



Food Tourism in Porto

THE INFLUENCE OF
SOCIAL MEDIA AND
AESTHETICS ON
PORTO'S FOOD SCENE

Master thesis by

Johanna Erna Gertrud Böck
Jordan Bradley Mehan

Supervisor: Carina Ren
Master in Tourism
Aalborg University
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Abstract

This thesis investigates how food tourism is characterized in the emerging tourist destination of Porto, Portugal. It further examines the role that social media and aesthetics play in tourists' experience with food in Porto, and how these factors influence Porto's food scene, specifically regarding cultural heritage and authenticity. The research of this thesis is based on qualitative methods and a constructivist philosophy of science. First, detailed desk research was conducted to gain an overview of relevant concepts concerning food tourism. This gave us a basic understanding of Porto as a destination and food tourism concepts. Next, we conducted a content analysis on the social media platform TikTok to investigate how the food scene of Porto is presented online. This TikTok analysis helped us gain a deeper understanding of the aesthetic trend that is currently popular in the food scene. Then, we conducted fieldwork in Porto to get a thorough understanding of how food tourism in the destination is characterized. Here, we conducted 18 semi-structured interviews with tourists and locals, asking them about their experience with food in Porto and how social media influences the local food scene. Additionally, we took part in a Food Tour and Baking Class, and conducted observations of everything that could be related to our research field, which further supported our other research.

The literature review outlines relevant concepts such as definitions of food tourism, the origin of food, cultural heritage and food, authenticity in food tourism, content on social media in food tourism, aesthetics and food images and satisfaction in food tourism. By using these concepts and our primary data, we were able to analyse the characteristics of food tourism in Porto, as well as the influence of social media and aesthetics on the food scene and the tourists' experience in the destination. Our analysis revealed that the history and traditions of Porto are expressed through its cuisine, therefore, preserving the cultural heritage of the destination. Furthermore, we found that Porto's cuisine and gastronomy can reveal parts of the city's identity, through educating tourists about particular aspects of its identity. Regarding authenticity, we found that tourists in Porto do value authentic food experiences and the taste of the traditional cuisine. However, we also found that the taste of traditional food has changed throughout the years, to adapt it more to the tourists' preferences. In addition, food authenticity contains many different layers, for instance, the preparation, presentation and consumption stage of the food. Furthermore, tourists seek different levels of authenticity in their food experience.

With regard to our first sub-question, we found that Electronic Word-of-Mouth plays a vital role in tourists' decision-making process regarding where to eat in Porto. In regard to social media trends, we

argue that food aesthetics and restaurant aesthetics both online and in real life can further influence their decision-making. The clash between the aesthetic trend on social media and tourists looking for authentic food experiences has created a push and pull between restaurants trying to stay authentic while at the same time becoming more modern, to attract a broader audience among tourists. This push and pull has led to an identity crisis in Porto's food scene and created a new foodscape in Porto. Further research is required to examine how tourism businesses and destination-management organizations can solve this crisis and ensure a strong brand identity of Porto.

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1. Introduction

Food and beverages have always been an essential part of the tourists' experience, but their importance has changed over the years. According to the Forbes magazine, *“more than half of leisure travelers now choose a destination based on its food or drink, the largest proportion of them middle-aged or younger”* (Levine, 2020) and during their travels, tourists spend approx. 25% in average of their budget on food and drinks (Wolf, 2020). Due to the increasing interest in food experiences, the relationship between food and tourism has evolved significantly, creating the new tourism segment of ‘gastronomy tourism’ (UNWTO, 2019). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines gastronomy tourism as *“a type of tourism activity which is characterized by the visitor’s experience linked with food and related products and activities while travelling”* (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023).

The interesting aspect of gastronomy tourism is, according to the UNWTO (2019), *“the difference between tourists who simply feed themselves during their travels and those for whom gastronomy has a decisive influence on their choice of destination and who wish to satisfy their hedonistic and cultural appetite”* (p. 8). They argue that gastronomy tourism has emerged from simply providing food for tourists in a destination, to now being a segment that offers tailored food experiences to educate tourists on the local gastronomy (UNWTO, 2019). Today, gastronomy tourism ranges from the food producers (e.g., Agriculture) to the processing companies (e.g., wineries), over the tourism and hospitality sector (e.g., food experiences) to the commerce and retail sector (sale of local food products) (UNWTO, 2019).

The tourism industry recognises that there are multiple names used to describe the phenomenon of travelling to a destination and experiencing its food in some capacity, whether it is eating at restaurants, participating in food trails, or attending cooking classes (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023). The different terms used to describe a variation of this specific tourism activity include food tourism, gastronomy tourism, and culinary tourism (World Food Travel Association, 2020). Food tourism is referred to as *“the act of traveling for a taste of place in order to get a sense of place”* (World Food Travel Association, 2020).

There has been a growing interest in food tourism; this growth is attributed to factors such as the *“explosion of food-focused media and social media, an farm-to-table movement among large travel brands, and the introduction of high-profile events celebrating local cuisine”* (Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance ; Skift, 2015, p. 6). The food content on social media has also been associated with the recent rise of food

tourism, as *“food videos on social media can convey food information intuitively and vividly, thus helping to spread the destination image based on food”* (Li, Xu, Song, & He, 2020, p. 1). Interestingly, almost 40 percent of Generation Z use social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram when searching for places to eat (Carbonaro, 2023), which makes social media an important tool for the food tourism sector.

Moreover, Research and Markets (2022) states that *“The global culinary tourism market reached a value of US\$ 696.5 Billion in 2021. Looking forward, the publisher expects the market to reach US\$ 1,796.5 Billion by 2027”*. Therefore, food tourism is not only a trend that has expanded in the last decade but is also a sector within the tourism industry that is projected to remain popular. Countries that are well known for their food include France, Italy, Spain, India, Japan, China, and Mexico; food from countries such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Peru, and Singapore are gaining popularity and recognition across the globe (Nesterchuk, et al., 2021).

In addition, one destination that is emerging in the food tourism scene is Porto, Portugal, which was just elected as the city of the year 2023 in the awards of the international magazine Food and Travel (Porto, 2023). In fact, in this competition, Porto even managed to *“surpass cities such as Barcelona, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, Paris, Vancouver and Vienna, which were also nominated in the same category”* (Porto, 2023). Additionally, Forbes Magazine just listed Porto as one of the top 50 destinations to visit in 2023, stating that *“You can expect great food, even better wine and affordable prices”* (Lupini & Adams, 2023). Furthermore, *“The city (like the rest of Portugal) is a paradise for food lovers and there are many traditional dishes that have their origins here and are really worth trying”* (Tsapepas, 2022). This is reinforced when Culture Trip states that *“A trip to Portugal is as much a culinary experience as it is a historical adventure”* (Nina, 2021). This indicates that in the next few years, Porto will become even more popular within the food tourism sector.

1.1 Motivation and Research Gap

The increasing prevalence of food tourism within the wider tourism sector speaks to the importance that the trend will hold in the industry for years to come, therefore motivating us to explore the phenomenon. As mentioned, several countries are well known for their food, suggesting that food tourism in those countries has been well-researched (Nesterchuk, et al., 2021). We noticed that some destinations that were becoming popular tourism spots and appeared to have an equally diverse and delicious cuisine were not as popular as the food tourism destinations listed by Nesterchuk, Balabanyts, Pivnova, Matsuka, Skarha, and Kondratenko (2021); this suggests that these destinations may have limited research on their food tourism sector. This prompted us to explore food tourism in a destination like Porto that was not as

well-known or recognised for this phenomenon yet. For this reason and its growing popularity in the food tourism sector, we chose Porto as a case study for this thesis.

Furthermore, through preliminary research regarding food tourism, we observed that there is limited research on the influence that newer social media platforms, specifically TikTok, have on a destination's food tourism sector. This piqued our curiosity and pushed us to examine how new platforms shape the food tourism scene of a destination. Research on themes and perspectives of food tourism has explored authenticity, culture and food, destination marketing, segmentation and food tourism, food tourism and sustainability (Okumus, 2021). Previous studies have examined the influence of social media, specifically how images or text, such as Instagram, Flickr, or travel blogs can shape the image of a destination (Li, Xu, Song, & He, 2020). In addition, TikTok is increasingly used as a search platform for food experiences (Carbonaro, 2023). Since the content on TikTok only consists of short videos, it is worth investigating whether these short videos can influence food tourism in a destination. In addition, we know that culture and tradition are tied to food tourism (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2023), leading us to consider in what capacity platforms such as TikTok may influence food tourism in a destination within the context of cultural heritage and authenticity.

1.2 Research Question

To address our curiosity and fill the existing research gap within the food tourism sector, this thesis will answer the following research and sub-research questions:

What characterizes food tourism in the emerging tourist destination of Porto, Portugal?

- *What role do social media and aesthetics play in tourists' experience with food in Porto?*
- *How do social media and aesthetics influence Porto's food scene, especially in relation to cultural heritage and authenticity?*

1.3 Delimitations

Food tourism and social media are both broad research areas, meaning the scope of this thesis must be narrowed.

1.3.1 Food Tourism

Food tourism is one of the more general terms used when describing tourists' interactions with food while travelling, as it encompasses all food and beverage-related activities (World Food Travel Association, 2020; Stone et al. 2019). It is also the term most frequently recognised by tourists (Appendix B). For these

reasons, this thesis will adopt the word “food tourism” as opposed to the other terms. Furthermore, food tourism can encompass an array of sectors ranging from unique food experiences, authenticity, culture and food, and marketing (Okumus, 2021). This thesis focuses on themes such as cultural heritage, authenticity, social media and aesthetics, as these themes not only add to existing research but also contribute to newer segments, such as technology.

1.3.2 Social Media/TikTok

Food tourism has been researched in relation to several different social media platforms. When examining food tourism decision-making and information search, this thesis considers Instagram and TikTok. However, to understand the presence of Porto’s food online, this thesis only looks at TikTok. Even though TikTok is currently one of the most popular social media platforms, there are only a few studies that concentrate on the promotion of food tourism on TikTok (Li, Xu, Song, & He, 2020). Therefore, this thesis focuses on the food content that is posted on TikTok.

1.3.3 Perspectives

As mentioned in the introduction, food tourism includes many different stakeholders. This thesis focuses on two of them, namely the tourists and the locals. We chose to not include the DMO as another perspective because we wanted the thesis to explore concepts such as cultural heritage, authenticity, and aesthetics through the lens of lived experiences in Porto. Interviewing a DMO would potentially push a business-centred agenda regarding food tourism in Porto, which we wanted to avoid. By interviewing tourists and locals, we felt that this thesis could get clear answers about what food tourism is truly like in Porto, not an image that the destination was trying to promote.

1.3.4 Overview of Thesis

This thesis will explore how food tourism is characterized in Porto. The thesis begins by outlining the philosophy of science that this research takes. It then moves to describe the methods used to collect the information needed to answer the research question. These methods include desk research, a content analysis on TikTok, observations, and qualitative interviews. The research design also includes quality criteria, researcher positionality, ethical considerations, and limitations. Following the methodology, this thesis provides an overview of literature relevant to the research question. The literature explores topics such as definitions of food tourism, the origin and rise of food tourism, themes and perspectives of food tourism research, cultural heritage and food, authenticity in food tourism, social media in relation to food

tourism, aesthetics and food, and satisfaction in food tourism. The thesis then moves into the analysis portion, where we analyse the data that will help answer this thesis' research question. The thesis ends with a discussion of what the data revealed, and a conclusion of the thesis' findings.

1.4 Case Study

As previously mentioned, one of the aims of this thesis is to explore food tourism in a destination that is becoming popular as a travel destination and that has little existing research on its food tourism sector. Furthermore, we want to look at newer social media platforms' role in a destination's food tourism sector. To accomplish these two goals, this thesis adopts a case study approach. The most obvious reason for adopting a case study approach is because we wish to explore food tourism in a destination, suggesting we must choose a specific location to study; this aligns with the case study approach where a researcher chooses a specific area or segment of study (O'Leary, 2021). A case study's ability to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon serves as another reason to choose a case study approach. This also connects with the philosophical stance of this research, namely the constructivist approach. In this type of research, a case study is the typical research design (Launsø, Rieper, & Olsen, 2017). A case study will enable us to focus on aspects such as food tourism, cultural heritage, authenticity, aesthetics, and social media in one place rather than spread across different definitions. This will give us a clearer understanding of the concepts, instead of a partial and superficial understanding that may be achieved if across various locations. This is important, as a clear understanding of these different factors will help us answer this thesis' research question.

The goal of this case study is to help us explore and bring new information to light on a subject area (O'Leary, 2021) regarding how food tourism operates in a destination. The hope is that the new information produced contributes to the tourism field by filling research gaps regarding food tourism and newer social media platforms, and perhaps could be triangulated with other existing research to help form the basis for new theories within the tourism sector (O'Leary, 2021).

The case chosen for this thesis is Porto, Portugal. One reason Porto is used as the case study is that *"the number of tourists visiting Porto is always growing"* (European Commission, 2023), and *"Portugal was named Europe's Leading Destination in the 2019 World Travel Awards"* (Arnowitz, 2019); this implies that it is a travel destination growing in popularity. In addition, it is a destination that is not as well known for its food (Nesterchuk, et al., 2021). These aspects served as motivators for this thesis, and therefore also serve as reasoning for choosing Porto for the case study. Based on preliminary research regarding

Portuguese food, it appeared that Porto offers a diverse food scene, making it interesting and feasible to study. We also chose Porto because of its purposiveness. Since Porto is becoming a popular travel destination, we argue that research on one of its tourism segments would provide a valuable contribution to the tourism community. Lastly, pragmatics are also important when choosing a case study (O'Leary, 2021) and therefore played a role in our decision to choose Porto. The city is easily accessible from Copenhagen, is affordable to travel to, and its food scene had an existing presence on social media, something that was necessary for this thesis.

1.5 Context

Portugal “is one of the oldest countries in Europe”, and “Its history is the combination of the story of Iberian tribes, Celtic peoples, the Roman Empire, Germanic kingdoms, Muslim invasions and the consequent Christian Reconquista, and finally, of the Exploration of the World” (Costa, 2021). Porto is the second largest city in Portugal (Augustyn, 2023). It lies along the Douro River, meaning throughout history it was a busy area, flourishing with trade and many Portuguese ready to settle into the city to create a home. As a result, the city has a high population density (Augustyn, 2023). Porto is one of the cities that helped provide Portugal with its name (Visit Portugal, 2013). The city was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1996 (Augustyn, 2023; Visit Portugal, 2013). This is mainly due to the city’s long history and, what many consider, its “untouched beauty” (Visit Portugal, 2013). That is, the city is known for keeping with its traditions, both tangible and intangible, regardless of outside influences (Visit Portugal, 2013).



Image 1: Map of Portugal (Maps-portugal, 2023)



Image 2: City of Porto

Porto's tourism sector is increasing, with the Portuguese National Institute of Statistics sharing that *"Porto and the North region of Portugal have attracted more guests than the rest of the country"* (Pacheco, 2021). Portugal has increased its revenue thanks to tourism activities; in 1995 tourism revenue made up 4.8 per cent of the country's gross national product, and before the pandemic, the percentage had risen to 10.25 (WorldData.info, 2020). Some of Porto's many tourism offerings include discovering the Douro, exploring the city's architecture and monuments, and trying some of the city's gastronomy (Visit Porto, 2023)

Food and wine are of great importance in Porto, as they are a large part of the city's culture and traditions (Taste Porto, 2020). Porto is most famous for its Port wine, a wine often served with dessert (Augustyn, 2023). In addition, Porto is known for its meat and seafood, especially traditional dishes such as Francesinha and Bacalhau (Spencer, 2023). It is also known for its pastry, Pastel de Nata. These dishes can be explored by tourists in the famous food tours that are offered by various providers in Porto, with Taste Porto (2020) stating that *"A Food Tour is the best way to get a proper introduction to a place's gastronomical scene, using history, architecture, and culture as background"*.

Porto is famous for crafting meals out of limited ingredients, for example using any part of animal meat to make an appetising dish; no food is wasted (Taste Porto, 2020). Sharing is a common practice in Porto, with Taste Porto (2020) stating that it is always ok to ask the waiter or waitress if you can share a dish with the person with whom you are eating. Despite the small size of the country, Porto's food is diverse, and varies from other cities in Porto, making the city's gastronomy quite unique (Taste Porto, 2020).

2. Methodology

The following section will outline how this thesis will answer the research question. First, the philosophical stance of this research will be explained. Then, this section will provide an overview of the thesis' research design, describing methods such as desk research, a content analysis on TikTok, observations, and qualitative interviews. The methodology section will conclude by touching upon quality criteria, researcher positionality, and limitations.

2.1 Philosophy of Science

The research for this thesis was conducted from a constructivist foundation. Researchers within the constructivist paradigm believe that knowledge is a social construction and that one's perception of the world is formed through one's own experiences and history (Juul & Pedersen, 2012). Hence, research

within the constructivist paradigm is focused on the studied human experiences and perceptions, by investigating a specific case instead of a more general research topic (Launsø, Rieper, & Olsen, 2017). Since our aim with this thesis is to deeply understand how food tourism in Porto operates, we approached our research from a constructivist position.

Within the philosophy of science of constructivism, there exist different sub-paradigms, such as phenomenology, hermeneutics and social constructivism. They differ slightly in their ontological and epistemological view. For this research, we worked from a hermeneutical standpoint. Hermeneutics is also called the study of interpretation and combines ontology and epistemology in the 'hermeneutic circle' (Juul & Pedersen, 2012). This circle represents their view of the world (ontology) and their method of gaining new knowledge within this world (epistemology) (Juul & Pedersen, 2012).

Hermeneutics believe that there is no such thing as the absolute truth — in contrast to positivists — and researchers can only understand an action by recreating the subject's viewpoint as much as possible (Juul & Pedersen, 2012). In hermeneutics, researchers are considered a crucial part of the research because they contribute with their own experiences and prejudices towards the studied subject (Juul & Pedersen, 2012). In this case, we were part of the research during the fieldwork in Porto, as we observed and experienced the food scene in Porto ourselves. Furthermore, our observations and experiences contribute significantly to our analysis and interpretation of the data collected in Porto.

This research thesis aims to investigate a problem statement that lies within the 'understanding type of research'. This type of research is characterized by researchers primarily searching for new knowledge by studying the researched subjects' perceptions of the phenomenon (Launsø, Rieper, & Olsen, 2017). Furthermore, the researchers are interested in uncovering the intentions, motivations, and opinions of the researched subjects (Launsø, Rieper, & Olsen, 2017). In the case of this thesis, our goal is to research the tourists that visit Porto as well as the locals that live there, as we are curious about their evaluation and views on food tourism in Porto. Launsø, Rieper, and Olsen (2017) point out that the context — the social and societal contexts in which the understandings and actions of those explored are formed — is essential for the interpretation of the understanding type of research. For this reason, we have asked tourists and locals about their background and knowledge of the food in Porto, so we know in which contexts they are answering our questions. Furthermore, the relationship between the researcher and the researched subject is usually very close and of great value for the research (Launsø, Rieper, & Olsen, 2017). Therefore, when approaching tourists and locals in Porto, we aimed to put ourselves on the same level as them to keep the interview more casual, comfortable, and trustworthy. This helped us develop a

more conversational tone for the interview, which Blommaert and Jie (2010) argue helps facilitate more useful information.

Since the research is based on the subjectivity of the explored subjects, the researcher needs to interpret their utterances, which can be based on statements or text (Launsø, Rieper, & Olsen, 2017). In our case, we need to interpret the tourists' and locals' statements from the interviews in addition to videos and video text from the TikTok analysis. According to Launsø et al. (2017), the interpretation of the data can be described as a process where the researcher creates or constructs their pre-understanding of the researched phenomenon and then recreates and reconstructs it in an ongoing process of recognition. In practice, this means that for qualitative interviews the researcher and the interviewee both have their own pre-understanding of the interview topic. During the interview, the researcher tries to comprehend the interviewees' pre-understanding, and in combination with their own knowledge background and other empirical and theoretical sources, the researcher creates a new understanding of the researched topic. This new understanding can help the researcher, usually after the interview, to complete the interpretation of the data (Launsø, Rieper, & Olsen, 2017). We can recognize this process of interpretation from our qualitative interviews. Before our field trip to Porto, we had a pre-understanding of food tourism in Porto based on our desk research and TikTok content analysis. Through each interview, we gained new knowledge of how tourists perceive food in Porto or how locals view the development of the food scene in relation to social media, which helped us to meet every interviewee with an even better understanding of the topic. Finally, we were able to interpret the data based on the new understanding we gained throughout the interviews.

2.2 Research Design

The following section outlines the research design of this thesis. We take a case study approach, using methods such as a TikTok content analysis, observations, and qualitative interviews with both tourists and locals. It will also discuss why this research is credible, the researcher's positionality, and the limitations of this thesis.

2.2.1 Desk Research

To establish a foundational understanding of the key concepts for this thesis, desk research via an internet search and literature review were used. We took this first step because Blommaert and Jie (2010) underscore the importance of understanding the contexts in which our study field operates, therefore allowing us to recognise valuable concepts and limiting the chances of asking the wrong questions. In addition, obtaining a pre-understanding of food tourism in Porto is part of our constructivist approach.

Preliminary research on the internet included searching for terms such as “Porto, Portugal”, “tourism in Portugal”, “tourism in Porto” and “food tourism in Porto”. This helped us gather information on tourism in Porto, specifically food tourism in the destination. To gain a more academic understanding of concepts relevant to the thesis, such as food tourism, cultural heritage, authenticity, social media, and aesthetics, we searched using relevant key terms on Google Scholar. Some of the relevant key terms include: “food tourism”; “gastronomy tourism”; “gastro tourism” “culinary tourism”; “Porto” AND “food tourism”; “cultural heritage” AND “tourism”; “Porto” AND “cultural heritage”; Porto” AND “cultural heritage” AND “tourism” AND “food”; “food” AND “authenticity”; “Porto” AND “authenticity”; “Porto” AND “authenticity” AND “tourism” AND “food”; “social media” AND “tourism”; “Porto” AND “social media”; “Porto” AND “social media” AND “tourism” AND “food”; “aesthetics” AND “tourism”; “Porto” AND “aesthetics”; “Porto” AND “aesthetics” AND “tourism” AND “food”.

Upon reviewing the secondary data and establishing a limited understanding of food tourism in Porto, we sought to collect primary data. Our primary data sources, which will be discussed in the following sections, are a content analysis on TikTok, observations, and qualitative interviews with both tourists and locals.

2.2.2 Content Analysis on TikTok

In order to understand how Porto’s gastronomy is represented on social media, and to be able to compare real-life experiences in Porto with the representation of Portuguese food and gastronomy online, we conducted a content analysis on TikTok (Appendix A). This analysis aims to also gain a further understanding of food in Porto before visiting the destination, and therefore, to form our pre-understanding of Porto’s gastronomic scene.

Content analysis can be described as *“a process that examines different forms of communication, such as texts or images, and calculates the occurrence of particular words, phrases, or other linguistic elements that surround a phenomenon”* (Lookingbill, 2022, p. 2). This method was originally only used for quantitative data but has been developed into a qualitative research method for *“systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material”* (Schreier, 2012, p. 1). Thus, qualitative content analysis is more focused on the interpretation of the qualitative material (Lookingbill, 2022).

TikTok was chosen for this content analysis because it is a new and popular social media platform that is heavily used by both young people and adults (Minadeo & Pope, 2022). Additionally, there are only a few studies that have analysed the content of videos posted on TikTok (Minadeo & Pope, 2022). Especially in relation to food content, there is little to no research. It is different to other social media platforms as it

only consists of short videos (no photos like on Instagram or short texts like on Twitter) and the algorithm works differently (Minadeo & Pope, 2022). For instance, the For You page, which is the main feed on TikTok, consists of *“endless, algorithmically curated videos based on content that a user has interacted with or watched previously”* (Minadeo & Pope, 2022, p. 2). Food videos are very popular on TikTok, *“as the number of views of short food videos accounts for 14%, ranking third among all themes”* (Li, Xu, Song, & He, 2020, p. 1). Before choosing this platform, we confirmed that there was the content of food in Porto on TikTok, meaning we would have data to collect and analyse for this thesis.

Since the platform is still relatively new, there is no commonly accepted method of conducting a qualitative content analysis on TikTok. We have therefore based data collection on various research articles that have conducted studies on TikTok (Fowler, Schoen, Smith, & Morain, 2022; Lookingbill, 2022). The first step was to log into TikTok and open the Discover page, which *“presents searchable content based on popular hashtags”* (Fowler, Schoen, Smith, & Morain, 2022, p. 740). Some studies have used hashtags to look for possible videos that can be analysed, however, we decided to use videos that just appear on the Discover page because the TikTok algorithm usually shows the most popular videos there. On the Discover page, videos are *“displayed according to a complex algorithm that factors in the popularity of the post itself, the popularity of the creator, content that the user previously liked or engaged with, and the geographic location of the device accessing TikTok”* (Lookingbill, 2022, p. 3). We tested different search terms but ended up using the search term ‘Food in Porto’, as it seemed to contain the most relevant videos for our analysis. Videos were considered relevant if they showed either food or places to eat in Porto.

The first 15 videos were collected on March 25, 2023, and the next 15 videos the day after, March 26, 2023, so the sample would be a total of 30 videos. Videos that were not in English (both sound and caption) or were about other activities in Porto were excluded, as well as videos that showed other places than Porto. The videos were all noted in a Video Analysis Scheme (Appendix A), where the following categories were written down: Username/Sender, Local/Tourist/DMO, Date, Caption, Hashtags, Restaurants/Cafés/Places to eat, Themes, Likes/Comments/Saves/Shares. We were mainly interested in the content of the video; therefore, we noticed all the details regarding the recommendations for places to eat in Porto, or which food to try in Porto.

After collecting the videos, we used the inductive open coding method to analyse the data. Open coding means that we identified several themes and assigned each video one key theme and possible sub-themes, based on the main focus of the video. For instance, a video that showed different places to go for

Brunch in Porto would fall into the main category of '*Places to eat in Porto (foreign)*' and the sub-theme of '*Brunch places*'. Afterwards, the newly created themes were organised under six key themes, which helped us to get a better overview of the similarities and differences of the total data collected. The key themes and their meanings are explained in the table below.

The created theme	Video content related to theme	Interpretation of the theme
Places to eat in Porto (local)	The video shows traditional or local restaurants/café to eat in Porto	The video intends to inform the viewer about traditional Portuguese restaurants in Porto
Places to eat in Porto (foreign)	The video shows foreign restaurants/café to eat in Porto	The video intends to inform the viewer about foreign restaurants in Porto
Local food to eat in Porto	The videos shows different local foods to eat in Porto	The video intends to inform the viewer about local, traditional Portuguese cuisine in Porto
Brunch places	The video shows places that serve Brunch in Porto	The video intends to inform the viewer about modern Brunch places in Porto
Traditional dish: Francesinha	The video shows the serving of the traditional local dish Francesinha	The video intends to inform the viewer about the traditional, local dish Francesinha, the ingredients of it and the way to serve it
Traditional dish: Bacalhau	The video shows the serving of the traditional Portuguese dish Bacalhau	The video intends to inform the viewer about the traditional Portuguese dish <u>Bacalhau</u> .

2.2.3 Observations

During our fieldwork in Porto, we also used observations as a method to collect relevant data and gain a better understanding of the gastronomic scene in the destination. In qualitative research, observations can be described as *"a systematic method of data collection that relies on a researcher's ability to gather data through his or her senses"* (O'Leary, 2021, p. 262). The goal of our observational research was to gain a thorough understanding of how the gastronomic scene in Porto works, where the traditional food has its origins, as well as how locals and tourists respond to the development of the food scene. Furthermore, through our observations, we gathered new knowledge about the destination and the people studied during the field trip. This helped us to bring new understandings into the qualitative interviews with tourists and locals, and at the same time, it can be viewed as part of the interpretation process according to our philosophical approach.

Before our field trip to Porto, we already completed some "observations", when we were analysing the TikTok videos. Here, we took notes on what kind of users (tourists or locals) posted the videos, what they showed and for what purpose they were posted. This gave us a pre-understanding of the destination, and the tourists that would visit it, as well as the locals that would live there. Thus, our observations noted during the field trip were also based on this pre-understanding developed through our TikTok analysis.

In observational research, researchers can become participants in the environment they are studying (O'Leary, 2021). When entering the field setting in Porto, we tried to act as normal tourists instead of researchers or observers, thus, we were part of the group that we were observing, namely tourists. For instance, when taking part in the Food Tour or Baking Class, we did not reveal until the end that we were researching food tourism in Porto, but instead, act as normal tourists enjoying food experiences in Porto. This allowed us to collect our observations subtly, creating an experience closest to the tourist experience. Additionally, our observations were of a more unstructured nature because we observed the setting without having predetermined criteria (O'Leary, 2021).

By paying attention to the more non-verbal interactions taking place in the observed setting, such as emotions, events, impressions, details about the people in the setting and about the physical setting itself, we used what Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) would describe as foundational ethnographic research techniques. Important for ethnographic research is to regularly take notes and reflect on the incidents the researcher has observed during the fieldwork (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). For this reason, we created a field diary, where we wrote down our observations of each day in the evening (Appendix B). During the day, we sometimes took some quick notes on our phones, when we observed an interesting event or someone, we met told us something interesting. This method of taking notes is also referred to as 'jotting', defined as *"To-be remembered observations into writing on paper as quickly rendered scribbles about action and dialogue"* (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 20). For instance, the night we arrived, our taxi driver gave us a lot of recommendations on Portuguese food in Porto, which we quickly wrote down on our phones. Another example is when we went on the Food Tour and our tour guide told us a lot about the history of the food, so we also took notes on that.

Overall, the goal of the field diary was to help us to recall the most important events that happened during the day, as well as to reflect on the things we learned about Portuguese cuisine, Porto's gastronomy or Portuguese people in general. The observations also helped us to develop further questions for the qualitative interviews with tourists and locals. For the analysis, the observations will be used to support our arguments and to draw on certain examples from our field trip.

2.2.4 Qualitative Interviews

To collect primary data on food tourism in Porto and to further understand what characterizes food tourism in the destination, we conducted qualitative interviews with both tourists and locals. We chose to interview both tourists and locals to obtain a multi-dimensional perspective of food in Porto. Qualitative data helps a researcher understand the *“interactions, processes, lived experiences and belief systems that are a part of individuals, institutions, cultural groups and even the everyday”* (O'Leary, 2021, p. 150). Therefore, to explore elements such as how cultural heritage and authenticity, and how social media may influence these concepts, it is necessary to understand the lived experiences of individuals interacting with Porto's food scene, as they are the source that can reveal these definitions and influences. The ability of qualitative data, specifically interviews, to provide detail and depth on a phenomenon is one of the reasons it was chosen for this thesis (O'Leary, 2021); a number of answers that quantitative data would have provided would not allow for the context and meaning needed to explore this thesis' research question.

We conducted a total of 18 interviews, nine with tourists and nine with locals. The interviews were held face-to-face and in an informal setting. This means that the style was rather casual and relaxed, allowing us to build trust with the interviewees in an informal setting. Furthermore, the majority of the tourist interviews were held in groups, meaning that we interviewed two or more tourists at the same time. This allowed the group members to follow up on each other thoughts, which gave the conversation a great flow. The disadvantage of interviewing bigger groups is that sometimes it can be hard to follow for the interviewer (O'Leary, 2021), which was the case for us during some interviews. We minimised any misunderstandings by recording the interviews so we could listen to them later. The interviews ranged from a few minutes to twenty minutes depending on the interviewee. The questions varied depending on whether the interviewee was a tourist or a local. Questions for tourists centred around Portuguese food, food-related activities, and social media use, while questions for locals centred around Portuguese food and the representation of Portuguese on social media. These questions were aimed at helping us uncover the interviewees' definition of traditional food in Porto, in which contexts they interacted with food, how they would describe the modern-day food scene, what influences they thought shaped Porto's current food scene, and how social media has influenced their food experience and decision-making process.

Before the Interviews

Before visiting Porto, we created an interview guide to help facilitate the conversation with tourists and locals upon our arrival. The interview guide can be seen in Appendix C. We adopted a semi-structured

interview process which *“employs a blend of closed-and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up or why or how questions”* (Adams, 2015, p. 493). This means our interview questions served as a guideline, not as a set plan. This enabled an interview process that was balanced between rigid questions and the free flow of information. This was important because this structure allows for the possibility of obtaining and exploring new information presented by the interviewee during the interview process (Adams, 2015), therefore allowing us to uncover new information and perspectives that may have been initially missed by the researchers in their preliminary data collection phase, and therefore missed in the interview guide. Based on our constructivist approach, the semi-structured interview guide provided us with the opportunity to bring new understandings into the next interview. Furthermore, we divided the questions into different topics to make sure that we asked questions that were relevant to our research field. This is important, as Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) argue, to define the objective of the interview questions, by categorizing the questions into topics when developing the interview guide. The topics we used were based on our desk research, for example, ‘traditional vs. modern’, ‘food as a motivation for tourist’ and ‘the influence of social media’.

During the Interviews

Upon arrival in Porto, we began conducting our interviews. When interviewing tourists, our method was approaching other participants in our food tourism activities or approaching people on the streets that seemed to have time to talk. More specifically, we conducted most of the tourist interviews in the market of Bolhão, a traditional Portuguese food market, which seemed to attract many tourists and provided a good surrounding for the interview. When interviewing locals, our method was asking the people who led our food tourism activities or talking with shop owners who were from the area. Since we had a fixed amount of time in Porto, we chose interviewees who we felt would be relevant (i.e., people that seemed willing to talk, people whom we knew interacted with the food in Porto, people who spoke with a high level of English). We used the voice memo feature on our phones to record the interviews. One of us typically recorded the interview, while the other asked the interview questions. This was in an effort to make the interview seem comfortable and more like a conversation, therefore fostering a better relationship with the interviewee and garnering more information. Due to the hermeneutic approach of our research, we were interested in establishing a closer/better relationship with the interviewees.

At the beginning of each interview, the interviewer explained the purpose and the structure of the interview to prepare the interviewee as best as possible. First, the interviewees were asked introductory questions, to make the interviewee comfortable with the topic and the whole interview situation. For

example, we asked tourists *“Is this your first time in Porto/Portugal?”* or *“What was your primary reason for visiting Porto?”* to open up the conversation (Appendix C). With the locals, the introductory questions were more food-specific, such as *“How would you describe traditional Portuguese food?”* and *“Which one are your favourite Portuguese dishes and why?”* (Appendix C). Then, we proceeded to ask more topic-related questions, and also follow-up questions such as *“How did you know that the restaurants were local?”* or for locals: *“So the reinventing has changed the local food scene over the years, like it's kept its core, or it has changed?”*. We also tried to pull anecdotes out of the interviewees, as Blommaert and Jie (2010) argue that these often provide some of the best “facts” for research.

In general, we drew from questions from the original interview guide or asked new ones based on the new understanding that we gained through the information that the interviewee would provide. We did make several modifications to the guide if we felt a question would not work well or if we felt a new question might work better. Adams (2015) recommends the tactic of modifying your interview guide based on how each interview goes. Additionally, this was part of the process of constructing new meanings and understandings, as described earlier in the philosophy of science section. We stopped conducting interviews when we felt that we had a large amount of data and information was beginning repeated, suggesting that there would not be new data brought to the table.

After the Interviews

In qualitative research, there are several steps after conducting the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The first step is that the interviews are recorded with the consent of the interviewees (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), which, as previously mentioned, applies to our interviews. The next step is to ensure that the transcriptions of the interviews are conducted following a transcription manual (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Since we use Microsoft Word's transcription feature, all interviews were transcribed in the same way. Furthermore, the interviews were transcribed in English, which is the same language in which they were conducted. Another important aspect of transcribing interviews is, according to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), the quality of the recording so the transcriber can clearly hear what the interviewee is saying. This appeared to be a bit of an issue for us since many of the interviews were conducted on the open street or in the market. Thus, there was usually a lot of background noise and voices, making it more difficult to understand the interviewees. We noticed that the automatic feature of Microsoft Word had issues understanding everything. Therefore, we went through each transcription manually once again, to ensure that the interview was transcribed properly, including everything that was said in the given context. The transcriptions can be seen in Appendices D-U. By transcribing the interviews both

automatically and manually, we ensured that we had proper transcriptions ready for the next phase: coding.

For the coding of the interviews, we used the interview analysis scheme by Launsø et al. (2017) which is adapted from Kvale's (1997) meaning condensation method. The purpose of the interview analysis scheme is to collect the data from the interviews by categorizing them into different themes that relate to the theories and contexts of the thesis (Launsø, Rieper, & Olsen, 2017). We adjusted the interview analysis scheme even more and created a table that was separated into three categories: respondent, quotes, and keywords/theory. To be able to differentiate between the data from tourists and locals, we created two separate analysis schemes. These can be seen in Appendix V. Through reading the transcriptions, we found quotes that were relevant to answering the research question. These quotes were inserted in the analysis scheme, citing the interviewee and labelling it with a relevant keyword or theory. These keywords/theories included terms such as "description of traditional Portuguese food", "aesthetics" and "social media use". These key terms/theories were inspired by terms that we had seen from our desk research and the TikTok analysis; however, we did create new key terms when we noticed a new theme emerging, for example, the terms "origins of Portuguese gastronomy" or "evolving food scene". Examples of key terms can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Word cloud of interview coding themes

2.2.5 Quality Criteria

There are several quality criteria to determine the quality of a qualitative interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The first criterium deals with the degree of rich, relevant and specific answers from the interviewees (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In general, we felt that locals gave very rich answers, whereas some tourists maybe could have provided more information. The second criterium requires short questions and long answers from the interviewer and interviewee respectively (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Here, we argue that this criterium is fulfilled, as our questions were generally quite short and the answers by tourists and locals were always longer. The next criterium deals with the interviewer asking follow-up questions to clarify the interviewees' answers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Again, we argue that this criterium is fulfilled as we asked a lot of follow-up questions during the interviews.

The next criterion requires that the interviewer already interpret the data gained during the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Since we asked questions about the new knowledge we gained during the interview, we argue that this criterion is fulfilled, as we need to process the information before being able to ask questions about it. Criterion five is similar to the previous, as it deals with the interviewer trying to verify their interpretations of the given answers during the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). By asking follow-up and clarifying questions, we believe that this criterion is fulfilled. Finally, the last criterion means that the interview is “self-reported”, thus does not need any further explanation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Again, the interviews with locals certainly fulfil this criterion as they are “a story”, whereas the tourist interviews might need further explanation to be able to understand “the whole story”. Overall, we argue that the qualitative interviews fulfil most of these quality criteria, thus, they are of high quality and value for this research.

With regard to the thesis, the trustworthiness of qualitative research is dependent on credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). First, a high degree of credibility can be achieved by four different approaches: ‘prolonged engagement’, ‘persistent observation’, ‘triangulation’, and ‘member check’ (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This thesis achieves credibility by visiting the destination for five days, meaning it achieves some level of long-lasting engagement and persistent observation. This was enough time for us to get familiar with the destination, and to find suitable tourists and locals to interview. Furthermore, we were able to do our own observations on the food scene in Porto. Of course, months of engagement would be the optimal approach to observation and collecting data in a destination, however, five days provided enough time to

conduct the number of interviews that provided us with the data we needed to be able to answer our research question.

Furthermore, we used both data triangulation, investigator triangulation and method triangulation to strengthen the credibility of this research. Data triangulation means the use of data collected at different times, places or from different people, while investigator triangulation requires that at least two researchers are participating in the coding and interpreting process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). By interviewing locals and tourists at different times and locations, we ensure data triangulation. In addition, we were two researchers coding and analysing the data, thus, ensuring investigator triangulation as well. Method triangulation refers to the combination of different qualitative methods (Launsø, Rieper, & Olsen, 2017). Since we used qualitative interviews, observations and content analysis as our methods, we also achieved a method triangulation. Through the implementation of these different approaches, we argue that our research has high credibility.

The research achieves dependability and confirmability by ensuring that each step of this research process was truthfully taken; a step-by-step account of the research process is detailed in the research design section. Lastly, we as researchers practised reflexivity, as we acknowledged our biases and limitations within this thesis. In addition, we used an online diary to note down our observations during the fieldwork, helping us to reflect on the new knowledge that we have gained. This thesis partially reaches transferability, as the findings are specific to Porto, but the context could possibly be transferred to other emerging food tourist destinations.

2.2.6 Researcher Positionality

In qualitative research, the researcher becomes naturally the instrument of the data collection process (Bourke, 2014). As O’Leary (2021) explains that “*Working towards credible research therefore demands reflexive awareness of our worldviews and a conscious effort for us to take them into account as we enter into the research journey*” (p. 63). Therefore, it is anticipated that the researcher's political position, beliefs, and cultural background – including race, gender, class, and education - may influence the research process (Bourke, 2014).

Furthermore, O’Leary (2021) argues, that it is essential as researchers to be sensitive to issues of power. Classifications that are related to power and privilege are, for instance, ‘white skin colour’, ‘university educated’, ‘middle class’, and ‘English as first language’ (O’Leary, 2021). Since we match all these factors related to power, we tried to be aware of that and the privilege that comes along with it during our

research. According to Bourke (2014), researchers need to reflect on their own positionality throughout the research process by asking questions like “How did we use our positionality in different spaces?” or “Did our positionality impact the interactions with the interviewees?”.

Even though being female is seen as less powerful (O'Leary, 2021), we believe that our gender was an advantage for us during our research. Since we approached tourists openly on the street or in other public places, and the majority of them were female, we argue that it was easier for us to convince them to participate in the interview, because we were also female and thus, appeared “less dangerous”. Additionally, our educational background may give them another reason to trust us with their answers. Coming from the United States and Germany – two developed countries – has given us the privilege of approaching interviewees.

Another important aspect of the research process besides the data collection is the interpretation of the data. According to Bourke (2014): “*Interpretation consists of two related concepts: the ways in which the researcher accounts for the experiences of the subjects and of her or himself, and the ways in which study participants make meaning of their experiences*” (p. 2). This means, that when analysing the data and discussing the results, the researcher's own subjectivity will be part of that. Since we use our observations and experiences in Porto actively for our analysis, our subjectivity is naturally part of our research.

2.2.7 Ethical Considerations

Another essential part of our research is ethics, as we as researchers hold a fundamental responsibility towards the researched subjects (O'Leary, 2021). Ethics can be described as “*principles or rules of behaviour that act to dictate what is actually acceptable or allowed within a profession*” (O'Leary, 2021, p. 76).

The first step to following ethical guidelines in research is to ensure that the research participants have given their ‘informed consent’ (O'Leary, 2021). More specifically, this means that the participants know what the research involves before giving their consent. In the case of the interviews with tourists and locals, we thoroughly explained the purpose of the interview, the time frame of the interview and the research field before we asked them for their consent. Additionally, we made them aware of their right to only answer the questions they want to answer. Through these implications, we got the interviewees’ ‘informed consent’, thus, fulfilling part of our ethical obligations.

Another important point in ethical research is to ensure that the participants do not get hurt, either physically or psychologically (O'Leary, 2021). While physical harm is relatively easy to notice, psychological

harm can be difficult to identify (O'Leary, 2021). Due to the rather harmless nature of our questions relating to food in Porto, we believe that the interviewees were not mentally hurt during the interviews. However, when interviewing the locals on Portuguese food, culture and heritage, sometimes it would bring up some more sensitive topics, where we could feel that the interviewees became a bit more emotional. For instance, when one interviewee seemed sad about his favourite restaurant being closed down due to investment funds, we tried to be understanding. Still, we believe that no one got physically or psychologically hurt during the interviews, as most of these emotions were tied to the pride they feel for their city's food, rather than the negative feelings of hurt or betrayal.

Finally, it is vital to ensure confidentiality, and sometimes even anonymity (O'Leary, 2021). Confidentiality promises *"protecting the identity of those providing research data; all identifying data remains solely with the researcher"* (p. 76), whereas anonymity goes a step further and means that not even the researcher can identify the person providing the data (O'Leary, 2021). In the case of the interviews, we offered all tourists full confidentiality, by promising that their identities would not appear in the thesis. For the locals, it was slightly different, because we mention their professions of two locals in the analysis, as it is essential for understanding the data. However, their names are still hidden.

Besides the interviews, we also collected data on social media, more specifically, on TikTok. Chamberlain and Lynch (2022) discuss ethical considerations for research on Instagram but point out, that most of these ethical concerns also can be related to other social media platforms. Because of this and because of the similarity of Instagram and TikTok in showing only visual content, we argue, that these ethical considerations can be applied to TikTok as well.

First, Chamberlain and Lynch (2022) point out that one ethical issue of working with extracting data from social media can be that *"the boundaries of privacy can be quite difficult to determine, as this boundary is fluid and contextual, and deeply debated"* (p. 11). To resolve this issue and respect the user's privacy, researchers should consider the user's/sender's intent in publishing this specific post, reflecting on whether it looks like it is intended for the public or should have been kept private (Chamberlain & Lynch, 2022). We were aware of this when collecting the data on TikTok, as all the videos that are part of the analysis contain some kind of *"call-to-action"*, for example, *"Save this so you remember"* or *"You must try this hidden spot specialised on homemade cheesecakes"* (Appendix A). We considered these call-to-actions to be an indication for the video was being made for a broader audience and not for private use.

Second, Highfield and Leaver (2016, as cited in Chamberlain & Lynch, 2022) suggest that another approach is to inspect the potential harm to the user's privacy by taking their video as part of the research. Here, it depends on how controversial the content of the post might be; if the user wants to be linked to it or not (Chamberlain & Lynch, 2022). To resolve this ethical issue, researchers suggest that the user is asked for their consent or offered anonymity (Chamberlain & Lynch, 2022). In the case of our TikTok analysis, we argue that the content related to food tourism in Porto is not controversial, thus, it would potentially not harm the user that we analyse their videos in our research. Therefore, we did ask the users for their consent, or refer to them anonymously.

Overall, we have tried to follow ethical guidelines during the interviews with tourists and locals, as well as in our TikTok analysis, as best as possible.

2.3 Limitations

We are aware that our chosen methods come with some limitations for this thesis. Concerning the interviews with tourists and locals, we were limited by time and sometimes by the language barrier to conduct the interview. Since we approached the tourists and locals in either a food-related setting, or during their work, we did not want to occupy their time too long, so this could have influenced our style of interviewing, and at the same time the depth of their answers. We tried to make up for this by interviewing a high number of tourists and locals. The language barrier narrows the pool of interviewees and creates the possibility of misunderstanding in data transcription and interpretation. Although we did have to decline some interviews because of the language barrier, we worked to find as many English-speaking interviewees as until we started to hear the same information in an effort to diminish the narrow barrier of a narrow pool and any misunderstandings.

Demographics may also present our data; some of the interviewees were older, meaning that they did not use social media as frequently as some younger tourists may. Since the influence of social media plays a large role in this thesis, it made it difficult to collect the data needed to examine the impacts social media may have on Porto's food tourism. In contrast, a wide pool of demographics may also mean that our data more accurately represented all the different types of tourists visiting Porto.

With regard to the TikTok analysis, it includes only 30 videos because after 30 the videos in English or about Porto decreased. To overcome this, we also looked at the comments during the analysis of the videos, which gave us some additional insights. Another limitation could be that we only included videos in English in the analysis, which could lead to a lack of the locals' perspective. Therefore, we looked at the

sender of the videos, and realized that there was a good balance between videos posted by tourists and videos posted by locals.

In terms of methodological limitations, our thesis aims to collect multiple perspectives to get a comprehensive view of the food tourism scene in Porto. It is important to note that regarding the interviews with locals, we chose to interview both people who worked in the tourism industry and those who did not. Including locals who worked in the tourism industry may present the same problem we feared that the DMO might; however, we felt that taking this chance was important because a local with knowledge of the food tourism industry in Porto, especially in relation to cultural heritage and authenticity, would be of great value to the thesis. Thus, the opportunity for valuable information outweighed the fear of pushing a business-centred agenda.

3. Literature Review

The following section will outline the core term of this thesis, food tourism, and will help define the concepts of cultural heritage, authenticity, social media, aesthetics and satisfaction in relation to tourism and food.

3.1 Definitions of Food Tourism

Hall and Sharples (2004) are credited with providing an early definition of food tourism, and their definition is frequently referenced in current food tourism research (Ellis et al., 2018; Okumus, 2021). They define food tourism as the act of going to, eating at or visiting a food experience in a destination (Hall & Sharples, 2004). They argue that to be food tourism, the act of seeking out a food experience must be intentional. By this definition, a tourist eating dinner at a local restaurant while travelling is not considered food tourism. The desire to visit or experience food in the destination must be the motivator of travel. Sio, Fraser, and Fredline (2021) reiterate that intention and motivation are prerequisites to being a gastronomy tourist; even if tourists try and experience local cuisine during their travels, they are only considered gastronomy tourists if their trip was primarily motivated by gastronomy-related activities. In contrast, Hsu and Scott (2020) argue that food tourism comprises both tourists that visit a destination for a specific, food-related reason (e.g., a food tasting), and those who are not driven by food when travelling, but still experience it nonetheless (e.g., eating local cuisine in a restaurant while on vacation). Other scholars, such as Nesterchuk et al. (2021), do not specify whether a tourist's desire to experience the food in a destination categorises their activities as food tourism or not. Instead, they state that gastronomy tourism is "*a product that is identified on a territorial basis and acts as one of the resources that can attract*

travellers to a region, country, city, etc.” (Nesterchuk, et al., 2021, s. 1872). Examples of gastronomy tourism include a tourist visiting a destination’s farms and markets, a tourist eating at traditional restaurants in the destination, and a tourist participating in food tastings and cooking classes while in the destination. The definition provided by Nesterchuk et al. (2021) places a greater emphasis on the product beginning offered, rather than the intention or desire to experience this product or activity.

Perhaps the varying definitions lie in the difference in terms used to describe the phenomenon. Terms used to describe the phenomena of tourists visiting a destination and experiencing the destination’s food include food tourism, gastronomy tourism, gastronomic tourism, culinary tourism, cuisine tourism, and food and beverage experiences (FBEs) (Hall & Sharples, 2004; Ellis et al., 2018; Okumus, 2021; Sio et al., 2021; Knollenberg et al., 2020). Hall and Sharples (2004) argue that there are three special interest groups of food tourists: gastronomic/cuisine tourists, culinary tourists, and rural/urban tourists. Gastronomic/cuisine tourists travel to a destination to participate in a specific food experience; their trip is centred around food, and they are categorised as a ‘high interest’ group. Culinary tourists are part of a ‘moderate interest group’, meaning they visit or participate in food experiences (e.g., wine tours), however, their trip is not only focused on food. Instead, food is just one aspect that adds to their overall trip. Lastly, rural/urban tourists visit a destination’s markets or specific restaurants, not because they are particularly interested in the destination’s food experiences, but rather because it is something unique to do while travelling. They are considered a ‘low interest’ group (Hall & Sharples, 2004). All of these groups fall under ‘food tourists’.

Like Hall and Sharples (2004), Ellis, Park, Kim and Yeoman (2018) acknowledge the different terms and make a separation among them. Ellis et al. (2018) use the term ‘culinary tourism’ to primarily describe a tourists’ experience with the destination’s food and culture; culinary tourism may focus on how authentic experiences and traditions influence a tourist’s trip. ‘Food tourism’, another frequently used term, focuses on a tourists’ physical experience with the food. That is, the term focuses on the tastes, smell, and actual experience of eating the destination’s food. The term ‘gastronomic tourism’ is used less than the terms “culinary tourism” and “food tourism”. ‘Gastronomic tourism’ is typically used in one of two ways: to encompass the hosts’ or locals’ experience with tourists visiting their destination for food, or as a way to also include beverages in the definition. Ellis et al. (2018) highlight that food tourism can be segmented into the following themes: activity based, motivational based, and mixed. Activity-based food tourism defines food tourism as a tourist’s participation in a food-related experience in a destination. Examples include visitation to food production sites, markets, and food festivals, and participation in cooking

classes. In contrast, motivational based food tourism defines food tourism through an individual's desire to travel to a destination because of their cuisine; this definition emphasizes the internal mindset and motivations of a tourist, while the first definition focuses on the actual experience of a tourist and the activities in which they participate. Mixed food tourism combines both definitions (Ellis, Park, Kim, & Yeoman, 2018)

Some authors, such as Okumus (2021), acknowledge that there are various terms used for gastronomy tourism (e.g., culinary tourism and gourmet tourism) but do not make a distinction among these terms. Hsu and Scott (2020) and Sio et al. (2021) echo the same sentiment when stating that terms such as food tourism, gastronomic tourism, and culinary tourism have the same definitions and can be used interchangeably. As previously mentioned in the introduction, this thesis will adopt the term food tourism. With so many different definitions, this thesis adopted the term with the broadest definition. Unlike Hall and Sharples (2004) and Sio et al. (2021), this thesis does not just define food tourism as intentional experiences with the food, but also as general encounters with food while travelling. This definition concurs with Hsu and Scott's (2020) definition. In addition, this thesis expands to segments of food tourism that authors, such as Ellis et al. (2018), divide which means that it adopts the perspective that food tourism is the physical experience with food and the meaning and traditions associated with the experience. This thesis adopts such a broad definition because it allows for a wider interviewee pool in Porto, and the term is easier to understand for tourists and locals.

3.2 Origin and Rise of Food Tourism

The concept of food tourism was discussed in tourism publications as early as the 1970s (Brown 1974, as cited in Okumus, 2021). Some scholars (Okumus, 2021; Ellis et al., 2018) credit the first academic exploration of food tourism to Belisle (1983); this research was centred around tourism and local food production. Nesterchuk et al. (2021) attribute the introduction of culinary tourism to Lucy Long, a professor at Bowling Green University, citing she introduced the term in 1998. Furthermore, they argue that the first official document on culinary tourism was written by Eric Wolfe, founder of the International Tourism Association, in 2001 (Nesterchuk, et al., 2021). Like the definition and terms used to describe food tourism, there is no consensus on when and where the term originated. Despite a lack of clear origin, research in the sector on food tourism expanded since its early introduction in the late 90s; particularly since 2008, the number of journal articles and conferences that discuss food tourism has grown significantly (Ellis, Park, Kim, & Yeoman, 2018). The term continues to expand and evolve, taking on

various names, encompassing different activities, being recognised by the UNWTO, and becoming one of the latest trends in the tourism sector (Nesterchuk, et al., 2021).

Some scholars suggest the rise in food tourism research could be connected to the rise of the experience economy (Nesterchuk, et al., 2021; Okumus, 2021; Ellis et al., 2018). Hall and Sharples (2004) attribute the rise in food tourism research to society's changing lifestyle, specifically the role that goods play in society and how individuals find their identity through these goods. As tourists began to use food as a mechanism to build and shape their identity while travelling, research on food tourism increased (Hall & Sharples, 2004).

Hall and Sharples (2004) also credit the rise in food tourism research to the recognition of the sector's business potential. Food tourism can increase a destination's profits, create new jobs, and grow the economy, making it an important field of study for a destination (Hall & Sharples, 2004). Nesterchuk et al. (2021) emphasise this when stating that gastronomy tourism can be a significant contributor to a destination's economy and can help a destination diversify its revenue areas. This is because gastronomy tourism encompasses many different stakeholders, some of which include manufacturers, chefs, local business owners, and hospitality workers. The money that each stakeholder generates adds to the destination's economy (Nesterchuk, et al., 2021). Additionally, because the gastronomy tourism sector is spread across a large number of sectors, it can create a multitude of jobs for both residents and foreigners, therefore positively contributing to a destination's economy (Nesterchuk, et al., 2021). The ability to help develop a destination and its economy serves as a driver of food tourism research. Lastly, food is central part of a destination's culture and traditions; destination managers realise the power that traditional food and food practices have to draw tourists to a destination. Thus, the rise in food tourism research is also attributed to the desire to capitalise on the sector's marketing potential (Hall & Sharples, 2004); unique food experiences help a destination remain competitive in the tourism market. The growing trend of food tourism and its importance to the wider tourism sector and destination development serve as motivators for this thesis to explore Porto's food tourism characteristics.

3.3 Themes and Perspectives of Food Tourism Research

Okumus (2021) argues that major themes in food tourism within the last 75 years include research on: *“(1) offering unique food and beverage experiences, (2) authenticity, (3) culture and food, (4) destination marketing through food tourism, (5) segmentation of food tourists (foodies), (7) molecular gastronomy and tourism and (8) food tourism and sustainability”* (p. 39). Ellis et al. (2018) reiterate these themes by stating that motivation, culture, authenticity, management and marketing, and destination orientation

are all major themes present in existing food tourism literature. The authors emphasise that the definition of these themes may overlap. Furthermore, food tourism can be looked at from a varying number of perspectives; the different perspectives include management and marketing, social and cultural studies, and geography (Ellis, Park, Kim, & Yeoman, 2018). The management and marketing perspective focuses on product development and the branding of the destination, making it more business focused. Additionally, it may focus on tourist profiles, tourist satisfaction, and tourists' travel motivations in regard to food. This perspective is the most common. The social and cultural studies perspective focuses on a destination's culture and identity in relation to food. For instance, this area of study may focus on how the consumption of a destination's food can build, shape, or help add to a tourist's identity. Lastly, the geography perspective focuses on how food tourism can help grow or transform a region. For example, it may focus on how food tourism can help a destination sustain its culture and traditions, or how it can cause the region to change or lose its traditions (Ellis, Park, Kim, & Yeoman, 2018). Themes and research areas that still lack in the food tourism sector range from the co-creation of tourism experiences, technology and food experiences, street food, food waste and safety, food tourism sustainability, and social media and food tourism experiences (Okumus, 2021).

This thesis focuses on themes such as cultural heritage, authenticity, social media and aesthetics. It draws from some current themes in literature, for example, themes mentioned by Okumus (2021), while also looking at new themes, therefore contributing to tourism research. An example of a newer theme at which this thesis looks is food content on social media. Okumus (2021) highlights technology and social media as areas that still lack research in the tourism sector, suggesting that this thesis can help fill those gaps.

3.4 Cultural Heritage and Food

Almansouri, Verkerk, Fogliano, and Luning (2021) provide definitions for and make distinctions among the terms ethnic food, local food, traditional food and heritage food. They suggest that ethnic food is defined by people, meaning that ethnic food is food eaten by a group of people who have something in common, such as religion or language. Local food is defined by place, meaning food is local if it is from a specific geographical region. Traditional food is defined by tradition, suggesting that there is a legacy or history surrounding the type of food that is being eaten. Lastly, heritage food is defined by people, place and legacy; it is food shared by a similar group of people, from a specific geographical region, and has been passed down for generations.

Almansouri et al. (2021) only use the terms heritage food and food heritage, but also differentiates between them. Citing Omar, Karim and Omar (2015), he says that heritage food can be described as

“traditional local food which is inherited, prepared and practised daily, rooted in a mixture of various cultures, religions, and beliefs” (p. 791). Food heritage is defined as *“the set of material and immaterial elements of food cultures that are considered as a shared legacy or a common good”* (Bessiere & Tibere, 2010, as cited in Almansouri et al., 2021, p. 791). The later definition appears to expand to include traditions and the symbolic dimension of the food. Similarly, Aziz, Juliana, and Teng (2021) provide a definition for food heritage when citing Valuing (2013): *“Food heritage is defined as a combination of food cultures’ material and non-material components that are widely considered to be a shared inheritance”* (p. 246). Thus, this definition includes elements such as physical ingredients, traditions, and table manners.

Aziz et al. (2021) state that *“traditional and local foods have been recognized as an intangible heritage and serve as a core element or supporting attraction to the particular tourist destinations.”* (p. 245). They argue that all aspects of food, ranging from the physical ingredients to traditions, to the meaning behind the food and traditions, are aspects that make up a destination’s intangible cultural heritage. Qiu, Zuo, and Zhang (2022) reiterate this by suggesting that intangible cultural heritage includes both the tangible and intangible aspects of culture. This can range from oral history, traditions, language, and performances. Thus, no matter the terms used —local food, heritage food, etc. — food plays a role in forming and sustaining a destination’s cultural heritage.

Almansouri et al. (2021) outline that the Mediterranean diet is an example of a cuisine that is recognised as an intangible cultural heritage for a destination. This is because the Mediterranean diet is not only about food but also about the lifestyle and traditions that accompany eating. For example, the feta cheese that Greeks eat is just as important as the people with whom they eat the feta. There is no distinction between food and eating habits; they are both equally important to the gastronomy of the country. The aspect of Greek culture that is conveyed through the food is why the diet is part of Greece’s intangible cultural heritage. Aziz et al. (2021) concur that the Mediterranean diet is a prime example of food that is intangible cultural heritage. They also provide another example of intangible cultural heritage through Turkish coffee, by sharing that Turkish coffee not only includes the act of drinking coffee from Turkey, but that it also *“symbolises the coffee-sitting ritual practiced by the Turkish and a sign of hospitality, fellowship, sophistication, and entertainment”* (Aziz, Juliana, & Teng, 2021, p. 247).

Almansouri et al. (2021) state that food is inherited from the past and still plays a role in modern society. Olalere (2019) concurs when saying that cultural heritage tourism is a way of travelling where you experience the past. Aziz et al. (2021) also suggest that food is something that can provide knowledge of

the past to the living. These arguments led us to believe that cultural heritage is a way for individuals to become educated on the past of a destination, and thereby further understand elements of the present-day destination. For example, Corrado (2022) details the history of the bean in Italy. It was once a peasant food, and *“during the fascist regime, common beans gained importance due to the progressive diplomatic isolation of Italy. Fascist food policies were based on self-sufficiency (autarchia) and alimentary sovereignty”* (Corrado, 2022, p. 6). Thus, the history of beans provides insight into Italy’s economic and political past, suggesting food and food tourism is a way to story tell about a destination’s history. Qiu et al. (2022) also argue that culinary events can serve as cultural education, and Stone, Migacz and Wolf (2022) state that *“Experiencing food is not just a touristic activity, but an exploration and education”* (p. 179). Thus, food activities (e.g., festivals and cooking classes) can serve as educational tools, especially in relation to local culture and heritage.

Authors note that the preservation of food cultural heritage can be difficult because it requires sameness within an inconsistent and ever-evolving world (Aziz, Juliana, & Teng, 2021). For example, globalisation and the rise of consumption have prompted fear among some populations that their food heritage and identity may be less prevalent or may change (Aziz, Juliana, & Teng, 2021). This is significant because Almansouri et al. (2021) argue that food is an integral part of a place’s cultural identity. Aziz et al. (2021) concur when they reference Ramli, Zahari, Halim, and Aris (2016), suggesting that food can distinguish areas and populations, meaning that food is a component of what gives a destination its identity. Despite the importance of identity, Olalere (2019) agrees with the authors that suggest cultural heritage can go through stages of evolution and can be shaped by foreign influences, meaning a destination’s culture may change.

Not only are foreign influences an aspect of society which may change a destination’s culture and identity, but as Olalere (2019) points out, intangible cultural heritage requires the fusion of the past with the present in order to both preserve the culture while also presenting it in a way that is relevant and interesting in modern society. This means that even if cultural heritage can “stay the same”, there is still the challenge of finding a successful way to preserve it. Thus, Olalere (2019) suggests putting a modern twist on old traditions in order for them to stay alive throughout the decades. Qiu et al. (2022) detail that over time, the boundary between authentic and inauthentic heritage has blurred; however, if you blur traditional performances with modern technology, maybe it is a better way to preserve the destination’s culture. Therefore, if foreign influences do not shape a destination’s culture, tools to help modernize the culture certainly will.

Furthermore, Qiu et al. (2022) outline some other threats to intangible cultural heritage which include the economy and lack of practice. Almansouri et al. (2021) add that some risk factors to the authenticity of food culture include: scarcity of raw ingredients, not following the exact recipe, using modern cooking equipment, food safety regulations, lack of cooking knowledge, and unfamiliarity with the presentation of the heritage food. It seems that while important, cultural heritage in relation to food comes with many complexities.

Literature on cultural heritage is significant because it reveals the relationship and importance that cultural heritage has to the food tourism sector. This is important when working to explore and understand the food scene in Porto for this thesis. Authors such as Almansouri et al. (2021) helped us frame cultural heritage in a food tourism context as something that can encompass similar groups of people, from specific geographical regions, passed down for generations. Furthermore, authors such as Aziz et al. (2021) and Qiu et al. (2022) showed us that intangible cultural heritage is not just the food, but also the tradition and meaning. This reminds us to look beyond the physical ingredients that tourists consume and to search for the stories and feelings associated with their food experience. Lastly, research on cultural heritage motivated us to not overlook the past when trying to understand the phenomenon of food tourism.

3.5 Authenticity in Food Tourism

The concept of authenticity has been a widely researched topic within the field of tourism for quite some time. Throughout the last decades, researchers have presented a variety of approaches towards authenticity in tourism, such as “original and staged authenticity”, “iconic authenticity” or “legitimate authenticity” (Lu, Gursoy, & Lu, 2015). Thus, it is not possible to provide one commonly adopted definition of authenticity. However, Lu, Gursoy, and Lu (2015) have divided all these definitions into three major approaches: “objective” (focused on the object), “constructivist” (focused on community judgements) and “post-modern” (focused on the self). The notion that there is not one accepted definition or division of authenticity is important to our thesis because it suggests that some concepts in our thesis may be defined by our interviewees, rather than existing literature; it implores us to explore how new terms can be constructed and further facilitates our process based on a hermeneutical foundation.

The earliest definitions stem from Boorstin (Boorstin, 1964) and MacCannell (1973). In his argument about authenticity in tourism, Boorstin (1964) argues that tourists do not seek to experience the reality in a destination, but rather want to experience so-called “pseudo-events”, preferably in guided groups and far away from the local community. MacCannell (1973) introduced the concept of ‘staged authenticity’,

where a tourist experience seems to be authentic to meet the tourists' expectations, but in reality, this experience is fabricated.

In tourism literature, researchers have established a strong connection between food and the authenticity of the tourist experience (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Seyitoğlu & Özdemir, 2017). The local cuisine plays a significant role in the authenticity of the tourist experience, since it contributes to the cultural image of the destination (Tiberghien, Bremner, & Milne, 2017). Furthermore, tourists aim to discover local foods and drinks when visiting a new destination and when the food experience is authentic, tourists get a positive impression of the tourist destination (Jang, Liu, & Namkung, 2011).

In a study, Shafieizadeh, Alotaibi and Tao (2021) found that the demand of tourists for authentic food experiences is growing. Hence, food authenticity is considered to be a great motivation for tourists to choose to visit a destination (Latiff, Ng, Aziz, & Kamal Basha, 2020). This is supported by Getz and Robinson (2014), who studied the motivation of potential food tourists of going to any Australian food destination and found that "Enjoying authentic regional cuisine in local restaurants" was the most appealing experience (among all kinds of experiences, also non-food related) for the respondents. Moreover, other researchers found that food has a bigger effect on the tourist memory than other typical tourism activities in the destination (Stone, Migacz, & Wolf, 2019). Thus, the literature on authenticity reinforced the value that our thesis could have on the tourism sector.

Authenticity concerns both the tourism developers and the tourists at a destination. This means that *"besides the tourists, the worldviews of the host community, who create and deliver tourism experiences, play an important role in shaping the authenticity of tourist experiences"* (Lunchaprasith & MacLeod, 2018, p. 103). Therefore, authenticity is not only about the perception of tourist experiences by tourists but also about the construction of these experiences by the host community (Lunchaprasith & MacLeod, 2018). Since we want to include the locals' perception of food tourism in Porto as well, we believe that it was relevant to look at how they define authentic food experiences in Porto.

According to Zhang, Chen, and Hu (2019), food authenticity can be described as *"the genuineness of local food which is specific to a place and a kind of description of local culture"* (p. 3). Researchers have also introduced the term an "authentic food experience", in which different aspects of the local gastronomy, like restaurants, traditional recipes and dishes, allow tourists to get a deeper insight into the local culture and history (Zhang, Chen, & Hu, 2019; Sims, 2009). In food tourism literature, the search for these authentic food experiences is considered a key motive for food tourists visiting a destination (Zhang, Chen,

& Hu, 2019). In our case, we were curious to examine how an authentic food experience according to literature takes place in Porto. Therefore, we will analyse our own food experiences in the destination by using the following concepts of ‘food authenticity’, ‘authentic food experience’ and ‘local food and authenticity’.

Furthermore, several scholars have studied the relationship between local food and authenticity in food tourism. For instance, Zhang et al. argue that “[...] *local food demonstrates traditions, legends, stories, and symbols, which, in turn, closely bind local food with authenticity*” (2019, p. 3). More specifically, tasting local food is a useful practice to discover the local culture, as it can inform tourists about how locals prepare and consume their food in a traditional way (Zhang, Chen, & Hu, 2019). In that way, the tourist gets an authentic food experience. Beverland and Farrelly (2010) support this notion by arguing that local food is a “tool” that communicates authenticity and at the same time brings the local culture and history closer to the tourist, thus, enjoying local food is a way for tourists to experience authenticity during their visit. This is similar to Tiberghien, Bremner and Milne (2017), who argue that local food is strongly associated with the cultural heritage of a destination, meaning that it is important for the extent of authenticity that tourists experience. This makes authenticity one of the most important reasons for tourists to travel (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2012). As Zhang et al. elaborate: “*For tourists’ food experience, authenticity is even more significant because tourists perceive authenticity in the process of gazing, smelling, listening, and tasting*” (2019, p. 3).

However, Sims (2009) raises the question of why local food experiences are considered to be “authentic events”, connected to cultural heritage, while other types of food experiences are not. In her opinion, there exist three approaches to how tourists socially construct authentic relationships between the place and local food (Sims, 2009). First, a food experience is more likely to be perceived authentic if it resembles the tourists’ assumption on how a typical food experience in this destination will be. More specifically, “*tourists may have their own ideas about what a “typical” food experience of that place might look like, and anything that fits this image – including the setting, the ambience and the food itself – is more likely to be identified as “authentic”*” (Sims, 2009, p. 329). Second, a food experience can be perceived as more authentic when it “*takes place in a sympathetic surrounding environment*” (Sims, 2009, p. 329). Lastly, authentic food experiences most likely include some aspects of tradition or naturalness. Sims’ (2009) argument is something we want to keep in mind while analysing our data, as it shows how debatable the term authenticity is.

Authenticity in food tourism consists of both the authentic food experience as well as the authentic restaurant experience (Seyitoğlu & Özdemir, 2017). In the authentic food experience, researchers have valued the relevance of the following aspects: *“cooking methods, cooking odors, recipes, ingredients, food and drink customs, social connotations, related ceremonies and festivals, and hunting and farming traditions”* (Zhang, Chen, & Hu, 2019, p. 4). In this regard, Cohen and Avieli (2004) talk about how specific elements in the preparation, presentation and consumption of food affect the tourists' evaluation of its authenticity.

Regarding the authentic restaurant experience, tourism researchers have found different aspects that can influence the authenticity of a restaurant. Beverland and Farrelly (2010) note that the restaurant's authenticity is also based on how it resembles the cultural heritage of the destination. In that respect, Fox (2007) identifies the ingredients of the food as well as the names of the dishes on the menu as ways to evaluate the authenticity of the place. Skinner, Chatzopoulou, and Gorton (2020) have conducted a study on how tourists judge a restaurant to be authentic and found that the interior design, decoration and music are important factors. Additionally, an authentic restaurant is usually rather small, further away from the main tourist areas, and a family-owned business (Skinner, Chatzopoulou, & Gorton, 2020).

According to Cohen and Avieli (2004), *“the common perception of food as a mere attraction in tourism is challenged by stressing the complications and impediments experienced by tourists in the local culinary sphere in unfamiliar destinations, even when attracted to the local cuisine”* (p. 755). The authors point out that several factors, such as hygiene and health considerations and communication barriers can influence the tourists' food experience in relation to authenticity (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Furthermore, they introduce the term *“tourism-oriented culinary establishments”*, which are restaurants that serve more familiar food to tourists in a familiar environment (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). The idea that the authenticity of restaurants encompasses varying aspects such as apparent compliance with tradition and overall hygiene reminds us that tourists' decision on whether a place is authentic can be quite complex. Thus, in the analysis it will be important to explore why and how a tourist determines a food or food place's level of authenticity by drawing on the data from the interviews.

Özdemir and Seyitoğlu (2017) have developed a framework, that divides tourists based on their relationship with local food consumption and authenticity into three different types. These three tourist types are based on three contexts of authenticity, depending on the degree of authenticity tourists wish for when visiting a destination. Tourists that are actively searching for a real authentic food experience are called 'authenticity seekers'. On the contrary, tourists that visit these tourism-oriented restaurants

can be described as ‘comfort seekers’. This type of tourist usually prefers to enjoy food that is familiar to them, in safe and comfortable surroundings. In between these two extreme types are the ‘Moderates’, who enjoy authentic food to some degree, preferably in a familiar environment. One can argue that it is difficult to put these tourists into three set categories, as we know from Sims (2009) that the perceived authenticity is very individual. Still, we want to use Özdemir and Seyitoğlu’s framework to assess what types of tourists experience food in Porto, but at the same time remain critical on whether tourists fit into this framework.

In their study of Greek ethnic restaurants, Chatzopoulou, Gorton, and Kuznesof (2019) discuss the concept of authentication, which refers *“how authenticity is used, who authenticates and justifies their involvement”* (p. 128). According to Cohen and Cohen (2012, as cited in Skinner et al., 2020), authentication can be divided into hot and cold processes: *“Cool authentication linked to objective, indexical judgements involves authorised institutions or persons declaring a site, object or event as authentic based on scientific proof or expertise. In contrast, hot authentication is based on belief rather than proof”* (pp. 156-157). In the case of food tourism, there is a tendency towards hot authentication, as there are not usually authorities present that declare a restaurant as being authentic (Skinner, Chatzopoulou, & Gorton, 2020). Hence, a tourist would more likely reach out to a local to gain knowledge about authentic food in the destination. This is relevant to our research because we are interested in investigating how tourists find out about authentic restaurants.

3.6 Content on Social Media in Relation to Food Tourism

Since this thesis seeks to analyse how social media influences the food scene and the tourist experience in Porto, it is relevant to look at different theories regarding user-generated content on social media related to food tourism. Tourism researchers agree on the significant influence that social media platforms have on tourist consumer behaviour and destination brand image (Sotiriadis, 2017). This influence can be seen especially in the information search and decision-making process of tourists before travelling to a destination (Bilgihan, Barreda, Okumus, & Nusair, 2016). According to Sotiriadis (2017), there is no commonly accepted definition of social media, but Chan and Guillet (2011, as cited in Sotiriadis, 2017) define social media: *“[...] as a group of Internet-based applications that exist on the Web 2.0 platform and enable the Internet users from all over the world to interact, communicate, and share ideas, content, thoughts, experiences, perspectives, information, and relationships”* (p. 181).

User-generated content is described as *“content in the form of images, videos or texts posted by users through social media”* (Li, Xu, Song, & He, 2020, p. 3). Several research studies have focused on the power

of user-generated content in destination branding, but there is only limited research on the influence of UGC on a destination's image (Iglesias-Sánchez, Correia, Jambrino-Maldonado, & de las Heras-Pedrosa, 2020). User-generated content has been proven to have some influence on several tourism and hospitality services, such as the popularity of restaurants (Zhang, Ye, Law, & Li, 2010), the occupancy rate of hotels (Viglia, Minazzi, & Buhalis, 2016) and tourists' intention to travel to a destination (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). However, UGC in these studies was mostly focused on online ratings and online reviews, and not that much on content that users had created on social media platforms, such as TikTok or Instagram. For this reason, we argue that our research can contribute to the limited research that exists on this topic at the moment.

Another important means of communication in tourism is "Word-of-Mouth" Communication, which due to the rise of social media has been transformed into an electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan (2008) have stressed the influence of both positive and negative WOM on tourism products and services in many different destinations. Thus, word-of-mouth has always played a key role in the tourism industry (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). E-WOM can be defined as *"all informal communications directed at consumers through Internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers"* (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008, p. 461). Furthermore, e-WOM can create a new kind of reality, by building virtual communities and relationships between users and thereby influencing tourists during their travel information searches (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008).

Oliveira and Casais (2019) also highlight the importance of e-WOM in restaurant services. According to the authors, tourists use social media platforms both before and during their trip and search for other consumers' reviews/opinions on restaurants in the destination (Oliveira & Casais, 2019). Thereby they confirm Yan, Wang, and Chau (2015) claim about social media being one of the best methods of sharing information, as well as searching for information about restaurants to decide on where to eat. Furthermore, in their study on how consumers choose restaurants in Porto based on user-generated content online, Oliveira and Casais (2019) found that consumers find images shared by other users on social media more relevant than images from the restaurants' websites. This means that consumers rely more on the online reviews of other consumers than the official restaurant websites. This literature underscores the importance that e-WOM will likely have in our thesis.

Since we want to investigate how videos on TikTok influence the food scene in Porto, we tried to find other studies that have analysed the impact of TikTok food videos on a destination. We found that there

are very few studies on the sharing of short videos about food on social media platforms such as TikTok. Li, Xu, Song and He (2020) have conducted a study on how short food videos impact the tourist image of a destination, by taking the city of Chengdu as a case. They argue that food videos on social media, specifically TikTok, can help to increase awareness towards a destination's food image (Li, Xu, Song, & He, 2020). Earlier studies have demonstrated that social media platforms indeed have the power to form and distribute a destination's image (Wang, Hao, Law, & Wang, 2019). However, these studies were focused on images and text on social media and not short videos. In their study, Li, Xu, Song, and He (2020) prove that short videos about food on TikTok influence the destination image in numerous ways. Once again, since research in this specific field is still limited, we believe that it makes our research even more relevant.

3.7 Aesthetics and Food Images

Only a few studies have addressed the value of aesthetics in relation to food tourism on social media. Marder, Erz, Angell, and Plangger (2021) argue that aesthetics are important factors in tourist decision-making. They go on to say that both professional and amateur (i.e., taken by a tourist) pictures of tourist destinations impact tourist booking intention. Specifically, the aesthetics of these images can positively or negatively impact a tourist's decision to book a destination. Yu and Liu (2021) reiterate that food images on social media can affect tourists' restaurant choices. This connects to Gambetti and Han (2022) who point towards the global phenomenon of "camera eats first" which deals with the fact that *"taking and sharing food images on social media when customers are dining out in restaurants has become increasingly popular as a key component of their life experiences"* (p. 2). Corvo, Migliavada and Zocchi (2022) also note that these images of the consumed food and drinks that are being shared on, for example, Instagram, are called "food selfies". They connect these food selfies to the fact that social media are primarily used aesthetically and emotionally (Corvo, Migliavada, & Zocchi, 2022). Furthermore, Holmberg, E. Chaplin, Hillman and Berg (2016) claim that a high percentage of images shared on social media platforms, such as Instagram, are illustrating food. At the same time, Oliveira and Casais (2019) found that *"customers tend to select restaurants by searching for food images on social media generated by other customers"* (as cited in Gambetti and Han, 2022, p. 2). As mentioned earlier, this is due to the fact that social media have become an exceptional method of sharing information, and consumers use these platforms to decide about which restaurant to visit and to share their experiences with other users after the visit (Yan, Wang, & Chau, 2015). In regard to our thesis, this could help us analyse if the aesthetics presented on TikTok of food in Porto may influence tourists' experience towards Porto's food and food places, and therefore also influence their behaviour in the destination.

Apart from the literature focusing on the role of food images in the promotion of culinary tourism on social media or tourists' decision-making behaviour, there are also a few studies that examine how food images influence consumers' food perception and desire (Spence, Okajima, Cheok, Petit, & Michel, 2016). This concept is called “food aesthetics” and can be defined as *“the sensory gastronomic experience from food presentation such as plating, decorating and styling”* (Schifferstein et al., 2020, as cited in Gambetti & Han, 2022, p. 2). When speaking generally about food and aesthetics, Barretto (2013) highlights the importance of looks by stating that tourists are on a quest for beauty and that *“A meal should be a meal, but faced to different options people would take the most beautifully arranged, regardless of the taste...That’s what ‘eating with the eyes’ is about...selecting food according to an aesthetic judgement”* (p. 79).

In culinary tourism, the importance of food aesthetics has been recognized because the visual art presentation of food is equally important to the gastronomic experience as the taste (Deroy, Michel, Piqueras-Fiszman, & Spence, 2014). This has also been acknowledged by Corvo et al. (2022), stating that *“Food therefore becomes a work of art to be enjoyed in a multisensory way, capable of providing a gastronomic experience characterized by a tangled web of sensory elements that create sensations and emotions of various kinds [...]”* (pp. 41-42). Andrinou, Metaxas, and Duquenne (2022) reiterate this when stating that *“‘Aesthetik’ is the Greek word for senses. Aesthetics stimulate all five senses, and they are an experiential process in nature”* (p. 481). This is important to our thesis because it tells us that when looking at the aesthetics of food and food places in Porto, we should examine both the look of the food and the food setting, and the atmosphere and feeling associated with that food experience.

After reviewing the literature on aesthetics in relation to food tourism, we believe that the theories regarding food aesthetics and restaurant aesthetics are particularly relevant to this thesis, as they help guide us to explore aesthetics and what aesthetics could mean for to the tourists and locals we interview in Porto.

3.8 Satisfaction in Tourism and Food Tourism

In literature, satisfaction regarding tourism is discussed in several ways. A common way in which authors discuss satisfaction within a tourism context is in relation to destination brand image. Sio et al. (2021), drawing from Campelo et al., 2014 and Tasci & Kozak, 2006, define destination brand as *“an identity that signifies the distinctiveness and attractiveness of a place, and many studies agree that destination image is an important factor when marketing a destination”* (p. 1). They go on to add that core culture and values influence brand image and identification. Since food is a large part of a destination’s culture and values,

we draw that a destination's food is a large aspect of a destination's image. Sio et al. (2021) suggest that a person's knowledge, feelings, and behaviour towards a destination can influence a tourist's image of the destination, and therefore influence their overall satisfaction levels. This is similar to what Lai, Wang and Khoo-Lattimore (2019) highlight when they discuss that existing research has used the destination image formation model to measure destination image, which comprises of cognitive, affective, and conative images. Cognitive image is one's knowledge and perception of the destination, affective image is one's feelings toward the destination, and the conative image is one attitude and behaviour towards the destination (Lai, Wang, & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019). They further argue that the more positive these images are, the higher is tourist satisfaction and loyalty, meaning the more successful tourism sector (Lai, Wang, & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019).

In addition to looking at tourism satisfaction from the lens of destination image, Hsu and Scott (2020) also talk about satisfaction in terms of tourists' attachment levels. They outline that food experiences in a destination can impact a tourist's place attachment to the destination, that is, the emotional attachment a tourist has with a destination. A positive or negative place attachment can influence a destination's image (Hsu & Scott, 2020). For example, if there is not enough food available, the trip may be bad, and therefore the tourists' image of the destination may be poor. In contrast, if the tourists have the opportunity to try unique food that they enjoy, they will be satisfied with their trip and therefore have a positive destination image (Hsu & Scott, 2020).

Rather than exploring tourism satisfaction in relation to the destination image, Chatterjee and Suklabaidya (2021) seek to examine the gap between perception and satisfaction in food tourism. Drawing from various authors, Chatterjee and Suklabaidya (2021) conclude that *"the most common dimensions are – service quality, food quality, authenticity, hygiene, atmosphere and price"* (p. 91) when studying the aspects that influence a tourists' satisfaction level with a destination. They find that there is a gap between tourists' perception, or pre-travel thoughts, regarding what New York food will be like, and what it is actually like, therefore influencing their satisfaction levels. Despite the influence of satisfaction levels, when asked whether they still enjoyed New York cuisine, tourists answered yes (Chatterjee & Suklabaidya, 2021).

Stone, Migacz, and Wolf (2019) take a different approach, addressing food tourism and satisfaction levels directly rather than through concepts such as destination image and perception gaps. When surveying tourists, they found that 80.2% of tourists said that food and beverage experiences during their travels impacted their satisfaction. Furthermore, 81.3% said a positive experience with recommending drinks

affected their likelihood to return to the destination, and 81.3% said that a positive experience with the food and drinks impacted their likelihood of recommending the destination (Stone, Migacz, & Wolf, 2019).

Overall, satisfaction levels within a tourism context are not only important because they influence a tourist's time in the destination, but also because they can influence the intention to revisit and likelihood to recommend the destination to others (Sio et al., 2021; Chatterjee & Suklabaidya, 2021; Stone et al., 2019). Therefore, understanding the relationship between food tourism offerings and satisfaction may help us to further understand revisit and recommendation intention related to Porto.

4. Analysis

The analysis is based on our research on TikTok, observations in Porto, and interviews with tourists and locals in Porto. It seeks to explore the characteristics of food tourism in Porto and look at the influence social media and aesthetics have on the tourist experience and food scene in the destination.

4.1 Food's Role in Porto's Cultural Heritage and Identity

While visiting Porto, we noticed that the food helped convey the traditions, meanings, and history of the city. From existing literature, we know that food tourism plays a role in supporting the intangible cultural heritage of a destination (Almansouri, Verkerk, Fogliano, & Luning, 2021). The following sections will elaborate on how different mechanisms help preserve the intangible culture of Porto.

4.1.1 The Past's Influence on Modern Cuisine

While in Porto, several locals shared with us that the gastronomy in Porto is heavily intertwined with the city's history. Corrado (2022) argues that the past can shed light on why certain ingredients are used in the cuisine of a destination, leading us to believe that by exploring Porto's past, we could gain deeper insight into the city's modern cuisine. As one local told us, *"Once you start understanding a little bit better the, the roots and also the origins of your gastronomy, you start understanding what is deeper below surface"* (Appendix G, ll. 44-45). We felt that by examining Porto's cuisine and identifying what was "below the surface", we would understand what characterizes the city's modern food tourism.

Upon talking with locals, we learned that Porto experienced great times of economic hardship throughout the years, where many citizens struggled financially and had to "make do" with what they had. According to them, these difficult financial times were, and still are, reflected in Porto's gastronomy, birthing a cuisine that uses simple ingredients and does not let any food go to waste. When describing Porto's

gastronomy, one local stated that *“in my simplest, the simplest is olive oil, onion, and garlic pretty much. Also, it's got a very interesting component of dishes made out of four times as many countries will have dishes made out of, you know, times of lacking or shortness of, you know, food.”* (Appendix H, ll. 12-15). He further elaborated by describing Porto's traditional dishes, explaining that:

“Some of the traditional dishes, like for example are, Açorda is the concept of you get all the dry bread that you have in your house put it in a in, a in a pot with lots of olive oil and tomato sauce and whatnot, and then some put, put any fish that you have cod fish the cheapest fish that you can find. The Fish that you got off the coast there. You just mix it up in a huge pot, for example, Tripas” (Appendix H, ll. 19-24).

This suggests that Porto's economic history inspired dishes that were made with the food that was available, not food that was expensive or scarce. It was about creating something filling that could sustain the Portuguese on a budget. A local echoed this sentiment when saying, *“the main idea I would say behind the majority of the gastronomy we have is in this principle of if you have little and you have a lot of mouths to feed, you need to make do with what you have, so you'll find different ways to use it.”* (Appendix G, ll. 79-85). One local told us that a primary type of food that was available to the Portuguese was leftover meat (Appendix H). A local legend stated that when sailors left Porto with much of the city's meat, the people in the city were given the parts of the meat that the sailors were not using (Appendix H). He said that it is why Porto's food is made up of non-traditional meat products such as the intestine and the stomach (Appendix H). This was a cheap yet filling way to make food in Porto.

Affordable yet hearty food is still prevalent in Porto's cuisine today, with many tourists using words such as *“rich, meat-heavy, reasonably affordable”* (Appendix D, l. 39), *“hearty, tasty and filling”* (Appendix K, l. 37), and *“very, very heavy”* (Appendix L, l. 49) to describe the food that they have experienced in Porto. In addition, specific foods were also used to describe Porto's cuisine, such as fish, potatoes, and sausage.



Image 3: Bacalhau



Image 4: Octopus rice

This implies that the history of Porto shaped the destination's food, and that the modern-day cuisine still reflects the city's past. When we compare what the locals tell us about the history of food in Porto to how the tourists describe their food tourism experience there are similarities in the descriptions. This leads us to believe that a destination's modern cuisine is not as modern as we may think. This is emphasised by Corrado (2022) when he discusses the history of beans in Italy, stating that beans were originally a large part of a peasant's diet as they were cheap and filling. Over time, they became a central element to the Italian diet. This supports the idea that a destination's modern-day cuisine may draw from moments of the past. Nevertheless, through understanding the history of Porto and why certain ingredients are used in its modern cuisine we learned about the past of Porto; this history helped convey the destination's story, and therefore Porto's culture. Thus, we noticed that one way in which Porto preserves its culture is through using modern food as a mechanism of sharing Porto's past with tourists.

4.1.2 Food as an Educational Tool

As mentioned above, the fact that tourists described Porto's food in a way that parallels the past suggests that the tourists came into contact with Porto's history, specifically its economic past. Some tourists may be conscious of this storytelling, while others may not be. For example, from our personal experience, it was not until one of our tour guides pointed out the specific links between Porto's food and history that we understand the connection (Appendix B). It would be easy for tourists to assume that meat is a large part of Porto's history simply because the Portuguese like meat, or perhaps they would assume that

Portugal has an abundance of meat, and that is why the gastronomy is so meat heavy. What we found interesting was that it seemed food tourism could serve as an educational tool for tourists. Once again, this is significant, as the storytelling of Porto's past can help preserve its history, thereby serving as a way to preserve its intangible culture.

Authors such as Qui et al. (2022) and Flowers and Swan (2019) support the concept that food can serve as an educational tool, with the first suggesting that food tourism can be a form of storytelling of the past and the latter arguing that food tourism can even provide the insights to help break down racial barriers. During our time in Porto, we experienced food tourism as an educational tool (Appendix B). For example, we participated in a Vintage and Port Wine Food Tour while in Porto. This tour, which is the oldest food tour in Porto, had us try fourteen different types of traditional food and seven types of beverages. During this food experience, we were taken to various eateries in the city by foot. As the tour progressed, we not only saw elements of the city, but also learned about the origins of the food in Porto, the history of Porto's food, the significance that the food holds among residents, and the importance of Portuguese recipes being passed from generation to generation. The insight that this tour provided into Porto was something we believe we would have missed if not for this particular food tourism experience. This reinforces that food experiences may have the ability to educate tourists about a destination. This also shows us that these educational experiences help a destination preserve its history and culture, underscoring the importance of food tourism in a destination and its relation to sustaining the destination's intangible heritage.



Image 5: Food tour



Image 6: Port Wine tasting at food tour

4.1.3 Discovering the Identity of Porto Through Food

Food also has the ability to reveal parts of a destination's identity (Aziz, Juliana, & Teng, 2021). When describing Porto's cuisine, one local argued that it was *"something coming out of ingenuity and the ability to improvise with the little you have"* (Appendix G, ll. 21-22). Another local added, *"Poor people just made delicious food. [...] Like it's I think it's something like I really appreciate"* (Appendix R, l. 85) and went on to say that she is *"proud of that stuff"* (Appendix R, l. 90). From the previous descriptions of Porto's food, which included words such as 'basic' and 'heavy', one would likely refrain from using words such as 'ingenuity' and 'delicious' to describe the cuisine. Yet, locals were quick to point out that it takes skill and creativity to craft good meals from basic ingredients. This way of thinking uncovers new characteristics of Porto's food identity, such as cleverness, innovation, and resilience. This shows that food and food tourism activities can teach tourists about unique and hidden aspects of the destination's identity, meaning tourists have the opportunity to learn about intangible aspects of Porto's identity and culture through its food. This notion is supported by Aziz et al. (2021) when they argue that food can represent aspects of a destination's identity.

A destination's identity may also be influenced by the religion of destination's the country, as religion is an aspect of a destination's intangible cultural, and intangible heritage can help communicate a destination's identity (Qiu, Zuo, & Zhang, 2022). Locals shared that Porto's Catholic roots had a large

influence on their food traditions. When speaking about Catholicism's influence on Porto, one local said that: *"It's important to understand that there is a massive influence of religion in this love of being around the table and having and sharing food. We're deeply Catholic country with the heritage and the policies and being around the sacred place, which is the table"* (Appendix G, ll. 31-33).

The concepts of sharing, togetherness, and love from Catholicism emerged in Porto's food culture. This implies that the gastronomy of Porto goes deeper than just the food that is being served; it centres around meaning and traditions. Aziz et al. (2021) echo this sentiment when suggesting that food goes beyond just a physical necessity and that it also encompasses tradition and culture. They provide the example that coffee in Turkey is more than just drinking coffee, it is *"a sign of hospitality, fellowship, sophistication, and entertainment"* (Aziz, Juliana, & Teng, 2021, p. 247). One local told us that food in Porto *"takes me back to family, it takes me back to sharing"* (Appendix G, l. 43). For this local, food is also about memories. Once again, we see that food becomes more than just the tangible, it becomes traditions, history, community, and feelings (Aziz, Juliana, & Teng, 2021). From our observations, we felt that tourism activities and experiences play an important role in tourists experiencing this underlying meaning of a culture, as they enable tourists to experience the intangible parts of the culture through a tangible action; food tourism acts as a vessel to convey parts of a culture that cannot be portrayed or fully understood through conventional ways such as traditional museums or sight-seeing. For example, when we were out to eat with another tourist we meet while in Porto, we were deciding what to choose from the menu. The waiter suggested that we could order a few things and share them, as this was the *"Portuguese way"*. This experience highlighted the importance of togetherness and sharing for us as tourists. It helped us understand the nuances that came with eating in Porto, therefore enabling us to further explore what characterizes the local cuisine.

4.1.4 Challenging the Definition of Traditional Food

The Portuguese empire and history of trade also influenced Porto's gastronomy. For example, one local highlighted that, *"we got a lot of influences from the Indians, the Chinese, when we went there 500 years ago [to] trade and we definitely also brought some things there, which is funny enough, vindaloo, for example, vindaloo, which is a type of Curry"* (Appendix H, ll. 144-146). He went onto say that: *"there's been an influence in the past that we brought all these differences from so Portuguese cuisine is not exclusively, you know, made in this corner of the world it. Rather, it draws inspiration and influence from the former Portuguese empire"* (Appendix H, ll. 150-152).

This is interesting because food that is considered specific to Porto has in fact been shaped by other regions of the world. It challenges the idea that Porto's tradition and heritage are singular or "purely Portuguese". This concurs with Omar et al. (2015, as cited in Alamansouri et al., 2021) definition of heritage food that suggests traditional food can be a mix of various cultures and beliefs. When talking about Malay intangible culture, Olalere (2019) also says that its *"cultural heritage has gone through several stages in its evolution, shaped by the cross-cultural exchange of culture and a number of foreign influences from the India sub-continent, the Middle East, China, Portugal, and other parts of the Malay Archipelago"* (p. 4).

It seems that this trend has continued through modern times, perhaps even progressing further. For example, when speaking with tourists many stated that they believed Porto's gastronomy resembled Mediterranean, Brazilian (Appendix F), and German cuisine (Appendix M). This shows that the influences of trade and globalisation on a destination's gastronomy are still prevalent because of the similarities to other cuisines. In addition, tourists mentioned that they noticed a lot of foreign restaurants, which are restaurants with food from another country. One tourist stated that *"I've seen Brazilian restaurants, or like Brazilian food [...] I think it's what tourists expect because we are in Portugal, it's Portuguese, so a lot of people think about Brazil"* (Appendix F, ll. 129-131). Other tourists noticed a lot of Italian restaurants, citing that *"when you walk into the street there is so much Italian food"* (Appendix I, ll. 104-105). Interestingly, one tourist stated, *"There seems to be a lot of Japanese [food]"* (Appendix K, l. 77), with another tourist echoing this sentiment by saying *"I saw foreign influence. Mostly like Italian. Uh-huh. I saw a lot of Pizzeria and Japanese as well. There is a lot of sushi"* (Appendix L, ll. 114-116). The influx of foreign cuisine in Porto was also showcased during our TikTok analysis, as the analysis revealed that more than half of the videos, we saw promoted foreign restaurants in Porto, with majority of them focused on Italian cuisine (Appendix A). This number of restaurants from other countries reinforces that a foreign influence can be seen in Porto today.

The history of Portuguese food and the presence of foreign restaurants prompted us to think about what it truly means for a destination's cuisine to be local and traditional. On the one hand, locals shared with us that their cuisine has been shaped by other regions of the world. On the other hand, many locals, tourists, and social media users made a point to try or showcase what they believed to be typical Portuguese food. In our TikTok analysis, we found a few videos that named some dishes that can be considered traditional to Porto (Appendix A), such as Bifana, Francesinha, Cachorrinho, Bacalhau, and Pastéis de Nata. Most of these traditional dishes were also mentioned by tourists when we asked them

about traditional Portuguese food. For instance, one tourist stated: *“Like the typical sweets like the Pastéis de nata, of course, and then also like they eat a lot of Bacalhau and these fried little Pastéis. [...] Yeah, I and like lots of rice with, like seafood”* (Appendix N, ll. 52-54). Another tourist believed that traditional Portuguese food consists of *“Lots of meats. It's. Yeah, it's very tasty and not a lot of vegetables”* (Appendix P, l. 52).



Image 7: Bifana



Image 8: Pastéis de Nata

During the Food Tour and through speaking to locals we learned that Portuguese cuisine mainly consists of seafood and meat, but at the same time, there are a lot of different traditional dishes. One local explained the importance of meat in the traditional cuisine: *“It's a lot about pork food because of our ancestors and about the poverty in Porto, so it's very rich food with a lot of meat”* (Appendix R, ll. 21-22) while another local pointed towards the variety of seafood dishes: *“We have like 500 types of cod fish dishes. I think that's very interesting. I think that also comes from our economic standpoint. We have to save a lot”* (Appendix T, ll. 35-37). The diversity in codfish dishes also comes across on TikTok, as we saw a couple of videos showing various types of codfish dishes to try in Porto.

Another local told us about the popularity of Porto's Street food: *“Porto is a bit more known for street food. Not only those dishes that I told you about the specific, but also in terms of street food, the sandwiches, the, the hot dogs or Gazelle [...] Bifana - BIFANA - is basically the concept of pork meat inside. It's simple, straightforward”* (Appendix H, ll. 203-206). Interestingly, most of the dishes that locals describe as traditional Portuguese – such as Bifana, Francesinha, and Bacalhau – are the ones that are portrayed

on TikTok as being typical for Porto. It is interesting that these dishes and ingredients were defined as typical Portuguese because, as explained previously, Portuguese food has been influenced by trade. This is further illustrated in the example of the Francesinha that, according to a local, originates from France. This is confirmed by Tsapepas (2022) when he states that Francesinha means 'little French girl'. However, he goes on to say that it is now considered a traditional local dish in Porto. With this, we started to wonder — if Porto has food that they define as typical, yet may actually be shaped by other nations, why are these foods and ingredients described as traditional to Porto?

Almansouri et al. (2021) may provide some insight into why this may be when they highlight the difference in definitions among ethnic food, local food, traditional food, and heritage food. Some food consumption may be defined by the people who eat it, while other consumptions may be grouped by where the ingredients were sourced, while others are defined by traditions present while eating. This leads us to believe that perhaps different stakeholders — that is tourists, locals, and social media users — define original and traditional food in varying ways. For example, maybe some define traditional food based on the food that has been in Porto for hundreds of years. Perhaps others view traditional food as food that is only eaten in Porto and not in other parts of Portugal. Or maybe traditional food is any food that is eaten by someone who is Portuguese, regardless of where the ingredients came from. The goal of our thesis is to not argue which definition of traditional food is the best, rather to highlight that in Porto the definition of traditional food can be rather nuanced. Despite the nuances, there is some type of overall consensus in regard to what is considered typical food in Porto, which will be unpacked in the authenticity section.

Sub-conclusion

The past's influence on Porto's modern cuisine, the ability of food to educate Porto's tourists, food's capacity to reveal parts of the city's identity, and the new influences shaping cultural heritage are ways in which cultural heritage presents itself in Porto. Overall, cultural heritage is a large component of what characterizes food tourism in Porto, especially the preservation of cultural and tradition in the city.

4.2 Authenticity

Tourism literature has shown that the number of tourists looking for local and authentic food experiences is growing (Shafieizadeh, Alotaibi, & Tao, 2021). Moreover, researchers have identified a strong connection between the desire for local food and authenticity in the food tourism experience (Sims, 2009;

Zhang, Chen, & Hu, 2019). For this reason, we are interested in investigating the importance of authenticity as a component of food tourism in Porto.

4.2.1 The Connection Between Local Food and Authenticity

On TikTok, approximately 1/3 of the videos we analysed contained local food content. For instance, one TikTok video¹ captioned *“How to eat like a local in Porto, Portugal”* shows four different traditional Portuguese foods and where to have them (grapechic, 2023). This seems to be something that tourists in Porto are looking for, as we found through the interviews, some of them were specifically looking for local food. This can be seen in the following statement of a tourist: *“So we are looking for traditional dishes. So, when we are looking for restaurants, we will go to one which seems to be traditional [...]”* (Appendix I, ll. 103-104).

Even though the term ‘authenticity’ was not raised during the interviews, we know from the literature that *“tasting local food is an indispensable way to quest for authenticity for tourists”* (Zhang, Chen, & Hu, 2019, p. 2). Hence, we see a connection between tourists looking for local food in Porto and therefore striving for an authentic food experience. Furthermore, tourism research has shown that a destination’s local food plays an important part in the degree of authenticity of the tourists’ experience because it is strongly connected to the cultural heritage of the destination (Tiberghien, Bremner, & Milne, 2017). This also became evident in the cultural heritage section, where we concluded that food is a great tool to convey the city’s cultural traditions, meanings and history.

4.2.2 Discovering Authentic Food Experiences in Porto

According to Zhang et al. (2019), *“An authentic food experience is a kind of cultural phenomenon in which chefs, restaurants, recipes, and dishes are considered in ways that allow visitors to integrate into the local culture and spirit”* (p. 2). The authentic food experience that these authors describe is something that we could experience ourselves during our field trip to Porto. On our first day there, we went to a Pastel de Nata Baking Class at a local’s home, not knowing anything about Portuguese food culture or the traditional Portuguese pastry we were going to make. Before the Baking Class started, the local woman who hosted the event gave us a short introduction to the traditional Portuguese cuisine, and how important the Portuguese food is for their culture and especially her family. The recipe for the Pastel de Nata stems from her Grandmother, and she seemed to be very happy about passing it on to us tourists, to show us how to

¹ <https://www.tiktok.com/@grapechic/video/7197805267113839918? r=1& t=8chY95bNxWs>

make a traditional Pastel de Nata. The whole process of baking the Pastéis de Nata gave us more knowledge of how Portuguese cuisine works. More specifically, how Portuguese people use a few, simple ingredients to create delicious food, which is the core of the Portuguese's cuisine identity, as we have examined in the first section of the analysis. Besides that, it made us appreciate the Pastel de Nata even more because we learned how complex it is to prepare them. When talking to the other participants of the Baking Class, we found that most of them had the same experience.

As described above, the Baking Class *“demonstrates traditions, legends, stories, and symbols”* (p. 3), which, according to Zhang, Chen & Hu, (2019), connects local food with authenticity. For example, our host for the Baking Class described herself as coming from *“a traditional (and by traditional, of course I mean a very loud) Portuguese family with a deep love for homemade dishes”* (Porto Cooking Class, 2023). The story about how she grew up, helping her grandma make Pastéis de Nata in the kitchen and now passing the recipe on to us, or the rather chaotic and loud way of giving us the instructions are great examples of how local food is tied to authenticity in Portuguese cuisine. Due to the strong presence of traditions and legends in this Baking Class, we felt that it was very authentic. In addition, Özdemir and Seyitoğlu (2017) suggest that food authenticity encompasses both the authenticity of the food experience and the restaurant experience. The authenticity of the food experience can consist of cooking methods, cooking odours, recipes, ingredients, food and drink customs (Zhang, Chen, & Hu, 2019). This is also demonstrated in our example of the Baking Class experience analysed above. The method of preparing the puff pastry for the Pastéis de Nata, the specific ingredients, the pastry being served with tea and coffee, are all indicators of an authentic food experience.

In addition to the Baking Class, in our TikTok analysis, we found only a few videos that named the ingredients of the local dish one should try, or even mentioned typical food and drink customs, therefore outlining the representation of authentic food experiences on social media. For example, one video² posted by a tourist showed a couple of traditional Portuguese dishes by explaining the ingredients and provided the viewer with some background information on the Portuguese cuisine: *“Portuguese food is really salty and savoury, so you’ll always have a beer or white wine to balance that fat out”* (getlowdernow, 2022). This can be seen as an attempt to inform the viewer/potential visitor on how to enjoy local Portuguese food in an authentic way, meaning, by having local food with the typical local drink on the

² <https://www.tiktok.com/@getlowdernow/video/7167805165565709570? t=8chGvqVnJZi& r=1>

side. In the video, the user also explains the history of Port Wine in Porto, which draws back to the fact that food experiences can educate tourists on the cultural heritage of a destination.

In the interviews with local Portuguese people, we also learned a lot about local food and the traditions around it. One local describes Portuguese food as *“I would say comfort foods. Sometimes a little bit greasy and very salty, but also diverse like there’s a lot. So depending where you are in Portugal, you can either have like the best grilled fish ever, or you can have the most incredible soup. Like with everything like with beans, with rice, with lots of Portuguese cabbage”* (Appendix E, ll. 7-10). The greasy and salty aspect was also mentioned in the TikTok video analysed above, and in most of the interviews with tourists and locals. However, the aspect of diversity did not become visible in the TikTok analysis since the videos showed mostly the same traditional dishes: Bifana, Cachorrinho, Francesinha, Bacalhau and Pastéis de Nata. Another local claims *“For the record, Tripas which is the most traditional dish of Porto. A white beans stew, so it’s lots of beans”* (Appendix H, ll. 30-31) Tripas was mentioned by several locals, and as we learned in the cultural heritage section, it really is a dish linked closely to Porto’s history. This dish was not present in any of the TikTok videos, but through the interviews with locals we learned that it can be considered as the real authentic local food of Porto. Unfortunately, we did not get to taste it, as it was not on the menu in the places we went to. This leads us to believe that it can be only found in really old, authentic Portuguese restaurants.

Concerning Zhang et al.’s (2019) explanation of an authentic food experience, we learned through our research in Porto that there are several ways of experiencing authentic food in Porto. The Baking Class was probably the food experience that we would review as most authentic because it was at a locals’ home, involving many local traditions while preparing traditional local food. Furthermore, on TikTok, the representation of authentic food seems to be rather narrow. It shows some local food, as well as food and drink customs that locals would identify as authentic, but from the interviews with locals, we learned that there is a wide variety in traditional Portuguese dishes. Thus, we conclude that authentic food experiences characterize food tourism in Porto, even though authenticity can vary depending on the circumstances or the stakeholders involved.

4.2.3 Exploring the Authenticity of Porto's Iconic Dish: The Francesinha

There is particularly one dish appearing several times on TikTok, and when speaking to tourists and locals: the Francesinha, a sandwich consisting of different layers of meat, cheese, and an egg on top (see Image 9). After seeing it repeatedly on TikTok and hearing about its traditionality from locals, we considered it a

must-try dish in Porto. According to Cohen and Avieli (2004), there are certain “*aspects in the processes of preparation, presentation, and consumption of food which appear to be diacritical in the tourists’ perception of its authenticity*” (pp. 769-770). This is similar to Almansouri et al.’s (2021) argument explained earlier in the cultural heritage section, that definitions of ethnic, local and traditional food can depend on the origins of the ingredients or the traditions in the consumption of the food. In the following part, we will take the case of the Francesinha as an example to analyse its authenticity as a local food in Porto. Here, we will mostly draw on our own observations as tourists rather than researchers, as well as some statements from the locals.



Image 9: Francesinha



Image 10: Excited to taste the Francesinha!

The preparation stage

In the stage of preparation, the focus lies on the raw ingredients and the method of preparation of the dish. Cohen and Avieli (2004) point out that for tourists, the raw ingredients are the most important indicator of authenticity, because “authentic” ingredients make the dish more authentic. In the case of the Francesinha, our Walking Tour Guide unfolded its original ingredients to us:

“In the 1970s, there was a guy, like many other people in Portugal, that migrated out of the [...] 1960s, 1970s to work in the South of France, he saw the customers here when he was working there in the restaurant, and he came back. [...] He started doing something similar, but more on the heavier side. Not the heaviest. He sees, like a slice of bread, some ham cheese, a steak, some meat inside. It wasn't a steak back then; it was pork loin and bread and then cheese all around you. This was meant for mostly men” (Appendix H, ll. 77-83).

Thus, back then the raw ingredients were ham, pork loin, bread, and cheese, whereas today it includes several layers of meat. It can be discussed which ingredients tourists nowadays would evaluate as ‘authentic’, but one can argue that bread, cheese, and some kind of meat might count as the original raw ingredients. The Tour Guide added: *“So that's how the Francesinha was born, it's like boom you know like that that thing you get the hit of that”* (Appendix H, ll. 88-89). This is interesting because it shows how the traditional dish Francesinha was somehow invented by a Portuguese man being inspired by foreign cuisine, relating back to the cultural heritage section, where we saw that foreign influences are still apparent in even food that is considered traditional.

The presentation stage

The next stage involves the presentation of the food, including the display, advertisement, and description of the dish by the local restaurant (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Already shortly after our arrival in Porto, we saw signs and images of the Francesinha everywhere in town. Thus, it is advertised a lot, so tourists will most likely notice it walking around the city. This was confirmed during our Food Tour, as we spoke to the other participants about the Francesinha and most of them had already tried it and emphasised its heaviness but also deliciousness. Most tourists we interviewed had also tried the Francesinha, or at least heard of it or seen advertisements for it. With that being said, it appears to be an outstanding dish in the destination and the core of Porto's cuisine. Skinner et al. (2020) argue that destinations might create a unique gastronomic identity by taking advantage of the food and drink specific to the destination and in that way differentiate themselves gastronomic-wise from other destinations. Hence, the Francesinha is part of Porto's identity and is associated with its local food culture, which is likely why tourists encountered it so frequently.

On our last evening in Porto, we decided to try the Francesinha at the restaurant that our taxi driver had recommended to us. Even though it was 10:00 p.m. on a Sunday, there was a waiting time for a table of about 50 minutes, which was quite surprising for us. We then went ahead to check out the restaurant

next door, which was called ‘Dona Francesinha’, so we assumed that it must be an adequate restaurant for the dish if it even carries its name. In fact, the restaurant being named after the dish is a great advertisement for the Francesinha.

According to Cohen and Avieli (2004) the most valuable tool to evaluate the degree of authenticity of a place in the presentation stage is the menu. The authors explain why: “*The menu can be approached as the culinary equivalent of the geographical map, guiding the customer through the fare offered by the establishment*” (Cohen & Avieli, 2004, p. 770). At the restaurant ‘Dona Francesinha’, the menu was divided into six main sections: “Starters”, “Meat”, “Fish”, “Other”, “Francesinha” and “Dessert”.



Image 11: Menu at Dona Francesinha

The division into sections that reflect the local cuisines eating habits is natural and can be seen as a factor for authenticity (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Here, the sections ‘meat’, ‘fish’, and ‘Francesinha’ basically displayed the most traditional dishes in Porto’s cuisine. It was interesting to notice that the Francesinha had its own section, even though tourists might not know what it means. For this reason, there was an English subheading stating: “*The best traditional Porto sandwich*”. This is similar to Cohen and Avieli’s (2004) argument, that local culinary terms are translated into a language or explanation that tourists would understand. However, one can argue that a sandwich in another cuisine is different to this sandwich. This is what Cohen and Avieli call the “*rendition of local culinary categories in what appear to*

be equivalent Western ones” (2004, p. 771), which can lead to problems because such a cultural translation can be misunderstood by tourists, having their own perceptions of “sandwiches” in mind.

Even though the primary language of the menu was Portuguese, making it somewhat authentic, the main ingredients of all the dishes on the menu were translated into English. This can be a sign for a tourism-oriented restaurant, according to Cohen and Avieli (2004), as these places try to provide a more detailed and understandable description of the food on the menu, so tourists will easily comprehend it. Some tourist-oriented establishments even include images of the food, to make the translation much easier for the tourist (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). This was not the case here.

However, there was a selection of five different Francesinha, making it hard for us to decide which one would be the traditional, authentic one. The first one was called ‘Dona Francesinha Special’, which we assumed would be a special version of the traditional one, but later we found it was actually the traditional one. The next three options were an option with only chicken meat, vegetarian, or a ‘Hamburger style’. While the first two options could cater to people that eat Halal or prefer a vegetarian diet, the last one was most definitely invented for tourists, as it included a beef patty and bacon, which were not part of the original recipe.

Inventing new options for the Francesinha is only a natural process, as Cohen and Avieli explain: “*Local foods are transformed on different dimensions and in various ways to suit tourists, and foreign dishes are introduced by tourism into the local cuisine and transformed to suit local tastes*” (2004, p. 767), meaning that the whole encounter between local and foreign food tastes create new so-called tourist cuisines. In this case, the Francesinha has been transformed three times, to cater towards tourists with special diets or eating habits, and probably to tourists that are too scared to try the original version but would try a Hamburger version because it sounds more familiar.

In the interview with our Walking Tour Guide, we found out that the traditional recipe of the Francesinha also has changed throughout the years. He explained:

“[...] the Francesinha, the recipe of it was always spicy sauce. And this is not something that tourism did only just by itself, but it is a common phenomenon they started, they stopped making it so spicy so they can appeal to a wider audience. And that is one of the things that I mean as a spicy lover they you know. Yeah, so this is, but this is also again, you know, Francesinha is 50 years old, so you know, it's typical. Yeah. But it's also changed, like it started off as a small, almost like hamburger and now it's huge” (Appendix H, ll. 220-225).

This is interesting because it shows that the traditional dish Francesinha has been changed throughout the years to make it more appealing to a broader audience, primarily tourists. Cohen and Avieli (2004) argue that local dishes must be changed to some degree to become popular among tourists. In their opinion, it is not a simple transformation, but rather an innovation of local foods (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Thus, one could argue that the changing recipe of the Francesinha is a rather natural process, which ought to happen due to the tourism boom.

When we ordered, we asked the waitress for the traditional Francesinha, and she asked us if it was the first time, we had that dish. Telling her it was our first time, she went on to recommend that we have it “the traditional way”, with an egg on top and fried potatoes on the side. In addition, she recommended that we share one Francesinha, as it would be filling for both of us. In this case, the waitress acted as what Cohen and Avieli call a “culinary broker”, a person who explains the dishes on the menu and gives the tourists recommendations on what to order. The culinary broker can act in two different ways: either reassuring the tourist to choose the traditional dish even though it seems strange to them or recommending dishes that they know tourists generally prefer, even though they might not be authentic for the local cuisine (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). In our case, we got the impression that the waitress recommended us the authentic, traditional Francesinha, but advised us to share it because she knows that it can be overwhelming for tourists to finish such a huge portion. Thus, referring to her function as a culinary broker, it was a combination of both ways.

The consumption stage

Finally, the last stage is the ‘consumption’ stage, which deals with “*the structure of the meal (as chosen by the tourist), the taste of the food, the manner of serving, the style of eating, and the spatial organization and decoration of the establishment*” (Cohen & Avieli, 2004, p. 772). Among these elements, taste is regarded to be the most important authenticity marker (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Thus, tourism-oriented restaurants would adjust the recipe of the local food to suit the tourists' taste, but only to a small degree, as it still is supposed to look authentic (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). In the case of the Francesinha, we know from our research that the taste has been adjusted with time, to make it less spicy than it originally was.

When the food arrived, we were happy that we got to share it, because it was a huge portion. We were very curious to finally taste it, after having heard so many opinions about it. Due to the different layers of meat, it tasted quite different from bite to bite. It was not spicy and had a unique taste that we had never experienced before. Therefore, we assume that the Francesinha we got served was adjusted to the

tourists preferred taste. Overall, we liked it, even though it was very heavy with the egg, cheese, and beer-tomato sauce on the side.

To sum up, the case of the Francesinha has shown that the authenticity of local food involves many different layers. It is not only important what the food is made of, but also how it is advertised and how it tastes is important for tourists to determine its authenticity. Furthermore, original recipes like the Francesinha change over time to make them more appealing to tourists. Finally, the Francesinha plays an important role in the characterization of food tourism in Porto.

4.2.4 Unravelling the Factors that Characterize Authentic Restaurants in Porto

Concerning the authenticity of local restaurants in Porto, tourists and locals explained how they determine whether a restaurant is authentically local or not. Some tourists would ask their tour guide for authentic local places to eat, others had gotten recommendations for local places from Portuguese work colleagues or friends. This can be an indication of the so-called “cold authentication” (Skinner, Chatzopoulou, & Gorton, 2020) because tourists would reach out to an expert in Portuguese food. In contrast, other tourists simply looked at the menu and ascertained it using their knowledge of Portuguese food, which is an example of “hot authentication”, as the determination of authenticity is simply based on the tourists’ own beliefs (Skinner, Chatzopoulou, & Gorton, 2020).

Food plays a significant role in tourists’ decisions on whether a place is authentic or not. Beverland and Farely (2010, as cited in Skinner et al., 2020) argue that *“the interesting link between the concepts of localness and authenticity is that consumers tend to judge the merits of a place’s food based on its authenticity to its heritage”* (p. 158) which means that tourists would evaluate a restaurant’s localness according to how authentic it appears in terms of its cultural heritage. This can, for instance, be done by inspecting the names of the dishes on the menu, as well as the ingredients of the food, as this sometimes can resemble the location of where the food originally stems from (Fox, 2007). This is also what tourists are doing in Porto, as one tourist explained: *“I would look at the menu and check for the dishes they offer. You can probably tell. Like usually if they don't like typically modernize or something”* (Appendix N, ll. 106-107). For example, considering a restaurant in Porto, tourists could check the menu by looking for traditional dishes such as Francesinha and Bacalhau. Since our analysis has shown that both dishes are part of the cultural heritage of Porto, they can be an indicator of an authentic Portuguese restaurant. Another tourist added that for her it is more *“The dishes, how they look like, if they're like, arranged really nicely or”* (Appendix N, ll. 117). This refers to the aesthetics of the food, which will be further explained in the aesthetics section of the analysis.

However, the food is not the only aspect that can help tourists decide whether a place is authentic. The locals we interviewed pointed towards the look and atmosphere of a place which makes it authentic. One local said: “[...] *but at the same time it's very important that we just have like pictures or play the music Fado or something. Just to show us that it's Porto*” (Appendix R, ll. 141-142). Thus, photos of Porto and traditional Portuguese music could be an indication of an authentic place. According to a survey conducted by Skinner et al. (2020), *“The interior servicescape of a restaurant, its décor, and music are somewhat important in customers’ judgements of authenticity”* (p. 165). This echoes what the locals told us and proves, that authenticity is more complex than just the food. Furthermore, as one tourist stated, the vibe is important as well, and continues saying that *“And not to posh, also. I feel if they're good, they're not really posh restaurants”* (Appendix N, ll. 121). This indicates that the perceptions of how a restaurant is authentic seem to differ between tourists and locals. Where locals are more focused on the décor and music, tourists seem to consider the vibe to be more important.

Another crucial factor of authenticity seems to be seeing locals eating in the restaurant (Skinner, Chatzopoulou, & Gorton, 2020). Seeing locals having dinner at a restaurant makes the tourists feel like it is an authentic place, otherwise, locals would not have chosen to eat there. When we asked one tourist how she determines if a restaurant is local, she responded by saying *“local people”* and went on to say, *“all like you know the old Portuguese men, yeah.”* (Appendix P, l. 124); and we have used this during our field trip as a sign of a local, traditional restaurant. As described before, we went to have the traditional Francesinha and ended up in a restaurant called Donna Francesinha, where ten locals were sitting next to us, which gave us a feeling of safety as we knew we had chosen a good place.

Furthermore, another local acknowledges the significance of the employees and the hygiene of the place. He said: *“Well, like if there's an old lady working at the restaurant at the [inaudible]. Old, I don't want to be rude, really, like kind of overweight lady. That's gonna be good food”* (Appendix T, ll. 174-176) and added: *“And if the place is a little bit dirty and looks a bit ugly, yeah, that's a good place”* (Appendix T, ll. 180). Hence, in the local's opinion, a traditional, local and authentic Portuguese restaurant looks a bit dirty, and an old lady is working there. This is interesting because one of the tourists we interviewed told us almost the same thing: *“The places that I like to, I like, like cheap and cheerful. When I take a picture, it looks disgusting”* and that *“like this place is like the grandma is cooking in the back, and you know, the kids are running around, like those are my favourites”* (Appendix P, ll. 260-261). Thus, there seems to be an overlap between what locals view as an authentic place and what tourists perceive to be authentic when it comes to Portuguese restaurants. However, the videos about Portuguese restaurants on TikTok

show the exact opposite of the attributes mentioned above. As our TikTok analysis has revealed, there is an overweight of videos that show very aesthetically appealing foods and places to eat in Porto. Later in the analysis, we will therefore investigate the relationship between the authentic and aesthetically pleasing aspect of Portuguese foods and restaurants.

4.2.5 What Level of Authenticity are Tourists Seeking in Porto?

After thoroughly investigating what factors are important to tourists when choosing local food and authentic restaurants in Porto, we are now interested in if there are several types of tourists enjoying Porto's cuisine. This will help us understand how tourists experience authentic food in Porto.

The literature review has shown that researchers divide tourists into three different categories related to their desire for authenticity in their food experiences (Seyitoğlu & Özdemir, 2017). The first type is the 'authenticity seeker' and can be described as a tourist that actively takes part in authentic food experiences (Seyitoğlu & Özdemir, 2017). An example of this type could be a tourist we interviewed at the Baking Class, as he actively chose to participate in the Baking Class to have a local and authentic food experience. Additionally, he explained to us that *"food is a big part of the experience for my travels"* (Appendix D, I. 35) and mentioned, that he would participate in a Portuguese food tour the next day. These types of tourists also like to approach local residents to obtain information about authentic food experiences. Again, the tourist told us that he had asked his Tour Guide for recommendations (Appendix D), which fits with the type of authenticity seeker.

Opposite to the authenticity seeker is the comfort seeker, who prefers to have familiar food in a safe and comfortable environment (Seyitoğlu & Özdemir, 2017). Two tourists from Kazakhstan that we interviewed during the Walking Tour could be classified as 'comfort seekers', as they preferred to only taste the food that they are familiar with. As one of them explained: *"And also like again because of the Halal aspect of the food, we had mostly Turkish cuisine"* (Appendix M, I. 78). Additionally, they had tasted some Portuguese pastry, but only because they have had European pastry many times before and considered it to be very tasty. Thus, it can be seen as a familiar food for them, as one of them stated: *"Like pastry [...] you can never go wrong"* (Appendix M, II. 72-76). This implies that they know that Portuguese pastry would not disappoint them, and therefore, still provides comfort, also because it is still the same category as European pastry. Another indication of them being comfort seekers is that although we know from other tourists, locals and our observations that there is a high degree of foreign cuisines in Porto, the Kazakh tourists had only seen either typical Portuguese restaurants or American Fast-Food restaurants such as McDonald's or Burger King. We know from Seyitoğlu and Özdemir (2017) that comfort seekers

live in a so-called environmental bubble, and usually eat in restaurant chains, which could be the reason why they only notice restaurant chains such as McDonalds in Porto.

Somewhere in-between these two extreme tourist types are the ‘Moderates’. These tourists experience a ‘staged authenticity’, meaning that *“familiarity and authenticity coexist in this context, and familiarity provides a safe and comfortable environment while authenticity enhances these tourist experiences”* (Seyitoğlu & Özdemir, 2017, p. 3). For instance, one tourist said: *“I would maybe do a port wine tour. But like, just if someone asked. I don’t know if I would organise them myself, like maybe if I have visitors or a friend asked me to join, then I would [...]”* (Appendix F, ll. 186-187). This indicates that she is interested in experiencing some ‘staged authenticity’ – as it is still an organised tour for tourists – but only in an environment that feels safe and comfortable for her, such as being with friends or family. Thus, she would be a typical ‘Moderate’ type of tourist. Furthermore, another tourist from Greece told us that she had chosen to go to Porto because of the cuisine’s similarity to the Mediterranean/Greek cuisine, but she was still interested in visiting some authentic Portuguese restaurants with vegetarian options (Appendix F). This is another sign of seeking a safe and comfortable environment, while at the same time searching for some degree of authenticity, placing her in the ‘Moderates’ tourist type.

Based on our research we argue that categorising tourists regarding their desire for authenticity becomes difficult when tourists have special diets, such as Vegetarian, Vegan, or Halal. As the example of the Kazakh tourists shows, they prefer to go to Turkish restaurants because they need to eat Halal, which is not compatible with the Portuguese cuisine. Another tourist told us that she had not tasted that much traditional Portuguese food yet because she was Vegan, and as we know from the cultural heritage section, the cuisine in Porto is mostly focused on meat. Therefore, these tourists who may still desire authenticity cannot get it and stick in their familiar food environment. These examples show that the framework could be expanded to take special diets into consideration.

Sub-conclusion

To conclude the authenticity section, we found that the degree to which a food experience in Porto can be considered authentic is depending on what the experience involves. Furthermore, the case of the Francesinha has shown that traditional dishes change over time to adapt to tourists' tastes. It also became apparent that authenticity is perceived in different stages of the food experience. Lastly, we found that not all tourists are seeking an authentic food experience, but that there are different types regarding to the degree of authenticity they are looking for. Overall, we found that authenticity plays an important role in food tourism in Porto.

4.3 Social Media and Aesthetics

The literature review has demonstrated that social media have a significant impact on tourist behaviour and destination image (Sotiriadis, 2017), especially in food tourism (Yan, Wang, & Chau, 2015). In the following section, we will examine the influence of social media on the tourists' experience with food in Porto.

4.3.1 The Importance of Electronic Word-of-Mouth in Food Tourism

Using social media for information search and decision-making occurred several times during our interviews with tourists. Since our literature review has revealed that e-WOM plays a significant role in tourists' decision-making process and information search (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008), we were interested in investigating how tourists in Porto make their decision about restaurants they want to visit.

When asking tourists about their source of information, we found that some of them still use the original word-of-mouth communication, for example, by asking Portuguese family members, work colleagues, friends or even their tour guides in Porto for recommendations for restaurants in Porto (Appendix K, Appendix F, Appendix J). For instance, one group of tourists explain that they got restaurant recommendations *"through colleagues from work that live here. [...] And then our Tuk Tuk driver"* (Appendix K, l. 83, l. 91). However, according to a local, this way of passing on recommendations as *"back in the day, things would go from people or from person to person. Would go from mouth to mouth"* (Appendix G, ll. 219-220), which can be classified as the traditional word-of-mouth, is not that relevant anymore, because the e-WOM has gained much more importance. Litvin et al. (2008) support this, as positive or negative e-WOM can have a noteworthy influence on tourism products and services, including the destination's gastronomy.

An example of the importance of e-WOM can be seen in our TikTok analysis. For example, one video³ showed different images of the Majestic Café, one of the oldest cafés in Porto – and an extremely popular café among tourists – stating that it is *"Awful AWFUL food and very expensive"* and instead one should visit another restaurant which had *"AMAZING food, much better prices and aesthetic!"* (the_express_tourists, 2022). In the comments, other users agreed with that statement and even suggested other places to go to instead. This video shows exactly how extensive the effect of e-WOM can be, as we as researchers and tourists in Porto avoided going to the Majestic Café, even though it was recommended to us by our tour guide, and we passed by it twice.

³ https://www.tiktok.com/@the_express_tourists/video/7173940465467723014? t=8chYvgvINRq& r=1

More generally, some TikTok videos shared multiple places that they would recommend for tourists to visit. One video⁴ listed ‘Empanada Malvon’, ‘Amorino’, ‘A Despensa’, and ‘Farinha’ as some of the must-eat places in Porto (justkirstiethings, 2022). The comments included users tagging other users, which may be an indication that said users are tagging their friends to let them know that they should visit these eateries. Not all users seemed eager to visit the stops, as one comments *“Don’t eat at Amorino!!! It’s an European ice-cream chain, not local and not artisanal at all”*. The creator of the video commented back *“But it was delicious sooo?”*. Regardless of whether the comments indicated that the users would visit or not visit the recommended eateries, the comments showed that e-WOM is prevalent on social media channels and in Porto, leading us to believe that it is important to Porto’s food tourism sector. A similar video⁵ (iamkkg4, 2021) also posted about what they felt were their top recommendations of places to eat in Porto; the comments were filled with agreement and praise or remarks such as *“Naaaah y’all forgot Conga!!!!!! And their Bifanas”* and *“Good options, but not all the best, at least you enjoyed “my” hometown and some of the best food in the world”*. This once again showcases e-WOM in Porto.

The power of electronic word-of-mouth also shined through in the interviews with tourists, as almost all of them were using either Google, Google Maps, Instagram or TikTok, to look up places to eat in Porto. While Google and Google Maps are primarily used for reading other people’s reviews about the restaurant one would like to go to, the social media platforms TikTok and Instagram are used mostly to get a more visual impression of the place. For instance, one tourist says that she uses these platforms to look up what the food at a restaurant looks like. This fits with Oliveira and Casais (2019) argument on the tendency of customers to choose a restaurant by looking for food images on social media. A tourist told us that the images she finds on Google are in fact an accurate representation of the food that she has experienced thus far in Porto. Overall, the analysis shows that social media plays a significant role in tourists’ decision-making and information search for food in Porto.

4.3.2 How is Food in Porto Portrayed on Social Media in Relation to Aesthetics?

Following Oliveira’s and Casais’ (2019) argument mentioned above, literature tells us that the sharing of food images on social media also involves aesthetic and emotional elements (Corvo, Migliavada, & Zocchi, 2022). More specifically, several studies have shown that food images can influence tourists’ perception and desire for food (Spence, Okajima, Cheek, Petit, & Michel, 2016). In literature, this process is described

⁴ <https://www.tiktok.com/@justkirstiethings/video/7107197414431378694? t=8chZEeXbTa6& r=1>

⁵ <https://www.tiktok.com/@iamkkg4/video/7025160506969247022? r=1& t=8chGp8DvQKI>

as food aesthetics, alluding to *“the sensory gastronomic experience from food presentation such as plating, decorating and styling”* (Schifferstein et al., 2020, as cited in Gambetti & Han, 2022, p. 2).

An example of the aesthetics of food in Porto can be seen first-hand through our experience with the city. When viewing videos on TikTok of food in Porto, we gravitated towards videos that showcased show-stopping food in Porto; we assume many other users do the same. This means that the videos we saw would feature close-up shots of food where you could clearly see the texture, temperate, colours and ingredients or spices used in the food. These videos made us feel like we knew the food would be delicious, even without having any “hard” evidence; the only thing on which we had to base our opinion on was the aesthetics featured in the videos. To us, this reveals just how important the aesthetics of food can be on social media.

In the TikTok analysis, we realised that aesthetics was not only about how they food itself looked, but also the aesthetics of the environment. We noticed that the food was often placed neatly on the plate, with fancy garnish to elevate the look of the dish. For example, we analysed one video⁶ that was captioned *“Eating the best pastries in Porto with Cotton Candy Tea from @tonton cake”* and was hash tagged with #aesthetics (anaarmas26, 2022). The video showed small, beautifully decorated cakes, and an elegant cup of tea with cotton candy on the side, which clearly is the “fancy garnish” described above, enhancing the look of the teacup. This can be seen in the screenshot of the TikTok below (anaarmas26, 2022).



⁶ <https://www.tiktok.com/@anaarmas26/video/7106195716413852933? t=8chaPD5fcvD& r=1>

There were several users commenting enthusiastically on this video, saying “*adds another coffee place to Google places I wanna visit*” or “*There is cotton candy tea? And nobody told me anything ☺*”, suggesting that these users would like to visit this place (anaarmas26, 2022). Peng and Jemmott (2018) argue that users are more likely to react positively to images of food that look very aesthetically pleasing.

Gambetti and Han (2022) support this argument when they outline 15 photographic attributes that have an influence on how aesthetically pleasing food images on social media are perceived by users. Their study highlights the importance of attributes such as ‘colour’, ‘brightness’, ‘contrast’, ‘clarity’ or ‘image composition’ (Gambetti & Han, 2022). This can be seen in the example above and in other videos of food in Porto on TikTok. For instance, in a video⁷ captioned “*New amazing brunch downtown*”, the user shows two different plates containing very colourful, contrast-rich, and beautifully arranged food, as seen in the screenshots below (itsacatarina, 2022).



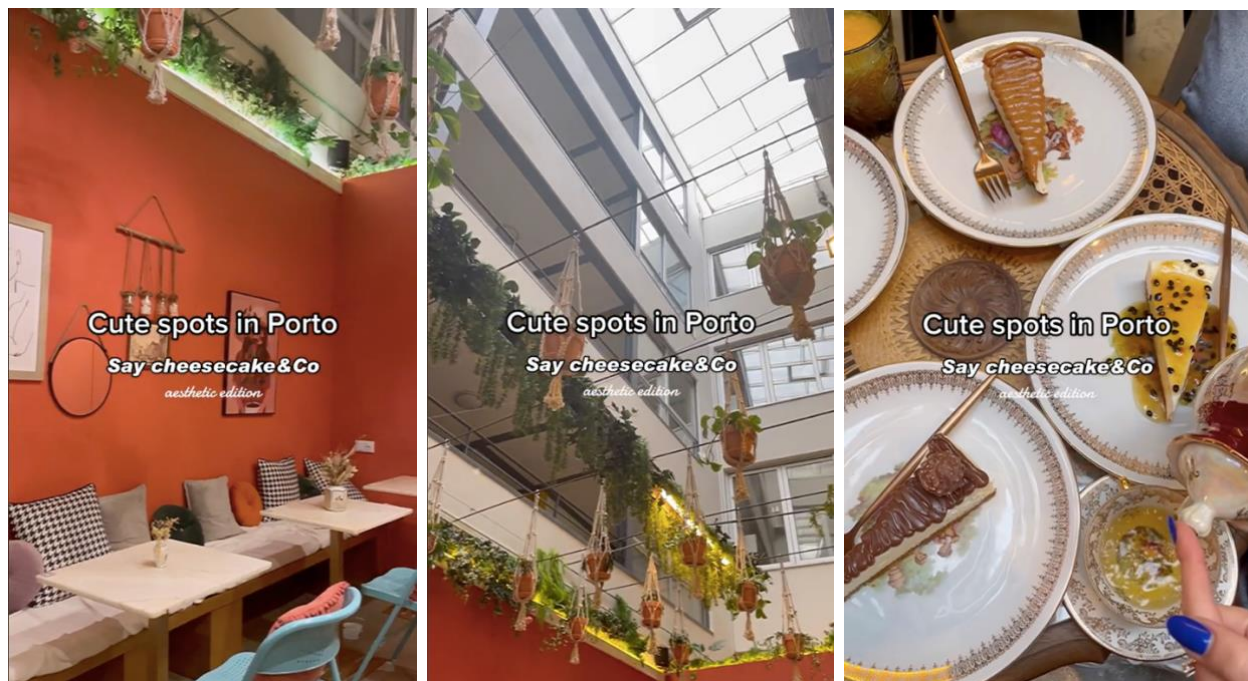
Furthermore, the short clips of the food seem very clear and bright, making it even more aesthetically pleasing, following Gambetti and Han’s (2022) argument. To us, it seems that the nicely arranged and well-made videos give users some form of satisfaction. Godara and Dev (2021) suggest that this may be because the aesthetically pleasing videos “fulfils one’s cravings for a certain dish”, which may explain why aesthetics play such a big role in food videos.

⁷ https://www.tiktok.com/@itsacatarina/video/7142224964953935110?_r=1&_t=8chGu5H3GMk

4.3.3 How are Restaurants in Porto Presented on Social Media in Relation to Aesthetics?

Through the TikTok analysis and our own observations, we found that not only the food aesthetics seem to be important for the tourists' experience, but also the aesthetics of the restaurant. The literature reveals that restaurants can communicate attractive attributes through the aesthetic style of their interior, decoration, or food menu (Yu & Liu, 2021). In the context of Porto, social media videos placed importance on elements such as a modern and sleek look, lots of greenery, areas for photo ops, and trendy signage in restaurants.

For example, one video⁸ titled "*Cute spots in Porto – Say Cheesecake & Co*" showed a café in Porto focusing very much on aesthetics (ana_lou.22, 2023). The place looks very modern, colourful, and green, as there are hanging several green plants from the ceiling. Walls and tables are decorated with beautiful dry flower bouquets, and pillows are matching the colour of the walls. Even the plates match the "Bohemian" interior theme of the café, and not much attention is paid on the food. The post even has a subtitle stating "*aesthetic edition*" which resembles the content of the video. All these aesthetics can be seen in the screenshots below.



⁸ https://www.tiktok.com/@ana_lou.22/video/7207117151193353477? r=1& t=8chattUQfdK

In fact, there were numerous videos focusing on the aesthetics of the place rather than the aesthetics of the food. For instance, one video⁹ posted by a tourist stated, *“The best brunch in Porto, Portugal”* and named three brunch places in Porto with short descriptions (shewillbewandering, 2022). The first place was described as *“Unique design, speciality coffee, breakfast, light and tasty meals. Perfect for any time of the day”*, which signals that the place is especially worth visiting because of the aesthetics “unique design” (shewillbewandering, 2022). This focus on aesthetics can be seen in the screenshots below.



All the recommended places centred around how aesthetically pleasing they looked, the food seemed to be more like a minor matter. The amount of content that focused on how a restaurant looked instead of the food led us to believe that a portion of the food scene in Porto was focusing more on the aesthetic appeal of their restaurants and perhaps less on the actual food or the traditions.

Furthermore, we noticed that most of the videos that were focused on aesthetics were recommendations for brunch places. In fact, one local told us that these brunch places have not existed for a long time in Porto: *“This never existed before going out for the, the whole concept of brunch itself. And the places that they go to seem a little foreign to me, yeah. [...] Not not because only foreigners go there, but the whole concept of it”* (Appendix H, ll. 273-275). This is interesting because it could mean that they were only

⁹ <https://www.tiktok.com/@shewillbewandering/video/7058844982660074799? t=8chbG6jJftj& r=1>

established in the first place to fulfil the tourists' desire for aesthetics. That is, the brunch restaurants were created to cater towards the new trend of food aesthetics in the gastronomic industry. A good example of this is another recommendation of a brunch place on TikTok¹⁰, describing it as *"Brunch, burgers & vegan dishes, plus cocktails, are served in this hip, health-conscious eatery"* (shewillbewandering, 2022). Again, the focus seems to be on the aesthetics of the restaurant, but also on certain trends on social media like "hip" and "health-conscious", but also modern food trends such as "brunch" and "vegan food".

As mentioned in the cultural heritage section, the acts and influences of trade and globalisation have seemed to emerge in new mediums, specifically through social media. Now, we are seeing a "foreign influence" through popular social media trends. Rather than Porto's cuisine changing because of another country, the food scene is changing to meet the demands of what is popular on social media channels. Thus, to align with the expectations of social media users and potentially draw more tourists to their food scene, restaurants such as brunch places opened in Porto, fitting in with the "aesthetic" presented on social media channels. This development was also confirmed by the locals, as one local explained: *"Yes, yes, I think that now they need to put more modern because of the young people. And because of the foreigners because they look Instagram, Instagram, Instagram, yes places"* (Appendix R, ll. 136-137). This local believes that Instagram as a social media platform has influenced the places in Porto to become more modern to appeal to a younger audience and to foreign visitors. The rise in restaurants that match this description in Porto makes us think that Porto's food scene is changing to cater around aesthetics, specifically for travellers who use social media.

4.3.4 Aesthetics' Influence on Tourists' Decision-Making Behaviour in Food Tourism

As alluded to in previous sections and as literature tells us, aesthetics in images online of a tourist destination play a role in a tourist's decision-making behaviour (Marder, Erz, Angell, & Plangger, 2021). For example, some tourists in Porto reinforced the notion that aesthetics influences their decision-making behaviour, as many tourists told us that they use Google images and images on social media as the primary way to make their decision regarding where to eat. An example of this can be seen when a tourist stated that in relation to using Google maps she reads *"information and look at photos and yeah, after we, you go to the restaurant"* (Appendix J, ll. 188-189). Marder et al. (2021) state that amateur photos (those taken by non-professional photographers, ordinary tourists) have the ability to push tourists to book or not book a destination, even though they do ultimately argue that professional photos can have a greater

¹⁰ <https://www.tiktok.com/@shewillbewandering/video/7058844982660074799? t=8chbG6jJftj& r=1>

influence on tourists' intention to book. In the case of food tourism in Porto, we noticed that amateur photos on Google and social media were some of the main ways in which tourists were gathering their information to make decisions on where and what to eat. Therefore, it seemed that tourists relied heavily on aesthetics from an amateur source.

Since many videos on TikTok are focused on modern and aesthetically appealing restaurants in Porto, we assume that the effect of social media is, on some level, connected with more modern media channels such as TikTok and even Instagram. When asking tourists where they find inspiration for restaurants to eat in Porto, one tourist claims: *"I think nowadays TikTok is very good for that [...] yeah, maybe better than Google.. Yeah, because you can see photo and videos of dishes. That's better. And Instagram"* (Appendix I, ll. 126-131). Another tourist told us that she first checks the restaurant on Google Maps, then opens Instagram to find it there and check out the images (Appendix F). She added: *"But mostly because I look for vegan options on social media"* (Appendix F, l. 160). This behaviour is interesting, as it indicates that certain diets, such as the Vegan, Vegetarian, or Halal diet, could influence the tourists' information search and decision-making based on social media.

The idea that tourists use food photos and aesthetics from social media to guide their food decision making while traveling suggests that Barretto (2013) may be right when stating that *"A meal should be a meal, but faced to different options people would take the most beautifully arranged, regardless of the taste. ...That's what "eating with the eyes" is about ... selecting food according to an aesthetic judgment"* (p. 79). This is interesting because although this line of thinking may be logical, one local did point out to us that the Francesinha in Porto does not necessarily look like an appetizing dish, however, there was a good amount of TikTok videos showing this dish as a speciality of Porto and hundreds of tourists ignore this and try it anyway. This would suggest the opposite, meaning tourists do not always eat with their eyes. Although tourists did not give us a reason for why they ate the Francesinha despite having a look that some may describe as off-putting, we draw that one reason could be that which was discussed in the authenticity section: Francesinha is a traditional dish. This would suggest that authenticity and traditions would have the ability to overrule the aesthetics of food in a tourist's decision-making process. However, further research would need to be conducted in order to determine if this is really the case.

In addition to aesthetics on social media, there are also aesthetics in real life that influence a tourist's decision to eat at a restaurant; the "vibe" of the restaurant may also sway a tourists' decision to eat at the restaurant and whether they were satisfied. Andriano et al. (2022) remind us that *"Aesthetik" is the Greek word for senses. Aesthetics stimulate all five senses, and they are an experiential process in nature"*

(p. 481). This suggests that aesthetics go further than what other authors describe it as, such as elements like colour, creativity, symmetry, and cleanliness (Marder, Erz, Angell, & Plangger, 2021). This leads us to believe that when deciding where to eat, tourists are not only influenced by the visual aesthetics of a restaurant in Porto but also by the “vibe” and environmental aspects of aesthetics.

For example, as previously mentioned in the authenticity section, one tourist would sometimes make her decision about where to eat based on whether the grandma was cooking and there were kids running around (Appendix P). In addition, a local stated that an authentic restaurant has an old, overweight lady working there (Appendix T). One tourist even explicitly said that they can tell whether a restaurant is traditional, and therefore make their decision to eat at said restaurant, based off “*kind of the vibe of the restaurant*” (Appendix N, l. 109). Thus, tourists also base their decision on where to eat off the environment and atmosphere of the restaurant rather than solely off how it physically looks. Additionally, upon visiting one of the trendy brunch places, we noticed that the staff was very tourist-centred, for example, they spoke English to us right away. They also all had matching uniforms matching the theme of décor. Thus, we argue that through the tourists-catered atmosphere that was crafted through the amenities and menu items, this brunch place created an environmental aesthetic that influenced food tourists' decision-making.

Interestingly, our research shows that good aesthetics does not always mean excellent quality. For example, from our own experiences at the trendy brunch spot Garden Porto, we observed that although the food looked very aesthetically appealing the quality of it was not good, which was a disappointing experience for us. However, it refers to Barretto's (2013) argument, about choosing the more aesthetically pleasing food, even though it might disappoint in its taste. We draw that this may be an emerging trend among tourists visiting Porto. It may not be the main motivator in seeking out food experiences, as authenticity still plays a crucial role, however, the move towards eating at places that have a cool look or feel appears to be becoming more popular.

Sub-conclusion

Overall, electronic word of mouth is an important tool for decision making habits among tourists in food tourism. In addition, the portrayal of food and restaurants in Porto on social media in relation to aesthetics heavily characterizes food tourism in Porto. It also speaks to the role that social media and aesthetics play in tourists' and locals' experience with food in Porto, especially with their decision-making behaviours.

4.4 The Interesting Clash between Authenticity and Aesthetics

So far, the analysis has revealed an interesting clash between the authenticity trend and the aesthetics trend in food tourism. On the one hand, it became clear that many tourists are seeking authentic, local food experiences when visiting Porto. In this regard, the powerful relationship between local food and authenticity in a food experience became visible. Furthermore, there appears to be an overlap between locals' definition of an authentic food experience and the tourists' perception of local food in Porto.

On the other hand, there is a popular trend on social media showing food experiences in Porto that look very aesthetically appealing. More specifically, in our TikTok analysis we found the majority of videos focus on the aesthetics of food and restaurants in Porto. For example, the videos show the matching decorations or colour theme of the place or zoom in on the beautifully garnished and arranged food on the plates. A local confirms this trend, by saying that nowadays it is all about *"[...] the bling! In a lot of places, you notice that and also you notice that because there is an immense pressure from social media for you to get your brands out in the world"* (Appendix G, ll. 205-206).

Yan et al. (2015, as cited in Oliveira & Casais, 2019) state that *"social networks have become an excellent means of sharing information, and it is now perfectly natural for any individual to seek information about available restaurants before making a decision and share their opinion after the experience"* (p. 6). This is increasing use of social media platforms by tourists visiting a destination is pressuring the local restaurants, as one local explained: *"So it's not so much that you we don't have good chefs, you don't have a good service being done. You don't have a good menu, you have all of that, but then there's a massive pressure where, if that isn't visible in social media if that doesn't have a repercussion that didn't happen, nobody knows"* (Appendix G, ll. 210-213). He pointed out how important it is nowadays for gastronomic places to be on social media in addition to providing good service and serving delicious food. This could present challenges for restaurants in Porto who are not on social media, as they may struggle to remain competitive with the more modern eateries that are capitalising on these trends, thus getting more visibility on social media like TikTok. This also speaks to the importance of e-WOM, because social media is the becoming the main means of communication.

Furthermore, some locals expressed that they were happy with Porto being represented on social media, because *"Porto now is on the map"* (Appendix E, l. 119) and *"any attention is good attention"* (Appendix H, l. 255-256). However, other locals voiced their concern about how social media is changing the way food is consumed. One local declared:

“So, I think that a lot of things are replacing that place, or a lot of things are trying to attempt to reconnect people through the thrill and excitement of having something new and tasting something new and it's more visual. It's more like a smoke and mirrors. You know the expression. I think gastronomy is becoming a little bit more [...] than necessarily something good.” (Appendix G, ll. 194-197)

This means that he believes that social media has changed the consumption of food to be something more visual than authentic. Consequently, we argue that social media is not only challenging the look of the food or atmosphere of a restaurant but also the food consumption in itself. For the food experiences in Porto this could mean that if they are not exciting and aesthetic enough, then tourists may not be as likely to participate. Nevertheless, when asking a local whether the presentation of food online can replace the real food experience, she stated: *“I think it's not 100% because they can't show the feeling or the OR sometimes, they don't tell the history behind. So, I think you need to explore by yourself and see and eat. So, I think it's a magic moment that we have for ourselves” (Appendix R, ll. 193-195).*

Another issue that comes with this new aesthetics trend is, according to a local:

“That sometimes people will overlook a little bit of what's the traditional because sometimes the traditional Portuguese, not sometimes most of the time, the, you know the real deal as we call it “Tasca” the restaurants here that are like the traditional thing there, we call them Tascas. They're not very aesthetically pleasing. You know, they're not like the Instagram or to talk aesthetic.” (Appendix E, ll. 88-92)

This local refers to the challenge that traditional, authentic restaurants are not necessarily aesthetic enough to be featured on social media and that tourists look for these more aesthetically pleasing places, and therefore overlook the traditional restaurants. From this, we draw that the desire for aesthetics may overshadow what is a traditional food experience for someone living in Porto. This could influence the level of authenticity that a tourist can experience during their travels.

In contrast to the aesthetic trend in tourist behaviour, we found that locals are not a big fan of this development towards more aesthetic food experience. For example, one local told us *“I would love to have good stocks being prepared in a good way with a lot of flavour and I wouldn't mind eating that in a dark room” (Appendix G, ll. 197-199).* This statement is directly opposite to the increasing phenomenon of “eating with the eyes”, as this local would enjoy food based solely on the taste and not the look. One

could argue that this is because there is a difference between tourists and locals, which there certainly is. However, as we found through the interviews with tourists, most of them share the locals' view. For example, one tourist stated that she likes places that are “*cheap and cheerful*” and “*when I take a picture, it looks disgusting*” (Appendix P, ll. 248-249), referring to the fact that she prefers food that does not look aesthetically appealing. Another tourist supports this by saying “*But I [...] always find it. When it's really prominent on social media, it's never really that good*” (Appendix K, ll. 117-118). This argument was also confirmed by our own observations, as we tried the food at a popular, aesthetically appealing brunch place, and it turned out not to be as good as it looked. Hence, we see a tendency from tourists and locals in Porto to the authentic, more unaesthetic food experience, which is contradicting the aesthetic trend taking place on social media. This contradiction indicates that there is a push and pull between tradition and modernity in Porto, which will be analysed further below.

4.5 The Push and Pull Between Modern and Traditional in Porto

The contradiction between the search for authenticity and the aesthetics trend in food discussed above suggests that there may be a push and pull between the traditional and modern in Porto. The desire for traditional food and atmosphere often seen in authentic food restaurants and experiences has to also balance the more modern trend of aesthetics, which is largely fuelled by social media. This push and pull effect can be seen in the following statement by a local:

“Yes, [...] everything that it's a bit more fancier, it's a lot of advertisement on Instagram. Yeah. Yeah. And I think it makes a big difference for that kind of places and sushi places too. And like the trendy places, I think it's a difference to have, like, the social media and it changes everything. Yeah, to the typical ones, I don't think so.” (Appendix O, ll. 121-124)

The local stated that restaurants in Porto strive to be modern and relevant for the types of tourists that desire the aesthetic food and experience; however, traditional restaurants, he argues, are less susceptible to this change, though they may not be free of it completely. This leads us to believe that in Porto there is an effort to keep restaurants in line with what tourists refer to as traditional while simultaneously working to make Porto's food scene more modern, and maybe even relevant on social media.

As discussed in the cultural heritage part of the analysis, there is a lot of history and elements of Porto's identity intertwined with the food and food experiences in Porto. Furthermore, even though the concept of "traditional" food is challenged by foreign influences, there is still a general consensus on what is authentic to Porto — whether that be certain dishes or the concepts of sharing that comes with eating them. The authentic dishes and experiences help preserve Porto's cultural intangible cultural heritage. A shift away from or a blurring between these traditional and modern experiences suggests a possible 'threat' to the preservation of Porto's cultural heritage. For example, discrepancies foster a lack of understanding regarding the culture of Porto, and what is authentic to Porto. One local specifically expressed her concern about the development of foreign cuisines in Porto, as she was seeing a lack of traditional Portuguese restaurants: *"I think now in Portugal, in Porto, Yeah, it's difficult to found restaurants, local [...] restaurants. Because now you have a lot of [...] different food investments here, like [...] a lot of nationalities here, but it's not traditional food"* (Appendix J, ll. 119-121); there is a fear around what is authentic and what preserves Porto's culture versus what does not. Perhaps there can be a balance between the two, however, at the moment, it seems that Porto's food scene is being pulled in multiple directions.

Moreover, something in between the traditional and modern are places that are referred to as tourism-oriented restaurants. According to Cohen and Avieli (2004) the purpose of these restaurants offering local food but catering it towards tourists is *"to provide neophobic tourists with familiar food and to make novel and strange food accessible and attractive to neophylic tourists"* (p. 767). One indicator of a tourism-oriented restaurant can be the English menu and English-speaking staff (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). One local we interviewed shared his concerns regarding these tourism-oriented restaurants:

"Yeah, it's really hard to find like a Portuguese restaurant [...] Because like if you walk down the street, it's going to be like menu all in English. You know, foreigners want that for them, it's easier for them, but neither people from Porto want that, so in that sense, I'm not sure. But since you can still find some typical places, but they are easily overrun by the foreigners." (Appendix T, ll. 157-161)

This local thought that there are too many tourism-oriented Portuguese restaurants in Porto, referring to the fact that he sees many restaurants with an English menu and that is overrun by tourists. According to Cohen and Avieli (2004), this is just the natural development of transforming the local cuisine towards

attracting more tourists, even though it could be at a cost for the locals. However, the locals' argument leads us to believe that locals do not appreciate these tourism-oriented restaurants, they rather want to keep the Portuguese restaurants as traditional as possible or at the very least to keep the new developments to a minimum. This brings us back to the push and pull described earlier. On one hand, restaurants may preserve the authentic food of Porto, therefore also sharing Porto's past with the tourists and sharing the city's intangible culture. On the other hand, if the menus are all in English or the food is adjusted to fit the tourists' taste, the restaurants are adapting to more modern times for the tourists but failing to preserve the intangible culture of the Portuguese language and traditional recipes. Even though these restaurants may strive to be something in between traditional and modern, they prompt us to consider whether these tourism-oriented restaurants are developed at the cost of preserving the destination's cultural heritage, or whether they can find a way to accurately educate tourists on Porto's past while also making them comfortable in present day.

Adjusting the traditional recipes to tourists' taste does not necessarily need to be a negative for the local gastronomy in Porto. This can be seen in the statement by a local who commented that:

"Currently you're having both things you're having a migration from what is the very deep, very traditional food, into things that are more vanguard and also fusion, so you see a lot of new chefs emerging into the scene that bring new ideas of old recipes, lending it with different traditions that in the history books we have some records of that having existed. But it kind of faded away." (Appendix G, ll. 112-115)

This provides hope that there is a way forward to include the old and the new while preserving cultural heritage. In fact, it references Qiu et al. (2022) when suggesting that presenting old traditions in modern way or mediums may actually be the best way forward when working to preserve cultural heritage. Another local added:

"I might have an example of that [...] but these new restaurants especially you know, since traditional it's such a high bar, I'd say I don't mean to have any lack of modesty, but it's such a high bar that in order to stand out new restaurants sometimes have to do new versions or, you know, reinvented the versions, so that's where a lot of creativity is coming into these new restaurants, reinventing from, you know, everything that is traditional, everything that

we know and love. The thing is, at some moments the, the simplest it is the best you know. So, they're somewhat reinventing in order to differentiate themselves from the other restaurants that are around.” (Appendix H, ll. 167-175)

This leads us to believe that the push towards modernity could spark ingenuity and creativity. This is significant because, as we saw earlier in the cultural heritage section, the concepts of ingenuity and creativity are actually part of Porto’s intangible heritage that is conveyed through food. This prompts us to consider whether the push towards modernity can still convey integral elements of Porto’s food culture, even if it is presented through a different way. Furthermore, it raises the question of whether the push and pull we are seeing in Porto can still successfully persevere the city’s intangible culture.

4.6 Forging a New Path for a Food Scene in Porto

The push and pull between modernity and tradition means that the food scene in Porto is constantly changing. The current mix of traditional and modern restaurants appeals to the taste of a broad audience, providing the appropriate food experience to tourists that are either ‘authenticity seekers’ or ‘comfort seekers’. An example of this is the Food Tour we participated in while conducting research in Porto. Here, our first stop was a small, local shop that sold traditional Portuguese food and wine.



Image 12: Local food



Image 13: Local shop

The place looked rather dirty, and chaotic and it smelled like many different flavours. Furthermore, the employees seemed to be old, Portuguese people, not speaking any English, but very friendly and service minded. We noticed that while we were there, a lot of locals came by to buy food and to talk to the

employees, very loudly, in Portuguese. This place would fit in what we described as an authentic, local place earlier in the analysis, and would mainly attract ‘authenticity seekers’.

Opposite this traditional shop is a huge indoor market, called Mercado do Bolhão, and our next stop on the Food Tour. When he announced that we are going to visit a market with traditional Portuguese food, we imagined some kind of old-fashioned, small market, with traditional decorations and stands. When we approached the market, it looked completely different to what we had expected. Our guide explained that the market has been recently renovated, thus the building looked very new and modern. For instance, the colour theme seemed to be different shades of grey, the stands were arranged symmetrically, and the whole look was just very modern and boring. When we saw photos of the old market, we were surprised at how much they had changed when renovating it. More specifically, it changed from being a traditional, chaotic, rather dirty open-air market, to a modern, organized, clean indoor market.



Image 14: Old Bolhão market (civitatatis Porto, n.d.)



Image 15: New Bolhão market

Inside the market, we heard a lot of different languages, which made us assume that the majority of the crowd were tourists. This could mean that the market has been changed to attract a broader audience and to make it more aesthetically appealing for tourists. This example shows how the aesthetic trend on social media might be changing the food scene in Porto. The stark contrast between the food and wine store and the market, further highlighted by being right across the street from one another, perfectly showcased the changing dynamic of the city and the push and pull between traditional and modern.

Moreover, the increasing demand for modern, more fancy and aesthetic restaurants also means that these restaurants are usually more expensive than traditional restaurants. As one of the locals told us, the economic factors are important concerning this development as well. He goes:

“The story of one of my favourite Tripas restaurants, which is ironic because it was my favourite deeper in the city centre. Right just 50 metres away from the train station that we visited, it was called a ‘Delgado’ and it was in a back alley. In the back of a back alley, you know, like you never walk in the night, but during the day it was the best Tripas that we had here in the city centre. In my opinion, they closed down because an investment fund bought the whole building and they decided to raise the rents. Yeah, yeah. They can't keep up with the kind of customers that. Why? In its place open they might open modern Portuguese restaurants like the ones we were talking about earlier.” (Appendix H, ll. 184-191)

The story of the local's favourite restaurant closing because they were not able to pay the rent anymore, could be a future scenario for other traditional restaurants in Porto. He explained this by saying that modern restaurants cater to tourists that are able to spend more money, thus the restaurant can pay higher rents. Traditional, authentic restaurants in Porto cannot keep up with this economic development. Another argument that is important to mention is that if a local place gets promoted on social media, it will be easily overrun by tourists, which can have an influence on the restaurants' food and prices as well. This means that locals would not necessarily go there anymore, as we have described earlier, locals do not like places that are overrun by tourists. Therefore, if this trend of modern, aesthetic restaurants maintains or increases its prevalence in Porto's food scene, it may negatively impact many local Portuguese restaurants. This is another example of the changing food landscape in Porto because of the trend towards modernity and aesthetics.

This clash between authenticity and aesthetics, the push and pull of traditional and modern, and appealing to different audiences leads us to believe that the birth of a new food scene in Porto is eminent, despite some arguing that the city has remained “untouched” from foreign influence. No matter the source of influence, one local reminds us that the everchanging food scene in Porto is “*not something new*” (Appendix H, ll. 100-101).

5. Discussion

The following section will draw from concepts in the analysis while also further discussing them — linking how they may be important for the food tourism sector, highlighting practical implications, and suggesting where further research may be valuable.

5.1 Porto's Identity Crisis

Scholars such as Aziz et al. (2021) and Tiberghien et al. (2017) highlight the strong link between local food and cultural heritage in a destination. Furthermore, authors such as Olalere (2019) and Almansouri et al. (2021) underscore the importance of using food as a tool to keep the past alive, passing down recipes and food traditions from generation to generation. This can be confirmed, to some degree, by our research, as it has shown a strong connection between the local food in Porto and the cultures and traditions behind it. For example, this is evident when the host of the Baking Class outlined the significance that the class has to her, stating that it serves as a way for her to pass down her grandmother's food and a way for her to show tourists what Portuguese food means to her and her family. Despite the importance that food seems to hold in preserving a destination's culture, our research also showed that the lines between what is traditional and local food in Porto are blurred with what is considered a foreign influence. That is, these preservation efforts are being complicated by new cuisines and food traditions merging with Porto's modern food scene. This not only leads us to believe that the preservation of cultural heritage is challenging in today's society but also that Porto may face an "identity crisis".

To stay relevant in a changing world, Olalere (2019) and Qiu et al. (2022) argue that the traditions of the past must merge with the devices of the present, for example, old traditions may need to implement technology in order to stay relevant. Although this has promoted fear among some that their food heritage and identity may be changed or become diluted (Aziz, Juliana, & Teng, 2021), it also may be necessary. With that being said, the balance between staying true to the past while staying relevant in the future may pose an "identity crisis" for Porto, as the city may struggle with fusing these two elements together. It is important for a destination to have a strong brand identity (Sio et al. 2021; Lai et al. 2019), suggesting that tourism providers in Porto will have to find a way to navigate these two elements and work towards finding a way to fit them together. Furthermore, once they find their new identity, they will have to market and cater their tourism offerings to reflect this identity. Future research on how to merge the past and present into the current identity of the city may be beneficial for Porto and its tourism sector, as it could help ensure the destination has a strong brand, adding to the success of their overall tourism market and their satisfaction of their tourists (Sio et al. 2021; Lai et al. 2019).

5.2 The Interesting Interplay between Social Media, Aesthetics and Authenticity

Our research indicates that tourists are looking for more unaesthetic, authentic food and places. This contradicts the arguments of some researchers. For instance, Baretto (2013) claims that tourists search

for high aesthetics in every part of their tourism experience, but especially in the food experience. Referring to MacCannel's (1972) theory of 'staged authenticity', Baretto argues that the reason why a place is being decorated to appear more authentic to tourists is 'aesthetics'. She explains this argument by saying that tourists visiting a place in a tourist destination *"have an anticipated idea of what they want to see. And they don't expect dirt or lack of order, they expect the aesthetics they have foreseen"* (Barretto, 2013, p. 2). This is somehow opposed to the reactions we got from tourists in Porto, as they seemed to be very determined to find a traditional, authentic and "dirtier" place to eat. However, the tourists we interviewed were from older generations and newer social media platforms such as TikTok are known to be used mostly among Generation Z (Muliadi, 2020). Therefore, it could be interesting to conduct more research on how Generation Z perceives food content on TikTok and if it makes them visit a destination, or a specific restaurant.

On the other hand, our analysis has shown that the aesthetics trend is very popular and is influencing the food tourism in Porto. This confirms the literature stating that social media is gaining more importance in food tourism (Oliveira & Casais, 2019; Yan, Wang, & Chau, 2015; Li, Xu, Song, & He, 2020). However, there exist only a few studies on how trends and food content on TikTok can influence food tourism in a destination. By analysing how the aesthetic trend influences food tourism in Porto, we believe that this thesis contributes to this research gap. By combining the perspectives of locals and tourists on social media in food tourism, this thesis provides interesting insights into the relationship between food content on social media and food tourism in the destination. Our research raises the question of whether the clash between tourists looking for authenticity and tourists valuing aesthetics will influence food tourism in Porto in the future. Will restaurants slowly adapt to the aesthetics trend, or will they stay authentic? And will the foreign food concepts, such as brunch, outweigh the traditional Portuguese food in Porto in the future? Since the food scene is changing constantly, more research into this matter during the next years will likely bring forward some more answers to these questions.

Furthermore, our research also demonstrates how the aesthetics trend is challenging the search for authentic food experiences. Therefore, it is also challenging the current literature, as we found it to focus on either aesthetics or authenticity. As several researchers argue, food aesthetics are gaining more importance in tourism food experiences (Corvo, Migliavada, & Zocchi, 2022; Oliveira & Casais, 2019; Gambetti & Han, 2022). However, as our example of the Francesinha shows, food aesthetics are not necessarily compatible with authentic, local food. This raises the question of how local food will be

adjusted even more in the future, and how this will impact the tourists' search for authenticity. It further casts doubt on how authentic food experiences in Porto will look like in the future, and how this will impact the preservation of the cultural heritage. This makes it difficult for tourism organizations to tailor the food experiences to tourists visiting Porto, as they have different ideas of what authentic food might be. Therefore, further research is needed to investigate which groups of tourists are looking for authentic food experiences, and how they would define local food in Porto. Based on this, tourism businesses can design better food tourism experiences for these tourists.

5.3 Types Of Tourists and Expectations In Porto

To assess which tourists were looking for authenticity in Porto, we used Özdemir and Seyitoğlu's (2017) framework, dividing tourists into 'authenticity seekers', 'moderates', and 'comfort seekers'. Based on the interviews with tourists, we were able to filter them according to the categories mentioned above. Of course, not all tourists fit into a certain category, but we could see some patterns that allowed us to infer whether a tourist would be more likely an 'authenticity seeker' or 'comfort seeker'. Thus, our research shows that tourists can be put into these categories to some extent. Knollenberg, Duffy, Kline and Kim (2020) reiterate this when they state that food tourism consists of different consumers, and understanding these consumers can help give a destination a competitive advantage. This is important because it means that different consumers have different experiences. However, as we argue in the analysis, the framework by Özdemir and Seyitoğlu's (2017) is limited in the way that it categorises tourists, for example, including special diets in the 'comfort seekers' category. Therefore, future research should focus on further developing this framework and the typology of tourists.

Furthermore, Sims (2009) argues that authenticity is perceived very individually, and it is more based on whether the expectations that the tourists held towards the destination's food are fulfilled. In our research, we did not examine the expectations that tourists held towards Porto's food scene. Therefore, it would also be interesting to further research the expectations that tourists held towards food tourism in Porto and authentic food experiences specifically, as it would help facilitate a deeper understanding of the different types of food tourists and Porto and how these tourists define authenticity.

One way to do so could be by looking at tourist's expectations regarding authentic food experiences as their overall impression of the level of authenticity once the food experience was completed. For example, food experience providers could ask the participating tourists what they expect from the

experience, and then afterwards evaluate together how these expectations were accomplished or not. In the case of the food tour in Porto and the Baking Class, there was no feedback or expectations talk included. By implementing this, food experience providers could tailor their food experiences even more to potential tourists/participants, making sure the tourists receive the type of authenticity they wish. This would make it easier for destination managers to understand the tourists visiting the destination and to therefore customise their marketing efforts to the different type of tourists. The authors of the framework state: *“such an understanding may help managers in designing suitable environments for tourists with different motivations, expectations, and types. As a result, tourists with a certain profile can experience a holiday that fulfills their expectations and eventually they are satisfied with the overall experience in the destination”* (Seyitoğlu & Özdemir, 2017, p. 5). This statement shows that tourist satisfaction is significant for tourist destinations, which will be further discussed below.

5.4 Satisfaction and Likelihood to Revisit and Recommend

As Sio et al. (2021) mention, knowledge, feelings and behaviour towards a destination influence a tourist's image of the destination. Looking at this from the perspective of food tourism, this would mean that tourists' knowledge, feelings, and behaviour in regard to their food tourism activities and experiences would influence what image they have of a destination. Since we found that cultural heritage, authenticity and aesthetics contribute to the knowledge and feelings tourists have towards Porto, we draw that these aspects influence the destination image that tourists have of Porto. Furthermore, this means that these aspects have the potential to influence the tourists' satisfaction because destination image influences tourists' satisfaction levels (Sio, Fraser, & Fredline, 2021). Chatterjee and Suklabaidya (2021) add that aspects such as authenticity and atmosphere influence a tourist's satisfaction with a destination. This, once again, leads us to believe that the elements studied in this thesis, that is cultural heritage, authenticity, and aesthetics, have the potential for tourist satisfaction, motivation and willingness to recommend the destination. Furthermore, a survey conducted by Stone et al. (2019) showed that food and beverage experiences impact tourists' satisfaction, likelihood to return, and likelihood to recommend. This reinforces that food tourism in Porto has the ability to influence tourists.

Interestingly, in our research, tourists did not go into detail regarding satisfaction levels, likelihood to revisit Porto or likelihood to recommend Porto. In addition, when they did, it was not necessarily related to the food in Porto, or because of the cultural heritage, authenticity and aesthetics of the food experiences. Some tourists did indicate that they were eager to eat at authentic restaurants, which

suggests that eating at a restaurant which they considered traditional would satisfy them. We feel that the mixed understanding of satisfaction we got from literature versus talking to the tourists means that further research would need to be conducted to understand whether cultural heritage, authenticity, and aesthetics of food in Porto are strongly connected to tourist satisfaction, motivation and recommendations. It would also be interesting to see if this varies from country to country; for example, whether more popular food travel destinations, such as Italy, experience the same phenomenon. It would be important to understand what influences satisfaction levels because as Sio et al. (2021) and Chatterjee and Suklabaidya (2021) highlight, satisfaction can influence the intention to revisit and the likelihood to recommend the destination to others, thereby impacting a destination's attractiveness and competitiveness, influencing its growth and success. Nesterchuk et al. (2021) remind us that food tourism can significantly contribute to a destination's economy and the jobs offered in the destination. From this, we draw that researching satisfaction levels and revisiting and recommendation intention is important because their levels could potentially have larger implications on the country, its economic stability and its citizen's livelihood. Practically, this would translate to Porto's tourism organisations and stakeholders, for example, Porto's DMO, prioritising food tourism research especially satisfaction in relation to food tourism experiences.

5.5 What is a Good Food Tourism Experience?

When speaking about satisfaction with a food experience, we were also prompted to think about what constitutes a "good" food tourism experience. Zhang et al. (2019) suggest that in order to produce a satisfying food tourism experience, the experience has to be authentic, meaning it must draw from traditional practices and ingredients used and produced in the destination. As previously mentioned, many tourists did highlight their feelings in regard to authenticity and aesthetics from their experiences with Porto's food. However, as outlined in the analysis, there are different levels of tourists regarding their desire for authenticity. An 'authenticity seeker' may define a good food experience as one where they were able to actively seek out authentic experiences. As previously discussed, this experience can vary, as the feeling of authenticity depends on whether the experience fits the expectation of the tourist (Sims, 2009).

In contrast, the 'comfort seeker' may define a good food experience as one that caters less towards experiencing the Portuguese culture and more to catering towards creating a comfortable and familiar environment. Furthermore, regardless of the type of tourist, the food scene in Porto is somewhat tourist

oriented. This was seen through the Francesinha examples mentioned in the analysis where we highlighted that the traditional dish has become less spicy for tourists. This suggests that there may not be any one “good” food experience, as it undoubtedly varies from person to person; however, there is some level of comfort and tailoring towards tourists in order to create a satisfying experience, regardless of what the tourist thinks they want.

For a destination, different definitions of good food experiences may present difficulties in designing food experiences. For example, as previously mentioned, restaurants may struggle with catering to modern aesthetics or maintaining traditional aesthetics. Furthermore, tour operators may find it challenging to choose whether to cater food tours to specific diets and lifestyles, like veganism, or keep with the traditional food of the destination, which may include a lot of meat. What makes it more difficult is that there is not one ‘true’ answer because of the needs of tourists changing for every individual; every tourist requires something different to be satisfied, and there is no ‘one size fits all’ model. These are decisions that the tourism industry in a destination will have to make, as well as finding a balance between what will attract and satisfy tourists while also staying true to what many locals may see as traditional. Perhaps future research on which demographics prefer certain aesthetics could make this decision-making process easier for tourism destinations. For example, further research could reveal that Generation Z may be more satisfied with modern and social media-oriented aesthetics, or it uncovers that while they enjoy aesthetically pleasing places, they are truly only satisfied if they experience a traditional aesthetic. More research could help food tourism providers discern what a good food experience means, and for whom that experience is good. This means more research in fields such as experience design, segmentation, customer satisfaction and product differentiation in relation to food tourism is recommended.

6. Conclusion

Through our TikTok analysis, our own observations, and qualitative interviews with both tourists and locals, we discovered how the themes of cultural heritage, authenticity, social media and aesthetics characterize food tourism in Porto.

In terms of cultural heritage, we conclude that food in Porto conveys the history and traditions of Porto, and the feelings and meanings associated with the culture. This contributes to the preservation of Porto’s cultural heritage. For example, our research has revealed the ‘nothing goes to waste’ mindset of the Portuguese and also highlighted the foreign influence other regions of the world had on Portuguese food.

Thus, food acts as a mechanism to teach tourists about Porto's past, therefore helping preserve its intangible culture. Overall, we learned that food tourism in Porto operates as a powerful educational tool.

Furthermore, we conclude that food and food tourism experiences have the ability to reveal parts of the Porto's identity, as they can teach tourists about unique and hidden aspects of the destination's identity, such as the meaning of togetherness. Once again, we saw that tourists have the opportunity to learn about intangible aspects of Porto's culture through its food. Interestingly, we also learned that food in Porto may blur the lines between what is truly traditional and what is not; traditional food has been shaped by other countries, and globalisation, specifically through mediums such as social media, brought new trends to the destination that shaped the gastronomy scene.

With regard to authenticity, we found that tourists do perceive local dishes as authentic, despite the new influences. Specifically, tourists believe that traditional food in Porto is salty, savoury, and greasy, mostly seafood and meat-based, and famous dishes include the Francesinha and Pasteis de Nata. However, we noticed that traditional food changes over time because it gets adjusted to the tourists' taste. Furthermore, we discovered that the authenticity of food involves many different layers, not only including the ingredients with which the dish is made, but also how it tastes and how it is advertised. In addition, we found that it is difficult to categorise tourists regarding their desire for authenticity, as special diets can influence their preference in foreign food. Overall, we conclude that local food does help convey authenticity in Porto for tourists and can be seen as an articulation of local traditions and culture.

In terms of social media, we conclude that e-WOM plays a significant role in tourists' decision-making regarding food in Porto. In addition, the aesthetics of food videos online and of food and restaurants in real-life can influence the tourists' decision-making behaviour. Furthermore, we found that social media is pushing Porto's restaurants and food experiences to focus on aesthetics. For instance, restaurants are changing their look to be more modern, and aesthetically appealing to attract Generation Z and tourists who use social media.

Moreover, we discovered a clash between the focus on authenticity and aesthetics because tourists in Porto seem to look for authentic food experiences, while on social media, the food content of Porto places an importance on aesthetics instead. Thus, the friction between these two factors creates an identity crisis for Porto, because it has led to a push and pull between traditional and modern restaurants in Porto. This push and pull leads us to conclude that the food scene in Porto is constantly evolving, therefore creating a new foodscape.

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