

Gastronomic Identity: Role of the Environment and Culture on Culinary Tourism

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Abstract

This was an exploratory study on the role of the environment and culture on culinary tourism in the county of Nairobi, Murang'a and Uasin Gishu; Kenya. The study evaluated various factors that are considered to influence gastronomic identity. The dominant elements in the environment include geography and climate, which in turn impact agricultural products that are available and the adaptability of new products that were brought in due to trends, fashion, or demand arising from increased travel. The cultural elements include religions, history, level of ethnic diversity, innovations, capabilities, traditions, beliefs and values. The tourism industry is not only the environment it is also affected by cultural culinary heritage. Tourism is a way to promote the traditions and customs. Eating habit is a matter of culture, a product of codes of conduct and the structure of social relationships. The purpose of this study was to establish how Kenya's vast cultures in the mentioned counties manage to satiate their gastronomic identities at the same time appreciating other cultures ethnic foods. The study used integrated methods of inquiry. Findings will be used to provide information on the gastronomic tourism in the mentioned counties. An understanding of these concepts can be valuable when defining gastronomic tourism strategies and local restaurant concepts.

Key Words: gastronomic identity; environment; culture; culinary tourism