

Unpacking Street Food Tourism in South Africa: A Literature Review and a Way Forward

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How to cite this article: Mnguni, E.M. & Giampiccoli, A. (2022). Unpacking Street Food Tourism in South Africa: A Literature Review and a Way Forward. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 11(3):1085-1098. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.277>

Abstract

Food tourism is a growing phenomenon that is adding value to the tourism sector. While it can be recognised as a specific food tourism category, street food tourism has not been yet clearly conceptualised and much research remains to be done on this sub-sector. This paper presents an overview of issues relating to street food tourism from a global context. It proposes a definition of street food tourism and suggests strategies to enhance its development. The paper is based on secondary literature. It presents a South African case study which is based on data sourced from a number of websites. The ambition of this paper is to contribute to the expansion of food tourism literature and assist stakeholders in the sector to chart a way forward.

Keywords: Tourism; food tourism; street food; street food tourism; South Africa; internet

Introduction

More than a third of expenditure in the tourism sector is devoted to food, which is a fundamental part of the travel experience (Jeaheng & Han, 2020). Street food (and so street food tourism) is a central dimension of food tourism. Street food is a fundamental aspect of food tourism and it allows tourists to indulge in true local food juxtaposed with local cultural experiences (Mitgosoom & Ashton, 2019). Street food is available around the world. While it has been historically associated with developing countries (where street food consumption is currently still increasing), eating of street food is also rising in developed countries such as North America and Europe (Fusté-Forné, 2021; Wiatrowski et al., 2021) as a form of convenient and cheap food that offers distinctive flavours to local people and curious tourists (Okumus & Sonmez, 2019). Its growing importance to tourists can be attributed to its convenience, low cost and high nutritional value (Lee et al., 2020).

In recent years, tourist destinations have exploited food's association with the local context as a marketing tool. Tourists' decision-making process is connected to the territory (Privitera & Nesci, 2015). Street food characterises an instant in this experience of novelty and a proximal association with the local context. Its relevance goes beyond the simple act of eating. In the global food system, "street food has significant economic, cultural, and spatial implications" (Fusté-Forné, 2021:1). Using local available resources, street food combines the local traditional values and culture authenticity favouring local economic development and a sustainable tourism system offering opportunities that support the sustainability of tourist destinations (Jeaheng & Han, 2020).

While it is not the focus of this paper, it should be noted that street food has its own challenges such as food hygiene, sanitation, safety and/or the nutritional aspects of street food (Choi et al., 2013; Kok & Balkaran, 2014; Martins, 2006; Mosupye & von Holy, 2000; Oladipo-Adekeye & Tabit, 2021; Wiatrowski et al., 2021). The extant literature highlights the positive aspects of street food while identifying challenges and concerns such as hygiene, safety, and the low educational level among street food retailers (Okumus & Sonmez, 2019; WHO, 1996). Safety is very important to enhance the development of street food within the context of sustainable tourism (Bellia et al., 2016). The safety of tourists and the protection of destination images are important, thus it is fundamental to make food, especially street food and other food activities such as food trucks, safe (UNWTO, 2019).

This paper proposes that, rather than ‘closing down’ the street food sector, stakeholders should work together to agree on strategies and regulations to protect and enhance it for the benefit of both the local population and tourists (the tourism sector). For Privitera and Nesci (2015:719), street food merits “support and protection against the negative outcomes of globalisation and internationalisation”. Increased understanding of street food/street food tourism is necessary to suggest solutions that address problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment afflicting many developing countries. It is against this background that this paper aims to increase knowledge of street food tourism by examining its image on the Internet using the case of South Africa.

Given street food’s potential, it is important to explore how to promote its development and to propose ways to enhance its role and value by finding innovative ways to manage it. Research on the relationship between street food and tourism has been neglected and street food is an emergent academic field (Chatibura, 2021). Notwithstanding the increased importance of street food (and street food tourism) in relation to the local community and tourism, there is a paucity of research on this sector (Chatibura, 2021; Okumus, 2021), with many of the existing studies focusing on hygiene and safety issues (Gupta et al., 2018). From an academic perspective, research is required to advance scientific knowledge that will inform food tourism in the future (Okumus, 2021). Furthermore, notwithstanding the role of street food and fast food in the economy, for example, of South Africa, little is known about their consumption (Steyn et al., 2011). This paper contributes to filling this gap. Based on an overview of global food tourism it proposes a way forward. The following section presents the justification for the study and the methodology employed in it. This is followed by a literature review on various issues related to food tourism and street food/street food tourism. Finally, a case study on South Africa is presented, followed by a conclusion.

Methodology

Studies conducted in Indonesia (Yusuf, 2017), Hong Kong (Chen & Lee, 2019) and Poland (Wiatrowski et al., 2021) have shown that consumers use the internet to gather information on food tourism and street food tourism. The Polish study presented the practice of using social media as a marketing and information channel in a nuanced way (Wiatrowski et al., 2021). It is acknowledged that it is impossible to access all possible sources on the Internet. In the interest of transparency, the predetermined words and parameters used in this study were simple and replicable. The data was mined essentially from peer-reviewed academic journals using Google and Google Scholar and the following key words: ‘street food’, ‘food tourism’ ‘tourism’, ‘tourists’, ‘global’ and ‘South Africa’. South Africa was used for further screening. Attention has been paid to select as much as possible most recent documents.

The keywords were combined in various ways, always directing the search to uncover issues relating to street food tourism globally and in South Africa. For each search, the abstract and first two pages of the results were analysed. While research indicates that 95% of web

traffic is related to the first page – leaving only 5% for the other pages (Jacobson, 2017), to enhance the findings, the second page of results was scrutinised. A number of iterations were performed that resulted in what is presented in this paper.

Literature review

Street food is not a recent phenomenon. Street-food vendors were present in ancient Mesopotamian civilizations and during Roman and Medieval times (Bellia et al., 2016; Kraig & Taylor Sen, 2013; Imai, 2019; İrigüler & Öztürk, 2016). However, with the birth of restaurants in the 18th century, it shifted from being the food of the rich to become that of the poor (İrigüler & Öztürk, 2016). Current street food is different from past practices in that it is increasingly linked to the preservation of tradition in a frenetic society (Bellia et al., 2016).

Most global outdoor dining experiences revolve around street food, and many of the world's citizens do not eat at home but “outdoors, on the street, on the move, at a familiar vendor, interacting with the people who happen to be around you, whether you like it or not. Street food is the food of the people...” (Imai, 2019: 77). Kraig and Taylor Sen's (2013) preface to their publication – the first encyclopaedia devoted to street food – notes that this type of food is one of the fundamental sectors in the global food economy with around 2.6 billion individuals consuming it each day.

Recent years have witnessed considerable growth in food tourism and it has become one of the most vibrant and innovative tourism sub-sectors. Furthermore, the fundamental role of gastronomy in development and tourism product diversification is well known to tourism actors such as destination companies (UNWTO, 2012). Competition among destinations is increasing and distinguishing cultural characteristics of the location are becoming the differentiation aspects to attract tourists (UNWTO, online). Food is a fundamental part of the tourism sector that attracts tourists and also determines their satisfaction with the destination (Hiamey et al., 2020; Knollenberg, 2021). Consequently, many destinations market their food and associated activities and experiences to attract tourists (Jeaheng & Han, 2020). The growth in the economic value of food (and beverages) has increased its social, economic, and environmental value to the destination (Knollenberg, 2021). The discourse on food tourism also embraces “ethical and sustainable values” constructed on various aspects of local contexts such as authenticity, local products and culture (UNWTO, 2012:5; see also Hiamey et al., 2020). Consumption of local food by tourists “is a sociocultural experience” (Hiamey et al., 2020: 193). Food thus serves to attract tourists and enhance their experiences at a destination while at the same time benefiting local economies and promoting sustainable development through the use of local resources.

Food tourism includes many types of food. Besides feeding the local population, street food is consumed by tourists (Chatibura, 2021; İrigüler & Öztürk, 2016). While some tourists prefer formal restaurants “others may simply prefer street food” that fulfils their desire for new experiences (İrigüler & Öztürk, 2016: 49; see also Cifci et al., 2021; Yuen May et al., 2021: 2). Tourists are also attracted by the novelty of street food (Yuen May et al., 2021; Chatibura, 2021) and the new and memorable experiences it offers (Cifci et al., 2021). The intentions of tourists are two fold, to eat and taste unique food and the experience with the uniqueness deriving from the context.

Local food serves to augment “the brand of the local community” as a tourist attraction, building local pride and creating employment opportunities for local people (Mnguni & Giampiccoli, 2015). Given its unique characteristics, street food differentiates tourism products in each locality, making each destination unique and contributing to its image and attractiveness (Cifci et al., 2021; see also İrigüler & Öztürk, 2016; Yuen May et al., 2021). Street food is common in many developing countries “where the underlying marketing concept

involves highlighting food varieties, affordable prices, convenience, and easy accessibility” (Mohamad et al., 2021:3). In countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, authorities promote the diversification of street food as a way to bring local cultural vibrancy and making places tourist attractions (Torres Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017). Bangkok has been described as “the most fascinating culinary phenomena in the gourmet world”, with close to 217 varieties of street foods (Chatibura, 2021:419). In Penang, Malaysia, street food is the main tourist attraction (Mohamad et al., 2021).

Given street food’s potential as a tourist attraction, it is not surprising that many countries are nowadays conscious of its attractiveness as they promote it in various ways such as at conferences and festivals (Chatibura, 2021; see also İrigüler & Öztürk, 2016). Street food is also now recognised by many governments as important. In Bangkok, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) efficiently depicts street food as one of the city’s tourist attractions (Chatibura, 2021). Another example is Malaysia, where street food is attached to local culture, it contributes to attract tourists and the government has permitted the presence of “night food streets” (Choon Loong, 2012:41). However, it is rightly argued that “it’s necessary to increase public and tourist confidence in street food safety to encourage sales. Street food stalls or shops can then be turned into attractive places for tourists. Government intervention and local authority support should be enforced so that the street food industry is given the official approval and recognition that it deserves” (İrigüler & Öztürk 2016:50).

Characteristics of street vendors are also changing. In modern times, in addition to uneducated and poor vendors, there are “qualified new graduates who live in countries with limited job offers or suffer from economic crisis; or unemployed professionals due to a downsizing in their previous jobs” (İrigüler & Öztürk, 2016:51). In some destination hawkers are regarded as tourist resource and food street vendors contribute to attract tourists by creating cultural vibrancy of the place where they sell food (Privitera & Nesci, 2015; see also Chatibura, 2021). When vendors are knowledgeable about their food products, street food can be used as an effective marketing tool (Bellia et al., 2016). The greater variety of people involved in supplying street food can also spread its consumption to different categories of people while, at the same time, contributing to the solidification and embedding of street food in specific social contexts.

Therefore, street food goes beyond ‘food’ as a nutritional act, with many other aspects attached to it. It is an essential component in local community development and well-being. Street food can be understood in relation to the ‘urban creative-food economy’ linked to speciality, ethnic, organic and fresh products and, while this is associated with urban elitism, it can also contribute to sustainable development and the well-being of people (Fusté-Forné, 2021). It offers opportunities to earn an income (especially for women) and to develop business skills (WHO, 1996). Street food is an important element of the food service industry (Hiamey et al., 2020) and food tourism and street food add value to the local economic, social, environmental and cultural context (Cifciet al., 2021; Giampiccoli et al., 2020; Torres Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017; Winarno & Allain, 1991). Examples from Asia illustrate that street food tourism can promote community development and it is predicted that in the future the Thailand street food sector will continue to increase (Torres Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017).

Defining street food tourism

While a number of definitions have been proposed of food tourism and street food, a precise definition of *Street Food Tourism* seems not to be present. Food tourism is described as “an experiential trip to a gastronomic region, for recreational or entertainment purposes, which

includes visits to primary and secondary producers of food, gastronomic festivals, food fairs, events, farmers' markets, cooking shows and demonstrations, tastings of quality food products or any tourism activity related to food" (from Hall & Sharples, in Fandos Herrera et al., 2012: 6). The World Food Travel Association (WFTA, online) proposes that "Food tourism is the act of traveling for a taste of place in order to get a sense of place." In addition, there is a plethora of 'food tourism' terminology such as "gastronomic tourism, culinary tourism, tasting tourism, gourmet tourism, and food tourism" (Hiamey et al., 2020:193). While the debate continues on terminology (see for example Ellis et al., 2018), "'culinary tourism' generally refers to tourists' cultural experience, and 'gastronomic tourism' concerns the place of food in the culture of the host" (Ellis et al., 2018:253). However, various terms can be used interchangeably and the common denominator is tourists' travelling to places searching for distinctive foods (Hiamey et al., 2020).

The concept of street food was officially recognised at the international level in 1986 when the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) stated that it "describes a wide range of ready-to-eat foods and beverages sold and sometimes prepared in public places, notably streets" (Winarno & Allain, 1991). In 1996, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined street food (or 'street-vended foods') "as foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors in streets and other public places for immediate consumption or consumption at a later time without further processing or preparation. This definition includes fresh fruits and vegetables which are sold outside authorized market areas for immediate consumption" (WHO, 1996:2). The FAO also notes that street food usually reflects the local cultural context and it is present in countless varieties with various characteristics such as diverse ingredients, its location in the street and low cost facilities (Winarno & Allain, 1991).

More recently, street food has been defined as "food prepared by a vendor and sold from an open-air stand, cart, truck, or perhaps a market stall" (Kraig & Taylor Sen, 2013:xix). Street food is usually considered a fast and snack type of food and it is prepared quickly and consumed in the street (Kraig & Taylor Sen, 2013). A characteristic of street food is its unavoidable and necessary connection with local territory, its context, heritage, and traditions. Street food reflects and is connected to the local food culture (İrigüler & Öztürk, 2016). It can be found in a variety of locations (i.e. streets or parks) and different means of transport are used (i.e. various mobile vehicles) (İrigüler & Öztürk, 2016).

It seems realistic to advance that a definition of street food tourism should combine aspects related to food tourism and street food contexts. Based on the above literature and definitions this paper proposes that street food tourism should be defined as follows: Street food tourism involves travel with a specific interest in experiencing, tasting and learning about street food (ready-to-eat food and beverages – including fresh fruit and vegetables) that are part of various socio-economic, cultural and environmental aspects within the local territory and are prepared and/or sold by formal or informal vendors (such as in an open-air stand, cart, food truck, or market stall) in streets and other public places for the benefit of the local population and tourists. Visits to street food festivals or similar events principally dedicated to street food are part of street food tourism.

The 'food' in street food

Street food is connected to the local territory - it is global but connected locally by the use of local ingredients (Privitera & Nesci, 2015). A specific feature is the craft of preparing street food that involves traditional methods and serving equipment that differentiates destinations from one another (Privitera & Nesci, 2015). In this way, street food contributes to maintaining local culinary traditions associated with specific local contexts, thus representing the cultural

authenticity of specific foods, and, thanks to different street food vendors, different recipes (Cifci et al., 2021; Torres Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017).

Kraig and Taylor Sen (2013)'s book sets out the 'basics' of what street food is, where it is cooked and how it is prepared, and where it is sold. It is also valuable as it lists many countries and/or regions' famous street foods, such as Haleem (a type of Porridge from Iran), Hushuur (a type of pastry from Mongolia), Kaiserschmarrn (Dessert Dumplings, Austria), *Phô* (Beef Noodle Soup, Vietnam), and *Pholourie* (Trinidad), to mention but a few. Tinker's (1997) book on street food in developing countries provides various street food recipes. A comprehensive list of street food is impossible, given that there are so many foods, recipes and ingredients.

There is a rich variety of street food around the world such as in the Asian context with street stalls in Korea and eventing markets in Thailand and Taiwan (Gupta et al., 2018). Locally loved street food includes Jerk chicken in Jamaica, bunny chow in South Africa, Pho and banh mi in Vietnam, arepas in Columbia, kachori and samoosa in India, falafel in Lebanon, doughnuts and dried mopani worms in some parts of Africa, taco in Mexico, and kebab in Turkey (Chatibura, 2021; Choi et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2018).

However, local tradition can also be adjusted to local taste and some typical street food undergoes changes or is imported from other places and examples include hot dogs, pizzas, hamburgers, and kebabs. For example, Asian food in Poland is less spicy to be more in tune with local taste (Kowalczyk & Kubal-Czerwińska, 2020). This raises the question of the relationship between street food, globalisation and new trends.

Street food, globalisation and new trends

Street food can embody resistance "to both cultural and economic hegemony..." (Newman & Burnett, 2013:234). Street food can offer opportunities to counteract the hegemony of multinational corporations (Newman & Burnett, 2013). Street food and recipes are linked to local cultural preferences, "providing an alternative to the homogenising tendency of imported foods or multinational chains", and when local ingredients are too expensive, street vendors use cheaper imported inputs to prepare traditional recipes (Newman & Burnett, 2013:234). However, as noted previously, most street food uses locally sourced fresh ingredients. The use of local ingredients and traditional recipes opposes the standardization (Americanization) of global food (Fusté-Forné, 2021; İrigüler & Öztürk, 2016). In this context, street food should not be confused with fast food as street food is normally more authentic and cheaper than conventional formal or chain restaurants. Street food is fast food but with more natural, instead of artificial, ingredients and flavours (Chatibura, 2021).

It should also be recognised that, like other human factors, street food is not static and can change or adjust over time, resulting in the emergence of new, more current street food strategies or approaches. Street food has been reinterpreted around the world and at different times mixing old recipes with more contemporary fashion and foodstuffs (Calloni, 2013). Food trucks, which represent a specific approach to managing the preparation and sale of street food, are growing in popularity and are becoming a vital part of the hospitality sector (Alfiero et al., 2017). In addition to traditional food trucks, recent years witnessed the growth of food truck operators that are more interested in the quality of the food, and selection of ingredients, as well as re-visiting traditional recipes. This has led to the expansion of what is known as the 'Gourmet Food Truck' serving more high-end quality food compared to long-established street food dealers (Alfiero et al., 2017). Resistance to multinational corporations and globalisation is not an inherent feature of street food/food trucks. There is growing debate on whether chain restaurants and multinational corporations should be also be permitted to have food trucks or street carts (Newman & Burnett, 2013).

Street food / street food tourism in South Africa: Current context

The main tourist attractions in Southern Africa are wildlife and the natural landscape; however, countries aim to diversify their tourism products (Chatibura, 2021). South Africa is multicultural and it has a large diversity of food; it is thus well-placed to promote food tourism. Food plays a relevant and crucial role in tourism “and countries such as South Africa see local food and cuisine as a strategy to promote city tourism” that is enhanced by wine and food festivals (Chatibura, 2021:410).

The South African food context is a result of the historical coming together of many groups of people, including black people (Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Venda and so on), and descendants of the Dutch/Afrikaners, Malay, English, Indian, Chinese, and many others (despite the conflict experienced at different times in its history). The fact that the country has 11 official languages speaks volumes. This rich cultural diversity has produced what is called a ‘rainbow cuisine’ (Kraig & Taylor Sen, 2013:304; Mnguni & Giampiccoli, 2015:28). South African foods and recipes include *Potjiekos* (outdoor cooked stew), *Bobotie* (a spicy Malay version of the British Shepherd’s Pie), *Melkert* (milk tart), and ‘pap’ (porridge) made from corn/maize (called mealies in South Africa, also known as *P(h)uthu* (Kraig & Taylor Sen, 2013).

Braai/Shisa nyama (barbeque) is also a favourite in South Africa. *Braai* relates to the “practice by which wood or charcoal is burned in an open fire to grill meat” (Venter et al., 2015:181). It is an important social activity that unites South Africans. The word *braai* comes from the Afrikaans language but it now belongs to all South Africans transcending social and race barriers (Venter et al., 2015). The braai is a (‘the’) national South African pastime and during weekends and holidays is a common occurrence around the country (Meincken, 2009). The term *Shisa nyama* refers to a *braai* that is usually (but not always) held in a township. This term is more common among the black population.

In the South African context, street food is regarded as “foods or beverages that are sold by the informal sector”. It is usually cheaper than formal fast food and it is sold from temporary stands in busy urban and rural areas (Kraig & Taylor Sen, 2013; Steyn et al., 2011). It should not be confused with fast food that is sold in, and from, formal contexts such as franchised companies (Steyn et al., 2011).

Street food usually falls under the informal sector and it is an important employment sector for the black South African population, especially for woman (Kraig & Taylor Sen, 2013). Many people, especially black members of the population in urban areas, buy street food. In 2013, it was reported that 10% of South Africans buy street food from about 60,000 street food vendors (Kraig & Taylor Sen, 2013). The range of food items is usually limited often including snacks but cooked food is also regularly sold (Steyn et al., 2011). Kraig and Taylor Sen (2013) identify a variety of South Africa street foods and their different origins, such as *Walkie-Talkies*, *Amanqina*, *Samoosas* and *Braai/Shisa nyama*.

Steyn et al. (2011) note that the most frequently available street food in Mpumalanga (one South Africa’s nine provinces) is fried potato chips, kotas and vetkoek. Martins (2006:21) notes that, in Gauteng Province, meat and the traditional South African porridge (Maizemeal porridge) “were sold by 172 or 86.0% of ... 200 vendors” contributing 64.9% of total sales. The remaining income was from other products such as tea, vetkoek, bread, and eggs. Kok and Balkaran’s (2014) research in Durban (KwaZulu-Natal Province) indicates that common street foods for sale include, amongst numerous other South African food, beef curry, vetkoek, fried wors, fried beef and fried chicken.

While it has been noted that street food offers an available source of food for the poor (Steyn et al., 2011), current trends have resulted in it also becoming a tourist attraction. Various websites write about street food within the context of tourism (thus street food tourism) in

South Africa, thereby highlighting its potential ‘new’ role in the country. For example, the locally popular *Braai/Shisa nyama* is presented as a tourist attraction on South African and international websites. *Shisa nyama* in South Africa has an important social and tourism attraction role of (see SAT, n.d.). The BBC Good Food website (Best, n.d.) also proposes *Shisa nyama* as an authentic tourism attraction linked to the local context. Again, a UK travel agency (Distant Journeys, 2018) dedicates a page to South African street food listing food such as Biltong (thinly-sliced, air-dried meat), Amagwinya or vetkoek (deep-fried dough dumplings) and of course the ubiquitous Braai. Writing on India’s TravelTriangle website, Ghangas (n.d.) observes that South Africa has “the most affordable street food,” adding that foodie travelers can discover delightful food around South Africa. The author (Ghangas, n.d.) lists the following street food: “Bunny Chow, Amagwinya, Walkie Talkie, Johnny’s Roti, Smiley (sheep head), Boerewors [...] Biltong, Kota, Boerie rolls.”

Efforts are also being made to popularise South African street food among an international audience via television. In an article on the Sowetan Live website, in March 2021, Seemela (2021) noted how a new television show is hoping to document the otherwise globally under-represented South African Street food. Specific locations also showcase South African street food as a tourist attraction such as in Plettenberg Bay in the Western Cape Province where street food is highlighted as a tourism attraction in the town’s tourism website (Sebezo, 2019). It adds that, “street food in South Africa has earned its place as an urban heritage delight”, pointing to food such as Walkie Talkie (chicken feet), Smiley (sheep or pig’s head), Bunny Chow and Amagwinya (vetkoek or fried bread with filling) (Sebezo, 2019). Street food tours are also available on well-known international travel/booking websites such as tripadvisor.com, including one focusing on where tourists can “eat from Indian, Bangladeshi, Syrian, African and Pakistani traders” (Eenblond TOURS).

Finally, as noted previously, food trucking has emerged as a new, often ‘gourmet’ street food approach. While street food is cooked and vended in the street or in taxi and railways locations (Nkosi & Tabit 2021) in South Africa, various food trucks “that serve mouth-watering food” (Mlandu, 2016) are operating in major cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town (see a list of food trucks in Emond & Spiro, 2019; Mlandu, 2016). While further research is required on this topic, Mlandu (2016) and Emond and Spiro (2019) note that food trucks offer a variety of dishes from burgers, to pizza and fish. It is also important to highlight that, like traditional offerings, this ‘new’ type of street food needs to be supported, with different support strategies in ‘traditional’ and ‘gourmet’ contexts. Street food markets are another growing phenomenon in South Africa; examples include the Neighbourgoods Market (Johannesburg), Pretoria Boeremark (Pretoria), The Food Market (Durban), Franschhoek Village Market (Franschhoek), and Wild Oats Market (Sedgefield) (Zinhle, 2020). Street food festivals such as the Cape Town festival are also becoming popular (however, the COVID-19 pandemic has put a damper on such events).

In summary, street food tourism in South Africa is entrenched in the country’s multicultural heritage from which it derives many recipes and dishes. It is of economic and social value to many people, especially disadvantaged individuals, whom it enables to earn an income or to purchase an affordable meal. Beyond this, as reflected on local and international websites, street food is, indeed, a tourist attraction that it is therefore possible to speak of street food tourism in South Africa. Tourists are attracted by the food varieties, convenience and its ubiquitous presence on the streets. At the same time, in line with international trends, South African street food is evolving to include food trucks and gourmet food which attract tourists. Based on the above the following propositions are offered to enhance the development of street food tourism:

- Train street food sellers on food safety, hygiene, and food handling. This is an intervention that should principally be undertaken by government department(s) that deal with Occupational Health and Safety. Universities could also have an important role through their Hospitality and/or Food Departments appointed to do so to ensure that these enterprises practice safe hygiene (Non-Governmental Organizations could also assist in various aspects). Street food vendors should be trained in various aspects of hygiene and food handling and a certificate should be awarded so as to confirm that the vendor can work as a street food seller.
- Ensure that safe cooking methods and equipment are utilised. This function should be monitored by government especially as a focus of the Unit that deals with hygiene or a State owned unit that supports small enterprises could take up this mandate to supply appropriate equipment or grants and loans to access appropriate equipment. Regular checking of street food cooking methods, facilities and equipment should be monitored to ensure street food safety.
- Train street food vendors to enhance their cooking skills and capacity. As far as possible, recipes ideally should link to local heritage and traditions. Training should be undertaken by a government agency, state-owned enterprise or university department of hospitality, catering or food. The aim should be to support the training of small businesses. The emphasis should be to train street vendors to maintain as much as possible the ‘authenticity’ of local recipes (local heritage). Local recipes are fundamental because that is what tourists usually want to taste, not ‘foreign’ recipes. While the maintenance of local recipes and traditions should be the priority the development of new/updated versions of local recipes that still remain closely associated with tradition should be allowed and, in fact, pursued.
- Establish specific streets/squares/small neighbourhoods as street food tourism areas (in this context, street food vendors should be organised, although this should not be rigid and should accommodate the historical location of street food vendors on the streets). The establishment of specific urban (or suburban) spaces dedicated to street food will become a specific tourist attraction (tourist will easily locate street food vendors’ locations because they will become important tourist sport of the city). This will enable those agencies who provide information to tourists to channel them to some designated areas where street food vendors are concentrated. Scattered street food sellers should not disappear but, when there are specific areas designated to them, they can enhance their visibility and relevance in the tourism sector and the local economy because greater number of tourists can find them.
- Only licensed/trained street food vendors should be allowed to trade in specific tourist areas (with licenses and with training being free and prioritising disadvantaged sections of the population). Over time, all street vendors (also outside street food specific designated areas) should be trained and licensed. Training and licensing (certification) should be compulsory (but free of cost). It is important to be sure that street food vendors operate with given rules and regulations on occupational health, hygiene and safety. The support to disadvantaged people is deliberate for purposes of their economic empowerment.
- Control the types of food sold in order to maintain the connection with the local heritage and traditional food to avoid the McDonaldisation process that standardises global food. This should be done to ensure that an authentic experience of local cuisines are served to visiting tourists. This issue go together with the training in skills and capacity (see above point). Monitoring of street food on sale should be implemented to regularly control street food seller’s types of food and recipes. It is important to avoid the McDonaldisation process that standardizes global food as this will favor the loss of local food heritage and also the decrease attractiveness of the street food as a tourism attraction.

- Promote healthier street food. Association or specific University departments could collaborate with street food vendors to improve the recipes from a health perspective (while maintain tradition). This will enhance the value and image of the sold street food.
- Promote street food festivals – proclaim a month of the year a street food tourism month. Government and other local organizations should favor the establishments of events/festivals related to street food. This should be done to ensure to celebrate local food and a celebration will rekindle the local heritage and the value it adds to the economy. These events will also have the potential to attract tourists to the area.
- Encourage and assist traditional street food vendors through financial, marketing and other strategies. Support interventions should include financial and marketing, besides training. This should include all businesses support initiatives such as book-keeping and costing. Thus, a specific range of policies and interventions should be made to assist and encourage street food businesses to formalize, ameliorate and expand themselves.
- Encourage and assist the new food trucks movement (both traditional and gourmet) through financial, marketing and other strategies. Food trucks should also be assisted to adhere to local rules and regulations. The food truck movement is rapidly expanding in many part of the world and it is important to consider it as important food/food tourism sector and, therefore, all government support should be provided to them. Compliance is important for the safety and hygiene of the sold products.
- Encourage university involvement in projects and training related to street food (see Mnguni & Giampiccoli, 2015), that could contribute to the valorisation and indigenisation of street food, but with a more contemporary approach to recipes. Universities (specifically the departments related to tourism, hospitality, catering, food and nutrition) should be the conduit through which training and research should be undertaken to support street food businesses and at the same time street food tourism as an avenue for job creation and income generation.

While, in general, within the constraints of rules and regulations, street food vendors should be allowed to work everywhere specific street food areas (such as road, street, square or neighbourhood) should also be developed. Specific facilities and features should be provided to promote street food businesses that will attract locals and tourists alike. This would enhance the contribution of street food to the local economy and further enhance its role as a tourist attraction. This means that a comprehensive, inclusive approach is called for to inform both policy and practice. Government should value and recognise street food (and thus street food tourism), and regulate it where necessary for the safety of consumers (locals and tourists) (on similar issues see also Privitera & Nesci 2015).

Conclusion

Street food is linked to the local territory, its culture and heritage and is also very important from a socio-economic perspective, offering employment and an income to many and providing the poor with affordable meals. Beyond this, it is increasingly recognised as important for its value and potential as a tourist attraction. Tourists look to experience different localities and street food is very much part of such an experience. This paper proposed a definition of street food tourism and presented an overview of such tourism globally and in South Africa. It argued that street food tourism benefits the local population as well as tourists. Food tourism is well recognised in South Africa and it reflects the country's multicultural heritage. The paper also offered recommendations to support and grow street food tourism in order to enhance its contribution to economic development. Given the paucity of research on

this phenomenon, it contribute to the knowledge on this tourism subsector and lays the foundation for further research.

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