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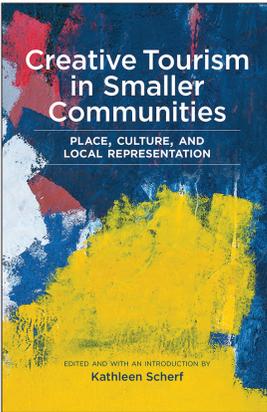
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**CREATIVE TOURISM IN SMALLER COMMUNITIES:
PLACE, CULTURE, AND LOCAL REPRESENTATION**
Edited and with an introduction by Kathleen Scherf

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Placemaking through Food: Co-creating the Tourist Experience

Susan L. Slocum

Introduction

Culture is increasingly being used to enhance tourism destinations and create economic opportunities through new attractions, cultural routes, and heritage centres. Urry (2001) argues that culture has become an essential element of tourism product development, which has made cultural tourism one of the fastest-growing segments of the leisure tourism market (Richards 2009). This growth is attributed to the high spending patterns and longer travel durations associated with cultural tourists, who often spend one-third more than other types of travellers (Richards 2009). However, the rise in cultural and heritage tourism products has resulted in the reproduction of formulaic cultural narratives as destinations compete with each other to fulfill tourist expectations of knowledge acquisition (Richards and Wilson 2006). The demand for cultural immersion, rather than cultural sites, has given rise to the creative economy in an attempt to meet the needs of a changing consumer travel base.

Creative tourism is a form of cultural tourism in which identity forms the basis of both production and consumption. From a supply-side approach, creative tourism is the provision of memorable experiences in a way that portrays an authentic narrative of a lived experience (Binkhorst and Den Dekker 2009). While recognizing that “authentic” is a much-contested concept, tourism producers try to accurately recount their culture in a way that allows consumers to experience their reality and identity.

From the demand side, Richards (2011) defines creative tourism as a participatory experience that develops a tourist's creative possibilities through contact with local people and their cultures. Creative tourism is thus the "truth learned from personal experience with a phenomenon rather than truth acquired by discursive reasoning, observation, or reflection on information provided by others" (Borkman 1976, 446). Creative tourism is the communication of culture that influences the identity of both the tourism provider and the visitor.

Food tourism is often perceived as a natural outgrowth of creative tourism. However, past literature has presented either a supply-side approach or demand-side analysis, and has neglected that the experience of food and drink consumption is a shared practice. Through the lens of sustainable tourism, it is the co-construction of consumption that ultimately brings success to small communities, described as granular communities by Scherf in this book's introduction, using food tourism as a development tool. Therefore, this chapter calls for a broader approach to food tourism studies as a means to reflect on the shared construction of food experiences, and it situates that approach as a potential method for creative tourism development and agent of change by including all the themes embedded in this book: (1) co-creation by visitor and resident of experiences that feature unique local skills and knowledge; (2) engagement of visitor imagination by participation in tangible or intangible endogenous culture; (3) generation or regeneration of sustainable cultural development for the host community; (4) formation of creative networks to offer touristic experiences; (5) examination of the processes, policies, and methodologies around creative tourism; and (6) creative representation of smaller communities. Using a literature review format, the goal is to combine supply and demand attributes from a variety of studies to show the underlying benefits of assessing the co-creation of food tourism through product partnerships. This chapter argues for the inclusion of both producers and consumers as a means to enhance the potential benefits that can arise for small communities embarking on food-and-drink tourism.

Food Tourism as Sustainable Tourism

Global food policy has had a dramatic effect on rural areas. Export strategies have left small-scale agriculture increasingly dependent on the

international food industry as a diversification strategy, resulting in unequal power distributions, higher entry barriers, and the distribution of financial rewards toward developed nations (Bolwig et al. 2010). Increasing production costs and decreasing prices have led to the reduction of family farms on a global scale, changing the pastoral landscapes and impairing the economic opportunities of rural regions (Ilbery et al. 2005). Monoculture farming has diminished traditional agricultural practices and created food deserts in areas that traditionally grew a variety of food items to support the needs of neighbouring urban communities. Moreover, monoculture requires the extensive use of fertilizers and pest-control measures, which erode the environmental health of these communities (Slocum and Curtis 2017b). As rural regions face increased hardships, such as outward migration, aging populations, and a lack of investment in infrastructure, health care, and education, food tourism is recognized as a viable development option, incorporating open space opportunities with food traditions as the basis for the tourism product. Innovative tourism markets have allowed small communities new opportunities to expand traditional agricultural production and increase diversity as a means to mitigate these economic challenges.

These production changes have also led to changes in consumer demand. The lack of transparent oversight in global food chains has increased fears around food safety and quality, specifically the use of chemicals in monoculture farming and ripening agents for long-haul transport (Henson and Humphreys 2010). Research has shown that increased freshness of produce, better taste, and a perceived healthier alternative is a primary driver in local food consumption (Delind 2006; Schnell 2011). Sustainable consumption includes the use of products that bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials, as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and pollutants (Seyfang 2006). There is evidence that food consumers in developed countries are motivated by intrinsic (food quality and appearance), extrinsic (retail and shopping experience), and credence (healthiness, environment, and rural welfare) elements, each of which have spurred the “buy local” movement (Weatherell, Tregear, and Allinson 2003).

Early in the discussion of food tourism theory, Hall et al. (2003) recognized the sustainable development potential of food tourism. The

incorporation of local food in the tourism sector has been acknowledged as a form of sustainable tourism because it strengthens local production through backward linkages in the tourism supply chain, resulting in decreased economic leakages and socio-cultural impacts (Slocum 2015). Slocum (2015) writes, “Eating habits can be viewed as an expression of culture and the preservation of traditional foodways is a substantial part of cultural identity” (245). Tourists seek new food-based traditions as a way to connect to the cultures they are visiting (Everett and Aitchison 2008), which has the potential to instill pride in local populations vis-à-vis their traditional agricultural practices and food traditions. Moreover, the growth in organic produce and the desire to eat food close to the area in which it is produced has reduced the environmental impact of food production. It is not surprising that food and drink have become a foundation of tourism marketing (Schnell 2011).

The Creative Economy

Howkins (2002) describes the creative economy as a system in which added value is instilled through imaginative qualities, rather than through the use of the traditional resources of land, labour, and capital. This concept initially referred to the arts, media, games, and research and development, where creative input is used as the primary source of value and the cause for economic transactions. Richards (2011) highlights the natural symmetry between the creative economy and tourism when he writes that

The practice of tourism . . . involves all four [creative] approaches, for example in the use of the creative environment through visits to creative clusters, the use of creative products as tourism attractions [e.g., travel related to famous authors, painters, etc.], the utilization of the creative process in designing creative activities for tourists (e.g. workshops and master-classes) and the involvement of creative people through the activities of the “creative class.” (1226)

In recognizing that tourism is experiential in nature, and that it is produced and consumed simultaneously (Pantzar and Shove 2005), tourism has become a driver of the creative economy (Richards 2011). As tourism

continues to rely on staged experiences for mass consumption, the tourism product and the destination are requiring new forms of innovation as a means of differentiation.

Tourism is dependent on a region's natural and cultural resources. These resources create a sense of place, or the special meanings that represent the identity and character of a region (Lockie 2001). Sense of place incorporates the physical setting, human activities, and human social and psychological processes within the natural environment that describe our attachment to and dependence on a place and its identity. Sense of place involves human experiences, social relationships, emotions, and thoughts that represent a communal identity (Liu and Cheung 2016). It is this identity that many tourists seek when travelling. Thus, it is the communication of sense of place that forms the basis of the experiential tourism product and the tourism narrative in food tourism. Creative tourism is essential in telling the story of the subtle differences in a destination's sense of place and communicating local identity in a way that can be consumed by tourists.

Yet, sense of place is not static, and tourist interactions with communities have the potential to change a destination's essence. In urban contexts, creative industries are being used to "transform" living spaces into areas for play. Marques and Borba (2017) acknowledge that "The interpretation and practices of a 'playable city' relate to co-creation in the way the city is made playable [bottom-up projects] but also in the way it is experienced, both by residents and tourists, as it promotes the interaction with the space" (87). In the same light, creative industries can change rural areas, redefining the role of open space and idyllic living through tourism consumption. There are opportunities for socio-environmental change through deeper understandings of consciousness and reconnection of the culture-nature divide through food tourism production (Cavaliere 2017). The creative formulation of the tourism narrative can shape traditional ways of knowing, creating new realities and expunging outdated notions of place identity. Serving tourists and creative talent development may present changing identities for communities accustomed to traditional industries (Blapp and Mitas 2017).

Food Tourism as Creative Production

Food is food. The ingredients in most recipes are similar across regions and cultures, starting with the basic grains (rice, wheat, corn, barley), combined with vegetables (tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers, peppers), a few spices (oregano, coriander, cumin, garlic), and perhaps a helping of meat (beef, chicken, pork) or fish. There are exotic foods that may be unique to an area (e.g., sea cucumber, squid-ink pasta, haggis), but it is the combination of common ingredients in a variety of ways that constitute most of the food eaten around the world. However, the concept of foodways helps to describe the subtle distinction between eating for nutrition and eating for experience. Foodways suggest that food is a network of activities: the production of raw materials; the planning of a menu; the preparation of the ingredients; the presentation and performance of eating; the preservation or repacking of excess items; and the reflection or discussion about past meals (Long 2004). It is within a region's foodways that distinctiveness arises, as Long (2004) aptly expresses: "Since food is more than the dishes we eat, we can be tourists by exploring these other aspects of the food system. It means we can mix the new with the old, the exotic with the familiar" (23). Foodways provide the channel to communicate sense of place.

By viewing food as a system, it is easy to see the creative opportunities inherent in food preparation. Food has become an artisan product, one that is produced with pride and that showcases a region's complex sense of place. Innovation can come through the growth of new or traditional varieties (e.g., heirloom), through cooking techniques (e.g., fusion cooking), or through food-based experiences (farm visits or cooking classes). Food is derived from the natural environment and provides insight into the histories, ethos, and identities of the cultures within that environment, thereby enhancing the sustainability of tourism (Long 2004). But the concept of foodways is not only about eating food; it also allows for experiences such as volunteering on a farm, shopping for handcrafted culinary souvenirs, attending a craft beer festival, or touring a food production facility.

Slocum and Curtis (2017a) highlight the entrepreneurial talents of farm shops in England. As brokers and promoters of local food, farm shop managers have the flexibility to negotiate a highly competitive and changing business environment. They write, "[they] quickly adjust the

focus of their business, experiment with new product and service offerings, and adjust their business model to accommodate changes according to the needs of their clientele” (47). In order to keep their shelves stocked, they collaborate with growers to find innovative products, encourage new entrants to ensure variety, use branding strategies to define “local,” and determine the local food image presented to consumers. As lifestyle businesses, they collaborate with festivals, farmers’ markets, and other outlets to support enhanced food-related experiences for residents and visitors alike. Their creative input vis-à-vis retail operations constructs the narrative of local food and their partnership requirements enhance social capital around food production.

Another creative example is presented by Azizi and Mostafanezhad (2014) by means of on-farm volunteer opportunities for tourists in Hawai‘i. Through WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms), volunteers live and work at organic farms specifically to learn about organic agriculture. Through a “social movement approach” (148), farmers are able to use tourism labour, specifically young people looking for alternative ways of life, to provide healthy, affordable, and environmentally friendly foods to local residents as well as restaurants, markets, and stores that support tourism growth. Through a strict screening process that seeks participants with “a genuine and honest interest in people” (147), hosts understand the tourist’s background, their expectations for spiritual and cultural growth, and design hands-on experiences in growing and marketing handcrafted food products. Moreover, “farm volunteering can provide a direct pathway for tourists to the backstage of a community . . . by avoiding the cash nexus outside the commodified relations of the tourism industry” (136). Volunteers help reduce the need for business expansion, maintaining the lifestyle business and developing the creative talents of the farm and their guests.

Food tourism has the potential to foster the “rediscovery” of food traditions, as emphasized by Grasseni (2014) in the northern Italian Alps. The use of geographic indicators can often lead to standardized products that are viewed by locals as lower quality. By drawing attention to the “rebel” (57) cheese makers in Valli del Bitto, Grasseni acknowledges that diversity is an “endangered resource” (59) unless a region can find an economically sustainable path to cultural resilience, as highlighted by

de la Barre in chapter 4 and Aquino and Burns in chapter 6 of this volume. The “ecomuseum” designation made by the local government has “become what common sense would have it: an open air park, complete with three routes, [that] provides an ecological packaging of cultural and environmental diversity for advertising the valley’s produce” (59). When tradition is transformed into a method of diversity, creative tourism opportunities arise through the combination of immaterial resources and material culture in which traditions are reinvented as a means to add value to local products. The resurgence of alternative forms of production that differentiate the product and align with the superior quality values of the community can be developed.

These three examples provide a general overview of how smaller communities are using the creative economy within the context of food. Each provides opportunities for memorable experiences, while showcasing regional identity in creative and artistic ways (Binkhorst and Den Dekker 2009). As is common in rural agricultural regions, these businesses are lifestyle endeavours (Slocum 2015), and tourism has provided a way for small farms to ensure adequate profit without the requirement of extensive growth or capital investment (Howkins 2002). Not only do these examples emphasize creative products distributed in creative environments, they show the creative process through which creative people construct and transmit their own evolving identities (Richards 2011).

Food Tourism as Creative Consumption

Tourists must eat. That said, what tourists choose to eat varies from individual to individual. Many studies have shown trends in tourists’ eating preferences, attempting to group similar tourists together as a means to delineate the food tourism market. For example, one early study grouped travellers into two groups, neophobes, or people who fear anything new, and neophiles, ones who like to experiment and try new things (Pliner and Hobden 1992). Shenoy (2005) applied these concepts to food tourists, acknowledging that tourist may fall somewhere on a spectrum between neophobe and neophile. Food preferences can vary based on the personal characteristics, activities, and motivations of tourists, and there is evidence that food choices are inspired by visitor nationality, the destination visited, seasonality, cultural experiences, interpersonal relations,

sensory appeal, and health concerns (Slocum and Curtis 2017b). However, as Slocum and Curtis write, “Outside of specific food-related travel, there is very little data to provide more than generalizations about tourists and their food-related habits” (129). Moreover, psychographic characterizations are less common than demographic or geographic analyses, leaving many unanswered questions about the motivation for food-related travel.

Food tourists are defined as people who travel to destinations that have established reputations as places to experiment with quality local food (UNWTO 2012). Some food tourists may treat food as a small part of the whole travel experience, while others may select destinations based on their food traditions and reputation (Hall et al. 2003). Research has shown that food tourists are generally open to new experiences, desire life-long learning, and are educated consumers (Croce and Perri 2010). They also value cultural immersion and participate in outdoor activities. There is evidence that food tourists care about sustainability, although there is no understanding of the cause-and-effect relationship between food preferences and sustainability values. For example, do sustainably minded individuals use their food choices to promote their values, or is it exposure to new foods (and culture) through travel that encourages pro-sustainability ideals?

In a study of long-term backpacking tourists, Falconer (2013) shows how the narratives of long-term change are embodied during the journey through food. She highlights that food provides the “structure and rhythm” (34) to life on the road, where the body wavers between the novelty of new food experiences that become routine over time, leaving the traveller wanting comfort foods from home. As these longings are fulfilled, the traveller weaves back to the exotic with a replenished sense of experimentation. Falconer writes, “tourists make sense of spaces through the sensual dimensions of food and drink: through the nostalgia of taste and smell, romanticised imaginaries of ‘exotic’ or ‘homecomfort,’ or the contrast between ‘local’ and ‘global’ foods” (34). As travellers negotiate their global cosmopolitanism alongside their cravings, their identity and expectations are shaped by the experience.

Bessiere and Tibere (2013) show the importance of food in the development of identity for tourists in France. Local recipes are seen as “symbolic consumption” (3425) of a region, its land, and its people. However, it is

the hospitality of the personal encounters that forms the connection to place. Hospitality provides the conversations that transmit the narratives of place and identity. These connections occur in restaurants, markets, on farms, and in wineries. The authors note that many regions use branding strategies to “enhance the attractiveness of traditional foodstuffs” (3424), and that souvenirs are purchased in places where heritage contact is perceived as the most impactful. The authors write, “Initiation into food cultures thus results from a dialogue with the natural environment providing a code to be deciphered by tourists as they make their way into the region” (3425). Some tourists describe a journey of self-discovery, while others connect to a country or region, emphasizing “the potential role of [food] tourism in the process of change” (3425).

Rudy (2004) provides another interesting study related to Mormon missionaries during their assignments abroad. Part of the goal of missionary travel is to engage in prolonged interactions in an unfamiliar culture to establish a connection that may bring new members to the church. Often, food is the vehicle that links people with their host culture, making food indistinguishable from the relationships they form while travelling. In turn, the sharing of food can reward the traveller “with personal growth, empathy, and long-term, life-changing experience in creating a community and comprehending the unfamiliar” (154). Rudy claims that the process of turning unfamiliar foods into familiar ones provides an opportunity to extend interpersonal understandings and expand personal tastes.

These three demand-side studies help to illuminate the process of change and personal growth that food tourism can provide for tourists. Travellers recognize the value inherent in food through the relationships derived around the food preparation and eating process (Howkins 2002). Within the consumption of a region’s identity and culture, tourists are establishing their own sense of place through the context of food and food practices (Lockie 2001). Liu and Cheung (2016) emphasize that sense of place involves human experiences, social relationships, emotions, and thoughts as a way for travellers to connect with a communal identity, one that now includes a changed self as the tourists negotiates her own self-construction. It is the participatory nature of food tourism that is

simultaneously being produced and consumed that situates food tourism squarely within the realm of the creative economy.

Discussion

Creative Food Tourism and Sustainable Rural Development

There is ample evidence of the sustainability benefits of food tourism. Food tourism has been shown to mediate economic challenges in rural areas through backward linkages in the tourism value chain, reducing poverty by providing jobs and opportunities for small businesses (Hall et al. 2003). It also has the potential to reconstruct social narratives that reinvent traditions and celebrate culture (Long 2004). Moreover, consuming food as close as possible to production sites reduces greenhouse gas emissions and the need for added chemicals to maintain freshness during transport (Henson and Humphreys 2010). Food tourism has the potential to support “lifestyle characteristics that unite environmental stewardship with support for local economies and emphasizes a ‘slow’ approach and sense of place within the tourism experience” (Slocum 2015, 252). However, it must be noted that the sustainability of food tourism is dependent on the practices of local growers and food-service businesses (Slocum 2015).

Moreover, the food tourism narrative has the potential to increase awareness of social and environmental conditions (Cavaliere 2017). Food tourists are educated travellers seeking an exchange of knowledge through the consumption of cultural experiences (Croce and Perri 2010). They value sustainability goals, participate in outdoor recreational activities, and are willing to spend more money on responsible tourism products (Slocum and Curtis 2017b). They derive value from exploring foodways and seeking a cultural product that is sensory in nature and that transmits the sense of place and the lived experiences of the communities they visit (Howkins 2002).

Creative Food Tourism as an Agent of Change

The case studies presented in this paper support the theory that food tourism lies within the realm of the creative economy, communicating economic and socio-cultural values through creative production and

consumption. Using a crafted narrative, food tourism creates memorable experiences that have the potential to influence a traveller's sense of self (Binkhorst and Den Dekker 2009). Moreover, food tourism incorporates Richards's (2011) four creative elements: creative environments, creative products, creative process, and creative people. Rather than rely on the traditional resources of land, labour, and capital, food tourism uses creativity as the added value, creating impactful relationships as the basis for the tourism product (Howkins 2002).

Yet, this chapter argues that the current literature fails to measure the co-constructed narratives that appear to dominate the food tourism experience. The primary flaw in the supply-side cases is that the voice of the tourist is silent, with the result that we as scholars do not know the effectiveness of the narratives being described or if the "truth" is being learned from personal experiences (Borkman 1976). The demand-side cases show spiritual changes in the tourists themselves, but they neglect to show exactly which creative elements in food tourism production influences this change. One could argue that the simple action of communal eating brings on these transformations, yet these experiences are "crafted" with tourists in mind, and no two food tourism experiences are identical. Food tourists seek cultural immersion that includes knowledge transfer, which implies that the simple process of eating strange or unfamiliar foods is not enough to provide a conduit for personal growth. This chapter proposes that it is the narrative associated with the experience that transmits a sense of place (Binkhorst and Den Dekker 2009), and the narrative evolves as actors interact and change throughout the creative process (Marques and Borba 2017). This narrative, while crafted by the tourism provider, is nevertheless interpreted and realized by the tourist.

Often, the values possessed by the tourism provider is the primary motivation for change within food tourism product development. For example, the organic farms in Hawai'i realized that their tourism product required a very specific type of visitor, one that valued the learning experience and who would contribute to the social movement approach inherent in their business model (Azizi and Mostafanezhad 2014). This implies that not all tourists are open to receiving the sense-of-place narrative valued by the creative entrepreneurs. Slocum and Curtis (2017a) provide another example in their case study wherein a farm shop owner ended a contract

with a local garlic producer because he was purchasing his garlic from overseas, even though he was crafting his product locally. By recruiting a new entrant into the industry, the farm shop was able to supply locally sourced *and* locally crafted garlic products. Therefore, rather than selling garlic items, the farm shop is defining local food through the narrative that expresses their commitment to local agriculture (Long 2004). In both cases, the tourism product is deeply rooted in sustainability ideals that inform supply decisions. However, the impact on demand decisions is not addressed in these cases.

The social interactions that are formed through the production and consumption of food tourism have the potential to provide open channels of communication in an intimate setting. Liu and Cheung (2016) emphasize the importance of social relationships in identity formulation; they argue that the mere presence of tourists has the potential to influence identity and sense of place. The co-creative nature of food tourism allows for quick adjustments to the experience in real time by providing an instantaneous feedback loop, potentially changing the food tourism narrative along the way. Marques and Borba (2017) write, “The co-creative processes should continue at different levels in the interaction with residents and tourists, improving their relationship to the [region] and changing their perspectives” (90). What constitutes “good food” is inherently different from what constitutes a “good food experience.” Further discussions on how food tourism influences sense of place is therefore warranted.

Richards and Wilson (2006) acknowledge that change is a fundamental aspect of the creative economy, which happens within both the production and consumption of food tourism. Yet, the nature of change is inherently different. Both Bessiere and Tibere (2013) and Rudy (2004) highlight changes in visitors that involve self-identity and discovery, yet the change experienced by suppliers appears to be related to their business models rather than perceived at the personal level. As lifestyle businesses, these creative entrepreneurs are seeking more than just profits; indeed, quality of life is an essential motivator (Azizi and Mostafanezhad 2014; Slocum and Curtis 2017a). Intuitively, the social bonds formed through food tourism interactions must have some impact on creative entrepreneurs at a personal level (Cavaliere 2017), but again, this voice is silent in the literature. Moreover, the change in sense of place and how that is

manifested in food tourism destinations remains obscure in the current literature (Blapp and Mitas 2017; Marques and Borba 2017).

Conclusion

Food tourism has become a major contributor to tourism studies, especially among scholars focusing on rural areas where food traditions are entwined with the history, heritage, and identity of communities. Collaborative networks, both among producers and between producers and consumers, have given rise to a new culture of creativity in small communities. For areas that may not have traditional tourism assets (national parks, large-scale attractions, or all-inclusive resorts), these case studies highlight how food has united agricultural communities by instilling pride through the communication of a sense of place. Similar to Prince, Petridou, and Ioannides in chapter 10 of this volume, this chapter has specifically argued that for small rural communities, the crafting of narratives has the potential to provide an inclusive self-determination that allows for local control over tourism development.

As scholars, our job is to create new knowledge around social relationships. While understanding visitor characteristics and motivations is important for the development of the tourism industry, recognizing how tourism and host interactions change the nature of a rural region is also vital to enhancing quality of life and social sustainability. The very nature of tourism impacts, such as increased traffic, changing food practices, and new open space usage, can have profound effects on a region's sense of place and foodscapes. Identifying how this change is negotiated through the creative economy and the tourism narrative can provide insight into future rural development challenges. This chapter is a call to action aimed at enhancing the potential benefits that can arise for small communities embarking on food-and-drink tourism.

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