CULINARY TOURISM: A KEY TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN GHANA

Emmanuel Kofi Bempong¹, Asana Saaka Constance², Belinda Alijata Sulemana², Noble Amoako Sarkodie² and Thomas Yeboah²

1. School of Applied Science and Technology, Sunyani Polytechnic, Post Office Box 206, Sunyani, Ghana, West Africa.
2. School of Applied Science and Technology, Tamale Polytechnic, Tamale, Ghana, West Africa.

Abstract:
Tourism has now assumed the position as the fastest growing industry in the world and the third foreign exchange earner in Ghana. Culinary tourism is a tourism activity that allows one to experience the food of the community. Culinary tourist therefore is tourist who takes part in the new trends of cultural consumption, seeking the authenticity of places they visit through food. Over the years there has been little research to use culinary tourism as a means of sustaining tourism in Ghana. The main aim of the study is to look at the potential of culinary tourism as a means of sustainable tourism in Ghana. The paper was mainly based on field surveys, personal observations, literature research and consultation with stakeholders. Questionnaires and interviews were the main methods used in gathering data from the respondents. The results of the study indicated that, Ghanaians have the potential of sustaining tourism through the use of culinary tourism. It is recommended that culinary tourism need to be branded, packaged and promoted to enhance its usage as a key to sustainable tourism in Ghana.

Key Words: Tourism, Sustainable, Culinary tourism, Region.

Introduction
Ghana’s tourism potentials based on its natural endowment ranges from ecotourism, through heritage to cultural tourism which encompasses culinary tourism. The changing dynamism of tourism in recent time’s calls for diversification of its activities in the local, district through the regional levels to the national for it’s all year round activities.

Tourism is the temporary movement of people to the destinations outside the normal places of work and residence including the totality of the activities to be undertaken during their stay in those destinations not only that but also including activities created so that the needs of the receivers will be satisfied (Cook, R. and Marqua 2002). Therefore, tourism activities in a country like Ghana such as transport, as well as culinary activities need to be enhanced in order to achieve the maximum benefit to the society.

Ghana with its diverse vegetation zones stretching from coastal savanna, semi deciduous rain forest to Guinea savanna, therefore comes out with variety of food crops in each area. This makes Ghana a home of different types of dishes ranging from starchy, root tuber crops to that of grains and vegetables which combine effectively with meat and fish. These can be used to promote culinary tourism in almost every corner of the country. Sustainable tourism practice is hence an all year round tourism activity is not only one part but of all aspects of tourism in some cases across the length and breadth of a country. Food tourism has become one of the most dynamic and creative aspect of tourism which can be used as a key to diversity and sustainable tourism practices.

All tourists eat when they travel. The question is, what do they eat and why?. This in the case of tourist to Ghana can be so many reasons in which food is no exception. According to UNWTO, 2010 REPORT, the coming decade is important for relation between the whole tourism industry and sustainability in terms of industry development and environment. Ghana tourism board has ten reasons which motivate people to travel to Ghana which includes Cultural tourism, Natural beauty, Peaceful and stable nature and so forth.
The concept of culinary tourism

Culinary tourism has grown considerably and become one of the most dynamic and creative segments of tourism. It has been referred to as gastronomy tourism. Culinary tourism is experiencing food of the community, region or an area and vital component of tourism experience. Food tourist is tourist who takes part in the new trends of cultural consumption, they are travellers seeking the authenticity of places they visit through food and therefore, are concerned with origin of food. (Hall, C M & Sharples L, 2003).

Culinary, food tourism, or gastronomic tourism is an emerging phenomenon that is being developed as new tourism product due to the fact that over a third of tourism spending is on food (Quan and Wang, 2004). The cuisine of a tourism destination is an important aspect of the holiday experience. The link between food and tourism, therefore, serves as a platform for locals to express themselves and at the same time aid their empowerment. The World Food Travel Association (WFTA) defined food tourism as the pursuit of unique memorable eating and drinking experiences. The Malaysian ministry of tourism (2010) defined food tourism as the travel to specific regions to sample cuisine unique to the area. Food tourism is, therefore, connecting between food destinations so that food consumed by tourist in a place is part of the tourist memory formation of their experience when visiting a place. (Hall and Mitchell 2001), defined food tourism as a visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific location for which food tasting and or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production region are primary motivating factor for travel.

Food tourism is a subset of cultural tourism. Culture is a set of behaviours, knowledge and customs that shape a society and on which a sense of belonging is based. The design of any food tourism offering will not be viable if it does not take into accounts the cultural characteristics of the territory. Food tourism is also referred to as indigenous tourism since it involves the use of local dishes. This allows for the growth and involvement of locals in the tourism industry. Food tourism has been beneficial for rural communities which struggled to develop by use of proximity to food producing areas, local communities which enjoy comparative advantage when it comes to serving traditional food. It therefore allows local communities to generate income, provide jobs and develop local economy. There are two types of food tourist:

a. Tourist who consume food as part of their travel experience
b. Tourist whose activities, behavior and destinations selection is influence by their interest in food.

World culinary tourism

The world is increasingly becoming a global village, making tourist to seek new experience that is based on a unique local identity and culture. They, therefore, try to promote their unique culture through food tourism. All over the world a third of tourist spending is devoted to food (Quan and Wang; 2004). Again according to the same research, eating in restaurants is the second favorite activity of foreigners visiting the United States of America and the number one activity for US travelers when they visit any part of the country. The 2011 UNWTO report indicate that Spain received 56.7 million tourists generating a receipt of 43 billion Euros. Out of the 56.7 million, international tourists more than 5 million said that they enjoy the Spanish food and wine and constitute one of the main reasons for choosing Spain as tourism destination. Spanish dishes such as omelet made from eggs, paella which is made from rice are all internationally recognized foods. France is one of the countries in the world noted strongly to be associated with culinary tourism for both international and French citizens traveling to different parts of the country to sample local foods and wine. Every part of the world has a type of food that dominates the culinary tourism activities in that region’s geographical area. Eastern Europe has been overshadowed by Azerbaijan’s food for international travelers in the major restaurants and hotels. This is a famous variety of meats; fish and vegetable dishes all supplemented with soft green and pigment species. Again the Azerbaijan’s kebab called the Shashlik made from fresh lamb, wild birds and fish with juice is popular in most restaurants in those regions. In the southern American countries of Brazil and Argentina also have dishes that are attracted to international travelers. The Brazil cuisine of fruits and fish cooked together in the forest region with vegetables which is a reflexive of Portuguese African legacy is very popular in most restaurants to both international and domestic tourist. The Asian region continues to be dominated by Korean cuisines. These are all traditional foods of both North and South Korea. Kimchi which is a fermented spicy cabbage and bibimbab, rice mixed with vegetables and meat is very renowned as healthy food from the region.

To promote and sustain the food tourism industry, tourism organizations have developed a gastronomic tour in Korea in collaboration with celebrities such as top chefs and famous entertainers. These go on across the country to promote and protect the indigenous food.

Russian traditional porridges, soups, fish, pancakes, pies with drinks such as berry juice and birch juice has also gain a lot of popularity amongst travelers in Moscow and other cities in the region.
Again Tourist expenditure on food and drink in Ireland 2001 was 2 billion pounds and represented the largest single component of individual visitor.

**Culinary tourism in Africa**

Africa is the world largest continent with over 54 countries. The diversity of culture and its natural resources also reflects its recipes. The northern African countries based on their location have a lot of spicy recipes from the Arabs. Egyptian dishes such as Baba Ghannouj which is made of egg plants, chickpeas, lemon juice, salt, pepper and oil and that of Kessiah which is a milk of yogurt savoury pudding made with flour and sometimes seasoned with fried onions, chicken broth or boiled chicken is very popular in North Africa. Eastern Africa is home to people who rear cattle sheep and goat. The dishes are also a collection of corn, rice lentis, pickles and meats. Ethiopian food known as Enjera is very popular around East Africa. It is made of pan cake, leavened bread from corn, sorghum and or barley mixed to gather. The central Africa has most of its food made from heavy starchy with a lot of animals meat such as crocodile antelope and others. In the Democratic republic of Congo, Kwanzaa is one of the popular foods and extends to all other regions. It is made from okro, black eyed peas and peanut soups eaten with rice or bread. The southern African region is dominated by South African dishes. Tripe is a traditional dish, made from treated flavoured potatoes and fried onions. Morogo is also spinach with butter, braised onions into maize porridge. Another popular food in South Africa is Chakalako which is a spicy reddish served alongside a main course such as rice. It is made from carrots, green pepper, sliced onions, vinegar chilli and comes up with strong flavor.

**Culinary tourism in Ghana**

Culinary Tourism in Ghana reflect the types of indigenous dishes that can be packaged and made attractive to both Domestic and international tourist. Ghana is located in the tropical west African region and have a lot of tuber crops and heavy starchy food with a lot of meat and fish. The popular stable food in Ghana is fufu which is a crashed cassava or yam served with soup. Kenkey and banku is made from fermented maize mill and usually served with tomatoes reddish sauce with fried fish. Another common food is jollof rice which is rice cooked with tomatoes sauce and red meat or chicken. However, there are some peculiar foods associated with each region or geographical area.

Greater Accra is the smallest but the most populated region in Ghana and play host to the capital of the country. It still remains a cosmopolitan region with it indigenous tribe, the Gas accounting for only 12% of the population. The Gas in the region has a traditional food which is very popular in the region. Banku or kenkey made from fermented corn dough with pepper and fried fish or okro stew is one of the commonest food in the region. Another type of food which is very popular and can be used to attract and sustain culinary tourism in the region is fried yam with turkey tails referred to as choffi and hot spicy pepper. The coastal regions of Central and Western regions are home to predominately Akans and a vegetation of mixed coastal Savanna and semi deciduous rainforest. These makes it common for vegetables such as onions, tomatoes, pepper, Garden eggs etc. fruits such as Mangoes, pineapples and oranges. Also Tuber crops such as cassava, yam, cocoyam and plantain with grains such as rice and maize with its accompanying bush meat such as antelopes and fish from the sea. These have influenced the stable food in the geographical area with Western Region having fufu with palm nut soup and snails or bush meat as a common food that easily attract visitors. Others are that of Akayeke with Avocado pear. The central region has fante Dorkun or fante kenkey which is fermented corn with fish or gravy. Another popular food is fante fante which is palmnut oil stew with small fresh fish eaten with either yam or fante kenkey.

The middle belt of the country is occupied by three regions namely the Ashanti, Eastern and the Brong-Ahafo regions. This is predominately Akan regions and the forest belt of the country. It is therefore home of tropical tuber crops such as yam, cassava, cocoyam, plantain etc. Indeed, the care endowed with abundance of food. These areas, therefore, have fufu with either palm nut soup or light soup or with snails or antelope or any bush meat as the most popular food. This is eaten by most as the stable food in the area. Another popular food in the area is Ampesia and Palava sauce. This is made from plantain and the green leaves of cocoyam. These dishes are served at lunch, supper and breakfast. In the East, most part of the country is covered by the Volta region and due to its geographical area it is noted for the cultivation of grains such as maize and rice. The stable food is Akpele made from corn with Okro soup.

The Northern, Upper East and West is noted for its Guinea Savanna vegetation and therefore noted for the production of grains such as millet, maize, sorghum and rice with a lot of animal rearing such as cattle, sheep and goat. The regions have Tuo zaafi popularly called TZ made from millet, maize or guinea corn flour and green leaves soup. Another popular food is Tubani, which is made from beans or cowpea with Sheanut butter oil and pepper. Another common food mainly for breakfast is koko which is millet or corn porridge eaten with koose which is beans fried balls.
Table 1: Shows Ghanaian dishes from various geographical areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Ghanaian dishes</th>
<th>Taste</th>
<th>Geographical area</th>
<th>Nutritional value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Banku or kenkey with pepper and fried fish or okro stew</td>
<td>Hot spicy and sour taste food</td>
<td>Gas and Fante in the Greater Accra region</td>
<td>Carbohydrates, proteins, fats and oils as well as some vitamins for bone formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Akyeke with avocado pear or vegetable soup</td>
<td>Spicy tasty</td>
<td>Western region of Ghana, Nzima-Fanti – Ahanta</td>
<td>Carbohydrates, for energy, vitamins and minerals for bone formation and proper metabolism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Fanti-fanti (fresh fish gravy) with Fanti kenkey</td>
<td>Hot spicy and sour taste</td>
<td>Central and Western region, Coastal savanna belt of Ghana</td>
<td>Carbohydrate for energy, proteins for repairing body structure and vegetables for vitamins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Fufu with palmnut soup or goat light soup</td>
<td>Spicy and delicious taste</td>
<td>Middle belt or forest region of Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and Eastern regions.</td>
<td>Carbohydrates, fats and oils for energy, proteins for repair of body tissues and vegetables for vitamins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Ampesi and palava sauce from plantain and cocoyam</td>
<td>Tasty and nutritious</td>
<td>Middle belt or forest region of Brong Ahafo and Eastern regions</td>
<td>Proteins for repair of tissues, fats and oils and carbohydrates for energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Akpele from corn and fresh okro soup</td>
<td>Slippery and delicious</td>
<td>Volta region of Ghana</td>
<td>Proteins for repair of tissues, fats, oil and carbohydrates for energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Beans stew with fried ripe plantain</td>
<td>Sweet and Spicy taste</td>
<td>Volta region of Ghana</td>
<td>Proteins for repair of tissues, fats and oils and carbohydrates for energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Tuozafi and sauce</td>
<td>Delicious</td>
<td>Northern region, Upper East and West regions (the three Northern regions of Ghana)</td>
<td>Carbohydrate for energy, proteins for repairing body structure and vegetables for vitamins and mineral elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Kooko and koose</td>
<td>Spicy taste</td>
<td>The three Northern regions of Ghana</td>
<td>Proteins, fats and oils as well as some minerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Tubani</td>
<td>Spicy taste</td>
<td>The three Northern regions of Ghana</td>
<td>Carbohydrate for energy, proteins for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dafaduka
Delicious
The three Northern regions of Ghana
Carbohydrate for energy, proteins for repairing body tissues

Wakye, gari, meat gravy shito, with talia (spaghetti)
Spicy taste food
The three Northern regions of Ghana
Carbohydrate for energy, proteins for repairing body tissues

Sources: Authors’ field survey (2013).

Methodology
Descriptive research approach was used in both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. Descriptive research is the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing conditions, prevailing practices, beliefs, attitudes ongoing process etc. The data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained through formal and informal interviews and secondary data mainly in literature review.

Primary data
A research trip was undertaken to all the 10 regions in Ghana. It was to conduct both formal and informal interviews with hotel and restaurant in each of the region as well as to meet tourist at a tourist site in each region. Hotels such La Palm Royal beach hotel, Labadi beach hotel in Accra, Miklin hotel in Kumasi, Ashanti region, St James hotel and Volta hotel in Eastern region, Mandela restaurant in Sunyani in the Brong Ahafo, Eusbert hotel in the Brong Ahafo region were all visited.

Focus group discussions
Focus group discussion sessions were held with the following restaurant operators:
- Jofel restaurant, Kumasi, Ashanti region
- Mandela restaurant, Sunyani B.A
- Hohoe restaurant, Hohoe Volta region
- African pot restaurant, Elmina, central region
- Linda Door Restaurant, Tafo, Eastern region
- Kings Canteen Services, Ho in the Volta region.
- Chances Hotel, restaurant, Ho, Volta region
- State Transport Corporation Canteen- Tamale, Northern Region

Field trip
Another key methodology used was the field trips undertook at the areas hotels and restaurants in the country for first hand information. The areas authors concentrated in the interview included the following:
- The origin of tourist in Ghana
- The place most tourist preferred to eat in Ghana
- The type of Ghanaian dishes tourist prefer to eat whilst in Ghana
- The reasons for eating a preferred type of Ghanaian dishes
- Reasons why tourist would prefer Ghanaian dish to other foreign dishes whilst in Ghana.

Interview with key Stakeholders
Another key stakeholder’s interviewed were tourists in some restaurants, tourist sites and hotels. In all about 50 tourists from various tourist sites, hotel and restaurants were interviewed. Again front office staff of hotels were interviewed, in all about 10 front office hotel staff across the country were interviewed. Again restaurant and bar operators were interviewed. In all about 20 popular ones across the country were interviewed.

Data Analysis, Discussions and Findings
The data for the analysis were concentrated on tourist who visits various sites in Ghana. We also looked at the hotels in which tourist stay whilst on visit to Ghana and finally looked at restaurants and bars popularly patronized by international tourist. The whole idea was to establish the following:
- a) The places were foreign tourist prefer to eat Ghanaian dishes in Ghana
- b) The preferred Ghanaian indigenous dishes by foreign tourist in Ghana
The reasons for the preference of a particular Ghanaian dish  
Whether it is profitable to engage in indigenous dishes business.  
Whether Ghanaian dishes were the reasons why tourists come to Ghana. In other words does Ghana really have culinary tourists?

The research targeted visitors to food joints in Ghana such as hotels, restaurants and bars, and also selected tourists’ attractions and tourist accommodation establishments.

In all 210 questionnaires were distributed across the length and breadth of the country. It was given to hotel operators in each of the region in Ghana. In all over 10 hotels in each region was captured.

Again at least 10 tourist in each regional tourist attraction were captured even though in some cases like in the Ashanti, Central and Greater Accra regions were more. Some of the tourist were also engaged in the hotels, restaurants and bars all to ascertain where they often eat, type of food, purpose of travel and the reason for their choice of food. Some of these attractions were captured.

Finally some restaurants and bar operators in all the 10 regions were captured to explain the types of food tourists prefer and the reason why they prefer cooking indigenous food. Most popular restaurants and bars in each region were captured even though in some cases like Ashanti, Central and Greater Accra Regions, it was more due to the closeness to tourist attractions.

A. The places where International tourists prefer to eat Ghanaian dishes when in Ghana

In trying to look at the places where international tourists prefer to eat Ghanaian dishes when in Ghana, This was to see if the food tourist are concerned with the environment for the preparation of indigenous dishes and also whether their choice of a particular type of Ghanaian dish is influence by the environment. 209 questionnaires were distributed total of 190 responded. 90 respondents representing 47% said they prefer to eat in restaurants that are noted for Ghanaian dishes. 80 respondents representing 42% said they prefer Ghanaian dishes in their hotels that they stay. 20 respondents representing 11% say they normally eat in some local eating joints known as chop bars in the various localities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
<th>Description/ Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>Eating in restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>Eating in hotels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>local eating joints/chop bars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1:

**Places where International Tourists prefer To eat Ghanaian dishes**

Source: Authors’ construct (2013)
This shows that most tourists prefer to eat in restaurants because of the hygienic conditions and there waiters and waitresses to assist them. Most tourists prefer to eat Ghanaian dishes in restaurants not the chop bars which are the local restaurants because they are concerned with the hygienic conditions under which the food is prepared and also feel that the hotels might be expensive as compared to the restaurants. One of the tourists in discussions at the cultural centre in Kumasi when asked further on why he prefers eating restaurants said he is concern with the water used in preparing the food in the chop Bars which are not good for his system. He also raised concerns about sanitary conditions in and around the environment where the food is prepared and rather explained that even though the chop bars has the worse conditions and the hotels has the best environmental conditions for the preparation of local dishes they turn to be expensive as compared to restaurants and that account for his choice of restaurants for indigenous dishes. The popularization of indigenous food in our restaurants will help in promoting culinary tourism in Ghana. Chop bar operators most equally be educated on hygienic practices in order to meet international standards.

B. Reasons for international tourists visit to Ghana

In looking at the reasons for visiting Ghana in order to know whether Ghana has culinary tourists who will really visit just because of Ghana’s food which is an aspect of cultural tourism, 210 questionnaires were administered of which 194 responses were received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
<th>Description/ Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>societal events such as Panafest,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>the natural beauty of the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>peaceful nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>culture which include food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Ghanaians are friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>the Sea, Sun and sand of Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>194</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure: 2. Reasons for international tourists visit to Ghana

Source: Authors’ construct (2013)
This means that most tourists come for the societal events. It indicates that food is part of culture is the third reason for tourist visit to Ghana. In discussions with a German tourist at the Bonwire kente village she indicated that culture is his man reason for coming to Ghana and that apart from experiencing the clothing and textiles another experience is to taste the food of the community is Fufu and palm not soup. When asked further whether that is his favorite Ghanaian dish he answered no and rather went further to mention Red plantain and beans or it as his favourite.Again when asked his reason for it she indicate her love for the spicy nature and flavor. When about her ratings of the various cultural tourism experiences in Ghana she rated food first followed by the creative arts industry of masks, carvings, dresses and followed by the music industry as the order of importance. This collaborated the idea that food is the highest cultural experience in Ghana. The promotion of it has the ability to be the number one tourists’ reason for coming to Ghana. Again since all who travel for other reasons also have to eat, culinary tourism has the potential of being the number one tourism activity in Ghana.

C. The preferred Ghanaian dishes by international tourists when in Ghana
Looking at the dishes tourists prefer when in Ghana, out of the 194 respondents received on the choices of Ghanaian dishes, majority of tourists said they prefer jollof rice representing 60 (32%), 40(21%) of them said they prefer beans and fried ripe plantain, 30(15%) said fufu and goat light soup. 20(11%) said Wakye, 16 of them representing 8%, said yam and palava sauce, 16(8%) again said Tuo zaafi (TZ), whilst 12(5%) said banku with fried fish and pepper.

This again means the preferred Ghanaian dishes tourists buy is jollof rice. This is well known and prepared in almost all hotels and restaurants in Ghana. It is therefore important to focus on the three best foods preferred by tourist that is jollof rice, beans and red plantain and fufu can be promoted as the key elements of culinary tourism in Ghana.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
<th>Description/items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>Jollof rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Beans and fried ripe plantain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Fufu and goat light soup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Wakye,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Yam and palava sauce,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Tuo zaafi (TZ),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Banku with fried fish and pepper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>194</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure: 3.

Source: Author’s construct (2013)
This means the preferred Ghanaian dishes tourists buy is jollof rice. This is well known and prepared in almost all hotels and restaurants in Ghana. When asked Canadian Tourist at the country Kitchen Restaurant in Accra, why his preference for jollof he explain that the colour is attracting and inviting, he again explain that it is spicy with good flavor as well. He again lives the taste compared to other dishes. When asked whether his decision is informed by the nutritious value, he answered in the positive and said the jollof rice has the balance diet with rice, vegetables, oils and meat or fish hence as his favorite Ghanaian dish. It is important to focus on the three best foods preferred by tourist that is jollof rice, beans and red plantain and fufu can be promoted as the key elements of culinary tourism in Ghana. These foods are also very common to all and grown in most part of Ghana.

D. The reasons for the preference of a Ghanaian dish.
Looking at the reasons for the preference of a particular Ghanaian dish, a total of 210 questionnaires were sent out and 192 respondents were recorded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
<th>Description/Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>It tastes very well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>The food is nutritious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>The food is cheaper/affordable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>The Food is safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 192 100%

Figure: 4.

Reasons for preferring a particular Ghanaian dish

Source: Author’s construct (2013)
This indicates that most people prefer Ghanaian food because of the taste and so if our chefs in the hotels and restaurants are well trained to produce food that taste so well it will help in the promotion of culinary tourism in Ghana. When asked whether the taste is good or has unique taste, a tourist eating jollof rice compared it and said although it’s similar to food in South Africa Chakalako, Ghana’s jollof rice is good and unique in taste.

E. How profitable it is to engage in indigenous dishes in the restaurants, hotels and chop bars.

In looking at the benefits of engaging in culinary tourism business by preparing indigenous Ghanaian dishes for sale to tourists, most hotels, restaurants and chop bar operators were the respondents. 188 responded and the results were as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
<th>Description/Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>made profit from the business to build houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>to take care of their children’s education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>expand their businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>other activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5:**

The food tourism operators have been a source of employment to many youth men and women. The owner of country kitchen, a restaurant in Accra collaborated it in discussions that he employs over twenty five workers and had used his profit to build a house and that is what he is using to take care of his children’s education he also agreed that other operators have benefited he more than him. The same results was collaborated by the operator of Eusbett Hotel in Sunyani who said he has used some of the profit to expand his business and explain high profit margin for the hotel when a lot of people consume indigenous dishes because items for cooking such food such as
cassava, corn, yam are cheat in Sunyani being a rural region. He said lot of tourist in his hotel prefers the Ghanaians
dishes because he uses fresh food items bought from farmers in and around Sunyani. When asked about the payment
of taxes he said it is based on the level of income hence the conclusion that culinary tourism could bring income to
both individuals and the government through taxation.
Finally the promotion of culinary tourism will bring total benefit to all sectors of the economy and the individuals
involved will benefit immensely.

Problems militating against the sustainability of culinary tourism in Ghana
Ghana’s tourism has over the years depended on areas such as Heritage, Eco- tourism and Conference tourism
without much attention being paid to culinary tourism. This is not because Ghana has not got the potential to
develop culinary tourism but the nation has not done any assessment of culinary tourism to its tourism development.
The culinary tourism however has quite a lot of factors militating against its growth and sustainability as a core tourism sector of the country.
As at the time of the research is clear that, in spite of the fact that a number of restaurants, bars and hotels serve its customers with indigenous dishes, there is still no agreed national policy or strategic objectives for the development of culinary tourism in Ghana. Apart from an attempt in 2007 to have valentine day celebrated with cocoa chocolate in Ghana, there are no plans to use food as a way to boost tourism in Ghana.
Secondly Ghana has not made any attempt at conducting research and perhaps only few or no research has been conducted on consumer market and performance research data on food to tourism in order to support an informed decision on the sector. All research has been limited to other areas of tourism in Ghana such as heritage tourism, eco tourism and technological tourism in Ghana by (Bempong 2011), which is why this paper is long overdue.
Thirdly, one of the revelations of the research is that Ghana’s stakeholders in culinary tourism stretching from hotels, restaurants and bars to the indigenous house wife have not made any attempt at co-operating and co-coordinating the activities of culinary tourism to know the types of foods to cook in hotels and restaurants or bars in various communities in Ghana. Everyone in the sector is developing his own thing without any co-ordination. Hoteliers do not know what really goes on in the chop bars and the restaurants as far as the current food tourism trend are concerned.
Ghana as a whole is not well vest with sophisticated ways of marketing any of its potentials both internally and externally and culinary tourism is no exception. The vigorous promotional branding, and marketing of local dishes such as beans and red plantain, Jollof rice etc. based on its nutritional value or taste has not been seen for all these years. How can there be sustainability of it. Information for food consumers is not available, inconsistent or insufficient. This was collaborated in the research when almost all the operators asserted they have not made any effort at marketing their dishes both internationally and nationally apart from the normal sign board to their location. They are not aware of any marketing of the dishes they prepare in the international magazine.
Another new trend of development in indigenous food is the perceived high cost or its expensive nature compared to foreign subsidized food grown with chemicals from the western world. The indigenous foods are made of the naturally grown food that is produced on small scale and therefore turn to be expensive.
There are no criteria for assessing the quality levels of food tourism in Ghana. The quality framework for food linked to national development is absent in Ghana. Therefore indifference food does not meet the quality standard expected from both local and international tourist. Although most food tourism operators in the study agreed that the Ghana Tourist Board are suppose to be the supervising agency most agreed that for a longtime the Ghana Tourist Board staff have not visited their facilities. Asked why it is so, some said due to the location of their facilities which is far from town.
Ghana has some good foods such as Jollof rice and red plantain but there is still not enough existing promotional literature of most foods for both local and international visitors to various destinations to read and get attracted to the unique experience available in food tourism. Most leaflet, magazines, pamphlet have been limited to hotels, car rentals and tourist attractions. The research proof that there is has not been much literature on various indigenous. The chef at the Eusbet hotel indicated that the only write up that he has on indigenous dishes was one from a book he has from his friend in Jamaica

132
Again there is no training for chefs and other practitioners in culinary tourism in Ghana. Most training have been limited to continental dishes such as rice, chicken etc. without looking at ways of training to improve the preparations of indigenous dishes. Most of the hotel operators, restaurants and bar operators agreed that occasionally the Ghana Tourist board organizes training workshops for them and a chef in the hotel in Elmina Beach hotel also collaborated it by saying that the hotel management sometime organizes a general training workshop for the but not on food preparations or even how to prepare indigenous dishes.

Recommendations for the sustainability of culinary tourism in Ghana

Ghana located in the tropical West Africa with three vegetation zones of coastal savanna, Guinea savanna and semi deciduous rainforest. The country is therefore endowed with grains such as millet and rice. Tuber crops such as cassava, yam and cocoa yam. Vegetables such as okro, garden eggs, tomatoes, pepper and fruit such as mangoes, oranges, banana and coco nut has the potential for the growth and sustenance of culinary tourism. There is need for conscious or deliberate attempt at utilizing these resources through promotion culinary tourism in Ghana.

The country has so many different ethnic groups, three different vegetation zones with its accompanying stable foods. These ranges from Jollof rice to fufu and palmnut soup. There is the need for Ghana to look at culinary tourism and pick up one type of food that will have a brand name of Ghana, develop and promote it by communicating to the rest of the world through rigorous marketing.

Quality and value for money is a key value for any tourism products. Therefore there is a need for the culinary tourism which is an aspect of tourism to stand up for quality and value in order to satisfy visitors. The governmental agencies in charge of quality control should enforce the quality of service offered by key players in the culinary tourism such as bars, restaurants and hotels located in both rural and urban areas of the country.

Culinary tourism can also be enhanced through the capacity building of practitioners in the industry. This can be through training workshops, seminars and symposiums for practitioners such as chefs, cooks etc. who are engaged hotel, restaurants and bars in the preparation of indigenous dishes. There can be collaboration between industrial practitioners in the culinary tourism in Ghana such as workers in hotels, restaurants and bars, that of tourism educational institutions such as universities, polytechnics and vocational institution in order to train practitioners on modern use of certain species in local dishes in order to meet the international levels expected.

Culinary tourist is a new phenomenon in tourism, gaining roots in most tropical countries due to its comparative advantage. Ghana is one of the countries endowed with special vegetation zones and food producers in Africa. The research is to group and re-brand culinary tourism based on various foods associated to a particular destination which sometimes refers to as destination dishes. A well prepared distinguished fufu and palmnut soup associated with the Akans in the middle belt, Fanti Dorkun for the Coastal Savanna and the kenkey for Accra. This will give a genuine experience to meet the expectation of culinary tourists to Ghana.

There should also be an increase in accessibility of indigenous food and drinks to visitors. This can be done through encouraging the patronage of indigenous food by Ghanaians in the bars, restaurants and hotels. There can be competitions on cooking of indigenous foods organized by the Ghana tourist board so that people in most urban areas such as Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi who have lost touch with some traditional foods and methods of preparation would be re-awoken to its usefulness.

Culinary Food tourism practitioners must be sponsored financially by giving them loans to expand their business. This would help increase the value of the business and increase their revenue base as well as revenue for government. Some of these profits can be ploughed back for expansion of businesses in hotels, bars and restaurant which helps in the sustainability of tourism through an all year round Food tourism activity.

The trends of terrorist attacks on tourists in places such as Egypt, Kenya and Uganda have been a key threat to the sustainability of culinary tourism in Ghana. Therefore the implementation of the tourist police system in Ghana to guarantee the safety and protection of tourists as certain in places like Egypt would influence the flow of culinary tourist.

The Ghana Government through its implementing agencies like Ghana Tourist Board must form alliances with international tourism agencies such as WTO and Tourism generating countries such as U.S.A in order to sustain the flow of tourists with diverse interest to Ghana.

Finally public-private partnership in the tourism sector must be encouraged for huge fundraising and technological development of the culinary tourism sector.
Conclusion
The dynamics of tourism is now changing from a specific tourism activity to much wider tourism activities. From the study, therefore, Ghana has the potential of sustaining its tourism growth by using culinary tourism as a tool for all year round tourism activities. These will increase income to stake holders and the government leading to an overall improvement in the standard of living.

References


