

# Culinary choices: developing Durban as a culinary destination

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## Abstract

This article explores a framework in culinary tourism as a means to strengthen tourism in the city of Durban, South Africa. 'Culinary Tourism' was founded by Lucy Long in the year 1998. Long (2004) believes that food is central to a travel experience and it can be used as a vehicle to access other cultures, and that we do not literally have to leave home to 'travel'. Eating is a universal activity and it gives one an insight into the lifestyle, and normative customs of other societies. Recent information technology, publications and academic literature indicate that culinary tourism has become popular for many local and international travellers. This study began from the hypothesis that South Africa has yet to use culinary tourism as a tool to market itself as a destination. Other supportive objectives of the study investigated whether Durban's cuisine is marketed adequately in relation to the identification of the variations in cuisine types that are available in Durban. The study also pays attention to ways in which Durban can serve as an attraction and preference for local and international tourists.

**Keywords:** culinary tourism, destination marketing, the anthropology of food, Durban cuisine, food tourism

## Introduction:

This article is based on an attempt to understand the concept of culinary tourism and assess its relevancy in a city like Durban which lies on the Indian Ocean coastal belt that is served by the warm Mozambican current. Further discussion in this paper bring to the fore the question whether Culinary Tourism has the capacity to strengthen tourism in Durban and its surrounding areas.

Durban's cosmopolitan population and range of ethnic cuisines provide fertile ground for a study in culinary tourism. The city's use of the concept as a tool to market itself more convincingly is yet to develop. The need for such a study is becoming increasingly important because Durban has been and is likely to be host to numerous international events in the foreseeable future. At the onset of research for this project for instance, the 2010 Soccer World Cup, managed by The Federation Internationale de Football Association, (FIFA) was hosted by South Africa, with Durban being one of its important sites for several of the matches. It is an established fact that countries that wish to host big international events do so because their purpose is to increase their tourism potential and make them a preferred tourism destination. Against the background of Durban's heterogeneous ethnic groups, the many variations of cuisines that are on offer in Durban are of global standards and the city has become an important coastal tourist and big-event destination. Furthermore, Durban was recently voted as one of many international cities in the world that offers world-class varieties

of street foods. According to this report compiled by the international television broadcaster CNN, the only other place that came close to Durban's positioning in this global comparison was Port Louis in Mauritius (Guy, *Independent on Saturday*, 13 August 2016). There is an obvious complexity to the research problem in such a situation as the city is yet to engage and market itself as a culinary tourism destination. This study therefore takes into account these factors and accepts that it has to begin from a position of disadvantage – in the absence of an established literature base on the subject with specific reference to Durban, as well as to the rest of South Africa. Culinary tourism in Durban would be an important factor in creating an attraction for the city in its drive towards making it a preferred option in their destination marketing initiatives ([www.worldfoodtravel.org](http://www.worldfoodtravel.org)). Tourism Destination Marketing is defined as:

“The management process through which the National Tourist Organisations and/or tourist enterprises identify their selected tourists, actual and potential, communicate with them to ascertain and influence their wishes, needs, motivations, likes and dislikes, on local, regional, national and international levels, and to formulate and adapt their tourist products accordingly in view of achieving optimal tourist satisfaction thereby fulfilling their objective (Wahab, Crampton & Rothfield, 1976: 24 cited in Pike & Page, 2014: 204).

A response to this definition however reduced it to being over simplistic since it did not take into account what external organisations levels of influence might be in situations where there are problems of actual visitor experience with crime, congestion, litter and the conditions of infrastructure that tourists are expected to use whilst visiting a destination (Pike & Page, 2014: 205). However, the definition does support the aim to increase numbers of tourists through amplifying the strengths or varying attractions of a destination. In the case of promoting the cuisine of a destination, it can be challenging. According to Boyne et al, (2003 cited in Okumus et al, 2007: 255) adopting an appropriate marketing philosophy approach to develop tourism around food and wine is difficult because there is a lack of understanding of food purchasing behaviours of tourists on a global scale. Every destination that has had an attempt at marketing culinary tourism has been faced with similar challenges, but are nevertheless improving the overall image of their destination, contributing towards economic growth and attracting tourists. For instance, destinations such as Hong Kong and Turkey use food to market their destinations and there are many tourist organisations, such as the Australian and Canadian Tourist Commission working on the promotion of culinary tourism at present (Horng & Tsai, 2010: 75). Similarly, South Africans too can learn from these organisations and adopt a suitable strategy for greater development of culinary tourism.

The main objectives of the study will therefore be aimed at addressing a three-fold problem of: determining how food in Durban can serve as an attraction for local (South African) and overseas tourists; about how food can help in the city's marketing strategies; and how its varied cuisines have both a local and international appeal. In view of the limitations of literature on culinary tourism either in Durban or South Africa, we begin from the premise that the concept is insufficiently used in marketing initiatives in either Durban or the country at large. Specialised cooking tours and ethnic cuisine tasting tours have not yet been incorporated into tourism packages in the South African Tourism marketing strategy. While the Western Cape is generally the preferred destination for South Africans and overseas tourists, the marketing of its regional cuisines is still seriously underdeveloped, even though Cape Town was nominated as a world favourite destination by trip advisor travellers in 2011 (Rane, 2012). The World Tourism Organisation cites six main purposes of tourism trips, namely; pleasure, business, visiting family, health, education and religion, but fails to make mention of the culinary tourist. For the purpose of this study, the culinary tourist is defined as a tourist who has a particular interest in various cuisines while travelling and is primarily motivated by food tourism in general. The culinary tourist is one whose intent is to travel to

experience different cuisines and not merely satisfy hunger. Similarly, according to Sajna Shenoy, the culinary tourist is defined as a special interest tourist, whose major activities at the destination are food related, and for whom food tourism is an important, if not primary reason influencing his travel behaviour ( Shenoy, 2005:17). However, Long (2004) indicates that there are various reasons that motivate the tourist to taste different cuisines. Some tourists intentionally consume different cuisines because they are curious or because they want to authenticate an experience by tasting it. Others could be bored with familiar foods and therefore are willing to sample unfamiliar foods (Long, 2004: 11).

### **Understanding culinary tourism:**

There are significant aspects to food that take it beyond the purposes of mere nourishment. While food is a pleasure for some individuals and an experience for others, it is also an indicator of ideological differences as well as an indicator either of social status or of similarities and differences that set people apart. Practicing Muslims and Jews for instance are inclined to avoid places where pork is a delicacy and significant to their menus, while Hindus may have a similar aversion to places where beef has prominence. It is in this vein that Debevec & Tivadar (2006: 5) argued that: "In many parts of the world food is a social jelly, a substance that binds people together and that separates them". Food can be used to express religious differences and can be effective in building social cohesion as well amongst people who share different cultures. Food and its various types have been studied by many social science researchers and although the focus may differ, the interests of these scholars have often overlapped. The word "food" frequently appears throughout this study and is used as a concept that refers to a wide variety of consumable items that are available both locally and globally. For instance, the term is used to describe fresh produce, meat and poultry, or processed and cooked edibles or raw and pre packed snacks and meals. According to the Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary, food is defined as things that people or animals consume (Hornby, 2000: 459).

Ritchie and Zins (1978) list food as one of the components of cultural tourism as they view it as representative of culture<sup>1</sup>. A dominant approach to understanding food and its consumption in the social sciences is the cultural approach amongst psychological and economic approaches. Anthropology accounts for the majority of cultural studies of food. Douglas (1975) for instance examines the role of food as a code conveying information about social events and social relations. She also discusses the variety of foods which are common amongst varying cultures (Douglas, 1975: 67). The anthropology of food consumption concentrates on whether the social patterns of food consumption are shaped by the structure of society and whether they are influenced by members of society. More specifically, anthropological research on food consumption has dealt with the determination of interrelationships between food and cultures and the impact of modernisation and globalisation on food consumption. The anthropology of food has been concerned about food consumption as a means of social differentiation and social conditions as well as the study of food consumption patterns. Anthropologists have studied this notion in structured environments such as family homes and restaurants, but with minimal reference to tourists (Ritchie & Zins, 1978: 230).

This study focused on tourists, local patrons and ownership and management of eating houses in Durban, South Africa. All three of these sectors create interconnectedness to the culinary service industry that make them mutually inter-dependent upon each other. Each of the segments function on different levels – for instance while the manager or owners of culinary institutions depend upon maximising sales, the tourist depends upon quality of service and taste of the cuisine. Both of these are dependent upon the service of chefs and the food

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<sup>1</sup> "Culture" is used as a concept that only loosely implies social normative practices, not as a universally acceptable concept.

attendants who represent the interests of the manager or owner and the expertise of the chef. Varying dishes can have significant meanings attached to them, especially if they have an historical basis to it and are connected to important moments in history and people. In Indian restaurants for instance the influence of the Mughal Empire on Indian cuisine or the impact that Colonel Sanders had on battered fried chicken in the USA has had a tremendous impact on how people relate to food, both inside and outside their homes.

In 2003, the Canadian Tourism Commission published a guide on how to develop a culinary tourism product. This was intended for both private and public enterprises that wish to involve themselves in this industry and a marketing strategy was established to include cuisine as a component of the cultural experience (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2003). Culinary tourism organisations such as the International Culinary Tourism Association (ICTA) and the International Culinary Tourism Institute (ICTI), were founded in the year 2006. The ICTA which is a non-profit trade association is the main organisation in the United States of America. It aims to educate the general public and its members on new developments within this industry. The ICTA founded international culinary tourism development to engage in consulting, research strategy and product development solutions for many types of businesses. The first certification program on culinary tourism was also launched in February 2009 in the United States of America, offering online training and in-depth research ([www.culinarytourism.org](http://www.culinarytourism.org)) which draws on a number of countries into its mission to promote culinary tourism. Australia has also begun targeting the culinary tourism segment in by promoting local cuisines to tourists. Erik Wolfe founded the Culinary Tourism organisation in 2003, which accomplished the growth of culinary tourism through destination marketing organisations and affiliations of varied destinations around the world. Their slogan, “every traveller eats and drinks” affirms the connectivity that is evident between food and wine tourism. ([www.worldfoodtravel.org](http://www.worldfoodtravel.org)).

According to Lucy Long (2004), “the culinary tourist anticipates a change in the foodways experience for the sake of experiencing that change, not merely to satisfy hunger’ (Long, 2004: 21). Such an experience offers the tourist new tastes, flavours and textures as well as new ways of perceiving each of these aspects. John Urry (1990) described this notion as a ‘qualitative category of experience’ and defined such a perspective as the ‘tourist gaze’ (Urry cited in Long, 2004: 21). This gaze pays attention to contrasts and distinctiveness and encourages individuals to realise their power and influence in symbolism. Various cuisines can be sampled in an effort to explore a new taste, but once that taste is found pleasing to the individual he or she may then indulge in that dish for enjoyment. Most foods are not inherently strange or exotic; an individual’s experiences are what determine and influence the status of food and exotic meals. Cuisine types and foods which are perceived to be unusual, novel or taboo may influence attitudes. Food taboos exist in most cultures and differ from culture to culture. The concept of exotic or taboo is formed when the individual has no exposure to people and cultures that may eat certain foods that are different to theirs. Different cuisine types become exotic for some people when their cultural beliefs about food practices are different from people of other cultures and when people in general are unfamiliar with certain cuisine types.

Numerous terms have been used to indicate and express the linkage between food and tourism, and some of them include food tourism, cuisine tourism, and culinary tourism as gastronomic tourism. According to Horng & Tsai (2010), cuisine is defined as cooking and the styles of food preparation whereas gastronomy often refers to “the consumption of food and drink in a more general sense” (Horng & Tsai, 2010: 75). Gastronomy also refers to the pleasure and enjoyment of consuming good food and drink as part of the lifestyles<sup>2</sup> of those who are affluent. The word ‘culinary’ means kitchen in the French language and is the adjectival form of cuisine which emphasises the practice and style of cooking and eating.

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<sup>2</sup> The manner in which communities or an individual works or lives (Wehmeier, 2000: 685).

Therefore, culinary can refer to cooked foods, food production, the ingredients of a meal, food tourism, motivations and activities (Ignativ & Smith, 2006 cited in Horng & Tsai, 2010: 75).

Anthropologists examined food and its practices simply to reveal its meaning and understand the contribution it has made to the way in which people choose to live their lives. Mintz & Du Bois (2002) claim that food, like other material substances, can solidify group membership and set groups apart. Food can also be segmented and be an indicator of ethnicity, race, nationality, class, individuality and gender. Eating different types of cuisine is seen as exciting and adventurous by many, and has given people reason to travel to different locations around the world. Cheryl and Bill Jamison, authors of, *Around The World in 80 Dinners: The Ultimate Culinary Adventure*,” state their motivation was to experience and taste different cuisine in their places of origin (Jamison & Jamison, 2008: 5).

Mitchell and Hall (2003) mention and discuss the food tourist in the article titled *Consuming tourists: food tourism consumer behaviour*. They explain that the food tourist is one that visits and dines at restaurants and cafes around the world. Some tourism organisations of holiday destinations have indicated that dining out is a common activity for international tourists and therefore have noted a positive contribution to restaurant profitability. Due to the lack of direct research into food tourism, there are minimal and superficial data available of food tourists, and as a result these scholars acknowledge the inability to define the term food tourist and identify the food tourist ( Mitchell and Hall, 2003 in Hall et al, 2003: 62).

Theorists such as Lucy Long (2004) explored the growth of food tourism relevance in a globalised society. Her experiences of travelling and experiencing local and regional foods in different destinations led to the concept “culinary tourism”. While both concepts are not interchangeable synonyms, there is a distinct overlap in the issues that they bring to our attention. This attraction is dependent on restaurants, cooking schools as well as festivals which focus on food and drink. The venues can be educational, celebratory, public or private, individual or communal. The marketing and advertising initiatives play a role in educating tourists of these possible ventures that they could engage in while travelling. Long (2004) defines culinary tourism as the “intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of the other”. She further explains that exploratory participation refers to the active involvement of the tourist which chooses to prepare, eat and present food and cuisines which belong to different cultures than their own. The individual does not necessarily have to leave their familiar surroundings to experience unfamiliar cuisines. The tourist should have the intent to participate accordingly (Long, 2004: 21).

### **Contextualisation and the research process:**

The research process involved a qualitative methodological approach which included participant observation, a literature survey, face-to-face interviews and surveys. The primary aim of the study was to determine how food in Durban can serve as a tourist attraction. Further investigations focussed on understanding and identifying tourists’ cuisine preferences and determining the level of influence the media has over patrons especially when they choose restaurants and their meals. Tourists (local and international), restaurant employees and employers, local patrons and renowned South African culinary specialists were interviewed. A qualitative methodological approach was used to acquire information during fieldwork. Qualitative research involves personal contact as well as interviews, surveys, documents and participant observation in order to understand and explain social phenomena. The motivation for using a qualitative research method as opposed to a quantitative one is that, as an exercise in anthropological research, the principal goal of this research study was to describe and understand the need for an updated approach to culinary tourism in South Africa. The main concern was to understand social action in terms of its specific content, rather than attempt to generalize and assume (Bailey, 1987: 60).

Durban has at least three areas that are central to local and tourist interest in leisure, eating and socializing viz. the Durban beachfront (often referred to as the 'Golden mile'); Florida Road (the mid-town area that is rapidly developing into a middle class 'hangout' for students and the elderly alike), as well as Lagoon Drive and Chartwell Drive in Umhlanga Rocks – where residential areas, hotels and restaurants serve the leisure needs of mainly the wealthy from within and outside the area. Fieldwork was conducted at these three sites. For the purposes of this study two sampling methods, purposive sampling and stratified sampling, were used in order to achieve the objectives of this study. Stratified sampling methods were used to organize the population into subsets based on common variables between them, and an appropriate number of respondents were then selected. An example of such a subset is the waitresses and waiters within a particular area of study. This sampling method is most convenient to manage and implement and errors can be remedied (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 191). One hundred and sixty three interviews were conducted with local restaurant patrons, local and international tourists and employees and employers of the hospitality industry within the three aforementioned areas of study: Florida Road, the Durban Beachfront, and Lagoon Drive and Chartwell Drive in Umhlanga Rocks. Of the 163 interviewees, 63% were male and 37% were female. The gender ratio was a mere coincidence as we interviewed both males and communication between the patrons and waitrons and the expressions of restaurant patrons when they received their meal. International tourists that were interviewed were from Spain, France, Germany, England, India, China and the United States of America. Secondary data was sourced from the published literature and media material relevant to tourism; this is analysed and discussed in detail in the literature review. Questions posed to interviewees focused on whether the diversity of Durban's cuisine was marketed extensively prior to the FIFA World Cup 2010, and if culinary tourism in Durban can be beneficial to both the hospitality and tourism sectors. Interviewees were asked to indicate their food preference whilst visiting Durban and this also demonstrated whether these interviewees had exposure to all the cuisines available.

### **Cuisines in Durban**

The data collated during indicated that both tourists and patrons had an interest in the food they consumed in Durban and that should particular dishes be marketed aggressively, they could serve to attract visitors. A variety of cuisines are available in Durban, offering tourists and local patrons a wide selection to choose from. Cuisines and regional specialities which are available in Durban are widely unknown, simply because relevant tourism publications such as the *Lonely Planet Travelling Guide of South Africa, Swaziland & Lesotho* make no mention of the types of cuisines available in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The Local media, the *eThekweni* Travel website make no mention of the types of ethnic cuisine available in Durban, even though the city is home to English, Scottish, Zulu, Irish, Indian and other variations of South African food. People of Indian Origin living in Durban (globally referred to as 'PIO's) in South Africa are diverse in social practices, religious beliefs as well as the types of cuisine that each ethnic group tends to prepare. This local variety of Indian cuisine has been classified as local Indian cuisine for the purpose of this paper. Varying social and religious sects amongst the "PIO's" living in Durban have each developed their own localised version of their traditional dishes and snacks. Further variations prevail in being permanently vegetarian or partly vegetarian, dependent upon religious beliefs and practices, the time of week as well as the time of year that they may observe strict vegetarian or fruit diets as forms of fasting. There are significant differences for instance in the ways in which commonly referred to dishes are prepared - according to religious background and social gatherings. For instance, the internationally known dish called "biryani" has a significant variation during social gatherings among Muslims and Hindus, particularly of North Indian extraction. During Muslim weddings and ritual gatherings biryani is almost inevitably cooked with either chicken or lamb, whereas among Hindus in such gatherings the dish is inevitably vegetarian. Similarly, vegetarian and

meat dishes vary widely in the ways in which they are prepared in Indian homes and they may vary even more from the ways in which they are prepared in the different regions in India – adding an emphatic localised adaptation to their dishes as descendants of migrant Indians.

According to the *Oxford Companion to Food*, the word curry comes from the south Indian Tamil word 'kari'. Curry is described as a spicy sauce which is poured over rice. Alan Davidson (2006) explains that the English word was used to “describe any spicy dish with a thick sauce or gravy that came from any part of India” (Davidson, 2006: 235). According to Clairborne (2009), when curry powder is prepared in the western regions of the world, the dominant ingredient used is turmeric, whereas in other regions of the world the combination of ingredients used in the preparation of the curry powder varies. She further explains that even the understanding of what a curry is in western regions of the world differs to what is known and understood as a curry in other regions. However, Clairborne (2009) has a broad description of a curry which can be fitting to most types of curries prepared in various regions of the world. She explains that the curry is any dish which consists of spicy gravy like sauce made with seafood, meat, vegetables or poultry. An Indian meal experience usually comprises of several curries, each with its own distinctive flavour and taste. The spices used to prepare these dishes are varied and are chosen with considerable care and discrimination (Clairborne cited in Ray, 2009: 217). This description is not entirely correct and fails to recognize traditional and regional differences across cultures that is influential in the preparation of dishes. For this reason, there can be multiple definitions to the word 'curry'. A variety of cultures use the term curry to describe dishes within their cuisines. For instance, Thai restaurants around the world often have dishes titled red or green curry, Chinese restaurants and takeaways tend to have chicken or seafood curries, while authentic Indian restaurants and takeaways offer a bigger variety of what has now become known as “curry”.

The definitions of curry are reliant upon at least three things viz. the origins of the dish, the era during which the dish was created and, the external influences that added to the exoticism of the dish. Maroney (2011: 123) for instance states that the Portuguese was responsible for introducing the chilli plant to India during the 16<sup>th</sup> century and that curry can be viewed as a development that reflects adaptations to British interests in spicy Indian food (Maroney, 2011: 123). According to Wehmeier (2000), the term 'curry' is defined as a dish which is Indian and which contains meat or vegetables. The spices of a curry are often hot and this dish is mainly served with rice (Wehmeier, 2000: 286).

The processes involved in cooking “curries” vary widely and can be complex enough to confuse “outsiders” in the ways that they are prepared. But it is in these variations and uniqueness with some individuals that such cooking can possibly add to tourist curiosities and a platform for launching culinary cooking classes to culinary tourists. In Durban, most Indian dishes with a sauce are commonly referred to as curry, often cooked in heavy based pots. First onions are browned in hot oil, followed by an addition of various spices, then the garlic and ginger and the mixture simmered for no more than a minute or two before the vegetables, lamb, chicken, beef or fish is added. Tomatoes, if the dish requires, are normally added in the last few minutes of the cooking process. The pan is covered and the dish is left to simmer, bringing all the flavours of this rich concoction together. Finally fresh coriander is folded in just before serving. The curry is usually served over white rice with condiments called chutney and/or sambals and pappadums.

Another popular way to serve curry is in a uniquely distinctive Durban created bread bowl, called 'Bunny Chow'. To make Bunny Chow a loaf of bread is cut in half, the center is removed and the curry served into it. The very nature of this item precludes any other way but one's fingers to eat it – a normative eating habit among Indians in whatever they eat. The origins of the bunny chow are obscure and almost a mystery. There are numerous versions of this dish and each Durban citizen will choose the version that they can relate to (Somers, 1991: 25).

## Findings

The data collected in interviews stipulated that cuisines such as Western or continental foods, Asian cuisine (Thai, Chinese and authentic Indian cuisine), Italian food and seafood are popular among tourists for numerous reasons. Some international tourists had no knowledge of Durban Indian cuisine, while others were hesitant to sample it because Durban Indian curries are widely known to be laden with chillies and spices, making them unappetising for those who are the occasional curry eaters. Discussions with tourists indicated their appreciation of locally grown produce which is relatively inexpensive, such as avocado pears, pineapples and bananas. Local tourists also mentioned that other cuisines such as continental, Portuguese and Italian was equally as appealing to them as Durban Indian cuisine. It was noted that those interviewees that had an appreciation for Indian Cuisine, had a palate for Portuguese foods as well. A commonality amongst these 2 varying cuisines was the use of chillies and other spices which contribute to a relatively spicy flavour in Portuguese dishes. The data collated reflected that Durban Indian cuisine is not as popular amongst international tourists as we initially believed, due to a variety of reasons, such as lack of marketing of local cuisines, misappropriated understandings of what local foods are and minimal exposure to these dishes. Among the European tourists, seafood, and Italian and Portuguese cuisines were mostly favoured whilst visiting Durban. Italian and Western or continental cuisine was preferred by both the Indian and American tourists. The Chinese tourists found their traditional cuisine most appealing whilst they were in Durban. These tourists in particular had little knowledge of Durban Indian food.

According restaurant employers and employees, the majority of local patrons informed them of their preference for Italian cuisine and seafood. Local patrons preferred Chinese cuisine, Indian cuisine (authentic and Durban) and seafood. British interviewees leaned towards both Durban Indian cuisine and authentic Indian cuisine and only one international tourist out of 25 respondents stated a specific preference for bunny chow. The majority of local patrons residing in Durban favoured mutton curry, and mutton and chicken bunnies. Almost 75 percent of the 45 local patrons expressed a love for dining at Indian restaurants which specialise in both authentic Indian and Durban Indian cuisine. Thirty-two percent of these respondents identified Durban curry as an authentic South African dish. This study also examined the background to Durban Indian cuisine, its origins and variations in preparation and taste.

The majority of tourists preferred to dine at seafood restaurants and steakhouses with the exception of interviewees from England who were emphatic about their preference for Indian food. The Indian tourists stated that they would opt to eat at steakhouses with special reference to the good quality of steak and lamb available in South Africa. If that was not possible, the Indian tourist had a second choice of a seafood restaurant and lastly, he would consider dining at a Chinese restaurant as a third option. The American respondents expressed a preference for Italian restaurants, and the Chinese respondents preferred to dine at Asian restaurants excluding those which specialise in local and authentic Indian cuisine, whereas 75% of local patrons had a preference for both authentic and local Indian cuisine and one Spanish respondent was expressive about his preference for Portuguese food.

It was a coincidence that research for this article took place at a time when a mega-event such as the Soccer World Cup was being hosted by South Africa. It is unlikely that such an event will return to the country before the next few decades, if at all. However, it has demonstrated capacity in at least two crucial issues viz. that South Africa as a country has the infrastructure and potential to host mega-events; and Durban as a metropolitan city has the capacity to accommodate both international and South African tourists from other areas of the country. The availability and quality of food too was appreciated by South African and international tourists, although numerous remarks made by tourists can add value to policy issues and futuristic planning for the city. One aspect for instance, that repeated itself on several occasions almost ironically because it is so universally available, was grilled steak. South

African steak had become increasingly popular during the Soccer World Cup to the extent that even the American media saw fit to carry an article on it. Numerous overseas guests commented about South African steak in ways that resonated with the American media coverage about it – assigning to it a distinction of its own. Likewise, there have been equally strong comments on seafood and game meat available in Durban. In several instances respondents also spoke about game meat that they had eaten in other parts of the country, such as ostrich, warthog, zebra, venison and to a lesser extent crocodile meat. All of these are or can also be made available in Durban. Those who ventured to try it and felt an appreciation for it spoke about it in ways that carried a message for such authentically South African food. In addition, numerous South African tourists from other parts of the country referred to more popular locally available cuisine such as spicy Indian food, Cape Malay food and fresh tropical fruit. Yet advertising for such cuisines hardly featured in the popular media in the run-up to the Soccer World Cup. Tourists from England too were familiar with Indian food and referred to it with fondness, while Spanish and American guests expressed appreciation for the fresh tropical fruit in Durban. Among these were the internationally popular Italian, Chinese and Thai cuisines. Cumulatively such a diversity of cuisines in Durban makes the city a truly cosmopolitan meeting place for international travellers and tourists. Herein lay the first major challenge for the policy makers and their drive to make Durban a unique place to visit in their ‘destination marketing’ initiatives.

Durban is unlikely to market itself either against other South African cities or against other competing metropolises in the developing world unless policy makers and political leaders understand what contributions cuisine and culinary tourism can do for it through a more holistic marketing package. On its own culinary tourism may not make as much sense as it could through a broader package that markets Durban as a preferred destination in one of several contexts, such as in South Africa, Southern Africa as a sub-continent, Africa as a continent, or among the more recognised destinations of the world. The city has the capacity and its potential has been recognised by a CNN report projecting Durban as being among one of the 10 most underrated cities in the world. A recent report by International television broadcaster CNN, indicated that Durban ranks amongst the top 23 cities in the world that offer world-class street food varieties. Special reference was made of the Indian and African influences on cuisines in Durban. Head of Durban Tourism, Philip Sithole was cited in the report and he stated that, “ food is one of our greatest assets in Durban’. The report suggested that food was more affordable in comparison to other European cities (Guy, *Independent on Saturday*, 13 August, 2016).

This study has demonstrated that there is indeed a need for culinary tourism marketing initiatives in South Africa. It suggests that a variety of cuisines in South Africa, including Durban Indian cuisine, could serve as a vehicle for culinary tourism. This initiative should complement current tourism marketing strategies initiatives in the country. Durban was used as a case-study. Aggressive marketing of Durban’s food and fresh produce has much potential for the growth of tourism in KwaZulu-Natal.

## **Conclusions**

Data collated from this study has elicited information that speaks to at least two major issues of relevance in ethnographic and applied anthropological research viz. the virtual absence of policy directions that are directed towards culinary tourism, and an equally wide lacunae in interests among South African anthropologists in the subject. While this exercise was not intended to be applied in nature it unearthed much that suggests a need for it. The success of culinary tourism in any situation would not only require an organised official push towards a formalised launch but also a constant oversight through a sustainable relationship between private enterprise and city/national officials intent on building such an industry. International

events have been taking place in Durban on a much grander scale than ever before over the last 20 years. But the fact that the city is often chosen as a place to have national and international meetings is itself a major selling point to officials who might preferably sooner rather than later realise the value of harnessing the potential that still lies dormant in culinary tourism. The same principle would apply to the practice in South African anthropology, especially since the diversity of ethnic cuisines that coexist with internationally renowned cuisines provide ample opportunities for further research in this budding area of interest.

This study has demonstrated that there is indeed a need for culinary tourism marketing initiatives in South Africa. It suggests that a variety of cuisines in South Africa, including Durban Indian cuisine, could serve as a vehicle for culinary tourism. This initiative should complement current tourism marketing strategies initiatives in the country. Durban was used as a case-study. Aggressive marketing of Durban's food and fresh produce has much potential for the growth of tourism in KwaZulu-Natal. To support the feasibility of this initiative, a recent article published in *The Tribune Herald* newspaper stated that the bunny chow has been identified as one of Africa's 15 favourite dishes by CNN travel. Dishes of Durban Indian cuisine such as breyani were ranked ninth and the bunny chow was ranked in the top 5. Special mention was made to the delicious bunny chows prepared by the Britannia Hotel restaurant located in Durban. This restaurant was also visited by tourists who participated in this study. Other dishes that topped the list included pap and meat as well as Portuguese chicken dishes which originate from Mozambique (Mungroo, *The Tribune Herald*, 15 June 2014). This media report indicates that there is a potential for Durban Indian cuisine, especially the bunny chow to become a huge attraction to the city of Durban.

Despite the outcomes produced by this study, there were various challenges. Amongst these was a methodological challenge that was initially identified during the analysis phase of the study. The fact that half the population sample was static and the other half was not could have impacted the outcomes of the study. According to Clammer (1984), anthropology presently lacks a research organising paradigm. The discipline has been noted to possess loosely defined customs in relation to both fieldwork and the presentation of results. These encompass the personal tastes and personality of the fieldworker, the nature of the problem selected for study and the general perceptions held by the researcher (Clammer, 1984: 84). Therefore, a sample population which includes both static and non-static interviewees within an unstructured paradigm presents varying perceptions for this anthropological study as well as new research opportunities for similar studies. The varied sample population includes tourism participants and observers, creating room for a wide range of avenues to be studied within Durban tourism.

Scholars such as Nash (1996) and Burns (2004) emphasise that anthropology and tourism are both about people, and that anthropologists are both tourism participants and observers whether they choose to acknowledge this or not. Therefore the research outcomes of a study such as this need to acknowledge that the researcher has been an active participant in the study. This sample population afforded me the opportunity to observe and engage with diverse individuals (tourists). The data collated from these interviews presented ideas and notions of food that have their roots in various cultural backgrounds which were both similar and different to my cultural background. Exposure to such diversity in perceptions of the variety of foods in Durban enabled me to have a better understanding of the overall global image of local cuisine in Durban. Culinary tourism and its current global growth has emphasised the value of food in the sphere of economic, tourism and cultural studies. Academic literature within tourism studies has concentrated on the role food has played as an income generator and a marketing tool; anthropological studies can develop and sustain the social and cultural perspectives of culinary tourism. These approaches could include reflections on food, place and identity and the development of identity formation in post-modern societies.

Broad societal changes in the eating habits of different nationalities are highlighted through culinary tourism. Anthropology has always recognised people on the move, such as migrants, refugees and colonisers and now as agents of dietary change. Like migrants, food has moved across the globe (Mintz & Du Bois, 2002: 105). In a series of articles, Lucy Long (2004) describes her life as a migrant from one country to another.

The development of culinary tourism has created greater awareness of the globalisation of food production and the global transportation of a variety of cuisines. For instance, a restaurant that specialises in South African cuisine located in the United Kingdom represents the global transportation of food; however, unless culinary tourists enquire about the availability of cuisine in the United Kingdom, they might not be aware of the availability of South African cuisine in that country. Culinary Tourism has created further interest in the topic of food and culture. Mintz & Du Bois (2002) have acknowledged that there is room for studies within anthropology that focus on food and specific cultures. Food can be seen as an essential aspect of a society and carries symbolic meanings in relation to traditions and special occasions. Ethnographers have pointed to numerous entry points to the study of how food can be connected to rituals, symbols and belief systems. Anthropologists have noted that food performs a social function which can either reaffirm or transform relationships with others (Mintz & Du Bois, 2002: 111).

Travel dining has become a core way for tourists to experience the local culture of a destination (Chang et al, 2011, 307). Wine and culinary tourism have emerged with a focus on offering greater varieties that the palate can sample and enjoy. According to Getz (2000), the visitor can experience a complete sensory experience that encompasses taste, smell, touch, sight and hearing (Getz, 2000 cited in Lopez-Guzman, 2012: 169). Future culinary tourism studies, irrespective of its academic discipline – anthropology, sociology, or tourism has the capacity to explore how cuisine can become a key factor in strengthening a tourist destination and how local cuisine can serve to promote any city in the world. Durban would be falling behind if it does not harness the potential of its tourism industry to its maximum; and anthropologists would be missing out on a momentum in culinary tourism if they fail to exploit this growing research niche.

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