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Tourist perspectives of the culinary tourism product of Zimbabwe

M. Nyarota ; R. Musundire; C. Kazembe

Chinhoyi University of Technology

O. Chikuta

Nanjing at Nanjing Tech University Pujiang Institute

Abstract

Culinary tourism has necessitated the development and use of local food as a gateway to a destination's cultural heritage. In culinary tourism, tourists travel to experience unique and authentic culinary traditions. The uniqueness is in the manner in which the cuisine is prepared, produced and presented. Destinations are using their local foods to bring out that uniqueness, luring tourists to visit them. However, in Zimbabwe the destination is seemingly less visible as an attraction on local food. Since time immemorial, tourist resort areas like Victoria Falls have been the main attraction for tourists visiting Zimbabwe. Besides the provision of local foods such as game meat, mushrooms, fish and local vegetables and a few food activities held, not much is known about the destination's culinary heritage. In fact, culinary tourism is still in its infancy in Zimbabwe. This study therefore used a quantitative research methodology to explore the culinary heritage of Zimbabwe. Data was collected from local and international tourists in Victoria Falls and Harare using a closed ended questionnaire. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 23, Findings indicated that culinary tourism was not yet an attraction for tourists visiting Zimbabwe. The results showed that though most hotels and restaurants were providing indigenous cuisines, there was limited variety, the prices were not favourable, and the cuisines' authenticity was also questionable. Implications of these results was that a lot needs to be done to illuminate the uniqueness of Zimbabwe's culinary heritage.

Key words: culinary tourism, cultural heritage, local food, authenticity, uniqueness.

Introduction

With the increase in tourism volumes and more discerning customers, destinations have spurred to invest in the development of local cuisine (Black, Okumus & Tasci, 2020; Okumus & Getin, 2018; Sammells, 2019). The desire to taste a unique and authentic culinary product is attracting more and more tourists to travel and visit tourism destinations (Mnguni & Giampiccoli, 2015; Zhang et al., 2019). This has resulted in culinary tourism taking the centre stage among the other food related tourism, with many global destinations designing local food products for destination competitiveness.

Despite this growth and popularity of culinary tourism globally, most countries in Africa, Zimbabwe included have not grabbed this initiative and their culinary tourism is still in its infancy (Jasinska, Charzynski & Switoniak, 2017; Mkono, 2013; World Bank, 2016). Though Zimbabwe has a rich culinary heritage, not much has been done to fully utilize its local foods, as a culinary tourism product (Tendani, Swart, & Van, 2021). Although some effort has been done to increase culinary tourism awareness in Zimbabwe through annual events, such as culinary expo, Sanganai/Hlanganani, much needs to be done to make the culinary products known (Kazembe, 2018; Tendani, et al, 2021). Through this study which sort to establish the culinary tourism product in Zimbabwe, gaps that should be filled for culinary tourism to thrive in the destination were identified.

Literature review

Culinary tourism was founded by Long in 1998, gaining its popularity in 2001. Long's point of view was that a better experience of cultures was attained by

exploring the treasures in an alien kitchen (UNWTO, 2018). While gastronomy also reflects culinary culture and tradition, it does not spell out the preparation aspect of food, which culinary tourism advocates for. However the fact that both gastronomy and culinary include cultural aspects, resulted in gastronomy and culinary being used interchangeably. There seems to be a general consensus that culinary tourism is linked to the cultural history of a region, while food tourism is the broad term which refers to food related forms of tourism (Okumus & Getin, 2018, p. 2). Similarly culinary tourism authors have highlighted the big role played by food in the process of discovering a destination and in particular its culture (Kazembe, 2018; Getz, 2010).

Within the country, regional cuisines represent the various ethnic groups and their cuisines are named in the language of the country. The tourist desires to sample such typical local delicacies, while some seek excitement on sampling exotic cuisines and wine as an exploration of the country. This strong crave to sample foreign cuisine just out of curiosity, has paved the way for culinary tourism (Wijaya, 2016). As a result travellers have identified such destinations as their visit choices (Long, 2014).

Global Significance of culinary tourism

Tourism based on gastronomy became one of the latest trends globally (Boutsioukou, 2018). Owing to its growth potential, culinary tourism has since become a new strategic sector contributing to the generation of wealth and employment for the entire value chain system (Razzaq, Nugraheni, Lastariwati & Mahfud, 2020; UNWTO, 2018). Destinations have managed to develop their products well and have attracted large numbers of tourists. Studies showed that generally tourists spend one third of their holiday budget on food, stay longer at the destination, while spending more on local products, thus creating

sustainability (Long, 2017; Stone et al., 2018; Tsai, 2016; UNWTO, 2018).

In the region, Africa's local food is still not well discovered by tourists, therefore little is known about the products and their authenticity. Tourists visiting Africa are generally attracted by the natural resources and wild life (Jasinska, Charzynski & Switoniak, 2017, p. 104). In Africa few destinations such as the Arabic countries in the Northern part of the continent: Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco and South Africa are popular (World Bank, 2016).

Zimbabwe's abundance of resources, rich traditions, history, art and cuisine, all can be utilized in tourism, leading to economic growth and poverty alleviation (Zhou, 2018; ZTA, 2016). Regardless of all these opportunities it is still suffering from disinvestment, high poverty rates and deterioration in provision of other social services. Though many factors have held back tourism in Zimbabwe, discovering its indigenous cuisine can be a viable tourism product which can attract large numbers of tourists.

Culinary tourism products

Naturally destinations have their unique local foods, from which culinary products which are unique and authentic can be produced (UNWTO, 2018). Tourism destinations are continuously exploiting their products' unique culinary features and cultural assets to create a strong image (Okumus & Cetin, 2018). The culinary tourism destinations create their distinctive atmospheres that are so important for an unforgettable travel experience by connecting the tourist with local culture, landscape, and food (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011; Santikul et al., 2019). According to Long (2018, pp 321-322) and Okumus & Cetin (2018), culinary products can be experienced and enjoyed through various activities, which are usually sponsored by government or the relevant

ministries.

Long (2018, pp, 321-322) looked at culinary tourism activities as: Tours and rails, public events festivals and tasting and cooking classes and cooking demonstrations. According to Okumus & Cetin (2018), there are four major aspects of culinary tourism activities namely: gastronomy tours by locals, home cooking and meal sharing, street food and markets and cooking lessons. Their activities seem to be speaking into those listed by Long. In all these activities food is experienced leisure and through learning, besides actually tasting it.

An important factor in all these experience is destinations being able to differentiate themselves from another through unique, tasty and quality foods, giving a total feeling of the environment during the visit. That can be achieved by using local foods in their authentic (original) nature. The cuisine therefore becomes a selling point through a memorable tourism experience, which encourages repeat visits (Daries et al,2018). Most destinations offer local and foreign cuisines in hotel and independent restaurants, where most tourists prefer to have their meals (Molina & Ochoa, 2018). In addition globally the local products offered are sustainable and purchased at a lower price range (Uygur et al, 2019). Destinations that have done well in culinary tourism have been named 'culinary giants'. Table 1 below shows some of the culinary giants and their success factors.

Table.1. Culinary giants' success factors

Country	Success factors
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Caceres now a World Heritage Site by UNESCO because of its wines. • Offer a sustainable diet. • Diet reduces greenhouse emissions by (72%), land use by (58%), energy consumption. • Products covered by quality certification.
Italian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cuisine is among one of the well-known and favourite gastronomy around the world. • Cuisine has a complex and rich history from the various cultures. • Popular for Mozzarella & pizza. • Strong purchases of wine a souvenir.
French	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastronomic meal of the French was on the World Heritage List. • French government created an “International City of Gastronomy”. • Renowned chefs and fathers of gastronomy.
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award of merit from UNESCO for fresh water produce, mountain agriculture, innovation and research, high elevation and cold climate. • Realised the competitive role of gastronomy and destinations branding.
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic groups, own traditional dishes. • Halal food rich and spicy.
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of tourist products and services. • Traditional cooking popular. • Industrial and traditional food coexist.
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination Marketing Organization DMO hails markets. • Vineyards in the Western Cape the town of Franschoek. • Multicultural, so named: The “Rainbow Nation”, 9 provinces each its unique tradition. • Food and cuisine festivals held annually, such as Clarens Craft beer festival.

Source: Authors compilation

2.3.9 Culinary tourism in Zimbabwe

While tourism is the third contributor to gross domestic product according to Woyo, (2018), not much has been done to illuminate cuisines for culinary tourism from the more than 20 ethnic groups. A variety of foods are grown in

various regions and a rich cuisine can come out of these groups. Hotels in the destination provide a few local delicacies in cuisines produced from meats such as kudu, impala, buffalo, elephant biltong and mopani worms. Beside game meats, offal, mushrooms, fish and local vegetables are offered (Mkono, 2013). Culinary experience is offered at Mama Africa Eating House and The Boma-Place of Eating (Mkono, 2013, p. 257).

Culinary giants

An analysis of culinary tourism literature shows that the destinations which have done well in their culinary tourism have embraced most of these food and culture related forms of tourism. Similarly, they created product diversity and a variety of activities for tourists to experience. Among the culinary giants is America, with their recipes and dietary practices that have been used to transmit knowledge from one generation to the next. On the list also are countries such as, Spain, Italy, France, Malaysia, Mexico and Thailand. According to the UNWTO ranking, Spain is the world's leading destination in gastronomy and has been highlighted as second in tourism expenditure and 4th in number of tourists (UNWTO, 2018; UNWTO, 2017).

This study has been motivated by the destination's rich, unique culinary culture; food products have not been explored for culinary tourism. Utilizing these resources can go a long way in destination being competitive in the region and globally. This study aimed to establish the nature of culinary tourism in Zimbabwe. Findings will determine the gaps which should be filled by stakeholders for culinary tourism to thrive.

Research methodology.

This study used a quantitative method to establish the nature of culinary tourism. The study was descriptive in nature to get a picture of the situation in Zimbabwe with regards to the nature of culinary tourism, from the perspectives of domestic and international tourists. Descriptive research design helps provide answers to the questions of what, who, when, where, and the how of the culinary tourism product (Savelli & Mateus, 2019 Cresswell, 2014). Though descriptive design may not give an answer to why, it is used to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena and to describe what exists with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. The study was carried out in Victoria Falls and Harare, which were chosen for their high concentration of tourists. Both international and domestic tourists were considered. The study developed questionnaires which had open ended and closed ended questions to allow respondents to justify their responses. Descriptive statistics using statistical package SPSS Vision 23, was used to analyse the quantitative data. Frequencies, percentages, mean values and standard deviations were used to get the meaning of data and presented in tables and pie-charts.

Results and discussion

The aim of the study was to establish the culinary tourism product in Zimbabwe from the perspectives of domestic and international tourists. Bio demographic data and travel characteristics were included as they are an important factor influencing the nature of culinary tourism product.

Bio-demographic data of tourists and travel characteristics

There were more female respondents than males, with most falling in the 36-45 years and 46-55 years age categories, showing a trending category of the age groups travelling. Most tourists were either employed or self-employed and the majority of respondents came from Africa and Asia, while the least were from Europe. The larger number of those from Africa were locals (Zimbabwean), giving a fair representation of the domestic tourists. Rest and relaxation and business came out as the main purposes for visiting the destination.

Tourists' knowledge of culinary tourism

The results revealed that knowledge from the tourists was based on their experiences with culinary tourism. Foreign tourists were more knowledgeable about culinary tourism than the local tourists. It was interesting to note that the local tourists viewed culinary tourism as involving foreign visitors. While this may be a significant point, because local cuisine usually attracts foreign visitors, though the domestic tourists should equally promote their own product.

Responses on the culinary tourism product in Zimbabwe.

The culinary tourism product in Zimbabwe was assessed through the following: cuisine's ability to motivate tourists to visit the destination, choices of eating places when visiting, assessment of cuisine aspects, opinion on the authenticity of cuisine, cuisine giving a memorable experience or not, food related activities visitors intended to visit while in the destination and the characteristics of the cuisine in restaurants and food outlets in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe cuisine being a motivation for choosing the destination.

The majority (n=68, 66.7%) indicated “no”, to the Zimbabwe gastronomy being a motivation for choosing the destination, as opposed to (n=31, 30.4%) indicating yes. That was a wide difference of more than double, which indicated that the Zimbabwe gastronomy is still far from motivating visitors to the destination. Literature supports these findings as visitors to African countries including Zimbabwe are attracted by nature and wild life. (Jasinska, Charzynski and Switoniak, 2017). These findings showed that culinary tourism is not attracting visitors to the destination. For culinary tourism to thrive, the cuisine should motivate tourists to visit. This is supported by Aydin, Erdoğan, & Erdoğan, 2022, p. 480-481), who found out that tourists are attracted by seeking novelty and escaping from their routine are their main motivations for traveling.

Choice of eating place while on holiday in Zimbabwe

The results indicated that the most popular choices of eating place by tourists when they visit the destination were hotel's restaurant (63%) and independent restaurants (21%), while the fast-food outlets (9%) and village food outlets (7%) were less popular. The reasons for the choices of eating places in order of popularity came out as: pleasant environment (24%), good service (21%), quality food (14%), food safety (12%), variety of cuisines offered (7%), search for indigenous food (7%), affordable prices (5%), convenience (5%), and less payment problems (5%). These results indicated that the restaurants in Zimbabwe were providing a preferred environment, with good service, quality food and safe food among other reasons to the tourists, which other food service providers should work in order to lure choice by tourists visiting the

destination. The price and search for indigenous cuisine are important for popularizing a destination cuisine. Quan & Wang (2004: 46) support these sentiments from this finding which opines how “the search for culinary-gastronomic dining in a star-rated restaurant ensures safety and a pleasurable experience.” This shows that safety is one of the key factors.

Assessment of aspects of culinary products.

On the culinary aspects which were used to assess the culinary tourism product in Zimbabwe, atmosphere in the restaurant was ranked highest as very good and good, a cumulative (82.4%) and service and hospitality also very good (76,5%). Other aspects such as traditional cuisine, quality of dishes and variety were on the mediocre, but can be considered as good as they were ranked between excellent and fair (see table 2). However, variety of dishes and price were on the lower side, as they were ranked as fair and poor. While service and hospitality are important, the quality of cuisine is an important aspect. The quality of cuisine should be considered as one of those on the top of the list when developing culinary tourism products and services to market a destination. This point is supported by Dries et al., (2018) as he opines that: the quality of a cuisine is becoming increasingly relevant in marketing a destination in the new tourism trends. The destination Zimbabwe should improve the quality of its cuisines for it to become a tourist pull factor and motivation to visit.

The Zimbabwe indigenous cuisine did not provide the expected variety and price. The lack of variety and a price which is not affordable can provide challenges in popularizing the local cuisine. A wider variety of the local cuisine exposes visitors to a list to choose from, encouraging intention to purchase the

products. The high price of local dishes give a negative effect on how the local cuisine is viewed, making it very difficult to be popularised. Renko and Bucar (2014) supports the significance of price in buying behaviours of customers. He found out that, in the food service industry, price was indicated as one of the highly rated dimensions affecting customers buying behaviour, as well as their preferences on choosing food outlets. With such results, much needs to be done on the price of traditional cuisines to encourage more takers, thus boost the destination's culinary tourism in Zimbabwe.

Table 2. Assessment of aspects of Zimbabwe culinary product

Culinary aspect	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Atmosphere in the restaurant	17,6	48,0	34,3	0	0	1	3	2,20	,695
Service and hospitality	13,7	56,9	19,6	9,8	0	1	4	2,21	,810
Traditional cuisine	17,6	25,6	49,0	7,8	0	1	4	2,46	,859
Quality of dishes	10,8	32,4	48,0	8,8	0	1	4	2,54	,783
Facilities	3,9	45,1	32,4	14,7	1,0	1	5	2,62	,893
Variety of dishes	9,8	18,6	38,2	29,4	3,9	1	5	3,01	,995
Prices	1,0	8,8	16,7	55,9	13,7	1	5	3,89	,971

Opinion on the authenticity of the Zimbabwe cuisine

There were varied views regarding the authenticity of the Zimbabwe cuisine ranging from being authentic (33%), not authentic (36%) and authenticity not

known (31%) and not, though the majority were of the view that the cuisine was not authentic. These statistics were in the same range, but the findings were not on the negative side with the cumulative percentage of those who said it was not authentic and authenticity not known at (67%). Some reasons cited for lack of authenticity were the use of processed foods, using modern cooking techniques and lack of knowledge and skills of the chefs. The Boma was indicated as a restaurant that is providing authentic food in the Victoria Falls. The restaurant served food cooked on fire while the customer was waiting. Such restaurants have been found to bring real authenticity in cuisine, as other destinations have resorted to such outlets, according to a study by (Strohl, 2019). Usman, et al (2020), also indicated that special equipment is also used, which improves the authenticity of cuisines.

Generally, the foreign tourists indicated that they were not sure about the cuisine authenticity under the cuisine is: "rather authentic", "not really authentic", "not quite authentic" and "not sure". These differences in opinion can be related to the perspective of some researchers that the desire for authenticity differs and the degrees of authenticity tourist seek may also differ accordingly (Ozdemir & Seyitoglu, 2017). The findings in this study are showing that the authenticity in the Zimbabwe cuisine is still questionable. According to Chatibura (2015) only authentic foods can motivate traveller and satisfy their curiosity. These findings imply that a lot should be done on the Zimbabwe cuisine to gain back its authenticity.

Zimbabwe cuisine giving a memorable experience

Results revealed that the Zimbabwe indigenous cuisine gives a memorable experience, to those who have experienced it, though to a lesser extent. Though 39.2% indicated yes, while the majority 60.8% were of the opinion that it was not giving a memorable experience the 39.2% was an indication of some memorable experience. The themes which emerged to support the cuisine not giving a memorable experience were that, the taste was not very different from their own and the products were not unique. Literature has shown that tourists who experience cuisines which give them a memorable experience tend to choose such destinations (Long, 2014; Wolf, 2018). Other studies have shown that real culinary tourism thrives on unforgettable travel experience with food and its related activities. These experiences retain the destination identity, distinctiveness and attractiveness and it builds connectivity.

The food related activities for culinary experience.

The results on Table 3 show that the top activities which tourist preferred to visit for culinary experiences, while in Zimbabwe were: cooking competition (1.75, SD=1.086), with (73%) indicating yes, renowned chefs preparing signature dishes (M=1.60, SD=0.650), next, cuisine tasting (M=1.46, SD=0.500), and displaying and tasting of typical Zimbabwe delicacies (M=1.52, SD=0.502). Wine exhibition choice was more skewed on the negative side (M=1.82, SD=0.407). The findings showed that the activities which were indicated yes to visits were all directly involved with cuisines production and tasting experiences.

Table 3. Food related activities to visit for culinary experiences

Activities	Responses	Frequency	%	Mean	Standard deviation
Cooking competition	Yes	73	65.2	1.75	1.086
	No	38	33.9		
Renowned chefs preparing signature dishes	Yes	62	55.2	1.60	.650
	No	49	44.8		
Cuisine tasting sessions	Yes	61	54.5	1.46	.500
	No	51	45.5		
Display tasting of typical	Yes	58	51.8	1.52	.502
	No	54	48.2		
Rural farm tour	Yes	49	43.8	1.56	.498
	No	63	56.2		
Food and art decorating	Yes	24	21.4	1.79	.412
	No	88	78.6		
Tea gardens	Yes	21	18.8	1.82	.407
	No	90	80.4		
Wine exhibitions	Yes	20	17.9	1.82	.385
	No	92	82.1		

Characteristics of indigenous cuisines in Zimbabwe restaurants and outlets

The nature of culinary tourism was assessed by evaluation of the characteristics of indigenous cuisines as very poor to excellent using a 5.likert scale. Assessment of the service being excellent had the highest mean value (3.60), and (SD=0.822). Food is tasty and rich in flavour was next, (M=3.55, SD=0.682), while quality of food is excellent was generally indicated as good and very well.

Few outliers ranked quality of food lowest. There were similar findings from consumers in New Zealand who consider sensory characteristics as most important in ethnic food (Ting, et al, 2017). Similarly, studies have found that service and service encounter are important in determining consumption behaviours of tourists (Chatibura, 2015; Lin & Mattila, 2010). The price rank shows that the customers were not happy about the price of the local food. However, despite the difference in ranking, the mean values of all the characteristics were above average. This can give a conclusion that the characteristics of cuisines in hotels were commendable.

Table 4. Characteristics of indigenous cuisines in Zimbabwe hotels and outlets.

Cuisine characteristics	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very good	Excellent	Mean	Standard deviation
The service is excellent	0	4.5	48.2	30.4	17	3.60	.822
The food is tasty and rich in flavour	0	1.8	50	39.3	8.9	3.55	.682
The quality of cuisine is excellent	0	0.9	61.6	34.8	2.7	3.39	0.559
The food meets the price value	8.9	36.6	39.3	9.8	5.4	2.66	0.964

Conclusion

This study established the nature of culinary tourism in Zimbabwe using domestic and foreign tourists as respondents. No study has specifically looked into the nature of culinary tourism in Zimbabwe. The results offer some theoretical and practical implications for culinary tourism to thrive in the destination. An exploration of the knowledge of what culinary tourism involves revealed that this type of tourism was known. The study also revealed that the Zimbabwe cuisine is still far from motivating tourists to visit the destination, yet

for culinary tourism to thrive the destination cuisine should be the pull factor. From the study it can be concluded that when tourists visit Zimbabwe their choice of eating places comprise of mostly hotel and independent restaurants, while fast food outlets and village food outlets were less popular choices of eating places. The major reasons being the pleasant environment, good service, quality food and food safety among other reasons. Therefore, this study revealed that restaurants are leading in providing cuisines. Restaurant atmosphere and service and hospitality were on ranked top on the assessment of gastronomy aspects. The indigenous cuisines did not provide the expected variety and an appealing price. Price of local food can be a threat to popularizing the local cuisine by reducing the numbers of takers, because the tourist has a budget which one adheres to when visiting. Zimbabwe as a destination should work toward an attractive price for their indigenous cuisines.

With regards to authenticity of the Zimbabwe cuisine, it can be concluded that its authenticity does not have that uniqueness as results showed that it does not give a memorable experience. Cuisine authenticity is being lost through the use of refined foods and modern production methods. The cuisine gives a memorable experience, though to a lesser extent. Tourists like to visit activities which are directly involved with cuisine tasting experiences and production, to include cooking competitions, renowned chefs preparing signature dishes, cuisine tasting, and displaying and tasting of typical Zimbabwe delicacies. The study also indicated that most service characteristics in the restaurants are good except for quality of food and price.

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Nanjing at Nanjing Tech University Pujiang Institute

Abstract

Culinary tourism has necessitated the development and use of local food as a gateway to a destination's cultural heritage. In culinary tourism, tourists travel to experience unique and authentic culinary traditions. The uniqueness is in the manner in which the cuisine is prepared, produced and presented. Destinations are using their local foods to bring out that uniqueness, luring tourists to visit them. However, in Zimbabwe the destination is seemingly less visible as an attraction on local food. Since time immemorial, tourist resort areas like Victoria Falls have been the main attraction for tourists visiting Zimbabwe. Besides the provision of local foods such as game meat, mushrooms, fish and local vegetables and a few food activities held, not much is known about the destination's culinary heritage. In fact, culinary tourism is still in its infancy in Zimbabwe. This study therefore used a quantitative research methodology to explore the culinary heritage of Zimbabwe. Data was collected from local and international tourists in Victoria Falls and Harare using a closed ended questionnaire. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 23, Findings indicated that culinary tourism was not yet an attraction for tourists visiting Zimbabwe. The results showed that though most hotels and restaurants were providing indigenous cuisines, there was limited variety, the prices were not favourable, and the cuisines' authenticity was also questionable. Implications of these results was that a lot needs to be done to illuminate the uniqueness of Zimbabwe's culinary heritage.

Key words: culinary tourism, cultural heritage, local food, authenticity, uniqueness.

Introduction

With the increase in tourism volumes and more discerning customers, destinations have spurred to invest in the development of local cuisine (Black, Okumus & Tasci, 2020; Okumus & Getin, 2018; Sammells, 2019). The desire to taste a unique and authentic culinary product is attracting more and more tourists to travel and visit tourism destinations (Mnguni & Giampiccoli, 2015; Zhang et al., 2019). This has resulted in culinary tourism taking the centre stage among the other food related tourism, with many global destinations designing local food products for destination competitiveness.

Despite this growth and popularity of culinary tourism globally, most countries in Africa, Zimbabwe included have not grabbed this initiative and their culinary tourism is still in its infancy (Jasinska, Charzynski & Switoniak, 2017; Mkono, 2013; World Bank, 2016). Though Zimbabwe has a rich culinary heritage, not much has been done to fully utilize its local foods, as a culinary tourism product (Tendani, Swart, & Van, 2021). Although some effort has been done to increase culinary tourism awareness in Zimbabwe through annual events, such as culinary expo, Sanganai/Hlanganani, much needs to be done to make the culinary products known (Kazembe, 2018; Tendani, et al, 2021). Through this study which sort to establish the culinary tourism product in Zimbabwe, gaps that should be filled for culinary tourism to thrive in the destination were identified.

Literature review

Culinary tourism was founded by Long in 1998, gaining its popularity in 2001. Long's point of view was that a better experience of cultures was attained by

exploring the treasures in an alien kitchen (UNWTO, 2018). While gastronomy also reflects culinary culture and tradition, it does not spell out the preparation aspect of food, which culinary tourism advocates for. However the fact that both gastronomy and culinary include cultural aspects, resulted in gastronomy and culinary being used interchangeably. There seems to be a general consensus that culinary tourism is linked to the cultural history of a region, while food tourism is the broad term which refers to food related forms of tourism (Okumus & Getin, 2018, p. 2). Similarly culinary tourism authors have highlighted the big role played by food in the process of discovering a destination and in particular its culture (Kazembe, 2018; Getz, 2010).

Within the country, regional cuisines represent the various ethnic groups and their cuisines are named in the language of the country. The tourist desires to sample such typical local delicacies, while some seek excitement on sampling exotic cuisines and wine as an exploration of the country. This strong crave to sample foreign cuisine just out of curiosity, has paved the way for culinary tourism (Wijaya, 2016). As a result travellers have identified such destinations as their visit choices (Long, 2014).

Global Significance of culinary tourism

Tourism based on gastronomy became one of the latest trends globally (Boutsioukou, 2018). Owing to its growth potential, culinary tourism has since become a new strategic sector contributing to the generation of wealth and employment for the entire value chain system (Razzaq, Nugraheni, Lastariwati & Mahfud, 2020; UNWTO, 2018). Destinations have managed to develop their products well and have attracted large numbers of tourists. Studies showed that generally tourists spend one third of their holiday budget on food, stay longer at the destination, while spending more on local products, thus creating

sustainability (Long, 2017; Stone et al., 2018; Tsai, 2016; UNWTO, 2018).

In the region, Africa's local food is still not well discovered by tourists, therefore little is known about the products and their authenticity. Tourists visiting Africa are generally attracted by the natural resources and wild life (Jasinska, Charzynski & Switoniak, 2017, p. 104). In Africa few destinations such as the Arabic countries in the Northern part of the continent: Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco and South Africa are popular (World Bank, 2016).

Zimbabwe's abundance of resources, rich traditions, history, art and cuisine, all can be utilized in tourism, leading to economic growth and poverty alleviation (Zhou, 2018; ZTA, 2016). Regardless of all these opportunities it is still suffering from disinvestment, high poverty rates and deterioration in provision of other social services. Though many factors have held back tourism in Zimbabwe, discovering its indigenous cuisine can be a viable tourism product which can attract large numbers of tourists.

Culinary tourism products

Naturally destinations have their unique local foods, from which culinary products which are unique and authentic can be produced (UNWTO, 2018). Tourism destinations are continuously exploiting their products' unique culinary features and cultural assets to create a strong image (Okumus & Cetin, 2018). The culinary tourism destinations create their distinctive atmospheres that are so important for an unforgettable travel experience by connecting the tourist with local culture, landscape, and food (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011; Santikul et al., 2019). According to Long (2018, pp 321-322) and Okumus & Cetin (2018), culinary products can be experienced and enjoyed through various activities, which are usually sponsored by government or the relevant

ministries.

Long (2018, pp, 321-322) looked at culinary tourism activities as: Tours and rails, public events festivals and tasting and cooking classes and cooking demonstrations. According to Okumus & Cetin (2018), there are four major aspects of culinary tourism activities namely: gastronomy tours by locals, home cooking and meal sharing, street food and markets and cooking lessons. Their activities seem to be speaking into those listed by Long. In all these activities food is experienced leisure and through learning, besides actually tasting it.

An important factor in all these experience is destinations being able to differentiate themselves from another through unique, tasty and quality foods, giving a total feeling of the environment during the visit. That can be achieved by using local foods in their authentic (original) nature. The cuisine therefore becomes a selling point through a memorable tourism experience, which encourages repeat visits (Daries et al,2018). Most destinations offer local and foreign cuisines in hotel and independent restaurants, where most tourists prefer to have their meals (Molina & Ochoa, 2018). In addition globally the local products offered are sustainable and purchased at a lower price range (Uygur et al, 2019). Destinations that have done well in culinary tourism have been named 'culinary giants'. Table 1 below shows some of the culinary giants and their success factors.

Table.1. Culinary giants' success factors

Country	Success factors
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Caceres now a World Heritage Site by UNESCO because of its wines. • Offer a sustainable diet. • Diet reduces greenhouse emissions by (72%), land use by (58%), energy consumption. • Products covered by quality certification.
Italian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cuisine is among one of the well-known and favourite gastronomy around the world. • Cuisine has a complex and rich history from the various cultures. • Popular for Mozzarella & pizza. • Strong purchases of wine a souvenir.
French	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gastronomic meal of the French was on the World Heritage List. • French government created an “International City of Gastronomy”. • Renowned chefs and fathers of gastronomy.
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award of merit from UNESCO for fresh water produce, mountain agriculture, innovation and research, high elevation and cold climate. • Realised the competitive role of gastronomy and destinations branding.
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic groups, own traditional dishes. • Halal food rich and spicy.
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of tourist products and services. • Traditional cooking popular. • Industrial and traditional food coexist.
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination Marketing Organization DMO hails markets. • Vineyards in the Western Cape the town of Franschoek. • Multicultural, so named: The “Rainbow Nation”, 9 provinces each its unique tradition. • Food and cuisine festivals held annually, such as Clarens Craft beer festival.

Source: Authors compilation

2.3.9 Culinary tourism in Zimbabwe

While tourism is the third contributor to gross domestic product according to Woyo, (2018), not much has been done to illuminate cuisines for culinary tourism from the more than 20 ethnic groups. A variety of foods are grown in

various regions and a rich cuisine can come out of these groups. Hotels in the destination provide a few local delicacies in cuisines produced from meats such as kudu, impala, buffalo, elephant biltong and mopani worms. Beside game meats, offal, mushrooms, fish and local vegetables are offered (Mkono, 2013). Culinary experience is offered at Mama Africa Eating House and The Boma-Place of Eating (Mkono, 2013, p. 257).

Culinary giants

An analysis of culinary tourism literature shows that the destinations which have done well in their culinary tourism have embraced most of these food and culture related forms of tourism. Similarly, they created product diversity and a variety of activities for tourists to experience. Among the culinary giants is America, with their recipes and dietary practices that have been used to transmit knowledge from one generation to the next. On the list also are countries such as, Spain, Italy, France, Malaysia, Mexico and Thailand. According to the UNWTO ranking, Spain is the world's leading destination in gastronomy and has been highlighted as second in tourism expenditure and 4th in number of tourists (UNWTO, 2018; UNWTO, 2017).

This study has been motivated by the destination's rich, unique culinary culture; food products have not been explored for culinary tourism. Utilizing these resources can go a long way in destination being competitive in the region and globally. This study aimed to establish the nature of culinary tourism in Zimbabwe. Findings will determine the gaps which should be filled by stakeholders for culinary tourism to thrive.

Research methodology.

This study used a quantitative method to establish the nature of culinary tourism. The study was descriptive in nature to get a picture of the situation in Zimbabwe with regards to the nature of culinary tourism, from the perspectives of domestic and international tourists. Descriptive research design helps provide answers to the questions of what, who, when, where, and the how of the culinary tourism product (Savelli & Mateus, 2019 Cresswell, 2014). Though descriptive design may not give an answer to why, it is used to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena and to describe what exists with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. The study was carried out in Victoria Falls and Harare, which were chosen for their high concentration of tourists. Both international and domestic tourists were considered. The study developed questionnaires which had open ended and closed ended questions to allow respondents to justify their responses. Descriptive statistics using statistical package SPSS Vision 23, was used to analyse the quantitative data. Frequencies, percentages, mean values and standard deviations were used to get the meaning of data and presented in tables and pie-charts.

Results and discussion

The aim of the study was to establish the culinary tourism product in Zimbabwe from the perspectives of domestic and international tourists. Bio demographic data and travel characteristics were included as they are an important factor influencing the nature of culinary tourism product.

Bio-demographic data of tourists and travel characteristics

There were more female respondents than males, with most falling in the 36-45 years and 46-55 years age categories, showing a trending category of the age groups travelling. Most tourists were either employed or self-employed and the majority of respondents came from Africa and Asia, while the least were from Europe. The larger number of those from Africa were locals (Zimbabwean), giving a fair representation of the domestic tourists. Rest and relaxation and business came out as the main purposes for visiting the destination.

Tourists' knowledge of culinary tourism

The results revealed that knowledge from the tourists was based on their experiences with culinary tourism. Foreign tourists were more knowledgeable about culinary tourism than the local tourists. It was interesting to note that the local tourists viewed culinary tourism as involving foreign visitors. While this may be a significant point, because local cuisine usually attracts foreign visitors, though the domestic tourists should equally promote their own product.

Responses on the culinary tourism product in Zimbabwe.

The culinary tourism product in Zimbabwe was assessed through the following: cuisine's ability to motivate tourists to visit the destination, choices of eating places when visiting, assessment of cuisine aspects, opinion on the authenticity of cuisine, cuisine giving a memorable experience or not, food related activities visitors intended to visit while in the destination and the characteristics of the cuisine in restaurants and food outlets in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe cuisine being a motivation for choosing the destination.

The majority (n=68, 66.7%) indicated “no”, to the Zimbabwe gastronomy being a motivation for choosing the destination, as opposed to (n=31, 30.4%) indicating yes. That was a wide difference of more than double, which indicated that the Zimbabwe gastronomy is still far from motivating visitors to the destination. Literature supports these findings as visitors to African countries including Zimbabwe are attracted by nature and wild life. (Jasinska, Charzynski and Switoniak, 2017). These findings showed that culinary tourism is not attracting visitors to the destination. For culinary tourism to thrive, the cuisine should motivate tourists to visit. This is supported by Aydin, Erdoğan, & Erdoğan, 2022, p. 480-481), who found out that tourists are attracted by seeking novelty and escaping from their routine are their main motivations for traveling.

Choice of eating place while on holiday in Zimbabwe

The results indicated that the most popular choices of eating place by tourists when they visit the destination were hotel's restaurant (63%) and independent restaurants (21%), while the fast-food outlets (9%) and village food outlets (7%) were less popular. The reasons for the choices of eating places in order of popularity came out as: pleasant environment (24%), good service (21%), quality food (14%), food safety (12%), variety of cuisines offered (7%), search for indigenous food (7%), affordable prices (5%), convenience (5%), and less payment problems (5%). These results indicated that the restaurants in Zimbabwe were providing a preferred environment, with good service, quality food and safe food among other reasons to the tourists, which other food service providers should work in order to lure choice by tourists visiting the

destination. The price and search for indigenous cuisine are important for popularizing a destination cuisine. Quan & Wang (2004: 46) support these sentiments from this finding which opines how “the search for culinary-gastronomic dining in a star-rated restaurant ensures safety and a pleasurable experience.” This shows that safety is one of the key factors.

Assessment of aspects of culinary products.

On the culinary aspects which were used to assess the culinary tourism product in Zimbabwe, atmosphere in the restaurant was ranked highest as very good and good, a cumulative (82.4%) and service and hospitality also very good (76,5%). Other aspects such as traditional cuisine, quality of dishes and variety were on the mediocre, but can be considered as good as they were ranked between excellent and fair (see table 2). However, variety of dishes and price were on the lower side, as they were ranked as fair and poor. While service and hospitality are important, the quality of cuisine is an important aspect. The quality of cuisine should be considered as one of those on the top of the list when developing culinary tourism products and services to market a destination. This point is supported by Dries et al., (2018) as he opines that: the quality of a cuisine is becoming increasingly relevant in marketing a destination in the new tourism trends. The destination Zimbabwe should improve the quality of its cuisines for it to become a tourist pull factor and motivation to visit.

The Zimbabwe indigenous cuisine did not provide the expected variety and price. The lack of variety and a price which is not affordable can provide challenges in popularizing the local cuisine. A wider variety of the local cuisine exposes visitors to a list to choose from, encouraging intention to purchase the

products. The high price of local dishes give a negative effect on how the local cuisine is viewed, making it very difficult to be popularised. Renko and Bucar (2014) supports the significance of price in buying behaviours of customers. He found out that, in the food service industry, price was indicated as one of the highly rated dimensions affecting customers buying behaviour, as well as their preferences on choosing food outlets. With such results, much needs to be done on the price of traditional cuisines to encourage more takers, thus boost the destination's culinary tourism in Zimbabwe.

Table 2. Assessment of aspects of Zimbabwe culinary product

Culinary aspect	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Atmosphere in the restaurant	17,6	48,0	34,3	0	0	1	3	2,20	,695
Service and hospitality	13,7	56,9	19,6	9,8	0	1	4	2,21	,810
Traditional cuisine	17,6	25,6	49,0	7,8	0	1	4	2,46	,859
Quality of dishes	10,8	32,4	48,0	8,8	0	1	4	2,54	,783
Facilities	3,9	45,1	32,4	14,7	1,0	1	5	2,62	,893
Variety of dishes	9,8	18,6	38,2	29,4	3,9	1	5	3,01	,995
Prices	1,0	8,8	16,7	55,9	13,7	1	5	3,89	,971

Opinion on the authenticity of the Zimbabwe cuisine

There were varied views regarding the authenticity of the Zimbabwe cuisine ranging from being authentic (33%), not authentic (36%) and authenticity not

known (31%) and not, though the majority were of the view that the cuisine was not authentic. These statistics were in the same range, but the findings were not on the negative side with the cumulative percentage of those who said it was not authentic and authenticity not known at (67%). Some reasons cited for lack of authenticity were the use of processed foods, using modern cooking techniques and lack of knowledge and skills of the chefs. The Boma was indicated as a restaurant that is providing authentic food in the Victoria Falls. The restaurant served food cooked on fire while the customer was waiting. Such restaurants have been found to bring real authenticity in cuisine, as other destinations have resorted to such outlets, according to a study by (Strohl, 2019). Usman, et al (2020), also indicated that special equipment is also used, which improves the authenticity of cuisines.

Generally, the foreign tourists indicated that they were not sure about the cuisine authenticity under the cuisine is: "rather authentic", "not really authentic", "not quite authentic" and "not sure". These differences in opinion can be related to the perspective of some researchers that the desire for authenticity differs and the degrees of authenticity tourist seek may also differ accordingly (Ozdemir & Seyitoglu, 2017). The findings in this study are showing that the authenticity in the Zimbabwe cuisine is still questionable. According to Chatibura (2015) only authentic foods can motivate traveller and satisfy their curiosity. These findings imply that a lot should be done on the Zimbabwe cuisine to gain back its authenticity.

Zimbabwe cuisine giving a memorable experience

Results revealed that the Zimbabwe indigenous cuisine gives a memorable experience, to those who have experienced it, though to a lesser extent. Though 39.2% indicated yes, while the majority 60.8% were of the opinion that it was not giving a memorable experience the 39.2% was an indication of some memorable experience. The themes which emerged to support the cuisine not giving a memorable experience were that, the taste was not very different from their own and the products were not unique. Literature has shown that tourists who experience cuisines which give them a memorable experience tend to choose such destinations (Long, 2014; Wolf, 2018). Other studies have shown that real culinary tourism thrives on unforgettable travel experience with food and its related activities. These experiences retain the destination identity, distinctiveness and attractiveness and it builds connectivity.

The food related activities for culinary experience.

The results on Table 3 show that the top activities which tourist preferred to visit for culinary experiences, while in Zimbabwe were: cooking competition (1.75, SD=1.086), with (73%) indicating yes, renowned chefs preparing signature dishes (M=1.60, SD=0.650), next, cuisine tasting (M=1.46, SD=0.500), and displaying and tasting of typical Zimbabwe delicacies (M=1.52, SD=0.502). Wine exhibition choice was more skewed on the negative side (M=1.82, SD=0.407). The findings showed that the activities which were indicated yes to visits were all directly involved with cuisines production and tasting experiences.

Table 3. Food related activities to visit for culinary experiences

Activities	Responses	Frequency	%	Mean	Standard deviation
Cooking competition	Yes	73	65.2	1.75	1.086
	No	38	33.9		
Renowned chefs preparing signature dishes	Yes	62	55.2	1.60	.650
	No	49	44.8		
Cuisine tasting sessions	Yes	61	54.5	1.46	.500
	No	51	45.5		
Display tasting of typical	Yes	58	51.8	1.52	.502
	No	54	48.2		
Rural farm tour	Yes	49	43.8	1.56	.498
	No	63	56.2		
Food and art decorating	Yes	24	21.4	1.79	.412
	No	88	78.6		
Tea gardens	Yes	21	18.8	1.82	.407
	No	90	80.4		
Wine exhibitions	Yes	20	17.9	1.82	.385
	No	92	82.1		

Characteristics of indigenous cuisines in Zimbabwe restaurants and outlets

The nature of culinary tourism was assessed by evaluation of the characteristics of indigenous cuisines as very poor to excellent using a 5.likert scale. Assessment of the service being excellent had the highest mean value (3.60), and (SD=0.822). Food is tasty and rich in flavour was next, (M=3.55, SD=0.682), while quality of food is excellent was generally indicated as good and very well.

Few outliers ranked quality of food lowest. There were similar findings from consumers in New Zealand who consider sensory characteristics as most important in ethnic food (Ting, et al, 2017). Similarly, studies have found that service and service encounter are important in determining consumption behaviours of tourists (Chatibura, 2015; Lin & Mattila, 2010). The price rank shows that the customers were not happy about the price of the local food. However, despite the difference in ranking, the mean values of all the characteristics were above average. This can give a conclusion that the characteristics of cuisines in hotels were commendable.

Table 4. Characteristics of indigenous cuisines in Zimbabwe hotels and outlets.

Cuisine characteristics	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very good	Excellent	Mean	Standard deviation
The service is excellent	0	4.5	48.2	30.4	17	3.60	.822
The food is tasty and rich in flavour	0	1.8	50	39.3	8.9	3.55	.682
The quality of cuisine is excellent	0	0.9	61.6	34.8	2.7	3.39	0.559
The food meets the price value	8.9	36.6	39.3	9.8	5.4	2.66	0.964

Conclusion

This study established the nature of culinary tourism in Zimbabwe using domestic and foreign tourists as respondents. No study has specifically looked into the nature of culinary tourism in Zimbabwe. The results offer some theoretical and practical implications for culinary tourism to thrive in the destination. An exploration of the knowledge of what culinary tourism involves revealed that this type of tourism was known. The study also revealed that the Zimbabwe cuisine is still far from motivating tourists to visit the destination, yet

for culinary tourism to thrive the destination cuisine should be the pull factor. From the study it can be concluded that when tourists visit Zimbabwe their choice of eating places comprise of mostly hotel and independent restaurants, while fast food outlets and village food outlets were less popular choices of eating places. The major reasons being the pleasant environment, good service, quality food and food safety among other reasons. Therefore, this study revealed that restaurants are leading in providing cuisines. Restaurant atmosphere and service and hospitality were on ranked top on the assessment of gastronomy aspects. The indigenous cuisines did not provide the expected variety and an appealing price. Price of local food can be a threat to popularizing the local cuisine by reducing the numbers of takers, because the tourist has a budget which one adheres to when visiting. Zimbabwe as a destination should work toward an attractive price for their indigenous cuisines.

With regards to authenticity of the Zimbabwe cuisine, it can be concluded that its authenticity does not have that uniqueness as results showed that it does not give a memorable experience. Cuisine authenticity is being lost through the use of refined foods and modern production methods. The cuisine gives a memorable experience, though to a lesser extent. Tourists like to visit activities which are directly involved with cuisine tasting experiences and production, to include cooking competitions, renowned chefs preparing signature dishes, cuisine tasting, and displaying and tasting of typical Zimbabwe delicacies. The study also indicated that most service characteristics in the restaurants are good except for quality of food and price.

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