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Gastronomy of Antioquia's East region. A tourism product?¹

Gastronomía del Oriente Antioqueño. ¿Un producto del turismo?

Silvia Liliana Ramírez Ceballos*
José Daniel Ospina Álvarez**

Universidad Católica de Oriente

“People who do not drink their wine and do not eat their cheese, have a serious identity problem”

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán

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Abstract

Gastronomic tourism is gaining importance in different parts of the world. Under this premise, tours around indigenous food of a certain place are created in order to attract tourists, thus generating processes of globalization and development of local resources. The outcome of this initiative is the improvement of the quality of life in the region and the development of competitive strategies, allowing them to retain a share of the market and preserve culinary traditions. This research seeks to determine if the gastronomic tourism represents a business opportunity for the inhabitants of Antioquia's East region. With these in mind, a non-experimental and descriptive research was designed, using reference to documentary and electronic information, interviews,

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* Teacher of the program of Foreign Trade, FACEA attached to the Research Group of the Catholic University of East Antioquia. Email: iceballos@uco.edu.co

** Research Project Assistant, Student Foreign Trade Program at the Catholic University of the East. E-mail: daniao5@hotmail.com

and surveys; an analysis of the current offer and the preferences of visitors attracted to the area by cultural, religious and nature tourism was also conducted. The results show there is a variety of dishes offered in the region of Eastern Antioquia which are full of meaning, starting with their preparation, plating, and consumption, and linked to cultural elements. These are reasons that can be used for generating business opportunities and improving employment in its inhabitants.

Keywords

Dining; Touristic draw; Quality of life; Traditions.

Resumen

El turismo gastronómico va adquiriendo importancia en diferentes lugares del mundo; bajo esta apuesta se crean rutas alrededor de los alimentos autóctonos de un lugar para atraer turistas, generando procesos de mundialización y valorización de los recursos locales, lo que redundaría en la mejora de la calidad de vida de las personas de la región al desarrollar estrategias competitivas que les permita conservar parte del mercado y conservar las tradiciones culinarias del lugar. Se busca determinar si el turismo gastronómico, representa una oportunidad de negocio para los habitantes de la región del Oriente antioqueño. Se diseñó una investigación no experimental, descriptiva, mediante la consulta documental y de fuentes electrónicas, entrevistas y encuestas, se hizo un análisis de la oferta actual y de las preferencias de los visitantes atraídos a la zona por el turismo cultural, religioso y de naturaleza. Los resultados del estudio muestran que existe una diversidad de platos que se ofrecen en la región del Oriente antioqueño, que están cargadas de significados desde su preparación, emplatado y consumo, elementos vinculados a la cultura, razón por la cual puede ser utilizada como atractivo turístico, generando oportunidades de negocio para mejorar el empleo de sus habitantes.

Palabras clave

Gastronomía; Atractivo turístico; Culinaria; Calidad de vida; Tradiciones.

Introduction

Since ancient times humankind has had the necessity of traveling. To this end, maps and transportation services for religious pilgrims were designed since the middle age. In modern times, accommodation and emerging maritime expeditions have appeared; by the twentieth century, there was the blooming of leisure travel, health tourism, mountain tourism, development of touristic packages and organized holiday plans. History shows how this cultural exchange has allowed knowledge of food, plants, crops, raw materials, developments, and scientific advances. In this scenario of multicultural expressions where different realities are inserted and intersect can be generated a cultural homogenization (Straka, 2008), adopting foreign gastronomic elements to increase their consumption and forgetting about their own traditions.

When tourists arrive to a country and make use of provided services, they just don't enjoy its monuments, culture, historical and recreational sites; but they also consume foods and drinks; it creates a business opportunity as gastronomic tourism. This phenomenon can be used to develop culinary experiences, festivals, gastronomic tours, market and visits to restaurants, where dishes of the country or region are served. All those facts allow to know the habits and lifestyle of the community through meals, sharing flavors and sensations by tasting local dishes of the region (Mascarenhas, 2010).

Gastronomic tourism is a means of recognizing expressions of the cultural identity of a place, allowing you to recover traditional food and improve the quality of life by providing employment opportunities for the people of the region. In comparison, one question arises; Is the gastronomy offered from the different municipalities in Eastern Antioquia, a product with touristic potential?

This article aims to show that well planned culinary tourism is possible and it improves the quality of life of the inhabitants of a region and keeps alive the culinary traditions of the population.

A conceptual approach

The word tourism has its roots on tour or turn, which is derived from the Latin verb *tornare* and noun *tornus*, meaning back, turn or return (Di-Bella, 1991); the World Tourism Organization, outlines that tourism is the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes (OMT 1994).

Modern tourism arising in the eighties, is based on a business model where new ways of working are given, the environment is protected, and technological changes are used, where it offers individuals personal experiences (Betancourt, 2008).

Cultural tourism works with historical and artistic resources for development, it is highly demanding and less seasonal; here is where gastronomic tourism falls; food as a form of pleasure, enables the development as a segment and attraction, as visitors seek to know the local culture, eat their native food, try the dishes and what is different from what they are accustomed to consume daily (Nunes dos Santos, 2007).

Gastronomic tourism is presented today as an alternative draw; where the kitchen of the visited place is the fundamental fact that the tour offers; it is a particular way of knowing the world, focusing on manifestations of the culinary culture of the place (Labella, 2008). Visiting primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific places where the tasting of dishes, experimenting with food production is the main reason for the realization of a trip (Millan, 2011). Gastronomic tourism is one main demand, which is designed to consume and enjoy products, services and dining experiences and complementary way, which it is at least one night in a collective or private accommodation in the place visited (Torres, 2003). Franco (2001), Bourdieu and Sloan (2005), food preferences and taste are formed culturally and socially controlled. This means that eating habits are influenced by factors such as social class, race, religion, age, education, health, and social environment.

Gastronomic tourism requires the following:

- **Gastronomy:** knowledge and activities that relate to ingredients, products, recipes and culinary techniques to introduce tourists to the culture and history of the region through the tasting experience and buying products.

The cuisine is part of the intangible cultural heritage, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural–UNESCO defines it as:

The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and techniques together with the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith, that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as an integral part of their cultural heritage. This is passed down from generation to generation, it is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history; It gives them a sense of identity, continuity and contributes to promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (UNESCO, 2003).

- ▶ Food products—culinary specialties are the basis of gastronomic tourism; those are natural elements that are to become the protagonists and identify the territory. For Cardenas (1998) are the vehicle of cultural approach to the extent that are configured as identifiers of peoples and territories.
- ▶ Territory is the linchpin of cuisine, it has differentiators and covers values, history, culture, landscape, customs and food.
- ▶ Cultural heritage: set of knowledge, customs, behaviors that form a society and generate feelings of rootedness and belonging. Ávila Aldapa (2014), this will be theoretically preserved and protected, as will be appreciated by a meaning that goes beyond its intended purpose, its codification, being then assumed as their own.
- ▶ Gastronomic tourist: a person who participates in cultural consumption trends, look for the originality of the places through culinary products and recognizes them as the means of living, socializing and sharing experiences. Currently, there is talk of foodies² identifying new and unsuspected places to eat and drink what fits your budget and circumstances.

Montecinos (2012) categorizes gastronomic tourism as:

- ▶ Internal gastronomic tourism, which is carried out by residents of a country, in order to consume and enjoy products, services and dining experiences and complementary priority.
- ▶ Gastronomic tourism receiver, performed by non-residents traveling within a country, with the main purpose to consume and enjoy products, services, and dining experiences and complementary priority.
- ▶ Issuer gastronomic tourism is making residents of a country traveling to another with the main purpose to consume and enjoy products, services and dining experiences, and complementary priority.
- ▶ International gastronomic tourism: which consists of inbound tourism and outbound tourism with the main purpose to consume and enjoy products, services and dining experiences and complementary priority.

Cultural components with implicit gastronomic tourism, allow foreigners to learn the customs of the people who visit, they are encouraged to own the traditions transmitted to future generations and become a strategy to attract tourism. The gastronomic offer is made with those products available to visitors for consumption; some of them can be very exclusive, but others may be served to nationals and residents. The gastronomic demand is those elements that attract locals and foreigners to consume.

² Word coined in 1984 by Paul Levy, Ann Barr and Mat Sloan for his book *The Official Foodie Handbook*³, are called seekers, and gastronomic prescribers who for their interests know the latest culinary trends, are the first to know and learn new restaurants, new food products, advise, believe and recommend, through the blogs and social networks, in which restaurants eat better and not necessarily in the most exclusive and luxurious places. Being foodie leads to becoming Sherpa's food, as they defined it in *The New York Times*. These individuals can afford to, to devote himself to gastronomic tourism, making culinary tours from city to city.

For the development of this sector, it is required to have transportation, infrastructure, housing, food, cultural, recreational, and entertainment activities for recreation and leisure; you must have an inventory as a starting point for the development of activities involving the promotion of the country and its attractions.

In Colombia, gastronomy and culinary knowledge are framed and intangible elements within the Cultural Heritage of the Nation (Art. 4 Law 1185 of 2008). The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism -Mincit-, has the challenge of strengthening the recognition and appreciation of cultural heritage through tourism, the policy objective is to locate Colombia as a destination for national and international cultural tourism through the harnessing of its diversity and cultural wealth, generating dynamic local development and sustainable production chains that promote the competitiveness of the heritage and identity of the regions. (Mincit, 2010). One of the actions envisaged in the policy for the development of this sector is strengthening as a tourism product; generate researching an innovation processes, memory recovering, labor skills developments, and service quality improvement by articulated work between enterprises, guilds and academy.

In Antioquia and its sub region, there are a variety of dishes that respond mainly to the legacy left by the Spaniard, African and Arab. Between the sixteenth and nineteenth century following the discovery of America, the Spanish brought new ingredients to the cuisine that were incorporated into the native diet such as rice, legumes, meat from different animals, sugar, wheat, vegetables and spices as well as new preparation techniques using pewter utensils³. Arab migration that occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought spices and plants to the cuisine, for better seasoning of dishes, and the contribution of Africans, brought in colonial times, was made by cooking techniques such as fried foods, sweets in preparations like jam, stacked cereals, sauces, seafood, and crops such as bananas.

According to Antioquia's Government information page (2014), the sub-region of Eastern Antioquia was created by Ordinance 041 of 1975, which divided the Department into nine sub-regions, for planning purposes; It has a land area of 7,021 km², which is the 11% of the department; comprising 23 municipalities and divided into four distinct agro-ecological zones:

- ▶ Plateau, including municipalities of El Carmen de Viboral, El Retiro, El Santuario, Guarne, La Ceja, La Unión, Marinilla, Rionegro and San Vicente.
- ▶ Reservoirs, including Alexandria, Concepción, El Peñol, Granada, Guatapé, San Carlos and San Rafael.
- ▶ Moorland, integrated by Sonsón, Nariño, Algeria and Abejorral.
- ▶ Forests, integrated by Cocorná, San Francisco and San Luis.

³ Pewter is an alloy composed of tin; copper, antimony and lead, once the cast is forged like, and then is passed through a bath of ceramic glaze, which is known as varnishing pewter. These tools have existed in the kitchens for a long time, however, in recent years has revived its popularity, both haute cuisine restaurants and homes.

Its geographical location, proximity to the metropolitan area of Medellín, the paths that connect with different economic centers of the country, the Jose Maria Cordoba International Airport Free Zone, production of electric power, and great wealth in natural resources show the region as an attractive pole for settlement, company goods and delivery services. This region is projected as a hub for regional development, which manifests itself as a planner and promoter of different investment projects that allow the area with a great potential for economic and social advancement.

Photography 1: Geographical Location



Source: <http://www.redoriente.com.co/index.php/area-o-provincia>, 2018

Tourism is an economic and social activity that generates effects on the economy, cultural environment and the environment of the countries of destination (Brida, 2011). Economically, you can list the ability of this activity to generate foreign exchange, which is recorded in the balance of payments. In terms of market, expansion can look for spending the visitor does when he demands goods and local services, while producers demand others elements needed to produce the goods consumed by tourists, finally creating jobs for different economic activities.

It is then recognized that the touristic sector not only benefits people and tourism-related activities, but it is reflected in other areas; generating the multiplier effect of tourism, which is the coefficient that measures the amount of revenue generated per unit of tourist expenditure (Arguett, 2014).

For Guemes and Ramirez (2012) Gastronomic tourism is a new way to approach the culture of a place, region or country, it has a more active, experiential, playful, and festive character, seeks sustainable development that involves:

- a) Ensure the maintenance of tourism resources.
- b) Improve the levels of the population that is responsible for production and marketing.
- c) Ensuring the satisfaction of the tourist experience in a quality way.

Methodology

The research took place at the municipalities of Eastern Antioquia; is the second sub region most populated of the department of Antioquia, after Aburra Valley (DANE, 2014); it offers a series of productive activities, which are immersed in a context of comparative advantages such as natural resources, specially, water; the geographical location to develop agricultural, livestock, agro industrial, industrial and service activities; Additionally, it has a touristic potential of great importance.

The study is descriptive and it addresses as theoretical lines: tourism, gastronomic tourism and case studies. The project was developed in two phases: First part is an exploratory one, then, with the acquired information, a conclusive phase was developed.

To approach the exploratory phase, it was considered the perspective of the bidder and the applicant. In order to know where the offered process began, there was a consultation on primary sources as managers, owners, professionals of 40 restaurants, hotels and businesses. The interview method was used with a semi-structured questionnaire and applied in individual sessions. Atlas T.I software was used for data analysis.

From the perspective of demand, 400 questionnaires were applied to guests visiting places in the different municipalities of the region where meals are offered. 160 surveys were applied to foreign tourists and 240 domestic tourists. Simple random probability sampling was used. It is assumed that the population is homogeneous, regarding an average level of spending of \$ (COL) 48,000 per day. The sample was calculated with the software Calculator Survey System; it has a confidence level of 95%, an error margin of 5% and a confidence interval of 2.8%. The questionnaire was composed by 15 dichotomous questions, and was answered individually in restaurants, hostels, and hotels by tourists visiting the region on weekends and holidays. Inconsistent responses were not considered for analysis, the data was processed in Excel, combinations of variables and graphs were made. This allowed the researchers to know the reasons why people visit these places and their opinion on food in the region.

The question that was sought to answer was, whether the bidders and plaintiffs considered that the region of Eastern Antioquia had the necessary potential to develop this type of tourism.

With the collected and analyzed material, it was possible to learn more about the perception of participants about gastronomic tourism, as an important input for preparing the concluding part. Data validation was performed using the technique of pairing, it served to verify the theoretical framework with data collected in fieldwork, and make comparisons.

Results

Offer of the Region

According to obtained information at the Antioquia East Chamber of Commerce (2018), 10.826 establishments are registered. These establishments develop activities related to the sale and manufacture of food and beverage, according to ISIC Code⁴, as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Establishments issue and elaborate meals in the municipalities of Eastern Antioquia

Isic code	Description	# Establishments
I5611	Outlay table prepared meals	2193
I5613	Sale of prepared foods in cafeterias	2013
I5629	Activities of other food services	43
I5630	Sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption within the establishment	2216
c1084	Prepared meals and dishes	75
C1063	Other derivatives of coffee	3
G4711	Retail trade in non-specialized stores with food consisting mainly stocked beverages	4258
G4781	Retail trade of food, beverages mobile sales stalls	25
TOTAL OF ESTABLISHMENTS		10826

Source: from the information provided in Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Antioquia, 2017 drawing.

Food-supplying at the studied area consists of formal restaurants, fast national and international and specialized food shops, canteens and cafeterias. Mexican, Peruvian, Italian and Argentinian, steak, grilled, roasted, fast, healthy, vegetarian meal, deli, and typical food are remarkable.

After performing a classification of business, there were found⁵ 12 first class restaurants, which exhibit an excellent atmosphere with a wide range of dishes of national and international cuisine, spirits and wines; they are characterized by providing excellent service. Three (3) of the owners and two managers of these restaurants, argue that local buyers are demanding; most visitors of this type of establishments are upper class

⁴ ISIC is developed and published by the statistical office of the United Nations Organization (UN) International Standard Industrial Classification; in order to meet the needs of those seeking economic data, classified according to categories of comparable economic activities.

⁵ They are known as full service, but the difference with fancy restaurants is your sales strategy, offering a la carte or menu can have 5 to 7 different service times and has a limited range of alcoholic beverages.

executives having business meals. There are 518 business establishments called tourist restaurants, they offer hors d'oeuvres⁶, Soups and creams, salads, pastas, fish and meat specialties, typical foods and products of Antioquia's gastronomy, desserts, sweets, ice cream or fruits. There are fewer restaurants that are visited by tourists with lower incomes, and people from the local market, they offer a simple menu; have separated dining room and kitchen. Crockery, glassware is simple and their services are not uniform. Countless facilities offer fast food (junk food) and satisfy needs quickly. Young people prefer those, their spaces are reduced and operate under the refueling operation. In the municipality of Rionegro are transnational restaurants such as Subway, Domino's Pizza, Burger King, Papa John's pizza.

Most of the touristic activity occurs on Sundays and holidays, favoring places that are installed near the tourist areas and average cost businesses; restaurants and hotels begin their operations on Friday. Another point that must be seen is that the municipalities of the region have different celebration agendas for festivals.

40 Interviewed people, including owners, managers or administrators of the restaurants have a knowledge about gastronomic tourism; they recognize that this could be a way to revalue the traditional and typical things of the area; attract people from different places that make adventure and cultural ecotourism. They consider that in order to enhance tourism of this kind, we must build a gastronomic tour organized around one or more products to characterize and identify the region where different actors are linked. They emphasize that the pioneers in the development and implementation of strategies where own food connects to the opportunity of tourism, have been European countries like France, Italy, and Spain. In South America they include Argentina, Mexico; in Central America and in Colombia the coffee route; showing that the gastronomic tourism has been important for the economic development of these areas, boosting the competitiveness of the territory, increasing and improving food production, respecting the environment and offering other labor to the inhabitants of the region options. They say that the development of gastronomic tourism in Eastern Antioquia represents an opportunity to increase the supply of products produced in the municipalities, developing specialized menus in local food, potentiating the lodgings on farms, creating jobs and business opportunities for the inhabitants of the region.

To the question Is, there a tourism potential on the gastronomy offered in the different municipalities in Eastern Antioquia? 40 interviewees consider that the typical products of the region have interesting elements and potential, so that in the long run it could be consolidated in the minds of consumers. However, 60% of them believe that the region is still underdeveloped for releasing this type of tourism. Of the 40 interviewed, 28 establishments (70%), offer foods from other regions, including from other countries, because the inhabitants of the region and surrounding areas are looking for the consumption of such foods; Very few restaurants offer a full menu of own region's foods or typical food of the department. The reason is that older people in the region and only half of foreigners and tourists from other departments of Colombia are asking for those kinds of dishes

⁶ Are small portions of food served during lunch or dinner to nibble on them while the dishes.

when they are in such establishments; young costumers and half of foreigners and visitors prefer fast foods, salads and international meals. Perception of owners of bars, cafeterias or informal businesses that offer their products to tourists and local people is that tourists are interested in approaching the popular, traditional and inexpensive food.

Interviewees note that in recent years they find qualified people to be hired in these places and are able to offer a good service. This staff ranges between chefs, specialists in kitchen, bar tenders etc. This is a key element, so that the tourist relates with the food and culture of the region.

93% of the restaurants located in reservoirs, forests and moorlands, receive cash only. In the Plateau 75%, accept debit and credit card; 54% of them have parking; 68% of them offer free internet service and 40% menus in different languages. The nearby streets and competitions are informal businesses, offering traditional food at low prices, increasing its share of the food market.

The recommendations made by interviewees, so that the gastronomic tourism in the region can be consolidated are thirty-six people (90%) consider that it is necessary to identify the food basket to give support to the path and make a connection with elements like stories, memories, beliefs, usages and traditions of the region; for twenty-five interviewees (62.5%), it is essential that there is a joint effort between public and private organizations with primary producers, associations, tourist service companies and the wider community; thirty people (75%) have an opinion about needing's for more training in quality, development of tourist services, new products, making crafts.

Demand in the Region

East Antioquia is gaining space in the minds of consumers by comparative advantage that the region possesses as climate, rivers and ponds, mountains, outdoor sports and the culinary variety offered.

According to 160 foreign tourists interviewees, the main motivations they have to make a trip is the pursuit of pleasure; 70% of them said that the process begins when selecting the destination, required means of transport, the architecture, natural resources and spaces offered by the region, and 20% come exclusively to taste the gastronomic delights and to know the culture of the region, the remaining 10%, comes to visit family and friends and these towns offer adventures, spaces for fun and to share flavors. The origin of foreigners in the polls is 22% North American, 12% Brazilian, Canadian 9%, 8% Spanish, 8% Venezuelan, Peruvian 7%, 5% French 5% Italian, 4% Argentinian; 4% Panamanian, Cuban 4%, and 4% Chilean.

The origin of domestic tourists traveling to the different municipalities of Eastern Antioquia are: 40% of Medellín, 20% of municipalities in the highlands, 10% of reservoirs, 5% Bogotá, 5% of the Coffee region, 5% Cali, 4% of the Atlantic Coast, 3% moorlands, 2% forests, 2% Antioquia's Southwest, 2% of Pasto, 2% of the rest of the country; 187 interviewees (78%) coming from other regions or departments visit the Eastern Antioquia for fairs, festivals, tourist attractions and restaurants. 161 respondents (67%) live in the territory and travel 60 to 100 kilometers for a change of routine, to eat different things from what they consume during the week and enjoy the places and attractions that are in the different municipalities.

According to the profiles of those interviewed, 49.6% of the visitors are people who work, study 36.9%, 7% are housewives and pensioners 6.5%. The groups consist of friends, families and couples. The behavior of food consumption is usually different for those traveling with friends, the aim of these is recreational activities and partying and minimize spending on food; couples often go out to eat in restaurants and family groups are looking for places where varied food is offered, according to the preferences of children, youth, adults and seniors.

From a population of 400 interviewed people, 85% of them visited one or more municipalities of the Eastern Antioquia and tried typical food of the region, 10% fast and international food and a 5% preferred healthily, vegetarian, vegan, food, including others.

Food related Activities they would like to meet are: for 67% nothing special, just enjoy a good meal, 15% observe and learn the process of preparing meals, 10% know the history and taste the food, desserts and beverages of the places visited, 8% see what the inhabitants of the region in daily activities such as planting, harvesting, milking, etc. Food products that visitors associate the Eastern Antioquia are described in Table 2.

Table 2. Meals associated by visitors to the municipalities of Eastern Antioquia

Classification	Products
Desserts	Manjar blanco o dulce de leche
	Natilla Antioqueña
	Boquediblos
	Hojuelas
	Panderitos
	Natilla
	bombones, caramelos
	Dulces de frutas
	Platano calado
	Arequipe
	Brevas con arequipe
	Arequipe y dulce de café
	Galletas
	Cocadas

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Classification	Products
Breakfast, snacks and finger food	Church Empanadas – Antioquia's pasties
	Fritters
	Stuffed potatoes
	Almojábanas
	Recalentaos
	Corn cakes
	Tomato eggs
	Cobs
	Peasant cheese
	Plantain with Tomatoes
	Cassava bread
	Cheese bread
	Corn cob
	Strong plates
Punchy beans	
Rinds with corn bread	
Sausages: sausage, sausages, chorizo,	
Tamales	
Soup	
Corn Bread	
Chicken stew field	
Rice souped with ground beef and avocado	
Charcoal roast	
Drinks	Tripe
	Fried trout with fried plantain
	Porridge
	Coffee
	Sweet water with lemon
	Schnapps
	Porridge
	Clear
	Sweet water
	Chamomile
Chocolate	
Tapetusa (Liquor)	

Source: Compiled from information provided by respondents, 2017.

When asked about the three main activities performed by interviewees when visiting one of these municipalities, the first answer were activities such as fishing, practicing an extreme sport, sailing, lounging, sunbathing, swimming and partying; Second place, the food tasting was found and, thirdly, visit tourist and cultural sites.

For interviewees, gastronomy is a respectful way to explore the culture of the region they visit, it is to link local people to their own past, value the ingredients they mix in order to offer a well prepared dish. They highlighted that in the places they eat, fresh vegetables, good care and presentation of dishes and palatable flavors are found. Some recommendations made by these tourists, especially foreigners when asked what would

they improve in restaurants and places offering meals are menus in Spanish and English, a brief description of the plate and texture, images that let them know components either because they do not know them or because in their country, have different names. 78% of respondents, they would be willing to recommend the municipalities of Eastern Antioquia visited, 85% would recommend food in the region to friends, acquaintances and family. Respondents from Medellín and municipalities in the Eastern Antioquia return to these municipalities on an average of 6 to 8 times a year. They note that one of the tourist places where they find organization, homogeneous plates and dishes prices is in Guatapé.

Conclusions

The national government through the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism–MINCIT–has raised the policy of cultural tourism, where general strategies for implementation are defined, but there is a lack on building competitive advantages around the gastronomic tourism in different regions of country. Regions require development plans, where it is evidenced the investments in places with implemented gastronomic tourism and where you can evidence the privileges for economic and social development of the community.

In Navarro's research (2011), development, impact and sustainability of tourism at the local level, there are similar results to our findings. It was confirmed that gastronomy can be converted into a tourist attraction and promote the sustainable development of a locality, enabling economic and social revival of a town and a region, based on the acquisition and supply of raw materials, inputs and increasing labor demand, basing their appeal on offering basic food, allowing expansion of productive activity and boosting the domestic market. Well-planned tourism, enable job creation and preserve the cultural heritage of the place, the continuous improvement of infrastructure and environmental conservation, but to achieve this objective it is necessary to know the region and its potential. Gastronomic tourism must be supported by the elements that unite the community, that differentiates them from other places and that makes people want to visit and taste their food.

Gastronomy begins to be related to the visited environment this is what differentiates conventional food tourism food and beverage industry. The town where the dish is presented to tourists seeking out for the history of relations between the population and tourism. (Mascarenhas, 2010). Although there are many elements that can validate the gastronomic tourism as a tool to improve the quality of life and allow culinary traditions are not lost in the study area, there are not planned, structured and consent processes, there have been only as isolated cases generated because of inhabitants of the region needs. For these initiatives to prosper over time and generate benefits for all stakeholders, it is required to put aside individualism.

The region has been influenced by important transformations, associated mainly with the construction of roads, making it a point of convergence of the national road system that articulates the capital of the republic with the Atlantic and Pacific coast, the east and the west of the country, it also communicates with two of the most important markets in the country: Bogotá and Medellín; for the air transport service, Antioquia has the José María Córdova airport in Rionegro, an air terminal that serves as an International Airport and serves, in particular, the passenger and cargo movement of the Aburrá Valley. From this place there are daily flights to national and international destinations, according to statistics from AEROCIVIL to January (2018) 266,145 arrived and 269,556 passengers left, for a total of 535,701. This makes the area attractive for the establishment of industries that strengthen the supply of export products, but are attractive for tourists who see this option for leisure activities and for those in the territory to generate ventures that improve the quality of life of the inhabitants.

To achieve development, consolidation and permanence of gastronomic tourism in a region, networks for working over to a common goal must be created, where new activities that generate benefits for the whole community are made. Kitchen products from the area are part of the intangible heritage of the region; it becomes a revenue generator when it is a service offered to tourists. This type of tourism is not a motivator fact for everyone; but it can generate a position market that can help strengthen tourism in the region. A major challenge is to encourage the formation of networks through association. This would reduce costs, and therefore the competitiveness and the ability to seize opportunities in national and international markets.

Tourism service providers recognize that there is potential for gastronomic tourism market, which could benefit various actors, as producers in the region, owners of restaurants, hotels, artisans; but they consider that a food route one can promote should be strengthened, where different actors in the region are involved. Visiting international food fairs becomes a vital element, since they can learn to have direct contact with people interested in the product and know by firsthand the changes or adjustments that must be made so that the product is more likely to be accepted by tourists. Demand for this service is growing, but it is necessary innovation and development of products offered to allow the premium category needed. There is insufficient information on indicators showing the tourism behavior in the region that allows for analysis and recommendations for continuous improvement of this economic segment.

Interviewed tourists rated from 1 to 10 the gastronomic cultural identity of the region, giving an average between 5 and 6, which may indicate that visitors feel that there is little identity between the food and the region. They argue that the score given is because there is no product differentiation with other regions of Antioquia, even with the coffee, as well as that the new businesses that are opening have the same menu. One of the biggest problems is the lack of formal information about the gastronomic offer of the eastern Antioquia, quantity, location, status of other users, and features.

The buyers and sellers agree that there are a lot of restaurants offering variety of dishes; but believe that experts as chefs and cooks, must seize the culinary traditions of the region, where innovation and enhancing of flavors exists in order to start generating recall and differentiation. Start communicating the development, history, and meaning of food for the inhabitants of the region. Presenting music shows and dances of the region as a way to keep alive the habits and circulate them internally to strengthen and internationalize Colombian food.

The commitment to quality and permanence search of culinary activities in a region requires that fits the demands consumers have; positioning the consumer's mind is essential; That is why one should work towards designation of origin of products or beverages in the region, a geographical indication or traditional specialty guaranteed. This may be one of the strategic directions that allows to offer high quality and healthy food.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with an institution or commercial association of any kind. Likewise, the Luis Amigó Catholic University is not responsible for the handling of the author's rights that the authors make in their articles, therefore, the veracity and completeness of the citations and references are the responsibility of the authors.

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