

The Hidden Taste of Anatolia: Kastamonu's Gastronomy Tourism Potential¹

Rabia SOYDAŞ²

Hakkı ÇILGINOĞLU³

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Abstract

Tourism covers various activities carried out by a destination in order to attract visitors. Gastronomy tourism, which is among many types of tourism such as culture, nature and sea, has an important place in terms of attracting tourists at all times of the year, providing high economic contribution and allowing local cultural values to be preserved and transferred to future generations. Thanks to its geographical location and hosting many civilisations throughout history, Kastamonu is a rich destination that can offer different types of tourism such as nature, culture, faith, winter, sea and gastronomy. With the interaction of different cultures over time, Kastamonu cuisine has also been shaped with unique and diverse local flavours. The aim of this study is to evaluate the gastronomy tourism potential of Kastamonu based on the views of local stakeholders. In the study conducted with qualitative research method, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 tourism stakeholders who shape Kastamonu tourism. The findings revealed that the city has a high potential in terms of gastronomy tourism, but this potential has not yet been sufficiently utilised. In this direction, various suggestions have been presented for the development of gastronomy tourism in Kastamonu. This article is derived from the master's thesis "A qualitative research on the gastronomy tourism potential of Kastamonu province and stakeholder views".

Keywords: Kastamonu Cuisine, Local Cuisine, Gastronomy, Tourism

Anadolu'nun Saklı Lezzeti: Kastamonu'nun Gastronomi Turizm Potansiyeli

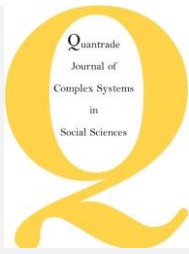
Öz

Turizm, bir destinasyonun ziyaretçi çekebilmesi amacıyla yürüttüğü çeşitli faaliyetleri kapsar. Kültür, doğa, deniz gibi pek çok turizm türü arasında yer alan gastronomi turizmi; yılın her döneminde turist çekebilmesi, yüksek ekonomik katkı sağlaması ve yerel kültürel değerlerin korunarak gelecek nesillere aktarılmasına olanak tanınması açısından önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Kastamonu, coğrafi konumu ve tarih boyunca birçok medeniyete ev sahipliği yapması sayesinde; tabiat, kültür, inanç, kış, deniz ve gastronomi gibi farklı turizm

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² Corresponding Author, Kastamonu University, Türkiye, rabiasoydas51@gmail.com 0000-0002-2640-8907

³ Kastamonu University, Türkiye, hcilginoglu@kastamonu.edu.tr 0000-0002-6787-3397



türlerini bir arada sunabilen zengin bir destinasyondur. Farklı kültürlerin zaman içinde etkileşime girmesiyle Kastamonu mutfağı da özgün ve çeşitli yöresel lezzetlerle şekillenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Kastamonu'nun gastronomi turizmi potansiyelini, yerel paydaşların görüşlerine dayanarak değerlendirmektir. Nitel araştırma yöntemiyle yürütülen çalışmada, Kastamonu turizmine yön veren 13 turizm paydaşı ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, şehrin gastronomi turizmi açısından yüksek bir potansiyele sahip olduğunu ancak bu potansiyelin henüz yeterince değerlendirilemediğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu doğrultuda, Kastamonu'da gastronomi turizminin geliştirilmesine yönelik çeşitli öneriler sunulmuştur. Bu makale çalışması "Kastamonu ilinin gastronomi turizm potansiyeli ve paydaş görüşlerine yönelik nitel bir araştırma" yüksek lisans tezinden üretilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kastamonu Mutfacı, Yöresel Mutfak, Gastronomi, Turizm

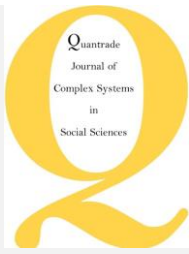
Introduction

Today, with the increase in economic prosperity and technological developments making life easier, there has been a significant increase in the tendency of individuals to travel. The increasing level of technology and development has also caused each field of science to become more integrated with each other (Şen, 2024). This situation has brought with it people's desire to explore different geographies, meet new cultures and gain personal benefits from these cultural experiences. In this context, the travels of individuals to meet their motivation and relaxation needs are considered as tourism activities. Tourists want to see not only the natural and historical beauties in the destinations they visit, but also to experience the cultural elements of that region. Among these cultural elements, local cuisines stand out as the carrier of the region's identity and form the basis of gastronomic tourism. Gastronomy tourism is based on gastronomy. Gastronomy is seen as an element that constitutes a significant subject in terms of tourism (Coşkun et al., 2024). Currently, gastronomy has a meaning beyond the act of eating and drinking to fulfil physical needs. Regarding the subject, gastronomy includes issues such as gaining travel experience and gaining status in order for people to socialise (Şat et al., 2023). In addition, more than one city is currently working to establish a presence in the field of gastronomy. At this point, gastronomy development in the city is important (Ertaş & Kadirhan, 2023). It is known that the existence of local flavours has an important share in the development of gastronomy (Esen, 2022).

Thanks to its strategic location and rich historical past, Turkey has hosted many civilizations, and as a result of the interaction of these civilizations, an extremely rich and diverse culinary culture has developed. Turkish cuisine, which bears the traces of Central Asian, Middle Eastern, Balkan and Mediterranean cuisines, differs with the unique ingredients, cooking methods and taste profiles of each region. This diversity offers an important potential in terms of gastronomic tourism. As a matter of fact, the interest of tourists coming to Turkey in the culinary culture of provinces such as Izmir, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Hatay is directly related to the rich cultural accumulation of these regions.

Kastamonu province, located in the Black Sea Region, is a versatile tourism destination with its unique cultural structure, natural beauties, historical texture, sea and winter tourism opportunities. In recent years, the importance of gastronomy tourism in the tourism sector has been increasing, and with the globalization of local cuisines, it has become an important attraction for destinations. In this context, Kastamonu is among the provinces that attract attention with its unique and rich culinary culture.

Many studies have been carried out on gastronomy tourism in the literature; these studies have sometimes dealt with gastronomy tourism in general terms (Uyar & Erkol, 2015; Bucak & Araç, 2013; Soydaş, 2023; Sarıışık & Özbay, 2015; Kivela & Crotts, 2005), and sometimes evaluated tourists' gastronomic experiences and regional potentials (Birdir & Akgöl, 2015; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Güzel Şahin & Ünver, 2015; Gülen, 2017; Aydoğdu & Duman, 2017; Aksoy & Sezgi, 2015; Balaban, 2025).



The aim of this study is to evaluate the gastronomic tourism potential of Kastamonu based on the opinions of local stakeholders and to offer solutions to eliminate the deficiencies in the region. In addition, due to the fact that the rich culinary culture of Kastamonu has not been adequately promoted from past to present, it is aimed to draw attention to the gastronomic elements of the region and to raise awareness in terms of gastronomy tourism.

1. Kastamonu's Culinary Culture

The culinary culture of Kastamonu, which has a deep-rooted historical past, dates back to ancient times according to archaeological findings. In line with the data obtained during the excavations, the traces of the food culture that developed in Kastamonu date back to 7000 BC. In the researches carried out by archaeologists, various kitchen utensils thought to have been used for cooking, storing and serving food were unearthed (Avcı & Şahin, 2014: 34). These findings reveal that the region has had an important culinary culture throughout history.

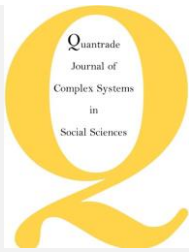
The Hittites, one of the first known representatives of Kastamonu cuisine, included many dishes that form the origin of today's local dishes in their culinary culture. Among the dishes belonging to the Hittite period, there are examples such as Keşkek, Tugugal (broad bean dish), Hurutel (sacrificial meal), Gangati Soup (vegetable soup), Kızarmış Keçi Kulağı (Fried Goat Ear) and Kizzuvatna Style Sheep Leg (Sandıkçioğlu, 2009). These dishes bear not only the taste of the period, but also the traces of social and cultural life.

Today, Kastamonu cuisine continues to exist by preserving its traditional lines. While the local cuisine comes to the fore mainly with its meat and pastry dishes, agricultural production in the region also makes significant contributions to the culinary culture. Einkorn wheat, garlic and various legumes grown in Kastamonu are among the basic ingredients of local delicacies. It is also known that the culinary culture of Kastamonu interacted with the Ottoman palace cuisine. The fact that a significant part of the cooks working in Topkapı Palace during the Ottoman period were from Kastamonu is a strong indicator of this interaction. Between the 15th and 17th centuries, the cooks of Kastamonu, who worked in the palace kitchen, brought the culinary culture of the region to the palace and contributed to the recognition of this culture in a wider geography (Avcı & Şahin, 2014: 34). With its historical origins, rich variety of ingredients and cultural interactions, Kastamonu cuisine is one of the important gastronomic centers of Anatolia (Dilek & Şimşek, 2023: 289).

Among the main delicacies in this cuisine are Banduma, Tatar Hamuru (Tatar Dough), Simit Tiridi, Katmer, Kaşık Helva (Spoon Halwah), Cide Ceviz Helvası (Cide Walnut Halwah), Kara Çorba (Black Soup), Serme, Dügün Böreği, (Patates Paçası) Potato Trotters, Etli Ekmek (Bread with Meat), Ekşili Pilav (Eğşili Rice), Kuyu Kebab, Ispit Sarma (Ispit Roasting and Wrapping), Cevizli Burmalı Çörek (Burmese Buns with Walnuts), Kestane Balı (Chestnut Honey), Üryani Eriği (Uryani Plum) and pestil varieties made from this plum, Kastamonu Simidi (Bald Plain), Tosya Keşkeği (Tosya Kesh), Siyez Wheat and Bulguru, Haluşka (Halushka), Kanlıca Mushroom Pickle, Rice made with Tosya Sarıkılçık Rice, Elma Ekşisi (Apple Eğşi), Çekme Helva (Tensile Halwah), Kül Çöreği (Ash Bun), Çatalzeytin Hazelnut Sugar, Çam Pekmezi (Pine Molasses), Bazlamaç (Dough Bread), Sarım Burma, Kızılık Tarhana, Ecevit Soup, Oğmaç Soup, Taşköprü Garlic, Black Garlic, İnebolu Chestnut, Uryani Plum Pulp, Hasude, Pastrami Bread, Kastamonu Apple, Yogurt Bread, Mushroom Bread, There are many unique flavors such as Cırık Dessert, Village Bread and Siyez Bread (Aydoğdu et al., 2019; Büyükmehmetoğlu, 2020).

2. Methodology of the Research

This study was carried out on the basis of qualitative research method, within the framework of inductive approach and general survey model. Qualitative research is considered to be an effective method that emphasizes complexity, contextual elements and detail in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the researched subject (Kuş, 2012).



The interview method, which is one of the data collection techniques frequently used in qualitative research, is an important tool in revealing the experiences, perceptions, feelings and perspectives of individuals. Interviews are conducted through verbal communication during the research process and provide direct access to the experiences of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Within the scope of the study, semi-structured interview technique was adopted. In the data collection process, a semi-structured interview form consisting of eight questions was used. While creating the interview questions, the researches titled "*The Contribution of Gastronomy Tourism to Çanakkale Tourism*" prepared by Bucak and Ateş (2014) and "*A Qualitative Study for the Evaluation of Gastronomy Tourism Potential: The Case of Manisa*" by Sabancı and Sarıışık (2021) were used.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face, and the confidentiality of the participants' personal information was meticulously protected. It was clearly stated to the participants that the data obtained would only be used for scientific purposes. The data obtained during the interviews were recorded through audio recordings and written notes, and then these data were transferred to the digital environment. Thus, the reliability of the research process has been increased by preventing possible data loss.

The questions in question are as follows:

1. Do you think Kastamonu has a potential in terms of gastronomy tourism?
2. If there is one product that can represent Kastamonu cuisine in your opinion, what would it be?
3. Do you think Kastamonu's local dishes are an attraction for tourists coming to the city?
4. Do you think that gastronomy tourism has a role in the branding of Kastamonu?
5. In your opinion, which types of tourism can be worked with in Kastamonu in terms of gastronomy tourism?
6. What are the aspects of Kastamonu that you see as missing or insufficient in terms of gastronomy tourism?
7. What should be done for the development of gastronomy tourism in Kastamonu?
8. What are your suggestions for the public and private sectors in the context of gastronomy tourism?

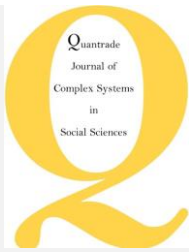
2.1.Purpose and Importance of the Research

Changing trends and visitor expectations in the tourism sector over time have gone beyond the classical holiday understanding and brought about a tendency towards more original, experience-oriented tourism types. Today, tourists are not only interested in the natural beauties of the destinations they visit; At the same time, they are interested in its cultural heritage, local way of life and local products. This situation has led to the prominence of niche areas in the tourism market and especially the remarkable rise of gastronomy tourism.

Today, many countries are trying to develop different and unique touristic products in order to increase their tourism revenues. Destinations with limited tourist appeal tend to reposition themselves with alternative types of tourism. In this context, gastronomy tourism stands out as a strong representative of cultural identity and plays a strategic role in the differentiation of destinations (Akbulut, 2019).

Anatolian geography has hosted many civilizations throughout history, which has enabled the region to have a rich gastronomic accumulation. Climatic and geographical diversity has been effective in shaping local cuisines, allowing the emergence of flavors unique to each region. One of the provinces with this rich culinary heritage is Kastamonu. Standing out with its natural, cultural and historical values, Kastamonu also draws attention with its original gastronomy products.

The main purpose of this study is to reveal the place and importance of the gastronomic values of Kastamonu province in the tourism potential. It is important to evaluate Kastamonu, which hosts different



types of tourism such as culture, nature and winter tourism, in terms of gastronomy tourism, both in terms of making the existing potential visible and using this potential effectively.

The research is based on interviews with stakeholders who shape Kastamonu tourism and is an idea-generating resource for both local administrators and those working in the field of gastronomy. In addition, it is aimed that the findings obtained with the study will contribute to the researchers who are interested in the subject and the literature.

In academic studies on gastronomy tourism; participation of tourists in gastronomy activities according to income level (Bekar & Kılıç, 2014), the potential of Mardin to be included in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a gastronomy city (Gürbüz et al., 2017), the role of local flavors in tourism (Kart Gölge, 2016) and the contribution of gastronomy to city branding (Boztoprak, 2019). In this context, in this study, it is aimed to evaluate the current situation and development potential of Kastamonu in the context of gastronomy tourism.

2.2. Universe and Sample of the Research

The universe of this research consists of real and legal persons who directly or indirectly contribute to tourism in Kastamonu. Research universe; It is important in terms of determining from which sources the data will be collected and which audience the findings will cover (Ural & Kılıç, 2011). Each research starts from a unique universe defined in accordance with its purpose (Karasar, 2012).

Purposive sampling method was used in the study. In this method, data were collected by selecting people and institutions directly related to the research subject (Sencer, 1989). Sample; it consists of public institutions, universities, private sector representatives and food and beverage businesses that play an active role in tourism activities in Kastamonu.

Institutions and Organizations Visited:

- Kastamonu Municipality
- Kastamonu Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism
- Kastamonu University
- Kursunlu Han Hotel
- Munire Sultan Table
- Ergun Hotel
- Kuzey Home Cooking

2.3. Research Method

In this study, qualitative research method based on induction and suitable for the general survey model was preferred. Qualitative methods contribute to the understanding of complex structures and contextual details (Kuş, 2012). With the interview method, which is the most commonly used technique, the perceptions, emotions and experiences of the participants were used (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In the study, semi-structured interview technique was applied and an interview form consisting of 8 questions was used. Bucak and Ateş (2014) and Sabancı and Sarıışık (2021) studies were used in the preparation of the form. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded with audio recordings and written notes. It was stated to the participants that their information would be kept confidential and that the data would only be used for scientific purposes. The collected data is preserved in digital form.

2.4. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The data were evaluated with descriptive and content analysis techniques commonly used in qualitative research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In descriptive analysis, originality was maintained with direct quotations, while in content analysis, the data were examined in depth. Numerical analysis of qualitative data based on

word repetitions was also applied in the study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). A total of 13 participants representing the private and public sectors were interviewed, and the responses were analyzed with tables and codes within the framework of 8 main themes. Participants K1, K2, K3... It is encoded anonymously.

2.5. Limitations of the Research

The study focused only on the gastronomic tourism potential of Kastamonu. Local dishes were discussed based on the literature and participant opinions, which created a limitation in terms of content. The sample is limited only to the province of Kastamonu and the data depend on the time allocation of the participants. Bureaucratic reservations have been observed, especially in public institutions. The interviews were conducted between February 1 and April 1, 2023, with a total of 13 people, through an interview form consisting of 8 questions.

3. Results and Discussion

In this section, the demographic characteristics of the 13 people participating in the study, the data obtained from the participants, findings, comments, conclusions and suggestions are included. Working in the tourism sector for at least five years is an important reason of preference for participants to be included in the study. Within the scope of the research, face-to-face interviews were conducted with a total of 13 participants by determining the appropriate time periods. The interviews were planned and implemented in the participants' own working environment and during working hours.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Participant	Gender	Education Level	Institution	Sector	Experience (Years)	Position
Participant 1	Woman	Master	Special	Tourism	22	TÜRSAB Provincial Representative
Participant 2	Male	License	Public	Tourism	32	Provincial Director of Culture and Tourism
Participant 3	Male	High school	Special	Tourism	18	General Manager
Participant 4	Male	License	Special	Tourism	5	General Manager
Participant 5	Male	Doctorate	Public	Tourism	24	Academician
Participant 6	Male	License	Public	Tourism	5	Cook
Participant 7	Male	Doctorate	Public	Tourism	16	Academician
Participant 8	Male	License	Public	Tourism	21	Mayor
Participant 9	Male	Doctorate	Public	Tourism	50	Academician
Participant 10	Woman	Doctorate	Public	Tourism	6	Academician
Participant 11	Male	High school	Special	Tourism	22	General Manager
Participant 12	Male	License	Special	Tourism	31	General Manager
Participant 13	Male	Doctorate	Public	Tourism	12	Academician

8 of the participants in the research work in public institutions and 5 of them work in the private sector. 11 of the participants were male and 2 were female. When the education levels are examined, it is seen that 5 participants have a doctorate, 1 has a master's degree, 5 has a bachelor's degree and 2 has a high school degree. In addition, all of the participants work in the tourism sector. The average duration of professional experience of the participants is around 20 years. Considering this period of experience, it can be said that the data obtained are reliable and meaningful in terms of research.

Table 2: Marketable Local Food and Beverages of Kastamonu According to the Participants

Product Name	Specified Participants
Tensile Halwah	K1, K4, K6, K7, K8, K9, K10, K13
Pastrami	K1, K3, K4, K5, K6, K9, K10, K12, K13
Taşköprü Garlic	K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K8, K12
Einkorn (wheat/flour)	K1, K2, K4, K6, K7, K8, K11, K12, K13
Uryani Plum	K1, K2, K4, K7, K9, K11, K13
Bald Plain	K1, K7, K9, K13
Eğşi Drink	K5, K7, K10, K11, K13
Tosya Rice / Yellow Fishbone	K2, K7, K12, K13
Hazelnut Candy	K6, K8, K12, K13
Walnut Halwah	K8, K13

The majority of the participants stated that products such as Tensile Halwah, Bacon, Taşköprü Garlic and Siyez products stand out among the marketable local values of Kastamonu. In addition, Uryani plums, Bald Plain, Eğşi drink and Tosya rice are among the other local products that are frequently emphasized. These findings show that Kastamonu has an important potential in terms of local product diversity and offers an evaluable resource in terms of gastronomy tourism.

Table 3: According to the Participants, Whether Kastamonu's Local Dishes Are an Attraction Factor for the Region

Participant	Response
K1	It is an element of attraction for the region with its unique flavors.
K2	Local delicacies are attractive for the region.
K3	It has a cuisine that attracts people's attention.
K4	It is an element of attractiveness. Kastamonu cuisine attracts attention in tourism fairs.
K5	It attracts attention with its old culture and culinary structure.
K6	Of course, it is the element of attraction.
K7	It is an element of attractiveness.
K8	It is a very good element of charm.
K9	It is an element of attraction for the region.
K10	Not much of an element of charm. Attractiveness depends on publicity.
K11	I don't think there is an element of attraction in terms of gastronomy.
K12	Instead of coming to Kastamonu to taste local delicacies, people usually come for nature and cultural tourism.

Participant Response

K13 The local dishes tasted by the visitors to Kastamonu and the local products sold are an element of attraction.

The vast majority of the participants stated that the local dishes of Kastamonu are an important attraction element for the region. It has been stated that these dishes have a remarkable feature with their unique tastes, old culture and culinary structure. However, some respondents stated that gastronomic appeal depends more on promotion and conscious preference factors. In particular, it has been emphasized that visitors who come to Kastamonu for nature and cultural tourism are more interested in natural beauties and cultural values than local dishes. As a result, it can be said that local dishes are an element of attraction, but its contribution to the general attractiveness in tourism is limited according to some participants.

Table 4: Local dishes according to participants

Product Name	Specified Participants
Tensile Halwah	K1, K4, K6, K7, K8, K9, K10, K13
Pastrami	K1, K3, K4, K5, K6, K9, K10, K12, K13
Taşköprü Garlic	K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K8, K12
Einkorn (wheat/flour)	K1, K2, K4, K6, K7, K8, K11, K12, K13
Uryani Plum	K1, K2, K4, K7, K9, K11, K13
Bald Plain	K1, K7, K9, K13
Eğşi Drink	K5, K7, K10, K11, K13
Tosya Rice / Yellow Fishbone	K2, K7, K12, K13
Hazelnut Candy	K6, K8, K12, K13
Walnut Halwah	K8, K13

According to the table, Kastamonu's prominent local dishes in terms of gastronomic tourism include Etli Ekmek (Bread with Meat), Banduma, Tirit, Kuyu Kebab and Soups. Most respondents indicated that these dishes had an element of appeal for the region. In particular, dishes such as Etli Ekmek (Bread with Meat) and Banduma stand out as symbols of Kastamonu Cuisine, which are frequently emphasized.

Local soups such as Göce Soup and wet Tarhana Soup also attract attention. However, some participants stated that the attractiveness of gastronomy tourism depends on promotion. This shows that gastronomy tourism can attract more attention with the right promotional strategies.

Table 5: Local Products Selected to Represent Kastamonu

Local Product	Specified Participants
Taşköprü Garlic	K1, K3, K5, K6, K7, K8, K9, K13
Kastamonu Pastrami	K2, K9
Etli Ekmek (Bread with Meat)	K4
Ekşili Rice	K10
Banduma	K12

According to the table, the most recommended product to represent Kastamonu was Taşköprü Garlic. 8 participants chose this product to symbolize Kastamonu. Other recommended products are local dishes such as Kastamonu Pastrami, Etli Ekmek (Bread with Meat), Ekşili Rice, Banduma. However, Taşköprü Garlic

stands out as the most prominent representative of the region. This shows how important Taşköprü Garlic is in the gastronomic identity of Kastamonu.

Table 6: The Role of Gastronomy Tourism in the Branding of Kastamonu According to the Participants

Participant	Opinion
K1	Undoubtedly, food culture is very important in the branding of a place.
K2	Gastronomy tourism is a destination element that attracts tourists in itself.
K3	The influence of gastronomy tourism on the branding of Kastamonu is undeniable.
K4	Gastronomy has a great place in the branding of Kastamonu.
K5	For the sake of branding, it is necessary to highlight the variety of food.
K6	Gastronomy is a type of tourism on its own. Gastronomy is important for Kastamonu with its local dishes and diversity.
K7	It has a developed historical cuisine. In this sense, it has the potential to carry Kastamonu to important places in its branding.
K8	In order to use the branding of Kastamonu in terms of gastronomy, the guest must be developed only to taste local delicacies.
K9	As the products are promoted, it contributes to branding.
K10	With the right promotions, it will come to a good place.
K11	Gastronomy is not at the forefront of its branding. However, local dishes should be brought to the fore.
K12	The effect of nature and cultural tourism on the branding of Kastamonu is higher than gastronomy. In order to increase this effect, it is necessary to organize a route on sightseeing and eating.
K13	If the Tourism Master Plan is drawn correctly and properly implemented by all stakeholders, the branding of Kastamonu will be faster.

According to the opinions of the participants, gastronomy tourism plays an important role in the branding of Kastamonu. Most of the participants stated that gastronomy is a type of tourism on its own and can make serious contributions to branding with the right promotion (e.g. K1, K2, K3, K4, K6, K7). However, some participants stated that gastronomy was not yet at the forefront, nature and cultural tourism was more dominant (K11, K12) and emphasized that promotion, destination management and strategic planning should be done in order to make gastronomy more effective (K8, K9, K13). In general, gastronomy tourism is seen as an element that reflects the local identity and cultural richness of Kastamonu, and it is thought that if this area is developed, it will make a strong contribution to the branding process.

Table 7: Tourism Sub-Branches That Gastronomy Tourism Can Cooperate With According to the Participants

Tourism Sub-Branch	Specified Participants
Cultural Tourism	K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8, K9, K11, K12, K13
Nature Tourism	K1, K2, K3, K4, K6, K7, K8, K9, K10, K11, K12, K13
Faith Tourism	K2, K3, K4, K6, K7, K8, K9, K13
Winter Tourism	K6

According to this table, gastronomy tourism was mostly associated with culture and nature tourism; this was followed by faith tourism. Only one participant stated that it can work integrated with winter tourism.

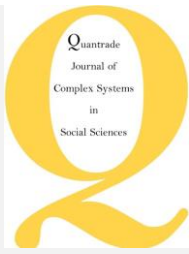
Table 8: Deficiencies of Gastronomy Tourism in Kastamonu According to the Participants and Suggestions for Elimination

Participant	The Direction He Sees as Missing	Suggestion for Elimination
Participant 1	Products that can receive geographical indications should be determined very well. It's not enough yet.	Products should be identified, adequacy should be ensured.
Participant 2	Kastamonu needs to explain itself well.	What is to be told needs to be announced to the world.
Participant 3	The same dishes are served in different cuisines with different tastes.	Standards should be applied in local products.
Participant 4	Lack of standards.	A certain standard should be set for local products.
Participant 5	The number of enterprises is insufficient.	The number of local food establishments should be increased.
Participant 6	Inconsistency in menus.	Standardization should be ensured in menus.
Participant 7	The number of quality restaurants is insufficient.	Standard menus should be created, quality restaurants should be increased.
Participant 8	The standard of taste and presentation is lacking.	Local dishes need to be brought up to standard.
Participant 9	Lack of publicity.	Advertising and promotional activities should be increased.
Participant 10	Taste differences are a problem for the customer.	Standardized presentation should be made.
Participant 11	Lack of standardization.	Standardization should be ensured.
Participant 12	Quality inspection is lacking.	Inspections should be carried out by experts.
Participant 13	There is a wide variety of products.	It is necessary to turn the disadvantage into an advantage with a planned presentation.

Most of the participants stated that the biggest obstacle to the development of gastronomic tourism in Kastamonu is the lack of standardization of local dishes. It has been stated that the presentation of the same products in different tastes in different establishments makes it difficult to create a gastronomic identity. In addition, the lack of qualified restaurants, the inadequacy of promotional activities and the inadequate evaluation of the potential of geographically indicated products were among the other main deficiencies. The majority of the participants emphasized that advertising and promotional activities should be increased for the development of gastronomy tourism. In particular, the effective use of social media and digital channels, increasing the number of local restaurants and strengthening stakeholder collaborations came to the fore among the suggestions. In addition, the idea that gastronomy tourism should be integrated with other types of tourism has been frequently expressed.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Tourism stands out as an important source of income in both local and national economies. Gastronomy tourism has gained an important place among these types of tourism. Gastronomy tourism is a field of tourism



that has the potential to reinforce the strong ties between food and beverage and culture and tourism. In this context, revealing the potential of regional gastronomy tourism is of critical importance for regional development.

Different areas have potential and importance in regional gastronomy tourism. Kastamonu is one of the areas worth mentioning in this context. Because Kastamonu attracts attention with its potential and importance in terms of gastronomy and therefore gastronomy tourism thanks to the richness and diversity of cuisine and food culture, socio-cultural interactions and developments, and the advantages and positive effects of its geographical location.

In this study, the results were reached in line with the data obtained through face-to-face interviews with tourism stakeholders who directly or indirectly contribute to the tourism of Kastamonu.

The main purpose of the study is to reveal the gastronomy tourism potential of Kastamonu, to evaluate its current situation and to create a resource for planning and strategies that will improve the gastronomy potential of the city. For this purpose, data were collected with an interview form for the participants operating in the field of gastronomy.

According to the findings of the research, it has been observed that Kastamonu has a wide range of food and beverages. The majority of the participants listed the prominent and marketable gastronomic products in the city such as garlic, einkorn wheat and its derivatives, Uryani Plum, Eği Drink, Bald Plain, Tensile Halwah, Cide Walnut Halwah, Tosya Rice, Kastamonu Pastrami, Çatalzeytin Pastrami and Çatalzeytin Hazelnut Candy. In addition, it was emphasized that local dishes such as Tirit, Kuyu Kebab, Etli Ekmek (Bread with Meat), Banduma, Black Soup, Ekşili Rice, Spoon Halwah and Cırık Dessert are important in terms of gastronomy. In the event that a single local product to represent Kastamonu is determined, Taşköprü Garlic stands out with its European Union registration and Geographical indication, while other participants suggested that different local products should be brought to the fore.

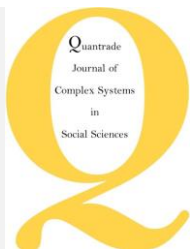
However, it has been stated that all these products are an important obstacle in terms of gastronomy tourism, and that the same products are presented in different tastes and lack of standardization is encountered in restaurants and businesses. Participants expressed their opinion that the menus should be brought to a certain standard and presented in a quality manner.

On the issue of whether Kastamonu's local dishes are seen as an element of attraction in terms of tourism, the majority of the participants accepted gastronomic diversity as an element of attraction. However, some participants stated that they came to Kastamonu for nature and cultural tourism, but they were also interested in local delicacies. In this context, it has been concluded that Kastamonu should focus more on gastronomic tourism.

Considering the participants' views on the role of gastronomy tourism in increasing the brand value of Kastamonu, the view that the Tourism Master Plan will make significant contributions to the branding process of gastronomy if it is prepared and implemented effectively has come to the fore. However, there are also opinions that gastronomy tourism will play a more prominent role in the branding process if it develops further.

It was stated by the participants that the main tourism sub-branches that can work with gastronomy tourism are culture, nature and faith tourism. Kastamonu can offer a different tourism experience by blending cultural tourism and gastronomy, and at the same time, it can combine gastronomy with other areas such as winter tourism and sea tourism.

Among the aspects that are seen as deficient in terms of gastronomy tourism, there are factors such as the difference in local dishes in the districts, the lack of standard menus, the inadequacy of restaurants offering



local flavors, the poor quality of the products that should be prepared by experts, the lack of festivals and the lack of promotion of local products. In order to eliminate these deficiencies, it was emphasized that the restaurants where local delicacies are served should be increased, a certain standard should be introduced and the products should be marketed effectively.

In order to increase the interest and attractiveness of gastronomy tourism in Kastamonu, the participants stated that more importance should be given to advertising and promotion. In addition to the effective use of social media and digital channels, they made suggestions such as the implementation of projects such as the Acem Inn, raising awareness of the public about gastronomy, organizing gastronomy tours and holding gastronomic competitions.

As a result of the research, the following suggestions can be made for the public and private sectors:

Recommendations for Public Institutions:

- For the success of gastronomy tourism, certain elements should be selected for the promotion of local dishes and an effective promotion should be made through these elements.
- Public institutions should contribute to increasing the brand value of the city by using social media more effectively.
- In the promotion of gastronomy tourism, mass media such as television and social media should be emphasized.
- Participation in cooking programs should be ensured in order to promote local dishes.
- The Persian Inn Project should be implemented as soon as possible.
- It is necessary to increase the festivals for local products and dishes and to ensure their continuity.
- Local governments should provide incentives to increase the number of local restaurants.
- A certain quality standard should be established for local products and inspections should be ensured.

Recommendations for Private Institutions:

- Restaurant and hotel owners should reach a wide audience through social media.
- Quality service should be provided with chefs and gastronomy experts who are experts in their fields.
- Product development studies related to local products should be emphasized.

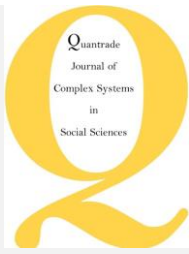
In conclusion, Kastamonu's rich cuisine offers an important opportunity to unleash the potential of gastronomic tourism. However, it stands out that in order to realize this potential, promotion should be done more effectively. Local gastronomy can be integrated with other types of tourism in the city and appeal to a wider audience. This research was carried out in order to fill the gap in the literature, to create a source for new studies and to evaluate the gastronomic tourism potential of Kastamonu. Similar studies in the future may be carried out in a broader context with the views of locals and tourists and can be compared with the findings obtained from this research.

Ethical Considerations of the Study

It is declared that the study was designed to realistically and ethically meet the needs, and that integrity was maintained in obtaining data, concluding the study, and publishing the results. Ethical committee approval was not required for this research. No research requiring ethics committee approval was conducted in this study.

Informed Consent

There was no need to obtain informed consent from individuals, as the study did not involve any procedures or interventions on human participants.



Author Contributions

Idea/Concept: R.S.,H.Ç.; Design: R.S.,H.Ç.; Supervision/Consultancy: R.S.,H.Ç.; Resources: R.S.,H.Ç.; Data Collection and/or Processing: R.S.,H.Ç.; Analysis and/or Interpretation: R.S.,H.Ç.; Literature Review: R.S.,H.Ç.; Writing: R.S.,H.Ç.; Critical Review: R.S.,H.Ç.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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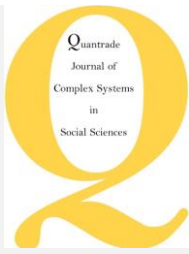
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Declarations

This study has not been presented at any congress. This article is derived from the first author's master's thesis conducted under the supervision of the second author.

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