



1st UNWTO World Forum on Food Tourism

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CONCLUSIONS

Food tourism is a cross-cutting segment incorporating various economic sectors: Depending on the person and the motivation behind the trip, culinary expectations can vary. Moreover, it is difficult to identify a food tourist, as many of their interests overlap with those of conventional tourists.

The commitment of sustainability: Although the tourism sector makes a significant contribution to the GDP of countries and job creation, the sustainability of this growth should be taken into consideration. Sustainable food tourism should incorporate the three pillars of sustainability defined by UNWTO: environmental (reducing emissions), sociocultural (the authenticity of a destination) and economic (equitable distribution).

The challenge of globalization: Promotion should be global, but the experience local. Food tourism is a form of cultural preservation and should be configured around the quality and authenticity of the product and territory.

Food tourism is a catalyst for the local economy: Food tourism provides the opportunity for job creation and the development of local economies, which in turn positively affects other sectors. It is also a major contributor to overcoming seasonality.

Coordinated efforts: Food tourism should be inclusive and collaborative, adding value and bringing together the efforts of all stakeholders in a territory. This cooperation is essential when taking into account small local production with weaker tourism infrastructure. Local branding is equally as important as regional branding. A single, coherent message developed by all parties involved and those associated with the destinations' brand is a challenge that cannot be addressed without qualified professionals.

The importance of people and the story: People and their stories humanize an experience, making it attractive to visitors. Storytelling should be innovative, building a narrative about the food in a destination, looking for new angles that reflect the points of difference. The digital era multiplies channels, promotes conversations and creates new audiences.

The food tourist is also a prosumer: Control of the tourist market has shifted from producer to consumer, to the traveller who is not seeking a service but an authentic and memorable experience. Progressively, tourists are more educated, demanding, exercise criticism and share experiences online.

Pairing gastronomy: Work is needed to position food tourism in the front lines of destinations' strategies. All destinations have "gastro" potential, but it is important to create holistic food tourism experiences. Food tourism is to be paired with the ingredients of landscape, culture and history.

In a competitive global market, innovation must be ongoing, but it is equally important to maintain identity and authenticity, as heart of the story.