

ГОТЕЛЬНО-РЕСТОРАННА СПРАВА

UDC 338.467.6

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2521-6643-2024-2-68.17>

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PECULIARITIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF GASTRONOMIC TOURISM IN GEORGIA

The article examines the essence of gastronomic tourism and its structure, considers its various definitions developed by foreign and domestic scholars. Gastronomic tourism is one of the types of excursion and educational tourism that was formed at the end of the 20th century. This is a relatively new but extremely interesting direction of the tourism business, which is actively developing, allowing travellers to learn about the cuisine of different countries and ethnic groups. The research uses the methods of structural-logical and semantic analysis (to clarify the terminology and conceptual apparatus of gastronomic tourism); system analysis (to assess the current state and prerequisites for the development of GT in Georgia), statistical method (to assess the place of GT in the tourist industry of Georgia), graphic method (for visual presentation of statistical data). The formation and development of gastronomic tourism in the world, its importance for the formation of the image of the territory are analysed. It is determined that gastronomic tourism is an integral part of all tours, and gastronomy has the potential to increase the attractiveness of the tourist product and tourist destination in general. It is proved that creating a favourable image of a country through the prism of national cuisine is a successful marketing ploy that helps attract tourists. It is intended, on the one hand, for tourists seeking knowledge and experience of new cultures, and, on the other hand, it provides additional value to the brands of tourist destinations. The influence of international (the World Food Travel Association and others) and national gastronomic tourism organisations on its development is characterised. The place of gastronomic tourism in the tourism industry of Georgia and the prospects for its development are analysed. It is proved that the culinary and wine sectors of Georgia play an important role. Thus, the contribution of the "Food and beverage service activities" sector in recent years has been approximately 20% in the GDP structure of the tourism industry. The analysis of the Georgian tourism sector has shown that gastronomic tourism in Georgia has significant potential to contribute to the development of new quality tourism products and experience. For its

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part, the National Tourism Administration of Georgia is doing its utmost to promote gastronomic tourism both nationally and internationally.

Key words: *gastronomy, gastronomic tourism, culinary tourism, national cuisine, cooking culture, gastro-tour.*

Бойко З. В., Горожанкіна Н. А., Корнєєв М. В., Щолокова Г. В., Уманська С. О. Особливості розвитку гастрономічного туризму в Грузії

У статті досліджено сутність гастрономічного туризму та його структуру, розглянуто різні його дефініції. Проаналізовано особливості становлення та розвитку гастрономічного туризму в світі, його значення для формування іміджу території. Гастрономічний туризм дуже популярний у світі вид туризму, який пов'язаний з культурним, етнічним, подієвим та агротуризмом. Через свою багатогранність гастрономічний туризм має кілька класифікацій, заснованих на різних характеристиках, найважливіша з яких заснована на типі конкретного продукту або напою. Гастрономічний туризм дозволяє людині відчувати культуру певної країни чи регіону через кулінарні дегустації та навчання готувати страви. Завдяки гастрономічним турам і подорожам можна отримати не тільки нові відчуття від поїдання різноманітних страв і дегустації вин, але це також є одним із шляхів проникнення в ту чи іншу культуру. Гастрономія пройшла довгий історичний шлях розвитку. Визначено, що гастрономічний туризм виступає складовим елементом усіх турів, а гастрономія має потенціал для підвищення привабливості туристичного продукту та туристичної дестинації в цілому. Доведено, що формування сприятливого іміджу країни крізь призму національної кухні є вдалим маркетинговим ходом, що сприяє залученню туристів. Він призначений, з одного боку, для туристів, які шукають досвіду ознайомлення з новими культурами, а з іншого боку, він надає додаткову цінність брендам туристичних напрямків. Охарактеризовано вплив міжнародних (Всесвітньої асоціації гастрономічного туризму та інших) та національних організацій гастрономічного туризму на його розвиток. Проаналізовано місце гастрономічного туризму в туристичній індустрії Грузії та перспективи його розвитку. Доведено, що кулінарний та винний сектори Грузії відіграють важливу роль. Аналіз сектору туризму Грузії дозволив встановити, що гастрономічний туризм у Грузії має значний потенціал для сприяння розробці нових якісних туристичних продуктів і досвіду. Зі свого боку Національна адміністрація туризму Грузії робить усе можливе для просування гастрономічного туризму як на національному, так і на міжнародному рівнях.

Ключові слова: *гастрономія, гастрономічний туризм, кулінарний туризм, національна кухня, культура приготування, гастро-тур.*

Problem statement. The field of tourism is actively undergoing changes and innovations. The structure of the tourism industry is quite dynamic. Mass, standard and complex tourism is being replaced by new types and destinations that depend on consumer demand. One of these directions is gastronomic tourism, which is developing rapidly all over the world. Gastronomic tourism (GT) acts as a constituent element of all tours, and gastronomy has the potential to increase the attractiveness of the tourist product and the tourist destination as a whole. Gastronomy has gone through a long historical path of its development. The functioning of organizations of GT only contributes to its development. The most influential international organization in the field of gastronomic tourism is the World Food Travel Association (WFTA). In addition, the popularization of gastronomy in tourist markets takes place thanks to the activities of UNWTO and UNESCO. All countries of the world have prerequisites for the development of GT, and this is a special feature of this type of tourism. But there are already countries about which a certain idea has been formed in the gastronomic tourism market. One of these countries is Georgia. This country has a favourable geographical position, a variety of climatic conditions and traditions of national cuisine, which it successfully uses to promote its tourist product and develop the gastronomic direction of tourism. Georgian cuisine attracts tourists from different regions of the world with its simplicity of ingredients and unique taste. Therefore, the study of the development of gastronomic tourism in Georgia is relevant, especially in the conditions of the recovery of the tourism industry after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Gastronomic tourism is one of the types of excursion and educational tourism that was formed at the end of the 20th century. This is a relatively new but extremely interesting direction of the tourism business, which is actively developing, allowing travellers to learn about the cuisine of different countries and ethnic groups. Currently, there is no consensus on the definition of "gastronomic tourism", both in foreign literature and among Ukrainian scientists. Among foreign scientists, C. Hall and R. Mitchell [1], M. Brokaj [2], G. Gheorghe, P. Tudorache, P. Nistoreanu [3], A. De Jong, M. Palladino, R. Garrido Puig, G. Romeo, N. Fava, C. Cafiero, W. Scoglund, P. Varley, C. Marciano, D. Laven, A. Sjölander-Lindqvist [4], G. Tovmasyan [5], S. Dixit, G. Prayag [6] were engaged in the study of issues of gastronomic tourism, and among domestic researchers – O.V. Nykyha [7], V. Pidgirma, H. Yeremiia, M. Khnykina [8], V. Khudaverdiyeva [9], etc. Research devoted to the development of gastronomic tourism in Georgia was highlighted in their works by M. Meladze [10], L. Kadagidze, M. Piranashvili [11].

The goal of the article is to analyse the peculiarities of the development of gastronomic tourism (GT) and determine its place in the tourist industry of Georgia.

Presentation of the main material. The research uses the methods of structural-logical and semantic analysis (to clarify the terminology and conceptual apparatus of gastronomic tourism); system analysis (to assess the current state and prerequisites for the development of GT in Georgia), statistical method (to assess the place of GT in the tourist industry of Georgia), graphic method (for visual presentation of statistical data). Materials presented on the

websites of the Gastronomic Association of Georgia [12], the National Statistics Office of Georgia [13] and other materials were used for the analysis. In the specialized literature, there are several definitions related to gastronomic tourism (Fig. 1).

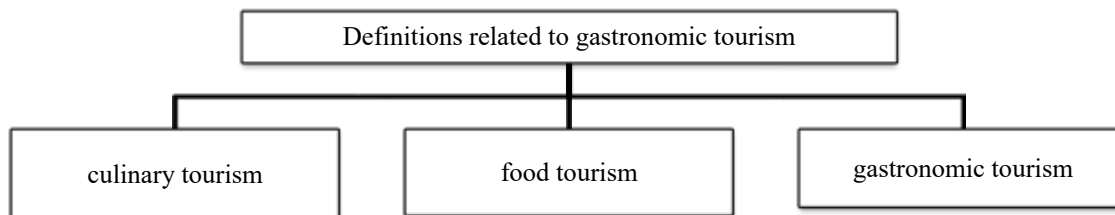


Figure 1. Definitions related to gastronomic tourism

Source: [14]

It is possible to note related concepts, such as culinary tourism, GT, gastro tours and gourmet tours, wine tourism, food tourism, as well as tasting and beer tourism [15].

C. M. Hall and R. Mitchell define gastronomic tourism as a type of tourism that includes visits and tastings of food, gastronomic festivals, food industry enterprises, especially restaurants, and special places related to certain food products, where gastronomic tourism includes observation according to the processes of food production and preparation [1]. Many scientific studies emphasize the advantages of including gastronomy in the brand identity of tourist destinations. Quantitative and qualitative results achieved by some tourism entities confirm the benefits of incorporating gastronomy into nation branding, as well as its role and importance in the development of the local economy [7]. But to develop it, it is necessary to consider the factors that determine the gastronomic culture of a particular area (Fig. 2).

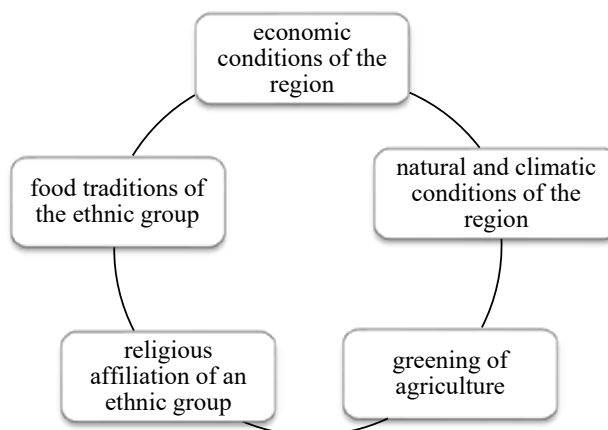


Figure 2. Factors determining the gastronomic culture of the region

Source: [7]

Gastronomy contributes to the development of additional economic value in the regions and is also important for the development of the economy of Georgia as a whole. Gastronomic tourism helps to increase the length of stay and spending of tourists on local goods and services of domestic production.

Tourism as an industry plays a leading role in the structure of the service sector and the economy as a whole (Fig. 3).

The rapid trend of growth of tourism was observed up to and including 2019. In 2019, tourism increased to USD 3.6 billion, which is 1.6 times more than in 2017. The share of the tourism industry also tended to grow and was 8.4% in 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the world tourist industry as a whole and Georgia in particular. In 2020, the share of tourism in the GDP structure was less than 6%. But in 2021-2022 the tourism industry began to be restored and in 2022 the total GDP of tourism was more than USD 4.4 billion, and the share of tourism increased to 7.2% [13; 16].

Such dynamics indicate that tourism is one of the main sources of income for the country, so it develops different types of tourism, forms a positive tourist image in the international arena, and attracts investments for the construction of tourism.

Food and drinking service in the tourism industry of Georgia ranks third in GDP. Its share in 2022 was 21%, inferior to land and water transport, as well as services provided by means of accommodation (Fig. 4).

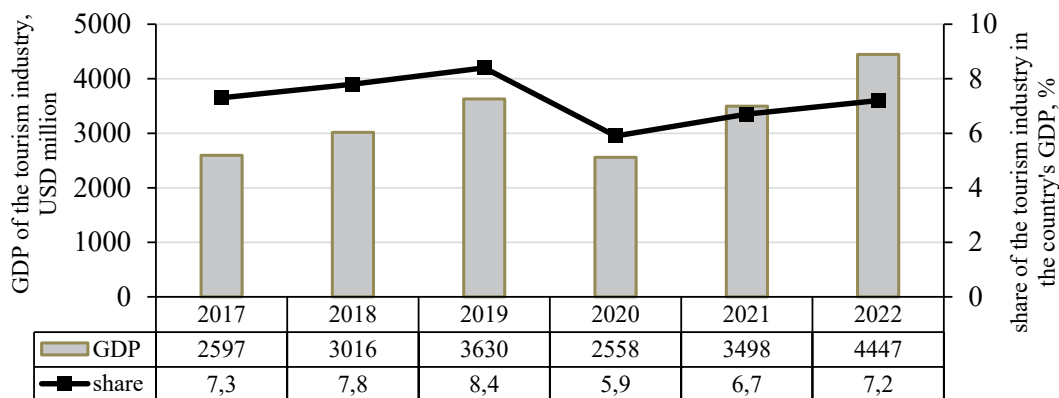


Figure 3. Dynamics of economic indicators of tourism development in Georgia for the period 2017-2022

Source: [13; 16]



Figure 4. The structure of industries in the volume of GDP of the tourist industry of Georgia in 2022

Source: [16]

The share of "Food and drink service activities" in GDP of the tourism industry from 2017 to 2022 has been approximately 20%, reaching its maximum in 2017 (26.1%) and a minimum in 2019 (18.3%). The total absolute contribution of this industry to the country's GDP in 2022 was almost USD 938 million, nearly twice as much as in 2017 (Fig. 5).

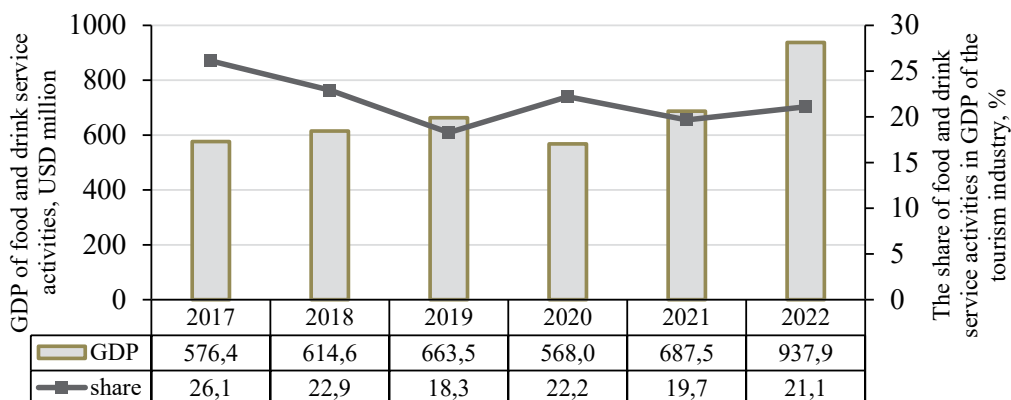


Figure 5. GDP dynamics of the "Food and beverage service activities" industry in Georgia

Source: [16]

Georgia's involvement in global tourist policies expanding its international cooperation in the tourism sector is an important trend, as the local specificity of tourist supply and demand, a modern and planned level of tourism development in regions and individual cities are taken into account. The National Tourism Administration [16],

which takes part in the conduct of domestic and international exhibitions, fairs and other events [17], is engaged in tourism in Georgia.

The result of such actions was an increase in international tourist flows, their number in 2019 amounted to more than 7.7 million people, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Georgian authorities significantly limited the possibility of foreigners visiting the country. In 2020–2021, the number of foreign tourists amounted to 1.5–1.7 million people, but already in 2022 it increased to 4.7 million people (Fig. 6).

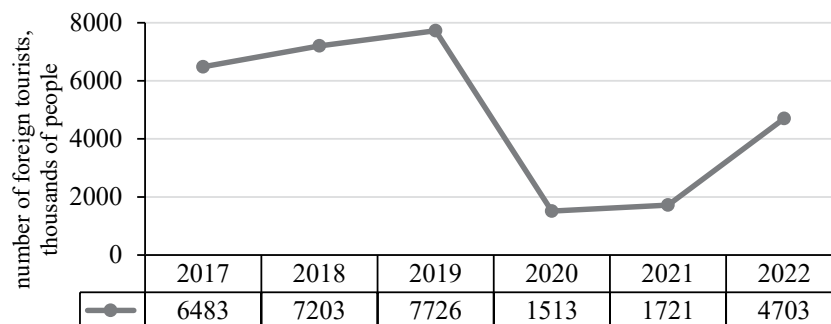


Figure 6. Dynamics of international tourist flows to Georgia for the period 2017–2022

Source: [13; 16]

The most popular regions of Georgia among foreign tourists are Tbilisi, whose share annually is about 50% among all international tourists, Adjara with its centre in Batumi (about 30%), as well as the wine region of Kakheti with its centre in Telavi; Tbilisi, Batumi (and other coastal cities) and Kutaisi are popular among domestic tourists, as well as the mountainous regions of the country, primarily Svaneti [16].

Among the spending groups of international tourists, food and beverage spending has the largest share and accounted for more than 33% in 2022, ahead of accommodation spending. And for domestic tourists, the share of spending on food and drinks is about 24%, inferior to spending on shopping (Fig. 7).

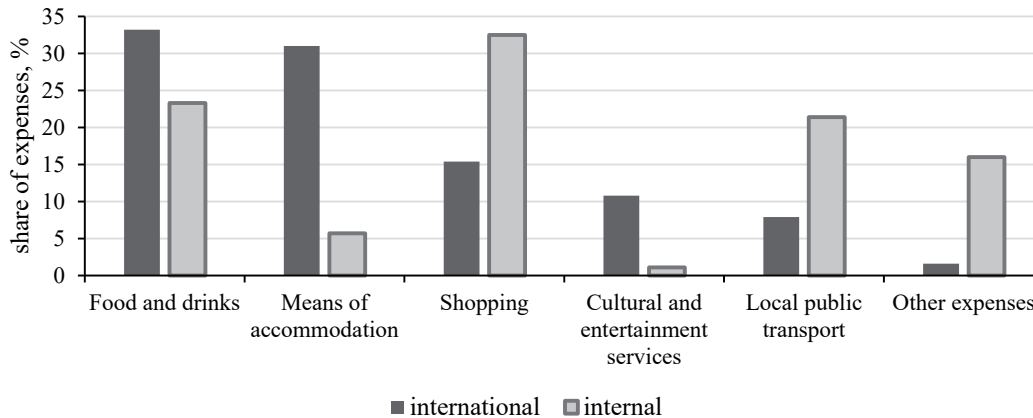


Figure 7. Expenditure of Georgian tourists in 2022

Source: [16]

The Georgian National Tourism Administration [16] and the Gastronomic Association of Georgia [12] promote Georgia's gastronomic tourism on the world stage [18].

Kvevri production is practised throughout Georgia, especially in rural communities where unique grape varieties are grown. A kvevri is an egg-shaped earthenware vessel used to prepare, age, and store wine. The knowledge and experience of kvevri production and winemaking are passed down through families, neighbours, friends and relatives, all of whom join in the collective harvest and winemaking. The winemaking process involves pressing the grapes and then pouring the juice, grape skins, stems and seeds into a kvevri, which is sealed and buried in the ground to allow the wine to ferment for five to six months before it can be consumed. This method of wine preparation is used by most farmers and city dwellers. Wine culture plays an important role in everyday life, as well as in the celebration of secular and religious events and rituals. Wine cellars are still considered the most sacred place in the family home of Georgians. The tradition of kvevri winemaking defines the way of life of local communities and is an integral part of their cultural identity and heritage, and wine and the vine are often mentioned

in Georgian oral traditions and songs. However, it is not advisable to stop there, because the unique Georgian cuisine can be fully included in the intangible heritage of UNESCO, following the example of French or Mexican cuisine.

The National Tourism Administration of Georgia prepared brochures "Food, Wine and Everything Else" and "Guide to Wine Routes". The first one presents general information about the country's gastronomic tourism, provides a map with the designation of gastronomic regions, and briefly describes some Georgian dishes, such as khachapuri, khinkali, etc. The second publication tells in more detail and in-depth about the history of Georgian winemaking, their traditions and customs, the peculiarities of Supra, Georgian grape varieties [19].

In addition, the Internet project "Taste Atlas" contributes to the development of gastronomic tourism in Georgia, which presents information about the most popular products, dishes, drinks and restaurants of the country (Fig. 8).

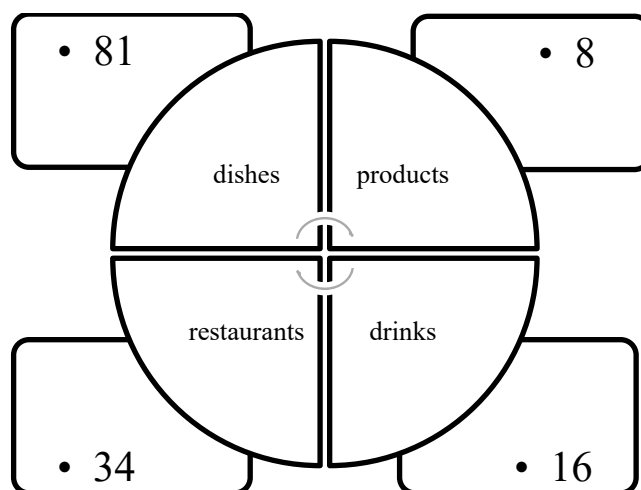


Figure 8. Advertisement of Georgian gastronomy on the Internet project "Taste Atlas"

Source: [20]

The peculiarity of this resource is that it provides recommendations on which dishes to try in which restaurants, as it is based on the reviews of experts and visitors to these establishments, who had the opportunity to determine their features, that is, the tourist only needs to choose. In addition, restaurants are grouped by region, which allows tourists to choose establishments in the cities and regions where they are or are going to be when planning their route. A similar and more popular resource for finding establishments that present national Georgian cuisine is the "Tripadvisor" application, which only in Tbilisi presents 654 establishments of national Georgian cuisine with reviews from visitors, another 259 establishments are presented in Batumi, 87 – in Kutaisi, 32 – in Gudauri, 31 – in Telavi, etc. [21].

Conclusions. Gastronomic tourism is a very popular type of tourism in the world, which has links with cultural, ethnic, event and agrotourism. Due to its multifaceted nature, gastronomic tourism has several classifications based on different characteristics, the most important of which is based on the type of specific product or drink. Gastronomic tourism allows a person to experience the culture of a particular country or region through culinary tastings and learning how to prepare dishes. Thanks to gastronomic tours and travels, it is possible to get not only new sensations when eating different dishes and tasting wines, but it also acts as one of the ways to penetrate a particular culture, an opportunity to understand the psychology of the native inhabitants and get new impressions from communication with people of another culture. Gastronomy has gone through a long historical path of development. The functioning of organizations of gastronomic tourism only contributes to its development. The most influential international organization in the field of gastronomic tourism is the World Food Travel Association. In addition, the popularization of gastronomy in tourist markets takes place thanks to the activities of UNWTO and UNESCO. It has been proven that gastronomic tourism has significant potential as a means of development of tourist destinations around the world. Forming a favourable image of the country through the prism of national cuisine is a successful marketing ploy that helps attract tourist flows. Gastronomic tourism includes various activities such as visiting producers of local products, participating in festivals, visiting markets, cooking demonstrations, tasting high-quality products, visiting restaurants or other activities related to food. Analysis of the Georgian tourism sector shows that gastronomic tourism has significant potential for the development of new quality tourist products. Various activities such as marketing and promotional tours, exhibitions, fairs, cooking courses, wine tastings, food and beverage brochures promote the country as a food tourism destination. The Georgian food and wine sector plays an important role.

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