



## GASTRONOMIC TOURISM AS A STRATEGIC DRIVER OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN

PhD **Amiriddinova Muslima Zayniddin kizi**

"Silk Road" International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage

ORCID: 0009-0005-8878-3867

[amiriddinovamuslima@gmail.com](mailto:amiriddinovamuslima@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** This study explores the position of gastronomic tourism as a strategic tourism development factor in Uzbekistan. It discusses the application of tourism industry resource potential, such as public catering services, and its impact on economic growth. The research indicates how an increase in cultural awareness and purchasing power of the population, coupled with a growing number of foreign tourists, has created favorable conditions for the development of gastronomic tourism. Utilizing qualitative and quantitative research like sociological surveys and economic analysis, the study concludes that food culture traditions, human capital, and new technology are key drivers of competitiveness in the tourism business. Restaurant businesses are increasingly inclined to be both service enterprises and cultural ambassadors, thereby enhancing the destination's reputation. The study concludes that with focused investment and innovative development, Uzbekistan can become one of the globe's leading gastronomic tourism centers along the Silk Road.

**Keywords:** tourism, gastronomy tourism, service, catering service, restaurants, Silk Road, development.

## GASTRONOMIK TURIZM O'ZBEKISTONDA TURIZMNI RIVOJLANTIRISHNING STRATEGIK OMILI SIFATIDA

PhD **Amiriddinova Muslima Zayniddin qizi**

"Ipak yo'li" turizm va madaniy meros xalqaro universiteti

**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu tadqiqot O'zbekistonda strategik turizmni rivojlantirish omili sifatida gastronomik turizmning o'rnini o'rganadi. Unda umumiy ovqatlanish xizmatlari kabi turizm sanoatining resurs salohiyatini qo'llash va uning iqtisodiy o'sishga ta'siri muhokama qilinadi. Tadqiqotlar shuni ko'rsatadiki, aholining madaniy xabardorligi va xarid qobiliyati ortib borayotgani, xorijlik sayyohlar soni ortib borayotgani gastronomik turizmni rivojlantirish uchun qulay shart-sharoit yaratgan. Sotsiologik so'rovlar va iqtisodiy tahlillar kabi sifat va miqdoriy tadqiqotlardan foydalangan holda, tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, oziq-ovqat madaniyati an'analari, inson kapitali va yangi texnologiyalar turizm biznesida raqobatbardoshlikning asosiy omillari hisoblanadi. Restoran biznesi ham xizmat ko'rsatish korxonalari, ham madaniyat elchilari bo'lishga ko'proq moyil bo'lib, bu manzilning obro'sini oshiradi. Tadqiqot natijalariga ko'ra, yo'naltirilgan investitsiyalar va innovatsion rivojlanish bilan O'zbekiston Ipak yo'li bo'ylab dunyodagi yetakchi gastronomik turizm markazlaridan biriga aylanishi mumkin.

**Kalit so'zlar:** turizm, gastronomiya turizmi, xizmat ko'rsatish, umumiy ovqatlanish xizmati, restoranlar, Ipak yo'li, rivojlanish.

## ГАСТРОНОМИЧЕСКИЙ ТУРИЗМ КАК СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКИЙ ДРАЙВЕР РАЗВИТИЯ ТУРИЗМА В УЗБЕКИСТАНЕ

*PhD Амириддинова Муслима Зайниддин кизи*

*Международный университет туризма и культурного наследия «Шелковый путь»*

**Аннотация.** В этом исследовании изучается положение гастрономического туризма как стратегического фактора развития туризма в Узбекистане. В нем обсуждается применение ресурсного потенциала туристической отрасли, такого как услуги общественного питания, и его влияние на экономический рост. Исследование показывает, как рост культурной осведомленности и покупательной способности населения в сочетании с растущим числом иностранных туристов создал благоприятные условия для развития гастрономического туризма. Используя качественные и количественные исследования, такие как социологические опросы и экономический анализ, исследование приходит к выводу, что традиции культуры питания, человеческий капитал и новые технологии являются ключевыми драйверами конкурентоспособности в туристическом бизнесе. Ресторанный бизнес более склонен быть как предприятиями сферы услуг, так и послами культуры, повышая репутацию направления. В исследовании делается вывод о том, что при целенаправленных инвестициях и инновационном развитии Узбекистан может стать одним из ведущих мировых центров гастрономического туризма вдоль Шелкового пути.

**Ключевые слова:** туризм, гастрономический туризм, сервис, кейтеринг, рестораны, Шелковый путь, развитие.

### **Introduction.**

The resource potential of the tourism sector is very important for the development of this sector. It is of great importance to study the main theoretical approaches to determining the essence of the resource potential of the tourism sector and its role in economic growth, and one of the main factors of economic growth is gastronomy tourism in service provision.

Uzbekistan gained independence, a significant increase in the development process in the socio-economic sphere has been observed (Тўхлиев, Қудратов ва бошқ., 2010). As the cultural level and material well-being of the population of the republic increase, its activity, purchasing power, demand for sports, entertainment and other institutions aimed at public service also increases. In recent years, a significant increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting our republic has been observed. Visits of foreign businessmen and diplomats to scientific conferences, symposiums, creative meetings held in our country have become significantly more active.

All this creates objective conditions for the rapid development of restaurants, buildings, hotels, catering establishments, shopping centers aimed at serving public interests. The tourism industry has been in constant need of renewal, creative and innovative ideas since its inception (Safarov, 2016). Therefore, in the tourism industry, countries offer visitors their various regional offers, new and amazing tours they have developed, and through this, the competitive environment changes in their favor. Based on the above, we can say that at this time, the usual and standardized tours that we know are being replaced by various new creative and interesting tours for travelers, various routes organized according to the demands and needs of tourists.

### **Literature review.**

Public catering in gastronomy tourism resources are divided into several main types depending on the type of service and service delivery (Abukhalifeh, & Pratt, 2022). Each category is designed for specific customers and is developing in accordance with the culture of

catering and market requirements (Hall, Sharples, & other, 2004). However, the development of an innovative economy in the tourism sector indicates the need for high efficiency of these processes in tourism enterprises, which determines the problem of increasing efficiency through the rational use of limited resources (Björk, & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2019). From this point of view, the formation and use of economic potential in the sector requires compliance with the processes of the economic system.

This problem consists of the following main components:

- resource utilization, that is, the use of scarce, hidden resources to diversify tourist services (production);
- targeted use, which implies the use based on the choice of an economic growth strategy that meets needs and provides economically efficient results.
- Rational use of scarce resources (lacking resources), meeting requirements, choosing an appropriate growth plan, modernization and diversification of the service sector are necessary to ensure economic growth in the tourism industry. This type of resource for the development of tourism entities' entrepreneurial activities requires, on the one hand, sustainable development, which determines special conditions, and on the other hand, it expands the economic opportunities of catering enterprises in tourism (Lin, Pearson, & other, 2011).

The economic potential of catering enterprises in tourism plays an important role, and each of the above resources has its place, including the economic resources developed by each catering enterprise, and the main resources are the material and technical base, as well as information and human resources. The expansion of catering enterprises is of great importance for the development of its economy, and the main purpose of these resources is to develop the tourism industry and provide quality services to tourists.

### Research methodology.

The research process used analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, systematic, comparative and factor analysis, scientific abstraction, sociological survey and other methods.

### Analysis and results.

The investigation of the development and situation of gastronomic tourism in Uzbekistan reflects the close interdependence between the development of the tourism sector and the effective implementation of its potential resources, including the field of public catering services. As socio-economic growth in Uzbekistan occurred in the post-independence period, heightened cultural awareness, spending power, and demand for good-quality leisure and service facilities have been among the primary drivers for the development of gastronomic tourism.

One of the most salient observations has been the rapidly changing nature of the tastes and expectations of foreign and domestic tourists. Classic mass-market holiday packages are being replaced by new, thematic, and innovative tour products, such as food-themed packages that focus on local specialties, culinary heritage, and genuine eating experiences. The shift is an immediate response to growing demand for individualized, culturally rich holiday experiences. Gastronomic tourism therefore offers itself not only as a novelty of services but as a significant tool of niche market attractiveness and competitiveness building in the tourism industry. The research reminds us that economic potential for gastronomic tourism lies inextricably linked to strategic use of limited resources—most notably, in catering. Effective use of resources involves venturing into unrevealed or latent resources such as food culture, indigenous foods, and historical cooking techniques for expanding the tourist product. Proper application of the resources ensures synergy with broader policy for economic growth, which keeps modernization and diversification schemes going across the hospitality industry.

Empirical data also show that the development of catering infrastructure—restaurants, cafés, traditional teahouses, and food markets—is a direct contribution to the economic and

cultural attractiveness of tourist destinations. These places not only serve as service points but also as cultural ambassadors, introducing tourists to the unique gastronomic identity of Uzbekistan. Moreover, the effective utilization of available limited resources in catering ventures, such as trained staff, state-of-the-art kitchen appliances, and information technology, is very critical to quality services delivery and long-term sustainability.

A sociological poll during this study supports these findings as well. Tourists evaluated gastronomic activities—especially those with local Uzbek food like plov, shashlik, somsa, and lagman—equally as tour attractions. Moreover, entrepreneurs in the food and hospitality industries were positive about growing demand for culinary tourism and saw the necessity of innovation, localization, and online marketing to attract and retain tourists. Therefore, the analysis confirms that gastronomic tourism is not only a secondary element of the tourism sector but a major pillar in its strategic development. Through the use of its rich culinary heritage and harmonizing resource utilization with modern economic planning, Uzbekistan can transform its catering enterprises into drivers of tourism-driven development. Continued investment in infrastructure, human development, and culinary branding is required to sustain the trend and turn the nation into a distinctive gastronomic destination along the Silk Road.

### Conclusion.

Concisely, the study corroborates that gastronomic tourism is a critical and strategic part of Uzbekistan's tourism business development. As the country continues to undergo socio-economic transformation, growing demand for quality, culturally active experiences positions gastronomy in the fore as the key driver of tourist satisfaction, economic diversification, and place brand. Utilizing scarce but fertile resources reasonably and strategically, such as traditional food culture, domestic materials, human resources, and high-tech technology, can significantly enhance the competitiveness of tourism services.

Tourism companies, with their material, technical, informational, and human resources, not only serve the basic requirements of travelers but also serve as platforms for intercultural communication and vectors for the promotion of national identity. The transformation of mass tourism to more thematic and personalized forms, food-tourism in particular, also illustrates generalized global tendencies and indicates the potential of Uzbekistan to enhance competitiveness in the global tourist industry.

This research also centers on ongoing investment in digital equipment, infrastructure, and human capital training for the improvement of service quality and sustainable development. By embracing gastronomy in tourism policy and development planning, Uzbekistan can maintain its appeal as a unique and authentic Silk Road destination, which appeals to regional and global tourists through its culinary heritage power.

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