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Segmentation Based on the Gastronomic Motivations of Tourists: The Case of the Costa Del Sol (Spain)

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Abstract: Tourist destinations increasingly sustain their consolidation, promotion, and development from gastronomy. This research aims to contribute to the scientific literature analyzing the relationship between tourism and gastronomy for the specific case of the Costa del Sol (Spain) from tourists' experiences of different nationalities who have visited the area. The methodology has been based on questionnaires applied to foreign travellers, after the gastronomic tasting of lunch or dinner in typical beach restaurants, called “chiringuitos”. Results show the existence of different segments of tourists based on their attitude towards local cuisine. Three groups have been identified, with different gastronomic predispositions and knowledge, and it is concluded that there are different levels of satisfaction and motivations in tourists, as they are identified in one segment or the other.

Keywords: tourism; gastronomy; Costa del Sol; culture; motivation; “chiringuitos”

1. Introduction

For years, the Costa del Sol has become a brand in a certain way within international tourism. Relevant factors such as climate, environment, and lifestyle, as well as local gastronomy, with its own identity, play in its favor to become the tourist destination par excellence in the South of Spain [1]. Not in vain, tourist-flow in Andalusia shows an apparent increase in recent years, reaching maximum levels in 2016 with 28.2 million people visiting [2]. The growing incursion of gastronomic tourism contributes positively as an ambassador of the local culture through its culinary heritage. It is, therefore, a distinctive sector, beyond pure holiday tourism or rest [3], which combines sensations, feelings, and experiences around the memorable moments that food represents. The result is a perfect atmosphere to improve the overall satisfaction of tourists on their trip.

This study observes and analyzes the satisfaction and motivations of tourists visiting the Costa del Sol (Spain). They are attracted by its gastronomy as the primary motivation to choose the destination, also analyzing the sociodemographic profile, satisfaction and motivational variables that make them a participant in this new experiential tourism, and their relation to each other [4]. Therefore, alternative experiences to traditional cultural tourism are researched based mainly on visual perception, with the help and reinforcement of the enjoyment of other senses (gastro-tourism, eno-tourism, oil-tourism). A gastronomic tourist who perceives a complete sensory experience, mainly regarding taste, suggests experiencing a greater fusion with the environment where one travels through food.

Gastronomy is part of the social and cultural heritage of the people [5,6], reflecting a particular lifestyle in different geographical areas. Tourists, especially those who consider culture their primary motivation to visit a particular destination, find gastronomy the necessary reinforcement to understand,

value, and learn from that destination. As postulated by Anderson et al. [7], producers and restorers are called to become active agents to offer unique tourist experiences, as in this case, considering the influence of the Mediterranean Diet (declared Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2010, based mainly on olive oil).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gastronomy–Tourism Relationship

The gastronomy–tourism binomial increases its relationship and importance in this 21st century. Research on the matter have doubled in the last ten years, and numerous studies and analyses can be found in the scientific literature [8,9]. From its origin, the terminology to refer to this modality of tourism has admitted expressions such as “gastronomic tourism”, “culinary tourism”, or “eno-gastronomic tourism” [10–12]. All these terms express the action of knowing other cultures through its typical food to obtain a unique and memorable gastronomic experience [13]. That moment becomes an essential element of attraction [14], being one of the major reasons for some tourists to visit some destinations, and marking three stages in the development of the relationship between gastronomy and tourism [15].

Undoubtedly, this broad and growing literary heritage focuses on the importance of the role played by food in the choice of a tourist destination, and, thus, highlights investigations such as: (a) the study of the changes in perception and preferences that the gastronomic experience of the visited place provokes in the tourist [16–18]; (b) the compilation of specialists’ reports carried out by Hjalager and Richard [19], examining the increase of tourist destinations that are requested due to their unique gastronomy; (c) studies on gastronomy led by Hall [20]; (d) Boniface’s work [21], and those by Long [22] regarding the identity and new reality of gastronomic tourism; (e) the contributions of Croce and Perri [23]; (f) the consensus of Lin, Pearson, and Cai [24] on the crucial aspect that gastronomy represents in identity and the construction of a tourist destination brand, and (g) the analysis of the confluence of gastronomy and culture to create tourism experiences, as referred to by Garibaldi and Pozzi [25].

The main relationship between gastronomy and tourism is investigated by Henderson [26] to locate it in different states: empirical observation, analytical methods, specific theory, and field surveys, and to group it in four lines of research: (1) on the behavior and the demand of the tourist in front of the local gastronomic specialties; (2) on the appearance and commercial development of gastronomy as a tourist product; (3) gastronomy as a marketing variable in relation to the manifest preferences of visitors; and (4) gastronomy as an instrument and a variable for the development and transformation of the chosen destination. This last aspect remains particularly sensitive, reinforcing the promotion of cooperation strategies between public and private agents for the development of tourism through its gastronomy [27].

Gastronomy serves as a relevant catalyst to increase and enhance the quality of the tourist experience and to promote a destination [28]. This places it as an added value that improves the competitiveness of each city through its gastronomic image [29].

In line with the literature review, the hypotheses to examine would be the following:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Gastronomy represents a crucial factor in decision making for a tourist destination, based on the different attitudes shown by tourists [30,31].*

2.2. Gastronomy as a Variable for Tourist Segmentation

Aside from its influence on the structure, design, and optimization of appropriate tourism policies, Kivela and Crofts [28] consider the segmentation of tourists visiting a particular place of utmost importance, using gastronomy as an element of affinity and grouping around their similar preferences, needs, interests, or socio-demographic characteristics. To respond to this segmentation, it

is essential to consider three main aspects: (i) tourists' strong gastronomic interest in relation to certain socio-demographic characteristics; (ii) the economic sufficiency of the group that makes the tourist investments of private and public companies profitable for their greater satisfaction; and (iii) tourists' purchase choices for certain food and drink products.

Gastronomy appears in the scientific literature to respond to the segmentation of visitors [28], even in gastronomic markets [32], and festivals [33,34]. McKercher et al. [35] suggests a segmentation theory focused on values and benefits, reinforcing quality experiences to meet the needs of tourists.

Kivela and Crotts [28] use specific questions to define possible categories of visitors to a tourist destination based on prior knowledge about culinary aspects, and the importance, customs, and desire awarded to the gastronomic experience in the place they visit. Using a questionnaire for the categorization of travelers, McKercher et al. [35] propose three aspects to discriminate between gastronomic tourists and others: their consideration as (i) culinary tourists, (ii) testers of a variety of typical dishes, or (iii) as interested in the specific geographic location as a decisive element of choice. They identify five possible groups: non-culinary tourists vs. authentic culinary tourists, disgusted vs. grateful culinary tourists, and possible culinary tourists.

For Thompson and Prideaux [30], the critical thing to segment tourists is centered on the value assigned to experiencing local gastronomy, which can be the main reason for the trip not being taken into account or not representing a specific milestone of it. Based on such a scale, they define tourists as (i) culinary, (ii) undecided, or (iii) indifferent, depending on whether the food and drink experience is important, very important, unimportant, or not relevant at all.

Considering the gastronomic implication in domestic life, Getz and Robinson [36] postulate a simple correlation—the higher the degree of involvement, the higher the level of desire to travel in search of gastronomic experiences, a fact that opens the door to consider new segments in tourist markets considered homogeneous to date, such as friends and family visitors [37].

Bjork and Kauppinen-Raisanen [31], similarly, analyze the role of the gastronomic experience and the tasted product as a sufficient reason to travel, as a decisive element, or as an added and global satisfaction of the trip. They determine three types of visitors; (i) experimenters, whose primary motivation is to gain local culinary experience when traveling; (ii) tasters, for whom local food represents a valuable and positive aspect; and (iii) survivors, for whom the act of eating does not represent an added interest or consideration.

An adaptation of the self-classification model designed by Scott et al. [38] is the basis for the study carried out by Ying et al. [39], through a single question that starts from the basis of considering the gastronomic tourist as one who deliberately consumes local food as a way to experience and understand a destination, being classified by their response in one of the following four predefined categories: (i) non-gastronomic tourist, (ii) casual, (iii) active, and (iv) committed to gastronomy.

2.3. The Motivations towards Gastronomy

According to Fields [40], the type of motivation associated with gastronomic tourism is of vital importance and identifies four possible motivations based on the physiological needs that every traveler must cover, relating, in most cases, to some type of restaurant. These are: physical motivations, directly related to the aforementioned need to feed; interpersonal, which are directly related to the social and communicative nature of people; cultural, which regard the desire for knowledge of other cultures and places; and the motivations of status, focused on the recognition of a particular social prestige or distinction sought. Thus, there are different perspectives, including motivational, to describe what the culinary experience represents in tourism, as it is oriented towards the tourist or the destination [41]. The consideration and final choice of a tourist destination is based in a significant way on the culinary expectations [11].

Tourist behavior regarding the gastronomic experience is analyzed from a double perspective, according to whether or not they show a primary or secondary motivation in their journey to discover new typical dishes and different and unique culinary experiences that increase their knowledge of

gastronomic culture and indigenous traditions [6,7]. The investigations [20,40] clearly define a profile for authentically gastronomic tourists who define themselves as interested in the quality, freshness, and authenticity of the local food, with a high economic income and budget.

Beyond the primary (when the visit has the enjoyment and knowledge of local cuisine as the primary objective) or secondary motivation (when people consider the culinary aspect when planning their trip, but it is not their main drive) evident in some investigations [42–44], there are other recent studies, such as Kim, Eves, and Scarles [45], which speak of up to five gastronomic dimensions: the appeal to the senses, the cultural experience that it represents, the excitement, the interpersonal relationships generated, and finally, health itself. Crespi-Vallona and Dimitrovski [32] consider only three aspects on which to group the motivations of gastronomic tourists: sensory, experiential, and health appeal. López-Guzmán et al. [34] consider three dimensions to segment the motivations under, the criterion of new gastronomic, cultural, and socialization experiences. Anderson et al. [7] distinguish three motivational categories: sensory, cultural, and social.

In line with the literature review, the hypotheses to examine would be the following:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Tourists' attitudes towards gastronomy in their trips condition their culinary motivations, rendering it a heterogeneous element [45–48].*

2.4. Gastronomy and Satisfaction

Gastronomy provides a different and unique way of experiencing a tourist destination [49], which is sought by visitors to increase the level of satisfaction on their trips [50], as an added element to traditional tourism (architecture, landscape, or culture). Ultimate satisfaction, in which the culinary experience will be decisive [31], will be reflected by the joint assessment of the motivations, expectations, and experiences obtained by the tourist [51], where the attributes and the different dimensions of the local gastronomic image perceived by tourists plays a fundamental role [52,53].

Another author who analyzes the close relationship between the culinary experience and the level of satisfaction obtained is Babolian Hendijani [54], who considers the ingredients and products used in the preparation of the dishes (fresh and of quality) as the cultural and gastronomic heritage of the place, and at the same time as a catalyst. Stone et al. [55] conclude that positive culinary experiences on a trip often result in positive memories.

In line with the literature review, the hypotheses to examine would be the following:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *Tourists' experience and overall satisfaction are conditioned by the contribution of the gastronomic experience [31,51].*

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Tourists' culinary motivations significantly influence the final satisfaction degree towards local gastronomy [11,48].*

3. Description of the Geographical Area

Bathed by the Mediterranean Sea, Costa del Sol is in the region of Andalusia, south of Spain, running from east to west along more than 150 km of coastline in the province of Malaga. It owes its name, not in vain, to an average of more than 300 sunny days per year, which, together with exceptional climatic conditions, allow pleasant stays and a unique tourist experience [56]. This temperate and warm climate, which is not exclusive to summer, encourages thousands of visitors to enjoy festivals, fairs, events, and open-air gastronomy at any time of the year.

Highlighting our study on the most representative municipalities of the westernmost coast, data regarding population for the year 2017 shows a number of inhabitants exceeding 500,000, an approximate 31% of the total population of the province of Malaga, as well as gathering the highest percentage of foreign population in the province (57%) and the Community of Andalusia (22%) [57].

As one of the most dynamic areas of Spain from a demographic point of view, economic and social profiles in Costa del Sol have been well adapted and have catapulted tourism as the strategic sector with greater strength and projection in the region, and with it, its linked gastronomic heritage.

The inescapable relationship with the Mediterranean has conditioned its history and its evolution. As in other provinces, many of the typical dishes of the region have their origin in Andalusian cuisine, characterized by the use of local products and its hodgepodge approach, to reinforce and generate new flavors and add new ingredients, to consume vegetables and season meals with garlic, onion, and spices such as pepper, basil, and cumin, in addition to the use of olive oil, which is the fundamental ingredient in the Mediterranean diet (declared Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2010). Thus, the riverside populations of the Mediterranean Sea have followed this set of eating habits for a healthy life, elaborating most of their typical dishes with olive oil at its center, both raw, preserving all its aroma, flavor, texture, and smell, as well as in dressings, stews, roasts, griddles, or fried foods.

Typical dishes on the Costa del Sol, such as the *espeto* of sardines or *pescado frito* (fried fish) cannot be missed. Such is the tradition and cultural heritage, that the *espeto* could swell the General Catalog of the Andalusian Historical Heritage as a benefit and an activity of ethnological interest and become an Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, highlighting the content of different writings of Muslim chroniclers which attest to the consideration of the sardine of the Costa del Sol as one of the most exquisite of all Al-Andalus.

Following a clear evolution of traditional cuisine, there are typical establishments where tasting this local cuisine is common. This research takes a look at the well-known “*chiringuitos*”. These are popular Spanish bars or restaurants, set with typical fisherman, sea, or traditional motifs. They are usually located just at the foot of the beach, open in seasonal or holiday periods, and usually outdoors. Aside from being meeting places for socializing, they have a rich and extensive variety of dishes typical of the Mediterranean diet, and the most well-known culinary offerings are the *espeto* of sardines and *pescado frito*, identified and named as typical dishes known on most occasions by surveyed tourists. The link between cultural heritage and cuisine based on identity is made possible by using a presentation based on the current concept, and increasingly in a *tapa* tendency. This food format is lighter in content and allows for a greater variety of typical dishes [11].

4. Methodology

4.1. Survey Design

The methodology used in this research is based on field work from a sample of tourists visiting the Costa del Sol and tasting typical dishes in the culinary establishments characteristic of the area (the beach restaurants), aiming to know their motivations and levels of satisfaction based on different aspects that influence them, as well as on the concept of local cuisine.

The beach restaurants chosen as survey points respond to a criterion of greater representativeness and distribution, to cover as much of Costa as possible, on the premise that tourists complete the survey once they have enjoyed the service and tasted the dishes, responding from their own experience [51,58]. The survey used was based on previous studies [5,45–48]. The instrument consists of different questions regarding tourism and gastronomy. The questionnaire was distributed in two languages: Spanish and English.

Three large blocks set the questionnaire’s structure. The eight questions in the first block refer to trip characteristics for each tourist; the second block, formed by eight other questions, includes motivational aspects, satisfaction with other dimensions, and general satisfaction with local gastronomy. Finally, the third block contains socio-demographic characteristics, such as sex, age, level of education, or income, among others.

4.2. Data Collection

In the spring of 2017, a pretest of the initial survey was carried out, in which some errors of approach and writing were detected that made it difficult to understand items. After correcting these issues, and before evaluating the questionnaire and its reliability, several interviews were carried out with the innkeepers of the guild to determine the final instrument to distribute in the field work.

The researchers met with several managers and hoteliers that are part of the Costa del Sol Beach Businessmen Association to explain the objectives of the research. Some of them collaborated from their beach restaurants and put the researchers in contact with the rest of the collaborators, aiming to cover as much of the coastline as possible. Twelve survey points of the Costa del Sol were covered during different days, during lunch and dinner, in order to collect the broadest possible tourist profile.

Collaborating surveyors applied the surveys with the University of Córdoba, which were distributed at the different survey points under the supervision of the authors. A total of 604 surveys were conducted during the summer period that covered from June to September 2017. Once filtered, 581 surveys were valid.

Sampling was performed at convenience, that is, people surveyed were those available at a specific place and time [59]. Also, no stratification was carried out by sex, age, education, or other variables, since there were no previous studies that supported any theory in this regard. The rejection rate to the survey was meager and not significant, and in no case was the duration of the survey more than 10 min.

4.3. Sampling and Sampling Error

The specific framework of this research is limited to tourists, national or international, who while visiting the Costa del Sol (Spain), with at least a one day stay, decided to eat at one of the beach restaurants. The number of visitors on the Costa del Sol during June to September 2017 was 2.1 million [60], with the reason or specific objective of their visit to the tourist area being unknown. Although the exact size and characteristics of the reference population are not known, the official hotel occupancy figure published by the INE was taken as a reference to have an approximate universe of study in this investigation, which would yield a sampling error of $\pm 4.00\%$ for a confidence level of 95%, in the case of having opted for a simple random sampling. The convenience design, which is commonly used in this type of research, was devised as follows: once the beach restaurants included in the study were identified, a random design was applied, so that each day, one of them was selected using a random procedure.

4.4. Data Analysis

The statistical program SPSS v.23 was used to carry out the statistical analysis. To assess the reliability and internal consistency of questionnaire responses, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The analysis continued with the application of multivariate techniques for grouping cases, in particular, K-means cluster analysis, to explain the similarity between the questions to the respondents, taking as reference variables knowledge, interest, and motivation for gastronomy when traveling. Some hierarchical clustering techniques suggested the three groups considered, and this was confirmed using, with the k-means algorithm, the F test to discriminate between g and $g + 1$ groups based on the reduction of variability in the residual sum of squares before and after the union of two candidate clusters to be considered. Once the segmentation was carried out, from the groups obtained, descriptive measures and association measures were calculated to analyze possible patterns of association between variables from the contingency tables. Hypothesis contrasts were also applied on means and variances (ANOVA and Welch) to detect if the means differ in the different segments obtained.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Group Segmentation

A total of 581 valid surveys were obtained among the 604 distributed to tourists at different points, once their gastronomic experience was over, from June to September 2017. Among the total tourists analyzed, gender parity was almost reached (47.7% men and 52.3% women), with an age between 40 and 59 years old in 47.5% cases. The sociodemographic data highlights the main occupations as private sector (49.9%), followed by public sector (22.6%) and retired (12.2%), with most having a university degree (48.8%); 65% had a medium-high level of disposable household income over €2000, and more than 39% was over €3000, coming from thirty different countries, leading with Spain and the United Kingdom (both with 32.8%), followed by the Netherlands (7.6%), Norway (5.8%), Sweden (5.6%), and others. The top three leading cities were London (8.4%), Madrid (6.4%), and Córdoba (3.8%).

Focusing attention on their greater or lesser interest in gastronomy and the different dimensions of satisfaction, and in order to characterize and analyze it, tourists surveyed were asked about the importance of gastronomy in their trips according to four aspects, three of them in line with the model proposed by Bjork and Kauppinen-Raisanen [31], as well as aspects that makeup satisfaction. In the first case, by calculating Cronbach's alpha (0.711), both the internal consistency of data and the reliability of the scale are shown.

Thus, cluster analysis for segmentation of tourists surveyed is part of the multivariate techniques that statistics offer to classify sets of individuals into homogeneous groups. Mainly it differs from the discriminant analysis in that the groups are not known previously, in the former, while the opposite is true, in the later, and it is a question of identifying the dimension with which the available variables discriminate those groups and can be used to classify individuals in given groups [61]. That is why cluster analysis is chosen as a multivariate technique to be applied, and the k-means non-hierarchical method in particular: it is, according to the literature reviewed, the most usual method in this type of gastronomic tourism study [34]. This technique allows individuals to be grouped according to their level of knowledge and interest in gastronomy and their consideration of gastronomic tourism as a primary or secondary objective when they are travelling, without considering that other particular socio-demographic characteristics provide a better segmentation than obtained in this research.

Socio-demographic characteristics, referred to previously for total samples, are maintained for the three groups identified when they are analyzed individually, obtaining slight deviations.

Table 1 shows the characterization of the clusters obtained from the means of items that quantify gastronomy's importance in respondents' trips. From the ANOVA, unequal means are corroborated for each group detected. This analysis does not allow specifying where the detected differences are found. To know which pairs of means are significantly different, post-hoc tests were carried out. In order to make these comparisons, it cannot be assumed that the population variances are equal, since the Levene test limit value was obtained as 0.05 in the first and third items, thus rejecting the equality of variances.

The application of ANOVA models is based on compliance, with the hypothesis of normality and homoscedasticity of their errors. As it is not possible to assume that the variances are the same, the application of the Welch test is used as an alternative (Table 2). The *p*-values in all cases are less than 0.05, so the hypothesis of equality of means of the different items between each of the established groups is rejected, concluding that the means of these motivational variables is different in each group.

Table 1 shows the sample distribution in the 3 clusters. Cluster 1 gathers 28% of respondents, which include those who score lower on the items that measure whether gastronomy is the objective of the trip, despite having a high gastronomic knowledge. This segment will be called "*Uninterested*", representing a tourist who does not have gastronomy among their travel objectives. The second cluster represents 23.2% of the sample and is characterized by having the lowest levels and knowledge of gastronomy, and will be called "*Indifferent*". Finally, 45% of the surveyed tourists form the third

cluster, which shows the highest scores in the four items, so it identifies a group with high interest and knowledge of gastronomy and which includes this aspect as a primary or secondary objective of the trip. The latter will be called “*Motivated*.” As in other investigations [30,31], the first hypothesis of this research is contrasted with the results obtained: tourists show different attitudes towards gastronomy as a variable of interest and a decision in their trips (H1).

To ensure the validity of this conclusion, and due to the restrictions imposed by the application of the ANOVA, the Levene test was applied, the results of which are shown in Table 2, and show heteroscedasticity in the variances of two of the four items analyzed. This leads to applying the Welch test for mean comparison in the different groups analyzed, which in this case confirms hypothesis 1 when rejecting the equality of means.

Table 1. Cluster characterization of means of questions about knowledge and interest in gastronomy.

Interest and Knowledge in Gastronomy	ANOVA				
	Uninterested 28%	Indifferent 23.2%	Motivated 45%	F	p-Value
You have good knowledge of food and cuisine in general	4.07 *	2.74 *	4.5 *	352.409	<0.001
You are interested in food and cuisine in general	4.19 *	2.95 *	4.69 *	389.459	<0.001
You have made trips where the main aim was to experience the local cuisine of your destination	2.11 *	2.67 *	4.12 *	258.343	<0.001
You have made trips where a secondary aim was to experience the local cuisine of your destination	2.49 *	2.99 *	4.06 *	152.083	<0.001

* The values show significant mean differences in each of the pairs of the three clusters in the post-hoc analysis. In order to contrast the significant differences between the different means, the Games-Howell test was applied. Source: Own elaboration.

Table 2. Robust tests of homogeneity of variances and equality of means.

Interest and Knowledge in Gastronomy	Homocedasticity of Variances (Levene)		Equality of Means (Welch)	
You have good knowledge of food and cuisine in general	12.619	<0.001	295.759	<0.001
You are interested in food and cuisine in general	2085	0.125	299.602	<0.001
You have made trips where the main aim was to experience the local cuisine of your destination	10.660	<0.001	290.132	<0.001
You have made trips where a secondary aim was to experience the local cuisine of your destination	1427	0.241	159.004	<0.001

Source: Own elaboration.

5.2. Gastronomy-Motivation Relationship

With the study of gastronomic tourism, it is essential to refer to the behavior of the visitor. A tourist who does not show a special interest in the gastronomy of a place, and whose primary or secondary objectives are not to know the local cuisine, behaves like a non-resident who has the vital physical need to eat every day. For this type of tourist, the food does not acquire more or less importance than during their day to day lives, regardless of being in a place with a different culinary tradition that entails certain social and nutritional habits. It is very likely that this type of tourist value the service and the price in a specific restaurant more than the quality of the offering. This type of tourist preferentially resorts to fast food restaurants that satisfy their need for food while guaranteeing speed of service, which in most cases is incompatible with the quality of a traditional restaurant.

One of the hypotheses raised in this research, the need to evaluate the reasons for tasting the local cuisine in a specific destination, specifically on the Costa del Sol, is confirmed. These motivations were captured in one of the questions of the survey, with the most representative and relevant ones

being those used in the analysis of the consumption of local culinary products [45–48], considering the specific characteristics of Costa del Sol and its visitors. Finally, five items were selected, measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 being “totally in disagreement” and 5 “totally in agreement”) to quantify the relative importance of some reasons in the decision to consume local cuisine in Costa del Sol.

The results shown in Table 3 mark the degree of motivations of the people surveyed to consume local culinary products. The Cronbach’s α coefficient (0.886) for the five items shows the internal consistency of the elements of the scale. In addition, the aforementioned table can also be deduced as the option “it is a pleasant experience”, postulated as the motivation with the highest mean score. This is followed by the options “it allows me to discover the flavor of local food in its origin” and “allows me to discover something different from what I consume in my region”, which in turn are followed by the option “it is nutritious and healthy”. The motivations “it allows me to advise on local gastronomic experiences to other travelers” and “it offers a unique opportunity to understand the local culture and expand my knowledge” had lower scores.

Table 3. ANOVA of motivations for consuming local gastronomy.

Motivations to Eat the Traditional Food Available on the Costa del Sol	ANOVA					
	Uninterested	Indifferent	Motivated	Total	F	p-Value
It offers a unique opportunity to get to know and to increase my knowledge of the local culture	3.77	3.73	4.24 *	3.98	22.540	<0.001
It allows me to discover the flavours in local food	3.97	3.88	4.31 *	4.11	15.165	<0.001
It allows me to discover something different to the food I usually eat at home	4.01	3.83	4.31 *	4.11	13.288	<0.001
It is a nice experience	4.20	4.17	4.44 *	4.31	6.669	<0.001
It’s nutritious and healthy	3.83	3.95	4.28 *	4.07	14.038	<0.001
It allows me to advise other travellers on gastronomic experiences	3.7	3.75	4.30 *	3.99	24.918	<0.001

* The values show significant mean differences in each of the pairs of the three clusters in the post-hoc analysis. In order to contrast the significant differences between the different means, the Games-Howell test was applied. Source: Own elaboration.

The p -values of the F statistics (Table 3) in all the items is less than 0.05, so the equality of means between the clusters would be rejected. However, if the variances are equal, in order to validate the application of the ANOVA analysis, it is verified once again through the application of the Levene test (Table 4), with the homoscedasticity hypothesis being rejected for three of the items. That is why, again, the Welch test is used as an alternative to the ANOVA F statistic to contrast the equality of means in the motivations of the different segments detected. Thus, in Table 4 it can be observed that for all the motivational variables, the limit probability of the Welch statistic is lower than 0.05, which indicates the existence of statistically significant differences in the means of these for the different segments considered. The motivations, therefore, differ significantly according to the greater or lesser interest in gastronomy. In this regard, the third detected segment, characterized by its high knowledge and interest in gastronomy, is the one that gives the highest score in all the motivational variables considered.

It can be concluded that the gastronomic motivations of tourists visiting a destination, in the case of the Costa del Sol, are not homogeneous [46], and are conditioned by factors such as attitude and interest in gastronomy in their trips (H2). It is evident that the use of gastronomy by tourists is a tool to know the culture of a specific destination in the search for new experiences, while satisfying interpersonal needs.

Table 4. Robust tests of homogeneity of variances and equality of means for motivations.

Motivations to Eat the Traditional Food Available on the Costa del Sol	Homocedasticity of Variances (Levene)		Equality of Means (Welch)	
	F	Sig	t	p-Value
It offers a unique opportunity to get to know and to increase my knowledge of the local culture	3.254	0.039	22.873	<0.001
It allows me to discover the flavours in local food	0.790	0.454	15.055	<0.001
It allows me to discover something different to the food I usually eat at home	1.411	0.245	12.657	<0.001
It is a nice experience	2.018	0.134	6.761	0.001
It's nutritious and healthy	4.959	0.007	13.970	<0.001
It allows me to advise other travellers on gastronomic experiences	4.526	0.011	25.351	<0.001

Source: Own elaboration.

5.3. Gastronomy-Satisfaction Relationship

The degree of satisfaction of the gastronomic tourists of the Costa del Sol is very high, with a score of 4.27 on a Likert scale of 5 points. Specifically, 48.7% of them claim to be fully satisfied (Table 5), most of them belonging to the third established cluster (Motivated). It can be said that there is a certain degree of dependence between certain tourist segments and the level of satisfaction with gastronomy (Gamma coefficient = 0.225, $p < 0.001$), although only 3% of respondents indicate a degree of satisfaction of 2 or less. Gastronomy positively influences the satisfaction and experience of tourists (H3).

Table 5. General satisfaction with gastronomy experience in the Costa del Sol.

Satisfaction	Uninterested	Indifferent	Motivated	TOTAL
1	-	0.5%	0.2%	0.7%
2	0.9%	0.7%	0.7%	2.3%
3	5.2%	5.4%	4.5%	15.1%
4	10.4%	8.6%	14.2%	33.2%
5	12.6%	8.8%	27.3%	48.7%
Total	29.1%	8.8%	27.3%	100%
Mean	4.19	4.01	4.44	4.27

Source: Own elaboration.

Once a high level of tourist satisfaction with the cuisine of Costa del Sol was corroborated, the relationship between this aspect and the motivations to consume food from the local cuisine was analyzed as an essential factor for the strategic planning of tourism [13]. Every one of the six motivational variables considered discriminated significantly with the perception of the degree of satisfaction shown (Table 6). The correspondence between the degree of satisfaction and the motivation is evident in the results of Spearman's questions, as the relationships between motivations and satisfaction are positive, and only in the item "It allows me to discover something different from what I consume in my region" is the coefficient less than 0.5. Regardless, there is a relationship.

It is also necessary to study the level of satisfaction with consideration to the segmentation (Table 7). The positive assessment in any of the established clusters is evident, although it is significantly different in each of the groups according to the knowledge, interest, and objectives towards gastronomy. The impact that this has, both on tourism companies and on public administrations competent in tourism, is clear; the strategies aimed at increasing the satisfaction of the gastronomic tourist in the Costa del Sol to enhance the value of this type of tourism have to start with a detailed analysis of the motivations of those who consume local products, in order to create an offering that responds

to their motivational needs and to influence final satisfaction (H4). These results support the idea that local gastronomy is a fundamental element that contributes to the satisfaction and behavior of tourists [11,48].

Table 6. ANOVA of gastronomic motivational dimensions based on satisfaction level.

Motivations to Eat the Traditional Food Available on the Costa del Sol	ANOVA		
	F	p-Value	Spearman's rho
It offers a unique opportunity to get to know and to increase my knowledge of the local culture	54.265	<0.001	0.536 **
It allows me to discover the flavours in local food	63.087	<0.001	0.573 **
It allows me to discover something different to the food I usually eat at home	37.484	<0.001	0.491 **
It is a nice experience	68.617	<0.001	0.571 **
It's nutritious and healthy	61.759	<0.001	0.573 **
It allows me to advise other travellers on gastronomic experiences	59.903	<0.001	0.583 **

** The correlation is significant at the level 0.01 (bilateral). Source: Own elaboration.

Table 7. Characterization of segments from the variable of gastronomic satisfaction.

Gastronomic Satisfaction by Segments			ANOVA		Homocedasticity of Variances (Levene)		Equality of Means (Welch)	
Uninterested	Indifferent	Motivated	F	p-Value	F	p-Value	t	p-Value
4.19	4.01	4.44*	12.69	0.000	1.215	0.298	11.975	0.000

* The values show significant mean differences in each of the pairs of the three clusters in the post-hoc analysis. In order to contrast the significant differences between the different means, Bonferroni test was applied. Source: Own elaboration.

6. Conclusions

Culture and local gastronomic heritage are currently a differentiating factor of tourist destinations due to the growing culinary interest of the visitors, becoming, for many of them, the primary motivation for tourism in a specific geographical area or region. The analysis of the relationship between tourism and gastronomy of a world-known destination such as the Costa del Sol (Malaga) is here shown. This study shows an incomparable framework to satisfy the traditional need for cultural and patrimonial knowledge with the most current and tendential need to enjoy authentic experiences in a sensory way through food. This is a fundamental aspect in the study of tourist destinations, where the relationship between gastronomy and culture is not indifferent, and becomes relevant if it is considered that almost 50% of tourists surveyed have a university degree. Thus, the “chiringuitos” become authentic cultural ambassadors of the area.

Tourists from the Costa del Sol, from 30 nationalities, had developed different attitudes towards gastronomy, making it a decisive attraction for the tourist development of the site. The type of tourists (“Uninterested”, “Indifferent”, “Motivated”) used in this research has proved empirically valid to segment visitors from a gastronomic perspective and show different culinary interests in the group. The cluster of high gastronomic interest (“Motivated”) is where the knowledge and enjoyment of local food acquires greater importance. This research adds to others and analyzes the effects of gastronomic interest and the behavior of visitors in Costa del Sol.

The culinary motivations of tourists are conditioned by the greater or lesser degree of interest in local cuisine, and this, along with other aspects, is one of the most interesting contributions of this research, showing that surveyed visitors who are more interested in the typical cuisine of Costa del Sol from the motivational point of view use gastronomy with a triple purpose; to acquire a greater cultural knowledge of the destination, to compliment social relations with relatives, friends, and acquaintances, and to have new culinary experiences. As high as the gastronomic interest declared by tourists are, so too are the valuations and the degree of satisfaction experienced in the trip. Thus, among the

main conclusions of this research, is that final satisfaction from tourism experiences is conditioned by local gastronomy.

In addition, a mean figure of 4.27 out of 5 in general satisfaction with gastronomy experiences in the Costa del Sol contributes to the concept of sustainability. The development of local gastronomy in the beach restaurants as a tourist product involves strengthening local economies, and a closer relationship between local food production and tourism, guaranteeing that local and seasonal food and agricultural products (tradition and cultural heritage linked to the “*espeto*” and Mediterranean diet) are more respectful to the environment.

A possible practical application of this research, considering a segmentation of tourists based on declared gastronomic interest and the importance that local gastronomy represents, would affect the hospitality and tourism policies of the area and its tourist agents, public and private, where each type of tourist identified must condition the promotion of specific tourist activities in Costa del Sol that maintain their status as a destination, not only because of the sun and the beach, but also for their local gastronomic culture as a competitive factor. Considering there is also a percentage of visitors who do not know local culinary traditions, economic-financial support measures that allow improvements would be desirable, to modernize and maintain the “*chiringuitos*” as main guarantors of the gastronomic expression of Costa del Sol and its signature, “*espeto*”, which aspires to be recognized as an Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.

Being that gastronomy is a variable for tourist segmentation, the motivations of tourists must be considered to allow the development of a real marketing strategy to ensure healthy growth and sustainability of the local food and gastronomy.

The time period is a primary limitation in this type of research when it fits into a specific summer period (June to September), which is why it would be interesting to extend the analysis to tourists who arrive from the time of Easter to the end October, also checking the impact of seasonality on gastronomic tourism.

Finally, a future line of research would be to know if the typical dishes of the Costa del Sol can be enjoyed in the places of origin of each visitor, then betting on the commercialization and distribution of the culinary products as reinforcement of the experiences in this destination. Additionally, a study on the effectiveness and profitability of a possible separation and remodeling of the dining areas of the “*chiringuitos*” is recommended, looking for the segment of tourists interested in the enjoyment of the local gastronomic experience, adapting commercial and marketing policies to ensure their loyalty and intention to repeat the visit in the future.

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