

# Theoretical turns through tourism taste-scapes: the evolution of food tourism research

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**ABSTRACT:** This article reflects on the evolution of food tourism research by tracing its conceptual, theoretical and empirical twists and turns over the past few decades. Prompted by some recent systematic reviews of food tourism studies, I draw on literature to follow the journey of this multi-dimensional subject area as it has weaved between economic-focused positivistic traditions and more interpretative sociocultural perspectives. I suggest that food tourism research offers an illuminating conceptual vehicle which can be fostered to generate insightful understandings of the complexity and inter-connectedness of diverse culinary artefacts, identities and the experience of practised place. By exploring its roots, its growth and its potential future, I suggest it provides opportunities to pursue more interpretative and critical modes of thinking and furthers our understanding of concepts such as sustainability, performativity, embodiment, liminality and "in-betweenness". In looking forward, I argue that food tourism research is still on a journey and while it continues to offer us a multifaceted cultural phenomenon saturated with meaning and discursive potential to produce new knowledge about tourism, we should embrace it, and travel with it.

**KEYWORDS:** culinary identity, embodiment, food tourism, 'in-between' spaces, taste-scape

## Introduction

Ellis et al.'s (2018) conceptual mapping of food tourism literature offers us an opportune moment to reflect on the evolution of this multi-dimensional research area. By taking the time frame 1994 to 2017 (the period they claim had the highest concentration of food tourism articles), their study provides a fortuitous opportunity to take stock of where we are with this phenomenon and consider three aspects in turn: (1) its origins as a legitimate field of enquiry; (2) how it has developed (and why); and (3) where it might be going as a subject area. Building on Henderson's (2009) literature review, a subsequent analysis by Lee and Scott (2015) and now Ellis et al. (2018), I hope this latest contribution will encourage the academy to celebrate the journey that food tourism research has taken and prompt further interrogation that continues to unlock the rich insights this subject area has to offer.

The explosion of literature around the years 2000 to 2005 on food tourism (Boniface, 2003; Hall et al., 2003; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Long, 2004) accompanied by special journal editions such as one on culinary tourism in *Tourism Review International* (2006) hailed the birth of food tourism as a subject in its own right (Lee & Scott, 2015). These publications marked a realisation that food tourism research could provide insights into interpretative, cultural and critical modes of thinking. If we then skip forward to more recent texts (Croce & Perri, 2017; Dixit, 2019; Everett, 2015; Getz, Robinson, Andersson, & Vujicic, 2014;

Hall & Gössling, 2016; Slocum & Curtis, 2017; Yeoman et al., 2015) and special editions such as the food heritage-themed *Journal of Heritage Tourism* (2013), we begin to appreciate the health of this field of enquiry.

Despite a significant rise in food-motivated travel, it took the academy some time to fully appreciate the social and cultural potential of food tourism research. As a subject, we are now only really acknowledging its complexity and power to unlock understandings about people, place and planet. Consequently, I suggest we need to build on studies published to date and continue to harness food tourism research to challenge the simplistic dichotomies of production and consumption; local and global; and economic and cultural. By further engaging with this wonderfully rich body of literature should allow us to dwell in the "in-between" spaces and explore the liminal zones of our understanding (Duignan et al., 2018). It is a call to continue to embrace the embodied and performative dimensions of food tourism (Everett, 2008), while not losing sight of the more material dimensions that have shaped its development, growth and impact.

## A brief history of food travel

Travelling for basic sustenance can be traced back 300 000 years to the dawn of humankind where hunting and gathering was commonplace until around 800 BC when farming methods were introduced. Over the course of time, food began to represent

more than a bodily requirement, it became culturally embedded, and "holy days" of the agricultural year soon became enjoyed as "holidays" (Boniface, 2003). Food also became associated with magic and ritual (Fernández-Armesto, 2001) and formed statements of identity — becoming a meaningful symbolic and religious artefact (Tannahill, 1988). However, food-related travel as leisure and adventure is perhaps most directly traced back to the explorers of the fifteenth century. Although primarily motivated by wealth and status, the early European explorers that sought valuable commodities and lands to conquer could arguably be regarded as the first food tourists. In response to rising costs of spice after the replacement of the Mongols by the Ottoman Turks, many endeavoured to locate spices directly. From Columbus, who reached the Bahamas in 1492, to Cabot and the discovery of the cod fishing bank in Newfoundland in 1496, to Vasco de Gama and the sixteenth century voyages of Sir Francis Drake, food was a central component of early exploration. Explorers undoubtedly learned a lot about the native people through the food, becoming enthralled with the discovery of sweet potatoes, beans, unusual birds and fruit (Tannahill, 1988).

The subsequent movement of food began introducing the everyday person to new commodities and fuelled interest in other nations, cultures and identities. Access to such items became increasingly commonplace as European colonisation gained momentum. Early explorers had opened the way for a new type of traveller by the seventeenth century, including writers like Defoe who were keen to return with stories of foreign foods and people. However, by the time of the Grand Tour of Europe in the eighteenth century, rich and open-minded travellers embraced the opportunity to experience other places and cultures through food and engage with new "exotic" tastes (Everett, 2015). In the early nineteenth century when restaurants and cookbooks were appearing, travelling to sample new foods remained an expensive pursuit for those individuals with transport options (McNeill, 2004).

By the 1920s, automobiles were making places more accessible and before long the first food and wine trails were developed in Germany as industrialisation increased and supermarkets began appearing. There soon followed a desire to use food as a unique place identifier and challenge increasing levels of homogeneity (Mason & Brown, 1999). By the 1950s, travelling for food not only became a way to escape city chaos and urbanisation, it also became a statement of identity and domestication (Boniface, 2003). Additionally, the rise of the celebrity chef in the 1970s prompted food being used to evoke emotion and a desire to experience something unique, becoming both a symbol of status and of cultural-awareness. As developing nations underwent rapid technological changes, nature-based travel began to emerge in resistance to the treadmill of work. Leisure and holidays increasingly provided ways with which to make personal statements and pursue unique experiences (Rojek & Urry, 1997) and food and drink tourism became synonymous with these desires for escape, cultural engagement, and more latterly, sustainable travel and slow tourism (Everett, 2014; 2015). Given its rising popularity, it is unsurprising that food became a legitimate field of enquiry in its own right and it is useful to reflect on how this field has developed.

## The origins of food tourism as a legitimate field of enquiry

In exploring the foundations of food tourism as an academic field of study, it should be noted that the "parent" discipline of tourism has long been characterised by a legacy of management anchored in epistemological and methodological positivism, before its belated turn towards more cultural and critical discourses and interpretations (Morgan et al., 2018). Tribe's (2006) analysis of tourism research revealed 38% was overtly economic, with only 7% directly drawing on sociology and 6% on geography. It was this strangle-hold of economics that "new" tourism research began challenging; problematising managerially orientated materials to embrace more qualitative and alternative voice perspectives which avoid the "tyrannical" presence of positivism and management-focused economics. Xiao and Smith (2006) also found that tourism scholars occupied a predominantly positivist position through the application of scientific methods, although Liburd's (2012) plea for tourism research 2.0 has since advocated a more dynamic understanding of how tourism research is enacted and performed.

So, in addressing the first theme of the origins of food tourism as an area of academic enquiry, we should note that although scholars such as Poon (1993) were theorising "new" forms of post-Fordist tourism experience in terms of reconfigured consumption patterns and a desire for more individual modes of tourism consumption, the academy failed to focus on the complexities of food as a social, cultural, material and symbolic signifier and resource. There was surprisingly little literature examining this increasingly popular touristic activity, which for some time was "simply ignored or taken for granted" (Quan & Wang, 2004, p. 299). Particularly notable was the relative scarcity of theoretically informed empirical work despite the increasing role of food as a catalyst in enhancing the tourism experience (van Westering, 1999). However, in suggesting that "over the globe there has been an indigenisation of music, art, architecture, film and food" (Beynon & Dunkerley, 2000, p. 26), this desire for "tasting the world" (Franklin, 2003, p. 244) and placing the "world on a plate" (Cook & Crang, 1996, p. 131) began attracting academic interest by the late 1990s.

It was Scarpato (2002, p. 132) who argued that scholars needed to move food tourism out of the "grey zone" of cultural and heritage tourism and acknowledge its conceptual opportunities, although Long (1998) had suggested earlier that there was a need to engage with foodways of the "other", or what Kim and Ellis (2015, p. 154) describe as the "manifestation of defining oneself through tasting food (culture and identity) of the other". Around 2003, there was a gradual widening of academic appreciation of this subject with some vernacular emerging, including "culinary tourism", "gastronomic tourism", and "foodways tourism". This emerging interest was primarily fuelled by four food-focused tourism books (Boniface, 2003; Hall et al., 2003; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Long, 2004) in combination with several journal articles across several disciplines (e.g. Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Hall & Mitchell, 2000; Hwang, van Westering, & Chen, 2004; Quan & Wang, 2004; Tikkanen, 2007). From languishing as a topic "in a relatively isolated position at the edge of established disciplines" (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 233) and only superficially understood, food tourism research began gathering momentum, although perhaps not in proportion to other work on multisensory experiences (Haukeland & Jacobsen, 2001). It was

Cohen and Avieli's (2004, p. 756) argument that "the interface between tourism and food was neglected by scholars of both tourism and food" that prompted Kivela and Crotts (2006, p. 233) to suggest "gastronomy is a body of knowledge with its roots in all major classical civilizations; despite this, however, in the hospitality and tourism contexts gastronomy is a new area of study".

Kim and Ellis (2015) suggest food tourism literature can be categorised into two disciplinary approaches: business management and marketing on one side, and cultural and sociological perspectives on the other. Despite this seemingly well-balanced offering, there is little doubt that food tourism was primarily recognised as a legitimate sphere of research in the context of economic development and destination marketing before it became an expression of culture and identity. This is perhaps not surprising, given the nature of the global economic "business" of tourism and the academy's slow adoption of more critical tourism research agendas and approaches (Tribe, 2006). Although research on economic food linkages (Telfer & Wall, 2000), destination marketing strategies (Fox, 2007; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Kneafsey & Ilbery, 2001; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Okumus et al., 2007) and quantitative consumer analysis (du Rand & Heath, 2006; Ignatov & Smith, 2006) was deemed valuable for progressing knowledge of tourism business development, it meant that work of a sociological orientation or cultural perspective did not progress at the same rate. Critics of the dominance of tourism management perspectives that neglected the cultural sphere included scholars such as Boniface (2003) and Long (2004), and emerged in studies such as those by Everett and Aitchison (2008), Sims (2009) and Stringfellow et al. (2013).

Considering the economic dimension of food tourism research, it is not surprising that the majority of methodological approaches employed reflected a bias towards large scale quantitative surveys and documentary analysis. All too often these studies were also focused on Western, developed countries, with limited focus on more developing nations and with few studies appearing from an Asian context until more recently (e.g. Henderson, 2004; Kim & Ellis, 2015; Oakes, 1999), and more latterly, an African perspective (e.g. Mkono, 2011; Mkono et al., 2013). With an overarching desire to quantify and provide statistical evidence to underpin economic development and business strategies, qualitative research was employed infrequently. Studies claiming to understand the phenomenon tended to build theories with survey data (Carmichael, 2005; Haukeland & Jacobsen, 2001; Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Reynolds, 1993; Smith & Hall, 2003), content documentary analysis (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Okumus et al., 2007), and structural modelling (du Rand & Heath, 2006; Quan & Wang, 2004). Although there was value in such research, its limitations were increasingly called into question if there was any potential that food tourism could be used as a way of exploring the "rich complexities

of human actions and experience which cluster around the production and consumption of that food" (Beardsworth & Keil, 1997, p. 139).

As studies began to employ more qualitative approaches, they disrupted the status quo and provided a depth of data befitting a topic immersed in complexities of identity development, cultural interaction and personal experience. It is in studies such as Hwang et al. (2004) and Oakes (1999) where issues of nostalgic resurrection began to be discussed alongside issues of identity, sustainability and cultural revitalisation. At a time when the tourism academy was seeking to embrace at least the "fifth" moment of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 13) and acknowledge non-representable geographies and psycho-sensorial processes, it was appropriate to examine a multifaceted topic with more ethnographic and personalised approaches. Through a process of cognitive mapping, Ellis et al.'s (2018, p. 250) paper explicitly states that "the field experienced a shift, that is, a 'cultural turn' from those early management-focused studies to more wholesome and exploratory discussions of food and culture". By categorising food tourism work into five broad themes, i.e. motivation, culture, authenticity, management and marketing, and destination orientation, they effectively illustrate the "unprecedented growth" of publications from 2008 to 2015. It was perhaps the shift to consumption and the cultural turn that fuelled the development of food tourism as a research area, so in the second section, we now turn attention to its evolution and growth as a field of enquiry.

### How and why has food tourism research developed?

In turning to the second theme of how food tourism research developed, I suggest it has mirrored its tourism "parent". It also bears a similarity to early food studies research which conceptualised food and society within structural epistemological and economic frameworks (Murcott, 1995). As discussed above, the shift from economic analyses to geographic perspectives to work that acknowledged the cultural and critical turn has characterised the history of this research area. A simple visualisation of the evolution of these phases is shown in Figure 1.

In its early form, food tourism research was originally studied as a part of the tourism experience rather than the reason for travel, and scholarship was slow to develop beyond economic appraisals, producer-focused analyses, and quantitative business-focused research. In 1998, Tregear et al. (1998, p. 386) suggested a "greater understanding was needed of the feelings and attitudes of consumers towards regionally identified foods". This was undeniably true as much work separated growers from consumers as disconnected entities rather than approaching the categories of "producer" and "consumer" as an interconnected and fluid nexus. A growing emphasis on understanding and analysing the consumer, particularly in regard to their experience, motivations and impact on the host destination became increasingly evident (Kim et al., 2009), despite some

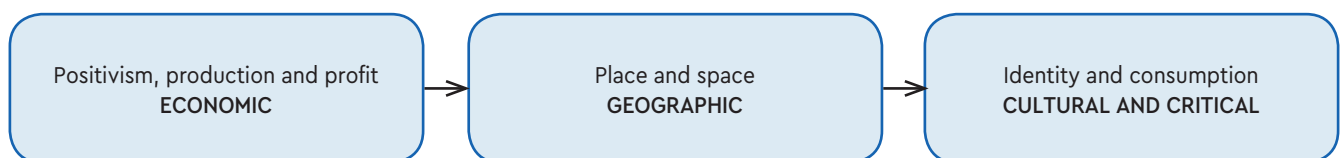


FIGURE 1: The evolution of food tourism research

recent studies still insisting that this remains under-theorised (Robinson et al., 2018). However, the consumer focus in food tourism primarily sought to inform businesses about consumer patterns rather than providing a focus on anything that could be described as a critical analysis of consumption. Such studies placed tourist attitudes and motivations in a framework that could be incorporated into policy decision-making or used as supporting evidence for regional marketing strategies or frameworks (Fields, 2002; Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Kivela & Crofts, 2006) rather seeking to understand food consumption itself.

Lockie (2002) also identified an excessive emphasis on producers in agro-food research which neglected the importance of consumers as active participants with agency. In seeking to emphasise issues of consumption, Goodman and du Puis (2002, p. 10) began to articulate producer and consumer relations in terms of the connective tissues between the two, and lamented that "consumption has been neglected, under-theorised, treated as an exogenous structural category, and granted 'agency' or transformative power only in the economic, abstract terms of demand". Fuelled by a desire to rematerialise geography and place culture within critical and reflexive economic analyses, Cook (2006, p. 661) exclaimed that he has "...found it difficult to find many multi-locale ethnographic food studies which illustrate relations between producers and consumers". Producer and consumer were only skeletally connected in the act of purchase, and the need to overcome the economic/cultural fault-line in agro-food studies has become particularly crucial (Whatmore, 2002). In moving beyond theoretical symmetries and linear frameworks, agro-food research and geographers began to push past an apparent ontological discontinuity between producer and consumer, bypassing classic Marxist approaches where power was unequivocally located in the sphere of production (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1999). The relationship began to be theorised as a relational set of practices, rather than addressed either from a political economy perspective (Whatmore, 1994), or consumption through cultural theory and new cultural geographies (Ashley et al., 2004). It was the cultural turn and recognition of food as a cultural object which then further fuelled interest in the subject.

The role of food tourism as a "source of identity formation in postmodern societies" began to be realised at the turn of the millennium (Richards, 2002, p. 3). The impact of the "cultural turn" (Mitchell, 2000; Jackson & Thrift, 1995) began to influence researchers examining the role of food in the touristic experience, and food was increasingly conceptualised as more than an economic commodity (Caplan, 1997). It was also within the sphere of the "new" cultural geography that food was being established as a communicator of cultural meaning and a material object embedded with sociocultural relationships. Earlier research on food heritage and authenticity published by historians and geographers that had been previously overlooked began to be resurrected to help advance tourism (Oakes, 1999; van Westering, 1999) — an emergence which aligned well with Scarpato's (2002, p. 60) plea that multiple disciplinary approaches can "allow tourism and gastronomy scholars to claim centrality for their work".

Although food research cuts across a wide number of related disciplinary boundaries, Zelinsky (1985) expressed surprise that the topic of food had been generally shunned by cultural studies. Three decades later, this situation has improved with a relative surge in food-focused literature since the cultural

turn (Freidberg, 2003). The shift since the early 1990s to consider food as material culture in geographical research is largely attributable to the work of Bell and Valentine (1997), who explicitly placed food within its geography and cultural context; an approach reflected in their book title, *Consuming Geographies: We are Where We Eat*. Additionally, Cook and Crang's exploration of London restaurants employed food more explicitly than previous empirical studies to investigate the "spatial character of those contexts of material practice" (1996, p. 133). Their work transcended the dichotomies of culture and economy, examining constructed meanings about food and the material embodiment of knowledges where the world's "babel" of national dishes could be encapsulated on one plate.

As a result of the shift in attention to the cultural and spatial character of food by scholars such as Bell and Valentine (1997) and Cook and Crang (1996), food tourism research began to be examined through a cultural lens and became a conceptual vehicle itself with which to contribute knowledge on sociocultural tourism issues in the context of wider global structures and influences. It began to be regarded as a topic that could be used to grasp greater understandings of wider systems of culture and shifting patterns of cultural engagement (Griswold, 2004). After all, "food and eating afford us a remarkable arena in which to watch how the human species invests a basic activity with social meaning" (Mintz, 1996, p. 7). The impact of these shifts towards cultural analyses is perhaps best illustrated by de Jong and Varley's (2017) work which adopts a Bourdieusian approach to critique the privilege of some culinary cultural symbols over more marginalised "working class" foods (i.e. the deep-fried Mars bar). This kind of work has echoes of Grunow's (1997) philosophical and sociological analysis of "taste" which developed Bourdieu's (1984) work beyond a structuralist construction of good taste and distinction generation.

Turning more specifically to foodstuffs and their biographies, sociological studies had given food a central role in the symbolic system, granting it the ability to convey meanings as well as nourish the body. Conceptualised as a set of cultural artefacts which can be harnessed to grasp an understanding of wider systems (Griswold, 2004), food began to be seen not just as an everyday object without meaning, but could represent a symbol and marker of identity. As social anthropological analyses have revealed, food is part of a physiological, psycho-sensorial, social and symbolic environment (Bessière, 1998). Food was increasingly being treated as an allegorical artefact with traces of human intention and action beyond its most obvious context. Such thinking also aligned well with the new concept of "interpellation" adopted in tourism where objects enter life and have a social effect (Franklin, 2003; Rojek & Urry, 1997). Food was fast being recognised as a direct crystallisation of the physical and symbolic landscape (Oakes, 1999), providing a link between place and its identity.

To Bessière (1998, p. 28), local food encapsulated an idealised past and could offer liberation from a "stressed society" by nurturing nostalgic feelings and a sense of time gone by. Bessière also stated that local food was able to provide a "resurrected effect of memory" (ibid.) — an object capable of re-establishing a severed connection to nature and times past. Such work ensured discourses of purity and naturalness became increasingly dominant. These almost mythical characteristics were further emphasised by Boniface (2003), who suggested local food transcended time and space and represented a kind

of uncontaminated world. Bessière (1998) was particularly keen to trace a rising popularity of "natural" products, building on the concept of the fresh in a processed environment and "handmade in a plastic world" (Graburn, 2006, p. 413) in line with much agro-food research (Murdoch & Miele, 1999). The partnership between food and nature began to be most closely nurtured in the countryside, where food objects placed in rural contexts offer urbanites a chance to return to rural roots (Tregear, 2003), and offered a moral anchor in a post-industrial world (Warde, 1997). Reconnection with nature became intrinsically linked with yearning for "yesteryear" (Dann, 1996) where nostalgic resurrection become a particularly potent discourse (Fox, 2007) alongside studies of authenticity, local heritage and tradition (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014; Everett & Slocum, 2013; Hjalager & Johansen, 2013; Mynttinen et al., 2015), and increasingly, embodiment and performativity.

### Towards a tourist "gaze"? Embodiment and performativity

In continuing with the analysis of how food tourism research has developed, it should be noted that a significant theoretical shift in the critical and cultural turns was the adoption of concepts such as cognitive and bodily engagement. Boniface (2003, p. 12) was one of the first to claim that local spaces endeavoured to directly enhance sensual experience, so qualities of place are embraced through "sight, touch...even via hearing" as opposed to the bland and sterilised supermarkets that are only apprehended through "eye appeal". Far too few food tourism texts examined and recognised this before 2008, overlooking the potential of food to provide a marker of identity (regional and individual), capable of providing an embodied experience of place (Sthapit, 2017).

Described as "one of the best general theoretical accounts of tourism in late modernity" (Franklin, 2001, p. 115), Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* (1990) occupies a celebrated place in work that has examined the tourism experience. In focusing on the visual nature of the touristic experience which locates all practices within a distinctive ocular environment, Urry demonstrated the way in which the tourism experience is characterised by being able to offer different visual signs from those present in everyday life to gaze upon and consume. Urry's ocular-centric theorisation conceptualised the way in which tourism experiences are socially organised and systematised through the visual appropriation of place. Although groundbreaking at the time, its central theoretical concept of the "visual" became subject to increasing criticism. Although Urry (1990) had never denied the existence of multiple gazes in his earlier work, he was keen to state a decade later that he thought "... there is a multiplicity, and the way to approach the analysis of these multiplicities of tourist gaze is, among other things, to think about the taste-scapes, smell-scapes, sound-scapes, touch-scapes" (Franklin, 2001, p. 123).

Tourism research was overly dominated by concepts of visualism (MacNaghten & Urry, 2000) and the body was often written out of tourism (Franklin & Crang, 2001). However, food tourism research has helped tourism move beyond "visual repertoires of consumption" (Franklin & Crang, 2001, p. 12) to a place where the object and viewer are involved in more sensual, embodied experiences involving "your own skin" (ibid.), where there is a need to embrace active bodily involvement (physical, intellectual, cognitive, and the gaze). In Everett (2008), I

endeavoured to place the concepts of performativity and embodiment at the heart of food tourism research, recognising a need to consider more active bodily involvement (physical, intellectual, cognitive, and the gaze). I found few studies had taken food as a marker of identity and explored how it might offer an embodied experience of place in a kind of sensuous geography (Rodaway, 1994). I particularly argued that food offers one of the few tourism experiences that involves an immersive physical internalising of a culture as opposed to a distance, passive "gaze". Being "the only product that can be experienced using all the human senses, therefore deepening the tourism experience" (du Rand & Heath, 2006, p. 210), scholars noted that food demanded attention.

One illuminating dimension of work on non-visual engagement with place and multisensory landscapes was offered by Dann and Jacobsen (2003) in their exploration of tourism "smell-scapes". They suggested that "an over-emphasis on the tourist gaze tends to disregard the fact that the unique character of a place can additionally be imparted by its aromas" (2003, p. 3). Olfactory sensations began to be given priority and the extent to which smell plays a central role in experiencing place (past and present) was explored. Although an important step towards conceptualising the tourism experience beyond the visual, it failed to generate data from "real-life" tourists and the research gap has more recently been addressed by studies such as Kim and Iwashita (2016) on noodle tourism and identity, and Agapito et al. (2017) on the link between sensory diversity and memorable destination experiences in Portugal.

Food tourism research began to suggest that embodied practices could inscribe places with identities. This form of performativity as a dimension of active bodily involvement became a powerful discourse, theorised as a way of making sense of self and the world (Edensor, 2001). Moreover, Perkins and Thorns (2001) claimed that pursuing a concept of "performance", as opposed to a gaze, widens the focus to consider the more multifaceted, multisensory experiences that make up tourism, and which I applied to food tourism (Everett, 2008). This argument has been put forward more recently by de Jong and Varley (2017, p. 220), who state that "[a]ttending to performativity would present opportunity for greater insights relating to how bodies are both inscribed by discourse, while also able to spatially perform both normative and transgressive identity practices".

Edensor (2001) also paid particular attention to how tourists play out identities to (re)produce spaces, assigning power to the individual where they are able to redefine their own landscape in a shifting world. As part of a "performance turn", Edensor claims that scholars need no longer be trapped in a representational world, but move from the semiological realisation of space to what tourists actually do. In placing specific emphasis on "things" (such as food) and their importance in tourism performance in the way they enhance the physicality of the body, such research stresses the inescapable hybridity of human and non-human worlds, the material and the non-material. Likewise, Bærenholdt et al's. (2004) and Haldrup and Larsen's (2006) work on tourist performances alluded to the power of the individual to redefine landscape in a shifting world of intersecting spatialisations, socialisations and cultural forms. This body of work provided a useful theoretical basis from which to develop food tourism research. One notable early example was Shelton's (1990) study of restaurants as theatres. In taking

Goffman's (1956) conceptualisations on the presentation of self in everyday life, Shelton develops a framework which presents restaurants as a "repertoire of symbolic stages" and regulated "enclavic" spaces. These spaces are constrained and planned as single-purpose spaces such as restaurants and visitor centres, and the more blurred "heterogeneous" spaces of food festivals are often less openly regulated and constructed alongside other people's everyday (non-tourism) lives.

Experiences began to be presented as socially and spatially managed, where touristic things can be taken and used as active agents in the production of regulated tourism landscapes and social imaginaries (Mansvelt, 2005). Although food tourism sites had been promoted as places offering authentic and embodied, multi-sensual experiences of local food, they have been increasingly become regarded as "themed" spaces undergoing perpetual re-imagining and manipulation (Gottdiener, 1997). Through concepts of performativity and embodiment combined with new empirical data, food tourism studies began to contribute new perspectives in the reconfiguration of relationships and spaces between consumer and producer (de Souza Bispo, 2016). The contribution that food tourism brought ensured the corporeal nature and multidimensional physicality of human beings were not detached from understandings of how cultural objects and spaces are both produced and consumed. Given the multiplicity of dimensions and its twists and turns, it is useful at this point to turn to the third aspect of this paper and consider where the study of food tourism might be going.

### Where might food tourism be going as a subject area? Moving into the "in-between" spaces

The third and final question is where might we take food tourism research from here? I have endeavoured to suggest that it constitutes a vehicle with which to transcend the economic and cultural spheres that have traditionally been separated into distinct dichotomous categories, where the economic sphere is traditionally favoured (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2003). It offers a platform of multidimensional integration; creating a close relationship between the economic (material, production) and the cultural (symbolic, embodied). On reflection, it becomes increasingly clear that food represents significant cultural power and has an unrealised potential to generate powerful social effects (Franklin, 2003). A seemingly innocuous economic commodity can be harnessed in the cultural production of knowledges regarding idealised spaces, nostalgia and identity formation, cultural capital, otherness, symbolism and embodiment.

Food tourism offers an enlightening kaleidoscopic lens for numerous temporal and spatial settings as physicality and symbolism collide. Consequently, I suggest an advancement of critical tourism knowledge may be achieved by overcoming dichotomous categorisations and occupying a "third space" in between the binaries. Much is to be gained if we explore the "in-betweenness" of spaces. As Bhabha (1994, p. 38) suggests, "to that end we should remember that it is the 'inter' — the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space — that carries the burden of the meaning of culture". Things are never a simple "either/or", so we need to think about the "in-between" which promotes a theoretical framework that rebalances conceptualisations of different spheres of analysis. So what is happening in the middle of all these spaces? We might

wish to consider "third space" thinking that makes sense of concepts such as "productive consumption", "performativity" and "liminality" to explain how enhanced engagement might provide a more complete account of food tourism. The term "third space" is generally attributed to Bhabha, who suggests that such spaces are "discursive sites or conditions that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, and rehistoricized anew" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). To Bhabha (1990, p. 211), "hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge".

In seeking this intellectual "in-betweenness" where cultural events and analyses are placed within the wider context of institutional structures and forces, we need to avoid de-socialising food tourism, while retaining both its spatial roots and the positive contribution of the cultural turn. Although advocated some time ago, there is still space beyond dualisms in epistemological geographical frameworks which have been made possible through academic resistance against dominant hegemonic orthodoxies of positivism and quantification. This new geometry of knowledge represents a "third space" in thinking through spatialities. Despite being "continually fragmented, fractured, incomplete and uncertain, and the site of struggles for meaning and representation" (Pile, 1994, p. 273), third-space thinking offers a third kind of knowledge that subverts dualistic categories and locates spaces of negotiation and "in-betweenness" (Shotter, 1993).

In endeavouring to explore the "in-between" spaces of food tourism, I have sought to examine the place-making agency of food tourism with three recent studies. Firstly, this was by investigating the interface between work places and tourism spaces (Everett, 2012). By exploring issues surrounding the global transformation of small food production sites into spaces of novel touristic experience, my study found that tourists are active in place-making as co-producers and co-performers in a process of productive consumption (de Certeau, 1988). Food tourism is approached as "doing tourism" (Crouch, 1999, p. 257), where tourists are not just passive consumers, but are active in sense-making. The identification of hybrid spaces when production sites and consumption spaces merged, the role of tourist agency to create dynamic spaces characterised by the carnivalesque, the creation of new spaces to accommodate tourist expectations, and the performative identity that is developed involving the alteration of work patterns and traditional production techniques all demonstrate the agency of consumers to change places and people.

Secondly, the repositioning of Urry's (1990) seminal "tourist gaze" metaphor (referenced earlier) was pursued in Everett (2008). I found viewing windows act as ironic metaphors for the complex nature of postmodern consumptive activity where "new" post-Fordist (flexible and personal) experiences become intertwined and blurred with more regulated new version of (neo)Fordist (characterised by a return to standardisation and automated production). It is this call to consider the tourist "graze" (rather than gaze) that I advocate. Further engagement with empirical studies that interrogate whether tourists display the characteristics of Urry's (1990) "post tourist" (those desiring more authentic experiences but who accept the inauthentic reality of some sites) remain relatively scarce. This revelling in the artificiality of the site, recognising that they were being

offered a seemingly constructed, rather than fully "authentic" view continues to offer new and intriguing areas of research. Food should be treated as a polysemic artefact that can be harnessed in the cultural examination of place so we can shift the focus away from economic-dominated theorisations.

Finally, a study on food festivals in the historic touristic city of Cambridge in the United Kingdom drawing on producer interviews explored concepts of liminoid spaces (Duignan Everett, S., Walsh, L., & Cade, 2018). In adopting the concept of liminality ("boundary" or "threshold"), we sought to explore how physical and digital liminoid spaces were leveraged — the way physical and digital spaces associated with festivals are being harnessed to create new spaces of consumption. In arguing that food festivals in heritage cities can be understood by pulling together the concepts of "event leveraging", "liminoid spaces" (physical and digital) and modes of "creative resistance", we suggested they help the survival of small producers against inner city gentrification and economically enforced peripherality. Inevitably, the impact of social media in creating new spaces of consumption emerged, but the "in-betweenness" of the digital and physical leaves much to be explored in terms of the positive transformation of place. I am certain that interest in food tourism will continue to accelerate as geographical barriers continue to dissolve through social media and digital transformation. Its effective use will lead to successful results for those destinations that understand and utilise it.

## Conclusion

So where does all this leave the study of food tourism research? There is no doubt that the last twenty years of scholarship has moved food tourism from a peripheral location in the social sciences into an academic arena where it is recognised as a valuable tool of knowledge generation. I hope by journeying through its development, food tourism has been presented as a vehicle which can be harnessed to illuminate the creative cultural examination of place, shifting away from the economic-dominated theorisations that have strangled tourism analyses. In parallel with tourism research, food tourism research has been dominated by economic analyses, quantitative analyses and linear determinism. Structural approaches privileging either producer or consumer became the orthodoxy across most of the major disciplines examining food. In touching on a multiplicity of disciplines, this review has highlighted why we must look beyond disciplinary borders and recognise the potential contributions that can be made to this embryonic subject field. Tracing the evolution and impact of the cultural turn in other subject fields may help galvanise food tourism as an area in its own right, while also allowing it to contribute to the wider theoretical development of tourism studies.

The cultural turn manifested itself in food tourism research rather more slowly and belatedly, so much so that there is still much to be gained from it. The gradual turn to culture is evidenced by the blurring of the production/consumption relationship and the increasing attention being paid to identity, nostalgia, power and adoption of qualitative case study methodologies. Being deeply embedded in systems of meaning, food began to be regarded as a poignant reminder of cultural identity and tradition, with a capacity to conjure the sense of a purer place, but also hold time and memory in an era of hyper-mobility (Long, 2004). Food was embedded with these

intangible constellations of signs of the past to evoke a sense of a place temporally and spatially apart (Cook et al., 2000) and promoted as a kind of cherished cultural heirloom (Long, 2004; Oakes, 1999; Zelinsky, 1985).

In combination with the findings of Ellis et al. (2018), this article suggests that there is a growing place for food tourism within a critical tourism research agenda. Food is a polysemic artefact able to characterise place and identity; consequently, it can be utilised to theorise the complex nature of postmodern production and consumption. In furthering concepts of the "taste-scape", we could fuel recent efforts to broaden tourism discourses beyond the ocular-centrism and build the tourist "graze" concept. Food tourism research is still very much on a journey and has much still to offer, therefore I urge scholars to consider adding new empirical contributions which analyse new aspects of this form of tourism activity. There remains tremendous value in engaging with non-representable forms of culinary tourism such as multi-sensual performative experience and sense of place to offer an additional dimension to the relational forms of power agency and dialogue (Jamal & Kim, 2005).

I encourage scholars to interrogate the connective tissue between concepts as opposed to approaching them as separate entities. Liminal sites of food tourism have been conceptualised as "third spaces" which exist beyond the everyday and are made active through the heightened interaction between key actors engaged in food tourism. By embracing different disciplinary theoretical and empirical "ingredients", innovative "recipes" for food tourism research can provide different ways with which to revisit dominant discourses and interrogate social relationships and interactions. We see some of this work coming through Yeoman et al. (2015) and studies that grapple with new directions in food tourism (e.g. Broadway, 2017; Kim & Iwashita, 2016). There is space in between all of the new concepts being addressed through food tourism: technology and social media (digital engagement with the physical), artificial intelligence with human agency, spaces of differentiation, policy and planning dimensions (de Jong & Varley, 2016), the luxury with the simple, religion (Henderson, 2016), urbanisation and population density, "glocalisation", sustainability (Sims, 2009) and climate change. It is this multidisciplinary polysemia of activity and potential that makes food tourism a fascinating and multidimensional conceptual lens through which to understand our social and cultural selves.

To be successful and sustainable, businesses, academia, governments and society will need to work together to achieve a virtuous circle for all. Closer links between production and consumption are necessary, both to maintain destination distinctness and to provide a robust global network that can resist faceless food production and an externally controlled food and drink offering. It is an experience where liminal people in liminal spaces engage intimately with liminal artefacts, therefore this paper encourages the academy to occupy and construct interconnecting spaces made up of co-produced and co-performed processes of the economic, but also the spatial, social and cultural and technological. Through an examination of tourism literature, it is clear that there is much that has been left academically "undigested", and there is a plethora of potentially valuable perspectives for the wider field of tourism to embrace. In recent years, it has been utilised to interrogate and understand the complex nature of postmodern production and consumption activities and presented as a multifaceted

artefact that can literally be "read" to relay the story of a places and people — I encourage you to go and read (and taste) those places.

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