



Chef's sabbatical: An analysis of chef's gastronomic research through culinary tourism[☆]

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ABSTRACT

Chefs have long looked to various aspects of food, culinary trends, restaurants and their peers for inspiration. So much that they take time away from the line to go deep into culinary cultures across the globe as spectators, diners, tourists and even as line cooks to find the inspiration behind their new dishes or menu items. The premise of a chef's sabbatical is not a new theory or trend, but rather a new explanation of a rite of passage in the culinary world via culinary tourism. At the start of a chef's career, they are encouraged to work and gather experience from a number of restaurants before becoming an Executive Chef. However, when they do become an Executive Chef, it is difficult to take on multiple tasks or work at different restaurants to further their knowledge outside the kitchen. This is where the chef's sabbatical premise is put forward.

“This article is dedicated to the late Chef Anthony Bourdain, who inspired us to get up and move”.

Introduction

Existing literature on the topic of culinary tourism has thoroughly examined a multitude of dimensions with regards to the importance, impact and viability of the topic associated with tourists, economics and the consumer market. The scope of this paper is to take a more in-depth and analytical approach to one area of the culinary tourism market, chefs. Chefs have been described as culinarians with regards to their professional field, preparing meals and dishes in all manners of restaurant operations. A chef is seen as a manager, innovator, flavor expert and artist by many both inside and outside the culinary field (Dornenburg and Page, 1996; Culinary Institute of America, 2012; Ruhlman, 1999). Chefs are also viewed as meticulous in fusing the bounds of creativity and passion to bring a pleasant dining experience to their guests (Ruhlman, 1999). However, even a chef must take time in their careers to rest on one's laurels to find new ideas, flavor combinations and dishes to enhance their craft. By enhancing their craft, chefs are able to ensure that the dining experience of their customers would also be positively affected. This also serves as a way for chefs to keep up with the ever-changing global trends in the culinary industry. Baldwin's (2017a, 2017b, 2017c) analysis of the transference of Asian hospitality explained how foods and cultures of Asia inspired new dishes and menu items for chefs across the globe. The author indicated that chefs today used a wide variety of tools for gathering inspiration

and acquiring new knowledge. These tools for inspiration included books, anime (Japanese cartoons), social media and many others. Several of the chefs interviewed during that study indicated that the best way for them to learn about new flavors or new cuisines was to physically travel to countries in Asia and learn about them. These chefs became the very definition of culinary tourists; culinary professionals with the intent of their travel being specifically set on new food and flavor discovery. Much in the same way as an academic researcher, professor or lecturer will take a period of leave from his/her university requirements to pursue new research or develop a topic of study for the enhancement or progression of their chosen discipline. These chefs would take time to be away from their jobs and restaurants in the same manner. This paper seeks to identify factors that lead chefs to travel as culinary tourists and to gain knowledge of a new or foreign cuisine so as to build up their personal culinary repertoire.

The professional chef

In the mainstream sense, a chef is seen as someone who cooks and holds the title with a high level of respect in the culinary and restaurant industry (Culinary Institute of America, 2012). However, when chefs speak of being a chef there is nod to the amount of time one has been in service of the restaurant industry. The title of chef is earned through years of work, practice and dedication to the craft (Culinary Institute of America, 2012; Ruhlman, 1999, 2001). Chefs are driven by their desire to understand, work with and produce dishes as well as providing good service to their customers (Dornenburg and Page, 1996; Culinary

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Institute of America, 2012). It is difficult to put a time limit on how many years are served in the industry or what level of culinary management is achieved before the title of “Chef” or “Executive Chef” is bestowed upon an individual. However, a previous marker is roughly 10 years of culinary experience, a wide breadth of food knowledge with a demonstrated progression of management of culinary operations (Ruhlman, 1999; Dornenburg and Page, 1996). This is not as accurate today with chefs such as 17-year old Flynn McGarry who is the Executive Chef of Eureka in New York City. He is a culinary prodigy who learned to cook via YouTube, cookbooks like Chef Thomas Keller's *The French Laundry Cookbook*. Through the help of his parents, they built a kitchen for him to practice and develop his skills. Today's generation of chefs are shattering the previous generation's notion of time served in industry (Stone, 2015). Chef McGarry is an extreme case. His example, and many others, only further demonstrates the degree of shift from the previous model in the restaurant industry where the path to become a chef has changed. The professional chef is now seen as a culinarian, artisan and showman who has amassed an encyclopedic level of knowledge of ingredients, flavor combinations, and cooking techniques at their disposal (Dornenburg and Page, 1996). The authors of *Culinary Artistry* (1996) reference *Creating Minds* (1993) written by Howard Garner and his examination of the realms of creativity: 1. The individual; 2. The discipline; 3. The field of judgement. Dornenburg and Page (1996) offered their interpretation of this model of creativity with regards to the culinary field: 1. The chef; 2. Cooking for the public (restaurants and hotels); 3. Constant evaluation by consumers, critics and the culinary community. In their book they offer a categorization of chefs by designation of skills, prices of menu offerings, chef's repertoire and so on. They propose that there are three types of chefs in the culinary industry: tradesman, craftsman, and artisans. Their proposed scale does well to categorize chefs by their “skills” level and the execution in a restaurant. However, this research seeks to dive deeper into what a chef does to reach the point where they have the skills needed to be successful. Whether the chef is a tradesman, craftsman or artisan, it does not change the fact they are first and foremost a chef. They are a disciple of the culinary arts with a passion for food regardless of how much their customers pay (Bourdain, 2000; White and Steen, 2010; Evans and Ellis, 2016). There is a desire to learn, taste, experience and grow within the realm of cooking that transcends any categorization of chefs dedicated to the craft. The need to seek new flavors, build the palate or go in search of the perfect meal is a factor that entice a chef to see the world through a culinary perspective (Bourdain, 2001).

The chef as an existential gastronomic tourist

Gastronomy has been classically defined as the study of food and the enjoyment of cuisine (Culinary Institute of America, 2012; Brillat-Savarin, 1826). Gastronomy is not to be confused with culinary. Gastronomy focuses on the elements of food, flavor, culture (nationality and dining), history and environment. It has also been defined as representation of societal culture and its consumption of foods and drinks (Santich, 2004). While the term culinary looks at the study of food preparation, execution, flavor development and techniques, cooking and the science thereof can be added to this list as well (Culinary Institute of America, 2012). The two terms are often inter-mixed in literature but they are indeed very different. With regards to tourism, the approach to gastronomy should exist harmoniously with the present context of culinary. Wherein both look at food and derived techniques, culinary is more technical and gastronomy tends to be more philosophical in nature. Simply put, cooking is the vessel that creates the gastronomic experience that diners have when consuming foods and drinks (Ruhlman, 1999). Gastronomy, in many ways, can reside in the perception of an individual. The tastes and aesthetics of the food experienced, can encompass various elements of gastronomy while being executed by way of culinary means.

In the academic sense, in the culinary and tourism worlds there are

many sources and discussions with regards to culinary and gastronomy tourism in that the terms may be used interchangeably (Long, 2003; Kivela and Crofts, 2005). The term culinary tourism, suggested by Long (2003), focuses on the ideology of tourist experiences in cultures using food as a cultural marker, medium, or vessel (Okumus et al., 2007). Culinary tourists make up a certain part of the tourism market by focusing on tourists who travel to a destination with the main goal of consuming numerous food products, dining in various restaurants or visiting wineries and food markets (McKercher et al., 2008). Wolf (2002) presented a different interpretation of a culinary or gastronomic tourist, citing that their purpose was to explore and enjoy a destination food offerings while savoring and creating memorable experiences. In a later study of the gastronomic profile of a culinary tourist done by Sanchez-Canizàres and López-Guzmán (2012) revealed the characteristics of tourists in a specific destination (Córdoba, Spain for this particular study) both long haul and short haul tourists who stayed in the city were normally there for less than a week for culinary tourism. Some spent from half a day to 2 days in the city touring and tasting the local fare. Their research found that these particular tourists put heavy emphasis on cuisine rather than cultural events or local attractions. The tourists cited value for money, quality of the food they consumed, and shared comments on how the cuisine was very traditional but could use some innovation (Sanchez-Canizàres and López-Guzmán, 2012). Kivela and Crofts (2005) also proposed that culinary/gastronomic tourists see value in the relationship among food, recipes and chefs of the destination as ideal for consumption when traveling.

Cohen's (1984) work on categorizing tourist lifestyles along with Bourdieu's model of the social construction of taste, gave way to Hjalager's (2003) introduction of a model of culinary tourism experiences. This brought forth the discussion of the categories and depth of the lifestyles of gastronomy tourists (Kivela and Crofts, 2005). The given model has four types of gastronomy tourists: *recreational, existential, diversionary and experimental*, each with their value and interpretation represented in Fig. 1. Kivela and Crofts (2005) further described the existential gastronomy tourist as an individual who seeks to discover new combinations of flavor and gains knowledge from the consumption of cuisines in a destination.

There is a strong desire to explore the local and regional foods, which are not easily available in the tourists' home country. During the stay of tourists, the notions of taking cooking classes, *staging* (working and observing in restaurants with no remuneration), and participating in harvests and/or farming will be the focus of consumption and satisfaction while traveling (Kivela and Crofts, 2005). Seymour (2005) offered a reexamination of the social construction of taste derived from Bourdieu's model, a construction of culinary taste. Citing that Bourdieu's explanation cannot account for the aspect of social groups that share similar incomes, as presented, but rather have a different pattern of culinary consumption (Seymour, 2005). With this culinary focused

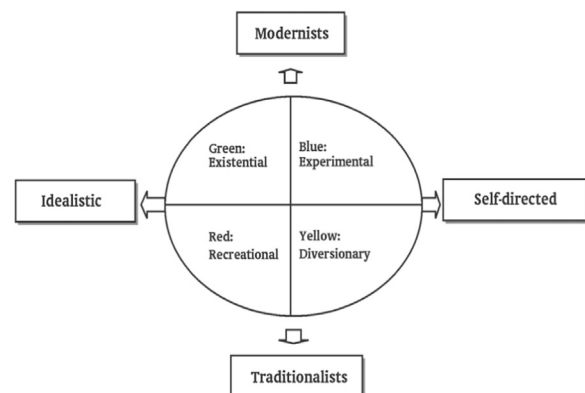


Fig. 1. Hjalager's Interpretation of Bourdieu's Model of the Four Lifestyles (2003).

Table 1
Seymour adaptations of social groups.

Social groups	Economic capital	Cultural capital	Taste	High consumption foods	Low consumption foods
Employers	High	Low	Rich & Costly	Pastries, wine & meat preserves	Fresh meat, fruit & vegetables
Teachers	Low	High	Exotic & Ethnic	Bread, canteen meals & ethnic foods	Wine and spirits, expensive meats
Professionals	Medium	Medium	Refined & Delicate	Expensive Meats, fresh fruit & vegetables	Pastries, canteen meals & meat preserves
Working Class	Low	Low	Cheap & High Calorie	Bread, cooked meats & milk	Fresh fruit,vegetables & canteen meals

model, the differences in taste and overall consumption can be further examined at a more accurate rate as times changes. Food offerings that were once limited to the aristocracy and the wealthy are now available in mainstream in the world today. This alters the view of culinary tastes being derived from societal, classist bias or lifestyles (Seymour, 2005). A condensed version of Seymour's (2005) interpretation of Bourdieu's model below illustrates a previous model of taste and consumption. Bourdieu's model examined an individual's economic and cultural capital, taste perception and menu preparation (Table 1).

Bourdieu's model also mentioned social opposition within each of the groups as potential influences of tastes and consumption. For example, employers opposing their subordinates given a lack of economic restraints, which enable them to consume finer food products on a more consistent basis. The working class's opposition with other higher ranked classes is rooted in values of hospitality and generosity (Bourdieu, 1984). Seymour's adaption examined food tastes and consumption from a group of redefined working classes. It goes as far to examine meal preparation, variants in consumption with relation to products while including a focus on perceived economic and cultural values. With regard to chefs and culinarians, depending on the stages of their career they will fall into different groups within this model. However, as tourists, this paper puts forth the idea that chefs are an even more descriptive sub group within the culinary construct of taste given their profession, background and level of involvement in food and cuisine. This study focuses on chefs as existential tourists looking to consume knowledge of flavors, foods and the local culinary surroundings of their chosen destination(s) to benefit their personal creativity and inspiration into their cuisine as a separate special interest group of tourists.

Creativity and inspiration

Creativity is the tool that helps push barrier of culinary innovation. It is the definition of artistry in the both the classical and modern sense (Stierand and Lynch, 2008). Chefs previously cooked and created dishes with the constraints and regulations of standard classical cuisines but the advent of culinary innovation post *Novelle* cuisine has seen a meteoric rise worldwide. This constitutes the parameters of what good taste is and how that taste or flavor is influenced and/or practised (Lane, 2013). The making of a great chef comes from years of training and repetition. The knowledge acquired from that training and the personal will to put the culmination of those skills towards one's cuisine (Gomez et al., 2003). The chefs that can master these areas pave the way for culinary creativity and inspiration that are the artistry of the craft (Stierand and Lynch, 2008). Many chefs often seek out a certain level of traditional or authentic flavor profiles when innovating a dish but may need to adapt those flavors for their menus or customers (Lu and Fine, 1995; Lin et al., 2017). An ideal example would be how chefs of the West look for the other cultures for inspiration behind their cuisine. Whether it be the bold flavors of Indian cuisine, the spicy flavors of China's Sichuan region, or the delicate flavors of Japanese cuisine, many chefs have taken inspirations from around the world in their menus (Baldwin, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c). The inspiration and pursuit of inspiration with regard to flavor can be defined in many ways within the world of food. As chefs move forward, the rules that govern what food is and should be, is changing and new rules are being made (Lane,

2013). The new path being paved brings more possibilities for chefs and cooks to transcend the normal and classic methods of cooking by chefs influencing cuisine and its innovation. In terms of the steps chefs take when creating new dishes, Page (2017) proposes 3 new stages of creativity that a chef will go through when creating. In stage 1 (*Mastery*), a cook will learn from their chefs or the masters of the craft. This helps build a foundation of knowledge, skill and flavor base. Stage 2 (*Alchemy*) is related to the acquiring of new knowledge and techniques. The chefs then incorporate new ideas, flavors or ingredients into existing classics for a new twist or approach to the dish. Finally, stage 3 (*Creativity*) is where the chefs use their own ideas, experience and flavor profiles to innovate a new culinary creation (Page, 2017).

Culinary innovation

Nowadays, culinary innovation and creativity can be seen as the delicate balance of practical application and physical science (Hornig and Hu, 2008). Chefs from all countries are trained (or learn) how to be creative from understanding the basics of cooking i.e. technique, ingredient quality, and timing (Culinary Institute of America, 2012; Dornenburg and Page, 1996; Saulnier, 1976). Cooking has become a means of artistic expression and pleasure for those enjoying and preparing cuisine (Belasco, 1999). But the innovation of the culinary field can be connected to a chef's ideas or inspirations as well as the science behind cooking, like molecular gastronomy for example (This, 2008; Hornig and Hu, 2008). The field of culinary, like many other fields, has its building blocks and foundations that give way to innovation. Chefs in recent years have drawn on their creativity and influenced innovation by thinking outside the box of traditional culinary techniques (Stierand and Lynch, 2008). Gomez et al. (2003) classified innovation of cuisine into three groups: exploratory, which is a modernist approach, minimalist, rooted in sensitivity, and classical innovation focused on local terroir and ingredients. For chefs, regardless of classification, the ideas for new menu items and dishes come from a variety of inspiring aspects such as paintings, emotions or combinations (Albors-Garrigos et al., 2013)

The biggest stride in culinary innovation can be seen in *Haute* cuisine. *Haute* cuisine is a style of cuisine and cookery designated by being prepared in upper class places for a higher income clientele (Culinary Institute of America, 2012; Saulnier, 1976; Escoffier, 1975). This is best noted by Rao et al. (2003) in which chefs embrace their freedom by breaking away from the grounded foundations and traditions of culinary; this in turn brought about the innovations that inspired *Novelle* cuisine, the next stage in culinary innovation after *Haute* cuisine (Stierand and Lynch, 2008). The steps taken by those chefs of the past gave the current generation of chefs the freedom to set the stage for culinary innovation in the 21st century. Innovation for chefs did not mean just breaking away from the chains of Auguste Escoffier and Antoine Careme, rather it gave chefs the freedom to establish new forms and new directions of culinary creativity (Ruhlman, 1999; Culinary Institute of America, 2012). Jacques Mazimin's "Conceptualism", Michal Bra's "Naturalism", Joel Robuchon's "Perfectionism" and Pierre Gagnaire's "Absolute Freedom" are just some of the styles of cuisine that have been rooted as innovative and inspirational for chefs today (Stierand and Lynch, 2008).

For the 21st century molecular gastronomy has been the innovation

of choice that primarily focuses on the science, or more accurately the chemistry behind food. Molecular Gastronomy refers to the use of chemicals and applying certain processes to food and ingredients to cuisine. Most notably, chefs like Ferran Adria, Heston Blumenthal, Wylie Dufrayne and others are seen as the leaders of molecular cuisine (Stierand and Lynch, 2008). This form of modern cuisine is the latest trend to evolve beyond the Western, American and European realms of chefs. Previous studies that examined Michelin starred chefs innovation and inspiration in the UK, Germany, Spain, New York, Hong Kong and Japan found that there were contrasts among the processes that these chefs used for developing new dishes (Ottenbacher and Harrington, 2007a, 2007b, 2008; Lane, 2010; Baldwin, 2017c). The process for these chefs was found to be more organic in nature and development while focusing on exposure to new ingredients or techniques. Several of the chefs cited their desire to taste and experience flavors from other cultures was tied to the origin of those foods. Chefs from countries like Japan, China, Korea and Mexico are now employing these innovative techniques to their traditional dishes to create new forms of cuisine (Baldwin, 2017a). Culinary innovations focus on products, but the process behind that innovation serves to develop the concepts that will eventually become the foundation for the next stage of innovation.

Methodology

Previous research from Lin et al. (2017) used a qualitative approach to examine the perception of food authenticity, innovation and creativity within Cantonese restaurants. The research utilized online methods of interviews and data captured from websites and consumers to gauge their perception of creativity and authenticity within that restaurant. The Michelin starred focus research topic from Harrington and Ottenbacher (2013) used a qualitative approach. However, the study focused on interviewing chefs to discover their idea generation and innovation process for creating dishes within their restaurants. A separate study from Baldwin (2017a) examined the transference of Asian hospitality and cuisine to chefs in the western countries. This study also adopts the qualitative approach as it aligns more with the nature of the study.

The aim of this paper was to analyze the factors and reasons for a chef to take leave as culinary tourists to grow professionally. An exploratory qualitative study was conducted to investigate and identify the connection between a chef's choice of culinary destinations and the knowledge gained during their travel. The research was conducted using semi-structured interviews that were done face-to-face, via Skype Video and using Facebook Messenger with the researcher being based in Hong Kong. 40 interviews were conducted with chefs within the food service and education industries who held ranks in their operations such as executive chef, sous chef, pastry chef, baker, culinary instructors and food truck operators. For chefs in these positions, they had to have complete or total control over culinary creativity, product development, menu development or innovation (Baldwin, 2017a). The chefs interviewed held jobs in different parts of the world such as Europe, Asia and America. They were asked a series of questions pertaining to their culinary experiences and influences as culinary tourists. The researcher halted the interview process at 40 chefs as the point of saturation was reached.

Findings

The interview process was broken into a series of demographic questions such as gender, age, education, and highest culinary rank achieved to get a sense of overall background of chefs. Then there were also a series of open-ended questions that were asked centering around the chef's reasons for undertaking culinary tourism. Table 2 illustrate some of the chef's responses to demographic questions.

The chefs that were interviewed came from a diverse background in the culinary field. Having worked in institutional food service, fine-

Table 2
Chef respondent demographics.

<i>Gender of Chefs</i>	Male	29
	Female	11
<i>Age of Chefs</i>	18–25	2
	26–33	8
	34–40	15
	41–50	10
	51–60	3
	50 or older	2
<i>Education</i>	Culinary School	29
	Apprenticeship	11
<i>Job Rank</i>	Exec. Chef	12
	Sous Chef	5
	Chef de Cuisine	8
	Pastry Chef	3
	Head Baker	2
	Lead Cook	4
	Culinary Instructor	3
	Food Truck Operator	3

dining, catering and retail as well as food trucks and higher education, these chefs represent a wide range of positions found in the restaurant industry. Roughly three-quarters of them received a formal culinary education in school, while the others had apprenticeship training prior to working their way to culinary leadership. It is also worth noting that 3 of the chefs interviewed have achieved either 1, 2 or 3 Michelin stars in their respective home countries (Hong Kong, Japan, and the United States). Table 3 below indicates the amount of years (by average) that the categories of chefs have worked in the restaurant industry. The longest serving chef has been in the industry for 35+ years while the shortest term served is 5 years by a lead cook.

Fig. 2 shows the nationality of the chefs that were interviewed. As indicated in the methodology, the researcher used qualitative means of face-to-face, Skype Video and Facebook Messenger as tools to communicate with the various chefs globally from Hong Kong. All face-to-face interviews were completed with chefs in Hong Kong (32), Skype Video (5), Facebook Messenger (3), due to the global time difference and schedule of the chefs.

Although the chefs do all come from various ethnic, educational, and culinary backgrounds, the desire to learn more and educate oneself further in food was a common thread tying all of the chefs together. Fig. 3 lists the types of cuisine served by the respondents indicates a wide range of styles of foods that are prepared. Some similarities between the chefs and their cuisine were found in the countries of employment, culinary background and desired cuisine/countries to explore as found in Table 3.

The chefs were asked a series of questions related to their desired cuisine and inspiration. General questions such as likes and dislikes in cuisine were avoided as the study sought to focus on foods of interest and passion for exploring the culinary arts of other parts of the world. Table 4 lists all the countries that the chefs listed as places that they visited as tourists during the interview process. Each country has its own deep and rich culinary history along with varied impact on the culinary world. A general observation from interviewing the chefs found that those chefs who had more Western dominant culinary

Table 3
Amount of time spent in the restaurant industry (by average).

Executive Chefs	20 years
Sous Chefs	12 years
Chefs de Cuisine	10 years
Pastry Chefs	12 years
Head Baker	8 years
Lead Cook	5 years
Culinary Instructor	18 years
Food Truck Operator	7 years

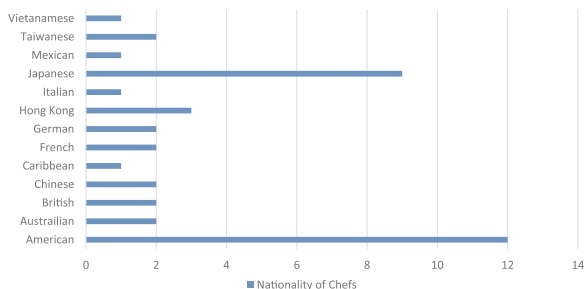


Fig. 2. Nationality of Chefs.



Fig. 3. Types of food served in the chef's dining establishment.

Table 4

Countries visited.

North and South America and the Caribbean	Europe/ Scandinavia	Asia	Africa and the Middle East
United States	France	China	South Africa
Mexico	Italy	Japan	Iran
Jamaica	Germany	Vietnam	Jordan
Barbados	Spain	India	Ghana
Venezuela	Switzerland	Russia	Egypt
Costa Rica	Austria	Australia	UAE
Columbia	Finland	Thailand	
	Malta	Hong Kong	

experiences and/or education sought to learn more about cuisines not in their global region or hemisphere (classically French trained chefs from America visiting various parts of Asia as an example). This was also encountered by several of the Japanese chefs who cited that they actually spent more time in the beginning of their career learning about French, American and Italian cuisines in Japan or abroad rather than focusing on their native Japanese cuisine.

Discussion

From further contextual analysis of the interview data, specifically with the open-ended questions, several themes emerged from the chef's culinary tourism travels:

- Inspiration for culinary tourism
- Technique and Taste Discovery
- The Categorization of Chefs as Culinary Tourists
 - o The Domestic
 - o The Stagiare
 - o The Competitor
 - o The Tournant

These themes present the desires chefs have when looking at travel and tourism for professional growth and culinary inspiration that align them with Hjalager's (2003) model for culinary tourists. However, there is also a strong connection with Seymour's (2005) adaptation of Bourdieu's (1984) food space map that address aspect of capital, time, culture and food consumption as the chefs focused on flavor discovery

and experiencing new tastes. Referring to Kivela and Crotts (2005) explanation of the existential gastronomy tourists, the above-mentioned categorizations of chefs are put forth as an extension of the existing models of culinary tourists.

From the chef's desires of culinary exploration these four categories emerged based on the specific intent or motivation of chefs as culinary tourists: *The Domestic Chef*, a chef that travels within their own countries or regions for culinary tourism and discovery; *The Stagiare*, a chef who travels the world with the sole purpose of training and working for free in kitchens around the globe to learn a new technique, craft and to enhance their skills; *The Competitor*, a chef that seeks to work and learn from successful culinary competitors in an effort to hone their own personal and competitive skills; and lastly *The Tournant*, a chef that seeks a multitude of cuisine knowledge, techniques, and culture that is not native to their home country, region or culinary skill base. This chef looks at long-distance/foreign destinations with regard to culinary tourism (can also be seen as a long-haul culinary tourist).

Inspiration for culinary tourism

Not all chefs stipulated specific types of foods or cuisines as a sole motivator for culinary tourism but rather they expressed an openness and curiosity to what the world of food had to offer when they embarked on traveling. Those chefs that did specify exact cuisines or foods indicated a variety of means to which they researched online, read about or inquired before they traveled. The chefs indicated that through their research and resources they could learn about what parts of the world has which foods they want to focus on. The chefs uses various forms of both traditional and social media when planning their trips, such as trade magazines, Twitter, Facebook and online blogs (Baldwin, 2017b). In some cases, the chefs indicated that they would choose a particular country or city such as Los Angeles, for one of the food truck operators, as a place to visit and gather inspiration and knowledge. The chef commented,

"I've always wanted to learn about raw food and prepare those dishes for clients with dietary restrictions. LA was a city that I learned from my research that I could go to and visit some of the best raw cuisine restaurants in the US. I made several connections and even drew inspirations for my menus from the restaurants I visited".

Several chefs expressed the same desire to understand how the origin of the dish or food product is handled and executed so that they could maintain the integrity of the dish. Another chef commented,

"Living in Hong Kong since 2012 I've seen that Mexican food is underrepresented. This annoyed me at first but then I saw an opportunity. After spending a month touring Mexico in 2014, primarily the Pueblo area, I found a greater appreciation for the cuisine and was inspired to start my own business in Hong Kong using the skills I learned from the chefs and cooks in Mexico. I'm now listed on Hong Kong's Plate Culture app as one of the few people offering traditionally inspired modern Mexican cuisine".

An overall tone from all chefs was their emotional connection and curiosity to a world that existed beyond where they worked, lived and grew up. For those chefs who watched movies about food or televisions, those moments sparked a fire in them that led them to travel the world and taste the experiences they saw others living online or on television.

"I was fortunate at culinary school. Anthony Bourdain was chosen to be our commencement speaker for my class's graduation from CIA. This was in 2002 and he had just finished his first book and was beginning his first show "A Cook's Tour". Meeting him and seeing that he was same person on TV and in real-life was surreal. A chef who graduated from the same school as me and was doing my dream job of traveling the world to see and experience food helped me

realize that this was possible”.

The variety of ways that chefs were inspired from their surroundings resonated deeply throughout the interview process. Many of them felt that because of their chosen profession they had a unique perception and access to the world of food. Food is ever-changing and evolving for these chefs and culinarians. The cycle makes the inspirations for the chefs change and evolve as well.

Technique and taste discovery

The theme of flavor and taste discovery directly relates to the foods that the chefs tasted and/or consumed during their travel. As indicated by Table 3, the chefs interviewed had visited over 22 different countries for culinary tourism. Each of these countries has its own nationality and culinary identity that is rich and filled with dishes and/or flavors that are symbolic of that country. In terms of regions the respondent countries can be listed in order from most to least visited by the chefs Europe/Scandinavia (8), Asia (8), North and South America and The Caribbean (7), Africa and The Middle East (6). The culinary background of the chef had great influence on where the chef would travel; however, the broadening of their palate seems to hold more influences. Many chefs indicated that they felt they need to taste more in order to learn more, simply reading about a method and then practicing it was not enough. By tasting more and further developing their palate, the chefs commented that they would be able to innovate and create new dishes to expand their current menus in their restaurants.

Europe

The food and culture of Europe was mentioned the most out of all the regions that were indicated by the chefs. France and Italy were the most common countries among chefs as areas to learn about and/or study food. The chefs that had a classical European background or training in culinary stated that there was a need to revisit timeless techniques and classics as the culinary trends of the worlds changed. Chefs indicated that visiting local patisseries and bistros of Paris and Nice would introduce them to new and modern approaches to dishes that they had cooked in the adolescence of their careers. They understood the methods and techniques behind the foods that were being prepared, so simply tasting and re-tasting them to develop a flavor memory of the dish was enough for them to learn and retain. The same could be said of those chefs that visited Spain, Portugal, Germany and Austria. For years, Spain has been at the forefront of the culinary world, thanks to El Bulli and Ferran Adria's take on molecular gastronomy, which has changed both the approach to culinary arts and dining for years to come. While El Bulli is now closed, there are other areas of Spain and Spanish food that chefs mentioned they wanted to learn more about, in particular the food of the Basque and Castile regions. For Germany and Austria, chefs who had a liking of charcuterie (meat and forcemeat preparation) claimed that these countries were ideal for expanding their knowledge base in sausage-making, terrines, and other forcemeats.

“It's a dying art (referring to charcuterie). You don't see many chefs in restaurants making their own forcemeats or patès. As a young chef, I was trained that these techniques were what defined a good chef from a great chef”.

The chef went on to comment further that he knows that times have changed in the culinary world but it would be a shame to see such techniques disappear from the restaurant community. One of the non-culinary technique related comments from a chef came with regards to their experience in Portugal. A chef mentioned that her trip to Portugal was not 100% centered on food, but rather to explore the many houses that produce Port and she singled out Vintage Port in particular.

“As a chef I always look for new flavors constantly to create a dish but personally I prefer more traditional tastes. This is the same for

wines and ports, during my travels to Portugal I spent most of my trip in the Douro region. Vintage port is my “poison” of choice while drinking with friends and family. There is a complexity and depth from vintage port that speaks to me and it is simply a must for me to have in Portugal”.

Asia

The dynamic food culture of Asia resonated quite strongly with the chefs that were interviewed. There was a clear division of chefs when it came to exposure to Asian food preparation, flavors and techniques. Those chefs with little to no exposure with Asian cuisines showed the greatest interest in traveling to Asia for learning and experiencing the food culture. Street food ranked high as a way for chefs to experience the food culture of various countries. However, the rise of prominent San Pellegrino and Michelin rated restaurants in Asia prompted some chefs to focus on visiting restaurants with staff of higher caliber throughout the region.

“I work in an Italian restaurant in Washington, D.C. and had the chance to visit northern China a few years back. The culture blew me away but the food I ate was different from what I expected. My Americanized Chinese food experience gave me a biased to the local food I ate but I learned a greater appreciation for the chefs and the techniques they used”.

Japan was mentioned by 7 chefs as a personal goal and “bucket list” to visit and experience the cuisine. Chefs indicated that they traveled between the Kyuuhsu, Kanto and Kansai regions based on their cultural interests. The most talked about were cities of Kyoto and Tokyo. They also visit the world famous Tsukiji fish market.

“We always hear about how Japanese have a different approach to handling fish and seafood. The amount of years that they dedicate to learning the craft is amazing. I took classes during my 2 weeks stay. Even though I learned a lot, I am still far from enhancing my skill level”.

With regard to staging, chefs indicated that personal and professional connections helped them get around from kitchen to kitchen and work under the table to learn new flavors and cooking techniques while traveling in Asia. Staging and culinary tourism will be discussed further in another section of this paper.

“I found a short term teaching position in Fujian and worked a few days a week in a local Chinese restaurant. It was technically illegal but I wanted to learn more about the food and how to prepare it, knowing a little Mandarin helped greatly. The chef there connected me to someone in Hong Kong so once my teaching job ended I went there and cooked in a few restaurants. From there I went Bali and Bangkok. What I learned in those countries is priceless for what I do now”.

The Americas and The Caribbean

The Northern and Southern continents of America are very different in almost every single way. South America, which in some cases will include the Caribbean, has a traditionally Latin flair to its culinary scene with each country having its own style and flavor profile. The Caribbean is not too different except for indigenous foods and flavor profiles. The cooking techniques also vary among the islands. North America is quite unique as a hub for the melting pot of culinary trends and techniques. The United States boasts “American” cuisine as a whole but the cuisine can be broken down into regional aspects much like Chinese cuisine. The chefs that traveled to or in this part of the world identified cities and culinary “hubs” that were of interest to them (Toronto, Canada; Lima, Peru; New York City, New York; Bogota, Columbia; Kingston, Jamaica and Bridgetown, Barbados just to name a few). The Americas offer just as much cultural and culinary dynamics as

the other regions. Most of the chef respondents were not long haul tourists traveling from other parts of the world to America, but rather domestic tourists traveling within the regions, countries or states.

When speaking to the chefs about the Caribbean or Latin America, most of them had motivation to trace the steps of their lineage. Through deeper conversation, several of the chefs revealed that they were immigrants or the children/grandchildren of immigrants. This gave insight to a unique motivation for chefs exploring this region. For them, even though they were culinary tourists, there was a pull factor to reconnect and uncover the lost roots within their families and culture.

“I’m from the UK, but my parents came from the Caribbean [mom was Jamaican and dad was from Barbados]. I wanted to learn more about where I came from and the food of my parents upbringing while on holiday. I didn’t get to experience much of that growing up”.

Speaking with the chefs of Latin-descent in the US gave another interesting perspective. Many of these chefs were immigrants and then nationalized later in their lives. For them, the aspect of cultural reconnection was different in that even though they were far from their first home there was a large enough community in the US where they didn’t need to explore their culture. Rather they looked forward to seeing other parts of the US and experience the foods of those regions.

“Here in the US, we have so many choices of where to go. I don’t have to time travel across the world so if I want to learn about a new cuisine I ask my chef or friends to connect me with someone who needs help opening a new restaurant or a hotel. I go and help them out and learn something new while doing it”.

In a similar example one of the chefs commented that he planned his trips for 6 months to a year in advance and rather than looking at individual cuisines he chose to visit areas where certain chefs have restaurants, food trucks or other F&B properties.

“Between consulting and running my chef’s kitchen I have about 12 personal days to take per year. I read up on chefs from the James Beard list, industry magazines or the ACF competition circuit. Once I find who I feel is doing something worthwhile and exciting I book the trip in advance. Hotels, flights, and restaurant reservations, the works. Each trip is 1–2 days max and I look to discover new flavors or techniques that will inspire fresh ideas for my own dishes”.

The chefs from all over the world showed a varied degree of inspirations and motivations for culinary tourism. While food unites all of them, the diversity lies in the reasons why they choose where to visit, what foods to explore and what to make of the overall experience.

The categorization of chefs as culinary tourists

Upon analyzing the data from the chefs and using Cohen’s, Bourdieu’s and Hjalager’s models as stepping stone of tourist lifestyles and culinary tourism, a perspective of categorization of the chefs came to light. If chefs can be seen as green existential gastronomic tourists that puts them in one group, from the data that group has up to 4 sub categories of chefs (possibly more). These groups can be interpreted as the underlying motivators for chefs who venture into culinary tourism lifestyles.

The domestic chef/culinary tourist

Chefs in this category, for a variety of reasons such as time, budget or desire to travel, tend to stay in their home country or region and explore culinary tourism. Using the Japanese and American chefs as examples there will be some cases where a chef may just be seeking a city or location that has interesting foods, highly rated chefs or a particular cuisine that they are interested in experiencing. Several of the Japanese chefs also reflected on problems about visa and language barriers when they traveled to a certain countries to work and or visit,

thus seeking culinary tourism ventures within Japan. Not many chefs in the US indicated visa issues with regard to travel but simply stated for most of their careers they didn’t have time to travel to exotic places for weeks at a time. It was much more conducive to stay “local” and seek the chefs or cuisine close to home.

The Stagiare

This category of chefs seeks to explore culinary tourism through “on the job training” or “real world experience” in the restaurants that served a cuisine they were interested in learning about. The chefs relied heavily on interpersonal relationships to open the doors for them to work either in their country or abroad. The chefs tend to travel on tourist visas and “stage” or work for free work weeks or months at a time. There are some negative aspects such as illegal work in another country, yet most chefs indicated that they did not care. The visa process can take very long to complete or it can be too expensive to bother with before travel. None of the chefs reported having an issue within the country or regional authorities that they staged in.

The Competitor

The category of chefs that embark on culinary tourism for competitions can be seen as a hybrid of the Domestic and the Stagiare. Chefs who are on the national competition circuit for their home country or whom compete at the global level must take time away from their primary positions to focus on their competition skills. Of the 40 chefs interviewed, 4 of them mentioned competing and culinary tourism. These chefs seek the top culinary competitors within their field and train with them for 1–2 days or up to a month. In many cases the chefs felt that they needed to seek these competing chefs because there were none locally for them to work with or to be mentored. One chef indicated that he took one year off from work to travel to the US and trained with the Olympiade der Köche or Culinary Olympic gold medal US team of master chefs to further his skills.

The Tournant

The word tournant is a culinary brigade term loosely mean “rounds man” or someone who moves from station to station. Through various departments, the chef becomes well-rounded within the culinary operation. It is similar to cross-training. The Tournant culinary tourist in this case is a chef that seeks inspiration from various cuisines and cultures around the world. These chefs specifically travel long haul to encounter foods, flavors and techniques from the source of where they come from. They can be viewed as long haul culinary tourists in that they take more than 2 weeks of culinary “vacation or holiday” at a time rather than short trips and visits. These chefs do not seek to work or stage but would rather immerse themselves in a culture and experience the life and food of the indigenous people around them. There is a unique sense of fulfillment that goes beyond learning and adapting what they see on a plate in a restaurant or in a street-side market. These chefs seek to discover the story of the people and the food around them and then turn those experiences into new ideas and dishes. Most of the chefs in this category worked in the education field and had long periods of breaks between work schedules and semesters.

Limitations and conclusion

This study has been conducted qualitatively in an exploratory fashion with 40 chefs being interviewed about their culinary tourism experiences and inspiration. While the sample chefs have diverse nationalities and ethnic backgrounds, a large sample study done in a quantitative approach may yield more common representation of the chefs in the restaurant industry. A global perspective may be too large to tackle all at once; however, focusing on countries and sub-regions as a start could be the step for laying a framework to examine chefs worldwide. There may even be more sub-categories of chefs based on their countries of origin and employment as international visa

requirements and restrictions may give chefs issues with regards to where they can travel.

The previous literature on culinary tourism, while very well defined, argued and discussed, does not examine chefs as culinary tourists. While they do simply fall into the “tourist” category, their motivations are very different from the tourists of previous studies within the field. These motivations, while being internally driven, have great potential to yield external and tangible results that can be seen and tasted in restaurants. There is a wide range of areas for the chef to draw inspiration, such as research and development via books, television or on the internet but those only influence a chef's sense of touch, hearing and sight. Tastes are what drive a chef to create, innovate and disseminate culinary knowledge. And it is with that knowledge gained through culinary tourism that a chef can transcend their current skill level and status while simultaneously honing and crafting their art. Chefs will always have the desire to learn and experience new cuisines to both develop their menus and their personal culinary growth while satisfying their job responsibilities. The chefs that are able to find the time in their career will take a few days, weeks, months or more to explore new foods and flavors to enhance their own palate. These chefs become the living embodiment of a “culinary tourist” in that unlike traditional culinary tourists their motivations are to enhance their personal and professional development as well as enjoy a vacation, holiday and creating memorable experiences. In many ways the chef needs to engage in culinary tourism, not just for leisure but for personal growth, expanding their palate and professional advancement. Culinary tourism, in its many forms, can give chefs the skills, knowledge and confidence to take their cuisine to the next level, wherever that level may be.

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