional level. The cognitive aspect encompasses the food's diversity, authenticity, and quality.

In contrast, the affective aspect relates to the emotional responses elicited by the culinary experience, such as pleasure, excitement, and satisfaction. Effective marketing strategies must leverage this dual perspective by promoting the local cuisine's tangible attributes and crafting stories and experiences that evoke strong emotional connections. By doing so, destinations can create a powerful and appealing food image that attracts tourists, enhances their overall travel experience, and fosters lasting memories that encourage repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

## 6. Conclusion

This study seeks to identify and analyze the key success factors in promoting gastronomic tourism, particularly emphasizing the significance of local culinary attractions and the power of storytelling. The findings reveal that the top primary aspects – cuisine, destination, marketing, and image – are crucial in shaping the overall experience of gastronomic tourism, influencing how destinations are perceived and their ability to attract visitors. As the centerpiece, cuisine highlights a region's unique flavors and culinary traditions. At the same time, the destination aspect ties these culinary experiences to the geographical and cultural context, creating a holistic tourist experience. Effective marketing strategies ensure that these unique offerings reach potential travelers, and a strong, positive image, often built through storytelling, drives tourist interest and visitation.

The general conclusion of this research is twofold, involving gastronomy and tourism promotion. The study underscores the significant impact of local cuisine on visitors' perceptions of a location, highlighting culinary tourism as a dynamic area within the tourism industry that offers hands-on experiences and opportunities for cultural assimilation and education. This is particularly beneficial for small or remote towns struggling to attract tourists. While research on the integration of storytelling and culinary factors in gastronomy tourism is still in its early stages (Akdağ et al., 2018; Peštek & Činžarević, 2014; Tsai & Wang, 2017), the potential benefits are substantial. Combining these elements with traditional tourism approaches can significantly enhance local and national economies and the overall tourist experience by creating memorable and engaging narratives that resonate deeply with visitors. This holistic approach elevates a destination's appeal and fosters a sustainable tourism model that celebrates and preserves cultural heritage through the culinary arts.

## 7. Acknowledgment

The authors gratefully acknowledge the support and assistance provided by all parties involved in completing this research. This work would not have been possible without various individuals and organizations' valuable contributions, insights, and cooperation.

## 8. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest regarding this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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