

## LOCAL FOOD IN LOCAL MENUS: THE CASE OF GOKCEADA

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*This paper attempts to determine motivations which influencing tourists' local food consumption. The study involved a multi-method approach undertaken through initiating interviews with local people to build inventory of local food of Gokceada, document review method was employed in restaurants (menus) to find out what extent local food peculiar to Gokceada take part in the menus of restaurants and finally a survey applied to visitors of the area to determine motivations which influencing their local food consumption. From the analysis five motivational factor identified; Quality of taste, authentic experience, rural development, health concern and knowledge. Quality of taste was chosen as a primary motivational factor by visitors to consume local food during their holiday.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Food is an extremely important part of the culture of a region. Moreover, tourism results from regions' sources, such as; specific landscapes, environments, culture and heritage (Beer et al., 2002). Nevertheless, governments, researchers and industry have only recognized the relationship between food, culture and tourism after the mid-1990s. From an economic point of view, food is a physiological necessity that's why we can easily argue that nearly 100% of tourists spend money for food where do they go for holiday or trip (Shenoy, 2005). However, local food is the best way to see destination's intangible heritage, through its consumption. In addition, food in tourism on the one



hand while supporting to local producers and local providers, on the other hand it provides high quality and fresh food to tourists (Long, 2004). This suggest that food in tourism can result in benefits for both hosts and guests (Nummedal and Hall, 2006; Okumus et al., 2007; Sims, 2009). More specifically, it is recognised that the kind of foods and drinks on offer for tourists confront us as a significant potential source in providing for the economic, cultural and environmental sustainability of tourism destinations. In other words, food could be a great medium for differentiating destinations.

According to Hjalager (2003), the new tourists seek food and beverage combinations and eating experiences that foster learning. For these tourists, food in a destination does not only satisfy hunger but, important for them, such consumption means gaining in-depth knowledge about the local cuisine and of the destination's culture. Local food as a tourism product is offered to tourists in many ways during their holiday, such as; in direct purchases from farms and in the restaurants, which allow for local products in their menus. Therefore, we can argue that food preparation and related services contribute substantially to tourism employment (Nummedal and Hall, 2006). The maximization of relationship between host and tourist by mean of locally produced food will increase the potential contribution of tourism to regional development (Hall, 2004). Sims (2009) lists interest in local food by tourist and its effects on tourism in three levels; firstly, increased tourist consumption of local foods will support local economy. Secondly, buying local products will reduce to carbon footprint. Thirdly, promoting local food products is one way to differentiate the destination among other competitors and attract a steady stream of visitors. However, while growing importance of food for destination is obvious, not all destinations try to use food in marketing activities to get potential opportunities it provides (Long, 2004; Okumus et al., 2007; Sims, 2009).

Local food is a fundamental component of a destination's attributes, adding to the range of attractions and the overall tourist experience (Symons, 1999). In the field of hospitality and tourism, there have been various attempts to determine and examine the factors influencing tourists to local food consumption in a tourist destination (Ryu and Jang, 2006; Sparks, 2007; Kim, et al., 2009). However, there is no study, which includes determination local foods of the destination, inclusion level of local food of the destination in restaurants menus and the determination of tourist motivations, which related to local food consumption. Therefore to fill out the lack in tourism and hospitality literature and to provide more comprehensive evidences to hotel and restaurant managers and local

governors the main objectives of the study is to reveal to what extent local food peculiar to Gokceada (Turkey) which intensively accommodates the traces of different cultures take part in the menus of restaurants and to determine motivations which influencing tourists' local food consumption.

## **LOCAL FOOD IN TOURISM**

Similitude-focused tendencies that come forward in consequence of globalization and are brought in the agenda of literature such as; isomorphism, standardization, etc. throw the local and localization out of focus and even ignore them. However, growing interest and demand from tourists for local values is the basic tenets of new tourists' who search for more real and authentic experiences (Nummedal and Hall, 2006). According to Rand et al. (2003), a successful destination is evaluated by the positive revelations of tourists to the area. Thus, the products that represented to tourists must be something the tourists wants and needs. In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on food products of a destination can be most important of cultural expressions (Handszuh, 2000; Rand et al., 2003; Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Selwood, 2003; Brownlie et al., 2005; Rand and Heath, 2006). Moreover, importance of food and eating out on trips and holidays is supported by many researchers (Telfer and Wall, 2000; Hjalager and Richards 2002; Hall and Sharples 2003; Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Okumus et al., 2007; Sims 2009). Telfer and Wall (2000) suggested that spending on eating out during a holiday constitutes approximately one-third of all tourist expenditures. Similarly, Turkey Statistical Institute (2008) announced that between 2005 and 2007 tourism spending on food and dining out in Turkey by international tourists averaged 28,6% of total expenditures, amounting to 4,11 billion USD, ranked first tourist expenditure on their holiday. In addition, Enteleca Research and Consultancy (2000) reported that around 72% of people visiting the U.K. were interested in local food and beverages during their holiday, and they were satisfied with their experiences of tasting local food. In other words, today' tourism trend more and more people travel in search of new gastronomic experiences or willing to taste local foods in destination where do they go for holiday (Hornig and Tsai, 2010). In light of these figures, it can be argued that consumption of local foods in a tourist destinations may be a key contribution to local economies (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Telfer and Wall, 2000).

There is no generally agreed or adopted definition of local food. For the objectives of our research local food is stated as, foods that are grown or processed with in local area or local specialty food that has a local identity (Enteleca Research and Consultancy, 2000; Sanger and Zenz, 2004). Local food is an important part of tourism experiences in destinations by introducing tourists' new flavours and different traditions. However, Kim et al. (2009) argues that existing studies on consumption of local food at a destination is still establishing its basic tenets. But in the literature of tourism, local food has examined in various issues, such as marketing and differentiate of tourism destinations (Okumus et al., 2007; Haven-Tang and Jones, 2006 ), the social and cultural significance of food (Arce and Marsden, 1993; Probyn, 1998), sustaining regional identity and culture (Wood 2001), the role of local food in tourism (Hall 2002; Hall and Mitchell, 2000, 2001; Wolf 2002; Kivela and Crotts, 2006), and in terms of economic benefits and local development.

According to Rand et al. (2003), local food is extremely important for to enhance sustainability in tourism whereby the government and the entrepreneur should work together to satisfy the tourists; contribute to the authenticity of the region; strengthen the local economy; and provide for the eco-infrastructure. Similarly, Rand and Heath (2006) argue that, the kind of foods and drinks on offer for tourists can have major implications for the economic, cultural and environmental sustainability of tourism destinations. Parallel debates are also taking place in agriculture, where focus upon local food products directly sold like farmers market is being championed as a way to boost the sustainability of traditional farming and community. These perspectives make local food an essential constituent of tourism product and a feature that can add value to a destination (Richards, 2002).

## **GOKCEADA AS CASE**

Gokceada is the largest island of Turkey having an important tourism and economic potential with its own specific geographical and environmental and protected, untouched natural resourced. The population of the island is 7.278 according to the census including 1.616 people living in the villages of the island. However, the population of island was counted as 8.894 in 2000; these figures indicate that Gokceada has an outward migration ([www.gokceada.bel.tr](http://www.gokceada.bel.tr)).

Agriculture and tourism are the sectors that should be focused on and examined thoroughly in order to create employment and alternative sources of income in Gokceada. Tourism activities in Gokceada mostly

depend on pensions and boarding houses. There are 156 registered pensions and boarding houses in the island, and the number of the pensions and boarding houses increases up to 200 during summer months. The importance of pensions and boarding houses in the service sector becomes significant when the total number of the beds is taken into consideration. There are 2.250 bed in the island certified by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and the breakdown of the beds is as follows: 930 beds in tourism facilities of public enterprises, 220 beds in hotels and 1.100 beds in pensions and boarding houses (Huryilmaz, 2006). However, majority of tourism activities is carried out only at the subsistence level.

In addition to this, return of Gokceada people from all over the world to Gokceada on every August 15 for festival organized to commemorate The Virgin Mary provides a seasonal activity for faith tourism. Furthermore, for the last ten years a film festival is being held each year in the island by sponsorship of Turkey Ministry of Tourism and Culture and Gokceada also host increasing number of conferences, symposiums and meetings and thus tourism movement in Gokceada has been increasing number of congress-organization activities. In the recent years, Gokceada has started to become an important centre for both local and foreign windsurfers whether amateur or professional thanks to the growing awareness about the characteristics and properties of its wind. Almost all of the agricultural activities in the island are carried out by organic farming and Gokceada is a candidate for becoming a major centre for clean agriculture. Such eco-organic farming practices and activities specific to the island could not be turned to account within the scope of tourism activities and in addition to this alternative sources of income could not be created and this factor leads young population to leave the island and migrate to other cities and countries. Shortly, the selection of Gokceada as a case was based on the district's potential to be a prominent district's in illustrating functions of tourism compared to other locations in Turkey.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to explore what extent local foods of Gokceada take part in restaurants menus' and to determine motivations which influencing tourists' local food consumption, quantitative and qualitative approach were chosen. Firstly, to find out local foods of the Gokceada semi structured interviews carried out with Gokceada' people across a range of locations (Mason, 2002; Eves and Dervisi, 2005). Secondly, to find out inclusion level of local food of the destination in restaurants document

review method was employed because of the non-reactive structure of this method (Patton, 2002; Sterk and Elifson, 2004). Therefore, all the menus of restaurants in Gokceada were reviewed and researchers carefully noted total menu items and local foods, which included in the menu. Lastly, to determine local food consumption motivations and expectation from the restaurateurs, convenience sampling method was used in conjunction with on-site intercepts; a questionnaire survey way employed to tourists whose visiting to Gokceada.

### Study 1

The aim of this study was to build inventory of local foods of the Gokceada. The unit of study of this study was local people. This was essential because only local people could know to local foods of the area. In this context, firstly, we gave information to participants about the research then we ask them to what are the foods traditionally cooked in the area. This study was carried out in 48 people at six villages in Gokceada. Data were obtained through interview with 48 people whose birth and live in Gokceada between from 04/2009 to 06/2009. According to results of the study, local foods of Gokceada include 96 different traditional foods and it's grouped under 6 topics (see Table 1).

**Table 1** Local Food of Gokceada

Kind of Food	Number of Food
Meat Dishes	24
Sea Foods	20
Vegetable Dishes & Salads	18
Leguminous	9
Pastry	12
Deserts	13

### Study 2

Under the light of the first study document review method was employed with all restaurants (19) in Gokceada between from 06/2009 to 07/2009. List of restaurants was taken from Municipally of Gokceada web site ([www.gokceada.bel.tr](http://www.gokceada.bel.tr)). The aim of this study to reveal to what extent local foods peculiar to Gokceada takes part in the menus of restaurants. Results for each restaurant have shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** Rate of Local Food in Restaurants Menus

Restaurants	Local foods in Menu	Number of total foods in menu	Rate
Rest. 1	46	80	0,57
Rest. 2	62	100	0,62
Rest. 3	28	50	0.56
Rest. 4	25	45	0.55
Rest. 5	17	44	0.38
Rest. 6	23	40	0.57
Rest. 7	2	7	0.28
Rest. 8	1	5	0.20
Rest. 9	55	183	0.30
Rest. 10	26	65	0.43
Rest. 11	13	29	0.44
Rest. 12	50	70	0.71
Rest. 13	38	100	0.38
Rest. 14	32	60	0.53
Rest. 15	42	75	0.56
Rest. 16	27	50	0.54
Rest. 17	35	60	0.58
Rest. 18	45	90	0.50
Rest. 19	30	121	0.24

*Average rate 0.47*

### Study 3

The aim of the last study to determine motivations of tourists' whose consume local food, and expectation from restaurateurs. This study was carried out with 389 tourists at different places of the Gokceada. Under the light of the study' aims a questionnaire was developed through discussion of prior researches (Enteleca Research and Consultancy 2000, Okumus et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2009; Sims, 2009). A convenience sampling method, in conjunction with on-site intercepts, was employed. 450 questionnaires were distributed and yielded 389 valid responses (86,4%). The survey time extended from 2009/7 to 2009/7. The survey was divided into four parts: the first the part focused on the demographic factors of participants, second part of questionnaire (two statements) was to understand to choose of restaurant type. The third part was composed of 19 statements that were linked to a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree) to identify what kind of motives impact tourists local food choose their holiday. Concerning the internal

consistency of the questionnaire, 19 items showed that the Cronbach's alpha score was 0.847, which meet the requirements of reliability. Similarly last part composed of 7 statements that were linked to a 5-point Likert scale to find out expectations of tourists' from restaurateurs.

### Characteristics of Respondents

The characteristics of respondents are as follows: female, 46,8%; male, 53,2%; age range mostly between 15 and 44 years old (73%); marital status, predominately married (59,6%); education level predominately over high school degree (76,6%); and, average monthly income above 800 Euro; %36,5 of respondents visited Gokceada before and average staying days of visitor 7.

### Results

The main findings include the following points:

**Table 3** Results of Factor Analysis

	Quality of taste	Authentic experience	Rural development	Health Knowledge concern
Healthy	,816			
Fresh	,759			
Clean	,728			
Quality	,675			
Tasty	,627			
Represents to Region		,905		
Distinctive		,905		
Traditional		,858		
To support local producers			,853	
Eating local food helps the regions' people			,821	
Trustable			,613	
Nutritious				,716
Good appearance				,629
Better for environment				,577
Variety of choose				,510
Organic/Natural				,472
Cheap				,462
I know how do they prepare it				,738
Curiosity				,654

%86,6 of respondents eat out until to survey and majority of respondents look for local specialties with a local identity restaurants (%73,5).

In addition, tourists' motives for local food consumption in the Gokceada, as determined by factor analysis, are identified (KMO =0. 865, Barlett test of sphericity is significant,  $p < 0.001$ ).

All items with five dimensions i.e. Quality of taste, authentic experience, rural development, health concern and knowledge are found reasonably acceptable based on factor loading with greater than 0.4 and reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) above 0.7. The major tourists' motive, as listed in factor 1, is quality of taste (the variance is 18.6 %).

However to find out expectations of the tourists from restaurateurs we developed scale which includes 7 item (Cronbach's alpha 0.792). According to results of the scale all items have very higher scores (see Table 4).

**Table 4** Tourists' Expectations from Restaurateurs (N: 389)

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
More local food should be found in the menus	4,5013	,61184
Menus must included information about local food	4,5296	,60264
Traditional methods should be used for to food presentations.	4,5116	,62836
Should have opportunity to taste before ordering	4,5398	,63941
Food was made from local products must be indicated	4,5424	,64326
Restaurants must reflect region qualities	4,5398	,68231
Staffs' knowledge about the foods is very poor	3,8972	,91365

*Strongly disagree=1; Strongly agree=5*

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The current was undertaken in context of rise of consumption of local food on holidays and increased awareness of local values for tourism. Through interview, document reviewing and questionnaire method, this study not only identified the motivations influencing local food consumption based on the empirical context of local food experiences on trips and holidays, but also built an inventory of Gokceada's local foods and defines expectations of tourists' from restaurateurs. The findings indicate that motivations to consume local food included five motivational factors: quality of taste, authentic experience, rural development, health concern and learning knowledge. Quality of taste which includes quality, freshness, healthy, clear and good taste items, has

been chosen as a primary motivational factor to consume local food by the participants. On the other hand, according to our second research, local foods in the restaurants menus capture 47% of all menu items. The average seems good enough but interactions between close areas to Gokceada also have some effects on foods. In other words, some foods defined as local food by local people also can be seen in some other destinations around the Gokceada. That's why participants want to see more local food in the menus which peculiar to Gokceada. Moreover, general perceptions of the participants about local identity of the restaurants on very negative way (see Table 4). However, 73.5 % of the participants look for local specialties with a local identity restaurant.

This study identifies the local food consumption motivations of tourists in during their holiday. This research could assist the local governors and tourism authorities when planning promotional activities to attract more people to visit area or to increase tourists spending in the destination. Additionally, from the perspective of restaurateurs, they should understand tourists' expectations and provide satisfactory service and products to them by bringing to light peculiar foods of area with new flavours and authentic ingredients. Lastly, the current research conducted with a domestic sample it would be interesting to undertake similar research and examine international tourists' motivations for consumption of local food in holiday to see if they are similar or different from domestic users.

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## ENDNOTES

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