



UDC 338.48-6:613.2

## GASTRONOMIC TOURISM AS A TOOL FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY NUTRITION: MANAGING AND MARKET TRENDS<sup>1</sup>

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**Summary.** The article examines the essence of the concept of «gastronomic tourism» and its social and economic content. The authors investigate gastronomic tourism as an essential segment of the tourism industry that is actively developing. The influence of culinary traditions on consumers' choice of tourist routes is analyzed. The percentage of travelers guided by the gastronomic features of destinations when choosing a location for a tourist trip is studied. It is also determined that their primary selection criteria are the diversity of cuisine, regional dishes, and the reputation of catering establishments. The rich marketing potential of gastronomic tourism is outlined, and how the culinary dishes of a particular region shape its cultural image, helping to attract tourists from different countries. The authors substantiate that gastronomy is a key storytelling element, especially for areas with little historical or cultural heritage. Examples of gastronomic associations from various countries are given. Special attention is paid to trends in gastronomic tourism, such as the growing demand for organic products, farm-to-table concepts, and sustainable consumption. Modern trends in the choice of gastronomic routes are analyzed, particularly the increasing interest in local cuisine and traditional cooking methods. It is noted that gastronomic tourism plays an important role not only in cultural exchange between countries but also in forming a national brand, contributing to the economic development of regions and cities. Considerable attention is paid to wellness tourism, which combines gastronomic experiences with the principles of healthy eating, SPA procedures, and physical activity. The growth of demand for healthy food is noted. For this purpose, analytics for different countries in the field of nutrition were analyzed. It was found that EU residents strive to switch to a healthy diet, which affects the gastronomic preferences of tourists. Financial aspects of tourists' food expenses in the total travel expenses are considered. Information sources that shape travelers' gastronomic preferences have been identified. Additionally, the article explores the role of digital media and social networks in promoting gastronomic tourism. It highlights how online platforms influence travelers' choices and help shape the perception of destinations through user-generated content and influencer marketing. Finally, the study outlines the prospects for future research in gastronomic tourism and its integration with global health and sustainability trends.

**Key words:** marketing in the tourism sphere, market tendencies, tourist destination, management of the hospitality industry, wellness.

[https://doi.org/10.33108/galicianvisnyk\\_tntu2025.02.113](https://doi.org/10.33108/galicianvisnyk_tntu2025.02.113)

Received 08.03.2025

УДК 338.48-6:613.2

## ГАСТРОНОМІЧНИЙ ТУРИЗМ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ ПРОМОЦІЇ ЗДОРОВОГО ХАРЧУВАННЯ: УПРАВЛІННЯ ТА РИНКОВІ ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ

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**Резюме.** Розглянуто сутність поняття «гастрономічний туризм» та його соціальний і економічний зміст. Досліджено гастрономічний туризм як важливий сегмент туристичної індустрії, що

<sup>1</sup> The research was funded by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, grant number 0125U000531 («Institutional and functional adaptation of the public health system to post-war recovery of Ukraine's economic and human potential»)

*активно розвивається. Проаналізовано вплив кулінарних традицій на вибір туристичних маршрутів споживачами. Досліджено, який відсоток мандрівників орієнтуються на гастрономічні особливості DESTINATION при виборі локації для туристичної подорожі. Також визначено, що основними критеріями вибору для них є різноманіття кухні, регіональні страви та репутація закладів харчування. Окреслено багатий маркетинговий потенціал гастрономічного туризму й те, як кулінарні страви певного регіону формують його культурний образ, допомагаючи залучати туристів із різних країн. Обґрунтовано, що гастрономія є ключовим елементом сторітелінгу, особливо для регіонів із незначною історичною чи культурною спадщиною. Наведено приклади гастрономічних асоціацій різних країн. Особлива увага приділена трендам у сфері гастрономічного туризму, таким, як зростання попиту на органічні продукти, концепції farm-to-table й стале споживання. Проаналізовано сучасні тенденції у виборі гастрономічних маршрутів, зокрема збільшення інтересу до локальної кухні та традиційних методів приготування їжі. Окремо зазначено, що гастрономічний туризм відіграє важливу роль не лише в культурному обміні між країнами, а й у формуванні національного бренду, сприяючи економічному розвитку регіонів та міст. Значну увагу приділено велнес-туризму, що поєднує гастрономічні враження з принципами здорового харчування, SPA-процедурами та фізичною активністю. Відзначено зростання попиту на корисну їжу. Для цього проаналізовано аналітику за різними країнами в сфері харчування. Виявлено, що мешканці ЄС прагнуть перейти на здорове харчування, що позначається на гастрономічних уподобаннях туристів. Розглянуто фінансові аспекти щодо витрат туристів на харчування в загальній сукупності витрат на подорожі. Визначено інформаційні джерела, що формують гастрономічні переваги мандрівників.*

**Ключові слова:** маркетинг у сфері туризму, ринкові тенденції, туристична DESTINATION, менеджмент індустрії гостинності, велнес.

[https://doi.org/10.33108/galicianvisnyk\\_tntu2025.02.113](https://doi.org/10.33108/galicianvisnyk_tntu2025.02.113)

Отримано 08.03.2025

**Introduction.** Trends in recent years show that such direction in tourism as gastronomic is gaining increasing popularity among different categories of travelers. People are interested in the culinary traditions of other nationalities. According to thematic surveys, up to 70% of travelers choose a destination that considers the local gastronomic goal. More than 90% of respondents agree that gastronomic traditions affect the overall rating of the destination. The most significant gastronomic factors that influence the choice of a destination by travel agency clients are the variety of cuisine (73% of respondents answered this way), regional dishes (36% of respondents), and the reputation of catering establishments (18%). There are many reasons why cooking and related experiences are included in the promotion policy of a particular tourist destination. For marketing purposes, gastronomy is a suitable subject for storytelling, as it is through food that it is appropriate to tell a story about the values and culture of a particular destination, especially those not rich in historical or cultural monuments. Many types of food and gastronomic habits are associated with specific regions and countries. For example, Italy is associated with pizza and pasta, and Great Britain with fish and potatoes. Pierogi and Polish sausages are the dishes that attract tourists in Poland, borscht and lard in Ukraine, falafel and shakshuka in Israel, fried chicken and BBQ in the USA, moussaka and Horiatiki Salata in Greece, sarmale and pastrama in Romania, etc. It is noteworthy that various human senses are affected by gastronomic tourism. Not only does vision play an active part (as is mostly the case in other types of tourism) in perception, but it also plays a role in taste, smell, hearing, and touch. An interesting fact is that each tourist's personal experience is different, which means that the overall perception of gastronomic recreation will differ for each person. One of the varieties of gastronomic tourism is wellness tourism, which, in addition to cooking, also includes some activities to improve a person's well-being (health-improving medical procedures, SPA procedures, physical activity). However, the basis is to provide a balanced and healthy diet for tourists based on their needs through healthy and tasty dishes. It is essential that, unlike home cooking, cooking during a vacation will bring benefits and pleasure from food, which is necessary and can be considered a challenge for organizers of tourist trips that include gaining new gastronomic experiences by tourists. One solution is

to offer dishes and drinks from the «healthy» segment in such a way that they satisfy the consumer's vision but do not cause disappointment in taste during consumption. Given the trends and problematic issues in the field of promotion of gastronomic tourism, in particular, in the wellness segment, it becomes relevant to conduct an in-depth market analysis of this vital sector of the industry, which is at the intersection of entertainment and public health maintenance, modern "healthy" trends in this industry and its impact on the national economy.

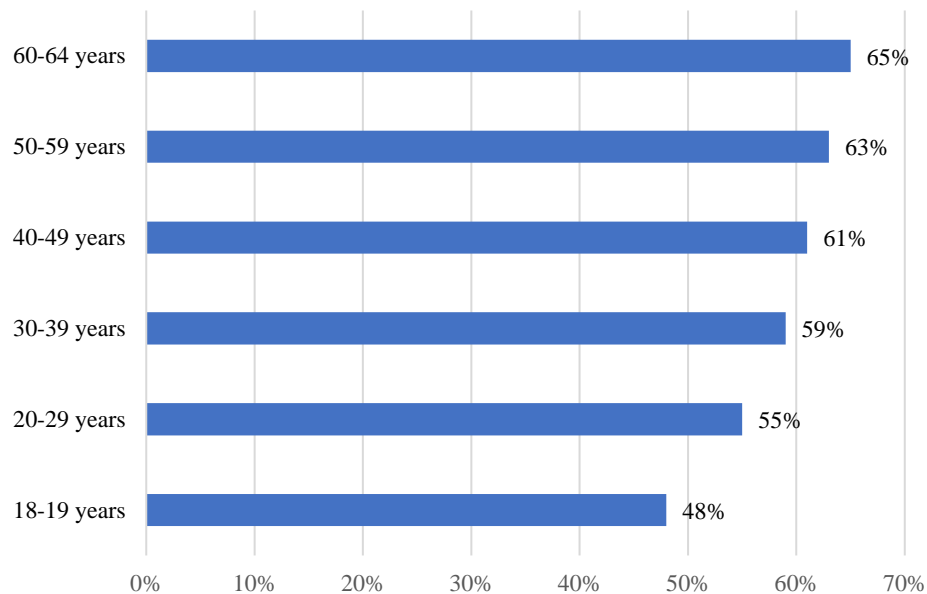
**Review of the latest research and literature.** In the scientific literature, not much attention has been paid to the study of gastronomic tourism as a subspecies of tourism as a global industry. The available sources on this topic, mainly describe the development of this direction of tourism within the country and the specifics of promoting this activity [1–3].

**The main purpose of the article** is a market analysis of the gastronomic industry to find out the fundamental role of tourism, in particular gastronomic attractions during travel, for the promotion of healthy consumption at the global level and to substantiate the rationality of the author's assumption that the menu during vacation can transform people's consumption habits towards more rational and healthy ones in their everyday lives. The essence of the concept of gastronomic tourism, the history of its development, and its importance for the development of national economies are highlighted in the work [4]. This work also provides a detailed strategic plan for developing this type of tourism with stages. Ethical and sustainable issues in gastronomic tourism, the impact of lifestyle, and the culture of this type of activity are studied in the work [5]. The characteristics of a tourist interested in gastronomy during his trip are analyzed, and marketing tools are identified that can largely influence his choice and interest in gastronomic offers. The work [6] is exclusively bibliographic and is devoted to studying the portrait of a gastronomic tourist and the features of his behavior. However, the existing works do not close the gap regarding the issue of healthy eating and consider the rational eating behavior of tourists when planning menus for vacationers. In this study, the issue of gastronomic tourism is considered from two positions: as a new tourist phenomenon that is gaining popularity in the tourist market, as well as a concept of recreation, within which not only a high level of satisfaction of tourists' needs in recreation is achieved, but also an essential component of the health and recovery of the body is taken into account, an indispensable component of which is proper nutrition. The author of this study attempts to shed light on the role of gastronomic tourism in promoting healthy eating behavior among various categories of the population involved in wellness tourism and related types of recreation.

**Task setting.** The research aims to determine the essence of «gastronomic tourism» and its socio-economic role in the tourism industry. The task is to investigate market trends in gastronomic tourism and how the behavior of consumers and clients of the tourism industry is also changing in response to the trends of a healthy lifestyle and the desire for healthy eating. The aim is also to identify marketing tools that can most effectively adjust clients' behavior in the tourism industry, particularly gastronomic tourism.

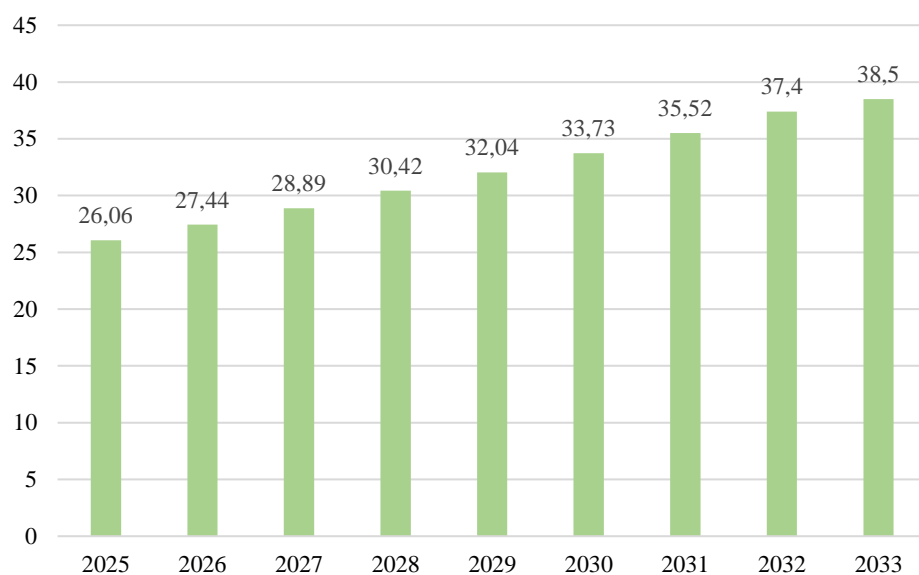
**Statements of main issues of the study.** Gastronomic tourism is a type of tourism where the direct focus of attraction for the client is the experience of consuming the cuisine of a particular country or region of the host country. Market analysis of trends in the food sector shows that a relatively high proportion of the population of the EU-27 countries is trying to eat healthier, which is typical for all age groups in general (Fig. 1).

These market trends are also valid for tourists' dietary preferences while traveling: people of older age groups are more inclined to review their diet during tourism and pay more attention to gastronomic offers from tour operators. Forecasts indicate that the healthy food market will grow reasonably stable and high in the next 8 years (Fig. 2).



**Figure 1.** Share of consumers that tend to eat healthy in the EU-27 in 2023 by age group

Source: built using data [7].



**Figure 2.** Growth forecasts for health food market value, in billion U.S. dollars

Source: built using data [8].

Gastronomic tourism is a relatively popular type of tourism, not even as part of regular tourism, but as an independent direction, which confirms the survey of respondents about their intention to choose a tourist tour for a trip. Thus, in 2024, 5.6% of respondents planned trips within the culinary/food tourism framework, which is only 3% less than the share of respondents who preferred coast and sea tours [9]. According to 2019 data, tourists spent about \$ 278.9 billion on their meals during trips, almost a quarter of all travel expenses [10]. People's travel preferences differ depending on the destination. For example, statistics show that nearly 70% of visitors to Denmark actively explore the country's regions to try local food. The figure

of 65% for Danish gastro-tourists shows the share of those who call visiting local cafes and restaurants their favorite activity while traveling to this country. In Italy, the primary sources of information about food tourism are friends and relatives (55% of respondents), specialized websites on food tourism (34%), TV series/programs/channels on food (32%), travel magazines (28%), gastronomy guides (28%), Facebook (27%), Tripadvisor platform (24%), food magazines (23%), travel agencies and tour operators (18%) [11].

**Conclusions.** Gastronomic tourism is becoming a powerful tool for cultural integration, promoting local culinary traditions and creating a unique cultural image of the region, attracting tourists from different countries. Current trends indicate a growing demand for healthy food, in particular for organic products and dishes that meet the principles of sustainable food, which creates new opportunities for gastronomic tourism. Food is increasingly becoming an important part of marketing strategy, helping to tell stories about the culture and traditions of regions, especially those that do not have a significant historical heritage. Wellness tourism, which combines gastronomic experiences with the principles of healthy eating and physical activity, is gaining popularity, as tourists seek not only to enjoy delicious dishes, but also to improve their well-being. To promote healthy eating through gastronomic tourism, you can introduce interactive gastronomic tours and master classes, organize excursions to local farmers' markets and offer the concept of «from farm to table». Market trend analysis shows that four out of five adults from Generation Z enjoy watching or interacting with food content on social media. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat are an important source of food inspiration for Zoomers. Popular food content categories include sensory food, pantry organization, and Mukbang. Millennials and Generation Z incorporate social media into their cooking and eating behavior. A widespread survey across several European countries shows that more than half of European 13–39 year olds cooked meals that were trending on social media. In addition, nearly a third of respondents turned to social media for recipes [12–14]. Restaurants and cafes that use organic ingredients can be certified as sustainable businesses, which increases their appeal among tourists who choose healthy eating. Additionally, it is worth using social networks and collaborating with fitness bloggers who promote a healthy lifestyle, as well as developing a strategy that includes healthy options for traditional dishes, which allows you to combine gastronomic authenticity with modern healthy eating trends.

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