

Investigating Foreign Tourists' Behavioural Patterns and Sensory Experiences in Seafood Tourism in Galle District

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Abstract

Seafood tourism has become a distinctive niche within food tourism, particularly in coastal destinations where culinary traditions are closely tied to marine environments. The Galle District of Sri Lanka, with its rich fishing heritage and vibrant seafood culture, offers an ideal setting to explore how foreign tourists engage with local food experiences. This study investigates the behavioural patterns and sensory experiences of foreign tourists participating in seafood tourism in the region. A qualitative approach was employed, using semi-structured interviews with nine foreign tourists to capture their perspectives on restaurant selection, sensory preferences, and cultural influences. The findings reveal that tourists' choices were shaped by factors such as authenticity, freshness, local recommendations, and the multisensory dimensions of taste, smell, sight, sound, and atmosphere. Moreover, the study highlights how these experiences contribute to cultural adaptation and foster deeper connections with the destination. The research emphasises the significance of seafood tourism, not only in enhancing visitor satisfaction but also in promoting sustainable tourism development and strengthening regional economic benefits. These insights provide valuable implications for local stakeholders, including policymakers, tourism operators, and restaurant owners, in shaping strategies that enhance authentic and sustainable seafood experiences.

Keywords: behavioural patterns, foreign tourists, seafood tourism, sensory experiences, sustainability