

The intensive development of tourism within countries can influence the national economies significantly. The development of tourism depends on the progress of different global trends, and the focus on gastronomy can be discussed as one of these trends (Everett & Aitchison, 2008, p. 153; Chrzan, 2006, p. 41; Sakolnakorn, Naipinit, & Kroeksakul, 2013, p. 78).

From this point, gastronomy can be discussed as the specific segment of the tourism sphere which can be used effectively to influence the general progress of tourism as the economic sector. Today, the focus on gastronomy tourism should be discussed as the result of the intensive economic and social development with references to the increases in the living standards and people's possibilities to travel.

### The Progress of Gastronomy Tourism

Gastronomy was always closely connected with tourism because visiting new places, people also paid much attention to the local culinary habits and traditions of the population. The situation has changed, and gastronomy became in focus as the main goal of tourists to visit certain countries and cities.

If gastronomy was the additional sphere for the development of tourism decades ago, it is the separate and specific segment of the industry today. From this perspective, gastronomy can not only to affect the tourists' impressions and expectations but also to become the main goal of their activities (Everett & Aitchison, 2008, p. 152).

Nowadays, tourists leave their places to find new experiences and emotions while eating and cooking in Italy or Austria, and tourism operators are ready to provide them with a lot of different tours on the topic because the popularity of gastronomy tourism grows, and this segment becomes an important profitable sector of the industry (Elsby, 2012, p. 22; Sakolnakorn, Naipinit, & Kroeksakul, 2013, p. 77).

The progress of this tendency depends on the increased status of cuisines in the world which is closely associated with the processes of, for instance, stating the status of the French cuisine as classical and luxurious (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003, p. 798).

The similar processes are characteristic for defining the Italian cuisine or the Asian culinary traditions as attractive for tourists because of the opportunities to develop cross-cultural eating as the approach to establish the cross-cultural ties and receive exotic impressions (Chez, 2011, p. 235).

### Restaurants as Destinations

The role of gastronomy is important for tourism development because experiences of eating the local food are traditionally associated with the places visited. Thus, focusing on food as 'a cultural reference point', it is possible to combine the efforts of producers and tour operators in order to contribute to the regional development and tourism progress at the territories (Montanari & Staniscia, 2009, p. 1465).

Tourism and consumption in their combination should be based on tourists' strong associations and links between the tastes of food and definite places. That is why, tour operators focus on gastronomy to promote regional flavors and tastes as well as associations with cultures and places (Elsby, 2012, p. 23). As a result, restaurants located in countries where the famous cuisines originated can become the destinations for tourists.

It is found that tourism is more developed in those cities where the role of restaurants is high and consumption is connected with the gastronomic tastes of tourists. In this case, the cities can become 'gastronomic oases' and contribute to tourism development (Neal, 2006, p. 2).

According to Chrzan, "our minds often link places with food, especially when a place is a popular destination, since most travel involves eating some of the local cuisine" (Chrzan, 2007, p. 21).

Stanonis develops the ideas of Neal and states that many cities have the reputation of culinary capitals that is why the numbers of people coming there to visit restaurants where the famous persons ate popular dishes are great, and this trend can be used by tourism managers effectively (Stanonis, 2009, p. 146).

From this point, the emphasis on restaurants as the destinations for tourists was typical for the industry's development during the decades, **but today this trend develops according to new approaches because not only restaurants are discussed as destinations but also the opportunity to learn more about the local gastronomy is considered as the attractive perspective for tourists.**

If Neal and Chrzan discuss the traditional approach to the ties between gastronomy and tourism, Cousins, O'Gorman, and Stierand focus on the opportunities provided by the innovative approaches and changes in the field of gastronomy as effective ones to influence tourism positively.

Much attention should be paid to molecular gastronomy as the new wave in the field of gastronomy which is rather revolutionary and can influence the tourism industry significantly. The new conceptualised restaurants are organised to respond to the trend, and these new experiences also affect tourism (Cousins, O'Gorman, & Stierand, 2010, p. 119).

#### Economic Advantages of Focusing on Gastronomy for Tourism Development

Researchers pay attention to different perspectives with references to which gastronomy can influence the development of tourism industry. One of the perspectives is the connection of gastronomy as the important tourism segment with the national and local agricultural sectors (Sims, 2009, p. 324).

Focusing on development of the agricultural sector in Cornwall, South West England, Everett and Aitchison state that gastronomy tourism contributes much to the progress of agricultural diversification in the region and to the intensification of the production and consumption processes (Everett & Aitchison, 2008, p. 151).

In their research, Everett and Aitchison concentrate on the general aspects of the question when Sims pays more attention to the creation of the 'alternative' food networks in order to promote the growth of the agricultural sector in relation to tourism. This approach is important for increasing the economic sustainability in the region and for improving the local tourism (Sims, 2009, p. 323).

The discussion of tourism as advantageous for economy of the country is often based on the approaches used by tour operators and authorities in order to develop the process and stimulate the people's interest in gastronomy and visiting restaurants as destinations.

Chrzan pays attention to the fact that "returning travellers tell of new foods eaten, new habits learned, and sometimes, in the case of spa and cooking-school vacations, of travel specifically for the food" (Chrzan, 2006, p. 40).

From this point, to make this segment of the industry more profitable, it is necessary to refer to the latest tendencies and changes within gastronomy tourism in order to determine the specific directions

for the development and further connections of gastronomy, tourism, consumption, growth of the agricultural sector, and development of the national cuisine.

#### Conclusion

Having examined the literature on the role of gastronomy for the development of tourism, it is possible to conclude that the discussion of gastronomy as the advantageous sphere for promoting the national and global tourism is developed during the recent years with references to the new approaches to the question. Thus, gastronomy plays an important role in influencing tourists' impressions related to places visited.

**Moreover, today people choose to travel round the globe with the main purpose to taste the local food or to visit cooking seminars and trainings. As a result, gastronomy becomes the main focus for the definite category of tourists.**

While combining this tendency with the traditional approach to tourism in its relation to gastronomy, it is possible to gain significant benefits and to contribute to the improvement of the local and national economies.

That is why, gastronomy as the new tourism segment plays an extremely significant role in forming the tourism industry today and in contributing to its intensive progress in association with such sectors of economy as agriculture and marketing.

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