



## Senior foodies: An evolving niche market in gastronomic tourism

Adela Balderas

### ABSTRACT

The world's population is ageing. Because of these global demographic changes it has resulted in the increased participation of older (or senior) adults in tourism and leisure activities and has prompted governments and tourism providers in many developed regions of the world to identify senior travelers as a priority market. An increasingly healthy senior market segment now has the time and purchasing power to travel more frequently. This has helped to create an emerging special interest or niche market that has been termed culinary or gastronomic tourism. The relationship between food and tourism has always been an increasingly important segment in the real worlds of hospitality, destination marketing, and tourism development. However, only recently we have seen the acceptance of the growth in interest in gastronomic tourism as an academic field of study. At the same time, there has been little research that has been carried out on the socio-demographics of this niche market. In other words, researchers have previously assumed that they all tourists experience gastronomic tourism in similar ways. As a result, little research has been found in the tourism literature, however there is some evidence to suggest that older gastronomic tourists are often very experienced travelers who have the time and money to seek out and experience foreign cultures through local food consumption that display different food preferences. On the other hand, other studies have noted diminished taste and olfactory sensitivity of older tourists, and a preference for familiar foods rather than trying out local cuisine so as to avoid any negative effects from change in diet or to control existing health problems. More research needs to be conducted to assist tourism providers and marketers to better understand and promote the importance of the gastronomic consumption needs and expectations of the older market segment.

### BIOGRAPHY

Adela Balderas has a Doctorate (International Mention) in Business Administration and Management from Deusto University (Spain), is a Research Fellow from Oxford University (UK), has an MBA Executive and a Master's Degree in Marketing from the University of the Basque Country, a Master's in Professional Coaching from INESEM and a Degree in English Philology (long-cycle) from Salamanca University (Spain).

Adela completed executive training programmes in Professional Coaching and Leadership Coaching at New York University, Stanford University and Harvard University (USA) and studied Creativity and Innovation at St. Martin's College, London (UK). Adela lectures at the ESIC Business and Marketing School and at the Basque Culinary Center, where she is the coordinator of the Management Area and director at a Master's program. In addition to being a visiting lecturer at various international (including Oxford University, and the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, Switzerland), Adela is a consultant and conference speaker working with international and national companies in the hotel industry and the world of hospitality.

### PUBLICATIONS

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