Local food consumption: distinct patterns of consumption and associated meanings amongst Portuguese rural tourists

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Aims



clarify local food consumption patterns amongst
 Portuguese visitors of rural areas,

 distinguishing groups of consumers surveyed in 2014 in the context of a 3-years research project, based on motivations for this type of food



Theoretical background



- Rural territories: increasingly attract tourists, due to appealing and distinctive experience opportunities based on varied endogenous resources "countryside capital" (Garrod, et al, 2006), highly valued by the post-modern tourist (Kastenholz, Carneiro & Marques, 2012; Lane, 2007).
- Within this rural tourism experience context, local food stands out (Sidali et al 2013), also frequently, eventually excessively, used in promotional material (Figueiredo, 2013).
- Local food is linked to the ideal of safer and healthier food consumption, associated to authenticity, local culture and identity.
- The consumption of these products after the trip is a means of enjoying a prolonged tourist experience at home (Aho, 2001; Kastenholz et al 2014).



Theoretical background



- Local food is a broad category, including agriculture produce, manufactured and refined products; with distinct ingredients, flavors and associated cultural meanings
- Its consumption may occur in distinct contexts at the destination and at home, integrated in tourism services or sold in shops.
- Rural tourists are heterogeneous, with different motivations, travel behaviors, demographics and impacts produced.
- Also the market of local food is heterogeneous.
- An understanding of this heterogeneity should improve sustainable destination management.



Methodology

- A questionnaire directed to a sample of the Portuguese population aged 14+
- A total of 1839 valid questionnaires were obtained (59.8% personal interviews / 40.2% online)
- A quota sampling approach was adopted based on the following criteria:
 - The municipality of residence categorized in three levels:
 - level 1 municipalities mostly urban;
 - level 2 municipalities intermediate
 - and level 3 municipalities mostly rural
 - The parish of residence (categorized in two groups urban or rural, according to INE classification)
 - Gender
 - Age

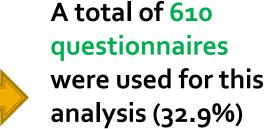


Methodology

In this study only the respondents who had:

- a) visited a Portuguese rural area in the last three years with tourism purposes
- b) and who simultaneously indicated consumption of locally produced food items, with known origin from rural areas, were considered

To assess heterogeneity within this market regarding consumption patterns of local food products, the main reasons for this consumption were introduced in a hierarchical cluster analysis



3 clusters resulted,
which were subject to
Chi-square tests to
assess differences
between them
regarding travel
behavior, link to rural
areas, type of local
products consumed and
socio-demographics.

Results and discussion



Clusters identified:

Cluster 1 — (25% of the sample)

Cluster 3 –(33% of the sample)

Cluster 2 – (42% of the sample)

Results

Main reasons for consuming food items produced in rural areas

Cluster 2

(42%)

Cluster 1

(25%)

Clusters

(% by column)

Cluster 3

(33%)

Total

(100%)

 $\chi^2(\alpha)$

Main reasons for consuming food items produced in rural areas						
	Being healthier	41,8	33,5	58,1	43,8	29.198 (0.000)
	Having better flavor	24,2	84,3	4,4	42,6	322.321 (0.000)
	Being more reliable	100,0	1,2	10,8	29,2	500.734 (0.000)
	Supporting local producers	0,0	24,8	27,6	19,5	50.053 (0.000)
	Being biologic	11,1	8,7	30,5	16,6	250.587 (0.000)
	Being national	8,5	32,7	1,0	16,1	92.714 (0.000)
	Being produced by relatives	9,2	11,4	16,7	12,6	5.141 (0.077)
	Being cheaper	0,0	1,2	12,8	4,8	43.877 (0.000)
	Being produced by themselves	2,0	0,0	9,9	3,8	32.027 (0.000)
	Having better appearance	0,0	1,2	7,9	3,1	23.352 (0.000)

Results

Sample profile

Main socio-demographic differences:

- Cluster 1 tends to be older, cluster 3 younger
- Cluster 2 tends to be higher educated

Differences regarding link to the rural:

 All tend to be rather urban, in some respects cluster 3 a bit more (but no statistically significant differences)

Sample profile

Some differences between clusters regarding preferences of specific products:

- Cluster 1 tends to like, more than others, products from animal origin, meat based products
- Cluster 2 tends to like, more than others, processed products, particularly wine, cheese, but also bread
- Cluster 3 tends to like, more than others, agrigulture produce, particularly vegetables, potatoes, but also eggs

Sample profile

Some differences between clusters regarding tourism activities undertaken:

- All frequently refer to (>60%) resting, appreciating scenery, contacting nature, visiting historical/ traditional villages and tasting local cuisine
- Cluster 1 tends to refer, more than others, to resting, tasting local cuisine and visiting relatives
- Cluster 2 tends to refer, more than others, to visiting historical/ traditional villages, monuments, museums and proteced areas
- Cluster 3 tends to refer to sports activities, more than others (although not a dominant theme either)

Conclusions



- Understanding this market heterogeneity regarding food consumption for those actually visiting rural areas for tourism purposes may help improve marketing, particularly product development and market communication, directed to diverse types of visitors of rural areas.
- Similar studies in other national contexts would be interesting for comparison.
- More, also qualitative research may be undertaken to better understand the role of local food consumption in the tourist experience on-site and also after the trip (e.g. also questioning the role of shared consumption and cultural meanings of particular local food items).

Thank you! Obrigada!

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