

CULINARY TOURISM: “Eating Out Of Curiosity”
—“the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of an Other”
(Exploring the world through food)

Most of us approach new foods with a certain amount of doubt: will it taste good; will it make us sick; can it really be eaten? But some of us also approach new food as an adventure, as an opportunity to try new experiences. This spirit of adventure characterizes culinary tourism. “Eating out of curiosity” introduces us not only to foods that are new to us, but also to a way of exploring the world. Food opens up new cultures for us. It offers a window into the lives of other people, other times and regions, religions, belief systems, and social classes. And such exploration can be done through cookbooks, restaurants, cooking shows, grocery stores, and family recipes as well as through travel.

Culinary tourism helps to explain both contemporary food trends in our culture and the historical development of various cuisines. It also makes us aware of the power food has to carry memories, affirm relationships, construct identity, and encourage artistic self-expression.

Culinary tourism is about food as a subject and medium, destination and vehicle, for tourism. It is about individuals exploring foods new to them as well as using food to explore new cultures and ways of being. It is about groups using food to “sell” their histories and to construct marketable and publicly attractive identities, and it is about individuals satisfying curiosity. Finally, it is about the experiencing of food in a mode that is out of the ordinary, that steps outside the normal routine to notice difference and the power of food to represent and negotiate that difference.

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CULINARY TOURISM

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Culinary Tourism—“the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of an Other”

“Eating out of curiosity”

“The participation, including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one’s own.”

Foodways: Products (Recipe, Ingredient, Dish, Meal, Individual, Cuisine/Culture)
Processes (Procurement, Preservation, Preparation, Presentation, Consumption, Clean-up/Disposal)

Performances (Performance-identity & meaning, Symbolism, Contexts, Concepts)

Types of OTHERS:

Culture/ethnicity (“exotic foods,” soul food,
Region (Buckeyes, chicken potpie, grits, sauerkraut balls)
Time--past, future (heritage foods, astronaut ice cream)
Ethos/religion (vegetarian, diet, health foods, kosher)
Socioeconomic class (“white trash”, gourmet)
Gender (quiche, steak, grilling foods)
Age (baby food, alcohol, adult foods)

Venues for culinary tourism:

Restaurants	Grocery Stores
Catalogues	Advertising
Cookbooks	Televised cooking shows
Films	Homes
Festivals	Tours
Literature	

Culinary Tourism=**Negotiating realms of culinary experience:**

	Exotic	
Edible		Inedible
Palatable		Unpalatable
	Familiar	

Strategies for Negotiating Exotic and Familiar:

Framing
Naming or translation
Explication
Menu selection,
Recipe adaptation