

# WINE ROUTES: DEVELOPMENT OF WINE REGIONS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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## ABSTRACT

Wine tourism an emerging tourism product, has an increasingly important role in the wine regions' development and promotion (Bras, 2010). Wine tourism was born from the union of two completely different industries (Hjalager & Richards, 2002): wine industry which is typically oriented to the product and for the wine production and tourism which works to accommodate the tourist. Each wine-growing region has been developing various forms of wine tourism, through wine fairs and festivals, the constitution of wine museums and enoteca / interpretation centers, visits to wineries and cellars, visits to vineyards and farms, wine tastings, wine-growing spas, wine-growing villages and wine routes (Costa, 2014). Wine routes are privileged instruments for the organization and dissemination of wine tourism (Correia, 2005), were created in Europe from the post-war period (Hall & Mitchell, 2000) and comprise one or more signaled pathways that run through a wine region (Brás, Costa, & Buhalis, 2010). Wine routes can help redesign the economies of rural areas (Scherrer, Alonso, & Sheridan, 2009), are an important tourist product in the world (Correia, Passos Ascensão, & Charters, 2004). The National Tourism Strategic Plan (2012), have on the analysis of the great trends of international demand, identified the gastronomy and the wine as one of the ten strategic products for the development of the national tourism (MEE, 2012). The cultivation of vines and the consumption of wine in Portugal are older than their own nationality (Hall & Mitchell, 2000). Wine consumption is associated with relaxation, social interaction and hospitality (Barber, Taylor & Deale, 2010). Portugal is one of the largest wine producers in the world (IVV, 2014). Wine production is one of the activities that have contributed most to the development of the economy (Guedes, 2006). The wine routes are one of the most visible aspects of the practice of wine tourism in Portugal (Simões, 2008). They were created by the initiative of wine producers in 1993 to increase the promotion and sale of their products and to develop the tourism potential of the different wine-growing regions in several areas, such as: culture, history, traditions, built heritage and landscape (Costa & Kastenholz, 2009). Wine routes are nowadays considered as a tourism product with great potential for the development of tourist destinations (Jurincic & Bojnec, 2009). This work aims at analyzing wine routes as a means of developing wine-growing regions, economically, socially and environmentally, and as an opportunity to promote positive images of wine-growing regions, using as a methodological support a literature review. It is also intended to propose an empirical study of the two aspects of wine routes in Portugal: (i) supply, in particular the characteristics and conditions of the routes; and (ii) search, specifically the profile of the wine tourist, his motivations, image of the wine tourism destinations and their degree of satisfaction.

**KEY WORDS:** Wine tourism, wine routes, development, wine regions, local communities.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Wine routes are privileged instruments for the organization and dissemination of wine tourism (Correia, 2005), were created in Europe from the post-war period (Hall & Mitchell, 2000) and comprise one or more signaled pathways that run through a wine region (Brás, Costa, & Buhalis, 2010). Wine routes can help redesign the economies of rural areas (Scherrer, Alonso, & Sheridan,

2009), are an important tourist product in the world (Correia, Passos Ascensão, & Charters, 2004).

The National Tourism Strategic Plan (2012), have on the analysis of the great trends of international demand, identified the gastronomy and the wine as one of the ten strategic products for the development of the national tourism (MEE, 2012). The cultivation of vines and the consumption of wine in Portugal are older than their own

nationality (Hall & Mitchell, 2000). Wine consumption is associated with relaxation, social interaction and hospitality (Barber, Taylor & Deale, 2010).

Portugal is one of the largest wine producers in the world (IVV, 2014). Wine production is one of the activities that have contributed most to the development of the economy (Guedes, 2006). The wine routes are one of the most visible aspects of the practice of wine tourism in Portugal (Simões, 2008). They were created by the initiative of wine producers in 1993 to increase the promotion and sale of their products and to develop the tourism potential of the different wine-growing regions (Marques, 2001), in several areas, such as: culture, history, traditions, built heritage and landscape (Costa & Kastenholz, 2009).

This work aims at analyzing wine routes as a means of developing wine-growing regions, economically, socially and environmentally, and as an opportunity to promote positive images of wine-growing regions, using as a methodological support a literature review. It is also intended to propose an empirical study of the two aspects of wine routes in Portugal: (i) supply, in particular the characteristics and conditions of the routes; and (ii) search, specifically the profile of the wine tourist, his motivations, image of the wine tourism destinations and their degree of satisfaction.

## 2. WINE TOURISM

In the decade of 90 of century XX appeared the first definition of wine tourism, as a special interest trip focused on wine mediated by the characteristics or attributes of a wine region and wine tasting, or both (Macionis, 1997). Later, other researchers concluded that wine is the main motivation offered to tourists when visiting a wine region, for which they define wine tourism as visits to vineyards, wineries, wine and grape festivals and events, to taste wine and / or to experience the attributes of a region (Hall & Macionis, 1998). This tourism product is based on the attractiveness of a region, its attributes, patrimonial characteristics, landscapes and wines produced (Van Westering, 1999).

Wine tourism is part of the Gastronomy and Wine sector and is characterized by a significant number of activities that provides the tourists' contact with the culture of vine and wine, such as: wine-growing activities, wine products and landscape heritage, and architecture (MEI, 2007).

The culture of wine is part of the cultural and social history of a territory is an element of Portugal identity. There are some objects and archaeological sites that testify to the production of wine in Portugal since medieval times (Marques & Eusébio, 2007). Portugal is one of the largest producers and exporters of wine worldwide (IVV, 2014). Wine production is one of the activities that has contributed most to the development of the economy (Guedes, 2006).

However, wine tourism is currently comprised of a wide range of activities (Clemente-Ricolfe, Escribá-Pérez, Rodríguez-Barrio, & Buitrago-Vera, 2012), such as:

- (i) Economic - purchase of wine (Alant & Bruwer, 2004) and local products (Getz & Brown, 2006);
- (ii) Cultural - visits to museums, interpretive centers of wine and vine culture (López-Guzmán, Vázquez de la Torre, Caridad, & Ocerin, 2008), tastings wine and local produce in the wineries (Brunori & Rossi, 2000);
- (iii) Tourism - participation in wine fairs and festivals (Bruwer, 2014), visits to wineries, cellars (Hall & Mitchell, 2000), vineyards (Bruwer, 2003), monuments (Correia et al., 2004) and natural heritage (Ravenscroft & Van Westering, 2001);
- (iv) Social - visitors have contact with the experiences and local traditions, and local residents (Carmichael, 2005);
- (v) Sports - horse riding, cycling (Correia et al., 2004) balloon rides, and extreme sports (Gonçalves, Completo, Moreira, Reis, Gustavo, & Aureliano, 2016);
- (vi) Health and well-being - the wine has antioxidant properties, the consumption of wine and its derivatives, for therapeutic purposes as a component of wellness / spa centers (Gonçalves, et al., 2006; Higgins & Llanos, 2015);
- (vii) Pedagogical - visitors have the opportunity to learn something about wine and its culture, within an educational experience logic (Bruwer, 2003; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002).

Wine tourism is not exclusive to the rural world. Many of the activities developed for wine tourists are also carried out in urban spaces (Inácio, 2007). Wine festivals and fairs, for example, are short-lived events (Bruwer, 2014), which generally take place in urban spaces (Vaz, 2008), being important marketing tools for wine-growing regions and for the individual wine producers (Bruwer, 2014). It is also an opportunity for local communities to promote their identity and tourism resources abroad (Inbakaran & Jackson, 2005), to create brand awareness, loyalty, educate, entertain and encourage future visits (Bruwer, 2014). The wine routes are another example of activity very much sought after by wine tourists in rural and urban environments, they even have the beginning and end in urban spaces, for the most part. Some cellars, museums and interpretive centers for wine and vineyards are strategically located in cities with medium or high population densities (Vaz, 2008).

This increasing in wine-related activities makes the concept of wine tourism more comprehensive, as it is a vast array of experiences built around visits to wine regions or wine-related events - which include wine tasting and experience of a wide variety of cultural activities and of lifestyle (Geibler, 2007).

### 3. WINE ROUTES

The wine routes are one or several signposted itineraries that cover a well-defined area - region, province and denomination area, congregate wineries, vineyards, wine tasting centers, wine museums and rural accommodation, that connect different winery properties and wineries of a certain area (Bruwer, 2003). They are the result of a collective action (Correia, et al., 2004), of public and private interests for the constitution of one or several itineraries, inviting visitors to discover wines and activities of a specific region.

The routes can be traveled by bicycle, horse, car or other means of transport, allowing contact with the cultural and natural heritage of a certain region (Getz, 2000), to contemplate the vineyards, to enter a museum, to taste the typical gastronomy of the region and to visit interpretative centers of wine and vineyard (García, López-Guzmán, Ruíz, & García, 2010). In this context, wine routes are an important marketing tool (Jurincic & Bojnec, 2009) for the dinamization of wine regions, for the preservation of the authenticity of each region through the dissemination of

handicrafts, landscape, architectural, museological and gastronomic heritage (Costa & Kastenholz, 2009; Inácio, 2010).

Since the post-war period wine routes were extended, in particular, to all European wine-producing countries (Hall & Mitchell, 2000). Most of the wine routes created on the "Old Continent" were almost always the initiative of wine industry entities that wanted to increase the promotion and sale of their products and with financial support from the European Community (Correia, 2005).

The implementation of wine routes in Portugal started in 1993, together with eight European regions, under the Dionisios International Cooperation Program promoted by the European Union in the framework of CAP reform - Common Agricultural Policy (Simões, 2008). Later, in 1996, the first wine route - Port Wine Route (Lourenço-Gomes, Pinto, & Rebelo, 2015) was inaugurated. Currently, according to the Tourism of Portugal, there are 12 wine routes, which mostly bear the name of the wine or the wine region where they have been implemented (MEE, 2011), with different varieties of wine, and also, with particularities Historical and cultural (see Table I)

**Table 1.** Wine Routes in Portugal

Wine Routes	Inauguration	Head office	Coordinating Entity
Wine Route of Porto	1996	Peso da Régua	Wine Route of Porto - Association of Adherents
Route of the Vineyard and the Wine of the West	1997	Óbidos	Region of Tourism of the Center / Office of the Route of the Wine of the West
Green Wine Route	1997	Porto	Center for Information and Promotion of Green Wines
Wine Route Alentejo	1997	Évora	Office of the Alentejo Wine Route
Wine Route Dão	1998	Viseu	Regional Wine Commission of Dão
Route of the Vineyard and the Wine of Ribatejo	1998	Santarém	Association of the Route of the Wine and Vineyard of Ribatejo
Vineyard Route of the Beira Interior	1998	Guarda	Regional Wine Commission of the Beira Interior
Vineyard Route of the Cister	1998	Moimenta da Beira	Regional Wine Commission of the Távora Varosa
Wine Route of the Bairrada	1998	Anadia	Bairrada Wine Commission
Wine Route of the Costa Azul	2000	Palmela	Mother House of the Wine Route
Wine Route of the Bucelas, Carcavelos e Colares	2003	Bucelas	Regional Wine Commission of the Bucelas, Carcavelos e Colares and Municipality of Loures
Wine Route of the Algarve	2014	Lagos	Algarve Wine Commission

Source: Authors

Wine routes present a set of similar offerings: wine tasting and sale, visits to wineries, vineyards, museums and thematic collections when they exist (Simões, 2008). In addition to wine, along the wine routes, tourists can enjoy the beauty of the natural landscape, farms and the richness of its historical, architectural and cultural heritage, unique and rich gastronomy (Correia, 2005; ICEP, 2000).

Despite apparent dynamism and organization, wine routes aren't still a consolidated product. There are few cellars and restaurants with infrastructure and services suitable

for tourism activity, such as opening hours, signalization, suitable places for visits, wine tastings and events, and with qualified personnel who speak foreign languages fluently (THR, 2006). It is also common for wine producers themselves or their families to carry out visits to the wine cellars. In general, there are no employees assigned to the winery in direct contact with the public (THR, 2006).

The wine routes comprise a diverse group of members: associations of winegrowers, cooperative wineries, warehouses, winemakers, producing farms, rural tourism

enterprises, restaurants and other centers of winemaking interest, which are organized in a network (Brás, 2010). With different states of development and growth (Correia, 2005). The development of wine routes can provide added value at various levels, for winegrowers, cellars and wineries, for the wine-growing regions and for the local community.

The wine is usually identified by its designation of origin, and therefore, like tourism, it promotes certain regions and destinations (Bras, 2010). The wine routes can be assumed as a complete destination, bringing together the main attractions of wine, gastronomy, cultural heritage, housing, a schedule of events, planned activities and a set of territorial service offering, essential components for promoting tourism in a wine-growing region (Correia, 2005).

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The wine routes, which have existed in Portugal since 1996, constitute a tourist product with great potential for the development of the wine regions. This paper analyzes the 12 wine routes in Portugal in a methodological framework proposed to evaluate the various aspects of the implementation, maintenance and sustainable use of the routes and the sustainable development of the local communities where they are inserted. It is proposed to use a check list proposed by Getz (2000). According to this author, the wine routes should follow the following principles:

- (i) The wine route should be easy to navigate;
- (ii) Provide maps and guides and place signs along the route;
- (iii) Associate activities (accommodation, catering, animation, etc.) and resources to the route to improve visitor satisfaction;
- (iv) Facilitate the use of the route by all, that is, visitors and residents;
- (v) Establish links with other local, regional and national routes or circuits;
- (vi) Integrate in the route planning the strategies of the activities, equipment and services that belong to the route;
- (vii) Engage public and private partners and investors;
- (viii) The circuits should facilitate the management of the visitors' flow, avoiding high concentrations of visitors in a given location and encouraging the preservation of more sensitive or fragile areas;
- (ix) Define the reception capacity of visitors on the route and in the region;
- (x) Develop marketing strategies from the implementation of the route in order to identify and capture the most indicated market segments;
- (xi) Establish permanent monitoring and maintenance of the pre-defined strategy, including gathering feedback from visitors and agents on the route.

This checklist together with other measuring instruments will allow access to a number of key aspects in assessing the relationship of wine tourism operators with the routes, places and destinations they visit in their wine tourism activities. It is intended to complement the use of that instrument with a questionnaire to evaluate the following aspects of wine tourists:

- (i) Sociodemographic profile of the wine tourist in Portugal;
- (ii) Motivation of wine tourists specifically push and pull factors (Alant & Bruwer, 2004); Cohen, 2009; Correia, Oom do Valle, & Moço, 2007; Galloway, Mitchell, Getz & Ong, 2008; Getz & Brown, 2006; Hanqin & Lam, 1999; Jaffe & Pasternak, 2004; Lau & McKercher, 2004; Mohammad & Som, 2010; Silva, Abrantes & Lages, 2009);
- (iii) Image of affective and cognitive destination (Kim & Richardson, 2003; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002)
- (iv) Level of satisfaction, more specifically perceived value (Bruwer, 2003; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Kastenholz, 2002; Lee, Yoon, & Lee; 2013), Overall Satisfaction (Bruwer, 2014; Jaffe & Pasternak, 2004; Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu, & Haydam, 2012) e Loyalty (Getz, 2000; Yoon & Uysal, 2005);
- (v) Future intentions of behavior, including intentions to return and recommend especially in the e-WOM (Abrantes, Seabra, Lages, & Jayawardhena, 2013).

#### 5. EXPECTED RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

At present, rural areas are becoming depopulated due to rural exodus and emigration. The outflow of people from rural areas has brought enormous imbalances to the economy, society and the environment (Correia, 2005). In recent years, some strategies have been developed to keep local traditions, customs and lifestyles alive, and to revitalize agricultural spaces (Costa & Kastenholz, 2009).

Wine tourism should not be restricted to wine-growing units with the capacity to receive visitors. It can play an important role in regional development; it can help prevent desertification and the constraints of some rural areas. The wine tourism can alleviate socio-economic imbalances and improve the quality of life of local communities, support traditional culture, promote the recovery of historic sites and the territorial conservation. Taking into account its importance, it is necessary to analyze consumer behavior and especially what may motivate tourists to look for wine destinations.

Thus, the study of the supply and demand of wine tourism assumes itself as fundamental. On the supply side, it is important to understand the state of wine routes in Portugal, its strengths and weaknesses in order to better understand where to act. On the demand side it is fundamental to know the wine tourism in Portugal, who they are, how they behave and what they want. The results of this study are important for destination managers and organizations that want to obtain competitive advantages

in this market. It will be possible to build marketing strategies, specifically, segmentation, communication, distribution and product design more appropriate to this demanding but equally lucrative market. As a suggestion of future research, it is recommended to know and understand the needs of wine tourism companies and the quality of the services offered by these companies to tourists.

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