

The influence of culinary movies as a popular culture tourism phenomenon in shoot destinations

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Setting the scene

Films contribute to our knowledge of spaces and the cultures reflected in them, thus forming an image of the destination shown in the film. As Kim and Richardson (2003) said, “news coverage and popular culture (as in films, television programs, and literature) can provide substantial information about a place in a short period of time”. When films presenting this knowledge and information generate mass media phenomena, they connect with a wave of popular culture tourism, as the audience want to visit the places shown in the film. This leads us to film-induced tourism, since, according to Hudson and Ritchie (2006a), “film tourism - sometimes called movie-induced or film-induced tourism - is defined as tourist visits to a destination or attraction as a result of the destination being featured on television, video, DVD or the cinema screen”. Riley, Baker and Van Doren (1998) reinforce this view, “movies provide the objects and subjects for the gaze of many people, and for some people, movies induce them to travel to the locations where they were filmed”.

The main objective of this paper is to investigate how culinary films influence tourism flow in the places where they were filmed. Even if we take into account that not all of these kinds of film have a specific setting, they still create a culinary image of the destination. For instance, while the setting of *American cuisine* (1999) is not important, the film constructs an image of French gastronomy and its restaurants. On the other hand, there are examples of films that “can also be used to direct attention towards geographical areas or draw attention to less known destinations. France, for instance, uses the film *Chocolat* (2000) to draw attention to Burgundy” (O’Connor, Flanagan, and Gilbert, 2008); and we can recognize La Havana through the ice cream parlor *Coppelia* in *Fresa y Chocolate (Strawberry and Chocolate)*; or learn more about Jutland (Denmark) from *Babette’s feast*.

“The media often claim that films and TV dramas have a positive impact on a specific destination, but there is often no method of calculating this effect” (Li, Li, Song, Lundberg, and Shen, 2017). To calculate part of this impact, our research focus was aimed at determining how Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) of the places where films were shot take advantage of this. That is, do they promote the destination through the movie? How? And is that the main point they are promoting?

Theoretical underpinnings

Different authors have established the relationship between film-induced image and tourism and the process of image formation. Before films, this image was created through books, literature, but “in the 21st Century, fictional films (movies and TV series) have taken over from literature as the most influential form of popular media, creating strong emotional ties to areas and can present certain activities that visitors and recreationists desire to imitate or experience” (Beeton, 2008). Unlike books, where the created image comes from the reader's imagination, “films provides viewers with images, accounts, and stories of life that are often far removed from the viewer's experience. They also have the potential to influence consumer perception, which can become part of enduring mental and social representations” (Macionis and Sparks, 2009).

According to Kim and Richardson (2003), “image has emerged as a crucial marketing concept in the tourism industry”. Within the tourism industry, we could say that film-tourism forms a part of cultural tourism, as Hudson and Ritchie (2006b) point out:

“Falling loosely under the umbrella of cultural tourism, film tourism is a growing phenomenon worldwide, fueled by both the growth of the entertainment industry and the increase in international travel”.

Indeed, “cultural tourism has several aspects, both tangible and intangible, such as works of art, language, gastronomy, art and music, architecture, historical sites and monuments, festivals and cultural events, religion, education, clothing, etc.” (Moirá, Mylonopoulos, and Kontoudaki, 2015). As cinema is considered the seventh art, and tourists traveling for film motivations are visiting different aspects of cultural tourism, as they are shown in the film, we could add film tourism as a part of cultural tourism.

“Movie tourism can be seen as a new form of cultural landscape (...). The images the movie goer forms as a result of watching it provides responses of the location as a ‘must see’

destination” (Jewell and McKinnon, 2008), which also leads us to include this type of tourism under the umbrella of cultural tourism. As Connell (2012) argues for, film tourism could be understood from a cultural perspective, since it is related to literary tourism and cultural geography. A part of it, as the author states “going to the cinema remains one of the most popular cultural activities in many societies”. Moreover, “TV series-induced tourism – and we could understand film tourism by extension – is a type of new cultural tourism that has great potential to advance cultural exchange and understanding” (S. S. Kim, Agrusa, Lee, and Chon, 2007). Mestre, del Rey and Stanishevski (2008) also refer to film tourists as cultural tourists, stating that “fictional cinema is a great creator of cultural images that travel all around the world and have a significant impact on audiences”.

The fact is that landscape and culture are very important in building the image of a destination in the mind of a tourist. For Riley and Van Doren (1992), “the key for the construction of a favorable destination impression appears to be a formula of idyllic or extraordinary landscape qualities, a unique social and cultural vantage point, and/or an image that tourists identify with and wish to explore or rediscover”. Furthermore, this created image will be long-lasting, because “film images persist for decades, provide publicity and create identities. The exposure a film gives a city, province or country is an advertisement viewed by potentially millions of people, an audience that could not be reached through specifically targeted tourism promotions” (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006a). Therefore, the fact of seeing a movie where a landscape or culture appear that we wish to know more about does not mean we have to go on the trip immediately, rather the idea can stay with us for a long time before we do so. When all is said and done, “for most film tourists it is precisely the connection between both scenery and film that makes the visit of a selected location so special” (concerning The Lord of the Rings and New Zealand) (Buchmann, 2010). That is, as Riley et al. (1998) pointed out:

“Through movies, people are sometimes induced to visit what they have seen on the silver screen. If this gaze is directed at objects or features which are extraordinary and thus distinguish the “site/sight” of the gaze from others, then the properties of a movie location – whether scenic, historical, or literary – qualify as icons for tourists to gaze upon. That is, in the sense that people are seeking sights/sites seen on the silver screen, they become movie-induced tourists”.

To sum up then, “the creation of a destination image stimulates information search behavior concerning that destination and this heightened interest level leads to potential travel behavior to visit the location” (Hahm and Wang, 2011). What is more, destinations where films

have been shot can benefit in diverse ways, and especially economically, because “additional businesses and services can be created through film tourism that in turn can encourage the extension and strengthening of the visitor season” (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006b).

Although further theoretical underpinnings regarding touristic image were found, only a few related to the image of gastronomy shown through films or culinary shows, as, for example, Busby, Huang, and Jarman (2013) do regarding the celebrity chef Rick Stein and his restaurant in Padstow (Cornwall, England). In this case, according to the authors “what does not seem to have been considered in the research are television portrayals of tourist destinations with local foods and chefs to the fore” when, in reality “the nexus between film, gastronomy and tourism centers on destination enhancement and awareness” (Busby et al., 2013).

Concerning promotion by DMOs, Riley and Van Doren (1992) expound “the case that motion pictures filmed in the USA for US and international markets have been influential in promoting US tourist destinations”, stating that “strong support for the premise of increased tourism through identification of destinations in movies is enhanced by statistical case studies and anecdotal evidence gathered within the USA”. But this phenomenon is not limited to the US, since it has become a global phenomenon, as Connell (2012) states:

“Despite being a relatively niche element of tourism activity, a marked uptake of film tourism initiatives by destination marketing organizations and economic development organizations, eager to capture additional promotion, visitor awareness and visitor numbers, is notable within an increasingly global context. A number of high-profile tourism destinations utilize film-related aspects in inbound marketing campaigns”.

In this article we will focus on movies rated as gastronomic, those with a storyline about food, and their connection with the tourism, as “research in recent years has indicated the importance of gastronomy in the tourism ‘offer’, and clearly, destination image can be influenced by perceptions of local cuisine, which are, themselves, influenced by the television representations” (Busby et al., 2013). Considering that, as Beeton (2006) states, “many destinations have come to assume that having a movie or television series filmed in their region will automatically increase tourism, and that this will be to their advantage”, we will analyze if this advantages are also taken into account in cooking movies recorded in France.

Methodology

Throughout this paper, a content analysis of films and destination websites is done. Kolbe and Burnett (1991) define content analysis as “an observational research method that is used to systematically evaluate the symbolic content of all forms of recorded communications”. Kassirjian (1977) points out that “content analysis is the study of the message itself, and not the communicator or the audience”. From this perspective, our study focuses on two messages: the message delivered through the chosen movies and the one transferred by the official websites of the analyzed touristic destinations, in order to understand the relationship between the gastronomic movies and the DMOs where they have been filmed.

To initiate the content analysis, initial parameters have been established as a basis for the analysis to acquire the data that would provide the conclusions. As Paisley (1969) states, content analysis is a research method defined as “a phase of information-processing in which communication content is transformed, through objective and systematic application of categorization rules, into data that can be summarized and compared”. Kassirjian (1977) adds that it has to be objective, since “each step in the research process must be carried out on the basis of explicitly formulated rules and procedures”; and systematic “is meant to eliminate partial or biased analysis in which only those elements in the content which fit the analyst's thesis are selected”. In our case, initially, a list of culinary movies was obtained from different film websites such as Internet Movie Database - IMDb (2016) (www.imdb.com) and Film Affinity (2016) (www.filmaffinity.com). As the study aims to research the culinary image portrayed of places in the films, the first filter for the film list was the condition of being related to gastronomy and used the following keywords: “cooking, cook, chef, culinary arts, food, kitchen and restaurant”. This list was later compared to the gross lifetime rank in Box Office Mojo (2016) (www.boxofficemojo.com), in relation to the keyword “Cooking”.

From these databases, we took the first ten main culinary movies by box office, as this figure indicates which movies have been a mass media phenomenon and had a significant audience (table 1). Year of production was not considered, as some of the oldest culinary films are still among the most viewed. Only films shot in France or talking about French cuisine were selected, which amounted to five of the ten mentioned above. The selected films were then analyzed using a set of questions designed to ascertain how gastronomy is presented in the movie (where the scene mainly set is; relationship between the main character and food; food as central or secondary subject; and so on). Results are shown in table 2.

After determining where the movie was set, an analysis of the official tourism bureau website was carried out for the place in question (table 3). A set of questions was designed to analyze whether the bureau considered the fact that a movie had been filmed there, and what it tells us about the gastronomy of the village/city, region or nation.

Ultimately, we adopted a qualitative approach for the research methodology, since the film and the website analysis are analyzed through the content following a deductive paradigm, as deductive approach in content analysis is useful when “the structure of analysis is operationalized on the basis of previous knowledge” (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008).

Trustworthiness of findings was established since each author carried out the analysis separately, following previously established guidelines, and in the end a consensus on the most trustworthy result was achieved. As Elo and Kyngäs (2008) state, credibility is acquired with the simplification of the data in categories and the representation of this analysis through tables.

Findings

The list of films that talk about gastronomy is a long one. The different databases consulted order them by keywords, popularity, user rating or box office. Some examples under the keywords “chef, cooking and cook” in IMDb are: *Burnt*, *Ratatouille*, *Chef*, *The hundred food journey*, *Julie & Julia*, *It’s complicated* and *Today’s special*. On the same database, but by popularity: *Charlie and the chocolate factory*, *Ratatouille*, *Chocolat*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *Julie & Julia*, *No reservations*, *Because I said so*, *Delicatessen*, *Like water for chocolate*, *Food Inc*, and so on. On Film Affinity the best ranked in the “cooking” genre are, among others, *Babette’s Feast*, *Eat drink man woman*, *Ratatouille*; *The cook, the thief, his wife and her lover*; *Tampopo*; *Estomago*; *Like water for chocolate*; *A Touch of spice*; *Bella Martha*; *Chocolat* and *An (Sweet red bean paste)*. As we can see, some are repeated on the different lists, and many others have not been mentioned due to the length of the list.

For our analysis, we took into account box office ranking according to Box Office Mojo, with *Ratatouille* (2007), *Julie & Julia* (2009), *Chocolat* (2000), *The Hundred-Foot Journey* (2014), *No reservations* (2007), *Chef* (2014), *Como agua para chocolate (Like water for chocolate)* (1993), *Burnt* (2015), *Big Night* (1996), and *Yin shi nan nu (Eat drink man woman)* (1994) as the highest ranking gastronomic films. Of these ten, five were based on somewhere in France and/or narrate stories related to French cuisine, even if they are set in other places of the world. Table 1 lists the films, their location and whether they relate to French cuisine. Finally, *Ratatouille*,

Julie & Julia, *Chocolat*, *The hundred-foot journey* and *Burnt* were chosen so as to use a reference destination that includes as many films as possible, in this case France and its cuisine.

Table 1. Relation between the selected films

Movie	Year	Location	French gastronomy
Ratatouille	2007	Paris (France)	Yes
Julie & Julia	2009	Paris, Rouen, Le Havre (France) Queens, NY.	Yes
Chocolat	2000	Flavigny-sur-Ozerain (France)	No
The hundred-foot journey	2014	Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val (France) Paris (France)	Yes
No reservations	2007	Manhattan	No
Chef	2014	USA	No
Like water for chocolate	1992	Mexico	No
Burnt	2015	Paris (France) New Orleans London (UK)	Yes
Big Night	1996	New Jersey	No
Eat drink man woman	1994	Taipei (Taiwan)	No

The five selected films, mentioned above, were analyzed for their responses to a series of questions regarding both gastronomy and the iconic features of the places where they were shot. Table 2 shows the results of this analysis. As we can see, a variety of places were identified with regard to where the story takes place, from a private home in the case of *Julie & Julia* or a shop in *Chocolat*, to a restaurant in *Ratatouille*, *The hundred-foot journey* and *Burnt*. In the case of *The hundred-foot journey*, a one-star French restaurant, an Indian restaurant and a culinary laboratory in Paris are displayed. Throughout films we can sense the interests of the characters, from wanting to learn to cook or improve their cooking techniques through classic French cook books, either from home or working at a restaurant, to trying to obtain a first, second or third Michelin star. With the exception of *Chocolat*, where the story revolves around chocolate and its recipes, in the films we discover the great dishes of French cuisine such as ratatouille, bouillabaisse, partridge or a variety of desserts, often repeated in different films, as well as their typical basic sauces (béchamel, velouté, espagnole, hollandaise and tomato sauce). Regarding the iconic features of the places where the story unfolds, although these do usually appear at some point in the film, it is to a much lesser extent than images of the actual dishes. For example, even if some of the scenes from four of the five movies had been shot in Paris, the Eiffel Tower is displayed for a very few minutes, compared to the time that dishes are displayed. This finding reveals how in this type of film the aim is to show the product, the food, the procedure that takes place to turn it into a dish, and the final

result. It is worth noting that all of the movies include scenes where the dish is actually served, either at a restaurant or at a private household.

With regard to our analysis of the official websites, including both France in general and the places where the different films are set (Paris, Flavigny-sur-Ozerain and Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val), as can be observed in Table 3 they all have a section dedicated to food, whether to display local products or restaurants and producers that can be visited. The France website offers recipes for French dishes and presents the cuisine of different regions. As for the local websites, only the Burgundy one has a specific section on local products and typical dishes and desserts of the region. Paris and Tarn-et-Garonne have a section dedicated to restaurants and/or local producers, but do not specify the products on offer. Only two of the towns where a movie was filmed refer to it on their website, and merely in a very superficial way. A reference to the film *Chocolat* can be found at the end of the description of Flavigny-sur-Ozerain, explained as a curiosity of the place. As for *The hundred-foot journey*, no specific reference is found in the information on Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val, although a search for *The hundred-foot journey* on the website reveals a PDF file that, when talking about places to visit, mentions the movie filmed there and a related tour. In the case of the France website, a search for all of the films analyzed here only returns information on *Julie & Julia*, in relation to cooking classes available in the place where Julia Child learned to cook, and *Ratatouille*, referring to the attraction at Disneyland Paris amusement park. The Paris website does not make any reference to any of the films analyzed, even though an iconic feature of the city appears in all of them except for *Burnt*.

Table 2. Culinary movie analysis.

Movie	Setting	Character	Type of cuisine	Dishes / products mentioned	Iconic features
<i>Ratatouille</i>	Restaurant	Chef's apprentice	French	Ratatouille	Eiffel Tower (Paris)
<i>Julie & Julia</i>	Private household	Woman who wants to learn French cooking	French (Julia Child's book)	French dishes	Eiffel Tower, Versailles, Orsay (Paris)
<i>Chocolat</i>	Shop	Shopkeeper	Product: Chocolate	Chocolate	Village square (Flavigny-sur-Ozerain)
<i>The hundred-food journey</i>	1-star French restaurant; Indian restaurant; culinary laboratory	Indian chef learning French cuisine. 1-star restaurant owner	French (Jules Gouffré's book) and Indian	5 basic sauces: bechamel, veloute, Spanish, Dutch and tomato. And French dishes	River and town (Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val) Eiffel Tower (Paris)
<i>Burnt</i>	Restaurant	2-star chef who wants a third	French	Bouillabaisse, partridge... and other French dishes.	London Eye, London bus and bridges.

Table 3. Web analysis

Site	Culinary section?	Shows dishes / culinary products?	Make reference to a culinary film?	Suggest activities linked to the film?
France Official Site (France, 2016)	Yes, link on homepage. "Foodie heaven" in "Inspire me".	Yes. Recipes from different regions.	No	Yes. Cooking classes (<i>Julie & Julia</i>); <i>Ratatouille</i> attraction at Disneyland Paris.
Paris. Official convention and visitors bureau website (2016)	Yes, link on homepage. "Eating out". About restaurants.	No	No	No
Burgundy Official Site (Designed by Burgundy, 2016)	Yes, link on homepage. "Gastronomy" in "Discover Burgundy"	Yes. "Typical products from Burgundy"	Not in culinary section. In "Discover Burgundy / Must see tourist attractions / Sites / Flavigny-sur-Ozerain" yes: " <i>Chocolat</i> "	No
Official website for Tourism in Tarn-et-Garonne, (2016)	Yes, link on homepage. "Food & Drink". Restaurants and producers.	No	No. And neither in "Visit / Classified cities and villages / Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val" Yes in the brochure "Tarn-et-Garonne, slow living and tourism"	Yes. Special guided tour following in the steps of the protagonist.

Discussion

The main aim of this research was to observe whether the Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) of places where films were shot take advantage of this fact. The study focused on France as a general destination due to its cuisine, and the villages of Flavigny-sur-Ozerain and Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val and city of Paris in particular. After analyzing the websites of these places, we observed that no specific promotion is done in connection with the films, except, and only superficially, in the case of *Julie & Julia* and *Ratatouille* in Paris, and *The hundred-food journey* in Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val. We would therefore say that the DMOs are not building on the success of these films, which are the highest grossing culinary films to date. This may be because the cuisine of France is already well-known, and it does not therefore have as great a need for promotion as other destinations. Be that as it may, “film tourism is potentially also threatened by stagnation, and the timing of publicity and the introduction of new attractions is vital to continue the rejuvenation” (Buchmann, 2010) of destinations such as the ones concerned in this study, always bearing in mind that, as some authors state, (Beeton, 2006; Connell, 2012), in the case that DMOs enhance tourism, especially in small villages, both positive and negative impacts that may come from it should be controlled.

Returning to the question raised at the beginning of this study, it is now possible to state that the analyzed destinations aren't promoting gastronomy as a main point, even though films related to gastronomy are shot there.

Regarding the landscape and cultural icons shown in the selected films, we can state that culinary films do not usually show much landscape or iconic tourist attractions, but rather relate emotions, usually perceived through food and particularly good food. Rather than showing cultural and landscapes icons, then, they show culinary ones, which comprise the most representative and typical dishes of French cuisine.

Finally, after conducting this study we conclude that dishes can be transported to other geographies other than those where they originated. The importance of cuisine is how the dish is prepared, the recipe and the ingredients, while the place may change. A good example of this can be found in the film *The hundred-food journey*, in which the Indian main character moves his kitchen to a remote village in France, where he seeks out ingredients to make his dishes. After all, “the value of gastronomy to tourism is multiplied many times by translation to the small screen” (Busby et al., 2013).

Implications for popular culture tourism

To date, little research has been conducted on the subject presented in this article. Even though these are well-known movies which have had big audiences and achieved a significant number of followers, DMOs in the places where they were shot do not noticeably promote the location through the film. During the research, the authors have noted that films might not have a direct relevant relationship with an existing location, although there could be a close relationship between the culinary image projected in the film and the final image tourists have of a destination. In the case of France it can be very complicated and maybe, unnecessary, since it is a much consolidated destination, partly thanks to its gastronomy. If we take notice of the villages where movies have been shot, as Flavigny-sur-Ozerain and Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val, it is clear that the DMOs should use the fact that a high-impact blockbuster movie has been shot there in order to attract more tourists. They should initially promote themselves from the website of the destination place, because as we have seen, all of them have one but they don't use it with that aim, they present themselves in a very superficial way in relation to the movie. If a good web design is done and they link the site to search engines so that people who look for information about the movie find their website, many users who are unaware that the movie has been shot there will have a desire to visit that municipality.

In this study, we examined only five of the many culinary films in existence. In addition, we analyzed a country that already receives a large number of tourists for other reasons beyond the films that may be shot there. Therefore, it may be interesting to devote further studies to determining the relationship between these films and the promotion done by DMOs in the countries where they have been shot, or the type of cuisine they refer to. Furthermore, from a different perspective, an analysis could be conducted of whether the dishes that are shown in movies are offered in French restaurants and whether they promote that themselves, taking advantage of the fact that they are known to many people because of the big screen.

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