

GASTRONOMY AS A PRIMARY TOURIST ATTRACTION OF A DESTINATION

Food Tourism in Mealhada, Portugal

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Food Tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon, although it has become important in Portugal like in other countries mobilizing a considerable number of visitors who travel for food. Portugal can be considered a destination with great potential for this kind of tourism because the relevance of his culinary heritage, but academic studies on this topic and on specific destinations are scarce in the country. Notwithstanding there are several opinion articles, not supported by academic studies, which can be imprecise. Also in international terms the generality of academic models about touristic attractions, relegates to second place, or omits, gastronomy as a touristic attraction. This article focuses on a success case in terms of food tourism in Portugal, the city of Mealhada, seeking to demonstrate the reality of destinations where the food is the most relevant touristic attraction, and trying to contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon which involves the movement of visitors because the gastronomy.

KEY WORDS: *food tourism, consumer behavior, tourist attraction, gastronomy, Portugal*