

Exploring the intention-behaviour gap for tourists' consumption of local food: A case of South East Queensland, Australia

Abstract

Food tourism is a growing phenomenon with a particular emphasis on experiencing authentic and traditional local foods (Bessièrè, 1998; Cianflone & Cardile, 2014). The World Food Travel Association (2015) define food tourism as “the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experiences, both far and near.” While drivers and barriers to local food consumption have been well researched (e.g. Kemp, Insch, Holdsworth, & Knight, 2010; Megicks, Memery & Angell, 2012; Selfa & Qazi, 2005), motivations for tourists consuming local foods are less well understood (Kim & Eves, 2012). In this paper, the findings of an online survey of 546 visitors to South East Queensland Australia which sought to identify future and past visitors' beliefs and attitudes toward local food and drivers and barriers to local food consumption is reported. While positive beliefs about purchasing local food are shared by both past and future visitors, in general, past visitors held less favourable attitudes toward local food and beverage than future visitors. The most important drivers for both past and future visitors for buying local food concerned the intrinsic qualities of the product itself including freshness and taste, with future visitors being more concerned about the health aspects of the product and being free from preservatives or chemicals. Support for local producers was also an important driver for both past and future visitors, however past visitors were more concerned about support for local retailers than were past visitors. Future visitors were more likely to agree that they would buy local food due to traceability, being traditional to the area, and interesting and novel. Past visitors were less likely than future visitors to agree that local food was good value for money, widely available, branded and easily recognizable as local or that local food could be trusted. While future visitors had high intention to purchase local foods, an intention-purchase gap is evident with past visitors purchasing less than anticipated, possibly due to perceived barriers associated with inadequate marketing and distribution, lack of information on where to find local food, lack of availability, expense and perceived inconvenience. Recommendations for local food producers and suppliers include improved marketing, branding and distribution.

References

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