

TERRA. Revista de Desarrollo Local

e-ISSN: 2386-9968

Número 6 (2020), 42-63

DOI 10.7203/terra.6.16145

IIDL – Instituto Interuniversitario de Desarrollo Local

Gastronomy as a tourist attraction resource in Cullera (Valencia)

Teresa Armengot Calabuig

Graduada en Geografía y Medio Ambiente (Universitat de València, España)

Agent de Desenvolupament Local (Ajuntament de Cullera, València)

teresaarmengot@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6475-5029>



Esta obra se distribuye con la licencia Creative Commons
Reconocimiento-NoComercial-SinObraDerivada 4.0 Internacional

ARTICLE SECTION

Gastronomy as a tourist attraction resource in Cullera (Valencia)

Abstract: beyond the fact that it is a relatively recent phenomenon, gastronomy, as a tourist attraction, has become increasingly important in Spain. The present research is about whether there is a gastronomic tourism in the Valencian municipality of Cullera, known for the sun and beach offer and its important heritage, which make this area of the coast privileged. This municipality is compatible with the activities of the tourist industry with a traditional economy, such as rice growing, citrus cultivations and orchard growing, which are highly valued, since they have a history rooted in customs and traditions, which have been developing new trends and products open today in the international market. In Cullera, beaches, heritage and catering industry are potential tools for the tourist offer. But, is there a real gastronomic tourism in Cullera?.

Key words: local product, traditions, taste, hostelry, recognition.

Recibido: 25 de noviembre de 2019

Devuelto tras primera revisión: 26 de diciembre de 2019

Devuelto tras segunda revisión: 28 de enero de 2020

Aceptado: 19 de febrero de 2020

Citation:

Armengot, T. (2020). Gastronomy as a tourist attraction resource in Cullera (Valencia). *TERRA. Revista de Desarrollo Local*, (6), 42-63. DOI 10.7203/terra.6.16145

EXTENDED ABSTRACT¹

The tourism industry has seen a situation of specialization and expansion of various brands in leisure material, at the point of existing names typologies. One of them is known as gastronomic tourism, which consists in the displacement of the tourist who sits down at attention for the gastronomy of the chosen zone, to taste and to know it is typical products.

In addition, gastronomy represents an opportunity to dynamism and diversifies tourism it promotes local economic development, involves various professional sectors (products, kitchens, markets, etc.) and incorporates our uses in the primary sector. This has resulted in the creation of a gastronomic offer based on local quality products and the consolidation of a market for gastronomic tourism.

The activities of gastronomic tourism are not only focused on restaurants, but also on visits to markets, local food shops, visits to houses of villagers, local festivals, etc. Discovering our flavors and ways of cooking is a way of doing tourism in which the gastronomy of the region visited is the predominant activity. It is aimed at all kinds of people willing to experience new culinary experiences. The gastronomic tourist is the one who travel to eat, to experience and taste local and fresh products; in the world there are different gastronomic activities that are carried out.

That is why this research proposes the analysis of gastronomic tourism as a first-rate territorial resource for Cullera, and to determine if it can be considered as a gastronomic destination or at least some areas of its municipality. The choice of object of study has several reasons: the first, because it has been declared a tourist municipality since the beginning of the 21st century and the creation of this study to see how the typology has evolved from a tourist point of view gastronomic; and the second because Cullera is a tourist town that has many resources to enhance it in different aspects, such as in the case of gastronomy.

For the elaboration of the present research work, the main objective of which is to analyze the existence of gastronomic tourism, it has been decided to use the following methodology.

The technique of qualitative research has been chosen because the object of study can be multi-method, that is to say, using diverse techniques of information collection at the same time. Moreover, it has also followed a participatory research, in which there have been several exchanges of knowledge with the participation of the subjects researched, in order to understand the causes, the problems, and the concerns of different groups. For one group, which reviews the bibliography, special attention has been paid to the evolution of gastronomic tourism as a resource, differentiating the possible stages; for another group, using the analyst of data from different sources of information, such as the Internet: i) World Tourism Organization; ii) the Newspapers of the main national and regional newspapers, such as Levante- EMV from Spain, El País from Spain, Las Provincias from Spain, and El Periodico from Spain; iii) photographys from the Tourist Information Office of the municipality, the Cultural Association La Penyeta from Cullera, and Valencia Tourist Agency's Data Bank.

Nowadays, Cullera has approximately one thousand apartments distributed all over the coast, almost three hundred apartments more than in 2017, which means a high number

¹ Authors' exclusive translation.

of residences to be inhabited by tourist. Many restaurants are intended for residential tourism where the purchasing power is low. The offer is high in terms of quality and affordable prices. This is the touristiest area such as San Antonio Beach and Raco Beach. The prices vary around the number of euros on the menu, and the average price is about thirty euros. The tourist who visit these restaurants are families, foreigners who spend the night in a hostel or hotel, residents of the town and Spanish tourists who have a residence in the area.

The most outstanding restaurants are located in prestigious areas, normally old farmhouses or farm where their cooking facilities are located. There areas close to the beach, or the river, or even the camps, where fishing and farming were the main suppliers of these establishments. In addition to a traditional kitchen, there was only one wood-fired stove where dinars were served at a low price, but the raw material was excellent, as the product was from nearby.

Gastronomic tourism is a very transversal product. An emerging mode is in great demand in the first decade of the 21st century. The tourist seeks to taste the typical products of the geographical area he or she is visiting, learn about the production process and enjoy the cultural and culinary heritage. It is necessary to undertake the field work in order to work out and estimate some condition, with the aim of analyzing what is the reason and the causes that provoke the tourism to come to Cullera.

Another important point is in relation to the 1995 General Plan for Urban Planning, where industrial zones and residential expansion zones focused on tourism are considered. There expansions have not been completed due to the economic crisis that will begin in 2007. This is a second opportunity to rethink what type of tourism is to be promoted in the territory, which includes the considerations of environmental respect and the requirements of sustainability. It should be noted, therefore, that the City Council has focused more on sun and beach tourism, in a cultural and gastronomic tourism of certain quality, as well the sign of “zero kilometer product”.

To affirm that Cullera is a gastronomic town can be a motive of dispute according to the perspective of where you look at it. The opening months of the restaurants stand out for their seasonality, coinciding with the massive arrival of tourist, especially those who come to the neighborhood of San Antonio beach, Raco beach, Faro beach and Dossel beach, which is the entire area along the beach. However, not all those who come to Cullera stand out for their seasonality, but the opposite. There restaurants are open all year round and include restaurants such as Casa Rocher restaurant, Picanterra restaurant, La Mar Salà restaurant and Casa Salvador restaurant, among others. The shops don't respond to a seasonality, as they are open all year round and include the Cullera market, the cooperative, the different commercial food establishment (fishmongers, butcher shop, fruit shop, among other), and the municipal market.

For this reason, and taking into account the previous considerations, gastronomic tourism in Cullera is not very developed in general, but there is a “gastronomic” tourism in those specific locations where are privileged areas, such as in the case of the pond and the lagoon or on the Dossel plate, where bet on a quality cuisine and “zero kilometer raw materials” among others. It is not important the quantity of restaurants and shops that Cullera has, but the quality of the work that is done there, because the gastronomic tourist is moving specifically to eat and buy that product.