

Egyptian Cuisine as a tool for Destination Marketing

By

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Abstract

Food tourism is considered a form of niche tourism. Food tourism has become a new type of tourism due to the continuous change in tourists' desires in addition to the intensity of competition among destinations. Both industries tourism and food benefit from this interaction, as food has become an important means of marketing the culture and identity of the destination. In recent times, the use of food tourism has increased as an essential element in the competitive marketing of the destination. This research focuses on highlighting the role that the Egyptian cuisine plays in destination promotion. To achieve the aim of this research, a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was handed who ate Egyptian food in Cairo's five-star hotels. Results showed that Egyptian cuisine is highly accepted by tourists while they are traveling to Egypt; moreover, there was a strong positive relation between "acceptances of Egyptian cuisine" and "Local food and destination marketing". Upon the study findings some recommendations have been suggested.

However, they would prefer to make Egyptian dishes in the future in a healthful manner by minimizing the amounts of fats and carbohydrates. These findings should compel

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Egyptian tourism officials to incorporate local dishes as an important touristic product into their marketing plans. Egyptian tourist officials ought to make greater efforts to promote Egyptian food, providing some types of local food during conferences, Providing translated television programs for food on Egyptian satellite channels that are shown in foreign countries and finally programs offered by tourism companies in Egypt should include the provision of local meals during the visit program.

Keywords: Egyptian cuisine, Western tourists, Food tourism, Destination Marketing

1. Introduction

Recently, many researchers and marketers have been interested in the importance of the relationship between tourism and local food in the differentiation of destinations (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Kivela and Crofts, 2006; Bjork and Kauppinen-Raisanen, 2016). The local food increases the attractiveness of the destination, which leads to the increasing of the incoming number of tourists. In addition, local food contributes to enhancing the tourist's experience and emphasizing the destination's cultural identity (Steinmetz, 2010).

When analyzing the literature dealing with methods of tourism destinations marketing tourist destinations in the worldwide, we find that the use of local food in the marketing of tourist destinations did not attract the attention of marketers significantly at the local and international levels (Stalmirska, 2017).

Number of tourists to a region and the visitors' expenditure in this region are representing indicators to the successful tourism destination. In their tours, visitors, spend money on

consuming products from the destination they visit, among their expenditures is the food & beverage. Local Food identifies the country's character (Rand, Heath, and Alberts, ٢٠٠٣). Therefore, in the tourism industry, food has become an increasingly important component of it. Food and tourism are two topics that are inevitably related to each other and have gained growing interest in in-depth research among scholars.

Food tourism has gained rising prominence in the tourism industry over the past few years. This relatively new market creates multiple marketing opportunities for destinations (Keller, ٢٠٠٠). In all facets of human life, food plays an important role, from meeting basic physiological needs to establishing social connections and psychological expression (Tikkanen, ٢٠٠٧).

One of the most significant tourism activities for tourists is to experience local food at a certain destination. A close relationship exists between food and tourism. Food is considered a valuable resource for the tourism industry and necessary for meeting physical needs. As human beings, all visitors have to eat while traveling. Food offers enjoyment, fun and socialization in addition to fulfilling physiological needs, and it is also an important factor in selecting destinations (Henderson, ٢٠٠٩).

Despite the distinctiveness of Egyptian dishes, the government did not begin to market Egyptian cuisine abroad through the Egyptian Tourism Authority and other relevant entities. Furthermore, there are no reports on the reactions of international tourists, particularly those from Western countries, to Egyptian food. In response to this issue, this study assesses western tourists' acceptance of

Egyptian cuisine, which may be useful in introducing Egyptian cuisine into the Egyptian tourism agenda.

The purpose of the current research is to explore the tourists' perspectives towards Egyptian cuisine and identify its role as a marketing tool for Egyptian destinations.

٢. Literature Review

Food tourism and Egyptian cuisine

Food tourism has ceased to concern itself exclusively with the provision of food in restaurants, hotels and resorts for visitors. It has changed hands and now it is the tourist who travels to look for, and appreciate, prepared food and drink (Hall, ٢٠١٣).

Food tourism is one of the most widely used words that refer to physical encounters for visitors, guided by their desire to participate in local food experiences (Cohen et al., ٢٠٠٤; Hall, ٢٠١٣). Food not only meets tourists' basic needs, but also reflects a cultural aspect linked to a destination (Jones and Jenkins, ٢٠٠٣). The importance of local food and cuisine for destinations has been stressed by several researchers (Boyne, Williams, and Hall, ٢٠٠٣; Horng and Tsai, ٢٠١٠). Local dishes that form the cornerstone of food tourism are not only to meet physical needs, but also a way of recognizing different cultures,

people, traditions and customs (Okumuş and Çetin, ٢٠١٨). That is to say local food being a part of local culture and history reflects the spirit of the place (Lee and Scott, ٢٠١٥). Therefore, local food has become an important source of destination attractiveness (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, ٢٠١٦).

Two elements are linked to Egyptian identity. First, the position gives the special characteristic of being European, Asian and African to Egypt. Second, history has given Egypt the characteristics of being Pharaonic, Greek-Roman, Coptic, Muslim and Arabic (Goldschmidt, ٢٠٠٨; Hashay, ٢٠٠٠). The variety of origins and characteristics of Egyptian cuisines reflect that the food culture in Egypt is based on its location (Mohamed, Hewedi, Lehto, and Maayouf, ٢٠١٩). The fertile soil of the Nile River and the right climate for various crops have also made it possible for Egyptian cuisine to be a rich variety of foods and food habits (Hassan Wassef, ٢٠٠٤; Mehdawy and Hussein, ٢٠١٠). Both of these influences, as well as recipe variations, have positively contributed to food heritage and

food preferences, and modern Egyptian cuisine is the outcome of these influences.

Egyptian cuisine is one of the most delicious and authentic foods in the world. Within a mixture of elements from throughout the Middle East and North Africa, as well as Greece and France, representing the numerous influences that Egyptians have had throughout their history, flavor is distinctive, highly spiced food, presentation is attractive and Egyptian chefs also put their own spin on their version of Egypt's most beloved foods (Roden, ۲۰۰۰). Grilling, boiling, stewing, and roasting were among the ancient Egyptians' cooking methods. They mastered the art of brewing. They also devoted extra attention to food preparation and selection. (Elmoghazy, and Omar, ۲۰۱۶)

There is a selection of local dishes in Egypt, Ful Medames Which is the food that is most popular and most widely consumed. It is worth noting that beans are the basis of other Egyptian dishes, such as falafel, first produced in Egypt, and then it spread to many areas of the Middle East. Moreover, BBC reporter Mullen (۲۰۱۹) wrote an article claiming that the best falafel in the world is Egyptian

falafel. Another local dish is molokhiyya. Koushari is a national food for the masses (a mixture of lentils, macaroni, and rice). Moreover, there are many popular local desserts in Egypt, Basbousa, Baklava, Eish elSaraya, Luqmat al-Qadi, Umm Ali (Elmoghazy et al., ٢٠١٦).

Egyptian food's authenticity and variety hold a great deal of promise for destination marketing. Food offers an excellent opportunity for tourists to immerse themselves in the culture of Egypt.

Food as Culture

Food, starting from its cultivation, preparation and consumption, is an essential part of the culture of countries. Food represents a window on the culture of other countries, as it is a major component of peoples' cultures and is one of the most important signs of cultural identity in addition to language, religion, folklore and other cultural elements.

Foods can be viewed in two sides: the first is the tangible side “the ingredients of the food and the tools used to cook it” and the intangible side, which includes “the flavor and aroma of the food, the quality of food cooking, the way

food is prepared and the traditions of eating it". (Sims, ۲۰۰۹).

Food can be compared to an artifact that reflects the destination's culture and offers tourists a flavor of the destination's different lifestyle. As a result, the food largely provides an image of some of the destination's characteristics (Rousta, and Jamshidi, ۲۰۲۰).

López-Guzmán (۲۰۱۲) affirmed that tourist destinations should focus on the importance of food in the tourist's cultural experience. Since each region has a cultural identity in cooking, the food is used to satisfy the tourist and contribute to the authenticity of the destination.

Food tourism comprises in its discourse the cultural values, novelty, local products, customs and traditions of the region, this is in line with current tendency of cultural consumption. Furthermore, food and tourism are one of the elements of local economic development. Food is an essential component of local culture and an essential part of the intangible heritage of destinations. In addition to the attractiveness of food for tourists, as food experiences are

one of the elements in determining travel destinations.
(UNWTO, ٢٠١٢)

Tourist Destination Definition:

Most of the tourism activities occur within the destination, so we find that destination marketing is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive approach to understand it. From the tourist demand side, tourists have many destinations to choose from, while from the tourism supply side, the destination's marketing organizations (DMO's) make great efforts to attract attention to the destination (Wang and Pizam, ٢٠١١).

One of the most significant definitions of a tourist destination is the one given by Źemła (٢٠١٦) which defines the destination as a geographical area that contains natural resources and cultural features that enable it to provide a tourist product, in other words, a product that includes accommodations - transportation - food and experience or tourism activities.

In the same vein, Manente and Minghetti (٢٠٠٦) pointed out that a tourist destination is more than just a geographical place, but it is a place that includes services,

products, natural and industrial resources, public and tourist facilities, and information that can attract numbers of visitors to a place.

According to Camilleri (٢٠١٩) there is a number of basic requirements that tourists expect in the destination, regardless of their reason for travel. These requirements are known as ٥A's and they are essential elements for the success of any destination; Accessibility, Attraction, Accommodation, Amenities and Activities.

Accessibility: For the destination to be suitable for visiting the tourists there must be a way to get to the destination as well as to the tourist attractions, this requires the availability of different means of transportation in for access to be possible (Camilleri, ٢٠١٩).

Accommodation: The destination must offer enough accommodation with several level of services and rates. The accommodation and lodging should be near from the destination. Sometimes the place of residence may be part of the attraction, especially when it has a view of landscape or a tourist attraction (Poonperm, ٢٠١٨).

Amenities: Amenities are considered a key factor in the tourist's feeling of comfort and safety inside the destination. They include water - electricity - roads - communications - media - emergency ... and other things that achieve the safety of tourists in the destination.

Activities: Tourists enjoy practicing certain activities in the destination such as: eating local food - shopping - hiking in natural areas - some sporting activities ... etc (Camilleri, ٢٠١٩).

Attractions: The attractions are the main motivation for a tourist to visit the destination. There are a large variety of attractions. The more attractive and diversified the tourist destination, the more tourists it attracts. We can divide the attractions into ٣ elements: natural attractions such as (mountains - seas - deserts ... etc.), man-made attractions such as (monuments and religious buildings), cultural attractions such as (museums - theaters – opera...etc.), in addition to intangible attractions such as culture, customs and traditions, where tourists can gain an experience (Papadopoulou, ٢٠١٦; Camilleri, ٢٠١٩).

Pinto and Kastenholz (٢٠١١) stated that marketing is one of the most important activities which the destination applies to improve its success in the market, which means the marketing efforts that the destination provide to people (who represent the target market and have free time, financial ability and willingness to travel) in order to convince them to travel to enjoy the services provided by the destination.

Destination Marketing

According to Pike (٢٠١٦), the destination marketing literature started in ١٩٧٣ with the first article by Matejka (cited in Pike, ٢٠١٦) followed three years later by the first destination marketing book by Wahab, Crampon and Rothfield (١٩٧٦). They described destination marketing as a management process through which national tourist organizations and/or tourist companies identify their chosen tourists. Communicate with them in order to determine and influence their desires, wants, motives, likes and dislikes, at the local, regional, national and international levels and to formulate and adjust their tourism products accordingly in

order to achieve maximum tourist satisfaction and thus fulfill their objectives.

According to Keller (٢٠٠٠) destination marketing is concerned with promoting the image of the destination and distributing local tourism products.

Okumus, and McKercher (٢٠٠٧) stressed that destination marketing is a difficult task due to the different goals and expectations of stakeholders in each destination. The target of a tourist destination marketing is not only to rise the number of tourists to the destination, but also to promote its sustainable development. Therefore, understanding the characteristics of each destination helps to attract several kinds of tourists. According to many marketing literature, each destination should distinguish itself by shedding light on its products and services to become a strong motivation urging tourists to visit.

For Ana, (٢٠٠٨) destination marketing is considered a necessity to develop a region and maintain its basic features as a tourist attraction. Elbe, Hallén and Axelsson (٢٠٠٩) described destination marketing as a term for identifying

strategically designed marketing activities aimed at attracting tourists to specific locations.

Uysal, Harrill and Woo (٢٠١١) mentioned that destination marketing research aims at recognizing the nature of the rapport between tourism service providers and tourists in the tourist destination. This rapport is tourism supply and demand. In the extremely competitive tourism market, the need for accurate timely data has become an important matter for developing destinations in order to be able to compete and to rise their share in the tourism market.

Stalmirska (٢٠١٧) stated that destination marketing is the exerted marketing efforts to attract tourists to a specific destination. In the same vein she offered another definition as the process by which the administration or tourism organizations determine its visitors to identify their motives and needs and influence them on all local and international levels, then adapt their services to satisfy these desires and achieve customer satisfaction.

There are two main benefits for destination marketing research:

- Retaining the competitive advantage of a tourist destination in the minds of potential and current tourists while increasing the destination's tourist demand.
- Facilitating the general management of the destination - in other words, providing information to make a correct decision in the required direction to market the destination and achieve its objectives.(Uysal. et al, ٢٠١١)

Local food and destination marketing

The main presence of food is observed in the various aspects of the tourist supply, which is a factor in choosing destinations and places of residence, however destinations depend in their marketing on other attractions. For travel agents and tour operators, food is provided as an essential component during the visit programs, whether it is served in hotels of various levels or restaurants. (Henderson, ٢٠٠٩)

Local food has a vital role in the marketing and branding of destinations (Cohen et al., ٢٠٠٤; Frochot, ٢٠٠٣; Lin, ٢٠٠٩). Because it is considered a fundamental component of culture, a destination must be offered (Mak, Lumbers,

Eves and Chang, ٢٠١٧). Moreover, Local food is a representation of local cultural identity and brings value to the destination (Stalmirska, ٢٠١٧).

Much of the destination's marketing literature emphasizes the importance of differentiation in products and services provided to tourists. Recently, many countries have increasingly turned to the use of food in marketing to destinations because the association of food with tourism achieves a competitive edge. Food does not only satisfy a basic human need, but it may also be a tourist attraction (Stalmirska, ٢٠١٧).

Food plays a significant role as a tourist attraction in many destinations, in addition to being an element of the intangible heritage of regions and countries. The tourists' experience of local food on their trips not only increases awareness of the destinations visited, but also supports the local community's preservation of its cultural identity (Elmpghazy et al., ٢٠١٦).

Although there is some fear of some tourists towards trying food while traveling due to some health requirements or quality control, however, food remains the most

distinguished experience in the tourist trip. Many marketers assert that food is a push factor and affects a tourist's choice of destination, and that it may even drive many tourists to revisit the destination (Stalmirska, ٢٠١٧).

According to Rousta et al., (٢٠٢٠) many countries used the image of their food as a marketing tool for them, for example enjoying Korean food stimulated customers to visit the country on behalf of food tourism. This confirms that the destination's image may be one of the most influencing factors on customer choices. This affirms that the good image of the destination food, which is formed among the tourists through their experiences, gives a good impression and encourages them to recommend others to visit the destination.

Egyptian advertisers have recently begun encouraging food tourism by incorporating food and food-related events to their advertising materials. This study is timely in this context because it sheds light on how Egyptian Cuisine used as a basic tool for destination marketing.

٣. Research Methodology

A self-administered questionnaire was directed to the selected sample from January 2021 to May 2021. A convenience sampling technique has been adapted to select hotels that participated in the field study. It was decided to focus only on a sample of oriental restaurants in five star hotels in Greater Cairo. The target population for this study was the western tourists who ate Egyptian food in these restaurants.

The final version of the questionnaire was divided into three main sections. The first section pertains to participants' demographic data (i.e., age, gender, and marital status) in the second section tourists were asked about "acceptance of Egyptian cuisine". The third section they were asked about "local food and destination marketing". Items were measured using a five-point Likert Scale, where 1 "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree". In order to examine the internal consistency of each section, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated. The calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient for study variables was 0.81 which confirms the high reliability of the study instrument.

The face validity of the questionnaire form was examined by three academic experts in hospitality field to improve its clarity, format, and content. Upon the experts' suggestions, the wording of some statements was modified, some statements were reordered, and some were deleted. The final version of the questionnaire form was developed giving due consideration to the comments received. Based on the experts' suggestions, the validity was strengthened. The instrument was written in English. A number of ٢٠٠ self-administered questionnaires were distributed. Only ١٦٣ forms representing ٨١,٥% were valid for analysis. For the descriptive analysis, A Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS ٢٥) was used for the descriptive analysis. To illustrate the relationship between “Acceptance of Egyptian Cuisine” and “Local Food and Destination Marketing”, a Pearson correlation coefficient was adopted

| Hotels | Valid Forms | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| | No. | % |
| Intercontinental Cairo Citystars | ١٩ | ٩٥ |
| Holiday Inn Cairo Citystars | ١٥ | ٧٥ |
| Sheraton Cairo Hotel | ١٦ | ٨٠ |
| Ramses Hilton Hotel | ١٧ | ٨٥ |

| | | |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Conrad Cairo Hotel | ١٦ | ٨٠ |
| Fairmont Nile City Hotel | ١٥ | ٧٥ |
| Sofitel El Gezirah Hotel | ١٤ | ٧٠ |
| Four Seasons Cairo Hotel | ١٦ | ٨٠ |
| Four Seasons Hotel Cairo at Nile Plaza | ١٨ | ٩٠ |
| The Nile Ritz-Carlton Cairo | ١٧ | ٨٥ |
| Total | ١٦٣ | ٨١,٥ |

Result and discussion

Table ٧ shows the descriptive statistics of the respondents' perceptions towards acceptance of Egyptian cuisine.

| Attributes | Mean | SD (standard deviation) | α |
|--|------|--------------------------|-----------|
| The Egyptian restaurant offers great choices of Egyptian foods | ٤,٧٤ | .٤٩٥ | ٠,٨١ ٤ |
| Most of the Egyptian foods offered at the Egyptian restaurants are freshly prepared. | ٤,٢٩ | .٦٩٨ | |
| Most of the Egyptian foods offered at the Egyptian restaurants are well accepted. | ٤,٠٩ | .٦٧٠ | |
| Most of Egyptian foods offered at the Egyptian restaurants look attractive. | ٤,٦٧ | .٥٢٠ | |
| The aroma of the Egyptian foods offered at the Egyptian restaurant is adorable. | ٤,١٩ | .٥١٥ | |

| | | |
|--|------|-------|
| The way most of the Egyptian food is prepared attracts me | ٤,٤٠ | .٦٠٣ |
| Some of the Egyptian foods offered at the Egyptian restaurant are recognized internationally | ٤,٦٢ | .٥٣٥ |
| I enjoyed most of the Egyptian foods during my vacation. | ٤,٧٠ | .٥١١ |
| When I travel to Egypt it is important to experience different local food from different tourist spots | ٤,٦٥ | .٦٠٤ |
| I have tried all of the Egyptian traditional eating manners during my vacation. | ٤,٥٩ | .٥٤١ |
| I usually visit Egypt because I want to escape from the daily routine and rarely trying local food | ٢,٠٦ | ١,١٢٩ |
| When I travel to Egypt as a tourist I need to dine out | ٤,٥٥ | .٥٩٠ |
| When I visit Egypt I take my meal from foreign restaurants | ٢,١٣ | ١,٠٨٦ |

Results presented in Table ٢, which reflect the perceptions' of the investigated tourists towards the acceptance of Egyptian cuisine, illustrate that the majority of the investigated respondents were more in favor for Egyptian cuisine. They strongly agreed on the vast majority of the

investigated attributes (eleven items) where the average mean ranged between 4.09-4.74. The highest attribute was "The Egyptian restaurant offers great choices of Egyptian foods" (M= 4.74, SD= .490) these result agreed with Nield, Kozak, and LeGrys. (2000) who mentioned that most of restaurants offers great choices to their customers followed by " I enjoyed most of the Egyptian foods during my vacation" these findings agreed with Björk et al.,(2016) who stated that most of tourists enjoyed local food during traveling (M= 4.70, SD= .011). Moreover, they agreed that " Most of Egyptian foods offered at the Egyptian restaurants look attractive" (M=4.77, SD=.020), followed by" When I travel to Egypt it is important to experience different local food from different tourist spots"(M=4.70, SD=.704) that agreed with Lin (2009) who said that It's crucial for tourists to try a variety of local cuisines while visiting various tourist destinations. In addition they agreed that "Some of the Egyptian foods offered at the Egyptian restaurant are recognized internationally" as mentioned by Boesen, Sundbo, and Sundbo (2014) who stated that some of the Egyptian dishes are well-known around the world.

($M= 4,62$, $SD= .035$) followed by "I have tried all of the Egyptian traditional eating manners during my vacation" ($M= 4,09$, $SD=.041$). Furthermore, they agreed that "When I travel to Egypt as a tourist I need to dine out" ($M= 4,00$, $SD=.090$). This finding agreed with Hashay (٢٠٠٠) who mentioned that it is necessary for tourists to eat out when they are travelling. Moreover, Wolf (٢٠٠٢) expresses that almost ١٠٠٪ of tourists eat out while travelling and foods and refreshments rank first in their spending.

Also, they agreed that "Most of the Egyptian foods offered at the Egyptian restaurants are freshly prepared ", ($M=4,29$, $SD=.698$) "The aroma of the Egyptian foods offered at the Egyptian restaurant is adorable"($M= 4,19$, $SD=.010$) and "Most of the Egyptian foods offered at the Egyptian restaurants are well accepted" ($M=4,09$, $SD=.670$) These results indicate that Egyptian cuisine is highly accepted by tourists while they are traveling to Egypt. This is because the mean score of all questions, with the exception of two "I usually visit Egypt because I want to escape from the daily routine and rarely trying local food" and "When I visit

Egypt I still take my meal from foreign restaurants” achieved a mean score above four.

Despite the fact that the study sample accepted Egyptian dishes, the majority of respondents mentioned in their comments that there is a need in the future to cook Egyptian cuisine in more healthy ways. In addition, respondents stated that there is a need to minimize the amount of fats and carbohydrates (starches and sugars) used in the preparation of Egyptian foods.

Table ٣ shows the Descriptive Statistics of the respondents’ perceptions towards Relationship between Food and Destination Marketing

| Attributes | Mean | SD (standard deviation) | α |
|--|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| There is a relationship between local food and tourism | ٤,٥٦ | .٥٤٥ | ٠,٨٦٩ |
| Local food can be a unique brand for a destination | ٤,٧٣ | .٤٩٨ | |
| Local food reflects the culture of the destination | ٤,٦٥ | .٥٧٢ | |
| Egyptian food are well known in the World | ٤,٦٨ | .٥١٨ | |
| Tourists spend a large amount on food in their tours | ٤,٤٠ | .٦٧٣ | |

| | | |
|--|------|-------|
| Egyptian food is a key factor for promoting | ٤,٥٨ | .٥٦٥ |
| Local food has impact on Egypt choice as a tourism destination | ٤,٦١ | .٥٣٧ |
| Products of the Egyptian tourism including food are key in attracting tourists | ٤,٧١ | .٥٠٦ |
| Social media as information channel serves tourists to know Egyptian local food | ٢,٣١ | ١,٠٤٥ |
| Tv programs and satellite channels have increased interest in trying local food in tourist destinations. | ٤,٦٩ | .٤٨٩ |
| Local food is a significant component of the tourism experience the destination culture. | ٤,٤٧ | .٦٧٩ |
| Food tourism represents a potential competitive advantage for a destination | ٤,٣٣ | .٦٧٦ |
| Egyptian local food like Foul Medames & Koshary are attraction factors for tourist choice of destination | ٤,٦٦ | .٥٢٤ |
| Egyptian Local food may even drive many tourists to revisit Egypt | ٤,٤٤ | .٦١٩ |

Table ٣ lists the mean scores of local food and destination marketing. The results show that respondents strongly agreed that there is a relationship between local food and tourism ($M=٤,٥٦$, $SD = .٥٤٥$). This finding agrees with Du Rand and Heath, (٢٠٠٦) who confirmed that local food is an element of the tourist attractions of a destination, consequently it is an important factor for destination marketing. This result illustrate the inter-relationship between food tourism and destination marketing.

The results, also show that the local food image can be a distinctive brand for a destination ($M=٤,٧٣$, $SD=.٤٩٨$). Mohamed et al., (٢٠١٩) asserted that a food image can possibly create a brand for a particular destination, and thus be achieves a competitive advantage because food smell and taste evoke the visitor's memory that may direct him to revisit a particular destination.

Moreover, the results show that tourists consume cultural products through eating at the destination ($M= ٤,٦٥$, $SD = .٥٧٢$), this finding agreed with Sims(٢٠٠٩) who concluded that the tourists' consumption of local food products reflects the culture of the destination, as they not only consume the

physical part, which is tasting the food itself, but rather they look to know the culture of the destination through the story, and that is why local food are a way to be aquatinted about the culture of the destination. Also, respondents thought that Egyptian food are well known in the World ($M= ٤,٦٨$, $SD =.٥١٨$).

Furthermore, the results assert that tourists spend a large amount on food in their tours ($M=٤,٤٠$, $SD =.٦٧٣$), Lee and Scott (٢٠١٥) mentioned that tourists spend on food about a third of their destination expenditure. Also Elmoghazy et al., (٢٠١٦) stated that some statistics indicate that tourists spend about ٤٠% during food and drinks on tourist trips.

Also, the results confirm the role of Egyptian food in destination promotion ($M=٤,٥٨$, $SD=.٥٦٥$), since Mohamed et al. (٢٠١٩) asserted that Egyptian marketers have tended to incorporate local food as an attractive element in the promotion of the destination, as most tour operators tend to include the visit of Khan al-Khalili in Cairo tours to enjoy the food served in its local restaurants.

Besides, the results pointed out that local food has an impact on Egypt choice as a tourism destination ($M=٤,٦١$,

SD=.۰۳۷), this finding agrees with (UNWTO, ۲۰۱۲) which has shown that tourists mainly from Gulf countries who travel, especially in the Holy Month of Ramadan, taste the foods that Egypt is famous for and enjoy the atmosphere of Ramadan. Moreover, Bonow and Rytönen (۲۰۱۲) emphasized that tourists realize the local cultures through their participation in local food habits and table customs in tourist destinations. This provides feeling of the destination visited. Moreover, they are buying some local food and drinks as a souvenir for their consumption in their country, which links them more to the place they visited and stimulates their feeling of revisit that destination.

The results assert that products of the Egyptian tourism including food are a key in attracting tourists (M=۴,۷۱, SD =.۰۰۶). Additionally, T.V. programs and satellite channels have increased interest in trying local food in tourist destinations (M=۴,۶۹, SD=.۴۸۹). UNWTO (۲۰۱۲) stated in its report on food tourism that access to food products from all over the world has become easier due to globalization which led to the emergence of magazines and television programs specialized in food, as well as the spread of

satellite channels specializing in foods from various parts of the world, such as Fatafeat, that provides programs on different foods in the countries of the world, which have linked both tourism and food.

The results show also that local food experience is a significant component of the tourism experience about the destination culture ($M=٤,٤٧$, $SD=.٦٧٩$). This agrees with Mohamed et al., (٢٠١٩) who cited that local food is an important way to increase the culture of tourists about the destination, so food is considered a tool to enhance the tourist's cultural experience, which led to know the identity of the destination through its local food. Furthermore, Food tourism greatly deepen the tourist experience because it is an experience in which the tourist uses all the senses Du Rand and Heath, (٢٠٠٦). Lin, Pearson, and Cai, (٢٠١١) stated that Food identity is used to promote as a destination for food tourism, which contributes to enhancing the cultural character and enriching the experiences of tourists in the destination.

Food tourism represents a potential competitive advantage for a destination ($M= ٤,٣٣$, $SD =.٦٧٦$), this finding agreed

with Hendrson, (٢٠٠٩) who stated that destination marketers have recognized the attractiveness of food on a local and regional level. He also considered it as an effective component of a destination's branding. The identity of the gourmet heritage can be exploited in the processes of renewal and differentiation, which conveys a distinctive sense of place. Therefore food is considered an essential element in the development of a destination, accordingly achieving economic progress.

In addition, the respondents agreed that the Egyptian local food like Foul Medames and Koshary are considered push factors for tourist choice of destination ($M=٤,٦٦$, $SD =.٥٢٤$). The results emphasize that the Egyptian local food has a great role to drive many tourists to revisit the destination ($M= ٤,٤٤$, $SD =.٦١٩$). This finding is compatible with Sims, (٢٠٠٩) who asserted that food is a push factor and affects a tourist's choice of destination, and that it may even drive many tourists to revisit the destination.

| Table ٤: Respondents' Demographic Data | | Freq. | % |
|---|------|--------------|----------|
| Gender | Male | ١١٦ | ٧١,٢ |

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|----|------|
| | Female | ٤٧ | ٢٨,٨ |
| Marital Status | Single | ٧٠ | ٤٢,٩ |
| | Married with no Children | ٢٧ | ١٦,٦ |
| | Married with Children | ٦٦ | ٤٠,٥ |
| Age | From ٢٠ to ٣٠ Years | ٥٩ | ٣٦,٢ |
| | From ٣١ to ٤٠ years | ٦٥ | ٣٩,٩ |
| | Over ٤٠ years | ٣٩ | ٢٣,٩ |

In regards to the demographic data of the investigated respondents it could be noticed that ٧١,٢% of the investigated respondents were males, while ٢٨,٨% were females. Concerning the marital status of the investigated respondents, ٤٢,٩% of the tourists were single. Meanwhile ٤٠,٥% of the investigated respondents were married with children. Only, ١٦,٦% of the investigated respondents were married with no children. In terms of age the majority of tourists ٣٩,٩% aged from ٣١ to ٤٠ years. Followed by ٣٦,٢% of them from ٢٠ to ٣٠ years old. While ٢٣,٩% of the investigated respondents were over ٤٠ years old.

To investigate the strength of association between the acceptance of Egyptian cuisine and destination marketing a

correlation analysis is conducted. The results are shown in Table (9)

| | | Acceptance | LFDM |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Acceptance | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.720** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.000 |
| LFDM | Pearson Correlation | 0.720** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | |

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To measure the strength of the relationship between acceptance of local food and destination marketing, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used.

There was a strong positive relation between “acceptances of Egyptian cuisine” and “Local food and destination marketing” $r = 0.72$, $n = 163$, $P < 0.01$. This finding signifies that acceptance of acceptance of Egyptian cuisine increasingly impact on the destination marketing by 72% and the others (28%) refers to other variables.

These findings agree with those of Okumus et al., (٢٠١٣) Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, (٢٠١٦) who stated that local food is a significant motivator of visitor destination selection processes, as well as a tool for marketing the diversity of locations. Furthermore, local cuisine and Egyptian cuisine have become increasingly important in defining and promoting various tourist destinations (Horng et al., ٢٠١٢)

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research paper measures the Egyptian cuisine as a tool for destination promotion. The data has been collected from ten five-star hotels in Greater Cairo. The findings report that Egyptian cuisine is highly accepted by tourists while they are traveling to Egypt, Moreover, there was a strong positive relation between “acceptances of Egyptian cuisine” and “Local food and destination marketing” Thus, food can be used as a tool for marketing destinations. These findings agreed with Henderson (٢٠٠٩) who stated that Local food can be used as a differentiator in destination marketing. Moreover, a distinct food identity contributes to a destination's competitiveness, which is why destinations

have begun to embrace local food as a marketing and branding tool (Boyne et al. ٢٠٠٤ and Okumuş et al., ٢٠١٨). The result shows that males were accepted the Egyptian cuisine rather than female.

The amount of fats and carbohydrates in Egyptian recipes should be reduced. In other words, it is a struggle to preserve Egyptian cuisine while still preparing foods in more nutritional manner. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Cohen et al., (٢٠٠٤), who emphasised the need of adhering to global dietary trends while preparing traditional foods.

This situation has provided an opportunity for food tourism to be a marketing tool, which enhances the sustainability and effectiveness of the destination since food enhances the tourist's experience in the tourist destination in addition to achieve physiological satisfaction. Egyptian food is an element of learning about the destination's culture. Accordingly it may be an important key for destination's promotion. In Egypt, food is not the main reason to visit, nevertheless it forms a part of a tourist's experience at the destination.

So, it is recommended to:

١. Conduct marketing campaigns based on the quality and unique taste of Egyptian food through training workers in restaurants and tourist food places to provide local foods that Egypt is famous for, such as koshari, falafel fava beans and others.
٢. Providing some types of local food during conferences
٣. Providing translated television programs for food on Egyptian satellite channels that are shown in foreign countries.
٤. Programs offered by tourism companies in Egypt should include the provision of local meals during the visit program
٥. Organizing international competitions for the most important local foods through the official organizations in Egypt for tourism promotion and covering their events through the media.
٦. The Egyptian tourism authorities need to make more efforts in terms of promoting the Egyptian cuisine.

- ∪. Appealing to the tourism sector to develop sales of the food services sector because of its significant impact on revitalizing food tourism
- ∧. Pay attention to mobile-friendliness when promoting food. This means, try to use vertical images of food wherever possible.
- ∩. Have a hashtag strategy (Provide restaurants/bars with napkins or coasters with your hashtag and encourage local restaurants to use hashtag)

At last, the findings of this study cannot be applied to all visitors to Egypt. This is due to the fact that the sample size was limited to 163 tourists who exclusively consumed Egyptian dishes in five-star hotels.

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