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The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Food-Related Behaviour of Tourists Visiting Greece

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has changed everyday reality and negatively impacted the global hospitality and tourism sectors. Even though food is an essential component of the tourist experience and the sustainable development of a region, research on the impact of COVID-19 on tourists' food-related behaviour remains scant. By implementing a quantitative approach, data obtained from 847 tourists visiting Greece before or during the pandemic were analysed in order to compare these two periods. Findings indicate that during the pandemic, tourists had a more positive attitude towards food than before the pandemic and were more motivated to consume local food. As a result, they spent more money on food and were keener to taste local food and visit Greek restaurants and taverns. Despite the restrictions, the level of food satisfaction remained the same. It seems that this is a case whereby the risk perceptions created by COVID-19 were eliminated. The demand for quality food experiences was mainly interpreted as a search for culture and consideration of health concerns. Specific trends have been revealed in tourists' food-related behaviours, which bear implications for a smooth transition to new and challenging circumstances. Researchers and food tourism stakeholders must set new goals, develop alternative forms of products and services based on sustainability, and, in general, adopt a new perspective to face future challenges.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic; food behaviour; tourist; sustainability; Greece

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1. Introduction

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in December 2019 brought a new challenge to everyday life globally. As infectious diseases directly impact travel behaviour and choices, the pandemic has severely affected the hospitality and travel sectors [1–4]. The countries most vulnerable were those hosting relatively large numbers of tourists each year, such as Greece [5,6]. Due to the pandemic, the total contribution of travel and tourism to Greece's gross domestic product decreased significantly in 2020, with EUR 14.8 billion compared to EUR 38.1 billion in 2019 [7]. However, destinations with a well-developed tourism industry were more resilient compared to others in the country which are not as well developed [8]. Worth mentioning is that food services are the primary employment providers in the Greek tourism industry. For example, Greece's tourism industry brought in EUR 16 billion in 2018, of which EUR 4 billion were spent on food and drink [9].

Greece implemented various preventive measures in response to the COVID-19 outbreak to ensure safety at holiday destinations. Starting with the cancellation of large events on 23 March 2020, Greece also reacted by adopting strict regulations for international arrivals, requiring the closure of non-essential businesses and restriction of unnecessary mobility. As the number of active COVID-19 cases stabilised in early May 2020, lockdown restrictions gradually eased, and, eventually, mainland transportation started functioning again. Full-season accommodation sites reopened on 1 June, and international arrivals

were permitted on 15 June. Furthermore, Greece established a series of health protocols for all tourism-related providers, such as hotels, restaurants, and archaeological sites, which, among others, limited the number of people who were allowed to be in the same area at any one time and prohibited buffets in hotels and restaurants [10].

Previous experience has shown that tourism as a system has been resilient to external shocks; nevertheless, it is an industry highly vulnerable to crises (e.g., SARS, Ebola, the 2008 global economic crisis, the tsunami of 2004, and the 11 September terrorist attacks); none have had a long-term negative impact [11]. Sigala [12] argued that the COVID-19 pandemic is not only unique in comparison to previous crises, but it could also have a profound structural effect on the sector of tourism. Previous pandemics have been restricted to specific regions, lasted relatively shorter periods, and resulted in fewer infections and deaths [13]. Short- and long-term economic, sociocultural, and environmental pandemic consequences have been reported to affect the tourism industry [14]. As a phenomenon that humanity has never experienced before, this pandemic underlines the need to understand tourism in the social, economic, and political contexts that will determine the future world in which it will operate [11]. Without a doubt, the pandemic revealed important barriers of the tourism industry in managing risks and unpredictability [15].

The pandemic has deeply impacted tourism dynamics, inducing changes in travellers' behaviour that call for fast, innovation-based responses [16]. In addition, holiday decision-making is characterised by a high level of complexity, particularly in times of rapid change and uncertainty [17]. Research has yet to be conducted to clarify whether the underlying theories and understandings have changed due to the 'new normal' world of tourism [18]. The pandemic could lead to "revenge tourism", as a way for visitors to relieve the lockdown fatigue and to make up for missed holidays, resulting in extensive travel in the near and medium term [19]. On the other hand, it stands as an opportunity to rethink tourism for the future [20] and for a degrowth-oriented restart that lays the groundwork for a more sustainable tourism sector [6,19].

Food tourism, or the close relationship between tourism and food, has emerged as a primary research area and can be described as visitors' behaviour motivated by a desire to experience certain foods. As a cultural anthropology concept, food tourism is about the interactions of tourists with a place through the medium of food [21]. Gastronomy is an increasingly important element of the tourism industry, as it represents the local culture through the habits, traditions, and history of the destination [22,23]. Food and gastronomy are crucial factors for the sustainable development of a region [24]. They are recognised as an essential component of the tourist experience, both from an obligatory as well as a symbolic standpoint [25]. Tourists' food choices generate demand for goods that are meaningful in symbolic, social, and economic aspects, enabling individuals to express their identities, preferences, and cultural meanings [26].

Despite studies on COVID-19 from different perspectives, research on the impact of COVID-19 on tourists' food-related behaviour remains scant, not only in Greece but worldwide. In order to adapt to the new circumstances and to develop an appropriate tourism promotion strategy, the new opportunities must be identified and evaluated against those that existed before [1,27,28]. The academic literature can assist tourism in reorienting itself by investigating the way in which the pandemic affects tourists' consumer behaviour [29]. To fill this research gap, the main purpose of this study was to compare tourists' food consumption behaviour before COVID-19 against that during the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to accomplish this aim, we examined the way in which the pandemic interacted with certain key features of tourists' food-related behaviour [30], namely the dining facilities they preferred, the consumption of local food, and their attitudes, motivations, and satisfaction by the food they consumed during their visit to Greece.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Dining Facilities and Local Food

Dining facilities are a core tourist product; food outlets may be geared primarily toward tourists or are highly dependent on them [31]. Local food and, consequently, dining in traditional eating venues are essential and integral to the tourist experience. Tourists' lifestyles, travel behaviours, and patterns have shifted due to pandemic-contextual factors such as lockdown conditions and personal characteristics such as anxiety about infection with COVID-19 [32]. These factors have all contributed to the gradual decline in consumption at food and beverage facilities [33]. To this end, the frequency of eating out has decreased, and the frequency of at-home cooking has increased. The restaurant industry was severely affected [11]. Due to restrictive health protocols, food delicacies attractions cannot attract as many visitors as they once did [2]. Social distancing and the fact that people avoid eating in crowded places have decreased interest in gastronomic tourism [28]. A study in the USA found that the majority of customers are unwilling to dine in restaurants [34], and another study from Pakistan found that the fear of COVID-19 reduces tourists' intention to eat local food [35]. At the same time, however, the pandemic has triggered sustainability consciousness, and many people have become willing to spend more for healthier and environmentally friendly food [36]. Though previous research demonstrated the importance of the social context, for instance, in a restaurant [37], in the post-pandemic era, social proximity seems to be an undesirable feature of the customer experience [38]. Safety assurance is the most critical aspect of service quality for international travellers [39]. According to the perceived risk theory, when multiple types (e.g., physical, health, social, psychological) of defined risk are present, uncertainty and perceived consequences crucially affect consumers' decision-making and behaviour [40,41]. This is especially important as tourists may visit a variety of dining facilities (e.g., indoor or outdoor, traditional, or international), depending not only on their food preferences but also on the assurance offered against pandemic-related threats.

To this end, the following hypotheses were formulated to be confirmed:

Hypothesis 1a (H1a). *The pandemic significantly affected the rate at which tourists frequented dining facilities at their place of stay.*

Hypothesis 1b (H1b). *The pandemic significantly affected the preparation of meals by the tourists themselves.*

Hypothesis 1c (H1c). *The pandemic significantly affected the rate at which tourists frequented Greek restaurants and tavernas.*

Hypothesis 1d (H1d). *The pandemic significantly affected the consumption of fast food and street food by tourists.*

Hypothesis 1e (H1e). *The pandemic significantly affected the rate at which tourists frequented restaurants serving international cuisine.*

Hypothesis 1f (H1f). *The pandemic significantly affected the rate at which tourists frequented snack bars, coffee houses, and beach bars.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *The pandemic significantly affected the consumption of local food by tourists.*

2.2. Attitudes toward Food

Tourists' attitudes towards food vary according to their particular interests regarding food and eating and their desire to seek new experiences while travelling [42,43]. Individual lifestyle orientations (e.g., existential, experimental, diversionary, or recreational) influence these interests and desires [42]. It is generally accepted that gastronomy contributes to the

level of traveller satisfaction and influences travel behaviour. Although most travellers have a casual approach to food, they greatly appreciate the culinary aspects of a destination [43]. Local cuisine is a significant tourist attraction and an integral part of the tourist experience, not just for those with particular interests but also for those with a more casual attitude toward food [31]. Some travellers are passionate about culinary experiences, as their gastronomic expectations act as a trigger for destination selection [44]. In this study, a combination of the food-attitude models proposed by Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen [45] and Pérez-Priego et al. [46] was implemented. These models consider one's predisposition and knowledge of local food to classify tourists into the following three types: 'Experiencers' or 'motivated' travellers are those who travel to gain food experiences, have a strong interest and knowledge of gastronomy, and include this aspect as a primary or secondary goal of the trip. 'Enjoyers' or the 'indifferent' are those with a positive attitude toward food but without such high levels of interest in and knowledge of gastronomy. 'Survivors' or the 'uninterested' are those with very little or no interest in food and without gastronomic experiences among their travel objectives.

Based on the theory of planned behaviour, people's attitudes affect their intentions and their actual behaviour [47]. Due to the pandemic, the intention to consume local food is a paradoxical combination of related motivations and health risks [41]. Godovykh et al. [48] demonstrated substantial causal relationships between COVID-19 cases or mortalities, word of mouth for positive or negative sentiment toward hospitality, and tourists' pre-trip perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural intentions.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is derived:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *The pandemic significantly affected tourists' attitudes toward food.*

2.3. Food Motivations

Food motivational factors have been acknowledged as one of the most critical constructs influencing tourists' food choices and eating behaviours [25,49,50]. In this research, five motivational dimensions of local food consumption were investigated, namely cultural experience, sensory appeal, excitement, interpersonal relations, and consideration for health concerns [50]. Consumption of local food can be viewed as a cultural experience, facilitating contact with authentic aspects and awareness of the destination's culture [49,51,52]. Sensory attributes, such as the odour, flavour, taste, and visual image of food, can be critical in determining food appreciation and influencing food choices [22,49]. Local food consumption can be driven by the desire to escape from routine and have an exciting experience and interpersonal relations, specifically, the need to spend time with family or friends (togetherness), and prestige [49,51]. Local produce is considered by many to be fresh and highly nutritious, thus meeting one's concerns for well-being and health [49,51]. Additionally, food-related personality traits have been identified as a major factor influencing the consumption of local food [25,49,53]. Neophilia, i.e., the inclination to seek out novel and unfamiliar foods, may explain why visitors seek new culinary experiences while on vacation [53,54].

Food motivations and behaviours may go through a transformation process due to the pandemic [55–57]; consumers' desire to consume safe food has elevated the importance of cleanliness and hygiene. In a study conducted in New Zealand during the pandemic, potential trends in food tourism, such as 'valuing local and locals' and 'food for well-being', were identified [58]. The significance of pleasure-seeking has been marginalised [55]. On the other hand, escaping the pandemic's pressure and engaging in novel and non-routine activities is more critical than ever [57]. According to Cheung et al. [55], tourists' primary psychological needs are subject to different causal explanations depending on the pandemic phase. Before the pandemic, socialising and interpersonal needs were met through interactions with locals, strengthening bonds with family and friends, and maintaining a sense of belonging. Family needs are critical both for meeting a family's vacation needs and fulfilling one's own family roles to meet the expectations of family

members. During the pandemic, tourists also expressed relatedness and interpersonal needs for a sense of belonging and socialising because of a long period of isolation and social distancing [55].

Hence, we postulate the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4a (H4a). *The pandemic significantly affected tourists' cultural motivations concerning the consumption of local food.*

Hypothesis 4b (H4b). *The pandemic significantly affected tourists' sensory motivations concerning the consumption of local food.*

Hypothesis 4c (H4c). *The pandemic significantly affected tourists' excitement motivations concerning the consumption of local food.*

Hypothesis 4d (H4d). *The pandemic significantly affected tourists' interpersonal motivations concerning the consumption of local food.*

Hypothesis 4e (H4e). *The pandemic significantly affected tourists' health-concern motivations concerning the consumption of local food.*

Hypothesis 5 (H5). *The pandemic significantly affected tourists' food-related personality traits.*

2.4. Food Satisfaction

Food-related experiences are strongly associated with consumer behaviour [28]; moreover, they are thought to be essential tools in marketing, as gastronomy is a unique way to experience a destination [22]. Visitors often seek to increase their level of satisfaction during their travels, adding gastronomy as an element to the traditional trip elements, i.e., landscape, architecture, or culture [46]. The level of satisfaction during the trip is determined by comparing the products and services that one has received to his/her expectations [59]. Ultimate satisfaction is formed by the joint assessment of the tourist's motivations, expectations, and experiences [60], in which the culinary experience is decisive [28,45]. The various attributes of the local gastronomic image perceived by tourists play a fundamental role. Positive culinary experiences on a trip often lead to positive memories and revisit intentions [61]. According to Madaleno et al. [50], tourism serves as a springboard for the promotion of local products in foreign markets; thus, the objective is to determine not only tourists' satisfaction by local food but also the likelihood that they will consume and recommend these products to friends and relatives after their trip.

While making travel plans, tourists seek information from experienced travellers about the destination's safety and risk exposure [62]. Electronic word of mouth positively affects tourist intentions to consume local food [59]. According to Hong et al. [63], due to the pandemic, psychological factors can directly affect satisfaction, highly dependent on the natural and safe experiences associated with hospitality services.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 6 (H6). *The pandemic significantly affected tourists' level of satisfaction by food.*

3. Methodology

3.1. Survey Design

A self-administered online structured questionnaire was designed on the Google Forms platform following a quantitative approach. The questionnaire was based on the literature review presented above and was structured in three basic sections (Appendix A). Section A assessed the respondents' sociodemographic profile through multiple-choice, dichotomous-type, and open-ended questions. Section B focused on respondents' travel characteristics by following similar question types. Additionally, it measured the degree of

tourists' engagement in activities, the type of dining facilities, and local food tasting using Likert-type scales of 1–5, where 1 stood for 'never', 'not at all', or 'strongly disagree', and 5 for 'usually' or 'strongly agree'. Section C gathered information concerning food attitudes, motivations, and satisfaction using Likert-type scales of 1–5, where 1 stood for 'strongly disagree' and 5 for 'strongly agree'.

The questionnaire was available in three languages (Greek, English, and French). It was initially translated from Greek to English, forward and backwards, twice. The same back-translation method was applied to translate the questionnaire from Greek to French. Before the questionnaire was distributed, two academic experts and two tourism professionals refined its content. Additionally, to ensure the quality of the data collected and to eliminate any ambiguous, vague, or unfamiliar concepts, the questionnaire was pre-tested on a convenience sample of 40 people. The pre-test enabled additional minor improvements to be made according to respondents' feedback comments. During the pilot phase, it was detected that very few questions were not easily understood by the respondents, proceeding to revise them. This phase was pivotal in ensuring that the wording, measurement scales, and sequence of questions were clear and understandable to the participants and appropriate for use in this study.

3.2. Data Collection

The questionnaire was linked to Facebook; an invitation message was posted to various pages and groups related to tourists visiting Greece, asking for participation in the survey. To rely on a representative sample, more than 130 Facebook pages regarding Greek tourism and destinations, including more than one million members, were approached for this purpose. Surveys administered on Facebook do not exhibit significant bias with respect to traditionally administered surveys in terms of demographics, psychometrics, or personality attributes. Using Facebook as a survey data collection tool offers a unique digital observatory of human behaviour and great opportunities for conducting large-scale surveys [64]. Additionally, it offers the ability to collect data rapidly in response to research opportunities (at low cost) as well as perform extensive and flexible sample targeting capabilities and conduct research even when sampling frames do not exist or are extremely difficult to access [65]. Nowadays, tourists of all ages increasingly use the internet to search for, seek, and choose their travel destinations prior to departure. They document their travel experiences upon their return, while also sharing them with friends and acquaintances [66]. In times of crisis, social media can keep individuals informed about the current situation and its progress in real-time [27].

The survey took place from July to October 2019 (before the COVID-19 pandemic) and from July to October 2020 (during the COVID-19 pandemic). A non-probabilistic convenience sampling technique was employed to collect the data. This is a common method in this type of tourism research; the people surveyed were those available at a specific time and place [67]. All participants were informed about voluntary participation and assured of their anonymity to reduce social desirability bias. They also gave their consent to the data sharing, completed the questionnaires without receiving any reward, and were fully informed about the study requirements and privacy policy. No stratification was carried out using sociodemographic variables as previous similar studies do not support such a technique. The duration of the survey was approximately 15 min. A total of 877 valid questionnaires were collected, of which 847 were used in the analysis after a data screening process, whereby missing data, unengaged responses, and extreme multivariate outliers were identified.

3.3. Data Analysis

Frequency distributions and descriptive statistics, presented as valid percent, median (M), and interquartile range (IR), were used to evaluate the data. A Pearson's chi-squared test was conducted to determine whether significant differences existed concerning tourists' sociodemographic and travel characteristics before and during the COVID-19 pan-

demic. To check each factor's internal consistency and reliability concerning food attitude, motivations, and satisfaction, a Cronbach's alpha value higher than 0.7 was considered an acceptable value [68]. Scale and subscale scores were calculated by taking the average of the related items.

A normality test was performed on the data before the other statistical tests. Data from the Likert scale were treated as ordinal values [69]. Kolmogorov–Smirnov's test showed that the scale and subscale scores could not provide the assumption of normality. For this reason, nonparametric tests (Mann–Whitney U) were used to compare scores in tourists' activities, dining facilities used, food attitudes, food motivations, and satisfaction before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. When the assumption of normalcy is violated, this test is frequently employed as an alternative to the paired Student's *t*-test. Furthermore, for Likert scale data, the nonparametric statistical methods outperform the parametric ones [69].

Ordinal logistic or linear regression was performed to investigate the associations of factors in the travel period, taking into consideration gender, age group, nationality, length of stay, previous visits, travel companion, and place of stay. Results are presented in the form of odds ratios (OR) or standardised coefficients (β) and a corresponding 95% (lower–higher) confidence interval (CI). The Brant test [70] was used for the proportionality assumption. Statistical significance was defined for p values below 0.05 and was based on two-sided tests. R software (version 4.1.3, R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria) was used for all calculations. R is a language and environment for statistical computing and graphics. It is a GNU project similar to the S language and environment, which was developed at Bell Laboratories (formerly AT & T, now Lucent Technologies, Murray Hill, NJ, United States) by John Chambers and colleagues. R is available as free software under the terms of the Free Software Foundation's GNU General Public License in source code form.

4. Results

Data were derived from a sample of tourists who visited Greece in any one of the two tourist seasons in 2019 and 2020. A total of 877 questionnaires were turned in, of which 430 were valid before COVID-19 (BC), and 417 were valid during COVID-19 (DC). The authors aimed to secure 385 respondents in each period. Based on such a sample size, and assuming an approximate character, if this research had used random sampling, the margin of error for a confidence level of 95% would have been less than ±5%.

4.1. Tourists' Profiles

Participants' sociodemographic characteristics and their distribution are shown in Table 1. Specifically, more female respondents participated during (60.2%) than before the pandemic (52.2%). The respondents were younger (i.e., less than 40 years old) during (74.3%) than before the pandemic (63.9%). The proportions of foreign and Greek tourists participating in the study (BC-DC) were similar; therefore, no analysis according to nationality was undertaken. However, the proportion of participants from European countries was higher during (63.8%) than before the pandemic (45.1%). Proportionally, more respondents held a postgraduate degree (57.2%) and had a relatively stable income (i.e., civil servant, full-time private employee, freelancer, retired) (70.7%) during than before the pandemic (46.2% and 60%, respectively). Respondents reported a very good or excellent financial status more frequently during (26.3%) than before the pandemic (14.4%). The profiles in terms of marital status (BC-DC) were nearly identical.

As shown in Table 2, during the pandemic, respondents avoided overcrowded destinations (e.g., big cities); instead, they visited islands at a higher rate than before the pandemic (62.6% vs. 35.6%). Additionally, during the pandemic, 72.2% of the participants stayed between 4 and 7 nights, as opposed to only 34.7% before the pandemic. Respondents visited familiar destinations at a higher rate during the pandemic than before (45.8% vs. 41.3%). Moreover, they preferred the environment of hotels (51.1%) and travelled with

companions (54.0%) at higher rates compared to their counterparts who travelled before the pandemic (26.7% and 25.4%, respectively).

Table 1. The distribution of the sociodemographic profile in each period.

Variables	Categories	Travel Period		Chi-Squared Tests
		Before COVID-19	During COVID-19	*p*-Value
Gender	Male	47.8%	39.8%	0.019
	Female	52.2%	60.2%	
Age Group	18–30 years old	35.1%	30.3%	<0.001
	31–40 years old	28.8%	44.0%	
	41–50 years old	18.6%	19.2%	
	51–60 years old	12.1%	6.0%	
	>60 years of age	5.3%	0.5%	
Nationality	Foreigner	67.4%	69.5%	0.510
	Greek	32.6%	30.5%	
Nationality (Continent)	Europe (except Greece)	45.1%	63.8%	<0.001
	North America	4.2%	1.4%	
	Central and South America	4.7%	1.0%	
	Asia	10.0%	2.9%	
	Africa	2.6%	0.2%	
	Oceania	0.9%	0.2%	
	Greece	32.6%	30.5%	
Education	Primary school	0.2%	0%	<0.001
	Secondary education	17.8%	9.4%	
	Vocational training	3.5%	3.6%	
	Diploma/Bachelor's degree	38.3%	29.8%	
	Master's degree	32.0%	46.6%	
	PhD	8.2%	10.6%	
Occupation	Student	21.1%	11.4%	<0.001
	Civil servant	19.5%	14.3%	
	Full-time private employee	24.6%	31.1%	
	Part-time private employee	8.7%	12.1%	
	Freelancer	11.0%	24.8%	
	Unemployed	4.7%	3.9%	
	Retired	4.9%	0.5%	
	Homemaker	0.9%	0.5%	
	Other	4.5%	1.5%	
Marital Status	Married	11.8%	18.8%	0.043
	Married with child/children	25.9%	24.2%	
	Never married	56.7%	51.7%	
	Divorced/Separated	5.4%	5.1%	
	Widowed	0.2%	0.2%	
Financial Status	Not good	3.8%	4.4%	<0.001
	Slightly good	27.8%	15.6%	
	Good	54.0%	53.7%	
	Very good	12.7%	24.6%	
	Excellent	1.7%	1.7%	

Note. n = 847. Numbers in columns of travel periods present valid percentages. Categories responsible for violating Chi-Square's test assumptions (frequency less than 5) were excluded from the analysis.

Table 2. The distribution of travel characteristics in each period.

Variables	Categories	Travel Period		Chi-Squared Tests
		Before COVID-19	During COVID-19	*p*-Value
Place of visit	Big cities (Athens, Salonica, Patras)	31.9%	11.3%	<0.001
	Islands	35.6%	62.6%	
	Villages, touristic resorts (mainland)	19.7%	19.4%	
	Other	12.9%	7.0%	
Length of stay	<4 nights	12.4%	5.8%	<0.001
	4–7 nights	34.7%	72.2%	
	8–15 nights	43.9%	15.0%	
	>15 nights	9.0%	7.0%	
Previous visits to the destination	No, this was the 1st time	58.7%	54.2%	<0.001
	Yes, this was the 2nd time	12.4%	22.4%	
	Yes, I have been to that destination more than twice in the past	28.9%	23.4%	
Place of stay in the destination	4–5 stars hotel	11.0%	19.9%	<0.001
	2–3 stars hotel	15.7%	30.2%	
	1 star hotel/hostel/pension	12.6%	4.1%	
	Family or friends' houses	18.0%	10.6%	
	Airbnb or rooms to rent	25.9%	30.2%	
	Camping	11.2%	2.9%	
	Other	5.6%	2.2%	
Travel companion	Alone	22.5%	14.4%	<0.001
	Couple	25.4%	54.0%	
	Family (with kids)	19.6%	10.3%	
	Friends/relatives	32.4%	21.3%	
Travel as a tour group member	Yes	3.0%	1.9%	0.80
	No	97.0%	98.1%	

Note. n = 847. Numbers in columns of travel periods present valid percentages.

To sum up, differences were found ($p < 0.05$) between the two travel periods (BC–DC) in regard to gender, age group, education, occupation, marital status, financial status, place of visit and stay, length of stay, previous visits to the destination, and travel companion. This means that people who travelled to Greece before the pandemic differed from those who travelled during the pandemic in several sociodemographic and travel-related characteristics.

As shown in Table 3, differences ($p < 0.001$) between the two travel periods (BC–DC) were found in regard to participants' engagement in activities while staying in Greece. More specifically, respondents' engagement in food, culinary, or tasting activities was more prevalent during (M = 4) than before the pandemic (M = 3). Additionally, respondents during the pandemic were keener towards resting (M = 4) as opposed to those before (M = 3). On the other hand, respondents during the pandemic did not seek sightseeing, museum, and monument visits (M = 2) as much as those before (M = 3).

Differences ($p < 0.001$) between the two travel periods (BC–DC) were found concerning the portion of the money spent on food by the participants. It is worth mentioning that the total amount of money spent during their trip, including accommodation, transportation, food and entertainment, did not differ ($p = 0.174$) between the two travel periods (BC-DC). However, the amount of money spent on food during the trip did vary ($p < 0.001$). Overall, participants who travelled during the pandemic spent more money on food (M = 36) compared to those before (M = 26). This finding can be related to tourists' engagement in more food, culinary, or tasting activities during the pandemic.

Table 3. Tourists' activity profiles and money spent on food in each period.

Variables	Travel Period				Mann–Whitney U Test
	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		*p*-Value
	Median	Interquartile Range	Median	Interquartile Range	
Resting	3	2	**4**	1	<0.001
Entertainment, nightlife	2	2	2	2	<0.001
Sightseeing, museums, and monuments	**3**	2	2	1	<0.001
Food, culinary, or tasting activities	3	2	**4**	1	<0.001
Adventure—alternative activities	2	1	2	2	0.005
Money spent individually and every day during this trip (in Euros)	70	50	75	50	0.174
Money spent individually and every day on food (in Euros)	20	20	**25**	15	<0.001
% Money for Food	26	21	**36**	13	<0.001

Note. n = 847. The highest value is marked in bold when the difference is statistically significant.

4.2. Dining Facilities and Local Food

As shown in Table 4, differences ($p < 0.001$) between the two travel periods (BC–DC) were found concerning the type of dining facilities used by the respective tourists. Respondents who travelled during the pandemic reported preparing their meals at their place of stay (23.1%) and dining in Greek restaurants and tavernas (58.3%) at a higher frequency (i.e., usually or frequently) compared to those who travelled before (13.1% and 34.1% respectively). On the other hand, respondents' low preference (i.e., never or occasionally) during the pandemic for fast food or street food (77.2%) and snack bars, coffee houses or beach bars (60.4%) was less prevalent than before (55.6% and 54%, respectively).

Table 4. Dining facilities used by tourists in each period.

Variables	Categories	Travel Period		Mann–Whitney U Test	Ordinal Logistic Regression	
		Before COVID-19	During COVID-19	*p*-Value	OR	95% CI
Dining facilities (e.g., hotel restaurant) at the place of stay	Never	29.3%	16.6%	<0.001	1.30	0.91, 1.86
	Occasionally	31.4%	28.1%			
	Sometimes	19.3%	34.9%			
	Frequently	14.0%	14.2%			
	Usually	6.0%	6.3%			
Own preparation of meals at the place of stay	Never	31.7%	27.6%	0.001	2.07 ***	1.41, 3.04
	Occasionally	34.7%	25.7%			
	Sometimes	20.5%	23.7%			
	Frequently	8.2%	14.9%			
	Usually	4.9%	8.2%			
Greek restaurants and tavernas	Never	6.8%	4.3%	<0.001	2.03 ***	1.43, 2.88
	Occasionally	36.1%	14.4%			
	Sometimes	23.1%	23.0%			
	Frequently	23.1%	31.2%			
	Usually	11.0%	27.1%			
Fast food and street food (e.g., pitta gyros, souvlaki, canteens)	Never	18.4%	30.0%	<0.001	0.35 ***	0.23, 0.54
	Occasionally	37.2%	47.2%			
	Sometimes	18.6%	13.4%			
	Frequently	12.3%	7.4%			
	Usually	13.5%	1.9%			
Restaurants serving international cuisine	Never	59.3%	70.9%	<0.001	0.96	0.46, 2.00
	Occasionally	32.9%	23.8%			
	Sometimes	4.2%	2.9%			
	Frequently	2.3%	1.7%			
	Usually	1.2%	0.7%			
Snack bars, coffee houses, beach bars	Never	12.6%	16.6%	0.001	0.67 *	0.47, 0.96
	Occasionally	41.4%	43.8%			
	Sometimes	16.8%	24.3%			
	Frequently	17.5%	12.5%			
	Usually	11.7%	2.9%			

Note. n = 847. Numbers in columns of travel periods present valid percentages. Ordinal logistic regression. Outcome: tourist period. Categories: during COVID-19. * $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$.

The regression analysis confirmed the results of the descriptive analysis, indicating that for respondents during the pandemic, the odds of being "more likely" (i.e., usually or frequently vs. never) to prepare their meals at their place of stay and to dine in Greek restaurants and tavernas are about 2 times more than those before, holding all the other variables constant. In contrast, their likelihood of eating fast food and street food or dining in snack bars, coffee shops, and beach bars is 65% and 33% lower, respectively, than that of those before. In conclusion, the results allow to confirm hypotheses H1b, H1c, H1d, and H1f. On the other hand, hypotheses H1a and H1e are not accepted.

As shown in Table 5, differences were found concerning participants' predilection to taste local food while in Greece ($p < 0.001$) between the two travel periods (BC–DC). During the pandemic, tourists reported eagerness (i.e., agreed or strongly agreed) to taste local food more frequently (84.6%) compared to the frequency before the pandemic (70.4%). The regression analysis confirmed that, holding all the other variables constant, during the pandemic, the odds of being "more likely" (i.e., strongly agree or agree vs. disagree) to taste local food while in Greece was almost 2-fold higher (1.79) than the odds before the pandemic. Thus, hypothesis H2 is also accepted.

Table 5. Tasting of local food by tourists in each period.

Variables	Categories	Travel Period		Mann–Whitney U Test	Ordinal Logistic Regression	
		Before COVID-19	During COVID-19	*p*-Value	OR	95% CI
Tasting of local food during the stay in Greece	Strongly Disagree	1.2%	2.4%	<0.001	1.79 **	1.16, 2.77
	Disagree	6.3%	4.3%			
	Neutral	22.1%	8.7%			
	Agree	44.4%	52.4%			
	Strongly Agree	26.0%	32.2%			

Note. n = 847. Numbers in columns of travel periods present valid percentages. Ordinal logistic regression. Outcome: tourist period. Categories: during COVID-19. ** $p < 0.01$.

4.3. Attitudes toward Food

As shown in Table 6, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the final food attitude scale has a value of 0.878, indicating a significant internal consistency between the scale elements. Differences ($p < 0.001$) detected between the two travel periods (BC–DC) indicate that respondents who travelled during the pandemic had a more positive attitude (M = 4) compared to those who travelled before (M = 3.4). The regression analysis showed that tourists' attitudes toward food during the pandemic was on average 0.15 points higher on a 5-point Likert scale than before, holding all the other variables constant. In conclusion, the results allow to confirm hypothesis H3.

Table 6. Attitudes toward food of tourists in each period.

Variables	Travel Period				Mann–Whitney U Test	Ordinal Logistic Regression		Linear Regression	
	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		*p*-Value				
	Median	IR	Median	IR		OR	95% CI	β	95% CI
Food and eating are important motives for travelling	3	1	**4**	1	<0.001	1.83 ***	1.28, 2.62		
Food and eating experiences are important when choosing a destination	3	2	**4**	1	<0.001	1.82 ***	1.30, 2.56		
Food and eating are important for travel satisfaction	4	0	4	1	<0.001	1.10	0.71, 1.70		
I am interested in food and cuisine in general	4	1	4	0	<0.001	1.78 **	1.19, 2.64		
I have good knowledge of food and cuisine in general	3	1	**4**	1	<0.001	1.65 **	1.15, 2.35		
Attitude Toward Food(Cronbach's Alpha = 0.878)	3.4	1	**4**	4	<0.001			0.15 *	0.03, 0.27

Note. n = 847. The highest value is marked in bold when the difference is statistically significant. Ordinal and linear logistic regression Outcome: tourist period. Categories: during COVID-19. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

4.4. Food Motivations

As shown in Table 7, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values on the final food motivations scales are above 0.7, indicating good internal consistency between the elements of the scales. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of food neophilia is slightly below 0.7, allowing marginal internal consistency. Differences ($p < 0.05$) between the two travel periods (BC–DC) were found concerning food motivations. Respondents during the pandemic were more motivated by cultural experience (M = 4.5), sensory appeal (M = 5), excitement (M = 4), interpersonal relations (M = 4), and health concern (M = 4) compared to those before for cultural experience (M = 4), sensory appeal (M = 4), excitement (M = 3.5), interpersonal relations (M = 3.67), and health concern (M = 3.33). The regression analysis results showed that a tourist's cultural experience and health concern during the pandemic is on average 0.15 points higher on a 5-point Likert scale than before, holding all the other variables constant. On the other hand, no differences between the groups of the two travel periods (BC–DC) were found ($p = 0.071$) for food neophilia; this personality trait does not seem to have been altered during the pandemic. In conclusion, the results allow to confirm hypotheses H4a and H4e. On the other hand, hypotheses H4b, H4c, H4d, and H5 are not accepted.

Table 7. Food motivations of tourists in each period.

Variables	Travel Period				Mann–Whitney U Test	Ordinal Logistic Regression		Linear Regression	
	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		*p*-Value	OR	95% CI	β	95% CI
	Median	IR	Median	IR					
Experiencing local products increases my knowledge about different cultures	4	1.25	4	1	<0.001	1.36	0.84, 2.22		
Tasting local products in an original place is an authentic experience	4	1	4	1	<0.001	1.42	0.85, 2.36		
Cultural Experience (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.898)	4	1	**4.5**	1	<0.001			0.15 *	0.01, 0.28
It is important to me that the local products I eat on holiday look nice and taste good	4	1	**5**	1	0.001	1.32	0.66, 2.64		
Sensory Appeal	4	1	**5**	1	0.001				
Experiencing local products in their original place excites me	4	2	4	1	0.366	1.31	0.87, 1.99		
Tasting local products on holiday helps me to relax	4	1	4	1	0.009	1.17	0.82, 1.68		
Excitement (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.745)	3.5	1	**4**	0.5	0.047			0.03	−0.09, 0.15
Tasting local products enables me to have an enjoyable time with friends/family	4	1	4	0	0.313	0.73	0.48, 1.11		
I like to talk to everybody about my local product experiences	4	1	4	1	0.068	1.24	0.84, 1.81		
I want to give advice about local product experiences to people who want to travel	4	1	4	1	0.001	1.34	0.91, 1.97		
Interpersonal Relation (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.831)	3.67	1	**4**	0.67	0.028			−0.03	−0.14, 0.09
Local products contain a lot of fresh ingredients produced in a local area	4	1	4	0	<0.001	1.54 **	1.04, 2.31		
Local food is nutritious	3	1	**4**	1	<0.001	1.92	1.34, 2.77		
Tasting local food keeps me healthy	3	1	**4**	1	<0.001	1.78 **	1.26, 2.51		
Health Concern (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.876)	3.33	1	**4**	1	<0.001			0.16 *	0.04, 0.28

Table 7. *Cont.*

Variables	Travel Period				Mann–Whitney U Test	Ordinal Logistic Regression		Linear Regression	
	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		*p*-Value	OR	95% CI	β	95% CI
	Median	IR	Median	IR					
I am constantly sampling new and different food products	4	1	4	1	0.076	1.24	0.86, 1.78		
I usually do not avoid food products that I have not tasted before	4	1	4	1	0.242	1.18	0.18, 1.70		
Food Neophilia (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.690)	3.5	1	4	1.5	0.071			0.07	−0.07, 0.20

Note. The highest value is marked in bold when the difference is statistically significant. n = 847. Outcome: tourist period. Categories: during COVID-19. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

4.5. Food Satisfaction

As shown in Table 8, satisfaction concerning the whole travel experience did not differ (p = 0.303) between the two travel periods (BC–DC). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the final food satisfaction was 0.926, indicating a significant internal consistency between the scale elements. Respondents reported almost the same (high) level of satisfaction regarding the foods they tasted (p = 0.001). Generally, regression analysis confirmed this finding, although respondents who travelled during the pandemic seemed "more likely" to eat local food again and to recommend it to friends or relatives. In conclusion, results do not allow to confirm hypothesis H6.

Table 8. Tourists' level of satisfaction by the trip as a whole and by the food tasted.

Variables	Travel Period				Mann–Whitney U Test	Ordinal Logistic Regression		Linear Regression	
	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		*p*-Value				
	Median	IR	Median	IR		OR	95% CI	β	95% CI
I am satisfied with the whole travel experience	4	1	4	1	0.303	1.22	0.57, 2.60		
I am satisfied with the food that I tasted (products and services)	4	0	4	1	0.001	0.87	0.53, 1.42		
I am satisfied with the local food that I tasted	4	1	4	1	<0.001	1.37	0.89, 2.11		
I will eat local food again at this destination	4	2	4	1	0.024	1.83 *	1.15, 2.93		
I will recommend local food to my friends or relatives	4	2	4	0	0.072	1.74 *	1.12, 2.69		
Food Satisfaction (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.926)	4	1.25	4	1	0.001			0.10	−0.01, 0.22

Note. n = 847. Outcome: tourist period. Categories: during COVID-19. * $p < 0.05$.

5. Discussion

This study was conducted during two similar (high season) touristic periods before and during the COVID-19 outbreak. Even though a uniform methodology was applied and participants were recruited from the same pool of population in both travel periods (BC–DC), some critical differences concerning their profiles became evident. More specifically, people who decide to travel and visit touristic destinations during a difficult and complicated time, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have a particular profile; this particularity is reflected in their food-related behaviour [25,49,50,54]. Tourists refrained from overcrowded activities such as sightseeing, museums, and monuments; instead, they preferred resting. The pandemic has raised feelings of fear and anxiety, reducing tourists' desires to participate in outdoor recreational activities [71]. As an exception to this trend, the present survey indicated that tourists participated in food, culinary, or tasting activities, that sometimes may take place in crowded environments. Tourists' food-oriented behaviour during the

pandemic is also witnessed by the fact that they spent more money on food than on any other type of activity. In line with previous research, tourists are willing to spend money to satisfy their needs and feel safe while engaged. The value-for-money aspect is more crucial now than at any other time [6,17].

Our results reveal that when going out to eat, tourists avoided fast-food outlets, snack bars, coffee houses, or beach bars and preferred to prepare their own meals at the place where they stayed. These findings align with previous research supporting that travellers' risk perceptions have increased due to the pandemic [28,41,72]. Ensuring a secluded environment seems to weigh considerably upon tourists' decisions and indicates a strong preference for personal hygiene standards, safety, and privacy during holidays [2]. Assurance of safety and security remains a crucial service-quality dimension and affects tourists' eating patterns and overall physical and mental health [55]. Despite this tendency, in our study, visits to restaurants and Greek taverns were not affected. Tourists not only continued to frequent Greek restaurants [73] but also preferred traditional dining places more frequently compared to prior the pandemic. It is well documented that customers have considerable concerns about the staff, the hygiene, and the cleanliness of the places where they dine [56]; small local restaurants may be viewed as safer places in terms of hygienic regulations. Thus, it has been suggested that consumer expectations regarding food in tourist destinations must be addressed accordingly in order to turn the COVID-19 issue into a benefit [28].

Tourists' attitudes toward food during the pandemic can be characterised as more positive than before the pandemic, because of their increased willingness to experience an authentic cuisine. Gastronomy was also found to impact both the choice of destination and the overall satisfaction from the trip. During the pandemic, tourists were more interested and had better knowledge on food and cuisine. This finding is in accordance with the study by Bernal Escoto et al. [74], who argued that the food industry has largely remained on the positive ground, being less vulnerable to the pandemic for the simple reason that people never cease to eat, albeit with any dietary modifications. Previous research has shown that despite the fact that the pandemic crisis potentially changes tourism landscapes and tourists' preferences and typologies [75], food remains a major motivator in travel and destination choices [57]. This has given hospitality and tourism businesses an opportunity to regain consumer trust by lowering perceived risks and increasing perceived value associated with these barriers [3].

In the context of an improved attitude towards food, during the pandemic, tourists were also motivated to taste local food. Cultural experience and well-being played a vital role in their decision to try local food, while sensory appeal, excitement, and interpersonal relations affected this decision but not so significantly. In line with Tiganis and Tsakiridou [73], taste remains the most critical attribute of local food consumption. Travellers enjoy the consumption of local culture through local dishes. Food not only remains a main 'cultural reference point' but tourists also seem to be even more motivated to learn about local traditions, seeking authentic experiences and a sense of place and identity through food [21,43]. Local food reflects customs and traditions, encourages experiential tourism, and allows tourists to integrate with local communities [76]. Gastronomic tourism is a key element in enhancing destinations in connection with culinary culture [60,77]. Health values have become a primary contributing factor to the evaluation of local food [35,52]. Generally speaking, the pandemic raised the interest for a healthy diet, as reflected, for example, by a higher adherence to the Mediterranean Diet observed in the Spanish population [78]. According to Cheung et al. [55], personal well-being and health have become important concerns for tourists, and this trend will probably continue or even grow after the pandemic. Physical and self-care motivation is critical for those travelling during the pandemic [57]. Because of isolation, social distancing, and travel restrictions, during the pandemic, the interpersonal motivations of tourists, such as family, the sense of belonging and socialising, become predominant. The desire for togetherness creates positive emotions to overcome the crisis with a strong sense of belonging to the community [55]; this

particular segment of tourists is referred to as 'crisis-resistant' because of their willingness to take risks, resist change, and enjoy the destination despite restrictions and threats [79]. This trend may be triggered by the desire to experience novelty [80], relaxation, or social responsibility to support the local economy [81]. During a physical and emotional exhaustion period, it is reasonable for people to want to try new flavours [28]. Thus, differences detected in tourists' food-related behaviours between the two travel periods in the present study could be attributed to a large extent to the particular demographic and personality traits which the people who decided to travel during the pandemic share.

In the present study, tourists expressed similar levels of satisfaction by their food experiences between the two travel periods. It should be noted that tourists' satisfaction by food includes the appreciation of local food, the intention to consume it again at the destination, as well as the willingness to recommend it to friends. Destination satisfaction and loyalty are intrinsically linked [60]; according to Humagain and Singleton [71], positive words from satisfied tourists who have visited a destination during crisis times are critical in attracting new visitors. Positive associations with value, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions outweigh the effects of other negative consequences of pandemic measures, such as activity closures or an insufficient supply of services. When tourists feel satisfied, their fear for disease transmission reduces, allowing for unconstrained experiences with less anxiety [71].

Experiences in tourism may encourage tourists to alter their behaviours in the long run and, eventually, promote societal change [82]. Thus, tourists who choose to eat healthily and behave sustainably during their vacations may find it inspiring to continue doing so when they return home. This inspiration can come from gastronomy tourism professionals who actively design and promote 'green' food offerings and other sustainable practices [83,84]. A few tourism scholars acknowledge the fact that access to a nutritious, sustainable diet is one of the greatest challenges for a better future, and even fewer link food production with tourist consumption and a renewed understanding of sustainability [21,85]. In that sense, there is an excellent opportunity for Greece and other Mediterranean destinations whose cuisines comply with the model of the Mediterranean diet. This model, as a healthy and sustainable dietary pattern [86], confers a positive image to local food and creates opportunities for environmental, social, and economic sustainability [87,88]. The different Mediterranean countries could explore the ways in which the Mediterranean diet can be exploited as a tool to meet their tourists' expectations for tasty, healthy, and authentic food [89].

In 2021, after an extended lockdown period, Greece managed to draw in half of the earnings it did in 2019 [90]. People held on to travelling amidst the mobility restrictions and having to follow strict safety guidelines. While Greece shows signs of resilience [91], academics and food-tourism stakeholders must set new goals and develop alternative forms of products and services based on sustainability to create a new perspective facing future challenges. Now is a good time to consider how food tourism might contribute to a more sustainable future and view the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity to rethink tourism in terms of sustainability and ecological and social justice [3,4,6,83,92]. The world will probably not be the same in this new normal, as the pandemic may spread in many waves, and the recovery situation may continue for years. If the ability to cope with sustainability ambiguity is not established in time, survival will be threatened [92]. Even if the crisis ends soon, we cannot afford to restart from where we left. Just as we currently control people's mobility for health reasons, it could be possible to regulate tourist flows by following sustainability standards even after the COVID-19 crisis has subsided. The integration of various stakeholders in the value chain will allow it to transcend by contributing to the sustainable development of the sector [74]. Gastronomy tourism can be more dynamic and sustainable, with a proactive approach towards 'the new normal' brought by the pandemic [18,28]. It is critical to develop smart and safe tourist and gastronomic destinations that successfully satisfy tourists' needs and provide economic survival during this challenging period. Based on local culture and heritage, experiential tourism may

become part of a vision for local development and branding based on innovation and knowledge [6,93]. Destinations may devise a strategy for offering a diverse range of activities and services. Tourism policymakers could use all possible tools to analyse and profile their potential visitors and attract them to destinations that provide a safe environment [94]. Yeoman and McMahon-Beatte [95] envision food tourism as a collaborative effort between tourists, producers, communities, and local authorities.

6. Conclusions

This research compared and contrasted tourists' food-related behaviours in Greece during and before the pandemic. The findings reveal significant behavioural shifts during the pandemic, as tourists exhibited more positive attitudes towards food and were more motivated to consume local food compared to the period prior to the pandemic. As a consequence, they spent more money on food, were keen to taste local food, and visited Greek restaurants and taverns at higher rates. Moreover, they demanded quality food experiences and, at the same time, minimised the risk perceptions created by COVID-19. In conclusion, compared to before the pandemic, during the pandemic, tourists adopted particular behaviours which are to a greater degree compatible with the principles of sustainable consumption. Thus, this study shows that while compliance with COVID-19 restrictions is critical for tourist satisfaction, destinations should also prioritise tourists' needs for cultural experience, as well as physical and mental well-being.

This research represents progress in food tourism research as, to the best of the authors' knowledge, it is the first attempt to evaluate tourists' food-related intentions depending on the pandemic effects. It provides food-tourism stakeholders with relevant information on how unprecedented circumstances impact tourists' behaviour, allowing them to plan a recovery strategy effectively. Despite its relevant theoretical and practical contributions, a number of limitations should be pointed out. First, this survey relied on self-reported data, which have certain limitations because of retrospective recall or social desirability bias. As such, a mixed-methodological approach including real-time and objective data could be used in future studies and provide for a more robust analysis. Second, the questionnaire was available in three languages (Greek, English, and French); future research could include questionnaires in other languages as well, such as German, Spanish, Italian, and Chinese, in order to secure a more representative sample of visitors. Third, as in this study participants were recruited through Facebook groups and pages, the sample was restricted to people interested in social networking while vacationing. Future studies may consider probability sampling techniques to refine and validate the results. For example, researchers may employ the 'snowball' method (i.e., encourage 'internet friendly' participants to assist their peers, parents, and grandparents take part in web-based surveys). Finally, this survey could be expanded to other popular social media platforms (e.g., YouTube, TripAdvisor, Instagram, and Twitter). Thus, the generalisation of the results should be implemented with caution as the sample is not representative of the entire population of tourists visiting Greece.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Questionnaire (English version).

A1: What is your profile?					
Please select or write in an answer for each question.					
1. What is your Gender?	Male			Female	
2. What is your Age?	18–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	61 or older
3. Write in your nationality					
4. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?	Primary School	Secondary education		Vocational training	
	Diploma/Bachelor degree		Master degree		PhD
5. What is your occupation?	Student	Civil servant	Full-time private employee	Part-time private employee	
	Freelancer	Unemployed	Retired	Homemaker	Other
6. What is your current marital status?	Married	Married with child/children	Never Married	Divorced/Separated	Widowed
7. How would you characterise your current financial status?	Not good	Slightly good	Good	Very good	Excellent
B1: What are the characteristics of this current trip?					
Please select or write in an answer for each question					
1. Write in the place you visited (if you stayed in more than one place, you could write the place where you spent most of your time or the area of your trip).					
2. Write in how many nights you stayed in that place.					
3. Had you visited that destination before in the past?	No, this was the 1st time	Yes, this was the 2nd time	Yes, I have been to that destination more than twice in the past		
4. Where did you stay (most of your time)?	4–5 stars hotel	2–3 stars hotel	1-star hotel/Hostel/Pension		
	Family or friends' house	Airbnb or rooms to rent		Camping	Other
5. Whom did you travel with?	Alone	Couple	Family (with kids)	Friends/relatives	
6. Did you travel as a member of a tour group?	Yes		No		
7. Write in how much money you spent individually and every day during this trip (accommodation, transportation, food, entertainment) (in Euros).					
8. Write in how much money you spent individually and every day on food (in Euros).					
B2. Think of this current trip. How did you spend your time?					
Please indicate your level of frequency with each of these statements.					
	Not at all	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually
1. Resting	1	2	3	4	5
2. Entertainment, nightlife	1	2	3	4	5
3. Sightseeing, museums, and monuments	1	2	3	4	5
4. Food, culinary, or tasting activities	1	2	3	4	5
5. Adventure—alternative activities	1	2	3	4	5

Table A1. *Cont.*

B3. Think of this current trip. How often did you use the following eating facilities? Please indicate your level of frequency with each of these statements.					
	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Usually
1. Eating facilities (e.g., hotel restaurant) at the place of stay	1	2	3	4	5
2. Own preparation of meals at the place of stay	1	2	3	4	5
3. Greek restaurants and tavernas	1	2	3	4	5
4. Fast food and street food (e.g., pitta gyros, souvlaki, canteens)	1	2	3	4	5
5. Restaurants serving international cuisine	1	2	3	4	5
6. Snack bars, coffee houses, beach bars	1	2	3	4	5
B4. Think of this current trip. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these statements.					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I tasted local food during my stay in Greece.	1	2	3	4	5
C1. Think of this current trip. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these statements.					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Food and eating are important motives for travelling.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Food and eating are important when choosing a destination.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Food and eating are important for travel satisfaction.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am interested in food and cuisine in general.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have good knowledge of food and cuisine in general.	1	2	3	4	5
C2. Think of this current trip. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these statements.					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Experiencing local products increases my knowledge about different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Tasting local products in an original place is an authentic experience.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It is important to me that the local products I eat on holiday look nice and taste good.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Experiencing local products in their original place excites me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Tasting local products on holiday helps me to relax.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Tasting local products enables me to have an enjoyable time with friends/family.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I like to talk to everybody about my local product experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I want to give advice about local product experiences to people who want to travel.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Local products contain a lot of fresh ingredients produced in a local area.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Local food is nutritious.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am constantly sampling new and different food products.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I usually do not avoid food products that I have not tasted before.	1	2	3	4	5

Table A1. *Cont.*

C3. Think of this current trip. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these statements.					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am satisfied with the whole travel experience.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am satisfied with the food that I tasted (products and services).	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am satisfied with the local food that I tasted.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I will eat local food again at this destination.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I will recommend local food to my friends or relatives.	1	2	3	4	5

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