
New Icons in Tourism

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Abstract: Nutrition is considered to be a human primary need, however, in a consumer society, where all people's secondary needs are already joined; we witness the "return to food" in a huge way. Nowadays many trips are organized in search of specialized cuisine, especially during events and wee-ends. The main goal of this work would be: to recognize the numerous interrelations between tourism and food production. From the territories, where typical food is localized, we can rediscover the identity of the landscapes, as a synthesis of culture, economy, society, and nature (Montanari, 2004). There is a need to promote traditions, history, territories, and people and products.

Key words: Nutrition, food tourism, society,

Introduction

Nutrition is considered to be a human primary need, however, in consumer societies, where all people's secondary needs are met, we witness a sort of a "return to food" in a huge way (Galvani, 2004). As prevention is better than curing an illness, we have discovered the beneficial results of healthy eating, and its positive effects on a personal well being. After a period of interest for exotic food we have rediscovered our own gastronomically treasures and their well preserved traditional values, in a land full of flavours and perfumes, of skilled craftworks, ancient and excellent work techniques. All this is nowadays an attraction's reason to do tourism. There is a need to promote our origins, our history, our land, its people and products. Celebrations usually take place with fairs, markets or the promotion of a particular type of food and its by-products.

Italian Food Variety

Italy is a small country, but it has a big variety of geological and climatic areas, because of its limited extension in longitude and a prolonged one in latitude. Moreover, its tight shape, differently influenced by two seas, the Tirreno, connected by the Gibraltar Straits to the open Atlantic Ocean, on one side, and the closed small and less deep Adriatic on the other, offers different landscapes due to the presence of the Alps and Apennines chains. Over this variegated zone there is a multilayered culture determined not only by the long history of the Roman Empire but also by other pre-existing civilisations and by post-roman or barbarian populations. The roman society was in its essence a blended Mediterranean civilisation imitating and inheriting, first of all, the

Greek essence. The succession of external invasions has continued until the State's unity, 150 years ago. From a territory as this, it derives a rich agricultural production which has been elaborated by the experience of different traditions into a food production renowned all around the world. The today trip fashion is pushing people into discovering the secret good qualities of traditional food in relation to health concerns.

Italian Society today

Italy initiated its industrialisation at the end of the XIX century, but due to the shortage of resources, the energy provision was limited to hydro-energy, so industrialisation was also geographically limited at the base of Alps, in order to utilise the force of flooding water. At the beginning of the XX century some of the biggest firms took place in the north-west part of Italy. Industrial production decreased in the period between the two world wars, but emerged stronger after the Second World War (Corbino, 1962). The Sixties witnessed the fastest urbanisation, an increase in population number employed in the industrial sector, an increase in urban building, in job creation and also in private car property, due to the presence of big car industries, especially the most typical of them: the FIAT in the area of hydro-energy (Bonazzi, 2000). As a consequence, number of high and toll ways were constructed and railways were less utilised than in other European countries (Massa, 2005). In those years started the mechanisation of every Italian family, even if cars were generally small, for which it was utilized the term: "utilitarian". Thank to cars and higher revenues, Italians began to take summer holidays, legally permitted by new government laws. Workers were able to join the coasts which were easily accessible, due the long and tin shape of the country which enumerates more than seven thousands kilometres of coastlines along a surface of 301.000 square kilometres. Mountain tourism was less accessible in the Alps, localised at the Northern part of Italy, at the border with France, Austria, Switzerland, and more accessible in the Apennines, a chain which constitute the back bone of the land. In Italy the mass tourism of the sixties coincided with economically affordable cars, but in the fifties, only a decade before, families were generally able to buy only motorcycles, as the famous *Vespa*, an Italian icon, famous all around the world. If motorcycle permitted to new urban immigrants to come back to their original countryside at the weekends, to visit their relatives and to buy agriculture products directly from peasants (considered healthier than urban merchandise), the car permitted to join mountains and coast. Fortunately tourist areas were close to every Italian city and all the industrialised zones (Galvani, 1987). The economic and social welfare continued in the seventies and families were able to possess more than one car, in this way even young worker or university students had their own mean of transportation. The diffused well being vitiated especially young population and cars were used as toys.

Italian Habits

Drinking coffee or eating ice creams are much diffused habits among all Italians, as Italian coffee is particular tasty and Italian ice creams are the most famous in the world, as Italian ice cream workers too are. According to these habits, young people were accustomed during the economic boom to drive many kilometres to find the tastiest

coffees and creams. Usually they chose tourist destinations or the nicest cities to go to. It was not unusual, among friends, to decide, even late at night, to leave home or the daily meeting places to go everywhere by car. This peculiar game was interrupted during the energy crises and the strong oil shortage of 1973. Italian Government prohibited the cars circulation during Sundays at day time or it permitted a limited use of them during working days to go to work. In some periods, cars circulated alternatively every two days, in odd or even days, according to the number of their plate. The limitations were strictly controlled, because Italy doesn't have crude oil or gas and it is obliged to import it from Arabian countries or Russia (Pombeni, 2005). Nowadays controls and limitations are posed only in order to limit air pollution. Even if coffee too is an imported product too, its cost doesn't affect the Italian import-export balance or pockets, as it is demonstrated by its increasing use, as increasing is the consume of ice-creams. Fortunately ice creams derive from national stuffs, but young people stopped looking for them far away, even if they now look for discos and they drive kilometres to go to the most famous of them. However this new behaviour has dangerous consequences, ensuing from driving during the nights and from the abuse of alcohol not severely controlled by the street police. One reason for this habit resides in the fact that the nicest discos are generally located in tourist areas.

Another actual change resides in the fact that people move no more only to find a good coffee or an ice cream for a night outside, but certainly they move to find the best restaurants, because good food is a post consumerism topic, in an era of new images and new myths, in search of quality, towards an ecology of consumes (Galvani, 2004). Food is considered a communication medium, a living common culture, able to attract people in its sanctuaries, even more than the high culture icons. (Cortin, 1992). This peculiar position is descending from the interest in the fitness and wellness of people, the *Lebenfürsorge*, cited by the sociologist Julius Lippert in 1884, which is directed to food as functional mean for health (Whorton, 1989). In this direction new tourism is going towards health, as a new religion, recopying the old tourism of the past centuries based on spas and thermal baths.

The Food Tourism

Italy is renown not only for ice creams but also for being the land of the famous Mediterranean diet. Its mild climate, the bio - geographical diversity in a relatively small area, the influence of seas, the protection from cold northern winds, the latitudinal extension in differentiated altitude, the presence of one alluvial big plain make the agrarian production very rich and diversified. The old and experienced handicraft traditions put added value to soil and breeding outputs. Some cheeses, salamis, hams, bred and wines are world famous. The Parma Ham, the Parmesan cheese, the Brunello di Montalcino wine are the most famous alimentary products in the world, even if they are very expensive. The Ministry of Agriculture is active in the safeguard and in the maintenance of typical agrarian products and of its derivatives; the associations of artisans are severe on the preservation of original recipes and the government recognises

more than 4000 Italian typical agro-food products. Significant is the Ministry's publication of the Atlas of the food production of national parks. The super-national control of EU accompanies the safeguard of traditional products and recognises the best European goods giving them the logos of DOC, DOCG, to the wines and DOP, IGP, IGT to other aliments, to indicate the original area of production which assures the genuineness of raw material and the respect of rules in the food processing. Among all the 520 European certified food products, Italy is ranked second in number of them, after France, and its percentage is increasing. Quantity of studies is made around these jewellerys, whose every processing steep is controlled along the chain named *traceability* or from "fork to farm". Years ago, the control process was named by EU "from farm to fork" in order to assure the genuine quality of ingredients, and the respect of processing appropriateness, but the denomination changed in order to assure a more user friendly approach to final consumers. These treasures justify the search of them in their original places by the mean of trips to buy them in original lands. Sure they can be bought in several city supermarkets, but to consume them where they are produced is now a reason to do tourism. Motivations to engage oneself in a trip are changing along time and places, but healthy reasons are now, and have been in the past, the most important. Today, environmental concerns are strongly pressing, because healthy troubles derive to individuals from pollution. Due to that, people are now looking for clean localities and sure food, avoiding chemical preservatives. The abuse of junk food is causing severe illnesses in the developed countries, but the care of these illnesses can be more expansive than food itself, even the medicines can be sometime more threatening than the infirmities themselves. Considering that, it would be worthy to spend money in good food. Another reason consists in the fact that expensive food was very limited in the past and it could be afforded only by the richest ones; it was so difficult to have it that it was assumed as a symbol of power. At the beginning of the past century, precious food started to be consumed not only by the rich, but also by the middle class, and at the end of the past century it started to be consumed by the population at large. A negative consequence can derive only from the abuse of consumerism; food can transform itself in a danger, because a limit is necessary in food undertaking. For that reason, the stronger economic possibilities of the industrialised countries should be transformed in quality instead of quantity (Taylor, 1989, Schilling 1993, Jenkins, 1998, Levenstein, 1998, Khare 1999, Teodori, 2005). Another change in travel practices is visible; it consists in buying original food samples during tourist transfers, instead of buying other banal souvenirs from foreign countries, such as puppets or Teddy bears. Tourism creates consume occasions for foreigners demanding souvenirs tied to land and history, and for nationals who feel a sense of national pride. Direct purchase from peasants is of mutual benefit for both producers and consumers. Recognising the beneficial influence of culinary tourism in specific areas, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and local administrations too are frequently promoting exhibitions, local events or festivities, to celebrate precious alimentary products. In Italy there are many hierarchical administrations and all are active in promoting food celebration with dances, music and other form of spectacle. In fact the Italian government recognises four thousand farm output and 149 of them are

internationally branded by EU. These products become selected images of the country attractiveness at the same time as handicraft, architecture and pieces of masterwork. Food celebration can help to acknowledge the social and cultural processes which both inform and are informed by economic and political change, influencing tourism movements.

Conclusions

The need of being part of natural processes appears in the return to the nature with the consequent condemnation of energy depletion, resources ravage, stuff damage and money waste. The refusal of *conspicuous consumption* matches with the use of simple food, natural make up and medicine (Veblen, 1889). Local governments generally assist this process by imposing special brands that give support to the protection and preservation of the quality and originality of the products, an aspect which became particularly important after realizing that sophistications may cause illnesses or even death. Reduction in food prices has brought on a consideration that some kind of food is a kind of privilege for few people, hence the revaluation of typical and labeled food products. This is supported by European Community and national policies, and confirmed by an increasing cultural education that requires a complex and wide knowledge in order to consume food. Then, the emerging concept of wellness imposes on individuals the interest for self care, fitness, as well as diets, supposed to have a proactive function on health. People are nowadays more attentive to good nutrition, because good quality food prevents the body being sick. The increase in cardio circulatory diseases, bones and earth diseases is seen as a result of bad eating habits. More attention to health, hygiene and better environment implies the need for a more essential life style which underlines the eco- sensitivity in its literal sense.

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