

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



RURAL MATTERS

PTDC/CS-GEO/117967/2010

COMPETE

QR

QUADRO DE REFERÊNCIA ESTRATÉGICO NACIONAL

UNião Europeia

FCT

Financiada pela União Europeia e a Tecnologia

Elisabeth Kastenholz – [elisabethk@ua.pt](mailto:elisabethk@ua.pt)  
Maria João Carneiro – [mjcarneiro@ua.pt](mailto:mjcarneiro@ua.pt)  
Celeste Eusébio – [celeste.eusebio@ua.pt](mailto:celeste.eusebio@ua.pt)  
Elisabete Figueiredo – [elisa@ua.pt](mailto:elisa@ua.pt)

University of Aveiro Portugal

# 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 consumption**



# 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



**A total of 610 questionnaires** were used for this analysis (32.9%)

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

Clusters				$\chi^2 (\alpha)$
Cluster 1 (25%)	Cluster 2 (42%)	Cluster 3 (33%)	Total (100%)	
(% by column)				

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)



### 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)

### 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, agriculture produce, particularly vegetables, potatoes, but also eggs

### 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 protected 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!



Elisabeth Kastenholz – [elisabethk@ua.pt](mailto:elisabethk@ua.pt)  
Maria João Carneiro – [mjcarneiro@ua.pt](mailto:mjcarneiro@ua.pt)  
Celeste Eusébio – [celeste.eusebio@ua.pt](mailto:celeste.eusebio@ua.pt)  
Elisabete Figueiredo – [elisa@ua.pt](mailto:elisa@ua.pt)

University of Aveiro Portugal