



# EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION ON GASTRONOMY AND WINE TOURISM

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## Abstract

Preparation and consumption of food and wine is part of the culture, which emphasizes their importance to be included in all aspects of human life. In this line, the food does not reflect the intrinsic nature, but cultural “exercise” as well. Moreover, the way people prepare the food and wine can be considered as evidence of civilization since there are cultural differences in applying the basic ingredients. The paper presents an overview on the inevitable relationship between food and tourism, putting an accent on the gastronomy tourism. It describes the specific motivation of the gastronomic tourists and wine tourists by clarifying their consumption and experiences. Additionally, the paper investigates the case of Macedonia by elaborating the Macedonian cuisine and wine. Finally, it concludes that Macedonia is rich on exceptionally well produced food products and wine.

## Key words

*Gastronomy; Wine tourism; Wine routes and destinations; Macedonia.*

## INTRODUCTION

It is interesting to note that the way food and wine is prepared and stored, as well as the preparation of the quantity and composition of the meal, its flavors, habits and traditions of serving, make the food and wine unique and exceptional for each country. Moreover, they have an important place in promoting the destination as interesting and worth visiting and staying. In this line, the climate, culture and history are integral parts of the surface, shape and character of the food and wine. Therefore, the gastronomy and the oenology are often treated as a sub-sector cultural



tourism or heritage tourism, by emphasizing the wine roads. Moreover, it is argued that the link between the national cuisines and tourism depends on the degree to which they reached the kitchen as part of social culture, and thus the national identity. This relationship between geographical locations, culture and the gastronomy or the oenology in tourism manner, sometimes includes the promotional efforts in creating a distinctive image of typical local, regional, or even national famous food and wine destination.

In this line the food can often be used as a tool to guide passengers or tourists to visit countries and regions. This is the case with the form of thematic brochures, or so-called Culinary books, wine roads etc. The gastronomy and the wine tourism, being named Enogastronomy, involves visiting a destination whose primary goal is to satisfy personal interests in indigenous (ethnic) populations or regional gastronomy and oenology by consuming food and drink, and visit courses. Thanks to the promotion (newspaper articles, television shows and series, etc.). the individual chefs and someliers become known worldwide by attracting huge audience. Nowadays, the tourists are ready to travel just to dine in a famous restaurant where the food is prepared in front of them, or are willing to visit a region which cuisine is spotted to be prepared in a hundred years old cooking technique. This means that the tourists are eager to visit a destination which has completely different culture than the current one. In this sense, it is the same challenge for an Italian tourist to have a dinner and drink wine in a small French restaurant in Nice, in the tavern of Crete Greece or in a traditional restaurant in Bali. Yet, besides the cultural - geographical variables (seat and destination) of gastronomic tourists and influence the behavior of other factors, the primarily demographic characteristics and social status (occupation and education) may have significant influence. It is noticeable that the choice of the food, the wine and the trip (and the amount of consumption for this purpose) may affect the lives of tourists and the appropriate family situation (in case of traveling with children or not). So, it is expected that that married couples are more motivated to visit local restaurants and wineries in a particular tourist destination and enjoy in much greater manner.

### **RELATIONSHIP: FOOD - TOURISM**

The food has a two-fold role in tourism industry. On the one hand, it is a necessary component of any tourist trip, because the participant must satisfy the physiological needs for tourism activities available at the destination. On the other hand, some destinations possess high quality foods according to local characteristics of tourist attraction and decide to declare the location of a tourist destination worth a visit just for the food and specialties (Boniface, 2000; Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

Furthermore, one may argue that the national cuisines are distinctive by setting the foundations of cultural tourism and heritage tourism. They arise and evolve according to the environmental conditions, soil type, social customs, religious conditions and other factors, and reflect cultural values, the struggle with nature, geographical location, historical influences, traditions and various forms of inheritance. Hence, the ratio of the tourists and the trip especially when taking into account its instrumental value may be different. Unlike other destinations and activities associated with them (visiting, shopping, and even sports game), where tourists are willing to try to experience something new and different, with new destinations and there are things completely unknown in the case of tasting different types of food that causes fear for their health. Consequently, the food can be seen as potentially dangerous and risky element, unlike other types of contacts which may be established with an unknown environment.

Typical sensitivity is expressed by Western tourists when traveling to less developed countries, which may be perceived as distant and not safe enough. In such conditions the existence of neophobia becomes dominant. Only few tourists would dare to try to taste unfamiliar foods and learn how to prepare. Yet, "What is this?" will always be the first question that comes to mind upon first contact with unfamiliar food. It can be expected to be a friendly tourist destination that offers local specialties only in cases if the tourists are already previously familiarized with the food. This is usually done by TV shows or books, unless such information is not relevant to the tourists' experience. However, the world-famous national cuisines, despite their global impact and dominance over other cultures, must always be prepared with a different manner typical for the national restaurants. But even in the cases of preparing the most well-known dishes, when the taste and smell of foreign cuisines are known and thus attract tourists, some precaution must be undertaken. This implies to meeting the different systems of accepting the food in the line of hygienic standards, safety control correctness of components, technology for the preparation of food, the ambience of the local restaurants, etc. It is therefore not uncommon to meet tourists which often stick to their home habits and ask for a more secure alternative food that looks "touristically".

## **TYOLOGY OF A "GASTRONOMIC TOURIST"**

The "gastronomic" or "culinary" tourist is a generic term that refers to all those who travel to taste the products of local cuisines specific to a country or region. The food for these types of tourists serves as a tourist attraction, monument or a natural rarity. Generally, one may note some specific motivation for the gastronomic tourists being encouraged for the following reasons:

- Desire;
- Demonstration of diversity, wealth and individualism;
- Interest and desire for knowledge discovery;



- The need to experience, the ground beneath his feet, in the process of globalization directed towards their roots and remind us of the village, or the desire to see where the food originates; and
- The desire for emotional satisfaction and experience the food without special effort.

Like other tourists with special interests in the culinary, the gastronomic tourists are part of the rich and more educated segments of tourism demand. Consequently, they are members of the upper and middle layer and generally travel in couples without children. In this line, it may be mentioned that the gastronomic tourists encompass only 3% of participants in the international tourist movements. However, there are studies noting that there are many passengers that travel being motivated in just enjoying the gastronomy. Despite the fact that the tourists generally consume traditional foods, one may underline that the gastronomic tourists are extremely important segment of the international tourism demand (Scarpato, 1999 and 2000).

### **OVERVIEW ON GASTRONOMY TOURISM**

The attraction of the destination is reflected in its capacity and capabilities to meet the needs of the tourists. It is often stated that the destination may have a gastronomic supply and additionally symbolically to satisfy the physiological needs of visitors by enabling social fun with true divided roles of all actors at the destination (Hall & Mitchell, 2005). It is more than obvious that the tourists choose a gastronomic destination for many different reasons, but with quite dissimilar values. In this line, the satisfaction of such experiences is not only perceived by the sensitive items such as food quality, restaurant, its decoration and accessories, but also is experienced by very different visual effects, like the serving method, location and the atmosphere.

Consuming the food may become a routine activity when the tourist moves to another location. But the transfer of routine habits of travel includes dimension to stick to the main content of the food being used (eg, potatoes or rice for Asians) with some peripheral accessories for variety and change. If the food is a prolongation of the domestic habits and not the primary purpose of the travel, it may have the status of a food episode and an experience. Sometimes it is known that there are tourists who seek experience outside the ordinary and routine. By searching something new and unknown, one may find the food as one of the motives for tourists' movement. In this line, the new experience with the food may be expressed in two ways: (i) Through the use of new ingredients and flavors that the tourist has previously tried; and (ii) By a new way of preparing and serving the food differently than the known way. So, the final impression may be an extraordinary experience of the unexpected food that remains in long-lasting memory. The best example for an ultimate

impression and experience with food is the gastronomy tourism. In this case, the food serves to boost the travel as a basic motive, while the tourist attraction is a secondary function i.e. the secondary motive. It may be concluded that the food motivation may make a unique and unforgettable experience in tourism industry.

Furthermore, it may be noted that these modalities reflect and provoke different tourist experiences in terms of the gastronomy, particularly by creating a difference between the 'recreational tourists' and 'tourists with tourists experience in the gastronomy'.

The recreational tourists usually travel by group travel arrangements and are usually open to connect to an unknown gastronomic sphere, expressing so called neophobic tendency. Generally, they recognize the quality of the destination, but only apply the well-known food that can be consumed in larger quantities than at home. Even individuals who are prone to research something new are determined for different types of food if it looks attractive, regardless the origin.

The tourists with the so called 'gastronomic experience' show particular interest in local food. They often visit local markets and malls to find or see, or even buy, unfamiliar vegetables, fruits and spices, and with great curiosity to observe the process of food preparation or street stall. They are willing to try to do something just out of sheer curiosity. Although relatively open to innovation, they can refrain from using local gastronomic offer, because they only teste gastronomic facilities. A smaller number of tourists may seek authentic experience (experimental tourists or existential tourists), by visiting local restaurants. Sometimes they consume a local food by testing the destination in real life or because such foods are their choice at home (experimental tourists), or the local food can become their permanent choice (existential tourists).

## **WINE TOURISM, WINE ROUTES AND DESTINATIONS**

In the past, the wine was used to announce the signing of war and ceasefire, while today we celebrate the birth, various successes and solemn moments. Wine is a complex drink that contains more than 600 chemical compounds. Most of these components are present in small amounts, but each of them drowning their contribution to get the taste, aroma and flavor of the wine. The nutritional value of the wine is known for centuries for people, but they are treated differently, so some believe that wine is an alcoholic drink, while the others think it is a kind of a food or medicine. It is assumed that the roots of winemaking originated from Persia. Ancient peoples such as the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans drank strong and full flavored wine with a high alcohol content, so they diluted with water get softer taste.

The wine tourism means a travel that includes visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, wine shows, with wine tasting and / or experiencing a particular attraction in a wine region that is the primary motivation for the trip. It is a kind of vacation



where tourists combine wine tasting from some vineyards and natural beauty and diversity of cultural - historical monuments in the vicinity of the destination (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2000; Hall et al, 2000; O’Neill et al, 2002; Rabotic, 2012).

The wine tourism in Europe is mainly developed in the form of wine roads. The first such, roads were made in Germany at the end of the second decade of the 20th century, in order to encourage visitors to enjoy the products of the region. In the 60s there was a growing interest particularly for the wine, due to promotion in printed and electronic media (various publications, gastronomy shows on radio and television, etc.).

TABLE 1. BENEFITS OF WINE TOURISM

Wine industry	Destination	Local community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Large quantum of sales</li> <li>○ New markets</li> <li>○ Testing new products</li> <li>○ Educated consumers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Number of visitors and increased spending</li> <li>○ Respecting the old and attract new customers</li> <li>○ Creating an image</li> <li>○ Provides travel and visit outside the main season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attracting new investment</li> <li>○ Initiation of new services in the area</li> <li>○ Fosters the ‘local pride’</li> </ul>

Source: Rabotic, B. (2012).

The wine route is basically sort of traveling along the route, which connects several wine estates and wineries in the region. Many, wine roads are marked in the official definition of a wine region that has already an image and brand. It is a place with usually certain cultural and natural attractions (and other attractive mountain scenery, castles, fortresses, etc.) and other facilities beside the wineries.

**MOTIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF WINE TOURISTS**

The visits of the attractions to the wine tourism are guided by different motivations among tourists and only a small number that visit the winery actually buy wine. It is often a case that the main motive is the desire to learn more about the wine (Barthes, 1979; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Gil & Sánchez, 1997; Roberts & Sparks, 2006). Furthermore, one must not forget the social aspect of the wine tourism, as well as the medical recommendation to apply moderate consumption of wine for health issues. Yet, it is a kind of a rule for having a complex motivation, as in the case of gastronomy tourism.

However, the visitors to the winery and the wine region are characterized with a certain exceptional interest in wine. Someone may visit the wineries for a completely

different purpose (eg. to collect labels of wine producers, etc.). It is most often a case to stop and visit the wineries being located along the travel direction in the line of having a tour and visiting the natural or cultural attractions. Frequently, the wine roads are combined with many tourist attractions, like: picturesque villages, local churches and monasteries, castles, archaeological sites, etc. Yet, the main idea of the wine roads is to provide an opportunity to the tourist for unforgettable experiences based on exploration and discovery.

The experience from the wine tourism is often associated with a conjunction with the culinary tourism and enjoying its surroundings and 'acts'. Therefore, it involves the activation of a variety of senses by including a chain in the following order:

- The general picture (an idyllic picture of grape plants, blue skies, traditional architecture, skyline, cellar with barrels stacked neatly, burgundy, etc.);
- Sound (pouring the wine, filling, appropriate music in tasting location, etc.);
- Contact (harvesting the grapes, barrels, bottles, cups);
- Flavor (fresh grapes, wine, bread, local specialties, etc.); and
- Smells (fresh soil, grapes, wine cellar, fermenting wine, etc.).

Since the vineyards are characteristic with rural ambiance, the wine tourism is commonly treated as a segment of rural tourism. Hence, it is impossible to establish a clear distinction between these two activities, because in practice they are intertwined. The fact is that a very appealing and relaxing natural setting in which there are some famous wineries further affect the volume of tourist visits. However, the wine tourists may be surprised with the organization in urban conditions, like wine festivals, exhibitions, etc.

## **INVESTIGATING THE MACEDONIAN CUISINE**

The Macedonian cuisine is part of the Macedonian culture that is synonymous to a typical hospitality. It features a blend of the Balkan and Mediterranean symbols which are quite heterogeneous. At the same time, it is based on fresh ingredients and urges application of herbs and spices thus provoking high quality. A special attention is paid to the cultivation of vegetables since it is healthy and full of taste. A wide selection of dishes from meat and fish meet the most demanding choices. The full picture of the Macedonian cuisine is not just testing specialties and wine, but much more. Namely, the Macedonian gastronomy and oenology offer extraordinary atmosphere that is generated during the preparation and tasting of food and wine.

The pleasant climate in Macedonia mainly influenced by the warm Mediterranean currents in the valleys of the rivers, the exceptionally high quality of water, fertile soil and a large number of sunny days (Ohrid has 2,300 solar hours, while Valandovo even 7,200 solar hours) provide a fruitful harvest and excellent traditional products. The agriculture is an important sector in Macedonia thus being recognized as one of the most important strategic industries in Macedonia. The



production and export of wine takes the second place after the tobacco. In fact, only a few small countries like Macedonia also offer a variety of products that include everything from citrus fruits, grapes, walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, tobacco, rice and mountain teas.

In addition, Macedonia is rich in meat of exceptional quality and successfully produced beef, chicken and lamb. It is also known for the production of cheese: young white cheese similar to Greek feta, golden cheese similar to Lokatelo Romano, as well as an excellent yoghurt and milk. Any Macedonian village has unique and special kind of delicious homemade cheese. Furthermore, different kind of vegetables grow in Macedonia, among which the red pepper is famous being dried during the summer and added to almost all Macedonian dishes cooked during the winter. Additionally, the Macedonians like to prepare the local specialty named Ajver out of red peppers, which is a favorite delicacy on the Balkans. Different types of delicious traditional dishes in Macedonia offer unforgettable enjoyment that may be experienced, like: turli tava, lutenica, banica, tarator, Ohrid trout, stuffed peppers, pastrmajlija, musaka etc. Nevertheless, it may be noted that the Macedonian specialty "paned beans" is fully comparable to truffles, oysters and caviar.

### **MACEDONIA - A COUNTRY OF YOUNG WINE**

There are wineries in Macedonia, which produce mainly bulk wine. In the same line, there are more than 30,000 families who own vineyards. The quality of the wine depends on the quality of the grapes, equipment and skills of the producers. While the equipment can be purchased and the manufacturer may be trained how to use it, the quality of grapes is still mostly depends on the climate and territory. These conditions are met in Macedonia due to a favourable Mediterranean to continental climate. The summers are hot and dry, while the winters are moderately cold. The average annual rainfall is from 500 mm in the eastern parts, to 1,700 mm in the mountainous western parts.

Macedonia has an average of almost 260 sunny days per year, which helps in the long process of maturation of the grapes, thus concentrating the sugars and acids enabling rich color and complex flavors in the wine. The intense aroma of Macedonian wines is the result of the combined influence of Mediterranean and continental climate with warm days and cooler nights and territory rich in carbonates and minerals. Up-to-date, the vines are grown in approximately 24,000 hectares, out of which 70% are planted with wine grapes and 30% with table varieties. Generally, there are three wine regions, which are divided into 16 plots and vineyards (Fig. 1):

- Povardarie Valley - Central wine region that covers 83% of total production and includes seven vine parcels: Skopje, Veles, Gevgelija-Valandovo, Strumica-Radovish, Ovce Pole, Vinica, Vinica-Kocani;
- Pelagonisko-Poloski - Western wine region that covers 13% of total production and includes six vine plots: Prilep, Bitola, Ohrid, Prespa, Kicevo, Tetovo; and
- Pchinja-Osogovski - East wine region that covers 4% of total production and consists of three vine plots: Kumanovo, Kratovo and Pijanec.

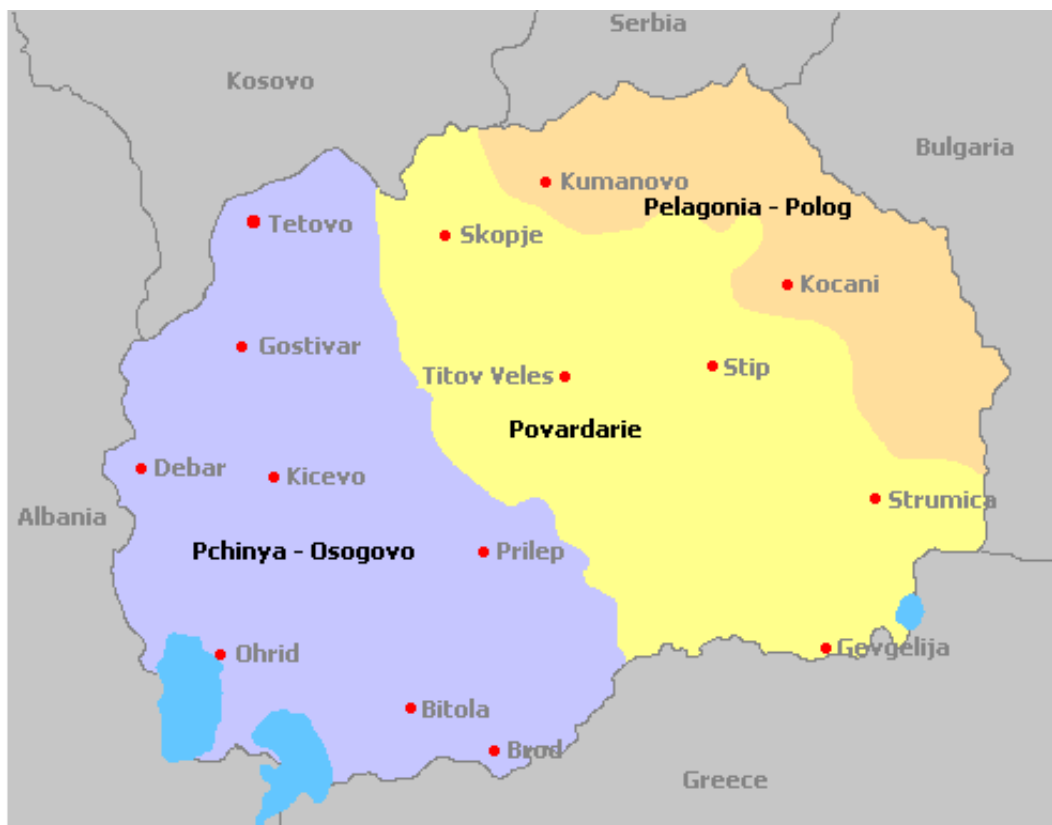


FIG 1. WINE REGIONS IN MACEDONIA

## CONCLUSION

The paper gives an overview on the inevitable relationship between food and tourism, putting an accent on the gastronomy tourism. It describes the specific motivation of the gastronomic tourists and wine tourists by clarifying their consumption and experiences. By investigating the case of Macedonia, it may be concluded that the Macedonian cuisine and wine are unique and offer extraordinary atmosphere that is generated during the preparation and tasting of food and wine.



The variety of traditional dishes complemented by tasteful wine, presents an interesting tourism supply for a certain type of gastronomic tourists. Yet, the paper concludes that the potentials for gastronomy tourism and wine tourism are present in Macedonia, but the economic effects and tourism valorization is still missing.

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