

Introduction

Just think of the lasting memories and friendships that you have developed while sharing your favorite foods and drinks. As we learned in Chapter 2, all of us share some of the same needs. Foods and beverages are not only instrumental in filling a number of basic human needs, but they also fill special tourism needs. **Culinary tours** have recently emerged as a significant component of the overall tourism industry. Research has shown that **culinary tourists**, those who travel to participate in cooking classes, dine out in unique locations, sample wines, and attend food festivals and farmers' markets, are younger, better educated, and more affluent than other travelers.¹

Meeting the needs of these special travelers as well as those seeking to fulfill basic physiological and social needs creates a variety of opportunities for tourism service providers to satisfy their guests and build lasting relationships. If a country would like to better promote its culinary tourism, photos and written descriptions really help online visitors to access the contents and topics in which they are the most interested. An analysis of government websites found that the website dimensions most essential for the promotion of culinary tourism to be “Cuisine and Food Culture,” “Featured Foods & Recipes,” “Table Manners,” “Culinary Tourism,” “Restaurant Certification,” and “Restaurant Guides.”²

Tourists provide an important source of revenue to many, but not all, foodservice operations. “Roughly half of all travelers report that they dine out when they travel, and that doing so is the most important activity planned after tourists arrive at a destination.”³ On average, tourists spend about 25% of their total travel expenditure on foodservices, more than their spending on public transportation, lodging, and other tourism services.⁴ Some operations such as Hard Rock Café and Bubba Gump Shrimp Company Restaurant and Market rely on a steady stream of tourist traffic, whereas others cater mainly to local clientele. Location and target segments will determine the relative importance of tourists versus local patronage in an operation's financial success. Research has shown that foodservice providers attempting to cater to tourists can target marketing efforts to one or more of the following segments based on what they are seeking: value, service, adventure, atmosphere and/or health.⁵

Because F&B experiences are very personal, the thought of pleasing all these different tastes may seem like a difficult task. What may be pleasing and desirable to you may be completely unappealing to someone else. The good news is that there are fundamentals that can be followed to provide successful F&B services. In this chapter, you will learn about these principles as well as some of the marketing, management, and financial decisions that combine to create the dynamic and fast-paced working environment of F&B operations.

Major Influences on the Development of Food and Beverage Services

We can trace the most important influences on the development of foods and beverages to travel experiences and innovations in science and technology. Throughout history, travel has introduced visitors to new tastes, and these discoveries continue today. Visiting new locations allows us to enjoy unfamiliar foods. It also allows us to expand our understanding and appreciation of new cultures, ceremonies, and traditions. In fact, throughout history, foods and beverages have often been at the center of social gatherings and celebrations.

Travel and Discovery

The quest to explore and conquer new lands that encouraged early travel also led to the spread of different F&B offerings. The importance of foods and beverages to the development of travel and tourism can be seen all the way from the expansion and conquests of the Greek and Roman Empires to the travels of Marco Polo.