

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CULINARY BUSINESSES: A REVIEW

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**ABSTRACT.** Culinary tourism also referred to as food tourism or gastronomy tourism, is engaged in by individuals who seek out culinary experiences to broaden their understanding of food culture or lifestyle while travelling. Tourism is very lucrative to local, state and national economies. Over the past decade, tourists have transitioned to seeking cultural experiences, where individuals immerse themselves in the cuisine and lifestyle of a culture, from street food to gourmet and fine dining. According to World Food Travel Association (WFTA), 80% of travellers research food and drink options while travelling to a new destination. Moreover, the organization states that 53% of these travellers consider themselves “culinary travellers.” With the COVID-19 pandemic limiting international travel, the impact has been greatly felt across all industries. The use of technology has been widespread during this time. During the height of lock-downs, with some of our favourite restaurants and food services unavailable, many people turned to social media to learn how to make their favourite dishes at home. So, from virtual cooking shows and tutorials, to live tastings and remote social eating have all been used to keep people engaged and interactive temporarily replacing the traditional experience. In support of the United Nations World Tourism Organization’s #TravelTomorrow campaign, chefs from around the world, including UNWTO Ambassadors for gastronomy tourism, shared their local recipes, giving audience a taste of what to expect when people start to travel again, and highlighting the unique potential of culinary. This paper using integrative literature review will highlight some of the impacts and challenges that food business especially small and medium establishments faced as a result of this pandemic. Caring about local food businesses and markets can help preserve our culinary roots. The recovery plan might be slow, but the tourism industry has always been resilient, it will survive.

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## **Introduction: Tourism Overview**

Tourism is one of the world's major economic sectors. In 2019 it accounted for 1, 460 million total international tourism arrivals and 1, 481 billion in total international tourism receipt. It is the third largest export category after fuels and chemicals accounting for 7% of global trade. Tourism is a key component of export diversification both for emerging and advanced economies, with a strong capacity to reduce trade deficits and to compensate for weaker export revenues from other goods and services. According to UNWTO total exports from tourism reached USD 1.7 Trillion in 2019. Export earnings from international tourism (travel and passenger transport) are an important source of foreign revenues for many destinations around the world, helping to create jobs, promote entrepreneurship and develop local economies. For many small developing countries, including most Small Island Developing States, tourism is a major source of foreign-currency income, which can represent up to 90% of total exports (UNWTO, 2021). In tourism, activities related to food have been called by several names, such as food tourism, culinary tourism, and gastronomy tourism. However, there are many types of tourism activities that tourists engage in among them is food related which refers to where tourists travel to a certain destination for the purpose of eating local foods. Visitors may not only learn about local foods, but also about the way of life, culture, and history of the locals.

Food tourism draws broader attention and emerges as a major research frontier in the field of hospitality and tourism (Ellis et al., 2018). The World Food Tourism Association (2020) classifies the historical

evolution of food tourism into three phases (2001–2011, 2012–2018, and 2018–present). In the first phase (2001–2011) food tourism was understood as the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experiences, while in its second stage (2012–2018), food tourism started to grow in parallel with mainstream tourism promoted by social media and television cooking shows. In the third stage (2018–present), food tourism started to be recognized as a composite industry comprising the full range of experiences including cooking classes and visiting farmlands (World Food Travel Association, 2020). As a result, currently, food becomes one of the main motivations of tourists in choosing their holiday destinations (Wondirad et al., 2021; Rita et al., 2019; World Food Travel Association, 2020).

While some destinations have traditionally benefited from the positive image of their food, other destinations such as Canada, Australia and South Africa have actively sought to promote and highlight their food and wine as part of their destination image. Norway, Singapore, New Zealand and Scotland each use food as a marker of identity to promote tourism and exports. Similarly, destinations like Scotland and Portugal, not necessarily known for their food, began to use their gastronomy as part of the tourism experience and destination marketing (Quigley et al., 2019). Dining out is very common among tourists and food is often considered an important part of exploration among tourists. The global culinary tourism market was valued at \$1,116.7 billion in 2019 and is expected a market value of \$1,796.5 billion by 2027, registering a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 16.8% from 2020 to 2027 (Research and Markets, 2020). The growth of culinary tourism is driven by increase in government initiatives to promote tourism. Moreover, rise in affinity of people toward foreign dishes such as Sushi, various forms of prepared meat, snacks and more among others promotes the culinary tourism market growth. However, risk involved in travelling can be a major challenge to the tourism industry in general, which also affects the culinary tourism market. On the contrary, an increase in social media trend of eating out in foreign lands has piqued the interest of tourists all around and has opened avenues for growth for the culinary tourism market.

## **Research Methodology**

This paper uses an integrative review process. The purpose of using an integrative review is to assess, critique and synthesis culinary tourism information available in the light of the COVID pandemic. Snyder (2019), argues that most integrative literature reviews are intended to address mature topics or new, emerging topics. In the case of mature topics, the purpose of using an integrative review method is to overview the knowledge base, to critically review and potentially re-conceptualize, and to expand on the theoretical foundation of the specific topic as it develops. For newly emerging topics, the purpose is rather to create initial or preliminary conceptualizations and theoretical models, rather than review old models.

## **The Importance of Culinary Tourism**

The phenomenon of culinary tourism was known many centuries ago when merchants made trips to foreign countries to purchase a variety of spices, wines and different beverages (Diaconescu, 2016). Culinary tourism refers to trips in which local cuisine (food) plays an important role. The World Food Travel Association (WFTA) defines culinary tourism as: the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experiences. For most tourist destinations, gastronomy plays a strategic role in their image and brand. Most culinary tourists are interested in local food culture, rather than gourmet. This relates culinary tourism to cultural and adventure tourism. According to data of the International Association of Culinary Tourism, those who prefer that kind of tours does not waive various events of cultural activities – visits to various festivals as well as museums and theatres. That is why travel companies quite often form special tours with taking into account both factors – culture and culinary (Diaconescu, 2016). Local cuisine gives travellers a direct and authentic connection with their destination. They experience local heritage, culture and people through food and drink. Food businesses include restaurants (family-style, family-owned; gourmet; international);

food kiosk; food trucks and home made foods. Culinary activities can range from tasting local food and drink to more adventurous and active experiences. They include:

- cooking with locals
- cooking workshops
- eating at locals' homes, at local restaurants, or street food
- food and drink tasting sessions of cheeses, wines, beers, spirits etc.
- food and drink tours and trails
- collecting ingredients or participating in the local harvest
- visiting farms, orchards, wineries, distilleries, food markets, fairs or festivals

Tourists spend over a third of their holiday budget on food and drink – even up to 50%, when food is the main travel purpose! Food tourism has become a blossoming field of academic study since the late 1990s (Leer, 2020; Long, 2004). The first studies focused on various forms and definitions of food-related tourism from gourmet tourism to wine tourism (Hall et al., 2009) and food-related agricultural tourism (Slocum and Curtis 2017; Everett, 2016). Definitions are tricky as all tourists eat, so at which point does tourism qualify as food tourism? Hall and Mitchell define it as 'visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of (a) specialist food production region are the primary motivating factor for travel' (Hall & Mitchell 2001: 308).

This seems a rather solid and broad definition, expanding the concept to much more than restaurant visits. In their review of the food tourism literature, Ellis et al., (2018) end up with a distinct description of the term: 'it could be argued that food tourism is about cultural anthropology through understanding the interactions of tourists with place through the medium of food' (Ellis et al., 2018: 261). In this perspective, food is not so much a thing in itself for the tourist, but a gateway to experiences of authenticity, interpersonal contact and other cultural aspects which might be found in other kinds of cultural tourism. Food is understood more as a medium for cultural understanding rather than a topic to explore in itself. This understanding might be too

simplified as we also see really nerdy forms of food tourism where the materiality and the quality of the food is very important, for instance, in exclusive craft beer festivals (Ikäheimo, 2020; Leer, 2020).

## **The Role of UNESCO World Heritage on Traditional Cuisines**

Since 2010, UNESCO has accepted local food culture as Intangible Cultural World Heritage. This kind of status can give tourism destinations a competitive advantage. They can build their image as a culinary tourism destination around it. The following list includes items inscribed by December 2020.

- **Traditional Mexican Cuisine – Mexico (2010):** This cuisine is a comprehensive cultural model comprising farming, ritual practices, age-old skills, culinary techniques and ancestral community customs and manners. It is made possible by collective participation in the entire traditional food chain: from planting and harvesting to cooking and eating. The basis of the system is founded on corn, beans and chili; unique farming methods such as milpas (rotating swidden fields of corn and other crops) and chinampas (man-made farming islets in lake areas); cooking processes such as nixtamalization (lime-hulling maize, which increases its nutritional value); and singular utensils including grinding stones and stone mortars.

- **Ceremonial Keşkek – Turkey (2011):** Made with meat or chicken, keşkek is a stew found in Turkish, Iranian and Greek cuisines. The dish is usually associated with a ceremonial or religious occasion and is cooked by groups of men and women together in the community.

- **Washoku – Japan (2013):** Washoku is a social practice based on a set of skills, knowledge, practice and traditions related to the production, processing, preparation and consumption of food. It is associated with an essential spirit of respect for nature that is closely related to the sustainable use of natural resources. The basic knowledge and the social and cultural characteristics associated with Washoku are typically seen during New Year celebrations. The Japanese make various preparations to welcome the deities of the incoming year, pounding rice cakes and preparing special meals and beautifully decorated dishes using fresh ingredients, each of which has a symbolic meaning.

- Mediterranean Diet – Cyprus, Croatia, Spain, Greece, Italy, Morocco and Portugal (2013): The Mediterranean diet involves a set of skills, knowledge, rituals, symbols and traditions concerning crops, harvesting, fishing, animal husbandry, conservation, processing, cooking, and particularly the sharing and consumption of food. Eating together is the foundation of the cultural identity and continuity of communities throughout the Mediterranean basin.

- Qvevri Wine Making – Georgia (2013): Qvevri wine-making is practised throughout Georgia, particularly in village communities where unique varieties of grapes are grown. The Qvevri is an egg-shaped earthenware vessel used for making, aging and storing the wine. Knowledge and experience of Qvevri manufacture and wine-making are passed down by families, neighbours, friends and relatives, all of whom join in communal harvesting and wine-making activities.

- Kimjang - South Korea (2013): Anyone who has ever tried Korean food has also sampled the famous pickled side dish called kimchi. Basically, kimchi is some type of vegetable—most frequently napa cabbage—that has been fermented in a spicy red paste that may include red chili powder, garlic, ginger, salt, sugar, fish sauce and green onions.

- Turkish Coffee – Turkey (2013): Turkish coffee combines special preparation and brewing techniques with a rich communal traditional culture. The freshly roasted beans are ground to a fine powder; then the ground coffee, cold water and sugar are added to a coffee pot and brewed slowly on a stove to produce the desired foam. The beverage is served in small cups, accompanied by a glass of water, and is mainly drunk in coffee-houses where people meet to converse, share news and read books.

- Lavash – Armenia (2014): Lavash is a traditional thin bread that forms an integral part of Armenian cuisine. Its preparation is typically undertaken by a small group of women, and requires great effort, coordination, experience and special skills. A simple dough made of wheat flour and water is kneaded and formed into balls, which are then rolled into thin layers and stretched over a special oval cushion that is then slapped against the wall of a traditional conical clay oven. Lavash is commonly served rolled around local cheeses, greens or meats, and can be preserved for up to six months. It plays a ritual role in weddings, where it is placed on the shoulders of newlyweds to bring fertility and prosperity.

- Kimchi - North Korea (2015): Kimchi is the Korean name for preserved vegetables seasoned with spices and fermented seafood. It's an important tradition on the Korean peninsula, where the recipe has been transmitted from mother to daughter for centuries.

- Beer Culture – Belgium (2016): Beer is big in Belgium and has been brewed in the country for centuries. Containing water, barley, hops and yeast, beer was originally made by monks and nuns in the Middle Ages as a replacement for water. (Drinking water was often unclean and made people ill, so a brew of weak beer was preferable—even for children).

- Palov Culture and Tradition – Uzbekistan (2016): There is a saying in Uzbekistan that guests can only leave their host's house after palov has been offered. Palov is a traditional dish made and shared throughout rural and urban communities of Uzbekistan. It is prepared with ingredients such as rice, meat, spices and vegetables and in addition to be enjoyed as a regular meal, is served as a gesture of hospitality, to celebrate special occasions like weddings and new year, to help those in need who are underprivileged, or to honour loved ones who have passed away. Palov may also feature at events alongside other rituals taking place such as prayer and performances of traditional music.

- Oshi Palav (pilaf) – Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey (2016): is a traditional dish of communities in Tajikistan recognized as a part of their cultural heritage. Otherwise known as the 'King of meals', it is based on a recipe using vegetables, rice, meat and spices but up to 200 varieties of the dish exist. Considered an inclusive practice that aims to bring people of different backgrounds together, oshi palav is prepared to be enjoyed at regular mealtimes, as well as social gatherings, celebrations and rituals.

- Nsima – Malawi (2017): is a form of thick porridge prepared with maize flour. Nsima is prepared through an elaborate process requiring specific knowledge, from pounding the maize into flour to selecting the accompanying food and then preparing and serving it. It goes by different names in other African countries. *Ugali* in East Africa, *pap* in south Africa and *fufu* in west Africa.

- Dolma – Azerbaijan (2017): Dolma tradition is a set of knowledge and skills relating to the preparation of the traditional meal 'dolma', which takes the form of small fillings (containing meat, onion, rice, peas and spices) wrapped in fresh or pre-cooked leaves or stuffed in fruits and



vegetables. The name of the tradition originates from the shortened Turkish word 'doldurma', meaning 'stuffed'. The meal is shared within families or local communities.

- Neapolitan Pizzaiuolo – Italy (2017): This is a culinary practice comprising four different phases relating to the preparation of the dough and its baking in a wood-fired oven, involving a rotatory movement by the baker. The element originates in Naples, the capital of the Campania Region, where about 3,000 Pizzaiuoli now live and perform. Pizzaiuoli are a living link for the communities concerned.

- Hawker Food Culture – Singapore (2020): Hawkers prepare a variety of food ('hawker food') for people who dine and mingle at hawker centres. These centres serve as 'community dining rooms' where people from diverse backgrounds gather and share the experience of dining over breakfast, lunch and dinner. Activities such as chess-playing, busking and art-jamming also take place.

- Couscous - Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco & Tunisia (2020): Couscous is a cereal, thus the process starts with a seed. Couscous is one of the most well-known dishes from North African cuisine. Each community has developed its own specific ways of preparing couscous, and each family takes pride in its own unique recipe. Couscous is made from semolina, which is a basic and cheap staple, and yet the dish holds much prominence, while its preparation requires complex steps and a certain level of skill.

- Il-Ftira – Malta (2020): is a flattened sourdough bread that's traditional to the island nation of Malta. It differs from the other flat breads listed by UNESCO and mentioned on this list – it's more like a loaf with a thick crust and a light, fluffy inside. The name ftira comes from the Arabic word for unleavened bread and the dish reflects the cultural exchange that has defined Malta's history. This bread is hand-shaped – the process can't be replicated by a machine – which makes it all the more special.

## **Impacts of Culinary Tourism**

### ***Sociocultural – street foods***

Previous research has confirmed that food and dining are major elements considered by tourists when travelling and choosing destinations (Jeaheng & Han, 2020; Choe & Kim, 2018). Tourists eat the local cuisine in a

tourism destination to fulfill their travel experiences (Vesci & Botti, 2019). Travellers acquire new knowledge and understanding of the traditional local and regional culture of a destination, which are valuable in relation to destination image and future tourist intention (Jeaheng & Han, 2020; Ellis et al., 2018; Kuhzady et al., 2020). Accordingly, several tourism destinations have emphasized food activities and created gastronomic/culinary experiences to attract international visitors. Street foods combine the authentic culture of the local people and the traditional values by using local resources, contributing to local economies and maintaining a sustainable tourism system. Street foods experience challenges and opportunities to increase the long-term sustainability at tourist destinations. Moreover, street foods have been used as a tourism tool in many destinations and are even regulated in some Asian countries, such as Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, Korea, Hong Kong, and Vietnam. In Southeast Asia, street foods have become an essential part of the tourism and hospitality industries because a tourist attraction represents the local culture and the way of life of local people. Given the aforementioned reasons, several destinations are focusing on street foods as an upcoming tourism product. In the past, scholars have indicated that food (Jeaheng & Han 2020; Tsai & Wang, 2017) and street food are the core of tourists' motivation and the main component of tourists' decision-making processes to travelling.

### ***Economic***

Culinary tourism stimulates local food production both in terms of quality and quantity which makes positive contributions to local economic development. As a vehicle to fuel the creation of new tourism products, culinary tourism encourages innovation and stimulates local entrepreneurship (Wondirad et al., 2021; Suntikul, 2019). Since culinary tourism encourages visitors to spend a longer period of time in the place of visit, destinations significantly benefit from its multiplier effect due to increased transactions between hosts and guests. In a nutshell, the concept of multiplier effect in tourism assumes that all segments within destinations' economy are interconnected leading to more transactions and financial circulations and thereby maximized outputs. Increased demand for a product in tourism as a result of improved destination image also positively impacts the national economy in terms of production, income, and employment (Wondirad et al., 2021). The concept of tourism

multiplier refers to a circulation of tourism revenue within destinations' overall economy (Mathouraparsad & Maurin, 2017). As a form of niche tourism, culinary tourism stimulates travel to tourist destinations which, in turn, emboldens other economic and social sectors. As explored by Rita et al. (2019), tasting local food and sightseeing are the most attractive destination activities among the US and the UK millennials. Moreover, a study conducted by World Food Travel Association in (2019) suggested that food was more important for 59% of leisure travellers during their holiday. Given the current international travel and tourism market is significantly patronized and will continue to be patronized by millennials and post-millennials (Business Insider, 2019; Wondirad et al., 2021), it is worthy to note that food tourism will remain to be one of the top tourist attractions in the future (World Food Travel Association, 2020).

In light of that, in the current global tourism market, there is a steady increase in the number of food tour companies, food and beverage focused events, and food and beverage focused marketing efforts (World Food Travel Association, 2020). Whenever tourist service providing institutions create a linkage between the culinary sector and destinations' attractions, the overall impacts of tourism in the area improve significantly. This is in part because food tourism facilitates inter sectoral linkage and thereby creates synergy in the entire economy (Wondirad et al., 2021).

### ***Environmental – meal deliveries***

In recent years' demand for locally grown food products has increased substantially as a possible alternative to the long supply-chain production models of the industrialized global food system. As such, local food has become a component of the development of sustainable culinary systems within tourism and hospitality, particularly in rural areas (Roy & Ballantine, 2020). However, the growing interest in local foods has been explored largely from the consumer's perspective and the role of farmer's markets (Crawford et al., 2018) rather than other elements in the sustainable culinary system and supply chain such as restaurants and food wholesalers. Studies in consumer's perspective have shown that local products are perceived as being characterized by a wide range of benefits such as environmental sustainability and new market opportunities, economic benefits, social benefits, animal welfare (Vigors, 2018), food quality, food safety (Baudry et al., 2017), and personal health (Roy & Ballantine, 2020).

Other studies have also suggested that local food products are commonly perceived as more natural, fresher, healthier, and safer than globalized food products. All these aspects lead consumers to pay a price premium for local food products (Merritt et al., 2018), including at restaurants.

More recently, sustainability has become a central issue in food tourism research and in public/political discourses on the matter. As mentioned above, it could be argued that the concept of sustainable food tourism – like sustainable tourism in general – is a contradiction in terms. As argued by Hall & Goessling (2016), there seems to be a contradiction between mobility and sustainability inherent in the very idea of sustainable tourism. While there is an argument for the right to travel, we should also consider the consequences of this right and how it relates to sustainability. It is not sustainable for a foodie from Melbourne to fly to Copenhagen and eat at Amass, one of the most sustainable restaurants in the world (Leer, 2020). So, rather than arguing that food tourism can be sustainable, the talk should be about undertaking food tourism more sustainably. And even talk about how food tourism might inspire sustainable practices and activism after the journey: food tourism as a form of education in sustainability. Also, it should be noted that there are various definitions and understanding of sustainability in relation to tourism. Some solely focus on the carbon footprint while others also include ideas of social, cultural and economic sustainability. So, food tourism can also benefit regional development (Hall & Goessling 2016). Various countries have applied a broad political focus to see food tourism as a way to sustain new economies, social networks and cultural initiatives in rural areas with increased depopulation due to urbanization, centralization and the disruption of traditional agriculture and industry in these areas (Slocum & Curtis 2017).

## **Impact of COVID-19**

Food delivery has already made a major impact on the restaurant industry. Before COVID-19, the on-demand economy sparked by Uber, Netflix, and Amazon Prime had already started its spread to the restaurant industry. Consumers wanted convenience in all aspects of their lives, including food. In the new post-COVID world, that demand for food

convenience has increased – both by necessity (i.e. shelter-in-place orders) and because so many brands are jumping on the food delivery service bandwagon. To make this service available to customers, restaurants are either relying on third-party delivery providers or creating their own with an online ordering impact system. As more and more dining rooms are allowed to reopen across North America, it's likely that the demand for delivery will be affected. But by how much? How many people will still prefer to order takeout and get it delivered versus dining in? Does that mean offering a delivery service is still worth the investment of time and resources? In fact, it's even inspired a whole new category of restaurant: ghost restaurants. Ghost restaurants are restaurants that only offer food via delivery. Unlike traditional restaurants, they don't have brick-and-mortar locations where you can dine-in or sometimes even pick up. They typically run out of commercial kitchens, so the focus is on food preparation and order fulfillment, rather than an experience. Since most dining rooms have been forced to close at some point in the past few months, ghost restaurants have really had their time to shine, helping diners get their favorite dishes safely and lowering operational costs for restaurant owners (McCann, n.d.)

### ***Technological – social media, partnership***

There are many studies on the important role ICT plays in an economy (Evans, 2018a; Evans, 2018b; Wang, 1999). While studies such as Bethapudi (2013) have argued that ICT plays a major role in tourism development and has become an inevitable contributor to tourism industry expansion, most analyses in the literature have largely ignored the important link between ICT and tourism (Adeola & Evans, 2020). Though some of this restaurant tech has been around for years, the industry has been slow to fully embrace digital innovations. Now, COVID-19 has radically changed consumer behaviour and restaurants have no choice but to adopt technology that improves safety and economic viability (Pendril, n.d.) Now, more than ever, restaurants are leaning into online ordering as a way to streamline takeout and delivery and keep their businesses afloat. Due to the COVID-19 crises, some restaurants and food establishments have been forced to rely on third party apps such as Caviar, Postmates, Grubhub, Uber Eats and DoorDash among others to bring in orders. For the small and medium businesses including street foods,

mom-pop diners and food trucks, the pandemic poses several challenges if they have to adopt to the current technological trend. These include staff who have to be reliable and trustworthy; technology to be able to receive, fulfill and deliver orders; labour costs and packaging options. One of the impacts of COVID-19 is the resurgence of families starting to cook and eat together. This has been facilitated by various live and taped cooking shows. It has forced people to look into healthier eating styles. Shop for groceries when necessary and experiment both adventurously and pragmatically with family. Perhaps, just perhaps cooking more at home could become the new post pandemic normal.

### **Future of Culinary Experiences**

The food-service and hospitality industry has always been characterized by advances that keep in step with—and are often ahead of—customer demands and the over-arching needs of a changing world. With environmental issues looming and the global population rising, it's more critical than ever for the food world to bring new ideas and innovations to the table. What food professionals will do about it in the next decade and beyond has become vitally important. So what does the future of food look like? According to the Culinary Institute of America ([www.ciachef.edu](http://www.ciachef.edu)):

- There will be more pop-up restaurants and food trucks than ever on the culinary landscape.
- Speaking of “pop-up,” kiosks are already popping up as the main tool for ordering in popular restaurants. On-screen ordering is a trend that will likely continue to evolve with the technology.
- Techie events have showcased automated robot kitchens. Many future kitchens will feature smaller, more efficient equipment; high-speed ovens; and water baths.
- Keep that smartphone or watch close by; it's likely going to completely replace credit cards as your method of payment.
- Smart tables will display your menu and allow you to swipe the surface of the table to browse, order, and even pay for your meal.
- Restaurants will take advantage of emerging technologies to be even more eco-friendly, creating new ways to recycle or compost all waste.

The menus will be a lot easier to track nutritional value, so offering healthful, flavorful choices will be more essential than ever. Menus will be nonlinear, more personal and more up to date. Product costs change on a near-daily basis, and digital menus make it easier for restaurants to adjust their prices and selections in real time. With internet and media advances making the world an increasingly “smaller” place, menus will trend toward more specific cuisine-focused themes ([www.ciachef.edu](http://www.ciachef.edu)). Another factor that will be relevant to dining intentions is brand trust, which refers to customers’ perceived values and reliance on a particular brand (Wei et al., 2021). Customers have more trust in restaurants that are reliable and exhibit some concerns for their health and safety. Thus, restaurants that have implemented efficient preventive measures during the pandemic may receive a higher level of customer trust. Starr (2020) indicated that some customers were appreciative of restaurants that had strict preventive measures and were willing to pay more, which resulted in a long-term benefit to the brand trust (Wei et al., 2021). In addition, to alleviate tourists’ concerns, vendors and entrepreneurs who want to establish street foods, will want to improve their safety and hygiene of food production by considering its quality to build tourist trust and belief toward street foods. Enhancing the image of street foods as a food destination will create a competitive advantage. These issues challenge the government and food businesses to work closely together in improving food tourism strategies/policies and good practices to increase its demand. By doing so, tourist intention will be boosted, and the positive image of a destination as one of the best places for food tourism will be improved (Jeaheng & Wan, 2020).

## **Conclusions**

Food and tourism will continue to play a significant part in the overall global economy. Food is usually the key to many cultures and social settings and to a larger degree a global intangible heritage which can be used to attract tourists. There is a strong connection and interplay between food and tourism which can drive an economy as well as cultural development. Experiences in diverse food products can help

brand and market destinations in addition to promotion of local artifacts and other traditional products. When destinations promote food as a product, it can help support the necessary infrastructure for overall production, consumption and delivery. It provides for entrepreneurship and employment opportunities which is normally a major goal for many communities. How food is produced, transported and consumed from a sustainable standpoint will be paramount. Farm to table or farm to fork concepts are gaining momentum. This paper has highlighted the importance and the impact of culinary tourism despite the challenges of the pandemic. The future of culinary tourism is definitely changing given the technological aspects of that are evolving. The pandemic has certainly provided opportunities and provoked many businesses to think out of the box and do things differently. Meal kits companies and delivery apps are beneficiaries of the developing consumer behaviour. Whatever happens, food will always remain at the core value of social and cultural bonding.

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