



Gastronomic Tourism as a Core Tourism Product for Augmenting Cultural Tourism in Egypt

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Abstract

Offering a variety of distinctive and unique tourism products can have a positive impact on tourist destinations. Gastronomic tourism, which highlights a destination's local cuisine as a key attraction, is particularly influential when it is tied to the country's cultural heritage. This study aims to explore how gastronomic tourism can be leveraged to enhance Egypt's cultural tourism. The research was based on primary data collected through a questionnaire distributed to (408) tourists between August and November 2024. It also incorporated a range of secondary sources related to the topic. The results indicated that gastronomic tourism provides a distinctive way to experience a culture, with food serving as a gateway to local traditions and values. This, in turn, can help boost cultural tourism in Egypt. As a result, the study recommends promoting Egypt's culinary heritage, developing food trails that connect cultural landmarks, aligning food with national festivals, and incorporating food into historical tours to strengthen the bond between food and culture. Additionally, improving infrastructure, focusing on sustainability, training skilled staff, and securing government support are critical factors for ensuring success.

Introduction

The tourism product is comprised of tangible and intangible components that help in constituting the destination's identity and providing a unique experience to tourists (UNWTO, 2024). Tourism products are critical factors for shaping tourists' motivations, affecting their choice of destinations and making their decision of travel (Haid & Albrecht, 2021). Hence, the decision-making process of choosing a tourist destination depends basically upon the tourism product regarding its quality, price and trustworthiness (Selvi & Praveen, 2024). Plenty of tourism products have changed profoundly over the past few years in response to changes in tourists' tastes and preferences (Duda, 2023). Therefore, tourist destinations are now keen on offering novel and innovatory tourism products that provide tourists with new experiences, and/or expanding or enhancing an existing product by comprehending the present trends (Hanifah et al., 2024; Huang, 2024; Ogera, 2024; Plzáková & Tittelbachová, 2024; Beltramo et

al., 2022 and Nekmahmud et al., 2021). The tourism industry has witnessed many considerable changes, especially when tourists have become fond of experiencing new high-quality tourism products (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Travelling for enjoying local foods is not a new phenomenon, nevertheless it is a current growing trend in the tourism industry (Mulcahy, 2019). Gastronomic tourism features tourists who travel to a destination for exploring its local cuisine and discovering its local culture from food (Acharjee, 2023). According to the findings of an exploratory study, the problem of this research emerges from the fact that despite the exquisiteness, uniqueness and plentitude of the local Egyptian cuisine, gastronomic tourism is not well-exploited to attract more cultural tourists to the Egyptian tourist destination. The importance of this research investigates into comprehending the contribution of gastronomic tourism in augmenting cultural tourism in the Egyptian tourist destination. Thus, this research aims at clarifying the concept of gastronomic tourism, shedding light on its features, understanding its travel motivations, identifying its importance, demystifying its relation with cultural tourism, and explaining how it can play a part in boosting the number of cultural tourists in Egypt, and consequently augmenting the Egyptian cultural tourism.

Literature Review

1- Gastronomic Tourism as a Core Tourism Product

Food is considered a significant tourism product and a key item for urging and motivating tourists to travel to a specific tourist destination (Tham & Chin, 2024; Sahoo & Anushree, 2024). It has been noted that eighty percent of tourists take into consideration food experiences and practices during their holidays, which led to the emergence of the term 'gastronomic tourism' (Senthilkumar et al., 2024). The word gastronomy is originally derived from the Greek word 'gaster', which means stomach, added to the Greek suffix 'nomy', which means a law or rule (Cachiguango et al., 2023). Hamidovich (2023) referred to the word 'gastronomy' as the art, activity and knowledge of cooking, eating, savouring and appreciating fine food and beverages. Gastronomic tourism, which is also known as gastro tourism, culinary tourism, gourmet tourism or simply food tourism depends basically upon utilising local food and beverages and their related environment as a tourist attraction (Andreanto et al., 2023; Thongkaw et al., 2023; Okumus, 2020). It is that tourism pattern whose tourists are motivated to visit a certain destination to have a diverse experience through its local and ethnic food (Bhanityanakorn et al., 2024). Therefore, gastronomic tourism is devoted to emphasising food experiences of tourists (Manochitraa & Kavitha 2024) by enabling them to delve into the destination's cuisine, immersing them in the predilection of local food and giving them an opportunity to savour its distinctiveness (Maraña et al., 2024; Al Usrah et al., 2023^a; Al Usrah et al., 2023^b). Furthermore, gastronomic tourism is not only confined to tasting and experiencing local food, but it also includes plenty of activities related to it e.g. visiting domestic food markets, visiting locations of local food production, meeting local food producers, going on food tours, participating in social dining, taking part in cooking classes and learning about local culinary and ethnic food (Leković et al., 2023; Park & Widyanta, 2022; Rachão et al., 2020 and Ellis, 2018). As a result, gastronomic tourism destinations have taken into consideration developing different food attractions e.g. culinary tours, culinary events and celebrations, and food workshops so that they can gratify tourists who are fascinated by experiencing food aspects of the visited area (Gunduz et al., 2024; Vlachou & Savvinopoulou, 2022; Yang et al., 2020). It is noteworthy that gastronomic tourism is no longer a niche tourism product, however it is a flourishing and significant growing trend in the tourism industry (Sachdeva, 2024; Mulcahy, 2019). Gastronomic tourism has witnessed remarkable expansions and popularisation over years; particularly in the

period from 2008 to 2015, and it is still on increase (Bhanityanakorn et al., 2024). There are many current variables that affect positively on tourists' travel intentions with regard to food (Sharma et al., 2023). Instances of these variables include the advanced information technology, the growing number of online food reviewers and social media food bloggers, as well as the extensive digital marketing regarding eating choices at tourist destinations (Mengjia et al., 2023).

2- Gastronomic Tourism in the Cultural Tourism Context

Cultural tourists have become keen on acquiring new experiences when visiting a tourist destination (Lin et al., 2024). Cultural factors act as significant pull factors in terms of the destination's ability to entice tourists to visit it and achieve its competitiveness (Amoiradis et al., 2024). Cultural tourism is that form of tourism where tourists' main travel motivation is to experience tangible and intangible cultural products at the tourist destination; encompassing architecture, antiquities, monuments, literature, norms, beliefs, customs, traditions, life style, arts, music, and local cuisine particularly in its relation with the destination's historical backgrounds (Chauhan, 2022). It has been noted that cuisine has a strong connection with culture, heritage, and reflection of the destination's identity (Gupta et al., 2024). Quintessential local and traditional cuisine of a certain area e.g. a region or country, does not only provide an avant-garde experience to tourists, but also reflects the history, culture, characteristics and local identity of that area in terms of habits, customs, traditions and norms (Adhianata et al., 2024; An et al., 2023; Baek et al., 2022; Yoo et al., 2022). Therefore, the perception of tourists towards the destination's local heritage and culture can be influenced by its local cuisine and ethnic food recipes (Mantiri, 2024). Tourist destinations are keen on exerting more efforts to diversify their products and services to guarantee unique experiences for tourists (Gomez et al., 2024). They are now differentiating themselves by creating a local cuisine image connected with its intangible cultural heritage (Eren, 2020).

3- Travel Motivations in Gastronomic Tourism

Travel Motivations are the chief factors that shape tourists' travel intentions and behaviours, and help in attaining their satisfaction (Soldatenko & Backer, 2019). They prompt tourists to travel to a specific tourist destination instead of another (Fonseca et al., 2024) by affecting on their persuasion about making the travel and experiencing the destination's different activities (Douglas et al., 2024). As mentioned before, gastronomic tourism is strongly related to cultural tourism (Mahmudi, 2023). It is not only meant of experiencing local cuisine offerings, but also goes beyond mere food consumption through savouring the authenticity of the destination's culture through food (Nazar & Shanthi, 2024). According to studies of Araruna & Kasmita (2024); Masmoudi & Jmour (2024); Bonanza et al. (2023); Singh et al. (2023) and Sugiartini (2023); travel motivations in gastronomic tourism have been identified as indicated in the following points:

- a-** The experiential motivation i.e. tasting the destination's local ethnic food and beverages.
- b-** The exploration motivation i.e. exploring the destination's local food as well as its local culture, heritage and tradition from food.
- c-** The learning and understanding motivation i.e. learning and getting experience about the destination's ethnic cuisine, its recipes and its historical background.
- d-** The social motivation i.e. strengthening social gathering and interaction with locals under the theme of ethnic food and culture.

- e- The entertainment motivation i.e. participating in organised food events and activities related to food organized at the tourist destination.
- f- Pleasure motivation i.e. the capability of food in providing tourist with memorable experiences.

4- Significance of Gastronomic Tourism for the Cultural Tourism Destinations

Gastronomic tourism has spread in many countries, particularly when many tourists became eager to immerse themselves in the local culture of the visited destination through food experiences (Das et al., 2023). According to Hidayat et al. (2024); Kesuma et al. (2024); Rangel et al. (2024); Rozanis et al. (2024); Kireeva et al. (2022); instances of countries that have a successful gastronomic tourism either as an independent tourism pattern or as a dependent tourism pattern upon cultural tourism include France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Poland, Russia, Greece, Indonesia, China, Thailand, India and Mexico. According to studies of Adhianata et al. (2024); Bhanityanakorn et al. (2024); Htet et al. (2024); Long et al. (2024); Tiwari & Mohanty (2024); Vuksanovic et al. (2024); Bairwa & Patawari (2023); Kamalapriya & Sanjeeva (2023); Leković et al. (2023); Putra et al. (2023); Wibowo et al. (2023); Lei et al., (2020); Liberato et al. (2020); gastronomic tourism has many privileges to the cultural tourist destination, as it helps in:

- a- Enhancing a profound appreciation for the destination's culture, legacy, genesis, authenticity and originality.
- b- Offering a deeper understanding of the destination's customs, traditions, norms, values, and life style.
- c- Promoting the country's entire cultural value and supporting its cultural tourism.
- d- Distinguishing the tourist destination from others.
- e- Understanding the historical background of preparing local food.
- f- Satisfying the curiosity of tourists about the destination's local food.
- g- Increasing travel activities of cultural tourism regarding its local culinary.
- h- Enhancing the branding and marketing of tourist destinations.
- i- Supporting the economic growth and the local economic development.
- j- Increasing the competency of tourist destinations.
- k- Attaining a genuine development at tourist destinations.

5- Local Egyptian Cuisine as a Key Component in the Egyptian Cultural Tourism

The Egyptian cuisine is considered one of the greatest cuisines amongst Arab countries and countries of the Mediterranean area. It includes plenty of dishes that are not only characterised by their uniqueness and deliciousness, but also by their vast historical backgrounds (UNWTO, 2021). The diversity of cultural backgrounds and different civilisations of Egypt e.g. Pharonic, Graeco-Roman, Byzantine, Coptic and Islamic strongly affected on the diversity of the Egyptian cuisine and the Egyptian food culture (Mohamed et al., 2020^a). Food constituted a paramount importance in the Ancient Egyptians' life, not only for nutrition but also for religious ceremonies e.g. mummification, the hereafter and funeral rituals, as well as the coronation ceremonies and wedding celebrations (Halawa, 2023). All practices of food had been depicted on walls of Pharaonic temples and tombs and demonstrated different types of Egyptian cuisine ingredients e.g. dried fruits, dried vegetables, meat of animals, meat of birds and bread (Muhs, 2018). Most of types of Pharaonic bread are still used up till now in modern Egypt e.g. Battaw Bread, Sun Bread, Sinn Bread, Rokak and Menatat bread (Mohamed et al., 2020^b). Food was also connected

with many Pharonic festivities e.g. Opet Feast in Thebes, the Valley Feast in Thebes, the Harvest Feast and many others occasions in which food was consumed for celebration (Rady et al., 2021). The famous Egyptian dish 'Molokhiya' was used to be prepared by the Egyptians since the past Roman era (Samih, 2023). Moreover, Egyptian Bedouins have outstanding gastronomic traditions, exceptional culinary practices and food habits that depends upon utilising some rudimentary materials e.g. firewood, heated sand, and clay ovens for cooking distinctive food items e.g. Mebaqbaqa and Kadid in Matrouh, Grisha in Sinai, Asida in all Egyptian Bedouin areas, in addition to special kinds of exclusive Egyptian Bedouin bread e.g. Tanour, Sag and Qarasa (Abdulmawla et al., 2019). Furthermore, Egypt is exclusively famous for other traditional dishes reflecting a significant part of its traditional culture e.g. Fuol Medames, Kosharey, Termes, Bisara, Bamya and many others (Boukid, 2024; Riolo, 2013). In addition, Egypt is also noted for its local beverages e.g. hibiscus drink, the liquorice drink, cinnamon drink, the sugar cane juice and many others (Riolo, 2013). Therefore, recognising, appreciating and preserving local Egyptian food are of extreme importance for cultural tourist destinations.

Methodology

This research depended upon utilising a mixed methodology comprising primary and secondary data. The secondary data included meticulous theoretical studies related to its subject. The primary data depended upon designing a questionnaire about the research's topic. Although there was a difficulty in determining the exact number of respondents, the random sample was utilised. Hence, the questionnaire was targeted at a randomly chosen sample of (500) tourists; Egyptians and foreigners. According to Mohamed et al. (2024); Halawa (2023); Taha et al. (2023); UNWTO (2021); Abdulsamiee (2021) and Mohamed (2020^a), Egyptian tourists were chosen alongside foreign tourists due to the key role that domestic tourism plays in the Egyptian tourism sector, the importance of identifying local tourists' perception of the relation between the local food and cultural tourism. Furthermore, some of the local Egyptian dishes in some Egyptian regions e.g. Matrouh, Siwa, Sinai and Upper Egypt might be uncommon for some Egyptians. The number of valid questionnaires for statistical analysis was (408) forms, with a response rate of 82%. The minimum number of respondents that should be applied to the unrestricted community should be (385) as shown in the following equation (Thompson, 2012):

$$n = \frac{N \times P(1 - P)}{\{N - 1 \times (d^2 \div Z^2)\} + P(1 - P)}$$

N= Sample size, P = Purpose of this study's Percentage 0.50, d = Error limit 's Percentage allowed 0.05, Z = The standard degree for giving general results is 95%. The standard degree = 1.96.

$$\begin{aligned} N &= \frac{500000 \times 0.50(1 - 0.50)}{\{500000 - 1 \times (0.05^2 \div 1.96^2) + 0.05(1 - 0.50)\}} \\ &= \frac{125.500}{325.63} \times 100 = 385.40 \approx 385 \end{aligned}$$

Due to the importance of online questionnaires as a popular and dependable method of gathering data (Wiemken et al., 2018; Saleh & Bista, 2017), a Google Form was designed for gathering data from respondents. The online questionnaires have been sent through travel agencies' emails and their official social media pages, as well as other official pages and platforms related to tourism and travelling. The questionnaire was designed according to aims of the research and consisted of three sections. The first section was designed to obtain

demographic data of respondents e.g. gender, age group, nationality, marital status, educational level, and average of income in United States dollars. The second section relied upon asking five indicative questions in regard to respondents' perception of gastronomic tourism. The statements of this section were set after reviewing some of the aforementioned studies e.g. Gupta et al. (2024); Mantiri, (2024); Chauhan, (2022) and Eren, (2020). The Third section consisted of fifteen Likert-type scale statements aimed at gathering more data and facts about the relationship between applying gastronomic tourism in the Egyptian tourist destination and augmenting its cultural tourism. The statements of this section were set after reviewing some of the aforementioned studies e.g. Long et al. (2024); Masmoudi & Jmour (2024); Bonanza et al. (2023); Singh et al. (2023) and UNWTO (2021). According to Likert Scale; mean, standard deviation, relative weight and degrees of agreement have been utilised to demonstrate the differences amongst respondents' opinions. The range of each level of agreement was calculated as indicated:

- Strongly disagree = from 1 to 1.79
- Disagree = from 1.80 to 2.59
- Do not know = from 2.60 to 3.39
- Agree = from 3.40 to 4.19
- Strongly agree = from 4.20 to 5

A pre-test was carried out to test wording, layout and completion time. After the forms had been adjusted, they were carried out in the period from the 3rd of August, 2024 to the 30th of November, 2024. Results were statistically analysed by using the SPSS programme; version (28). The analysed data helped in revealing some important facts about the subject of study and were presented in tables.

Reliability and Validity

As indicated in the following Table (1), the questionnaire's reliability and validity of this study were measured depending upon Cronbach's Alpha coefficient.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
20	0.903

Table (1) demonstrates that the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of the questionnaire's dimensions was 0.903, which is higher than 0.70 (Pallant, 2020). This finding proves the reliability and validity of the questionnaire utilised in the study.

Results and Discussion

Section One: Respondents' Demographic Data:

Table 2. Demographic Data of Respondents

Demographic Data	Attributes	Statistics		Rank
		Frequency	%	
Gender	Male	224	54.9	1
	Female	184	45.1	2
Total		408	100%	
Continued				

Age Group	Less than 35 years old		104	25.5	2			
	From 35 to less than 45 years old		148	36.3	1			
	From 45 to less than 55 years old		80	19.6	3			
	From 55 to less than 65 years old		52	12.7	4			
	Over 65 years old		24	5.9	5			
Total			408	100%				
Nationality	Egyptian		276	67.6	1			
	Non-Egyptian	Jordanian	132	24	32.4	5.9	2	2
		Syrian		44		10.8		1
		Libyan		24		5.9		2
		Iraqi		12		2.9		3
		Bulgarian		8		2.0		4
		American		4		1.0		5
		British		12		2.9		3
		Romanian		4		1.0		5
Total			408	100%				
Marital Status	Single		120	29.4	2			
	Newly Married		32	7.8	3			
	Married with Children		248	60.8	1			
	Divorced		8	2.0	4			
Total			408	100%				
Educational level	Pre-university		36	8.8	4			
	Bachelor of Science		176	43.1	1			
	Master of Science		92	22.5	3			
	Doctor of Philosophy		104	25.5	2			
Total			408	100%				
Income Average in US Dollar	Less than \$500		120	29.4	2			
	From \$500 to less than \$1000		172	42.2	1			
	More than \$1000		116	28.4	3			
Total			408	100%				

According to the previous table (2), demographic data of respondents have been revealed as indicated:

1- Gender

The sample has a fair representation of both males and females, with nearly equal proportions. However, the data state that the percentage of male respondents are more than females; as 54.9% of respondents are males in comparison with 45.1% of females.

2- Age Group

There is a representation across different age groups, which deepens analytical perspectives from diverse age demographics. The majority of respondents' age group is from 35 years old to less than 45 years old; representing 36.3%, followed by respondents whose age group is less than 35 years old; representing 25.5%, followed by respondents whose age group is from 45 years old to less than 55 years old; representing 19.6%, followed by respondents whose age group is from 55 years old to less than 65 years old; representing 12.7% and finally came respondents whose age group is over 65 years old; representing 5.9%.

3- Nationality

According to respondents' nationality, the majority of respondents are Egyptians; representing 67.6%, whilst non-Egyptian respondents represented 32.4%. Nationalities of non-Egyptian respondents have been identified and included Syrians; representing 10.8%, followed by Jordanians and Libyans; representing 5.9% for each one of them, followed by Iraqi and British; representing 2.9% for each one of them, followed by Bulgarians; representing 2%, and finally came Americans and Romanians; representing 1% for each one of them. The inclusion of various nationalities in the sample ensures a broad range of perspectives contributing to a broader understanding of respondents from different cultural backgrounds.

4- Marital Status

According to respondents' marital status, the majority of respondents are married with children; representing 60.8%, followed by singles; representing 29.4%, followed by the newly married; representing 7.8%, and finally came the divorced; representing 2%. The inclusion of various marital statuses in the sample ensures a diverse range of perspectives fostering a deeper understanding of respondents from different relationship backgrounds.

5- Educational Level

According to respondents' educational level, the majority of respondents hold a bachelor of science degree; representing 43.1%, followed by respondents holding a doctor of philosophy degree; representing 25.5%, followed by respondents holding a master of science degree; representing 22.5%, and finally came those holding a pre-university degree; representing 8.8%. Incorporating a range of educational levels provide diverse perspectives for enhancing the understanding of respondents with varied academic experiences.

6- Income Average in US Dollar

According to respondents' income average in United States dollar, the majority of respondents' income average is from 500 US dollars to less than 1000 dollars; representing 42.2%, followed by respondents' whose income average is less than 500 dollars; representing 29.4%, and finally came respondents whose income average is more than 1000 dollars; representing 28.4%. The diversity in income levels gives insights from respondents with varying spending capacities.

Section Two: Respondents' Perception of the Gastronomic Tourism Concept

1- Are you acquainted with the gastronomic tourism concept?

Table 3. Respondents' Acquaintance with the Gastronomic Tourism Concept

Attributes	Frequency	Percent
Yes	232	56.9
Somewhat	124	30.4
No	52	12.7
Total	408	100

As indicated in the previous table (3), answers showed that the majority of respondents are acquainted with the gastronomic tourism concept; representing 56.9%, respondents who answered "to somewhat" represented 30.4%, and respondents who answered "no"; represented 12.7%. It can be inferred from this finding that gastronomic tourism has become known and widespread amongst a large category of tourists, which is consistent with the study of Jain & Mitra (2024), which stated that gastronomic tourism became known to many people due to many factors e.g. various types of media.

2- Are you motivated to visit a tourist destination for experiencing it local cuisine?

Table 4. Respondents' Motivations Towards Visiting a Tourist Destination for experiencing it local cuisine

Attributes	Frequency	Percent
Yes	264	64.7
Somewhat	112	27.5
No	32	7.8
Total	408	100

As indicated in the previous table (4), the majority of respondents; representing 64.7% are motivated to visit a tourist destination to try its local dishes 64.7%. Respondents who answered 'somewhat' represented 27.5% and finally came respondents who answered 'no' representing 7.8%. The majority of respondents emphasised the importance of food and beverages throughout their holidays, particularly in terms of trying the local cuisine of the visited destination. This finding is consistent with the studies of Yeşilçimen & Akin (2025) and Cahyaningrum et al. (2023), which mentioned that there is a substantial relation between food and tourism, as food is considered an integral part of the entire tourism experience, in addition to its role in experiencing new cuisine, socialisation and culture. The finding is also consistent with the study of Staver et al. (2024), which mentioned that cuisine has become one of the main driving forces for visiting a tourist destination, which resulted in the emergence of gastronomic tourism.

3- Is gastronomic tourism important to the destination's cultural tourism?

Table 5. Importance of Gastronomic Tourism to the Destination's Cultural Tourism

Attributes	Frequency	Percent
Yes	372	91.2
Somewhat	32	7.8
No	4	1.0
Total	408	100

According to the previous table (5), the majority of respondents; representing 91.2% stated that gastronomic tourism is important to the destination's cultural tourism, followed by respondents who answered to 'somewhat'; representing 7.8% and finally came those who answered 'no'; representing only 1%. The majority of respondents stated that gastronomic tourism has many advantages to tourist destinations in terms of cultural tourism and culture preservation. This finding is consistent with the study of Bain (2024), which mentioned that gastronomic tourism has a key role in preserving the culture of local cuisine and reinforcing the country's identity. Furthermore, the finding is also consistent with the study of Yaman & Koksall (2024), which stated that that gastronomic tourism is important to cultural tourism, particularly when a part of the country's culture and heritage is reflected in its cuisine.

4- Could adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt positively influence the Egyptian tourism sector? (Please, elaborate)

Table 6. The Impact of Gastronomic Tourism on the Egyptian Tourism Sector

Attributes	Frequency	Percent
Yes	376	92.2
Somewhat	24	5.9
No	8	2.0
Total	408	100

According to the previous table (6), the majority of respondents' answers; representing 92.2% revealed that adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt will have a positive impact on the Egyptian tourism sector, followed by respondents who answered 'to somewhat'; representing 5.9% and finally came respondents who answered 'no'; representing only 2%. The majority of respondents stated that many advantages can be generated from adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt e.g. creating a diversity in the Egyptian tourism product, attracting a new category of domestic and international tourists i.e. gastronomic tourists, increasing the number of domestic and international cultural tourists, increasing the popularity of the local Egyptian cuisine of different Egyptian regions, enhancing the competition of the Egyptian tourism sector either in gastronomic tourism or cultural tourism, reflecting a part of the Egyptian cultural heritage in different eras, preserving the national identity and legacy, realising the cultural sustainable development of Egypt, increasing the employment rate by creating new job opportunities for youth, attracting new investments and enhancing the Egyptian tourism growth. This finding is consistent with the studies of Mengjia et al. (2024) and Fitrizal et al. (2021), which stated that gastronomic tourism has many advantages to tourist destinations, particularly in terms of enhancing the destination's cultural experience, sustainability, growth and prosperity.

5- Are there any obstacles hindering the proper implementation of gastronomic tourism in Egypt? (Please, elaborate)

Table 7. Obstacles Hindering the Proper Implementation of Gastronomic Tourism in Egypt

Attributes	Frequency	Percent
Yes	124	30.4
Somewhat	172	42.2
No	112	27.5
Total	408	100

According to the findings of the previous table (7), the majority of respondents answered 'to somewhat' representing 42.2%, followed by respondents who answered 'yes'; representing 30.4% and finally came respondents who answered 'no'; representing 27.5%. respondents gave instances of obstacles hindering the proper implementation of gastronomic tourism e.g. insufficient knowledge about the gastronomic tourism concept by some tourists, the lack of service quality in some catering establishments, the poor standards of cleanliness and hygiene in some catering establishments, the lack of sufficient skilled labour, limited English proficiency amongst residents in some Egyptian areas, the lack of sufficient catering establishments and infrastructure, the lack of food events and festivals, the lack of effective marketing campaigns, the insufficient responsible bodies that can support and oversee this tourism pattern. This finding is consistent with the study of Sharma & Srivastav (2024), which instances some obstacles facing gastronomic tourism e.g. marketing and cleanliness.

Section Three: The Role of Gastronomic Tourism as a Core Tourism Product for Augmenting Cultural Tourism in Egypt

Table 8. The Role of Gastronomic Tourism as a Core Tourism Product for Augmenting Cultural Tourism in Egypt

No	Statements	N %	5-Point Likert – Scale					Statistics		
			5	4	3	2	1	\bar{x}	SD	R
1	The Egyptian tourist destination is characterised by its distinguished, authentic and unique dishes	N %	172 42.2	196 48.0	40 9.8	0	0	4.32	0.645	1
2	The local Egyptian dishes can reflect Egypt’s culture and its different civilisations	N %	120 29.4	236 57.8	48 11.8	4 1.0	0	4.16	0.654	4
3	Tourists are enthusiastic to visit the Egyptian tourist destination to participate in activities and festivals associated with its local food and its relation to local culture	N %	88 21.6	208 51.0	60 14.7	36 8.8	16 3.9	3.77	1.010	11
4	Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in diversifying the Egyptian cultural tourism product	N %	92 22.6	280 68.6	32 7.8	4 1.0	0	4.13	0.572	6
5	Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in deepening the cultural image of Egypt	N %	84 20.6	288 70.6	32 7.8	4 1.0	0	4.11	0.559	8
6	Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt will be a unique experience for cultural tourists	N %	108 26.5	272 66.7	12 2.9	16 3.9	0	4.16	0.654	4
7	Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in increasing its market share of cultural tourism	N %	100 24.5	268 65.6	28 6.9	8 2.0	4 1.0	4.11	0.686	8
8	Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in enhancing the competitive advantage of its cultural tourism	N %	96 23.5	276 67.6	28 6.9	4 1.0	4 1.0	4.12	0.647	7
Continued										

9	The Egyptian local cuisine helps in achieving the sustainability of the Egyptian cultural heritage	N %	108 26.5	252 61.7	40 9.8	0	8 2.0	4.11	0.727	8
10	Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in increasing the demand to the Egyptian tourist destination	N %	112 27.4	260 63.7	24 5.9	4 1.0	8 2.0	4.14	0.729	5
11	Gastronomic tourism in Egypt can help in increasing the market share of the Egyptian tourist destination	N %	100 24.5	264 64.7	32 7.8	0	12 3.0	4.08	0.764	9
12	Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in attaining objectives of the sustainable tourism development by enhancing the Egyptian cultural identity	N %	116 28.4	252 61.7	28 6.9	4 1.0	8 2.0	4.14	0.742	5
13	Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in increasing the purchasing power in the Egyptian tourist destination	N %	108 26.5	272 66.7	20 4.9	4 1.0	4 1.0	4.17	0.644	3
14	Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt can help in eliminating the tourism seasonality	N %	108 26.5	240 58.8	40 9.8	16 3.9	4 1.0	4.06	0.644	10
15	Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in the emergence of new projects supporting it	N %	140 34.3	236 57.8	20 4.9	8 2.0	4 1.0	4.23	0.714	2
Total		N %	408 100				4.12		0.514	

The previous table (8) was designed to identify the role that gastronomic tourism can play as a core tourism product for augmenting cultural tourism in Egypt, as indicated in the following points:

- Respondents strongly agreed on statement number 1 " The Egyptian tourist destination is characterised by its distinguished, authentic and unique dishes"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.32.
- Respondents strongly agreed on statement number 15 "Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in the emergence of new projects supporting it", representing an arithmetic mean of 4.23.

- Respondents agreed on statement number 13 "Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in increasing the purchasing power in the Egyptian tourist destination"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.17.
- Respondents agreed on statement number 2 " The local Egyptian dishes can reflect Egypt's culture and its different civilisations"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.16.
- Respondents agreed on statement number 6 "Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt will be a unique experience for cultural tourists"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.16.
- Respondents agreed on statement number 10 "Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in increasing the demand to the Egyptian tourist destination"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.14.
- Respondents agreed on statement number 12 "Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in attaining objectives of the sustainable tourism development by enhancing the Egyptian cultural identity"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.14.
- Respondents agreed on statement number 4 "Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in diversifying the Egyptian cultural tourism product"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.13.
- Respondents agreed on statement number 8 "Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in enhancing the competitive advantage of its cultural tourism"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.12.
- Respondents agreed on statement number 5 "Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in deepening the cultural image of Egypt"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.11.
- Respondents agreed on statement number 7 "Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt helps in increasing its market share of cultural tourism"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.11.
- Respondents agreed on statement number 9 "The Egyptian local cuisine helps in achieving the sustainability of the Egyptian cultural heritage"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.11.
- Respondents agreed on statement number statement number 11 "Gastronomic tourism in Egypt can help in increasing the market share of the Egyptian tourist destination"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.08.
- Respondents agreed on statement number 14 "Adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt can help in eliminating the tourism seasonality"; representing an arithmetic mean of 4.06.
- Respondents agreed on statement number 3 "Tourists are enthusiastic to visit the Egyptian tourist destination to participate in activities and festivals associated with its local food and its relation to local culture"; representing an arithmetic mean of 3.77.

The general answers of respondents were at the level of "agree" for all statements representing a general arithmetic mean of 4.12, which validates that gastronomic tourism can be implemented as a core tourism product for augmenting the cultural tourism in Egypt.

SWOT Analysis about the Gastronomic Tourism as a Core Tourism Product for Augmenting Cultural Tourism in Egypt

According to the previous findings, the following SWOT analysis presented in table (9) gives a summary of the overall situation concerning gastronomic tourism as a core Tourism product for augmenting cultural tourism in Egypt, as indicated:

Table 9. SWOT Analysis about Gastronomic Tourism as a Core Tourism Product for Augmenting Cultural Tourism in Egypt

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Egyptian cuisine is deeply rooted in history, offering different unique dishes. - The Egyptian cuisine reflects the diverse cultures across Egypt. - Many Egyptian traditional dishes have historical significance, linking gastronomic tourism to Egypt’s ancient heritage. - Egypt already has a well-established tourism sector that can integrate gastronomic tourism with cultural tourism effectively. - Egypt’s historical reputation attracts tourists who may also be interested in exploring its cuisine. - Dining by the Nile or in historic settings enhance the appeal of gastronomic tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gastronomic tourism in Egypt is underdeveloped, with limited global promotion of its potential. - Some tourists may be deterred by concerns over food safety and cleanliness. - A lack of skilled personnel in gastronomic tourism, particularly in its relation with culture and heritage may affect service quality. - Lesser-known regional foods are not being effectively marketed. - Poor road access to rural food destinations can hinder tourism development. - Limited English proficiency amongst some locals may affect communication with international tourists. - The emphasis on Egypt’s monuments overshadows its gastronomic and cultural tourism potential. - Few large-scale food events exist to attract international attention.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The growing interest in authentic food experiences makes gastronomic tourism a rising global trend. - Providing tourists with interactive cooking experiences can enhance the Egyptian gastronomic immersion. - Gastronomic experiences at Egyptian historical landmarks can blend food and culture seamlessly. - Highlighting unique local cuisines can attract food enthusiasts. - Developing food tours across regions can display Egypt’s richness of food diversity. - Promoting Egyptian cuisine in relation to its historical backgrounds can encourage people to travel to Egypt for this purpose. - Promoting sustainable gastronomic tourism can appeal to environmentally conscious tourists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other countries with strong gastronomic tourism appeal may overshadow Egypt. - A shift in global food trends may reduce interest in traditional Egyptian cuisine. - Concerns over food safety could deter potential tourists. - Over-tourism could harm local ecosystems and reduce the availability of fresh ingredients. - Insufficient policies or funding could hinder the growth of this tourism pattern.

Conclusion

This paper has been presented to explore gastronomic tourism as core tourism product for augmenting cultural tourism in Egypt. Gastronomic tourism and cultural tourism are closely interconnected because food is a fundamental expression of culture. Exploring local cuisine allows tourists to gain insight into a destination’s history, traditions, and way of life. Cultural tourism often highlights a region's heritage, rituals, and customs, and food becomes a sensory way to experience these elements. Egypt is an ideal destination for combining gastronomic and cultural tourism due to its rich history, diverse regional cuisines, and vibrant traditions. Food reflects the country's heritage, with dishes like Fuol Medames, Kosharey, Termes, Bisara,

Bamya, Molokhiya, Mebaqbaqa, Kadid, Grisha, Asida, the exclusive different types of Egyptian Bedouin bread, as well as the local drinks e.g. the liquorice drink, the hibiscus drink, the cinnamon drink and the sugar cane juice. All these dishes and beverages have a historical background and can connect tourists to ancient stories. Egypt's hospitality and fusion of modern and traditional culinary practices make it a unique and memorable destination where gastronomy and culture blend seamlessly. Therefore, adopting gastronomic tourism in Egypt can be a successful way towards augmenting its cultural tourism. Thus, the findings validate the role of gastronomic tourism as a core tourism product for augmenting cultural tourism in Egypt.

Recommendations

a- Recommendations for the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities

- Integrating food-based experiences prominently in the marketing of Egypt as a cultural destination.
- Launching local and international marketing campaigns including paper and electronic marketing to promote Egypt's unique gastronomic heritage as a part of its gastronomic tourism offerings.
- Producing documentaries about gastronomic tourism in Egypt highlighting the Egyptian food and its historical background.
- Displaying an array of Egyptian dishes and their cultural significance through dedicated food festivals, exhibitions, and media promotions.
- Establishing food routes by connecting key cultural and historical sites with local food experiences for offering tourists an integrated experience.
- Collaborating with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation to seek recognition for traditional Egyptian dishes as a part of Egypt's cultural heritage to enhance the global awareness.
- Promoting less-explored destinations e.g. Nubia or Siwa, in gastronomic tourism programmes by emphasising their unique cuisines and cultural practices.
- Improving transport, tourist facilities and services in rural Egyptian areas where gastronomic and cultural tourism can thrive, making them accessible and appealing to tourists.
- Providing specialised skilled staff in understanding and presenting the Egyptian cuisine as a part of cultural storytelling, particularly in foreign language with emphasis on the English language.
- Promoting sustainable gastronomic tourism by supporting eco-friendly practices, cleanliness and hygiene in food preparation.
- Encouraging travel agencies in Egypt to organise gastronomic tourism programmes that link between local food and culture.
- Enhancing collaboration between both of the public sector and private sector in Egypt.
- Signing an agreement with the leading countries in gastronomic tourism to gain further insight into the latest practices in this field.

b- Recommendations for Travel Agencies in Egypt

- Offering gastronomic tourism programmes and tours that combine visits to historical sites with traditional dining experiences.
- Offering tailored tours that cater for specific interests of tourists e.g. vegetarians.
- Taking part in national food festivals celebrating Egyptian cuisine and link them to the ancient Egyptian culture and traditions.

- Collaborating with local food experts, food historians, and cultural guides to enrich gastronomic tours with authentic narratives.
- Working with local establishments that maintain high hygiene standards for building trust with tourists.
- Increasing social media platforms to highlight gastronomic tourism experiences, including videos of local food preparation and tourists' feedback on the local food.

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سياحة الطعام كمنتج سياحي أساسي لتعزيز السياحة الثقافية في مصر

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المستخلص

يُساهم تقديم منتجات سياحية متنوعة وفريدة في خلق تأثير إيجابي على المقاصد السياحية. سياحة الطعام، التي تبرز المأكولات المحلية للمقصد كعامل جذب رئيسي، تكون ذات تأثير خاص عندما ترتبط بالتراث الثقافي للبلد. يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف كيفية الاستفادة من سياحة الطعام لتعزيز السياحة الثقافية في مصر. اعتمد البحث على البيانات الأولية التي تم جمعها من خلال استبيان تم توزيعه على (408) سائحًا بين أغسطس ونوفمبر 2024. كما شمل أيضًا مجموعة من المصادر الثانوية المتعلقة بموضوع الدراسة. أظهرت النتائج أن سياحة الطعام تقدم طريقة مميزة لتجربة الثقافة، حيث يعمل الطعام كمدخل لفهم التقاليد والقيم المحلية. ومن ثم يمكن أن يساعد ذلك في تعزيز السياحة الثقافية في مصر. بناءً على ذلك، يوصى البحث بالترويج لتراث الطعام المصري، وتطوير مسارات للطعام تربط المعالم الثقافية، ومواءمة الطعام مع المهرجانات الوطنية، ودمج الطعام في الجولات التاريخية لتعزيز العلاقة بين الطعام والثقافة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن تحسين البنية التحتية، والتركيز على الاستدامة، وتدريب الموظفين المهرة، وضمان الدعم الحكومي هي عوامل حاسمة لضمان النجاح.

الكلمات الرئيسية: السياحة، سياحة الطعام، السياحة الثقافية، المقصد السياحي المصري.