

## **The use and stimulation of culinary tourism in learning about local and regional cultural peculiarities and historical heritage**

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### **Introduction**

*The fate of a nation depends on the way that they eat.  
(Brillat-Savarin 2012)*

Gastronomy or food consumption in its the most general sense has been one of the integral constituents of the human's life since its existence. Eating habits or preferences were formed over the centuries. This process was accompanied by a number of natural and cultural factors that influenced the customs and traditions preserved to these days. Spatial differences formed in such way have become a very valuable differentiating feature of local cultures. What is more, they form not only the basis for the development of tourist activities, but also constitute an interesting research problem.

Food and its regional and local specifics related to the preparation methods and ways of consumption are an interesting way of learning about the cultural heritage of an area. Unlike the other forms of tourism, especially the passive ones connected with the presentation of historical heritage, this way of learning is kind of welcoming variation associated with pleasant tasting experiences.

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Food consumption is the essential and very important condition of all forms of tourism. According to some experts, the food expenses may exceed even one third of the total tourist expenditures (Quan, Wang 2004; Hall, Sharples 2003), which makes the gastronomy and food consumption (including the consumption of basic food and food products) an important factor influencing the quality of the offered products in relevant tourist destination as well as the final tourist experiences.

In this respect, however, the constantly expanding globalization can be seen as certain problem. The complexity of the food products offer and the constantly growing possibilities, with the whole complex of economic, social, cultural, and other determinants, significantly affect the ongoing changes in the way of life worldwide. The quality, variety, and way of eating are largely conditioned by the amount of money that an individual can and also is willing to invest in it. In this respect, the majority of people is forced to act very rationally, mainly due to economic factors. The increasing standard of living, social welfare, constantly expanding consume, increasing income of individuals, and expanding cosmopolitan way of life lead to the formation of the group called culinary hedonists. This group of people is eager to travel and visit remote destinations to meet their very specific needs in terms of boarding. It is a segment of tourists who are willing to spend considerable financial resources on the quality food, dishes, as well as transport to enjoy them. For that reason, it is potentially very interesting segment of tourists for the development of so-called gourmet, gastronomic or culinary tourism (Matlovičová, Pompura 2013).

Current trends and changes in way of life, especially the increasing rate of individualization as a manifestation of postmodern lifestyle, fundamentally modify the traditional eating rituals. The originally common family eating gradually loses its importance. However, its absence may cause the demand for another form of social food consumption in order to share the experiences related to gastronomy. It is, therefore, another of the factors influencing the demand for culinary tourism (Hjalager, Richards 2002). In this respect, according to some studies (Warde, Martens 2000), the importance of the social aspect impact on the overall experience of eating is more important than its quantity and quality.

### **Definition of culinary tourism**

*One of the privileges of the human race is to drink without thirst and the present-day cook knows how to make us eat without hunger.*  
(Brillat-Savarin 2012)

If we consider tourism as a demand-oriented concept, then food tourism, based on actual data published in the Global Report on Food Tourism by WTO, is one of the most dynamic segments within the tourism market (UNWTO

secondary producers, because (Hall, Sharples 2003) the recreation, entertainment, and learning about the culture of visited places are the main aims, which are somehow connected with food and food degustation. The term culinary tourism refers to all individually or collectively organized trips to the places of specific type of food production for the purpose of their consumption, which is seen as a means of recreation and experiencing the pleasure of eating.

However, this does not mean that each visit of a local restaurant or market can be considered a culinary tourism. The main motivating factor of culinary journeys is the desire to experience the taste of specific foods or gourmet products that are exceptional in some ways or are characterized by some regional and local specificities. For example, it may be wine, cheese or even tasting of various dishes prepared by well-known and recognized chefs and served in expensive and exclusive restaurants. On the other hand, this form of tourism can also include a tasting of local specialties, which cannot be eaten in another location because of their endemic nature. From the point of view of the definition of this form of tourism, the degustation of food and culinary products is considered a superior aim of the journey, which influences the behavior of tourists and their decisions. For example, the decisions about the direction, time of travelling, a way of spending time during the tour, etc. Culinary tourism can be characterized as a form of tourism with specialized interests, where the consumption of food or tasting of food and beverages is an important element of related leisure time activities (Kurek et al. 2007).

Meaning of culinary tourism can be seen in both the expected economic benefits for the destination, as well as its social potential, which is viewed in terms of deepening awareness of culinary diversity. Culinary tourism enables another way of local culture perception, encourages better understanding of regional food traditions and related cultural values, and enables better understanding of the visited communities.

### **Forms of culinary tourism**

Food or culinary tourism includes a variety of activities ranging from degustations, visits to the restaurants for the purpose of pleasure from food, cooking shows and demonstrations, to farmers markets, gastronomic festivals, food fairs or similar events (Hall, Sharples 2008). It reflects a certain kind of national cultural heritage, which stimulates the interest of potential tourists to discover the history of the territory through the customs and traditions in gastronomy. Therefore, food tourism is considered a subset of heritage or cultural tourism.

In terms of the place of realization, it can be classified as both urban and rural tourism. In some ways, both environments determine the possible variants of its forms, whether towards agro-tourism, festival tourism, or even other forms.

Depending on the intensity and the extent of the influence of food as a motivator for undergoing a tourist journey, we distinguish:

- a) forms of tourism where food is a primary motive of a tourist journey:
  - gourmet tourism,
  - gastronomic tourism,
  - cuisine tourism,
- b) forms of tourism where food is a secondary motive of a tourist journey:
  - culinary tourism,
- c) and the other forms of tourism where the interest in food and food degustation is subordinated to other traveller's interests (Hall et al. 2004) (figure 1).

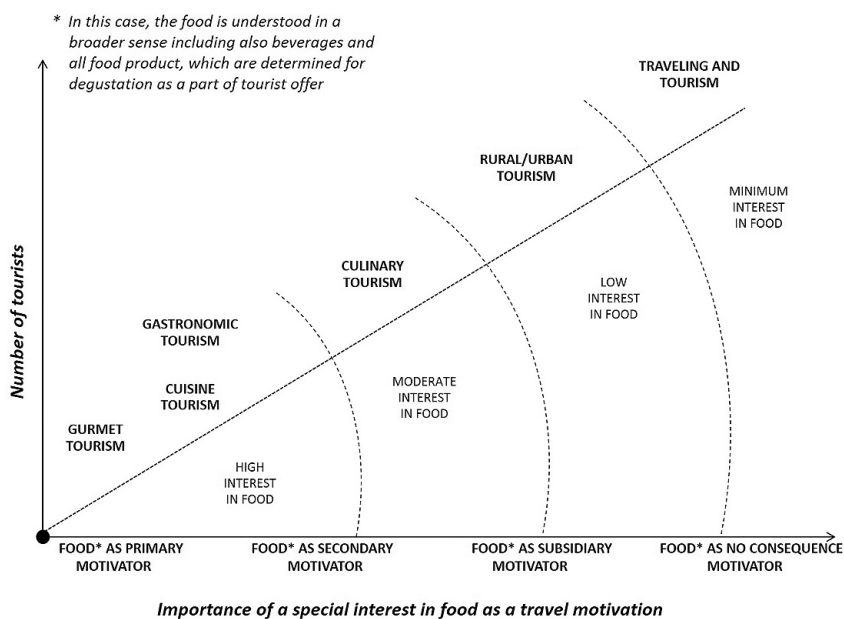


Figure 1. Forms of tourism according to the rate of the interest in food degustation and culinary products

Source: Hall et al. 2004.

In terms of culinary tourism, the food products consumption and degustation as a motivation for travelling can be the primary or secondary goal. As it has already been mentioned in the introduction, the current global homogenisation tendencies and spreading cosmopolitanism cause a constant expanding of an offer. Such processes can be observed also in the field of culinary tourism,

2012). The report further states, that the gastronomy and related forms of food tourism, represent not only an opportunity to revitalize and diversify the tourist offer in a destination, but also represent a new opportunity to support a recovery of the primary economic sector. Within the supply chains, this sector is closely linked to other economic sectors represented mainly by various producers, traders, cooks, etc. (UNWTO 2012; Smith, Xiao 2008).

The simplified idea, which identifies culinary tourism with a visit to a restaurant or with food or meal consumption mostly away from home in a way which breaks the stereotypes of our everyday eating, is very inaccurate. The main reason of inaccuracy is that the stated simplification considers some activities to be tourist activities, even though, they do not have such character. Moreover, it makes it impossible to distinct culinary tourism from other or all the other forms of tourism, where gastronomy is an inevitable part of a journey, but it is not its primary goal. Therefore, from the point of view of the definition of culinary tourism, it is essential to differentiate (Matlovičová, Pompura 2013):

- tourists who see the food consumption as an inevitable part of a traveller's experience and,
- tourists who choose a destination and related traveller's activities based on the food and the goal to enjoy the expected culinary experience.

Therefore, while creating a tourist product and marketing strategy of a tourist destination, it is possible to approach the food consumption and related activities (Matlovičová, Pompura 2013):

- as a means or an inevitable part of a tourist journey, or
- as a goal of a tourist journey.

The core and relevance of the distinguishing culinary tourism from the other forms of tourism can be seen in a way of satisfying the demand for rest, recreation or entertainment by the means of activities which are connected primarily or secondarily to food or gastronomy.

Reflecting the stated facts, it is possible to consider the culinary tourism (or food tourism<sup>4</sup>) a form of adventure or cognitive tourism. The main or important motive of this form of tourism is a visit to places which offer an opportunity to taste gourmet or food products. It is not crucial whether there are primary or

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<sup>4</sup> In finding a suitable Slovak semantic equivalent to the English term Food Tourism, we face a problem. The reason is that the existing attributes in Slovak language either narrow the content of this form of tourism or have inappropriate connotations (e.g. *alimentárny turizmus*, *potravinový turizmus*, *reštauračný turizmus*, etc.). Perhaps this is the reason of some terminological inconsistencies that we encounter in literature. Sometimes, even terms such as culinary, gastronomic, or gourmet tourism are considered as synonyms by some authors (Kurek et al. 2007). In further parts, we will try to point at the semantic differences in above terms, since in the course of food tourism development, those differences also become a source of differentiation of individual-specific variants of this form of tourism.

where three specific forms have been shaped: gourmet tourism, gastronomic tourism, and cuisine tourism (figure 2).

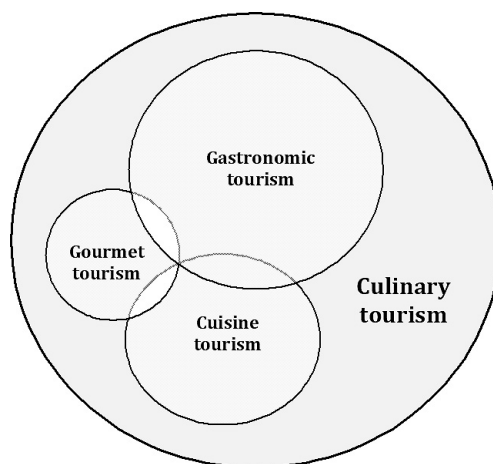


Figure 2. Forms of culinary tourism

#### a) *Gourmet tourism*

By the share of tourists, the gourmet tourism is the “smallest” one. In this case, the extent of interest in food and gourmet products degustation is the largest one and represents the main motive for undergoing a journey by tourists. The term gourmet<sup>5</sup> itself comes from French where it named a specialist in wine

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<sup>5</sup> According to some sources, the term *gourme*, which is of uncertain origin, first appeared already in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In general, it referred to a young man at that time. Later on, it was found in Old French. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was transformed into *gourmet* and it referred to a wine broker or wine-taster employed by a wine dealer. Explicitly, we come across this term in the work of Brillat-Savarin *Physiologie du goût* (1825), where it is mentioned in relation to the wine as well as grape quality assessment (Brillat-Savarin 2012). The word “gourmet” as an adjective started to be used at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, the other similar term *gourmand* carried the additional connotation of a man who simply enjoys food in great quantities. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in terms of French, its meaning began to move rather to *the people loving good food*. Brillat-Savarin used to refer by this term to the *food expert*. In fact, both expressions were originally semantically different. While the *gourmet* referred to an expert in the field of quality food and wine, the *gourmand* carried more quantitative connotations meaning a person who enjoys food in great quantities. Today, both French expressions have more or less similar meaning, which corresponds to its Old French form denoting a man, who has refined sense of taste assessment (of food and beverages - especially wine). However, it has still remained a small semantic difference in English. Since the term *gourmet* is used to refer to food and beverage expert in a more positive sense, the *gourmand* refers to *eater or glutton* with rather negative connotations.

quality assessing. Its further expansion to all kinds of delicacies and culinary specialities, whose consumption was not primarily related to sustenance as an inevitable part of a man's needs to survive, is used until now.

Products of gourmet tourism are, therefore, focused on gourmets, i.e. people with a sophisticated sense of assessing the food taste, who look for high-quality luxury food and food specialities, and are willing to travel because of them.

Gourmet tourism is considered a subvariant of culinary tourism focused on gourmets - experts on food and beverages. In other words, we talk about people with deep knowledge of gastronomy and refined sense of taste assessment, who seek for high quality, luxury food and specialities.

#### b) *Gastronomic tourism*

Similarly, also in the case of gastronomic tourism, the interest in culinary products degustation is of primary importance; however, its participants are willing to accept a wider range of gastronomic products with the emphasis on quality, status, and prestige. Thus, in this case, the target market of tourists is greater than in the case of previous form. In addition to experts in gastronomy, here are also involved laymen who are actually less demanding tourists than those in case of gourmet tourism.

For the above-mentioned reasons, gastronomic tourism can be considered a form of food tourism, which is primarily focused on visiting the quality restaurants and gourmet product consumption, while the emphasis is placed on quality, status and prestige (e.g. restaurants on the list of Michelin Guide). In addition to the gastronomy experts, also laymen, who accept a wider range of culinary products than gourmets, build the target markets.

Constantly expanding phenomenon of pop-culture associated with a trend to attend stylish and exclusive restaurants or other special events connected with food and beverage tasting can be considered as one of the important factors that contributed to the formation of so-called gastronomic tourists. This trend in

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In Slovak, the term *gourmet* refers to the expert on food and lover of fine food and drinks (especially wine). In other words, we talk about someone who has deep knowledge of gastronomy and that is why, he has high expectations in this respect. He also has refined sense of taste and puts an emphasis on pleasure associated with food. In addition to taste itself, for gourmet as an expert, very important are also aspects such as the way of serving, the environment in which the food is served, as well as the variety of others especially visual attributes of the served dishes. Some reservations, in terms of accuracy, exist with a synonym *sweet tooth*, which can refer to the eating in great quantities. The correct understanding of the person addressed as gourmet, therefore, requires putting the emphasis on the deep knowledge in gastronomy and required high quality food and beverages (Elias 2011).

spending leisure time of middle and upper-middle class together with gastro-nomic globalization contribute to the creation of new culinary products based on the mixing of different cultures of the world. The key attribute is the release or complete absence of strict rules. A contemporary modern cuisine generates new forms and flavours, and thus, it brings a constant product differentiation, which subsequently influences decision-making processes of tourists and attracts them to such destination to enjoy offered gourmet experiences.

To simplify the message within the marketing communication strategy, there are often used so-called personal associations based on the personality of one of the world renowned chefs. The unique qualities of the personality (of the creator of flavour styles and culinary trends) form the basis for the culinary products which are often transferred to a broader area and they are usually put together in associations.

### c) *Cuisine tourism*

Tourism of local cuisines is carried out in urban as well as rural environments. However, a key factor in the development of this form of culinary tourism is rural areas, especially those that focus on the production of certain agricultural products or some traditional culinary specialties. Food tasting is often associated with a food purchase and is run on the place, which is adapted for tourists. It can be a certain farmstead, food plant, or town centre in case of some culinary festivals, markets or fairs.

The primary motive of cuisine tourism is tasting and learning about the traditional local culinary specialties. Formally, it may be a different farmers markets, fairs, gastronomic festivals, and other events focused on area-specific food products and gastronomy.

In some cases, this form of culinary tourism, because of its nature and close link to the local agricultural production, can be considered as part of rural tourism as well as agro tourism. While talking about rural tourism, agro tourism, and cuisine tourism, it is the cuisine tourism, that is characterized by the highest level of culinary or food authenticity reflecting the local culture and culinary traditions. In this case, food and gastronomic homogenization are perceived in a rather negative way, since they reduce the attractiveness of tourist products. This is one of the examples which confirm rather ambivalent nature of tourism activities in the gastronomic globalization. On the one hand, mass tourism contributes directly by increasing demand to uniformity in the local gastronomic offer (McDonaldisation, pizza), but on the other hand, culinary tourism creates a demand for in situ production, i.e. special local culinary products (food, dishes, and drinks). Their consumption at the place of production is accompanied by



the inimitable *genius loci* and is considered an important differentiating feature of the local cuisines tourism product.

An important attribute, in terms of the cuisine tourism realisation, is a culinary event that is organised regularly. In this case, a periodicity is an important condition for introducing a sustainable tourism product and attracting potential tourists.

Festivals and public events have always been more or less related to the food, even if their main function was different. In addition to various kinds of religious festivals, the oldest types of festivals include various forms of events celebrating the harvest (harvest festival). The tradition of the oldest one dates back to the pre-Christian times. For example, The Bacchanalia were Roman festivals of Bacchus, the Roman god of wine (in ancient Greek mythology, he was also known as Dionysus). This festival was held annually in the middle of March, but later on, it was organized even five times a year. Christian traditions and celebrations usually followed those in the pre-Christian times, but many of them have been replaced or at least, there were some attempts to replace them. Countries or regions with a tradition of winemaking are often associated with the most various celebrations of wine. Other celebrations could have a religious motive, but even in these cases, the wine was presented. Interesting is that various stages of the wine production cycle (e.g. the growing of the first buds, growing of the first grape berries, beginning of grape berries ripening (fr. *Veraison*) or final-vintage, the harvest of the grapes served as a reason for organising festivals and other similar events. Nowadays, the meaning of the celebrations associated with wine was semantically shifted to a more secular level. Nevertheless, in many countries (e.g. Spain and Italy) the link between wine and culinary festivals and religious feasts is still very common. It is nothing exceptional if culinary festivals are considered a national or regional holiday and thus, these days can also be public holidays. For example, The Thanksgiving Day celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November in the United States and on the second Monday of October in Canada, is sometimes colloquially called Turkey Day. On this day, there is in both countries a holiday. During this day, people meet with the close family or friends and symbolically give their thanks for the harvest (Hall, Mitchell 2008; Barkin, James 1994; Hall, Sharples 2008).

According to the importance and size of the territorial impact in terms of ability to attract tourists, we distinguish (Hall, Sharples 2008):

- local events (festivals),
- regional events (festivals),
- national events (festivals),
- international events (festivals) of the local cuisines.

In terms of the food event (festival) orientation, we can distinguish (adapted by Hall, Sharples 2008):

- general events – focus is placed on the local food products and local cuisine in general (Exeter food festival, Tasmania Taste Festival, Regional Farmers Market in Banská Štiavnica, etc.),
- cross-thematic events - focused on the selected categories or groups of products (New Zealand Mendocino Crab and Wine Days, Spiš Wine and Honey Festival Via regia, etc.),
- mono-thematic events - focused only on one group of products (e.g. Niagara Icewine Festival),
- mono-product events - specialized on just one food product or a gourmet specialty (Oregon Truffle Festival, Potato Festival in Stiaavnica Mines, Days of Cabbage in Stupavské and others).

Despite the permanently high popularity of similar events, intensifying competition stimulates product innovations. Innovations can be observed in terms of the expansion of offered traditional dishes, specialties, and other products, as well as in term of the listed events of all types. In order to attract as many visitors as possible, some of the traditional events are moving towards the category of general festivals. During these events, in addition to traditional specialties, also well-known restaurants can present and offer their gourmet specialties and gourmet dishes from other regions or other parts of the world. Applied elements of interactivity to culinary products can be considered an interesting diversification. In such case, tourists can be engaged in the process of preparing food or drinks. A very common and favorite is various courses for public, e.g. course of cooking or bartender, sommelier or barista training courses etc.

### **Stimulation of culinary tourism through guidebooks – case study of the Michelin Red Guide**

Publishing of guidebooks for the best restaurants and other catering establishments is one of possibilities for stimulating culinary tourism. One of the oldest and most famous guidebooks for quality restaurants in the world is the Michelin Guide, sometimes also referred to as the Michelin Red Guide. Its origin is linked to the production of tires. Actually the main reason for its release was the boom in the car industry and the efforts to increase and publicize driving, which also required the improvements in terms of the experience of traveling.

The idea to publish a guide, which will provide cyclists and motorists with useful information on location of petrol stations, garages, and establishments with good food and recreation opportunities, was brought by André Michelin. In August 1900, the first publication of the red guide – the Michelin Guide France

with 35 000 copies was printed. The release of this guide was accompanied by Michelin brothers' great ambitions, as they stated that: This guide was born with the century and will last as long as the century does. In 1904, the Guide went international and the publication of the Michelin Guide Belgium was launched. In 1911, also The Britain Guide started. In 1908, because of the high demand, The Bureau of Itineraries was created. Its main task was to provide motorists with free assistance when arranging their itinerary. The great interest in this service is evidenced by the statistics: in 1921, the agency has equipped 19 000 requests and in 1925, it was already 155 000. In 1910, the information in the guide was more detailed. The guide included also cartographic materials in the form of road maps in scale 1:200 000 (*Michelin History* 2013).

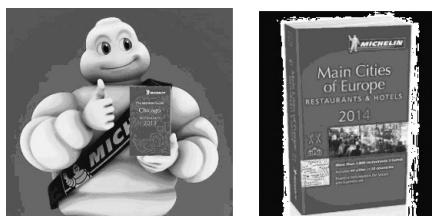


Figure 3. Mascot Bibendum and Michelin red guide Main Cities of Europe 2014

The initial strategy of free distribution ensured that the guide was quickly well-known among motorists. However, over time, it began to lose its seriousness. In an effort to improve its reputation, the Michelin Company has decided to charge this guide since 1920. Commercialization was justified by the story saying that Andre Michelin, while passing the service workshop, saw the Michelin Guide being used to prop up an uneven desk. After this, he decided together with his brother Edouard that it cannot be for free, because people don't appreciate what they don't have to pay for. Initial price was set at 7 francs and at the same time, the advertising of the guide was launched. This was a reasonable decision preceded by, among other things, an increase in popularity of the guide. Especially popular were parts paying attention to the restaurants (*Michelin History* 2013).


Michelin Company, encouraged by the great interest of the public, put together a team of anonymous inspectors, who started to evaluate restaurants according to the specific criteria. In 1926, places offering good quality food were starred for the first time. Later on, in 1931, the rating system was revised and restaurants were awarded not only one but up to three stars. The criteria for awarding stars were defined in 1936 and after small modifications; they are still used even today (*Michelin T&L* 2013).

In 1931, the guide's blue cover was changed to red one. Nowadays, the red color is well-known and significant visual attribute of the brand Michelin Guide and the guide is often referred to as Red Guide (*Michelin T&L* 2013).

Although, the publishing of the guides was stopped during the both World War I and World War II, they played an important role during this period. Especially important were maps that, despite their initial thematic focus on travel related services, became very useful to the army. Maps were quite detailed and in fact, at that time they were basically the best cartographic materials for the French army. On request of the French Ministry of war, the Michelin Company called its cartographers and prepared a special edition extended with neighboring countries and Norway, which were not included in earlier editions. A similar request for the assistance was also received from the Nazi Germany, which occupied France at that time. However, the Michelin Company refused to cooperate. In a way, a curious was the edition of 1939, published only six months before the war. In the spring of 1944, based on the request of commanders of Allied Force, which were being organized in Britain to invade the Normandy, the Michelin Guide 1939 was adapted and printed in 1944 in the USA. The cover of this new guide was in lighter red than the original edition and there was a note on the cover stating for official use only. This limited edition was prepared for American troops, who expected orientation problems in the war-devastated areas without marking system. The new special edition of the Michelin guide was extended with hundreds of detailed and up-to-date French city maps. In June 1944, Allied troops armed with, inter alia, a special edition of the Michelin guide, landed on the coast of Normandy. The purpose, for which the guide was intended, indicates that most of the copies were destroyed in the war or taken back home to USA by American soldiers. Nowadays, this edition has a great collecting value. The guide can be sold for as much as 2000 USD, while the original price was only 30 francs (7 USD) for one piece (Lottman 2003, *ViaMichelin* 2009).

One week after the World War II had been ended (16 May 1945), the publishing of the guides was renewed. The first post-war edition contained a note on the cover: This edition, prepared during the war, cannot be as complete and precise as our pre-war publications. Nevertheless, it should be useful (*Michelin* 1939; *ViaMichelin* 2009; Lottman 2003).

Major change in the labeling of restaurants came up in 1955 when a new category, in addition to the 1-3 stars, was introduced:

 – *coins* indicate restaurants that serve an affordable fixed-price menu (starter + entrée + dessert) depending on the local monetary standard. For example, today, the maximum permitted coin price in the USA is \$25.



– *Bib Gourmand* – the symbol of Bib gourmand was introduced in 1997. It indicates a restaurant offering good value for money. Today, the company presents its meaning as Inspectors' Favourites for Good Value (figures 4, 5) (ViaMichelin 2009, Michelin Dictionary 2013).

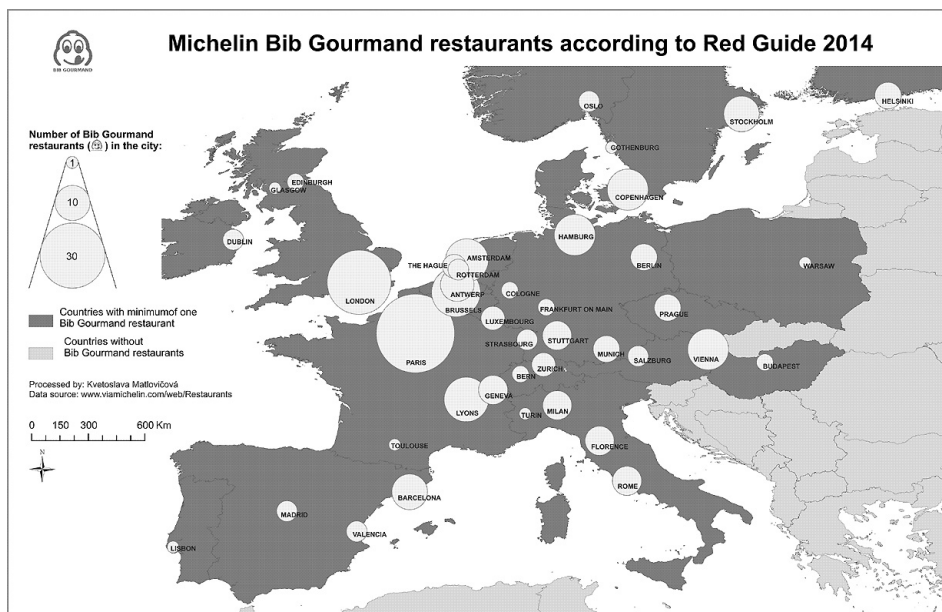


Figure 4. Michelin *Bib Gourmand* restaurants according to Red Guide 2014  
Source: [www.viamichelin.com/web/Restaurants](http://www.viamichelin.com/web/Restaurants).

Because of growing competition in the field of publishing of similar guides and continuously wider penetration of the Internet into our daily lives, Michelin guide management approached to certain changes that reflect new trends. As a result, the on-line guides have been published on the website ViaMichelin.com since 2001. For example, the Japanese cities of Tokyo, Yokohama, Shonan, Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Nara can be found at Michelin Japan (2013). Basic on-line search is available on an interactive map at: <http://www.viamichelin.com/web>. The website provides, inter alia, a number of other useful information for motorists in eight languages.

The year 2005 experienced the beginning of spatial expansion in terms of visited and evaluated places. It all started with the New York City publication (in the first New York City publication, there were 39 Michelin starred restaurants). In 2006, the edition was extended also by San Francisco with 28 restaurants. The year 2007 brought the first edition of the *Bonne Petites Tables France* and first Michelin Guide from the Asia. In terms of Asian cities, Tokyo was

chosen as first in 2007 and one year later, also Hong Kong and Macao Guides were launched (Michelin Dictionary 2013). In 2009, the first iPhone application was introduced and the 100th anniversary edition of Michelin guide France was published. In the same year, it also came out for the first time a guide Bib Gourmand of Benelux and Buenas mesas for Spain (Michelin Dictionary 2013).

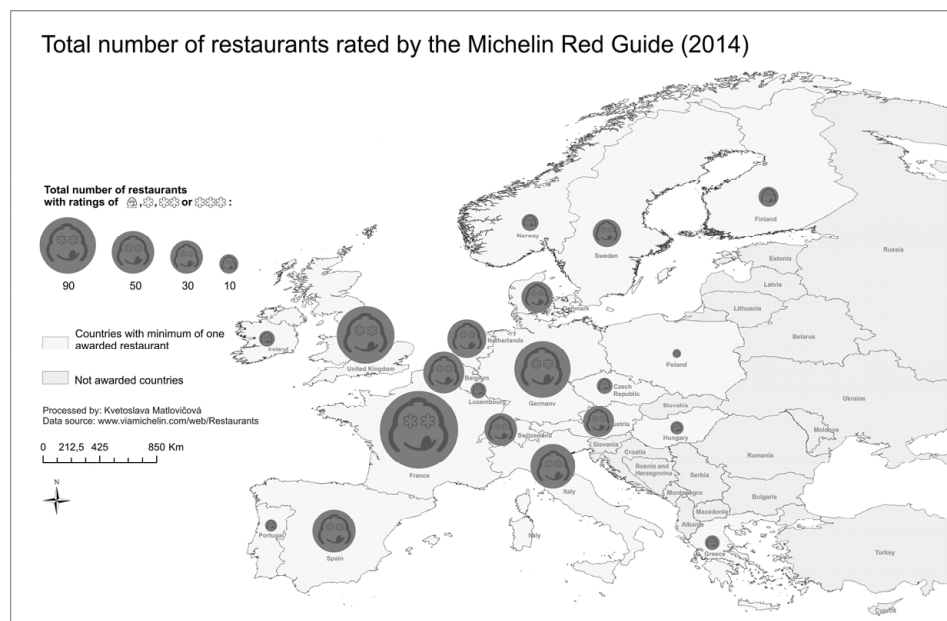


Figure 5. Total number of restaurants rated by the Michelin Red Guide 2014

Source: [www.viamichelin.com/web/Restaurants](http://www.viamichelin.com/web/Restaurants)

In 2011, the Red Guide was published with 23 rated restaurants in Chicago. Tokyo was extended in that year by the edition Bonnes Petites Tables Tokyo and from the territorial point of view; the guide covered also Yokohama and Kamakura. Another new publication was launched for Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe. Following year, the Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe guide included also Nara and the Tokyo-Yokohama-Kamakura guide was extended by Shonan. In 2012, it was also published a new guide for Hokkaido (Michelin Dictionary 2013).

In 2015, it will be published the first edition of the Red Guide for the territory of South America (perhaps also due to relatively frequent criticism). Thus, in March 2015, we can expect the first Brazilian edition – The Michelin Guide Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo (Michelin Gide 2012, Michelin South Africa 2014).

By the end of 2015, the Michelin Red Guides will cover 24 countries on 4 continents and more than 45,000 evaluated establishments from Sao Paulo via New York to Hong Kong. Nowadays, the territory of Europe is considered to be the best covered.

European print versions of the Michelin Red Guides 2014 include:

- Main Cities of Europe Michelin Guide 2014,
- France Michelin Guide 2014,
- Paris Michelin Guide 2014,
- Germany Michelin Guide 2014,
- London Michelin Guide 2014,
- Great Britain & Ireland 2014 Michelin Guide,
- Eating Out In Pubs (Great Britain and Ireland) Michelin Guide 2014,
- Italy Michelin Guide 2014,
- Great Britain & Ireland Michelin Guide 2014,
- Spain & Portugal Michelin Guide 2014,
- Belgique, Luxembourg Michelin Guide 2014,
- Nederland Michelin Guide 2014,
- Suisse Michelin Guide 2014,
- Bib Gourmand Benelux Michelin Guide 2014,
- Bonnes petites tables du guide France Michelin Guide 2014.

Asian print versions of the Michelin Red Guides 2014 include:

- Gide Hong Kong & Macau Michelin Guide 2014,
- Michelin Guide Kansai (Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Nara) 2014,
- Michelin Guide Tokyo, Yokohama & Shonan 2014,
- Bib Gourmands in the 2014 Michelin Guide to Tokyo Yokohama Shonan.

American print versions of the Michelin Red Guides 2014 include:

- Chicago Michelin Guide 2014
- San Francisco Michelin Guide 2014
- New York City Michelin Guide 2014

The first ever Michelin Guide to Brazil will be published in 2015:

- Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo Michelin Guide 2015.

The red guides are published in different countries usually from September to March (i.e. already four months before the beginning of the year), both in printed and electronic versions. In recent years, the application for iPhones is also available. Links to online shops, where it is possible to buy guides, can be found on the website: <http://www.michelintravel.com/michelin-guides>. For example, the price of the latest version of the MICHELIN Guide Main Cities of Europe 2014 (in June 2014) was 30 € (*Michelin Guides* 2014).

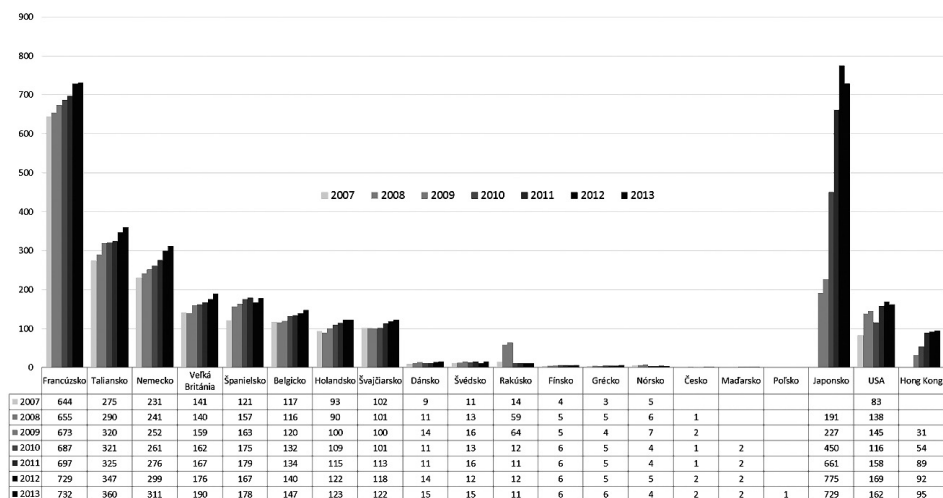


Figure 6. Overview of countries according to the number of restaurants that received a Michelin star during the period 2007–2013. Source: adapted on the basis of the data from Zadrozny 2013.

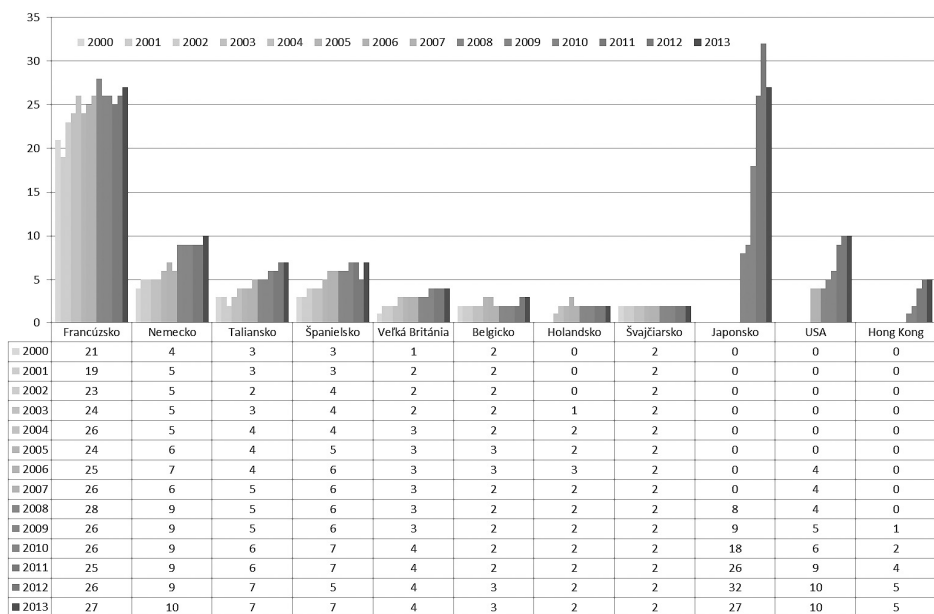


Figure 7. Overview of countries according to the number of restaurants that received the highest rating - 3 Michelin Stars during the period 2000–2013. . Source: adapted on the basis of the data from Zadrozny 2013.

Evaluation of establishments is conducted by inspectors who are certified experts in the field of gastronomy. Moreover, all of the inspectors have to pass a



demanding selection process, which is followed by 6 months long training led by another instructor. The evaluation is carried out anonymously, i.e. workers in selected establishments do not know that they are tested. Inspectors usually do not visit the same restaurant twice and the selected district is visited only once every ten years. According to the recent information, the inspectors may (or needn't) disclose their identity and also ask for additional information (Michelin Dictionary 2013). After each meal, stay or visit, they prepare a report, which is sent for further processing to the headquarters in Paris. Unlike other similar guides, inspectors are employees of the Michelin company or the company that publishes the Michelin guides in the country.

Restaurant cuisine evaluation by awarding stars (see above), which was introduced in 1926-1936, remained unchanged up to present days. Getting a Michelin star, according to the Michelin company, is a reward of know-how, demonstration of the certain kind of creativity as well as unfailing quality offered over time. Evaluation criteria are uniform for all rated establishments worldwide. In case the rating of the establishment is not good enough for awarding a star, it is not included in the guide (note: however, there are some exceptions - see below) (*Michelin Guide* 2012).

It is important to note, that the star rating applies solely to the quality in terms of cuisine served. It means, the evaluation reflects only what is on the plate and only what is on the plate. Thus, the award of stars does not take into considerations the restaurant's décor, the price of the ingredients or the quality of services.

Published criteria used by inspectors are as follows (*Michelin Guide* 2012; *Michelin Dictionary* 2013):

1. Quality of the ingredients (It is not necessary to use the most expensive ingredients such as caviar or *foie gras* to earn a star. The most important is the quality of the selected products.).
2. Flair and skill in preparing ingredients and combining flavours .
3. Chef's personality as revealed through the cuisine.
4. Value for money.
5. Consistency of culinary standards (it is important to keep quality standards permanently).

Based on the assessments of the above criteria, the stars are awarded as follows:

✳ – One star indicates a good place to stop on your journey. It is awarded to a very good restaurant in its category, offering cuisine prepared to a consistently high standard.

✳✳ – Two stars indicate a place worth a detour. They denote excellent cuisine, skillfully and carefully crafted dishes of outstanding quality.

☼☼☼ – Three stars are awarded to a place worth a special journey. Such reward indicates exceptional cuisine where diners eat extremely well, often superbly. Distinctive dishes are precisely prepared, using the ingredients of the highest quality (*Michelin Gide 2012, Red Guide Use 2014*) (figures 8, 9, 10).



Figure 8. Michelin-starred (one star) restaurants according to Red Guide 2014

Source: based on [www.viamichelin.com/web/Restaurants](http://www.viamichelin.com/web/Restaurants).

In addition to quality cuisine, also the atmosphere of the restaurant is the subject to evaluation. It means that even a restaurant, which does not obtain a star, can be included in the prestigious guide. The level of comfort, decor and service is described by one to five crossed knives and forks – known as couvert. If the pictogram of couvert is of the red color, it indicates the superior evaluation (i.e. a pleasant environment) and the black is for basic. Description of ranking is as follows:

- 1 couvert – quite comfortable restaurant,
- 2 couverts – comfortable restaurant,
- 3 couverts – very comfortable restaurant,
- 4 couverts – top class comfortable restaurant,
- 5 couverts – luxurious restaurant in the traditional style.

Small plates receive restaurants which adopted the small plate concept.



Figure 9. Michelin-starred (two stars) restaurants according to Red Guide 2014  
Source: based on [www.viamichelin.com/web/Restaurants](http://www.viamichelin.com/web/Restaurants).



Figure 10. Michelin-starred (three stars) restaurants according to Red Guide 2014  
Source: based on [www.viamichelin.com/web/Restaurants](http://www.viamichelin.com/web/Restaurants).

The small plate concept is based on the serving of a number of smaller dishes, instead of two or three larger ones. This concept was created around the year 2000 in response to efforts to healthy eating that avoids weight gaining. In the next period, this concept was developed in the USA where it is known as the Small Plate Movement (*Michelin Dictionary* 2013, *Red Guide Use* 2014, *Small-plate* 2013).

Other evaluation also focuses on the average price of served dishes and other related services (wine list, valet parking, brunch, late dinner, etc.). The guide also includes the evaluation of the hotels and their services (*Red Guide Use* 2014, *Michelin Dictionary* 2013).

Today, we can say with certainty that more than a century-long story of brand building Michelin has been successful. Although, originally it was not the main purpose of the Michelin Company, their brand is currently strongly associated with gastronomy, through the evaluations of the quality restaurants, which are published annually in the Michelin Red Guides. Nowadays, Earning of a Michelin star is considered one of the most prestigious awards that a chef can get. The strength of the Michelin brand in the field of gastronomy is evidenced by perhaps the best known affair (2003) of French chef Bernard Loiseau. When he had learned that he was about to lose one of the three stars, he had committed suicide before the Michelin Guide was published. Perhaps the saddest aspect of the whole incident is that the Michelin Guide published after his death kept him all three stars. Of course, this situation immediately sparked a debate on the methods of evaluation and awarding stars (Labanc 2013; Anonymous 2012a, 2012b).

Hunting for obtaining Michelin label and also a challenge to keep Michelin label create enormous psychological pressure on chefs. Also the necessities of using the most quality ingredients and sophisticated practices in food preparation place a financial burden on the budget of establishments. Many of chefs criticize the evaluation criteria, which, according to their opinion, are not clear. In fact, the Michelin Company did not publicize details of the procedures that are used for nearly 100 years. The debates became even more intensive in 2004, when the controversial book *L'inspecteur se met a table* was brought out. Pascal Rémy, the former inspector, describes here the work of anonymous reviewers, their enormous work load, high performance pressure, low financial reward, and many other behind the scenes details on evaluation procedures. What is more, he is not moderate in criticism of the Michelin Guide (Labanc 2013).

The most frequently reported complaints are also related to the fact that the French cuisine serves as a reference frame for evaluation and thus, it does not respect local cultural peculiarities. At the same time, there are some complaints by chefs from countries that have not yet been visited by inspectors. In this re-

spect, it has been medialized the issue of how to send already work loaded inspectors to these countries. Anyway, in general, there is a rule that the visited country should have a sufficiently large tourist market and in case of cities, there is a minimum size of 500 thousand inhabitants to be included on the list of planned visits. Of course, there exist also some exceptions, notably in case of France and Great Britain, which are grist for critics who consider the selection unfair. On the one hand, evaluated are small countries and towns, while countries such as Canada, Australia or Mexico are still ignored. In case of Slovakia, thus it can be raised the question whether the proximity of Bratislava to Vienna could not be used in order to succeed. In this respect, critics also point at Japan and Hong Kong, where the stars are awarded to restaurants that actually even did not expect such award and according to Pascal Rémy they did not meet as demanding conditions as it is in case of restaurants in other parts of the world. This is confirmed also by probably the world's cheapest Michelin starred restaurant in Hong Kong – Tim Ho Wan, where diners can enjoy gourmet meals for as little as 40 HD, which is less than 4 EUR (Ho Wan 2014; Labanc 2013; Anonymous 2012a, 2012b).

Reservations in relation to the evaluation were also raised after Juliane Caspar (originally from Germany) became the editor of the Paris Michelin Guide. It is hard to say, if in this case played a role fact that the leader editor became someone without French roots for the first time. However, critics also noticed that after she came, there was a significant rise of Micheline stars in Germany, which was attributable to her influence (Labanc 2013).

Nowadays, it is rather difficult to say to what extend are above statements true or if they were raised only as a result of the competitive environment. On the other hand, it is certain that a good marketing, built on the strong media coverage, plays a key role in efforts to gain recognition not only by the Michelin Guide, but mainly by all gourmets and tourist, who promoted good food and drinks to the purpose of travelling. In this regard, the media can be really helpful. There are many well-known cases when the persistent work of journalists, who e.g. promoted Danish cuisine for a long time, achieved placement on the Michelin red map. Being part of such a prestigious guide means for the country a great assistance in promoting tourism.

## **Conclusion**

Nowadays, the dynamics of changes in culinary products is significant, which points at the high flexibility and viability of this stream of tourism. However, on the other hand, it makes the attempts to classify this form of tourism more difficult. It is therefore necessary to see the definition of individual options not only as temporary, but also as mutually overlapping.

From this point of view, culinary tourism can be considered as the umbrella concept, denoting the above mentioned forms, but also tours where the activities associated with food tasting are of the secondary importance. In addition to the above mentioned activities, they can include also different festivals, demonstrations or shows focused on food and gastronomy. Degustation and tasting of culinary specialties on holiday are in many cases of the same importance as the visits of historical sites, museums, etc. (Hjalager, Richards 2002).

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