



**Identification of Inbound Tourists Image Perception on Local Foods
and Cuisines in Sri Lanka by Cognitive and Affective Factors**

(With special reference to Galle district Sri Lanka)

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ABSTRACT

Food and related tourism experience is a significant part of every travel experience. Foods and beverages accounts for nearly thirty percent from overall expenditure of the destination and involves a significant part of total expenditure of tourist's budget. (WTO statistics, 2014) Local foods and cuisines are an important part of the destination experience in many destinations in the world. Amidst this background, it would be worth to identify the tourists' image on Sri Lankan local foods. Hence, this research mainly focused to investigate the image perception of tourists on Local Foods in Galle district in Sri Lanka. The data was collected from 100 sample of inbound tourists who visited the selected destinations. Data was collected by using convenience sampling method using a structured questionnaire. Based on the related literature, a model was developed to identify the most favorable, moderate and unfavorable image dimensions and the impact of each dimension to overall destination. Descriptive analysis and regression analysis were used to analyze the data in order to achieve the objectives of the study. According to the research findings, there is a moderate level of image on Sri Lankan foods in the destination among inbound tourists visiting the destination and there is a significant impact from local foods and cuisines image perception variables for overall destination image. Moreover, destination has a huge potential to develop the local foods and culinary tourism experience as a destination attraction tool and the potential dimensions and indicators of the local food image can be used by entrepreneurs and tourism related entities to develop destination food and cuisines experience as a separate niche market for destination sustainability.

Key Words: Local foods, Tourist's image, Food tourism, Tourist's experience