Food Tourism and the Culinary Tourist in Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana
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Abstract
The study sought to examine the relevance of food tourism in national development, determine the factors which influence the participation in food tourism and promote interest in local dishes. Questionnaires were administered to 200 respondents who were purposively selected tourists and 20 restaurant operators were interviewed from the Kintampo, Brong Ahafo region. The results revealed that most 104(52%) tourists travel from far and near to enjoy the culture of other regions and countries of which food is part. Factors influencing participation in food tourism are that tourists look for quality food to enjoy and also are attracted by food Bazaars and local delicacies. It was also agreed (100%) that food tourism is relevant to national development. It is therefore recommended that Food tourism be part of the government’s tourism agenda and should be properly organized to meet the current changes and challenges. Also hoteliers should from time to time organize food bazaar and conferences showcasing Ghanaian indigenous dishes. There is the need for the Ministry of Tourism to organize food fairs to showcase local delicacies by both chop bar operators and other food vendors to market the industry.

Keywords: food tourism, local dishes, government tourism agenda, food related activities
INTRODUCTION

The relevance of tourism to the development of countries all over the world cannot be over emphasized. This may be due to the fact that large revenue is obtained from goods and services rendered. It also offers huge opportunities to people. There are classes of tourism that tourists engage themselves in. These include domestic, in bound and out bound tourism. Domestic tourism involves residents of a country travelling only within their country. According to Pearce, (2005) In bound means non – residents travelling in the given country and the out bound is travelling in another country. Apart from the classifications, there are also types of tourism. These are leisure, culture, business, ecotourism and agriculture, culinary and wine tourism. This research is based on food tourism which is culinary tourist.

Food and tourism are connected through the experience that the tourists go through. The tourists eat and dine out, enjoy the taste of a place, consume the sights and sounds away from home, and penetrate into another culture through participation in activities of the area enjoying their meals. Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, (2012), observed that food and tourism allow an individual to experience the culture of others on a sensory level and not just learning it through books. Yurtseven & Kaya (2011) also noted that local food is a fundamental component of the attributes of a tourist destination in addition to the range of attraction and the overall tourist experience. Food is therefore an essential constituent of tourism production as well as consumption.

It is necessary for a tourist to dine out of hunger; however, others dine at particular restaurants to experience the local food and cuisine. To some it is an integral component of their travel itinerary. Some people dine out for pleasure. It forms part of the recreational and leisure activity of the occasion and offer opportunity for visitors to experience the atmosphere of international destinations.

The market forces of globalization through magazines, radio shows and television have made food products and cuisines from all over the world more accessible. Food fairs focus on travel and vice versa. Food network programmers are devoted to food and their source. The fact therefore remains that food and tourism are intertwined. In our interesting and competitive world of tourism marketing, every region or destination is in constant search for a unique product to differentiate itself from an area of other destination. Countries like Canada and Australia have already begun to target the culinary segment in their marketing strategy by promoting local cuisines to their tourists as a main part of their tourism policy (Cooper, 2008). The Canadian Tourism Commission has identified culinary tourism as an important component of the rapid growing cultural tourism market, so has the Tourism Council of Tasmania. The council adopted a strategy in 2002 to develop high quality wine and food tourism experiences,
events and activities, and a multi-regional approach. This has resulted in longer stays and increase visitor spending, resulting in benefits to the local economy (Tourism Council of Tasmania, 2002).

It is interesting to note that dining out in Ghana is currently becoming popular. People are seen patronizing functions and subsequently enjoying a variety of dishes prepared to feature different cultures. There are local television programmers that feature food and tourism like ‘Magi Food Moment’, ‘Edziban a didi’ and scenes from power gliding in the Kwahu mountains. These are attempts to promote food and tourism, in the hospitality industry. It is an industry that has great potential and if properly harnessed and developed can be of much importance to the country. It has the propensity to change the Ghanaian economy and move it to a higher pedestal. Ghana still has many undeveloped natural scenes and sites scattered throughout the country. Some, of the known tourists’ center in Ghana include the Kakum national park in the central region, which is famous for its walk-way, the Buabeng-Fiema monkey sanctuary in the Brong Ahafo region, several castles and forts dotted along the coast, the butterfly sanctuary in the Ashanti region and the Paga crocodile pond. These centers are under–developed and are therefore operating far below expected capacity.

According to Morrison, (2013), the creation of the ministry of tourism underscores the government acknowledgement of the importance of tourism in packaging the country for international market and for revenue generation. He further cited Aburi botanical gardens as one tourist center which has been neglected since it was handed over by the colonialists after independence. After over 100 years of existence the garden, he lamented, has lost its ‘greenness’ and now has become a forest reserve. Aburi Botanical gardens which should have modern chalets that would attract writers, the religiously-inclined, the sick and newly–wed couples who want a quiet but luxurious environment to spend a few days to work, meditate, convalesce or enjoy at a reasonable fee for the development of Ghana economy is now out of shape.

Akordor, K. (2011) also proposed that the garden needs good restaurants which can serve good local dishes for the sake of foreign guests who would want to enjoy some of our delicacies they cannot find in their home countries. It needs amusement parks where children accompanied by their parents could visit at weekends for educational tours and relaxation. There are similar problems in other tourist centers like the Mole game reserve in the Northern Region, Kintampo waterfalls and Boabeng-Fiema in the Brong Ahafo Region. The roads leading to the centers are bad; the hospitality facility very poor and inadequate. It is a fact that what nature has generously provided us has been neglected. We could not harness and add value to it. The Volta Lake also has vast tourism potential with all its numerous islands. It is painful to note
that it is being wasted. The fact remains that tourism development in this country is lagging behind.

Food and tourism have the potential of bringing money to the national coffers and also changing the economy of our rural areas. Ghana has a lot of indigenous variety of nutritious food dishes that can receive foreign attention. What factors have contributed to the neglect and non-participation of people in the food and tourism industry in Ghana and what measures are required to promote the industry in order to reap its benefits? Ghana has a lot of indigenous food varieties that can do well in the food tourism market if well promoted. The food tourism is one of the areas that can be developed to boost the Ghana economy. Until we realize that tourism is a money spinner and can transform the economy into a vibrant one, it will be difficult to break barriers hindering the development of tourism. All components of tourism have suffered in one way or another. In Ghana the food tourism has not been developed. Evidence of linkages between food and tourism is lagging behind with little or limited reference to literature on the subject. This study sought to promote the interest of food tourism in Ghana and to create awareness to Hoteliers on the need to, as Ghanaians prepare, cook and serve our indigenous dishes in our hotels because of the growth of food tourism and to determine the factors which influence the participation in food tourism and promote interest in local dishes.

Specific objectives

1. To determine the concepts which influence the participation in food tourism by stakeholders.
2. To identify and promote interest in local dishes by sustaining food tourism related activities.
3. To examine the relevance of food tourism in national development.

Research questions for the research

The following research questions have been developed from the objectives of the research:

1. What are the concepts which influence participation in food tourism?
2. How can tourists be encouraged to show interest in local dishes?
3. How relevant is food tourism to national development?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Food tourism

Food, according to Foskett and Ceserani (2007) is anything liquid or solid which, when eaten provides the body with nutrients for growth and repair of body tissues, energy, fight infections and protects the body against diseases. Tourism on the other hand has many definitions; it includes a collection of activities, services and industries that deliver a travel experience. It
involves transportation, accommodation, eating and drinking, establishments, retail shops, entertainments, business facilities and other hospitality services provided to individuals or group of traveling away from home, (anonymous). Again tourism according to International association of Scientific Experts in Tourism, it in terms of particular activities selected by choice and undertaken outside the home environment. These definitions and others brought about the research topic, food tourism and the culinary tourist in Ghana.

Mckercher (2008) wrote that food tourism is the act of experiencing the food of the country, region or area and it is now considered as a vital component of the tourism experience.

Food tourism again, is defined as the tourist’s food activities at a destination, such as dining, purchasing local food products and experiencing the characteristics of a unique food-producing region. Hall, (2001), Hjalager, (2002), Hall, (2003), confirm that food is the focus of travel behaviour tourists’ participation in food related activities rather than a by-product. Food is very important to the tourist while on tour for his survival. It is virtually impossible to carry all the needed food items on you to the tourist destination. However, it can also be dangerous to eat unfamiliar food prepared by untrained food vendors. Warde (2000), referred to eating at ethnic and regional cuisine restaurants as a form of gastronomic tourism. He explained that food tourism is not limited to tourists only but also to all participants who patronize the restaurant. A more workable definition of food tourism according to Hall and Sharples (2003) is “visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific location for which tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production region are the primary motivation factor for travel”. The main element in the definition is pointed out by Hall, (2001) that food tourism occurs only when the food of a place acts as a primary motivation to travel to the destination. The definition given falls short because it is limited to interest in food as a travel motivation.

This research redefines food tourism as tourists’ food related activities at a destination, such as consuming ethic and distinctive cuisine, using primary and secondary food producer, purchasing local food products or food pertinent products, and experiencing the characteristics of a unique food producing region. Much as tourists may participate in food tourism, it is the degree of participation which determines where the tourism stands along the tourism interest (Everett, 2016). When participation is high there is indication that there is special interest tourism. This research views culinary tourism as a special interest tourism. Lucy Long, a researcher from Bowling Green University in Ohio (USA) who first coined the term "culinary tourism" back in 1998, (anonymous, 2011) Then in 2003, under the guidance of a group of industry advisors, Erik Wolf founded the International Culinary Tourism Association. The ICTA has grown every year in terms of number of members and scope of programmes offered.
In 2006, the ICTA created a separate International Culinary Tourism Institute, which oversees the educational and training components of the ICTA’s programmes. Then in early 2007, began delivering culinary tourism development solutions to meet the rising industry demand for guidance and leadership in culinary tourism product development and marketing.

According to Long (2015), culinary tourism is “an international, exploratory participation in food ways of another, including consumption or preparation and presentation for consumption of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered as belonging to a culinary system not one’s own”.

Today’s tourist is more cultured than visitors of 20 years ago, is well travelled, is searching for new experiences, is concerned about the environment, is interested in taking part in a health/well-being lifestyle and wants to experience the local culture when he goes on holiday. Trend analyst, Ian Yeoman, (2008), writes that food is a significant aspect of the tourist’s experience of a destination, driven by the need to have a high-quality experience. Food tourism shapes gastronomy destinations such as France, Italy and California whereas in emerging destinations such as Croatia, Vietnam and Mexico food plays an important part of the overall experience, he added.

Long (2004), again identifies five categories of culinary tourism referred to as ‘Other.’ The cultural type of culinary tourism is based on experiencing food ways of ethnicities not one’s own. This is the most frequent category in which culinary tourism is enacted, and represents the common notion of culinary tourism. It is common in Ghana and experienced during festival like the ‘Homowo’, a festival among the Ga-Adangbe people. The festival which is celebrated during the harvest season is done to ‘hoot’ at ‘hunger’ after a long season of hunger. The main dish during the celebration is called ‘kpopkoi’ and palm nut soup. The main ingredients used in preparing include maize, okra, palm nut redfish, herring and crab. The dish is traditionally cooked in earthen pots and prepared only during the festival period. People are attracted to the festival but also have the urge to taste the ‘homowo’ meal, ‘kpokpoi’. There can be no homowo festival without the meal. Its preparation procedure has therefore been handed down from generation to generation. This is a typical example of culinary tourism and needs to be encouraged by adopting it in tourist centres. There are other similar festivals related meals like the yam festival celebrated by the people of Wenchi, Dorma, and Techiman in the Brong Ahafo region; these are culinary tourism which is needed to be integrated into tourism in Ghana.

The next culinary tourism worth mentioning is the regional type which refers to experiencing a food system that is physically removed from one’s own. Geography plays a considerable role in this category of tourism. When a local produce and the cuisine become unique of the region due to a local cultural influence, it makes the local produce ionic of the region alone. A classic
example is the Maine lobster which is part of the Maine Coast has become symbolic of the state (Lewis, 1998) and is an integral part of the Maine tourist itinerary. In Ghana, Atimpoku is noted for “one- man- thousand” fish abadoo, kenkey and ‘adode’ (oyster). Atimpoku is famous because of Adomi Bridge that spans the Volta Lake and makes the Volta region accessible by road from the eastern region. It is also closer to Akosombo, another tourist centre which is famous in electricity power generation.

The third culinary type of tourism is that of experiencing food ways that are separated by time, both historic and futuristic. Activities for this type of culinary tourism would include visiting an attraction where one could say our historic re-enactments of feasts from a different era, sampling foods of the past and food products like heirloom tomatoes, watching demonstrations of old style cooking, buying cookbooks with recipes from the past (Guha, 2009). This type of culinary tourism brings back old practices in cooking methods and gives opportunity to the younger generation to taste indigenous food of the past. In Ghana dishes like ‘apranprasa’, ‘ofam’, ‘nkyokyerewa’ can only be found during functions in institutions, cook art competitions cultural festivals, re-enactments of ancestral practices (“amamre fie” in Kumasi) and school practical work. During such functions many of the defunct dishes which have been alienated from the system are showcased for people to see and taste food of the past. It is during this period that new recipes are introduced and tried.

The fourth category of culinary tourism is experiencing the culinary ethos that is not one’s own. Food cooked for religious dietary requirement fall into this category. Examples are the Ramadan food ‘hallal’, and kosher food, vegetarian foods, vegan and foods cooked using organically grown local produce, are foods cooked with respect to belief systems. Religious beliefs and value systems have been suggested to be influential in determining people’s food consumption patterns. Hassan and Hall’s study (2003) of Muslim tourists in New Zealand examines the role of religious beliefs in food consumption patterns. The researchers found that lack of Hallal food prevents most Muslim tourists from eating at restaurants while traveling and almost 55% of them prepare their own food. The demand for Hallal food by Muslim travelers is often overlooked by destinations. As a result, according to them, many destinations lose tourist revenues/receipts to countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, which offer the tourists opportunities to consume food confirming to their religious belief system.

A few other studies, however, have shown that religious beliefs and other value systems are not very influential in preventing tourists from participating in the food ways of the other. Cohen and Avieli (2004) state that Israeli tourists are willing to be relaxed about the ‘Kashrut laws’ when they are traveling and are open to experiencing most local food, although unwilling to try culturally unacceptable foods like dog, cat, and reptile meat. Similarly, Rotkovitz’s study (2004)
on Jewish tourists suggests that even though they are likely to experience some kind of barrier when experimenting with unfamiliar food ways, there is a more psychological openness to experimentation because travel is transient in nature. The exotic in this case feels like a safe adventure, and religious beliefs and value systems may not be much of a hindrance to trying the local fare. Thus, the relevance of religious beliefs in explaining participation in food tourism has empirically shown mixed support and therefore is excluded from the conceptual framework.

The final category of culinary ‘other’ is the socio-economic order. Examples include dining at an upscale restaurant, attending a gourmet cooking class or experiencing lower class cuisines like mountain foods, southern working class food, down-home diners, home cooked plain food of the middle class that is served at the mom and pop’s outlets and buying ‘white trash cookbooks’. In Ghana, similar site include ‘omotuo special’, ‘akrantie and otwe base’, ‘aponkynkra’ spots. ‘Tilapia special’, ‘akonfem’(guinea fowl) and gizzard joints, and ‘tuo zafi (TZ)’special.

The sites for participation in culinary tourism, according to Long, (2015), include restaurants, ethnic restaurants, festivals, festive food events especially dedicated to a particular produce like apple, peach, pumpkin, shrimp, oysters, snails, redfish, mushrooms, glasscutter, guinea fowl, gizzard and the bat. It is worth noting that cooking demonstrations use local cookware’s like ‘asanka’ and ‘kukuo’ clay products for special reasons. The uses of home grown freshly picked ingredients are also recommended.

Long, (2015) study has helped the understanding of culinary tourism by demonstrating that culinary tourism is composed of different categories of activities and therefore makes it multidimensional. He further explained that there are many sites for participating in culinary tourism and if properly explored can provide more job opportunities to people. Food tourism is therefore relevant to the development of developing countries like Ghana.

**Concepts influencing participation in food tourism**

This section reviews literature relating to concepts that influence participation in food tourism. There are concepts like food studies, social psychology and consumer behaviour. Shenoy, (2005) wrote ‘studies have shown that there are reasons assigned to why people have the propensity to avoid or approach unfamiliar and foreign foods’. Shenoy,( 2005) also found out that a person’s willingness to taste new food is significantly and positively related to how adventurous one thinks he is. Knaapila et al., (2011) explained that food neophobia is a personal trait in men or women. It examines “the reluctance to eat or avoidance of novel foods”. Studies in food and nutrition have demonstrated significant gender and age differences regarding this trait, with
men being more food neophobic than women, and older people more neophobic than younger people.

According to Long, (2004), food consumption is a dynamic process running along three axes: from the exotic to the familiar, from the inedible to the edible, and from the unpalatable to the palatable. In food / culinary tourism, there is usually a shift from the familiar to the exotic, where the exotic could be an ingredient, dish, eating style or preparation method of the host community. For food to function as a tourist attraction, it needs to fall sufficiently outside of the mundane and suitably inside the boundaries of what is palatable (Arcimowicz, et al, 2016). In addition, the perception of what constitutes exotic, inedible or unpalatable depends on personal tastes, personalities, cultural preferences and aesthetics.

Food neophobia is one such personal trait that has been proposed as a barrier for tourists to experience the local cuisines say Cohen, (2004), affecting the food tourism experience Mitchell (2003). Local food might not be an attraction to many tourists because they are afraid of experimenting with novel foods and ingesting something strange (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). However, the empirical significance of food neophobia in explaining participation in food tourism remains untested.

Food borne diseases have been cited as a cause for concern by tourists traveling to developing countries, and “traveler’s diarrhea” is reported as the most common ailment MacLaurin, (2001). In a study of perceived risks of travel, Lepp, (2003) found strange food as being one of the risk factors for tourists. The study revealed that institutionalized tourists, the organized mass tourists, female tourists, and tourists with least experience in traveling abroad perceived strange food to be more of a risk.

From the destinations’ perspective, food neophobia is a major hurdle in increasing the demand for regionally produced food, as seen in Steinmetz, (2010) case studies of the Caribbean Islands. The Caribbean economy, which survives on tourism, imports most of its food because the conservative eating habits of the sun and sand tourists prevent them from experiencing local dishes. This pattern seems to be recurring as evidenced by McAndrews’ (2004) study on Hawaiian tourists, who despite showing interest in Hawaiian culture like Hula, fire-twirlers and the like, seem least interested in the local food, so much, that many a time the local food went untested.

As a result, destinations and restaurants have attempted to surmount the tourists’ neophobic tendencies by developing strategies such as renaming the exotic dishes, or translating it and putting it within American or Anglicized context (e.g. Khmichi as the Korean pickle). Yet another strategy is the development of tourism-oriented culinary establishments Cohen & Avieli, (2004), stated that, serving innovative and creative version of the local dishes that are
transformed to suit the tourist palate, function as a “culinary environmental bubble” for the food neophobic tourists.

To sum up, food’s capacity to affect the tourist’s physical health makes it one of the risk elements of tourism. In addition, the inherent trait within a person to avoid novel foods plays a crucial factor in determining the extent of participation in food tourism. According to Pilcher, (2004), “food neophillic tourism who travelled to Mexico demanded unfamiliar dishes like cuitlacoche (made of corn fungus), and cactus worms, ant eggs, tacos of chapuliness (grasshoppers)”. On the other hand, adventurous but food neophobic tourists, who trek the extreme dangerous terrain of the Himalayas, are too reluctant and fastidious to try local Nepalese fare and carry along packaged toasts, and apple pies Cohen, (2004). In the same vein Ghanaians who visit the countryside often shun local dishes and rather take coconut. They normally give excuses like unfamiliarity and prefer to play it safe. However, the actual reason is their suspicion which lies in the conditions under which such dishes have been prepared. This implies that a tourist may be motivated to choose a destination in order to seek novelty; it may not function within the realm of food Pearce, (2005).

**Variety-Seeking Tendency and Food Tourism**

Ratner & Kahn (2002), noted that, a consumer’s desire to select a variety of food may depend on factors like changes in taste, constrains and changes feasible alternative. Ratner & Kahn, (2002) also acknowledged that variety-seeking attitude of tourists stems out of stimulation to accept substituted Food. Mak et al., (2012) defines variety seeking tendency with respect to food as “the factor that aims at providing variation in stimulation through varied food product alternative”. Tourists seek variety when the type of food that is normally consumed is not available. There is variety seeking when there are changes in constraints, such as access to more money or restaurants. Changes in tastes due to advertising may influence variety in order to break from monitory in consumption of food. Goldberg, et al, (2016) further considered variety seeking with respect to food as a manifestation of cultural experimentation and a search for innovation in consumption.

**Measures to Encourage Tourists to Show Interest in local dishes**

An exhibition of culture competency by natives may attract and convince tourist to enjoy local dishes, ordering a particular dish and pronouncing it the way natives pronounce it is one way of encouraging tourists to develop interest in a particular dish. Molz, (2004), emphasised that the dining place ought to be open to both locals and tourists. Participation of locals should be very high. The natives should be prepared to educate tourists on the nutritional value of the dish. The environment and the setting should meet required standards. Waste disposal should be efficient. Intelligent and smartly dressed workers should be strategically positioned for easy
identification. There should variety of pictures to advertise the various dishes and these should include pictures of tourists who patronize the centre. It is important to impress tourists after the initial preparation by a well delicious and attractive local dish acceptable for the consumption of both natives and foreigners. It is known that tourist who possesses cultural capital frequent places of all types and derives satisfactions from consuming peasant foods as they do from eating at high quality restaurants. Local tourists’ sites should be designed to suit tourists’ taste. Recreational grounds can be added to a cultural dimension to the destination. It is widely known that where the tourist eats and what he eats exhibits the socio-cultural class he belongs to and makes food an ideal tool for social cohesion and social stratification, Sajna S. Shenoy, (2005).

In Ghana some local dishes are becoming popular and need to be advertised to the outside world. Such dishes include fufu with variety of soups like mudfish and snail in palm nut soup, light soup with fish and goat meat, and green soup with mushroom and snail (‘abunabunu’). Another dish worth mentioning is ‘ampesi’ (boiled plantain) and ‘kontomire’ stew with agushi (melon seeds stew), sliced yam and garden-egg stew and ‘omutuo’-rice balls with groundnut soup. Delicacies like guinea fowl, grass-cutter and crabs are also becoming internationally acceptable.

**Promotion of tourism for development**

The benefits derived from tourism cannot be over emphasized. Ghana abounds in many undeveloped tourist centres that need to be exploited. What is required is the injection of huge capital to redesign and construct infrastructure and access roads to meet international standards. The centre must be managed by well qualified and trained personnel. There should be departments like the administration centre, natural scenes and sites, restaurants to take care of food tourism, recreational units, libraries for research purposes hotels or guest houses and business or craft centres/markets. The natives of the area should not be left out in the development agenda. They should integrate into the activities of the centre. They should be given the opportunity to cultivate and produce food ingredients needed to sustain the food tourism component of the centre. They should be encouraged and supported to supply vegetables, food crops, bush meat edible oil and labour. They should also be encouraged to engage in grasscutter rearing, rabbitory, poultry farming and animal husbandry. Mineral water production should also be encouraged at the centre. Food tourism should be part of the government’s tourism agenda and should therefore be properly organised, sustained and preserved for expansion and modernised to meet current changes and challenges.
METHODOLOGY

The researchers found it appropriate to use qualitative approach with descriptive survey design. According to Leedy & Ormrod (2001), qualitative research is normally used in exploratory research design to gain preliminary insights into decision problems and opportunities. Hence, qualitative research in the exploratory research design tends to focus on the collection of detailed amounts of primary data from relatively small samples of subjects by asking questions or observing behaviour (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). It also tends to uncover the underlying motivations behind consumers’ opinions, attitudes, perceptions and behaviour.

Population:
The target population chosen are International and local tourists who visit the Kintampo waterfalls, Boabeng-fiema monkey sanctuary, hotels in Brong-Ahafo, restaurants and bars in Kintampo.

Sample Technique and Size:
The sample frame was drawn purposively from tourists (both local and international), at lorry parks, some restaurants, hotels, Kintampo waterfalls, and Boabeng-fiema monkey sanctuary. These are the popular attraction centres. Any tourist who is willing to participate in the study is selected. This allowed a sample size of 200 to be selected. 20 Restaurant practitioners were interviewed on food tourism perception.

Instrument:
The instrument used to gather the primary data was questionnaire.

Data Analysis: Data was analysed descriptively using tables with frequencies and percentages

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Nationality of Tourists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghanaian</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other African countries</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries outside Africa</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers field work 2016

Table 1 shows the nationality of respondents. It is clear that more Ghanaians partook in the study which is good because the perception of the local people on food tourism is much needed in this study.
Table 2: Concepts influencing participation in food tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts influencing participation</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs provide needed food and drink at tourists centers</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food bazaars attract tourists</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists look for quality food to eat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfamiliar items on menu</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of food by entrepreneurs to satisfy tourists</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist should be encouraged to eat local dishes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers Fieldwork 2016

This section discusses factors that influence participation of food tourism. 63% of respondents disagreed that entrepreneurs provide needed food and drink at tourists’ centers. This confirmed by Shenoy, (2005) that a person’s willingness to taste new food is significantly and positively related to how adventurous one thinks he is. Similarly, Wolfe (2016) support the assertion that the needed food and drink to tourists are not provided because some tourists fear to eat unfamiliar food. They also disagreed to the statement that tourist’s destinations provide food to satisfy tourists. Akordor (2011) stated that Aburi botanical gardens needs good restaurants which serve local dishes for the sake of foreign visitors. This also confirms the statement tourists should be encouraged to eat local dishes which has 125(65%) of the respondents agreeing to it. Nield, et al (2000); and Spearks, et al, (2003), in their study also confirmed the presences of an array of ethnic restaurants that provide a multiplicity of culinary experiences are considered important attributes of a tourist destination.
Table 3: The relevance of food tourism to national development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number of respondents who agreed</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food tourism is beneficial national development</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food tourism promote employment</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Tourism can generate high revenue for national development</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers fieldwork, 2016

The study sought to identify the various factors that influence food tourism to national development. As shown in the table above, all the respondents agreed that food tourism is beneficial because it can promote employment and yield high revenue. This finding confirms Akordor’s (2011) observation that when tourism is properly harnessed for the international market, it can generate a lot of revenue for national development.

Table 4: Food tourism showcase local delicacies to satisfy tourist demand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Tourism showcase local delicacies</th>
<th>Number Of respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
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Researchers fieldwork, 2016

As a result of the survey on the showcasing local delicacies, more than 10% of respondents did not agree to the statement showcase local food will meet customer demand. Even though they knew it can help satisfy tourist food demand, whiles more than 80% agreed to the statement. This is in agreement with the assertion made by Sajna (2005) that where the tourist eats and
what he eats exhibits the socio-cultural class he belongs to and makes food an ideal tool for social cohesion and social stratification.

RESULTS FROM INTERVIEW

The interview results revealed that culinary consumers tend to be couples that have above-average income, are usually professionals and are aged 30 to 50 years. This confirms The International Culinary Tourism Association report which 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. Restaurant owners agreed that a good number of tourists’ eager to know the kind of food they serve locally and actually try them. This shows that the level of interest in our local food by foreign tourists is not bad and a work on advertisement and promotion will help establish the market.

CONCLUSIONS

Today, the consumer is better educated, wealthy, has travelled more extensively, lives longer, and is concerned about his health and the environment. The study results revealed that all the respondents agreed that food tourism is beneficial because it can promote employment and yield high revenue. This shows that when tourism is properly harnessed for the international market, it can generate a lot of revenue for national development. As a result, food and drink has become more important and have a higher priority amongst certain social groupings. To the extent food is the new culture capital of a destination, as if culture has moved out of the museum to become a living experience of consumption. On factors that influence tourists’ participation in food tourism, it was clear that tourists look for good quality food, and so when local delicacies are properly showcased, tourists will no doubt patronize it. The study further revealed that tourists are scared of unsafe food therefore food providers should go an extra mile to prove to tourists that the food is safe. One thing is clear; food must be a quality product, whether it is slow food or fast food, therefore sumptuous dishes that are safe should be served at all destinations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Food tourism should be part of the government’s tourism agenda and should therefore be properly organised, to meet the current changes and challenges. There is the need for the Ministry of Tourism to organize Food Fairs to showcase local delicacies by both chop bar operators and other food vendors to market the industry and hotel restaurants should incorporate local dishes in their menus. Food borne diseases have been cited as a cause for concern by tourists traveling to developing countries, and “traveler’s diarrhea” is reported as
the most common ailment MacLaurin, (2001). Therefore, food service providers’ adherence to strict hygienic principles will go a long way to promote food tourism.

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