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Evaluating the gastronomy-related contents of the websites of UNESCO global geoparks in Europe

Avrupa'daki UNESCO küresel jeopark web sitelerinin gastronomi ile ilgili içeriklerinin değerlendirilmesi

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ABSTRACT

In the last 20 years, UNESCO Global Geoparks have become the center of attention due to the development of geotourism worldwide. Geoparks have initiated the GEOfood project to contribute to their promotion, increase visitors' interest, and develop new sustainable strategies for agriculture and local food production. Thanks to this project, geoparks have started to add local gastronomic values to their attractiveness and to market them together with geosites. Gastronomy constitutes an integral component of cultural heritage, serving as a significant point of interest for tourists and contributing to the local economy and sustainability. It is thus imperative for geopark websites to provide information about the geosites, establishing connections with the region's gastronomy. From this point of view, this study aims to evaluate the current state of gastronomic content on the websites of European UNESCO Global Geoparks. To address the gap in the existing literature on this topic, a qualitative study was designed, and a content analysis was carried out on the images and texts published on the websites of 21 European geoparks, selected with a purposive sampling method. The study findings indicate that the gastronomy-related content is not rich enough and needs to be developed, linking it with geological heritage. Given the significant role that gastronomy plays in the preservation, survival, and presentation of local cultures, it was concluded that it would be beneficial for the development of geotourism in European UNESCO Global Geoparks to consider cultural and especially gastronomic heritage as an attraction in addition to geological formations.

ÖZET

Son 20 yıl içerisinde UNESCO Küresel Jeoparkları dünya genelinde jeoturizmin gelişimine bağlı olarak, ilgi odağı olmaya başlamışlardır. Jeoparklar, tanıtımlarına katkı sağlamak, ziyaretçilerin ilgisini arttırarak, tarım ve yerel gıda üretimi için yeni sürdürülebilir stratejiler geliştirmek amacıyla, GEOfood projesini başlatmışlardır. Bu proje sayesinde jeoparklar çekiciliklerine yerel gastronomik değerleri de eklemeye ve bunları jeolojik çekiciliklerle birlikte pazarlamaya başlamışlardır. Gastronomi, kültürel mirasın ayrılmaz bir bileşeni olarak, turistlerce önemli bir çekicilik unsuru olarak görülmekte ve yerel ekonomiye ve sürdürülebilirliğe katkı sağlamaktadır. Bu noktadan hareketle, bu çalışma Avrupa UNESCO Küresel Jeoparklarının web sitelerindeki gastronomiyle ilişkili içeriğin mevcut durumunu değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu konuda, literatürdeki boşluğu da gidermek amacıyla, nitel bir çalışma tasarlanmış ve amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilen 21 Avrupa jeoparkının web sitelerinde yayınlanan görseller ve metinler üzerinde bir içerik analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma bulguları, jeoparkların gastronomiyle ilgili içeriklerinin yeterince zengin olmadığı ve bunların jeolojik mirasla ilişkilendirilerek geliştirilmesi gerektiğini göstermektedir. Gastronominin yerel kültürlerin korunması, yaşatılması ve sunumunda oynadığı önemli rol göz önüne alındığında, Avrupa UNESCO Küresel Jeoparklarında jeoturizmin geliştirilmesi için jeolojik oluşumların yanı sıra kültürel ve özellikle gastronomik mirasın da bir çekicilik unsuru olarak değerlendirilmesinin faydalı olacağı sonucuna varılmıştır.

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1. Introduction

Geotourism is a sustainable type of tourism that is mainly based on the study of inanimate nature, geological elements and landforms, but with a holistic perspective also includes living nature, culture, and cultural heritage (Çeşmeci, 2023; Dowling & Newsome, 2018; Pica et al., 2017). Over the last decade, geotourism has grown in tandem with the creation of geoparks (Pica et al., 2017). UNESCO Global Geoparks are unique, unified geographical areas where landscapes of international geological significance are managed through a holistic concept of conservation, education, and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2024) and where mostly geotourism takes place. Recognized for their geological importance and commitment to sustainable development, UNESCO Global Geoparks offer unique opportunities to explore the relationship between the world's geological features, local foods and gastronomic practices. Indeed, integrating gastronomy into the promotion of UNESCO Global Geoparks represents a new field of study open for development, intersecting geotourism, cultural heritage, and local culinary traditions. In this context, this study analyses the gastronomy-related content on the websites of European UNESCO Global Geoparks to determine the extent to which they currently use their websites to promote local gastronomic culture and heritage to contribute to the enhancement of visitor experiences.

When the related literature is analyzed, it is seen that studies have been conducted on different topics specific to UNESCO Global Geoparks or on their web content. For example, Pijet-Migoń &Migoń (2021) analyzed the web-based content of 38 European UNESCO Global Geoparks related to wine culture and determined that in web-based material, the topic is presented poorly. In other studies, geotourism has been examined in the context of sustainable development, and the importance of infrastructure development and virtual tours as a resource has been emphasized (Frey, 2021; Perotti et al., 2020). The suitability of specific areas for geopark proposals has been rigorously assessed through detailed investigations and field studies by experts to identify areas of geological interest (Bonachea, 2023). Understanding landscape aesthetics in geoparks has also been another topic of interest, with Fox et al. (2022) focusing on new landscape considerations and the importance of isolating the content being viewed. From a different perspective, Sujatna et al. (2022) conducted a study using linguistic analysis to understand the textual meaning of geoparks' slogans, revealing the importance of slogans in communication. Costa (2023) highlighted the role of palaeontological heritage within geoparks and underlined its importance for the progress and continuity of these areas. When the studies specific to UNESCO Global Geoparks are evaluated, it is seen that studies have been carried out in various aspects such as tourism, geodiversity, sustainable development, and linguistics. Close to the subject of the study, it is seen that there are studies in the literature in which the effectiveness of websites in the promotion of UNESCO Global Geoparks is examined, as the importance of alternative forms of tourism and the need for special evaluation criteria to improve their promotion are emphasized (Xanthakis, 2024); the functionality, performance and user experience of geopark websites are also compared and the user experiences of visiting these websites are examined (Wisnuadhi et al., 2022). Similarly, Şener et al. (2023) evaluated the status of online promotion activities of four global geopark candidate areas in Türkiye, examining their websites and the social media content they share. However, while some research has been carried out on the websites of UNESCO Global Geoparks, no study, except the study of Pijet-Migoń & Migoń (2021), has examined precisely the content of the websites that is linked to gastronomy. This study aims to assess the current state of gastronomy-related content on the websites of European UNESCO Global Geoparks. It is supposed that this will contribute to filling the relevant gap in the literature and the existing knowledge, and as a result, it is aimed to produce some outputs as a recommendation to both academic circles and sector stakeholders. In this context, it can be said that the results obtained from the study are important for the academic community and sector stakeholders.

Considering this information, the study first includes a comprehensive literature review in the triangle of geoparks, gastronomy (GEOfood), and geotourism, then the methodology and findings of the study are presented, and finally, in the conclusion and recommendations section; the outputs for academic circles and sector practitioners, the limitations and suggestions for future studies are given.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Geoturism: A Catalyst for Conservation and Cultural Awareness

Geotourism, as a burgeoning segment of sustainable tourism, is predicated on the notion that travel should conserve the environment, respect local cultures, and promote economic opportunities for local communities. Farsani et al. (2011) define geotourism as a movement that enriches the traveler's experience and understanding of a destination's natural resources and cultural heritage. In support of this and similarly, Newsome & Dowling (2010) state that there is a strong link between geotourism and cultural tourism. Reynard & Giusti (2018) also emphasize that multiple strong links between cultural heritage and geological elements may exist, and these links can be studied under cultural geology. Authors also clarify that these strong links can be handled in three major ways: first, the impact of geoheritage and geological processes on culture; second, the influence of culture on geoheritage perception and management; and third, the integration of cultural and geological heritage (Reynard & Giusti, 2018). Pijet-Migoń & Migoń (2022) also underline that the relationship between geoheritage and cultural heritage is a popular subject in academic studies nowadays and that it has become one of the mainstream subjects in geoheritage and geodiversity research.

Geotourism is distinguished by its focus on geological features, aiming to educate visitors about Earth's processes and history while fostering a sense of stewardship towards natural landscapes. Pásková & Zelenka (2018) further elaborate on the role of geotourism in supporting environmental initiatives and the conservation of landscapes. The authors argue that the increasing public interest in environmental conservation has been instrumental in the

establishment of UNESCO Global Geoparks, which serve as platforms for implementing geotourism principles. This relationship underscores the symbiosis between geotourism and geoparks, with the former driving awareness and the latter providing the infrastructure and framework for sustainable tourism practices.

2.2. Geoparks: Fostering Sustainable Development and Community Engagement

Geoparks are defined as territorially designated areas that encompass significant geological heritage sites. They are strongly linked with geotourism and one of their aims is to promote this sustainable activity (Albani et al., 2022). Geopark's primary function is to preserve geological diversity and promote public understanding and appreciation through education and sustainable tourism (Briggs et al., 2021; Eder et al., 2004; Farsani et al., 2011; 2014; Henriques & Brilha, 2017). These areas are characterized by their comprehensive management strategies that aim at conservation, education, and the sustainable development of local communities. Zouros (2004) and Brilha (2018) discuss the evolution of the geopark movement, initiated to address the conservation of geological heritage amid increasing tourism. European Geoparks Network (2023) emphasizes the dual role of geoparks in protecting geological heritage and fostering sustainable local development. This holistic approach is vital for the integration of conservation goals with socio-economic development, enabling communities within geoparks to benefit from geotourism activities.

Rodrigues et al., (2021: 108) propose that an innovative development strategy for geoparks is creating "geoproducts" and define geoproduct as "commercial service or manufactured article inspired in geodiversity" They describe that these geotourism products can be composed of travel services, transportation, accommodation, food and drink, souvenirs or merchandise and different types of product packaging. They also add that, the "geoproduct" is not a simple geographical designation; it is defined primarily by its association with the unique geodiversity of the place where it is found and underline the importance of geoproducts for local development and geotourism activities (Rodrigues et al., 2021).

2.3. Innovating Geology and Gastronomy for Sustainable Development with GEOfood

The fact that there is almost no scientific research linking food, food and beverage culture or local gastronomy in general with geotourism and geoparks, indicates that there is a significant gap in this field. Pijet-Migoń & Migoń (2021) in their research exploring the link between geoheritage and wine culture, note that geology or history of the Earth are not familiar topics for the multitude. That's why they propose to tie "known" with "unknown" for better understanding and learning the geoheritage in geoparks.

Better known for general public in the geoparks can be the foods and beverages produced, and the gastronomy of the region in which a geopark takes place. Perhaps mainly for this very reason, the creation of a brand for these gastronomic values and the integration of gastronomy and geotourism in geoparks have come to the fore. The GEOfood concept represents a novel integration of geological heritage with local gastronomy, aiming to promote sustainable food production within geoparks. Originating from Norway's Magma UNESCO Global Geopark, the GEOfood brand distinguishes products that embody sustainable practices, local materials, and minimal transportation impact. The GEOfood brand aims to highlight the authenticity of products, producers, and restaurants within UNESCO Global Geopark territories. The idea originates from the need to connect food and raw materials with their area of origin, emphasizing the connection with geopark's unique geodiversity (Gentilini et al., 2020). Gentilini et al., (2021) highlight how GEOfood leverages the unique geological features of an area to enhance the value and appeal of local food products, fostering a sustainable economic model that benefits local communities and conserves the environment. Ocelli Pinheiro et al., (2023) elaborate on the socio-cultural implications of GEOfood, noting its role in preserving regional food heritage and promoting narratives that connect people to their geological and cultural landscapes. The initiative not only supports local economies but also educates visitors and residents about the significance of geology in shaping local food traditions.

This detailed literature review underscores the interconnectedness of geotourism, geoparks, and the GEOfood concept within the broader context of sustainable development. By fostering an understanding of geological processes, conserving natural landscapes, and promoting local gastronomy, these initiatives contribute significantly to local and regional development. Future research should explore the socio-economic impacts of geotourism and GEOfood on local communities, identify best practices for sustainable management within Geoparks, and evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs in raising awareness about geological heritage.

3. Methods

This study aimed to assess the gastronomy-related content on the websites of European UNESCO Global Geoparks, employing a qualitative research design and content analysis of scanned websites. Krippendorff (2018: 24) defines content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use." This technique is not limited only to texts or written materials, but images, signs, symbols, maps, and even sounds can be included as data (Krippendorff, 2018). In this study content analysis method was used descriptively (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013), just to identify what is existing gastronomy-related content in selected geopark websites. To do an analysis, categories for the classification of gastronomic contents were needed. Categories are important to create comparability and to ensure that these different classifications can be used in different ways (Sørensen et al., 2018). The classification of the content was carried out by using the category names from the GEOfood website.

As of 7 February 2024, there were 195 UNESCO Global Geoparks across 48 countries worldwide, with Europe hosting the highest concentration: 94 geoparks in 28 countries (European Geoparks Network, 2024; UNESCO, 2024).

Guided by the research objective to assess the current state of gastronomy-related content of the websites of European Geoparks and considering that sampling from the internet presents some problems, the authors decided to use the purposive sampling method and to limit the research sample just to those geoparks which use the GEOfood brand and are listed in official GEOfood website. The main reason for choosing these geoparks was the assumption that they would have much richer gastronomic content on their websites compared with others. Consequently, starting from 13 June 2023 till 15 February 2024, the official websites of GEOfood labeled European UNESCO Global Geoparks were scanned for gastronomy-related content simultaneously by all three authors. At the beginning of research in June 2023, on the official website of GEOfood (https://geofood.no/), there were just 15 partner geoparks from Europe. As of February 2024, the number of European geoparks increased to 21 and a total of 28 geoparks worldwide were listed (GEOfood, 2024). Identified 21 European geoparks that use GEOfood label formed the research sample. Content analysis was conducted on all visuals and texts related to gastronomy across these websites (local foods and beverages, local restaurants, or other gastronomic products). Our comprehensive examination included all relevant sub-pages, links, video content, and promotional materials. Thus, "data triangulation" (Flick, 2018) was achieved through collecting data from multiple sources and scanning multiple data types. The authors first examined the websites separately, recording the related texts or visuals on the data collection form, and then the information gathered by each of them was compared and combined. The presence of all three researchers during the data collection and interpretation process can be expressed as the fulfillment of the "investigator triangulation" (Archibald, 2015) strategy for achieving research validity. The analysis revealed that most of these websites featured gastronomy-related pictures, videos, or text, which were then systematically evaluated.

4. Results

Appendix A presents the names of the geoparks, the countries where they are located, and the links of the websites examined as a result of the website scanning process. Referring to Appendix A, it is noteworthy to say that the geoparks that have undergone website analysis are predominantly located in Portugal and Italy (8 geoparks out of 21). The reason for this may be that the relevant countries attach more importance to gastronomy tourism and get a significant number of gastronomy-interested tourists.

The main findings obtained within the scope of the study are presented in Table 1. It provides details about the gastronomy-related content on the relevant websites. It also lists in detail the gastronomy-related content type presented on the websites of various UNESCO Global Geoparks in Europe. This content varies according to the geographical location of the geoparks and reflects the unique gastronomic characteristics of each region. The geoparks analyzed include Germany, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Hungary-Slovakia, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Greece, and Spain. The content types include text, photos, and video, and the details provide information about specific food and beverages, locally produced agricultural products, organic farms, famous restaurants, and gastronomic events offered by geoparks or by local entrepreneurs inside the geopark's boundaries.

The gastronomic contents of each geopark are enriched with foods and beverages that highlight their regional characteristics and cultural heritage. These contents contribute to the recognition of geoparks not only for their natural beauty and geological importance but also for the unique food and beverage experiences they offer to visitors. Among the geoparks analyzed, organic agricultural products, locally produced honey, wine, and cheese, as well as meat, fish, vegetables, and desserts reflecting the regional food culture stand out.

This diversity shows that geoparks not only protect their natural and geological values but also care about regional gastronomy and cultural heritage to contribute to sustainable tourism and the local economy.

Table 2 presents information on the prevalent culinary culture in the geographies where the relevant geoparks are located, as well as ideas for essential gastronomic values to be considered. For the gastronomic values presented some content can be created such as visuals, videos, recipes, festivals, cookbooks, famous chefs, cooking competitions, knowledge competitions, etc. that emphasize these values can be shared on these websites. Considering that promotion is now frequently made on different platforms, it should not be forgotten that these contents can be shared especially on social media tools and interactions with the public can be developed. On the other hand, taking into account that gastronomy has an important place in branding (Kılıçhan & Köşker, 2015), geoparks producing content that emphasizes gastronomy more, can have significant benefits in terms of branding and developing geotourism.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

Gastronomy can play an important role in the promotion of geoparks, enabling visitors to discover flavors unique to the region and get to know local products more closely. Simultaneously promoting the gastronomic and geological heritage in geoparks can be used to raise awareness about sustainability of natural resources and to make geoparks more attractive to a wider range of visitors. In this context, gastronomy-related contents of geoparks can be considered an important part of regional development and tourism strategies. This study aimed to evaluate the current state of gastronomy-related content of websites of European UNESCO Global Geoparks. It can be concluded that there is some valuable content related to gastronomy linked with cultural heritage on the websites of analyzed geoparks, but this content is not linked deeply with geoheritage of the region. There are no clear explanations aimed at educating visitors about the connection between geoheritage and gastronomy or geoheritage and GEOfood. Similar results were also found in the research conducted by Pijet-Migoń & Migoń (2021) after scanning 38 global geopark websites in Europe to assess whether there are present connections between geoheritage and wine culture, they found that the theme is incompletely handled and inefficiently communicated to potential visitors through the information in their web sites.

Table 1. Availability of gastronomy-related contents on the websites

	UNESCO Global Geoparks	Country	ContentType	Details in Content	GEOfood Category
1	Thuringia Inselsberg – Drei Gleichen Geopark	Germany	Text, photo, video	Famous restaurants, cattle grazing in the limestone, salmon swimming in ponds in the red sandstone, vegetables rooted in Permian volcanics and deer roaming the forests, a variety of wines, Bratwurst sausages, Rosenhof Holzhausen rose water.	Meat, fish, fruite&vegetables, beverages
2	Natur- und Geopark Steirische Eisenwurzen	Austria	Text	Jubilee Pilsen beer, cattle-sheep breeding, and other local specialties.	Meat, beverages.
3	The Vestjylland UNESCO Global Geopark	Denmark	Text	No details, just mentioning some related words.	-
4	Rokua UNESCO Global Geopark	Finland	Text, photo	Includes where to eat, restaurants, cafes, casseroles, organic farms, sausages, and wines.	Meat, beverages, pasta
5	Lauhanvuori– Hämeenkangas UNESCO Global Geopark	Finland	Text, photo		Meat, beverages, dairy, egg
6	Vis Archipelago UNESCO Global Geopark	Croatia	Text, photo	There are aperitifs such as the world-famous Maraschino from Zadar, starters such as cheese from Pag, ham from Slavonia and kulenova seka, oysters and mussels from Ston, delicious grilled fish, salted anchovies, eel, and frog from the Neretva Valley, mlinci turkey, pašticada from Split and desserts such as pudding, kotonjata, kroštule or fritule.	Honey, marmalade, fish, fruite&vegetables, beverages
7	The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark	Ireland	Text, photo	Fish, lobster, oysters, milk, mutton, lamb, lamb, and potatoes are important sources. Farmers markets and festivals are important.	Meat, fish, dairy, vegetables
8	Las Loras UNESCO Global Geopark	Spain	Text, photo	Agriculture, animal husbandry, and biscuit production are developed. Honey, potatoes, and poultry are important.	Honey, meat, fruit&vegetables, diary, beverage
9	Villuercas Ibores UNESCO Global Geopark	Spain	Text, photo, video	Black pudding, honey, olive oil, cheese, and wines are important.	
10	Rocca di Cerere Geopark	Italy	Text	The spread of cereal culture is closely linked to the pagan cults of Dementra-Cerere, which also gave its name to the Geopark.	Pasta, beverages, fruit&vegeatables, dairy
11	Sesia Val Grande UNESCO Global Geopark	Italy	Text	Training programs are organized in Sesia Val Grande for food sustainability.	
12	Tuscan Mining Park UNESCO Global Geopark	Italy	Text, photo	Tuscan Mining Park is the first GEOfood partner in Italy and supports localism, taking a similar approach to the Slow Food movement for sustainable food.	
13	The Novohrad -Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark	Hungary-Slovakia	Text, photo	The Mato Buffalo meat ripening center, flower honey, acacia honey, herbs, and jams are important.	Meat, honey, herbs
14	Magma UNESCO Global Geopark	Norway	Text, photo	The website of this GEOfood pioneer geopark contains very detailed information. Local restaurants, farms, and local products are featured.	Honey, marmalade, meat, fish, vegetables
15	Azores UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal	Text, photo	"Cozido das Furnas" is the most emblematic dish and a highly valued tourist product. This rich and exquisite stew consists of different types of meat, potatoes, vegetables, and black pudding, all steamed in a pot wrapped in linen bags inside fumarolic soil. The most common dish is the Espírito Santo soup. Slipper lobsters, spider crabs, crabs, and whelks as well as grilled limpets are also often requested. The wines "Magma", "Muros de Magma", and "Moledo" are linked to the GEOfood brand. Restaurant menus are also included.	Fish, beverage, pasta, honey, meat, fruit&vegetables, dairy, oil, herbs
16	Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal	Text		
17	Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal	Text, photo		
18	Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal	Text, photo		
19	Terras de Cavaileros UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal	Text, photo		
20	The Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark	Slovenia	Text, photo	Idrıja Breakfast is a famous gastronomic product that includes local ingredients.	Honey, oil, marmalade
21	Grevena-Kozani UNESCO Global Geopark	Greece	Text, photo	Grevena honey is an important product as a GEOfood partner.	Honey

Source: *Created by the authors.*

5.1. Practical Implications

Within the scope of this study, there are various implications for both tourists and stakeholders. Integrating European gastronomic culture into the promotion and development of geoparks and geotourism offers a unique opportunity to elevate visitor experiences, promote sustainability, and stimulate economic growth. Geoparks, aimed at conserving natural and cultural assets while fostering education and geotourism, serve as effective tools for sustainable development (Brilha, 2015). By incorporating elements of gastronomic culture, such as traditional foods and culinary experiences, geoparks can deepen visitors' connection to local heritage and landscapes, enriching their overall experience (Gordon, 2018). The inclusion of gastronomic culture within geoparks contributes to geoconservation efforts and enhances geoeducation by emphasizing the importance of local culinary traditions and their connection to the geological landscape. This approach not only helps protect valuable geoheritages but also plays a crucial role in stimulating regional economies

Table 2. Gastronomy-related contents suggestions to create attraction in terms of geotourism

	UNESCO Global Geoparks	Country	Characteristics of Food Culture	Suggestions
1	Thuringia Inselsberg – Drei Gleichen Geopark	Germany	Hansel and Gretel is the most important work emphasizing the importance of food in Germany. Potatoes are very important; asparagus and rye bread are widely consumed in Central Germany.	Korn, Thüringer, Zwiebelsuppe, Pilze, Kuchen-Streusel, Westphalian ham
2	Natur- und Geopark Steirische Eisenwurzen	Austria	Coffee culture and coffee houses are important elements of Austria. Wine culture and inns are other important features.	Wiener schnitzel, Knödel, Taschen, Steak with onions, Apfelstrudel, Linzertorte.
3	The Vestjylland UNESCO Global Geopark	Denmark	Seafood, poultry, game, and pork are predominant in the diet. Beer consumption is common.	Herring and Salmon, Beers, Wines, Especially Fruit Wines, and Mead.
4	Rokua UNESCO Global Geopark	Finland	The culinary culture is like Denmark. Seafood, poultry, game, and pork are predominant in the diet. Beer consumption is common.	Karelia, Cabbage Rolls, Game Meat, Mammi, Carrot, Turnip, Piirakka, Rye Bread, Herring and Salmon, and Coffee.
5	Lauhanvuori– Hämeenkangas UNESCO Global Geopark	Finland		
6	Vis Archipelago UNESCO Global Geopark	Croatia	In the Mediterranean climate zone, fish and vegetables are consumed predominantly, whereas in the continental climate zone, beef and poultry meats are consumed. Wine and beer consumption is common.	Strukle, Palachinka, Rolled Pasta, Dumpling, Janecka Juha, Cobanac, and Madjarica
7	The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark	Ireland	Potatoes have an important place in the culinary culture thanks to the potato aid of the Ottoman state during the famine.	Soda Bread, Summer Pie, Honey Mustard Chicken, Guinness Cake, and Potato.
8	Las Loras UNESCO Global Geopark	Spain	Spain, which has the cultural traces of many civilisations in its historical past, has a rich gastronomic culture and rich diversity in different regions.	Gazpacho, Paella, Tapas, Cabrales, Mahon, Burgos, Tetilla, Aguardiente, Ojen, Pacharan, Amorosso, and Singari.
9	Villuercas Ibores UNESCO Global Geopark	Spain		
10	Rocca di Cerere Geopark	Italy	Italy, one of the oldest cuisines in Europe, is a country developed in the field of gastronomy in many ways. Factors such as the first cookbooks, trained cooks, commitment to local products, Slow food movement make Italy an important destination in terms of gastronomy.	Arancia rossa, Balsamic, Crostini, Carpaccio, Parmesan, Mozarella, Pasta, Pizza, Calzone, Panforte, Mel fino, Torrone, Spumoni, Marsala, Sambuca, Vermut, Latte, Cappucino, and Espresso.
11	Sesia Val Grande UNESCO Global Geopark	Italy		
12	Tuscan Mining Park UNESCO Global Geopark	Italy		
13	The Novohrad -Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark	Hungary-Slovakia	In Hungary, which has a nomadic culture, dishes made with dried meat and onions are common. Wheat, milk, dairy products, and pastries are also common in Slovakia.	Goulash, Kiifli, Unicumi, Palinka, Black beer, Paksa, Lokse, Langos, Haluski, and Bublanina.
14	Magma UNESCO Global Geopark	Norway	Norwegian cuisine has the same culinary culture characteristics as in other Scandinavian countries.	Farikal, Kjottkaker, Lapskaus, Somon, and Fattigman.
15	Azores UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal	Portuguese cuisine has a rich culinary culture due to its historical background and geographical features. Mainly potatoes, rice, seafood, bread types, meat, and fish varieties are consumed.	Cod, Caldo verde, Pudim flan, Porto, Kupaj, Madeira, and Vinho verde,
16	Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal		
17	Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal		
18	Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal		
19	Terras de Cavaileros UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal		
20	The Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark	Slovenia	Slovenian cuisine varies greatly due to its diverse culinary regions, which have been shaped by the country's bordering nations, cultural diversity, folk traditions, and unique geography and climate.	Burek, Gubanica, Jota, Potika, Mocnik, and Golaz.
21	Grevena-Kozani UNESCO Global Geopark	Greece	Greek culinary culture has been influenced by the Mediterranean countries, especially western Türkiye.	Retsina, Mastika, Kopanisti, Kasseri, Feta, Istaka, Tarato, Tyropita, and Suvlaki.

Source: *The table was created by the researchers by taking into account the local culinary culture and heritage of the geographies where geoparks are located.*

through the promotion of geotourism activities (Chen et al., 2022). By promoting sustainable development in geoparks through the preservation and promotion of geoheritage, geotourism becomes a significant driver of economic growth and environmental conservation (Xu & Wu, 2022).

Moreover, the promotion of geoheritage, geodiversity, and geoconservation within geoparks aligns with the objectives of sustainable development, fostering the appreciation of natural and cultural diversity while promoting peace (Quesada-Román et al., 2021). Geoparks, with their focus on geoconservation and sustainable development, offer a platform for integrating gastronomic tourism, providing visitors with a comprehensive experience that combines geological wonders with culinary pleasures (Fassoulas et al., 2022). This integration not only enhances the visitor experience but also serves as a means of promoting environmental education and increasing the touristic appeal of geopark areas (Valente et al., 2020). GEOfoods present an opportunity to attract culinary tourists interested in exploring the intersection of food, culture, and geology. This could include guided tours of local farms, vineyards, or food markets, where visitors can taste and learn about GEOfoods firsthand.

In conclusion, incorporating European gastronomic culture

into geoparks and geotourism initiatives holds promise for promoting sustainable development, preserving cultural heritage, and enhancing visitor experiences. By leveraging Europe's rich culinary traditions within the geotourism framework, geoparks can create immersive and educational experiences that benefit local communities, promote conservation efforts, and attract a diverse range of visitors.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

The present study has some important theoretical implications. First, incorporating GEOfoods into European gastronomy carries significant theoretical implications that extend across various disciplines, including culinary arts, environmental and cultural studies. GEOfoods have the potential to stimulate tourism and economic development in regions known for their unique geological features and culinary heritage. Europe boasts a rich and varied culinary heritage that reflects its unique identity and history. Studies indicate that European cuisine displays notable diversity both nationally and regionally (Vanhonacker et al., 2010). Traditional foods play a central role in European culture, representing an integral part of its identity, heritage, and dietary customs. Often tied to specific occasions and seasons, these traditional dishes are passed down through generations, and prepared in ways that honor culinary traditions (Pieniak et al., 2013). The consumption of these foods is deeply ingrained in European societies, contributing to the cultural significance of local livestock breeds and landscapes (Gandini & Villa, 2003). European gastronomic traditions have evolved over time, with local cultures embracing influences from other cuisines, incorporating new ingredients and recipes to enrich their culinary landscapes (Baldi et al., 2022). Exploring these ingredients enriches the culinary landscape. Gastronomy in Europe is closely linked with tourism, with culinary tourism playing a significant role in travel experiences (Lin et al., 2021; Ullah et al., 2022). Beyond offering culinary delights, gastronomic tourism allows travelers to explore and appreciate the cultural heritage of different regions (Horban, 2023). Moreover, the promotion of local gastronomic specialties contributes to the economic and cultural development of regions, highlighting the potential of gastronomy to drive tourism and foster growth (Roila et al., 2021). European gastronomy encompasses more than just food; it offers a holistic cultural experience, providing insights into the history, traditions, and values of diverse European regions (Elss et al., 2020).

In summary, the theoretical implications of GEOfoods in European gastronomy extend far beyond the food and cooking. They encompass environmental sustainability, cultural heritage preservation, culinary innovation, and interdisciplinary research, highlighting the interconnectedness of food, culture, and the environment in shaping our culinary experiences and identities. European gastronomic culture is dynamic and embodies its identity, reflecting the diversity of European societies, their traditions, and their openness to culinary influences from around the world. European gastronomy acts as a portal and serves as a gateway to explore the cultural mosaic of the continent.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Finally, it can be said that the present study has contributed to the lack of information in the literature, albeit to some extent. There are some limitations related to the selected research method. In this study content analysis method was used descriptively, just to identify what kind of gastronomic-related content exists in geoparks websites. For that reason, statements concerning the effects of website content on an audience cannot be based on this analysis (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). In addition, only the English language content of the websites was considered and evaluated in this study. It is possible to state that this is also an important limitation of the study because it should not be forgotten that a geopark may have much richer website content in the local language. It is possible to carry out future studies with other methods in a much broader perspective within all geoparks around the world, based on the limitations of this study. In addition, a systematic review can be carried out by selecting some keywords, and a content analysis can be carried out by examining the texts on the websites with the help of various search engines. Considering that similar studies to be carried out in different periods can contribute to the field, it is possible to carry out similar studies both in Europe and worldwide by adopting different methods at certain intervals.

Ethics Statement: Ethics committee approval was not obtained for this study as it did not require ethics committee approval. In case of detection of a contrary situation, TO&RE Journal has no responsibility, and all responsibility belongs to the author (s) of the study.

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APPENDIX A

European UNESCO global geoparks offering geofood or other gastronomic contents

	UNESCO Global Geoparks	Country	Websites
1	Thuringia Inselsberg – Drei Gleichen Geopark	Germany	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/thuringia-inselsberg-drei-gleichen https://geofood.no/geoplaces/thuringia-inselsberg-drei-gleichen-geopark/ https://www.geopark-thueringen.de/en/
2	Natur- und Geopark Steirische Eisenwurzen	Austria	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/Styrian-Eisenwurzen https://geofood.no/geoplaces/steirische-eisenwurzen-geopark/ https://www.eisenwurzen.com/#willkommen
3	The Vestjylland UNESCO Global Geopark	Denmark	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/vestjylland https://geofood.no/geoplaces/the-vestjylland-unesco-global-geopark-is-the-first-danish-geoofood-member/
4	Rokua UNESCO Global Geopark	Finland	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/rokua https://geofood.no/geoplaces/rokua-geopark-finland/ https://www.rokuageopark.fi/en/experience/geofood
5	Lauhanvuori– Hämeenkangas UNESCO Global Geopark	Finland	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/Lauhanvuori-H%C3%A4meenkangas https://geofood.no/geoplaces/lauhanvuori-hameenkangas-geopark-2/ https://lhgeopark.fi/en/mire-is-life/
6	Vis Archipelago UNESCO Global Geopark	Croatia	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/vis-archipelago https://geofood.no/geoplaces/vis-archipelago-geopark-2/ https://croatia.hr/en-gb/nature/geopark-vis-archipelago
7	The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark	Ireland	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/burren-cliffs-of-moher https://geofood.no/geoplaces/the-burren-and-cliffs-of-moher-geopark/ https://www.burrengeopark.ie/
8	Las Loras UNESCO Global Geopark	Spain	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/las-loras https://geofood.no/geoplaces/las-loras-geopark/ https://geoparquelasloras.es/index.php/en/home-ing/
9	Villuercas Ibores UNESCO Global Geopark	Spain	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/villuercas-ibores-jara https://geofood.no/geoplaces/villuercas-geopark-2/ https://geoparquevilluercas.es/en/
10	Rocca di Cerere Geopark	Italy	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/rocca-di-cerere https://geofood.no/geoplaces/rocca-di-cerere-geopark/ https://www.roccadicerere.eu/
11	Sesia Val Grande UNESCO Global Geopark	Italy	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/sesia-val-grande https://geofood.no/geoplaces/sesia-val-grande-geopark/ http://www.sesiavalgrandegeopark.it/index.php/en/
12	Tuscan Mining Park UNESCO Global Geopark	Italy	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/tuscan-mining-camp https://geofood.no/geoplaces/tuscan-mining-geopark-2/ https://www.europeangeoparks.org/?page_id=648
13	The Novohrad-Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark	Hungary-Slovakia	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/novohrad-nograd https://geofood.no/geoplaces/novohrad-nograd-geopark https://www.nogradgeopark.eu/en
14	Magma UNESCO Global Geopark	Norway	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/magma https://geofood.no/geoplaces/magma-geopark/ https://magmageopark.no/en/
15	Azores UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/acores https://geofood.no/geoplaces/azores-geopark/ https://www.azoresgeopark.com/?lang=EN
16	Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/estrela https://geofood.no/geoplaces/estrela-geopark-2/ http://www.globalgeopark.org/GeoparkMap/geoparks/Portugal/14076.htm
17	Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/arouca https://geofood.no/geoplaces/arouca-geopark/ http://aroucageopark.pt/en/
18	Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/naturtejo-da-meseta-meridional https://geofood.no/geoplaces/naturtejo-geopark-2/ https://www.naturtejo.com/en/
19	Terras de Cavaileros UNESCO Global Geopark	Portugal	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/terras-de-cavaleiros https://geofood.no/geoplaces/terras-de-cavaleiros-geopark/ https://geoparkterrasdecavaleiros.pt/p/en/
20	The Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark	Slovenia	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/idrija https://geofood.no/geoplaces/idrija-geopark/ https://www.geopark-idrija.si/en/idrija-selected/
21	Grevena-Kozani UNESCO Global Geopark	Greece	https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/grevena-kozani https://geofood.no/geoplaces/grevena-kozani-geopark/ https://www.geoparkgrevenakozani.com/2021/01/geosites.html

Source: *Created by the researchers based on GEOfood Official Website and UNESCO Global Geoparks Official Website data, obtained 07 February 2024.*