

ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF CULINARY EXPERIENCE IN TOURISM (Identifying Factors that Shape Memorable Experience)

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Abstract: This research explores the core elements of a memorable culinary tourism experience, highlighting the relationship between food, memory, and traveler behavior. Using a qualitative memory-work method developed by Haug (1987), this study involved 56 respondents, predominantly female (85.71%) aged 21-25 years (87.50%), and residing in West Java (70.36%). Respondents provided insights into their culinary preferences, factors contributing to memorable experiences, and personal stories through open-ended questions. This research employs Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) theory and culinary tourism experience concepts to analyze the data. Key findings suggest that memorable culinary experiences are shaped by the uniqueness of food and beverages, the ambience of the location, the presence of companions, special moments, and other touristic elements such as service quality and price. These elements contribute to travelers' emotional connections and influence future destination preferences. This research provides a comprehensive understanding of how culinary tourism can drive loyalty and enrich the travel experience.

Keywords: culinary tourism; memorable experiences; food and memory

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi elemen inti dari pengalaman wisata kuliner yang berkesan, dengan menyoroti hubungan antara makanan, memori, dan perilaku wisatawan. Metode yang digunakan pada penelitian ini adalah kualitatif memory-work yang dikembangkan oleh Haug (1987), penelitian ini melibatkan 56 responden yang sebagian besar adalah perempuan (85,71%) dengan rentang usia 21-25 tahun (87,50%), dan berdomisili di Jawa Barat (70,36%). Responden memberikan wawasan tentang preferensi kuliner mereka, faktor yang berkontribusi pada pengalaman berkesan, dan cerita pribadi melalui pertanyaan terbuka. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) dan konsep culinary tourism experience untuk menganalisis data. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa pengalaman kuliner yang berkesan dibentuk oleh keunikan makanan dan minuman, suasana lokasi, kehadiran pendamping, momen spesial, dan elemen turistik lainnya seperti kualitas layanan dan harga. Elemen-elemen ini berkontribusi pada koneksi emosional wisatawan dan memengaruhi preferensi

destinasi di masa depan. Penelitian ini memberikan pemahaman komprehensif tentang bagaimana wisata kuliner dapat mendorong loyalitas dan memperkaya pengalaman wisata.

Kata Kunci: *wisata kuliner; pengalaman; makanan dan kenangan*

BACKGROUND

The role of food in tourism has changed significantly in recent decades. No longer merely fulfilling basic needs, food has now become an important part of creating memorable tourism experiences (Sthapit et al., 2019). According to the World Food Travel Association (Stone, et al., 2020), 53% of travelers who travel for recreational purposes are also motivated by food/beverages, and approximately 25% of tourist spending is on food.

From the supply side, tourism destinations have integrated local food into their tourism products with the aim of attracting more tourists and improving local community welfare (Stone et al., 2019). From the demand side, tasting local cuisine has become a must-do activity for many tourists, serving as both a cultural activity and entertainment (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2019).

Memory is a crucial element in tourism as it is considered a "primary source of information" in decisions to return to a destination (Braun et al., 2006). In the culinary world, memories from food experiences can strengthen tourists' attachment to a place (Tsai, 2016). Culinary experiences during travel are often embedded in memory because food has a greater impact on memory compared to other destination attributes (Stone et al., 2019).

Indonesia, with its cultural and culinary richness, has great potential to develop culinary tourism as a main attraction. Its various distinctive dishes, which have been globally recognized, offer opportunities to create memorable tourism experiences. As previous research has stated, food and beverage experiences not only add value to tourism trips but also help shape destination image (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2013).

Stone et al., (2022) found that tourists associate culinary experiences with memory through sensory engagement, emotions, social interactions, novelty, and reflection. Unique sensations, such as the taste and aroma of food, as well as positive emotions and interpersonal interactions, reinforce memories. Full focus on the experience and pre-trip expectations also strengthen the connection between culinary and memory, making the experience more memorable.

Several components found in Afaq et al.'s (2023) research trigger this culinary experience, namely unique food and beverage experiences, geographical location or setting, travel companions and social interactions, celebration of specific moments, as well as tourism

components such as unexpected travel experiences and nostalgic memories of food. In general, memorable culinary tourism experiences tend to be more explicit compared to memorable tourism experiences in general.

This research aims to explore the relationship between culinary experiences and tourist memory, as well as how unique elements in culinary tourism can be designed to create deep memories by identifying specific travel elements that may foster memorable experiences, and this research considers how food and beverages, essential elements in travel experiences, connect with memory (Stone et al., 2022). By examining culinary tourism from theoretical and practical perspectives, this research is expected to contribute significantly to tourism literature while supporting the development of culinary-based tourism destinations, particularly in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Food, Culinary and Memory

Food and beverages have a close relationship with memory because they involve all five human senses (Dantec et al., 2021). Additionally, food can evoke cognitive, emotional, and physical memories (Ramírez-Gutiérrez et al., 2021). However, accurately describing the relationship between food and memory is not easy due to the difficulty of defining memory itself (Kim et al., 2022), as it can refer to both individual and collective memory.

According to Stone et al. (2017) in their research, memory is an ongoing process that gives value to the past, both personally and socially. Meanwhile, the opportunity to try new flavors allows tourists to enjoy sensory experiences related to local traditions, thereby creating positive memories (Tsai 2016).

Food-related memories often trigger associative memory (Dantec et al., 2021). Memories about food while traveling can emerge for various reasons. For example, these memories are usually associated with certain moments that can be remembered as events (Stone et al., 2019). When traveling, even daily activities such as eating can feel extraordinary due to the uniqueness of the dishes or the atmosphere of the place.

Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTE)

Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTE) refer to travel experiences that leave positive and lasting impressions on tourists, which influence both their memories and their future behavior (Larsen, 2007). Tourists accumulate memories based on their involvement with specific events during travel, which can be positive or negative (Kim & Jang, 2016). Factors

such as participation, hedonic activities, and local culture positively influence tourists' autobiographical memories (Kim, 2010).

Kruger et al., (2017) describe Memorable Tourism Experiences as experiences that are remembered and valued by visitors, with outcomes that can be mental, spiritual, or physiological in nature. However, according to Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021), there is still no consensus on the dimensions of MTE, although the importance of the concept has been acknowledged. The impact of Memorable Tourism Experiences extends beyond the travel experience itself. As stated by Bai et al. (2023), these experiences can influence tourists' attitudes and behavior both during and after their travels.

Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTE) play an important role in tourist decision-making. According to Bai et al. (2023), these experiences influence their future destination choices. Kutlu & Ayyildiz, (2021) also found that such experiences not only influence subsequent travel plans but also have a positive impact on tourists' overall comfort and satisfaction.

Memorable Culinary Experience

Food and beverages play an important role in enhancing destination attractiveness and significantly influence tourists' destination choices (Richards, 2021). Culinary tourism is an activity that is not only about enjoying food; this concept encompasses the entire cycle from production, preparation, to food consumption (Hall, 2020). Choo et al. (2022) explain that culinary tourism is a process used by individuals to explore and understand the history and culture of a place through food traditions and related events, which then form Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTE). Tsai (2016) affirms that tourists who enjoy local food at destinations can learn about local culture while experiencing pleasant and refreshing experiences.

Several researchers have attempted to conceptualize models for memorable culinary experiences and develop measurement scales (Dedeoglu et al., 2022). Pourfakhimi et al. (2021) state that enjoying food can be a basic experience (to fulfill functional needs) or an extraordinary experience (involving hedonic aspects). In research by Hernández-Mogollón et al. (2020), they emphasize that restaurant service quality is an important attribute, which needs to be complemented by the physical environment and food quality. Furthermore, Tsai (2016) found that the uniqueness of locality also plays an important role in creating memorable culinary experiences.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach using the memory-work method developed by Haug (1987). Memory-work is a social constructionist approach that has been recommended for research in tourism (Small, 1999) and consumer behavior (Thomsen & Hansen, 2009). This approach allows individuals to recall experiences and feelings without specific direction from the interviewer (Lupton, 1994), resulting in more authentic data without researcher influence.

The informants in this research numbered 56 people with the following characteristics: majority were female (85.71%) and male (14.29%); age range was dominated by the 21-25 years age group (87.50%), followed by 25-30 years (7.14%), with the remainder distributed across 18-20 years, 31-35 years, and above 35 years, each at 1.79%. In terms of occupation, respondents consisted of students (37.50%), private employees and freelancers (28.57%), professionals such as managers, travel consultants, lecturers, and others (22.50%), fresh graduates (8.93%), and other categories (10.71%). Most respondents resided in West Java (70.36%), East Java (19.29%), Jakarta (7.14%), Lampung (1.79%), and Yogyakarta (1.79%). Respondents' education level was dominated by D3/D4/S1 graduates (83.93%), high school (12.50%), master's degree (1.79%), and doctoral degree (1.79%).

The informant selection technique used purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) respondents had previously engaged in culinary tourism; (2) had memorable culinary experiences during travel; (3) were willing to fill out the research form voluntarily; and (4) were able to describe their culinary experiences in detail. Informant selection was conducted online through the distribution of Google Forms to reach a broader and more diverse range of respondents.

Data collection was conducted through Google Forms containing open-ended questions. The forms were distributed through social media to reach respondents who met the criteria. Respondents were given four main questions: (1) level of interest in culinary tourism; (2) food and beverage preferences; (3) factors supporting the creation of memorable culinary experiences; and (4) detailed stories or narratives about their most memorable culinary experience. As done by Kivela & Crotts (2009), respondents were given the freedom to answer in their own words and provide as much detail as desired. The answers provided reflected spontaneous experiences, as someone would recall or narrate a journey without researcher intervention. Although this method did not allow researchers to ask follow-up questions directly, this approach provided space for more natural and authentic responses and enabled

data collection from a larger number of respondents compared to more in-depth face-to-face memory-work approaches.

Data analysis was conducted through several stages. First, researchers performed coding by assigning codes to each respondent's answer based on the sequence of completion, questions, and answers (example: I1-1-1-1 meaning Informant 1, Question 1, Dimension 1, Answer 1). Second, researchers read and examined all respondent answers carefully to understand emerging patterns and themes. Third, a categorization process was carried out based on similarities in themes and answer characteristics. Fourth, after grouping, researchers identified and determined the main themes emerging from the data. Fifth, the themes found were then matched with concepts and theories discussed in the literature review, particularly related to Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) and memorable culinary experiences. However, researchers remained open to the possibility of new themes emerging that were not previously present in the literature review. Sixth, researchers conducted in-depth interpretation of each theme to understand the meaning and relationships between elements of memorable culinary experiences. Finally, analysis results were presented descriptively by including direct quotes from respondent answers as evidence and illustration of each theme found.

This research used source triangulation techniques to maintain data validity by collecting data from various respondents with diverse backgrounds. Additionally, member checking was conducted by ensuring that researcher interpretations aligned with the intentions conveyed by respondents through re-verification of collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Elements of memorable culinary experiences include specific food or drink, location or setting, companions, occasion, and touristic elements. It should be noted that some respondents mentioned more than one element when answering. This section will present the elements found in memorable culinary experiences along with representations and comments from respondents. Each respondent's answer will be coded according to the sequence of completion, questions, and answers (e.g., I1-1-1-1).

Tabel 1. Demografi Responden

Profile	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	14,29%
	Female	85,71%
Age	18–20	1,79%
	21–25	87,50%
Occupation	25–30	7,14%
	31–35	1,79%
Occupation	>35	1,79%
	Student	37,50%
Occupation	Employees	28,57%
	Professional Workers	22,50%
Occupation	Fresh graduate	8,93%
	Others	10,71%
Domicile	West Java	70,36%
	West Java and Bali	19,29%
Domicile	Jakarta	7,14%
	Lampung	1,79%
Domicile	Yogyakarta	1,79%
Pendidikan	Higs School	12,50%
	D3/D4/S1	83,93%
Pendidikan	Master's	1,79%
	Doctoral	1,79%

(Authors' Data Processing Results, 2025)

Table 1 presented above provides an overview of information about respondents. Based on the table, the majority of respondents are female (85.71%) while males are only (14.29%). Most respondents are in the age range (87.50%), indicating dominance from young or early adult age groups. Other ages are very small with numbers each below 10%. In the occupation category, the largest number is students with 37.50%, followed by employees (freelance and private employees) with 28.57%, professional workers (Manager, Surveyor, Travel Consultant, Personal Assistant, BNN Staff, Lecturer, F&B Admin, Marketing, IT, etc.) 22.50%, unemployed 8.93% and others 10.71%. Most respondents come from West Java (Bandung, Cimahi, Kuningan, Majalengka, Sukabumi, Cianjur, Sumedang) with 70.36%, followed by East Java (Bojonegoro, Tulungagung, Banyuwangi, Bangkalan, Surabaya) with 19.29%. The majority of respondents have a D3/D4/S1 education level of 83.93%, which represents higher education, while a small portion has a high school background at 12.50%.

Food and Beverages

At the most basic level, the memories that emerge are the food and beverages consumed. There are no food characteristics that are consistently considered most memorable; it could be among food, drinks, or even desserts. The most frequently mentioned foods are those believed to be local or authentic. Local food is mentioned as memorable and is often cited as a characteristic of the place visited. One respondent stated:

"Culinary from my perspective represents the characteristics of that place through its cuisine" (I8-2-2-1).

Some local foods mentioned include Sundanese food (I22-2-1-1), pempek from Palembang (I52-2-1-1), goat satay from Purwakarta (I11-4-1-1), Malang parasmanan meatballs (I20-4-1-1), Solo sate buntel (I2-4-1-1), bakmie 96 Cibeunying (I4-4-1-1), pak Slamet's fried duck in Bogor (I7-4-1-1).

Food considered authentic often leaves a deep impression. As expressed by a respondent:

"Gudeg, authentic specialty of Jogja." (I43-2-1-1) "Authentic and delicious seblak taste." (I55-4-4-1).

Service can also have an impact equivalent to food or beverages. Some respondents mentioned that their culinary experience was closely related to service quality, indicating that food and the way it is served cannot be separated:

"Friendly service, service is always okay." (I7-4-5-1)

Other respondents also mentioned friendly vendors (I9-4-6-1) and good service (I29-3-3-1) as memorable factors. Taste satisfaction in food lies in the pleasant experience produced by the combination of delicious food flavors and proper texture. One respondent explained:

"Both of these foods are very delicious and crunchy, the meat is so sweet and addictive." (I16-4-5-1).

"The surabi served has a dry outer texture while the inside remains soft and is given abundant toppings." (I16-4-4-1)

Satisfying taste often creates a deep impression on consumers, as expressed:

"What is most remembered is the delicious taste." (I51-4-1-1)

Taste refers to various variations such as sweet, salty, sour, and spicy, while texture relates to how food feels in the mouth. Both interact to create a satisfying culinary experience:

"Exploring taste, texture, other condiments, everything is delicious, nothing failed." (I4-4-3-1)

Taste consistency refers to the taste experienced throughout consuming food. Food with taste consistency tends to provide a more enjoyable experience because the taste is maintained. As conveyed by a respondent:

"Found rice with egg and shredded chicken in the Saparua area and it really tasted really good." (I1-4-4-1)

Taste dissatisfaction arises when the taste of food does not meet expectations, which can be caused by taste imbalance, low ingredient quality, or lack of deliciousness that can reduce enjoyment during consumption. One respondent expressed:

"Sadly now the taste of the food is less okay, tends to be bland." (I49-4-9-1)

Food type affects taste satisfaction because each type of food has different taste and texture characteristics, which may be more preferred by consumers. As expressed:

"The variety of side dish choices." (I51-4-5-1)

Location or Setting

Tourism activities involve travel outside the daily environment, so one element in memorable culinary tourism experiences is the location where the experience occurs. Many respondents mentioned the location element as memorable. In general, this includes areas, atmosphere or views, famous locations, and residences. Respondents frequently mentioned area names such as cities or districts and street names after mentioning the food or beverages they consumed. Some areas mentioned include eating in the Bogor area (I7-4-2-1), Bangkalan, Madura (I13-4-2-1), Dieng (I16-4-2-1), roadside Java, Bandung (I18-4-2-1), and Pahlawan Street (I23-4-2-1). The atmosphere created by the culinary location during culinary tourism is often more memorable than the name of the place itself. One respondent expressed:

"On the way back, we ate at Anyer beach (forgot the name of the place)." (I8-4-2-1)

Other respondents also mentioned the beauty of rice fields and gentle breeze at Kopi Klotok (I27-4-4-1), as well as:

"The atmosphere of Jogja city which is still very crowded late at night." (I15-3-1-1)

These findings align with research by Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen (2019) which states that physical location and dining atmosphere have a strong influence on culinary experiences. Environmental atmosphere, whether natural scenery or urban atmosphere, creates a foodscape that becomes the stage for tourists' culinary experiences. Research by Stone et al. (2017) also found that setting or location is one of the important elements contributing to the formation of memorable culinary memories.

There are several locations that are already famous and serve as culinary tourism destinations. As expressed by a respondent:

"Ate at a place, forgot what the name was, anyway the satay that's already famous in Purwakarta." (I11-4-3-1)

Some other famous dining places mentioned include Bu Imas (I25-2-1-1; I22-4-2-1) and Dimsum Sembilan Ayam (I3-4-1-1; I14-4-1-1). Several locations were also mentioned as famous places to find street food, such as Saparua (I1-4-1-1), Blok M (I30-4-2-1), Thailand

(I26-4-2-1), and Lengkong Besar (I33-4-2-1). This supports Tsai's (2016) finding that the uniqueness of locality plays an important role in creating memorable culinary experiences. Locations with strong culinary reputations tend to attract tourists specifically seeking authentic experiences. According to Richards (2021), famous culinary destinations not only offer food but also cultural and social contexts that enrich the overall tourism experience.

In addition to locations at tourist spots, residences were also mentioned by some respondents as memorable locations. One respondent stated:

"Eating at home with family." (I31-4-2-1)

Other respondents also mentioned in front of the alley near home (I35-4-2-1), buying food outside to eat at home (I49-4-2-1), and mom's hometown (I7-4-2-1). This finding is interesting because it shows that memorable culinary experiences do not always occur at distant tourist destinations. Stone et al. (2019) explain that locations with emotional attachment, including home or hometown, can create strong culinary memories because they involve aspects of nostalgia and family bonds. Hernández-Mogollón et al. (2020) also emphasize that the social and emotional context of dining locations is as important as the physical aspects of the environment in creating memorable experiences. This shows that memorable culinary experiences are not only determined by exoticism or geographical distance but also by the personal meaning associated with that place.

Companions

Social interaction plays an important role in creating memories, as respondents often associate their experiences with people involved, such as travel companions, partners, or family. One respondent shared:

"Ramen in Dotonbori, with friends, the most memorable moment was feeling happy to be able to eat the typical food of that country." (I19-4-3-1)

Another respondent expressed an experience with their partner:

"Eating bakmi Harmony in Bandung, because I was with my partner hehehe." (I17-4-4-1)

While culinary experiences with family also became memorable moments:

"I first ate rujak cingur with my family." (I13-4-3-1)

The presence of loved ones is often mentioned as a main factor in making experiences more meaningful and unforgettable. Respondents mentioned various companions such as family (I3-4-2-1; I7-4-3-1), friends (I8-4-1-1), partners (I10-4-2-1), and relatives (I40-4-3-1). These findings align with Tsai's (2016) research which states that social interaction in culinary

tourism becomes an important element that enriches the dining experience. Togetherness with loved ones provides an emotional dimension that strengthens culinary memories.

Stone et al. (2017) also identified that companions are one of five main elements forming memorable culinary experiences. According to Afaq et al. (2023), interpersonal interaction and the presence of close people can increase emotional attachment and support the formation of long-lasting positive memories. Additionally, culinary experiences enjoyed alone also provide personal satisfaction, allowing time for reflection or relaxation and creating a deeper connection with the food consumed. As expressed by a respondent:

"Sate Buntel Pak Manto, Solo and alone because I was solo traveling." (I2-4-3-1)

Another respondent explained eating alone as a form of self-reward:

"Bought it whole and ate it alone. This is really remembered because it was bought as self-reward after thesis defense." (I49-4-4-1)

Solo touring experiences were also mentioned as memorable moments (I29-4-3-1). Findings regarding these culinary experiences provide an interesting new perspective. Although most previous research such as Stone et al. (2019) and Sthapit (2019) emphasize the importance of social interaction in creating memorable culinary experiences, this research shows that individual experiences also have significant value. Solo culinary experiences allow tourists to focus more on the sensory aspects of food and engage in personal reflection.

This supports Larsen's (2007) idea that memorable tourism experiences do not always have to involve social interaction but can also be introspective and personal. Emotional contexts such as personal achievement (for example, completing a thesis) or independent exploration in solo traveling provide special meaning that makes culinary experiences memorable, even when enjoyed alone.

Moment or Occasion

Special moments or occasions such as vacationing with friends, family events, and dating were mentioned by some respondents as contexts that make culinary experiences more memorable. One respondent expressed:

"Maybe because eating with family makes it more fun." (III-4-5-1)

Another respondent shared a culinary experience that occurred in the context of academic travel:

"At that time there was language research that required me and friends to visit Banten directly. It was also a vacation." (I8-4-1-1)

Simple moments like eating with a partner after being tired from work were also mentioned as memorable experiences (I18-4-4-1). Traveling specifically to seek culinary

experiences was also done by respondents. Some mentioned trips to Bandung because of its many culinary options (I22-4-2-1), culinary touring in Blok M (I30-4-4-1), and trying culinary experiences (I53-4-1-1). This shows that culinary is not only a complement to tourism trips but can also be the main motivation for traveling.

These findings support Braun et al.'s (2006) research showing that certain events strengthen memory attachment to food. The emotional context of an event provides additional meaning to the food enjoyed, making the experience more memorable. Stone et al. (2017) also identified occasion as one of the key elements in memorable culinary experiences, where specific moments such as celebrations, vacations, or important events create a setting that enriches the culinary experience.

Kim's (2010) research found that factors such as participation in special activities and hedonic experiences positively influence tourists' autobiographical memories. In the context of culinary tourism, moments such as family celebrations or vacations with friends create strong emotional bonds between food and memories. Choo et al. (2022) also explain that culinary tourism conducted in the context of festivals or special events tends to create more memorable experiences because it involves richer cultural and social elements. Interestingly, this research's findings also show that simple moments such as eating after being tired from work can be as memorable as large events. This indicates that the personal meaning and emotional context of an event are more important than the scale or luxury of the event. As stated by Sthapit (2019), positive emotions felt during culinary experiences, regardless of context, play an important role in the savoring process that stores these experiences in long-term memory.

Tourist Elements

Customer satisfaction level with experiences includes food quality, service, atmosphere, and other aspects that meet consumer expectations. This taste satisfaction determines whether the experience will be remembered as something positive. Friendly service (I7-4-5-1), very friendly sellers (I9-4-6-1). Unique dining atmosphere (I7-4-6-1), "the coolness of the morning breeze, presented with a stretch of clouds and sunrise" (I15-4-3-1), scenery and atmosphere (I27-4-4-1), supportive atmosphere at the foot of the mountain and cloudy (I29-4-3-1), bustling atmosphere (I33-4-1-1), comfortable atmosphere (I35-4-3-1), (I55-4-3-1), (I56-4-1-1), good atmosphere (I39-4-1-1), warm atmosphere remains (I49-4-1), created atmosphere (I49-4-8-1).

Food prices become the value consumers pay to enjoy dishes. Prices considered fair or commensurate with quality and experiences obtained become important factors in creating positive impressions. "Cheap, eating curry with tiny portions, doesn't feel like you keep adding

more" (I7-4-7-1). Cheap prices (I39-4-2-1), fairly cheap food prices (I54-4-1-1), cheap food prices and worth it (I54-4-7-1).

Consumers seek or choose types of food with specific motivations and reasons.

"I really enjoy going around looking for street food in Bandung City, one of them in Saparua" (I1-4-1-1).

"At that time there was language research that required me and friends to visit Banten directly" (I8-4-1-1).

Consumer expectations before consuming food or enjoying services and the actual experience felt can determine satisfaction levels whether the experience is considered impressive or not. "Honestly I was reluctant to go there because I had to climb many stairs but I want to return to buy that macaroni again" (I5-4-3-1). Slow service (I24-4-4-1), characteristic taste not liked by consumers (I44-4-1-1), inconsistent food taste (I49-4-9-1). Beautiful food dishes provide strong emotional or sensory impact to consumers, whether in terms of taste, innovation, or connection to certain memories. "What I remember most is when eating various foods at dimsum sembilan ayam" (I3-4-1-1), light snacks (I5-4-3-1), food with various toppings (I6-4-3-1), eating with complete family (I7-4-3-1), simple menu (I8-4-2-1), perfect taste (I9-4-1-1), enjoyed in a new place (I10-4-1-1), different food processing (I11-4-3-1).

Factors influencing consumer decisions to purchase certain dishes such as recommendations from friends, positive reviews on social media, nutritional needs, or just to satisfy hunger. What is memorable is when my superior also recommended the recommendations I gave to their business colleagues and they also liked it (I21-4-2-1). Memory plays an important role in culinary tourism experiences. Previous research by Braun et al., (2006) and Stone et al., (2019) shows that food and beverages tend to be more easily remembered than other destination aspects. Sensory activation such as taste, aroma, and food visualization contributes strongly to tourist memories. This is reinforced by emotional experiences, social interactions, and location uniqueness that create deep impressions.

Culinary tourism is not just a consumption activity but also a means to understand local culture (Tsai, 2016). Traditional elements in food reflect a destination's identity, as found in regional specialties such as pempek from Palembang or sate buntel from Solo. Memorable experiences influence tourist behavior in the future, including decisions to return to destinations (Bai et al., 2023). This also applies to their culinary preferences, where positive memories can encourage loyalty to a destination or certain foods.

This research found key elements forming memorable culinary experiences shown in Table 2. Food and beverages are the main elements in culinary tourism experiences. Previous

research by Stone et al., (2017) mentioned that taste, aroma, and food visualization elements are very important in building tourist memories. Respondents in this research mentioned local dishes as food that provides deep impressions.

Table 2. Elements of Culinary Experience

Food/Drink	Location/Setting	Companions	Occasion	Touristic Elements
Experience	Famous places	Presence in experience	Unplanned experience	Food quality
Authentic food	Unique and iconic places	Family	Celebration or special	Memorable experience
Local food	Comfortable atmosphere	Friends/partner	Culinary tourism (festivals, cooking classes)	Desire to return
Taste and texture quality	Beautiful views	Meeting new people	—	Satisfaction
Service quality	Street food	Personal reflection	—	Affordable prices, Hedonism

(Authors' Data Processing Results, 2025)

Local foods frequently mentioned by respondents become memorable dishes due to their authenticity and uniqueness. Taste consistency, where food remains delicious throughout consumption, enhances the overall experience. Additionally, friendly service and attention to detail in presentation also strengthen culinary tourism impressions. According to Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2019), physical location and dining atmosphere have a strong influence on culinary experiences. This research supports these findings with many respondents connecting their experiences with location elements, such as rice field views at Kopi Klotok, or street food in Blok M. The atmosphere of dining places, whether cool mountain air or local market bustle, creates unique and profound experiences. Additionally, home or hometown as locations are also remembered because they offer emotional warmth. This aligns with Stone et al.'s (2019) finding that places providing emotional attachment have stronger appeal in building memories.

Social interaction in culinary tourism becomes an important element, as highlighted by Tsai's (2016) research. In this study, respondents often associated their memories with the presence of family, friends, or partners. Togetherness with loved ones provides an emotional dimension that enriches the dining experience. Additionally, solo traveler experiences were also identified as reflective moments allowing individuals to build more personal relationships with food. Research by Afaq et al. (2023) also found that social interaction can increase emotional attachment and support positive memory formation. Special moments, such as celebrations or vacations, often become the setting for memorable culinary experiences.

Previous research by Braun et al. (2006) shows that certain events strengthen memory attachment to food. In this research, respondents described how family events, dates, or spontaneous culinary explorations became moments strengthening their culinary experiences. This supports the idea that the emotional context of an event provides additional meaning to the food enjoyed. Touristic elements, such as appropriate pricing, supportive atmosphere, and fulfilled expectations, become important aspects affecting tourist satisfaction levels. Richards' (2021) research shows that culinary tourism is not only about enjoying food but also about the overall experience, including service quality, location uniqueness, and visual appeal. This study also found that dining place atmospheres, such as fresh air at mountain foothills or beach views, provide added value strengthening positive impressions.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that memorable culinary tourism experiences encompass various interrelated elements, including the uniqueness of food and beverages, location atmosphere, social interactions, celebration of special moments, and other touristic elements. Factors such as taste uniqueness, quality consistency, and emotional interaction contribute to the formation of deep memories that influence tourist loyalty to destinations or specific foods. The importance of paying attention to these elements in planning and managing culinary destinations, particularly in Indonesia, which has cultural and culinary richness with potential to be developed as a main tourism attraction.

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