

Food Tourism: An Effective Marketing Tool for Indian Tourism Industry

Moushumi Banerjee

Department of Hotel Management, MJPRU, Bareilly, India

Abstract: *Tourism programming is preliminary to development of successful tourism management. Disparate tourists destinations all over the world has proven that a proper programming could reduce negative effects and improve and preserve tourism market in that area or state. Thus, programming can be suggested as a sine qua non of tourism-oriented economy development success. The first step in the in all the stages of a tourist travel, a small number of programming is to identify the effective factors. One of the main implicit factors that tourists consider in choosing the destination is food. As Lacy and Douglass mentioned "every tourist is a voyeuring gourmand". An international conference on cuisine and tourism was held in November 2000, in Cyprus. It was acknowledged, in a majority of articles, the local meals the local meals play a leading role in impressing tourists and increase the tourists. From snow-speckled peaks that crown the country to the lazy backwaters down south, from the earthiness of the east to the spunk of the west, India offers a variety of mind-stirring backdrops for foreign tourists. While the tourism industry is blossoming year after year, growing as the latest trend of 2014 are food tours. According the World Food Travel Association (WFTA), food tourism is "the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experiences, both far and near".*

Keywords: gourmand, meals, tourist, WFTA, food tours

Eating connects us to our histories, As much as it connects our souls to our bodies, our bodies to the earth. (Evan D.G. Fraser)

1. Introduction

Chemistry of Food and Tourism

Eating is a physiological need which requires fulfillment whether at home or during travel. The consumption of food in travel is unique because it occurs in a foreign environment (Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). Recent research has shown that tourists spend almost 40% of their budget on food when traveling (Boyne, Williams, & Hall, 2002). The 2004 Restaurant & Foodservice Market Research Handbook states that 50% of restaurants' revenue was generated by travelers (Graziani, 2003). It shows that there is a symbiotic relationship between food and the tourism industry. Reynolds (2004) asserts that food, like other elements of travel transportation, accommodation, activities, and attractions plays an essential role in the travel experience. As an attribute or creation of a destination, cuisine bears symbolic meaning and is a determinant of overall travel satisfaction (Henkel, Henkel, grusa, Agrusa & Tanner, 2006; Rimmington & Yüksel1998), when other forms of tourism has been saturated by the tourist. More importantly, food has been recognized as an effective promotional and positioning tool of a destination (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Similarly, with increasing interest in local cuisine, more destinations are focusing on food as their core tourism product. For example, France, Italy, and Thailand have been known for their cuisine.

Javier Blance Herranz has classified the motivations of tourists into two broad categories – the **internal stimuli** or the push and the **external stimuli** or the **pull**.

According to him: The former are considered from the perspective of demand, and they lead the tourist to travel to gastronomic tourism destinations that often includes desires as well as psychological, social and ego-centric

needs such as escapism from the daily routine, relaxing with family, rest, exploration and social interaction and affective or emotional bonding. The resources considered pull factors are cultural and natural attractions, special events and festivals, experiences with food products in the destinations and other opportunities for leisure and entertainment, value, friendliness of residents, gastronomic diversity and variety, attributes or the characteristics of the destination such as proximity etc. (Herranz 8).

Whether one looks at the subject of food from the perspective of a philosopher, an economist, a nutritionist or a historian one thing must be accepted that food shapes the cultural identity of a race. Albert Sonnefield has said:

Man forges in the smithy of the fire the created consciousness of human environment, his mythology, his history, his economy, and his gastronomy. (Dutta x).

2. Purpose of the Study

Though cuisine is not often the first factor prompting tourists to visit a particular place but food can be one of the highly rated products of niche tourism. The study aims to figure out the prospects of ethnic cuisine of India in enhancing the quality of tourist stay and at evolving ways to sustain culinary tourism in India which in turn can be a major source of livelihood for the local population.

Food tour packages have been studied in a fairly detailed manner so as to analyses the influx of both domestic tourist as well as international tourist and their attachment towards to the cuisine of particular region. A special emphasis has also been made on food as an attraction in destination marketing apart from other tourist attractions.

The sole aim of this article is to develop food tourism concept like other forms of tourism and pave the way for its sustainability and exploring and bringing to limelight the antique foods which are hidden as the Treasure Island and putting it as one of the masterpiece of India's rich culinary repository. Throughout the study, the purpose is to find out the initial growth and scope of food tourism in India so as a strong marketing strategy can be chalked out for successful destinations promotion and products improvisation to make it prime focus in the tourism system.

3. Food Tourism: Meaning and Significance

The "Impact of Catering and Cuisine upon Tourism" was discussed at the 36th AIEST (Association Internationale d'Experts Scientifiques du Tourisme) congress in 1986. It was a stepping stone for food tourism as a travel phenomenon and as a distinct tourism market segment. Since then, the World Food Travel Association (formerly the International Culinary Travel Association) has been the pioneer in the global education and promotion of these burgeoning new trends, and in facilitating industry specific knowledge enhancement in coordination with the research community. The association also plays a leading role in coordinating the World Food Summits.

Understanding the sense behind such an assertion in the whole of India in general and the prospect of culinary tourism in India the National Tourism Policy of India, 2002 states that attempts should be made to:

Capitalize by packaging India's unmatched variety of traditional cuisines that are today becoming increasingly popular in the world. The linkages and ripple effects created by a rapidly expanding restaurant sector can have dramatic implications for the Indian economy, implement private-public partnership of the Culinary Institute of India that will research and document ancient culinary traditions, create a highly skilled workforce of culinary professionals that can populate not only hotel and catering establishments in India, but also internationally through a non-traditional medium, and encourage Indian entrepreneurs to establish restaurants of Indian ethnic cuisine internationally, by conceiving an innovative incentive scheme. (National Tourism Policy 2002, 14-15).

Food can be a travel attraction that augments the visitor's experience (Henderson, 2009). Travelers' destination choice may be significantly affected by the destination's culinary richness and offerings and can ultimately impact overall satisfaction levels. Destination will use food as the main attraction and will develop marketing strategies that will focus on the food. It is important for marketers of a culinary destination to know the image currently held by its targeted customers and how to affect their intention to visit through effective marketing strategies. Frochot (2003) recommended food images can be utilized to exhibit the cultural aspects of a country. As such, destinations can use food to represent its "cultural experience, status, cultural identity, and communicating" (p.82). Further, Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983) argued that cuisines that are highly

known for their taste and quality can be developed into tourist products.

4. Marketing Tools to Promote Food Tourism in India

1. The "Incredible Tiffin" Campaign

Ab Karim and Chi (2010) contend that cuisines that are distinctive and renowned for their taste are well suited to be developed and promoted as a tourism product. In recognition of culinary tourism's potential impact on the tourism economy, the Ministry of Tourism, India launched the culinary offshoot of the Incredible India campaign, aptly christened Incredible Tiffin in May, 2012. As V. Sunil, who led the advertisement campaign for Incredible India recently quoted, "we can't sell the Taj Mahal and backwaters forever" (Gill, 2012, Para. 6). In addition to tourism promotions, the initiative also aims to research and document regional cuisines (Budhraj, 2012). As an unprecedented aspect of culinary promotion of India, Indian wines will also be featured as part of the campaign.

2. Culinary Classes in Tourists Itinerary

Latest addition to tourist itinerary is a peep into what's cooking in an Indian kitchen. Indian cuisine is famous all over and since India attracts tourists from various countries, tourists enjoy a firsthand experience at cooking desi khana by visiting houses here to learn how to cook authentic Indian food.

➤ Flavours of India

Indian meal with our curries, spices and with various flavours has always been treated like an art. And now this art is leading international tourists into the Indian kitchen. "One of the main reasons behind the increasing popularity of the trend is the desire to know more about Indian lifestyle, culture and tradition. And food is undoubtedly an important ingredient of Indian lifestyle," admits Sameer Gupta, a culinary expert with 30 years of experience. Gupta, who has served food to dignitaries like **George Bush, Prince Charles and Lady Diana**, has been teaching the art of Indian cooking to international tourists visiting Jaipur. His house in Jawahar Nagar is frequently visited by groups of tourists for cookery classes. Tourists come for classes; they ask to teach them the way to cook authentic food without compromising on its ingredients. Now they want to learn dishes exactly prepared in Indian style. At times they also ask us to organize lunches and dinners to see how Indian families sit and eat together.

➤ Culinary heritage, a mirror to real India

It is not just the experts and luxury hotels that the tourists want to visit. Their search of authentic food takes them to simple households. That is where they want to learn Gatte ki sabji, curry, Papad ki sabji, Mangodi ki sabji, dal, Baingan ka bharta, sweet dishes like kheer and halwa. The tourists even want to sit with families and relish the delicacies. Indian restaurants do serve the most delicious dishes, which do satisfy their palates, but tourists like to visit to these homes to experience real India. Tour operator Sanjay Kaushik of Rajputana Holiday Makers says, "Five star and seven star hotels display luxury and hospitality. But today our international travellers want to see real

India, Indian values, our culinary legacy and the Indian way of life. And that is why we take them to visit families, where they learn art of cooking as well."

➤ **Flavour plus medicinal**

Indian food is just not rich in taste but high on health too. They want to learn because of the fact of medicinal advantages of Indian spices. They know that the Indian delights laden with ghee and spices have lots of nutritional values as well and can cure many diseases. We take them to the market to buy wonder spices like black pepper, red chili, saffron, turmeric and cinnamon loaded with health benefits.

Places to Take India Cooking Classes on a Culinary Holiday

- The Pimenta-Spice Garden-Bungalows-Cooking Holidays - Kochi (Cochin)
- Akriti Eco homestay Nilgiri Mountains, Tamil Nadu
- Silom House and cooking school, North Goa
- Bengali cooking classes, Kolkata, West Bengal
- Private cooking class in a Indian home, Delhi
- Spice Paradise cooking class, Rajasthan

3. Food Festivals to Promote Tourism

Food festivals of India are a vibrant representation of the myriad tastes of the country, complete with the exclusive delicacies and food-items belonging to the Indian states. Such festive events offer lip-smacking, delicious food, snacks, main courses food items, desserts and various kinds of food preparations with fruits, desserts and a host of several other ingredients to its visitors. Some of the celebrated food festivals of India include International Mango Festival in Delhi, Sea Food Festival in West Bengal, Gujarati Food Festival, etc., which are thronged by innumerable food connoisseurs and tourists from across the country. The food festivals of the country reflect the diverse cultures and traditions prevalent in the nation, which find expression through its large variety of regional cuisines of the nation. Unique flavours of local cuisines of India creeps its way into these impressive and extremely tempting food festivals, compelling its visitors to indulge in some of the most delectable food dishes.

➤ **Delhi Tourism's Dilli ke Pakwaan Festival**

The Delhi Tourism's week long annual event on culinary delights "Dilli ke Pakwaan" at Baba Kharak Singh Marg in Delhi witnessed a new attraction 'Khao Gali' with street food vendors associated with the **National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI)** putting up their stalls there to showcase their culinary expertise, acumen and brilliance. Thousands of people have thronged the Khao Gali street food stalls and realized how such street foods were adding charm and diversity to the festival which otherwise is mainly dominated by the big caterers and food chains. Tourists from United States, Britain and Germany visited the street food stalls and relished special tikki, jhaalmurhi, soyabeen chaap, rumali roti with kadhai ka paneer and garlic soaked special kababs. Street food is a treasure house of local culinary traditions and is increasingly playing an important role as an enhancer and

force multiplier of tourism sector. Asian street food is considered as the best in the world. The street food stalls under the stretch of Khao Gali are serving lip smacking luscious items including dahi kabab, potato veggies, dahi bhalla, garlic chhole kulche, namkeen chirwa, soybean veg malai chaap, special tikki and golgappe, shevpuri, jhaalmurhi, drypuri along with varieties of paan. Besides the stalls of quintessential chaat, kababs, biryani, parathas and chhole bhature, an amazing range of desserts, milkshakes, lassi, churan and pan are on platter in the festival.

➤ **International Mango Festival**

Organised in Delhi, the International Mango Festival is a grand event which continues for two days during summer which exhibits over 550 variations of mangoes which involve 'chorasya', 'malda', 'shamasi', 'himsagar', 'balia', 'dhoon', 'nigarin kheria', 'ruchika', 'mallika', 'amrapali', 'fazia', 'alphonso', 'gelchia', 'dhaman' and many others. The Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC) arranges this festival in coordination with the National Horticultural Board, New Delhi Municipal Corporation and Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority. Famous chefs from luxury restaurants and hotels in India contribute towards the preparation of tasty food dishes and recipes all made from mangoes. Cultural performances and competitions like mango slogan writing and mango eating contests for ladies are essential parts of the festival.

➤ **Kashmir Food Festival**

Delicious, spice foodstuffs, accompanied by a mild taste and very little salt, particularly non-vegetarian items were amongst the main food attractions of the Kashmir Food Festival which is celebrated in the month of January. It continues for a period of ten days. The various culinary delights of Kashmir are introduced in this food festival of this northern Indian state. Kashmiri platters are enriched with superbly delicious dishes like 'Aloo Chooria', 'Surkh Angeri Paneer Tikki', 'Nadru ka Choorma', 'Akhrot ki Chutney', 'Badam Subz Shorba' (soup), 'Bhodarwa Rajma', 'Chyoke Wangan', 'Mutter Mushroom', 'Madhur Pulao' or sweet rice, 'Sada Chawal', 'Kashmiri Lavasa Bread', 'Paneer Kaliyan' and others. Though the regional inhabitants of Kashmir are not quite fond of sweets, Kashmiri Food Festival is also a spectator to the preparation of sweet dishes like 'Halwa' and 'Rasmalai'. 'Kahva' or green tea, which is a popular health drink of Kashmir, is also offered in this festival. Spices like saffron, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, etc are employed to add to the tastes of the various food items.

➤ **Gujarati Food Festival**

Every year, an elaborate food festival is organised in the western Indian state of Gujarat, known as the Gujarati Food Festival which bears testimony to the wide combination of Gujarati food dishes which comprise 'Jalebi', 'Rabri', 'Methi Muthiya', 'Bhindi Sambhariya', 'Surti Dal', 'Gujarati Kachori', 'Gujarati Kadi', and a series of other amazingly wonderful delights which are exclusive to this Indian state. Chefs of renowned hotels and restaurants of Gujarat participate with enthusiasm.

➤ **Bangalore Restaurant Week Festival**

Bangalore Restaurant Week Festival is an interesting food festival which is observed in the city of Bangalore, Karnataka. A vast number of chefs belonging to different restaurants as well as food lovers from Bengaluru readily participate in this recurring food festival. In the year 2010, Bengaluru witnessed the celebration of one of the grandest food festivals of the country, in which about 74 restaurants enjoyed active participation in numerous festival events associated to it. Many shopping malls also played a crucial role in the Bangalore Restaurant Week Festival. Various types of contests, quizzes and competitions were held during this impressive food festival of Bengaluru. Expert chefs had been invited as judges for the numerable contests.

➤ **Sea Food Festival of West Bengal**

A great Sea Food Festival is organised in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal, especially in places like Digha, and other popular sea-beaches in this state. Various kinds of non-vegetarian foodstuffs are savoured by the tourists and food lovers who attend this famous Food Festival.

4. Indian Cuisine in International Cookery Shows

Indian cuisine is so popular that many Hollywood and western television shows have references to it, showing it as part of their popular culture. No longer is curry made fun of as food that will give one a bad tummy. Instead, top food shows have had references to Indian dishes; what with a breakfast staple like **upma** winning votes at the finale of one of them or a deconstructed paneer gravy making people go wow in another. If anything, this is a time where Indian food is gaining momentum, with many international chefs trying to reinvent popular dishes and give them a makeover to cater to a wider audience of gourmards.

5. Strict Food Standards for Restaurants by Government

Restaurants are an integral part of a tourists visit to a place and as such the services offered by them can make or mar a visit. Restaurants are increasingly becoming popular with the tourists – both domestic and foreign as they intend to enjoy the taste of authentic food, particularly cuisine of different states in the country. With the aim of providing standardized **WORLD CLASS SERVICES** to the tourists, the Department of Tourism; Govt. of India has a voluntary scheme for approval of restaurants in the country. Such independent restaurants will be outside the hotels and should have more than 30 seats.

5. Regulatory Agencies

1. The Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (**HRACC**) inspect and assess the restaurants based on facilities and services offered.
2. The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India – **FHRAI** is also a regulating authority.

Some Important Legislation

A. Prevention of Food Adulteration Act: It is a Central Government Act. This Act has been enacted to:

- Protect the public from poisonous and harmful foods.
- Prevent the sale of substandard foods.
- Protect the interests of the consumers by eliminating fraudulent practices.

B. Food Safety and Standards Act: The Act deals with the following:

- Establishment of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, which lays down scientific standards relating to articles of food
- Regulates the manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import of food articles
- Ensuring the availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

6. Food Tourism Market Size in India

The market dimension for culinary tourism mostly dominated by the inbound and outbound tourist that widely encompasses all the segments of tourism because the tourist when step out thinks about his food and accommodation which are barely necessary if it may not be his purpose other than the culinary. so it is always a speculative purpose of culinary tourism is fulfilled in a two way fashion. So the culinary aspect of tourism is directly intentionally and indirectly speculatively needed and demanded and also fulfilled.

The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during 2012 increased to 6.58 million from 6.31 million in 2011. The growth rate in FTAs during 2012 over 2011 was 4.3% as compared to 9.2% during 2011 over 2010. The growth rate of 4.3% in 2012 for India was better than the growth rate of 4% for the International Tourist Arrivals in 2012.

The above statistical survey gives a crystal scenario of foreign tourist and which captures the culinary market directly and indirectly (source: MOT. Gov. of India). The domestic survey of leisure travelers in India found that 37% engaged in culinary related activities. The International Culinary Tourism Association predicts that this will grow rapidly in the coming years. According to India Today survey a profound share of Indians has made culinary activities part of their travels in the last three years due to the cause of strong influence towards food and exploring the novelty on foods.. In India, food tourism is estimated to be worth nearly \$2billion each year. The culinary tourism pursuit is also solely guided by the different food and drink festivals happening all the year round in different places in India which gives unfailingly gastronomic experience.

That's the reason the market size is increased by leaps and bounds, and within a very short period of time there will be millions of culinary tourist travel to India each year.

7. Brief Profile of Consumers

The profile of the culinary consumers is manifold and varied by nature. The culinary is such an arena all types of tourist and travelers fall into this type of activities whether it may be business traveler or heritage tourist or adventures tourist, because it is an innate desire of everybody to be involved in the gastronomical activities which not only quench their soul but also unfolds to visualize and experience the unique cultural experience of a particular destination. So it can be mentioned that Gastronomic consumers are the couples that have above-average income, are usually professionals and are aged 30 to 50. This alternatively correlates closely to the demographics of the cultural tourist. The International Culinary Tourism Association states that on average, food travelers spend around \$1,200 per trip, with over one-third (36% or \$425) of their travel budget going towards food-related activities. Those considered to be “deliberate” food travelers (i.e. where culinary activities are the key reason for the trip) tend to spend a significantly higher amount of their overall travel budget (around 50%) on food-related activities.

8. Potential of Desi Fare to Capture Global Tourism Market

Indian food including **kebabs, chicken tikka masala, biryani, curries, masala dosa and even the humble naan** are immensely popular and available in places like **UK, Canada, the Middle East, US and even China**. This reflects the soft-power that India has abroad through its food. In fact, most of the Hollywood celebrities and singers who tour India have often been quoted about their familiarity with the Indian cuisine, with them stating their favourite fare. When singer Katy Perry was in the country two years ago to perform at the T20 opening ceremony in Chennai, she had insisted that she wanted to try out all the staple kebabs and curries, since she had grown fond of them during her previous visit to the country, when she was staying in Rajasthan. It's not any particular city or cuisine that is most famous. The popularity enjoyed by cuisines from across India including **Goan, Punjabi, South Indian, Rajasthani, Gujarati and even Parsi food**. This is one of the reasons why Indian street fare like chaats and rolls has gained popularity. The rolls have now transformed themselves into hybrid versions globally, like naanwiches and chapatti tacos. Indian restaurants are now serving newer avatars of popular Indian dishes for the next generation of Indians as well as other residents. And this holds true not only for regular restaurants that serve Indian food. Street stalls to subway cafeterias to Michelin-starred restaurants, Indian food and ingredients have made an impact on the larger gastronomical map.

Beat these facts!

1. While one would believe that it is the chicken tikka masala or kebabs that would make for the most popular Indian dish across the globe, a food survey conducted a year back stated that masala dosa is the one Indian dish every global citizen must try before they die!

2. In Britain, so popular is Indian food that chicken tikka masala is synonymous as the national dish, beating old favorites like Shepard's pie and fish and chips.
3. Indian spice markets offering saffron, cardamom, cloves and mustard have made a splash, beating the popular Middle Eastern spice souks.
4. Many fast food chains owned by Indians across the globe have reinvented sandwiches and pita pockets to serve naanwiches, where they stuff naan breads with popular Indian gravies like butter chicken, chicken tikka, vegetable kadhai and paneer makhnawala.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

“**ATITHI DEBO BHAVA**” which signifies the true essence of “**INCREDIBLE INDIA**”. A land which always gives the immense and profound respect even to the strangers not only with a glass of water but also make them delighted with sumptuous meal which carves its stepping stone to the culinary activities. India is such a country where its culinary dimension is best projected due to its natural grandeur, its picturesque location, snowcapped mountains and lush green valleys, cool climate and above all the hospitable people. Therefore culinary is bestly and finely experienced in India because every hundred meters, the food dimension changes and a tourist can enjoy the different food with different experience which is nowhere found in the world.

This article revealed that although India has unique and fabulous natural offerings it is not able to cash upon them due to lack of various facilities. The best interest of the tourist is not met due to the lack good necessities like amenities, food and water and proper infrastructural facilities like accommodation, transport, accessibility, etc, which were found lacking in certain cases. India has such a bountiful culinary repository that has spreaded all through the regions, if this culinary hidden treasure is explored and implemented in an efficient and effective way then with in a very short span of time, India will place itself as the culinary hub in the global map.

1. Government of India should strike out the concept tourism as a business activity; rather it should imbibe as a facilitator for the development and upliftment of the social cultural and economic aspect of both people engaged in it and the society.
2. To make Culinary Art as a front line in whole tourism system, the government of India needs to organize various food festivals showcasing regional cuisine, set up mega food parks and food courts near popular tourist destination, wine and beer festivals should be conducted in various parts of the country.
3. Insisting the hotels and restaurants, both private and governmental, to offer Indian dishes and that should be made mandatory, and the live kitchen should be set up to showcase the art of Indian culinary in a visualize manner.
4. Indian government has to focus more on the rural tourism, where the ancient cuisine can be explored and the tourist can experience the natural organic food.

5. The ministry of tourism, Govt. of India should come forward to set up more & more hotel management & food craft institute in the country to bridge the gap in hospitality sectors.
6. Also the ministry of culture & tourism, Gov. of India should give more emphasis on CBSP, HUNAR SE ROZGAR TAK PROGRAMME where the below poverty line students will get an exposure and learn the culinary artistic skills which will help in future to heighten the Indian cuisine to a greater extent.
7. Govt of India through the Railway sectors must be given a boost to the regional cuisine by providing the food from the regions which the trains are travelling.

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