

**Analysis of the impact of traditional cuisine on loyalty to a
World Heritage destination**

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Abstract

The traditional gastronomy of a territory reflects the history and customs of populations that have inhabited it over time and left the imprint of their respective cultures. This research focuses on traditional gastronomy in World Heritage cities. It delves into the concept of visitors' loyalty to cities listed as World Heritage sites, with the aim of providing results that can help improve the management of the tourist destination in question. To do so, a questionnaire was given to a sample of 154 visitors to Córdoba, a World Heritage city. Structural equation modelling is then used to test, and ultimately confirm, five proposed hypotheses. The analysis includes traditional gastronomy as a factor that affects satisfaction with the destination, satisfaction with the restaurant and visitors' loyalty to the city. Results show that traditional gastronomy in World Heritage cities has a very significant influence on satisfaction with the destination and satisfaction with the restaurant itself. Consequently, this finding highlights the importance of supporting traditional gastronomy in those destinations that have it and promoting it abroad. In addition, a number of areas for improvement have been identified: enhancing the local population's awareness of their own gastronomy; the professionalization of gastronomy in restaurants' front and back of house; and highlighting the cultural legacy of traditional gastronomy and improving the information provided about it. Therefore, this study is important for the tourism management of heritage cities to make them stand out from other similar destinations.

Keywords: traditional, cuisine, management, loyalty, satisfaction,

1. Introduction

In recent years, tourists' attitudes have been changing, and gastronomic tourism has undergone rapid development, with emerging trends such as fusion and molecular cuisine (Vega and Ubbink, 2008). However, many tourists prefer to try local food during their holidays, and this is often one of their key motivations for travelling to a destination. (Türker and Süzer, 2022). Thus, tourists' strong interest in food in a heritage tourism setting calls for a deeper understanding of this concept (Almansouri et al., 2022). The gastronomic culture of a territory cannot be considered as an isolated feature (Ellis et al., 2018; De Albuquerque et al., 2019); rather it is the product of the different cultures and civilizations that have populated a territory. Even in migratory movements, it can be seen how gastronomy is taken from one region to another and adapted to the new territory (Nyamnjoh, 2018). Only catastrophes where a civilization was completely wiped out resulted in the loss of a cuisine transmitted from generation to generation. Over time, the sum of the different cultures in a single territory gives rise to a wider cuisine (Guerrero et al., 2009). For World Heritage cities, this culinary heritage can be a differentiating factor in the choice of a destination.

Although the fundamental motivations for visiting such a city are the features for which it is listed as a World Heritage Site, there are a number of additional factors (Bonetti et al., 2014) that can also play an important part in the choice: transport, the

47 political situation, the country's food security, gender (Remoalda et al., 2014), and
48 traditional gastronomy. This study focuses on the importance of traditional gastronomy
49 in World Heritage city destinations.

50 The traditional gastronomy of a region is recognized as an important feature of
51 World Heritage cities (Bessière, 1998; Pearson and Pearson, 2017; Meneguel et al.,
52 2022); however, there are very few studies of how it influences visitors' satisfaction with
53 restaurants in the city or the destination itself, or their intention to recommend the city or
54 make a repeat visit. This study contributes to the literature by reporting evidence on these
55 issues.

56 Thus, the objective of this article is to add to the research on gastronomy as a
57 fundamental element in the choice to visit a heritage destination. This study identifies
58 different items that account for the impact of traditional gastronomy on World Heritage
59 cities, can help improve the management of tourism in cities that have a unique heritage,
60 and provides useful information for both managers of World Heritage cities and
61 professionals working in the field of gastronomy and heritage. The research delves into
62 aspects such as satisfaction with restaurants and the destination itself, along with the
63 variables relating to traditional gastronomy in cities with a strong heritage component.
64 The related scientific literature (e.g., Ashworth and Page, 2011) addresses traditional
65 gastronomy in heritage cities from two perspectives: studies on the direct impact of
66 traditional cuisine on destination loyalty, which are very scarce, with this article making
67 a contribution in this regard; and studies on satisfaction with restaurants and loyalty, a
68 topic that has been more extensively studied in academia. Another element that makes
69 this research novel is the application of structural equation modelling (SEM) to explore
70 the relationship between traditional gastronomy and a heritage destination. Given all of
71 the above, this article represents a contribution to the limited knowledge on the subject.
72 Following this introduction, the rest of this article is structured as follows: The second
73 section describes the theoretical framework on the impact of traditional cuisine on
74 destinations, satisfaction with the restaurants that offer such cuisine, satisfaction with the
75 destination and visitors' subsequent loyalty to the destination. The third section presents
76 a conceptual model with the five hypotheses to be tested. The fourth section outlines the
77 methodology used and the results of the research. The fifth section discusses the results,
78 while the final section sets out the conclusions and lists the references used.

79

80 **2. Theoretical background**

81

82 2.1. The impact of traditional cuisine on destination loyalty

83 The importance of traditional cuisine as a significant factor in destination choice
84 has been studied for countries such as Albania (Brokaj, 2014), Korea (Kim et al., 2008)
85 and Spain (Antón et al., 2019) among others. Academic research has shown how, from
86 the visitor's point of view, traditional gastronomy is an important element of intangible
87 heritage. For example, the study by Vázquez-Medina and Medina (2020) focusing on
88 Mexican cuisine shows how UNESCO's designation of this cuisine as intangible human
89 heritage has made it a resource for gastronomic tourism, where the State has commodified
90 traditional culinary knowledge as a tool for the promotion of tourism. Likewise, other
91 studies focusing on this country, specifically the work carried out with traditional cooks
92 in the state of Coahuila, confirm the importance of traditional cuisine for the identity and
93 sustainable development of the region (Cortes et al., 2020).

94

95 Therefore, tasting traditional dishes increases tourists' knowledge about local cuisine
96 while also giving them a sensory pleasure (Chang et al., 2011; Henderson, 2009) that
97 generates feelings and emotions (Kivela and Crotts, 2006), thus reinforcing their
98 involvement in the local culture of the destination (Hernández-Rojas et al., 2020).

99 In the same vein, studies on the general image and aesthetics of gastronomy reveal
100 the importance of traditional cuisine in destination choice and confirm that visitors
101 positively associate traditional local cuisines with the identity of a place (Hudson et al.,
102 2019; Wang and López, 2020). Thus, the identity of the territory in traditional gastronomy
103 and tourists' interaction with the suppliers of local cuisine are positively associated with
104 their behavioral intentions in terms of revisiting a destination, reflecting the impact of
105 traditional cuisine (Hultman et al., 2017; Kumar and Kaushik, 2020).

106 The abovementioned studies indicate several consequences of the impact of
107 traditional cuisine: first, the local cuisine itself benefits from the support of tourists' visits;
108 secondly, it preserves ancestral customs and traditions; and thirdly, along with the
109 tangible heritage of cities, it can be a way to attract tourists, with the cuisine being one of
110 their main motivations for visiting.

111 2.2. Satisfaction with restaurants serving traditional cuisine

113 The popularity of and interest in traditional cuisine has been gradually increasing
114 in recent years (Ting et al., 2017). As a result, traditional restaurants, mainly located in
115 the historic centers of cities, have been thriving. Different academic studies focus on
116 studying visitors' relationships with local gastronomy in order to improve the
117 management of destinations (Kumar et al., 2020; Kunasegaran et al., 2019). In this sense,
118 authors highlight how destination management includes a focus on traditional restaurants
119 (Hernández-Rojas and Huete Alcocer, 2021). This study shows how a visit to a traditional
120 restaurant affects the likelihood of recommending and repeating a visit to a World
121 Heritage city.

122 There is extensive academic research on satisfaction with restaurants related to
123 prices (Han and Ryu, 2009), restaurant quality (Almohaimmeed, 2017), satisfaction are
124 food quality, appropriate cost, and attentive service (Gupta et al., 2007) and restaurant
125 staff (Alhelalat et al., 2017). Other studies focus on the importance of traditional
126 restaurants (Hernández-Rojas and Huete-Alcocer, 2021), where the taste and quality of
127 the traditional food offered by these restaurants are found to be the attributes that most
128 influenced visitor satisfaction (Carvache-Franco et al., 2021). In this context, there are
129 fewer studies that address satisfaction with traditional restaurants, and a notable lack of
130 scientific studies focused on satisfaction with restaurants serving traditional cuisine in
131 World Heritage cities as a factor of attraction. The present study represents a contribution
132 to the literature in this regard.

133 Some studies (e.g., Wijaya, 2019) describe how the traditional food of a region
134 showcases cultural food habits relating to how people prepare the ingredients, cooking
135 methods and the culture of eating behavior. This traditional food can be tasted in
136 traditional restaurants, which play a key role in preserving and continuing the cultural
137 legacy (Mykletun and Gyimóthy, 2010; Omar and Omar, 2018).

138 2.3. Satisfaction with the tourist destination

140 Academic studies show how tourist satisfaction with a UNESCO World Heritage
141 destination influences loyalty to that destination (Maghsoodi et al., 2016). Satisfaction is

142 one of the most widely researched antecedents of loyalty and in recent years this concept
143 has been the subject of extensive academic discussion in the field of tourism research.

144 According to Ashworth and Page (2011) satisfaction with a destination does not
145 depend only on the experience with tourist services, but is also influenced by many
146 endogenous factors such as safety, hospitality, the friendliness of the local inhabitants,
147 the cleanliness of the destination, the transport infrastructure and the level of visitor
148 management, as well as factors that cannot be controlled but are characteristic of a
149 destination, such as the climate. Alegre and Garau (2011) point to a need to distinguish
150 between the factors that lead to general satisfaction and to dissatisfaction, while some
151 factors can work both ways; the same climate could be a factor that increases tourists'
152 general satisfaction with the destination or that increases general dissatisfaction. Other
153 authors (e.g., Dmitrović et al., 2009) have designed a conceptual model of tourism
154 satisfaction at the destination level, showing that costs and risks (causing disutility),
155 which may also include weather conditions, negatively affect customer satisfaction
156 (Dmitrović et al., 2009).

157 In recent years, other factors such as gastronomy have also been highlighted
158 (Huete-Alcocer and Hernández-Rojas, 2022), especially traditional gastronomy, but no
159 study to date has shown the extent to which it can influence a heritage destination. In
160 general, studies on gastronomy in a destination confirm that it is a factor that can be
161 modified in terms of its management by public administrations and private managers
162 (Robinson and Getz, 2016).

164 2.4 Loyalty to the destination: satisfaction with the destination and satisfaction with 165 traditional restaurants

166 The use of causal models to explore the relationship between tourist satisfaction
167 and behavioral intentions to visit a destination is an ongoing focus of loyalty research
168 (Prayag et al., 2017). There are many academic studies that jointly analyze satisfaction
169 with the destination and tourists' recommendation and repetition intentions. They show
170 how a greater degree of satisfaction with a destination increases the intention to return in
171 both the long and short term (Assaker and Hallak, 2013). That is, if the experience with
172 the destination is positive, the intention to return to it increases over time (Assaker et al.,
173 2011). Therefore, most of the related research agrees that loyalty to the destination is
174 positively influenced by tourists' satisfaction with their own experiences.

175 However, there are very few studies on how loyalty to a destination is influenced
176 by traditional restaurants. Some examine this relationship from the perspective of
177 emotions (Hernández-Rojas and Huete-Alcocer, 2021), while others show that tourists
178 who feel more nostalgia for traditional restaurants perceive their gastronomic experience
179 to be of greater value, which tends to generate greater loyalty intentions (Chen et al.,
180 2020).

181 Finally, with regard to loyalty and its relationship with gastronomy, there have
182 been few scientific attempts to measure it. That said, academia has shown an interest in
183 loyalty with respect to gastronomic tourism (Allan, 2016; Folgado-Fernández et al., 2017;
184 Di-Clemente et al., 2019), albeit not specifically focusing on the direct relationship with
185 traditional cuisine.

190 2.5 Hypothesis development

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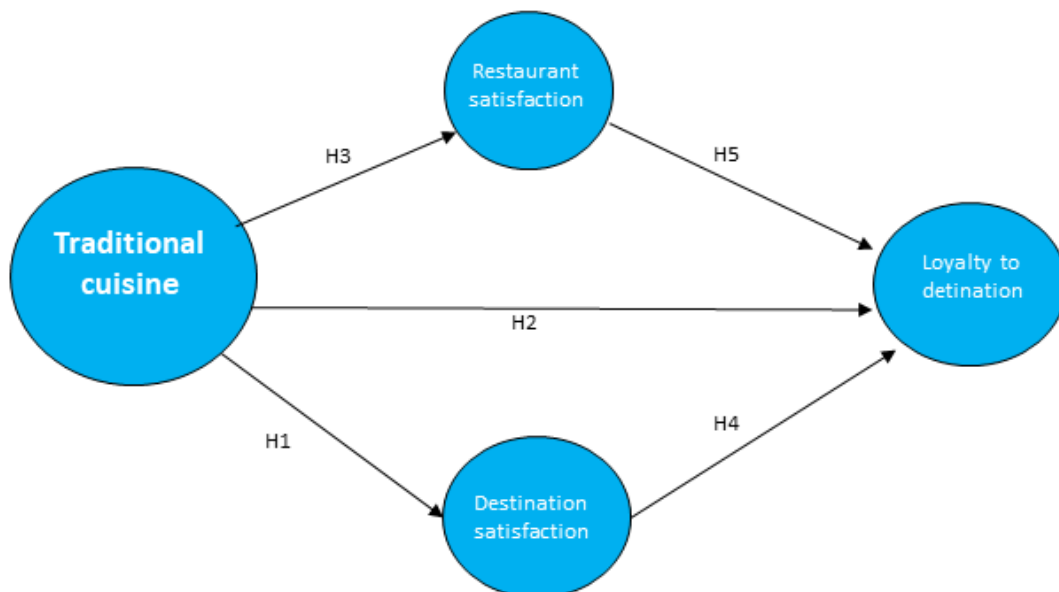
192 Traditional or local cuisine is created and developed in homes. However, with the
193 arrival of visitors and tourists to a territory, the cuisine reaches a larger public. The
194 gastronomic knowledge passed from generation to generation in family cuisine initially
195 serves the family itself. With the arrival of visitors, traditional restaurants based on local
196 gastronomy begin to open and serve the general public. There are factors that modify
197 these traditional dishes over time—forms of food consumption, culinary presentation, or
198 any type of change to adapt to new trends—but without abandoning the culinary roots
199 from which they emerged.

200 Studies such as that by Almansouri et al. (2022) posit that food in places with a
201 heritage component is influenced by social and cultural factors, reflecting an increasingly
202 dynamic authenticity over time. Despite the evolution that traditional cuisine is
203 undergoing, there is a need to protect the authenticity and heritage of the typical recipes
204 and cuisine of a place. Therefore, there is no better place to offer such cuisine than in
205 restaurants located in the historic center of a city listed as a World Heritage site, as is the
206 case under study in this research.

207 Thus, this study proposes a conceptual model that seeks to demonstrate the effect
208 that traditional cuisine has on satisfaction with the destination and on satisfaction with
209 restaurants that offer this type of local food. At the same time, it is aimed at clarifying
210 the direct influence that the local cuisine has on tourists' loyalty to the destination, both
211 attitudinal and behavioral, increasing their intention to recommend or return to the city.
212 The conceptual model proposed and depicted in Figure 1 provides a novel contribution
213 to the literature by highlighting the role of local cuisine in tourists' satisfaction with both
214 local restaurants and the city as a destination, and their subsequent loyalty to the
215 destination. Based on this model, five hypotheses are proposed, which are then tested to
216 shed light on the relevance of traditional cuisine.

217

218 **Figure 1. Conceptual model**



219

220

221 *H1: Traditional cuisine positively and significantly influences tourists’*
222 *satisfaction with a World Heritage destination.*

224 *H2: Traditional cuisine positively and significantly influences tourists’ loyalty to*
225 *a World Heritage destination.*

227 *H3: Traditional cuisine positively and significantly influences tourists’*
228 *satisfaction with traditional restaurants.*

230 *H4: Tourists’ satisfaction with a World Heritage destination positively and*
231 *significantly influences their loyalty to it.*

233 *H5: Tourists’ satisfaction with traditional restaurants positively and*
234 *significantly influences their loyalty to a World Heritage destination.*

236 **3 Methodology**

237 3.1. Data collection and coding procedure

239
240 This research applies a quantitative approach to test the hypotheses raised. The data
241 used come from a sample of 154 tourists who had enjoyed traditional cuisine in
242 restaurants in the historic center of Córdoba (Spain), a World Heritage city.

243 The information was collected through a questionnaire with 24 questions to be answered
244 on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was designed to measure the four constructs
245 in this research: the traditional cuisine of this city, satisfaction with restaurants that offer
246 this type of food, especially in the historic center, satisfaction with the destination in
247 general, and tourists’ loyalty to this destination, especially due to the restaurants. A series
248 of questions on sociodemographic characteristics were also included, making it possible
249 to define the profile of the tourist interviewed. The typical respondent was a middle-aged
250 woman (85% of respondents were women, 35% were between 40-59 years old), with
251 higher education, specifically a university degree (5.6%). Almost half of the tourists
252 interviewed (49.4%) came from other provinces in Andalusia. This may be due to the fact
253 that the survey was conducted in November 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic,
254 meaning that most of the visitors to the city were domestic tourists, and lived relatively
255 nearby.

256 The proposed theoretical model is of a reflective nature and consists of four
257 constructs. The method used to analyze the model was partial least squares SEM (PLS-
258 SEM), which involves evaluating and confirming the validity and reliability of the
259 measurement model, before examining the structural model to reveal the relationships
260 between the theoretical constructs (Hair et al., 2011). To do so, SmartPLS 3 and SPSS
261 Statistics software were used.

262 **4. Results and discussion**

263 4.1. Evaluation of the measurement model: validity and reliability

264
265 First, the individual reliability of the indicators was assessed (Table 1). For this
266 purpose, the factor loadings of the items used in the questionnaire were calculated, and
267
268

269 those that were greater than or equal to 0.707 were deemed acceptable (Carmines and
 270 Zeller, 1979).

271

272 **Table 1. Measurement model results**

Factor	Items	Loading
Traditional cuisine	TC1: Córdoba is a city known for its gastronomy	.703
	TC2: Córdoba is a city known for its tangible heritage	.802
	TC3 The local cuisine in Córdoba has a good reputation	.846
	TC4: The cuisine has tradition and roots in the local population	.748
Restaurant satisfaction	RS1: The restaurant is known outside of Córdoba	.688
	RS2: Location in the historic center	.811
	RS3: Organization in the restaurant	.809
	RS4: Power of attraction	.824
	RS5: Involvement with tourists and/or visitors	.744
	RS6: Opinion about the food tasted	.758
	RS7: The service provided by the restaurant	.816
	RS8: The atmosphere in the restaurant	.839
Destination satisfaction	DS1: The city is nice	.792
	DS2: The city is fun	.802
	DS3: It has been worth coming to this city	.720
	DS4: This city is a good place to visit	.801
	DS5: The restaurants are good value for money	.738
	DS6: There are useful tourist information centers	.695
	DS7: The city has a pleasant climate	.738
	DS8: I feel safe in this city	.770
Loyalty to destination	LY1: I will make a repeat visit to this city for the restaurants alone	.782
	LY2: I will recommend family and friends come to this city for the restaurants alone	.804
	LY3: I will visit this city again	.794
	LY4: I will recommend family and friends come and discover this city	.833

273

274 Next, the composite reliability was assessed to check whether each indicator
 275 satisfactorily measures the construct to which it is assigned. This analysis was performed
 276 by calculating Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1951); values over 0.7 indicate acceptable
 277 reliability and values greater than 0.8 confirm a very good level of reliability (Nunnally,
 278 1978). As Table 2 shows, all constructs satisfy the requirement of reliability. In addition,
 279 the convergent validity of the model was confirmed, allowing the measurement of the
 280 magnitude of the correlation between the four constructs; to do so, the Average Variance
 281 Extracted (AVE) was calculated, the value of which should be equal to or greater than
 282 0.5 according to the criterion of Fornell and Larcker (1981). Lastly, another measure of

283 consistency reliability (CR) was calculated; specifically, the rho_A value suggested by
 284 Dijkstra and Henseler (2015).

285

286 **Table 2. Construct reliability and validity**

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Destination satisfaction	.894	.896	.915	.574
Loyalty to destination	.817	.820	.879	.645
Restaurant satisfaction	.912	.915	.929	.620
Traditional cuisine	.780	.791	.858	.603

287

288 Subsequently, the discriminant validity of the measurement model was checked,
 289 the results of which are shown in Table 3. This measure indicates the extent to which a
 290 given construct is different from the others. For reflective models, as is the case with this
 291 research, discriminant validity compares the square root of the AVE, located on the
 292 diagonal of the matrix, with the correlation between constructs (Purwanto and Sudargini,
 293 2021).

294

295 **Table 3. Discriminant validity**

	Destination satisfaction	Loyalty to destination	Restaurant satisfaction	Traditional cuisine
Destination satisfaction	.758			
Loyalty to destination	.707	.803		
Restaurant satisfaction	.703	.713	.788	
Traditional cuisine	.865	.739	.773	.777

296

297 **4.2. Evaluation of the structural model**

298 After the evaluation of the measurement model, the structural model was analyzed in
 299 order to test the hypotheses proposed in this research (Table 4). To do so, the values of
 300 the path coefficients (β) were assessed using the non-parametric resampling technique,
 301 PLS bootstrapping (Hair et al., 2011), indicating the significance of the relationships
 302 between constructs. The results, which are shown in Table 4, support the five hypotheses.
 303

303

304 **Table 4. Structural model results**

	Path coefficients	S. E.	Bootstrap-t value	Supported
H1: Traditional cuisine -> Destination satisfaction	.865	.030	28.793	YES
H2: Traditional cuisine -> Loyalty to destination	.287	.142	2.014	YES
H3: Traditional cuisine -> Restaurant satisfaction	.773	.046	16.696	YES
H4: Destination satisfaction -> Loyalty to destination	.224	.140	1.696	YES
H5: Restaurant satisfaction -> Loyalty to destination	.335	.105	3.191	YES

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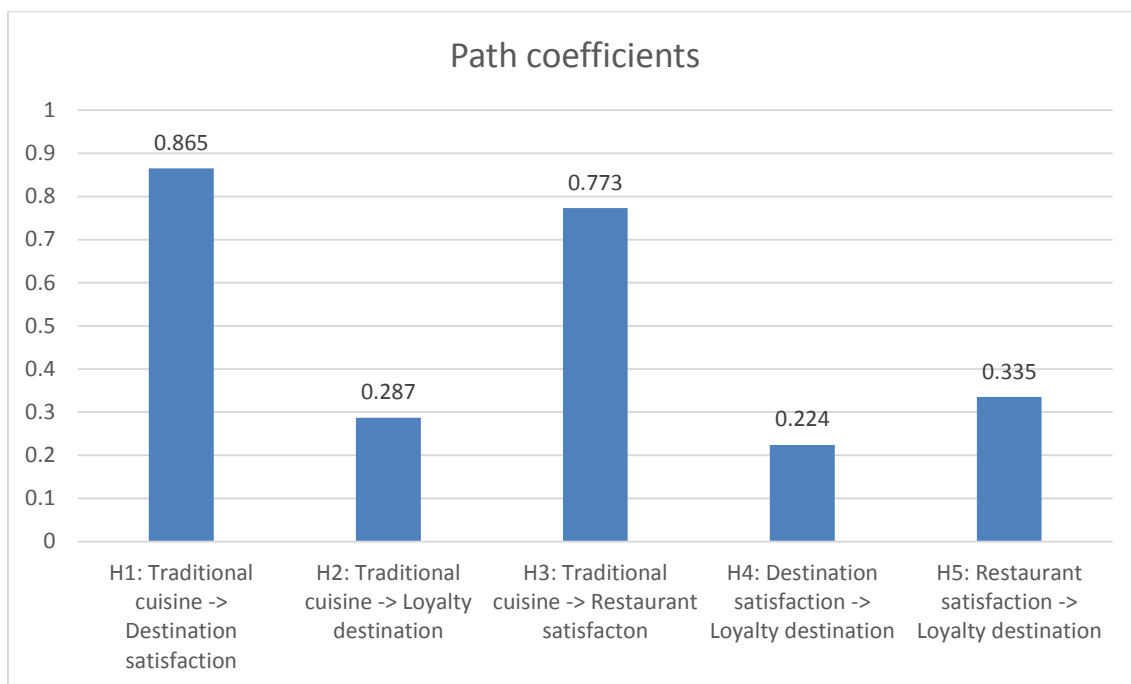
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Note: * p < .05; ** p < .01; ***p < .001 (distribution t(4999) of Student) t(0.05; 4999) = 1,645 ; t(0.01; 4999) = 2,327; t(0.001; 4999) = 3,092

307 Figure 2 clearly shows that, of the five hypotheses proposed in the model, the
 308 strongest relationship is found for H1, regarding the influence that traditional cuisine
 309 exerts on tourists' satisfaction with a destination listed as a World Heritage city. This
 310 underscores the relevance of the intangible human heritage recognized by UNESCO, a
 311 finding reported by other authors in the case of traditional Mexican cuisine (Vázquez-
 312 Medina and Medina, 2020).

313
 314
 315

Figure 2. Path coefficient values (β)



316
 317

318 Finally, the predictive power of the model was verified through R^2 . According to
 319 Falk and Miller (1992), the value of R^2 —indicating the variance in the endogenous
 320 variables explained by the model—should be greater than or equal to 0.1. The other
 321 measure calculated was Q^2 (Stone, 1974); values greater than zero indicate the predictive
 322 relevance of the model. Table 5 shows the good results for the predictive relevance of the
 323 proposed model of traditional cuisine.

324

Table 5. Predictive relevance of the model

325
 326

	R^2	Q^2 predictive relevance
Destination satisfaction	.749	.751
Loyalty to destination	.609	.543
Restaurant satisfaction	.597	.591

327

328 The standardized mean square error (SRMR) was also calculated to test the global fit
 329 of the model. The resulting value was 0.077, which indicates a good fit according to
 330 Henseler et al. (2015), as it is below the threshold of 0.08.

331

332

333

334

336 The results show that, of the five hypotheses proposed, the strongest relationship is
337 found for H1, demonstrating the relevant role played by traditional cuisine in satisfaction
338 with the destination (H1: $\beta = .865$; $p < 0.001$). The strength of the relationship is much
339 higher than that found for satisfaction with the restaurant (H3: $\beta = .773$; $p < 0.001$), while
340 the effect of traditional cuisine on loyalty to the destination is weak (H2: $\beta = .287$; $p <$
341 0.05). The results for the fourth hypothesis (H4: $\beta = .224$; $p < 0.05$) show how satisfaction
342 with the destination influences loyalty, but to a lesser extent than the effect of satisfaction
343 with the restaurant on tourists' intention to return to the destination or recommend it to
344 family and friends (H5: $\beta = .335$; $p < 0.001$).

345 The hypothesis with the strongest relationship of the model (H1)—a relationship that
346 has not been widely studied and thus represents a novel aspect of the article—
347 demonstrates the importance of traditional cuisine with roots in the territory and how it
348 affects tourists' satisfaction. There are very few studies that have constructed SEM
349 models to demonstrate this relationship. With respect to the relationship between
350 traditional cuisine and loyalty to the destination, the results align with those reported by
351 Hernández-Rojas et al. (2021), while results regarding the relationship between
352 traditional cuisine and satisfaction with the restaurant align with those reported by Chi
353 et al. (2013).

354 The relationship found between satisfaction with the destination and loyalty to it (H4)
355 is consistent with the findings of authors such as Folgado-Fernández et al. (2019).
356 Regarding the relationship between restaurant satisfaction and loyalty (H5), the results
357 coincide with the study by Kim et al. (2010). It should be noted that the relationship
358 between satisfaction and loyalty to the destination has been widely studied in the literature
359 (Pizam and Ellis, 1999; Kim and Cha, 2002); however, there are fewer studies that
360 specifically focus on satisfaction with restaurants in this regard.

361 All this indicates that protecting, preserving and promoting traditional cuisine
362 (Vázquez-Medina and Medina, 2020) in traditional restaurants such as those located in
363 the historic center of Córdoba, or in other popular World Heritage cities, can influence
364 tourists' satisfaction and their subsequent loyalty to the destination, as reflected in their
365 intention to return to the city and recommend it. In this regard, other studies confirm that
366 good local food (Chang et al., 2011) or good service (Sulek and Hensley, 2004; Ryu et
367 al., 2012) can increase visitor satisfaction.

368

369 5. Conclusion

370 This study has focused on studying the connections between visitors to a World
371 Heritage city and traditional local cuisines. A better understanding of the relationship
372 between traditional gastronomy and satisfaction with the restaurant and the destination
373 sheds light on how visitors to cities with a strong heritage component choose these
374 destinations. The analysis has shown that satisfaction with traditional restaurants has a
375 more important effect on loyalty than satisfaction with the destination itself, thus making
376 the traditional gastronomy of a World Heritage city a fundamental factor for attracting
377 tourists and encouraging repeat visits. Likewise, the importance of traditional gastronomy
378 for satisfaction with traditional restaurants has been demonstrated.

379 Therefore, local gastronomy, with its traditional dishes and restaurants, must be
380 protected and preserved as a hallmark of a territory, especially in cities with tangible
381 World Heritage listings. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has now been largely
382 controlled by the development of vaccines, it had an enormous impact on gastronomy and

383 the restaurant industry—and by extension on loyalty to heritage cities—because it limited
384 physical meetings, creating a need to rethink traditional gastronomic experiences
385 (Dedeoğlu et al., 2022). Areas of potential improvement identified include raising public
386 awareness of traditional gastronomy, since the current popularity of international cuisines
387 means we run the risk of blurring the lines with traditional local cuisine. In addition, the
388 brands or image of traditional restaurants should be promoted abroad. As for satisfaction
389 with the destination, other possible improvements include information on traditional
390 gastronomy in tourist offices and signage indicating places where traditional gastronomy
391 is verified as authentic.

392 Implementation of interactive service platforms in destinations, such as mobile apps,
393 e-commerce websites, augmented reality and virtual reality videos, is another
394 recommendation (Yu et al., 2021). As technology is increasingly incorporated into food
395 tourism experiences, tourism marketers and cooking class organizers need to pay close
396 attention to online or hybrid formats to integrate the physical and virtual aspects of the
397 dining experience. Therefore, there is a need for more research on the technologically
398 enhanced dining experience.

399 As in any study, there are limitations. It would have been interesting (study that can
400 be considered a future) employ a longitudinal approach to examine how these
401 relationships change over time. The effect of traditional gastronomy on satisfaction with
402 the destination and restaurants, and subsequently tourists' recommendations, opens up
403 more lines of potential future research. One such avenue of research would be the analysis
404 of the role played by local residents in traditional cuisine and their degree of involvement
405 in securing tourists' loyalty to a destination.

406 While structural equation modeling was used in this study, qualitative research using
407 focus groups or in-depth interviews could help gain a deeper understanding of visitors'
408 evaluation of dining experiences. Doing so can shed light on gastronomic experiences in
409 traditional cuisine and what is called the soul or spirituality of cuisine, as has been
410 explored in a number of studies (e.g., Sharpley and Jepson, 2011; Bastenegar and Hassani,
411 2019).

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8 Dear editor international journal of gastronomy and food science:
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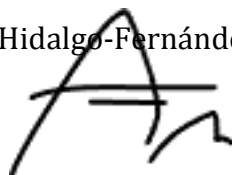
10 First of all, we thank you for the opportunity to submit the article "**Analysis of the**
11 **impact of traditional cuisine on loyalty to a World Heritage destination**" for
12 consideration and possible publication in the international journal of gastronomy
13 and food science
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- 16
- 17 ● Traditional cuisine as a factor is demonstrated is an important factor in the
18 repetition and recommendation of destinations
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- 20
- 21 ● The world heritage cities present a gastronomy that must be protected, take
22 care of those who visit the destination
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- 24
- 25 ● The traditional cuisine of a territory is the factor studied in this research that
26 most influences satisfaction in destinations
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- 28
- 29 ● The article contributes to the importance of supporting traditional
30 gastronomy
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40 Thank you for your consideration!
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42 Sincerely,
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44 Amalia Hidalgo-Fernández
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