Is gastronomy important for UNESCO World Heritage Sites' tourists? A case study from Portugal

Joana Lima, Jaime Serra, maria do Rosário Borges & Noémi Marujo

Abstract

UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) act as icons to attract visitors seeking to experience cultural (ancient) heritage. Gastronomy, as cultural heritage, reinforces the identity of a destination.

Presenting a case study from a Portuguese UNESCO WHS, this study brings insights into how these destinations may deepen the knowledge on gastronomic visitors, contributing to their sustainable development. Specifically, this study aims to identify the importance that visitors give to gastronomy and to identify their differences in terms of profile and travel behaviour, through data collected using a visitors' survey.

Results show that gastronomy can be a major motivator for visiting a WHS and indicate that visitors strongly motivated by gastronomy have differences in terms of demographic profile, motivations and expenditures.

Keywords: UNESCO; World Heritage Sites; Gastronomy tourism; tourist motivations; segmentation; Portugal

Introduction

Tourists who visit a cultural destination, in addition to increase their knowledge regarding its heritage, want to have intense experiences. In this sense, gastronomy has become a key piece in the analysis of tourist destinations, especially those related to culture and heritage as a direct link to the human senses (López-Guzmán, Lopez, Perez-Galvéz & Álvarez, 2017).

UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) have a unique identity and a distinctive brand, acting as icons to attract visitors in quest of learning about and experiencing cultural (ancient/traditional) heritage. The cultural heritage of a UNESCO classified city is what shapes the 'sense of place' of the territory, being a key resource for the development of cultural tourism at that destination. Gastronomy, as cultural heritage and a tourism resource, reinforces the cultural and social identity of a destination. In a WHS, gastronomy can be a complementary tool to deepen socialization at the destination, but also for visitors to experience the destination's heritage through their senses, increasing the intensity of the experience they live. However, if we conduct a quick search on Scopus, as an example of scientific database, with the keywords "tourism" AND "gastronomy" AND "UNESCO" OR "world heritage" only 36 results appeared, with most of them not focusing on gastronomic tourism. Despite this exploratory search is based only in one database, as Scopus is one of the most well-known scientific database in tourism, the obtained number of results seem to evidence a lack of research on this topic.

Portugal, a worldwide recognized destination, assumes gastronomy and wines as one of its "strategic assets" for tourism in its National Tourism Strategy – *Estratégia Turismo 2027,* stating that "traditional gastronomy is present throughout the country. Portugal is among the countries with the best fish in the world; it has internationally recognised *chefs* and several Michelin-starred restaurants" (TP, 2016, p.48). This document also recognizes gastronomy and wines as "one of the assets that enrich the tourist experience and/or add value to the territories" (TP, 20, p.46). Additionally, Madaleno et al (2017) found a significant relationship between inbound tourism and exports of agro-food products in Portugal, showing the importance that gastronomy may have in promoting national economy not only during the tourist experience, but even after that visit occurs.

In this context, gastronomy appears as one of the most important elements of Portugal's intangible heritage-scape that worth's consideration by researchers and tourism stakeholders. The small city of Évora, classified by UNESCO since 1986 as a WHS, is integrated in a predominantly rural region of Portugal (Alentejo) and presents very distinctive particularities not only regarding built heritage, but also intangible heritage, with strong rural links, such as the gastronomic resources. These features make this small WHS city an interesting and relevant case study.

This study presents a case study and is expected to bring insights into how small/medium inland cities, classified as WHS' destinations may, more effectively, explore beyond their implicit cultural material heritage attributes, deepening the knowledge on gastronomic visitors, contributing to their sustainable development as a tourism destination. Specifically, the present article aims to identify the importance that visitors give to gastronomy for visiting the city of Évora, a UNESCO WHS, and to identify differences in terms of profile and travel behaviour of the gastronomic visitors. This case study may be useful for future comparisons between small/medium inland cities, classified as WHS' destinations, particularly for peripheral destinations in the south of Europe's context.

In order to accomplish this aim, first a literature review on tourism, gastronomy and WHS destinations is presented. Secondly, the methodology chosen for studying the tourist market of Évora is described, and its results are presented. The segments of visitors are identified according to the level of importance they reported to gastronomy as a motive for visiting Évora, when filling a questionnaire applied to the visitors of the historic city centre of Évora. The differences in their profiles (sociodemographic, travel behaviour and evaluation of the destination) are also discussed. In the last section of the paper, we reflect on the implications of these findings for increasing the contribution of gastronomy to the tourism development of WHS destinations.

Literature review

Gastronomy and Tourism

Richards (2012) noticed that tourism activity related to food has been labelled under different concepts (such as culinary tourism, food tourism, or gastronomy tourism), but all of those terms have the same meaning: people travel to a specific destination for the purpose of finding foods. These different terms all appear because of the recognition that the motivations and experiences associated with gastronomy (food and/or cuisine) have increasingly attracted tourists to certain destinations (Lee & Scott, 2015; Ellis, Park, Kim & Yeoman, 2018; Su, Johnson & O'Mahony, 2020). Some authors claim that there has been an increase of tourists who travel specially to experience the gastronomic culture of a country or region (Sio, Fraser & Fredline, 2021). In other words, these authors present gastronomy as these tourists' main motivation in the process of deciding their trip. Some studies already have shown that the desire to travel to a destination can be strongly influenced by gastronomic motives (Fields, 2002; Dixit, 2019). Tourists who visit a cultural destination, in addition to increase their knowledge regarding its heritage, want to have sensorial experiences. In this sense, gastronomy has become a key piece in the analysis of tourist destinations, especially those related to culture and heritage (López-Guzmán et al., 2017), being

sometimes central to determine the choice for one destination over another (Pérez-Gálvez et al., 2021).

In this context, one can easily understand that gastronomy has a rather significant impact on tourism and, therefore, the link between gastronomy and tourism should not be ignored (Kivela & Crotts, 2005; Lee & Scott, 2015; Ellis et al., 2018; Pérez-Gálvez et al., 2021; Sio, Fraser & Fredline, 2021). However, only during the last two decades' researchers have begun to study the relationship between gastronomy and tourism more in-depth (Lee & Scott, 2015; Sio, Fraser & Fredline, 2021). For Tikkanen (2017), the relationship between gastronomy and tourism can be analysed through four aspects: gastronomy as an attraction; gastronomy as a component of the tourism product; gastronomy as an experience and gastronomy as a cultural phenomenon.

In this sense, gastronomy acts as a key element for the consolidation and promotion of tourist destinations (López-Guzmán et al., 2017). It can enhance the touristic quality of the tourist experience (Kivela & Crotts, 2006), and increase the competitiveness of a certain destination (Du Rand, Health & Alberts, 2003), because "gastronomy is closely linked to the destination" (Kivela & Crotts, 2006, p. 373). The gastronomic culture of a destination (e.g. the recipes, the flavours and different aromas, the preparation methods) makes it unique compared to other destinations (Medina-Vituel, et al, 2019). Gastronomy tells the story of a place and, as a cultural symbol of a community, is a central element of the tourism experience (Marujo, 2017). Gastronomy influences tourists' perceptions, satisfaction and behavioural intentions during and post-visit towards the destination (Leong et al., 2017).

For many tourists, gastronomy has become a key element in the decision-making process of choosing a tourist destination (Berbel-Pinedaet al., 2019). Shalini & Duggal (2015) stated that the overall experience of visiting a tourist destination is intensified by its sumptuous gastronomy. Gastronomy "represents a significant part of the cultural heritage and identity of tourist destinations" (Lin, Marine-Roig & Llonch-Molina, 2021, p.1). Therefore, it is the perceived authenticity of a destination's gastronomic heritage that motivates many tourists to visit a specific place (Medina-Viruel, et al, 2019). This means that gastronomy is becoming a symbolic part of holidays, truly relevant, much more than just the satisfaction of biological needs (Carvalho, Kastenholz & Carneiro, 2021), and is being perceived as an opportunity for being peak experiences (Quan & Wang, 2004) that definitely contribute to the so pursued memorable and sustainable tourism experiences.

Having this in mind, Medina-Viruel et al. (2019) concluded that local gastronomy plays an essential role as an attraction tool for the majority of WHS's tourists, that they characterized as hedonic motivated tourists, focused on knowing new places, breaking away from daily routine and tasting the local gastronomy.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) as tourism destinations

UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) have a symbolic distinction, and as a consequence of this recognition, it could be possible to this kind of destination to attract a higher number and specific profiles of visitors (Marujo, Serra & Borges, 2016; Ryan & Silvanto, 2010), seeking to learn about and experience cultural (ancient/traditional) heritage.

WHS classification is regarded as a mean of promoting the tourism industry in destinations that possess them (Buckley, 2004; Ramires et al., 2018; Ryan & Silvanto, 2010). Ryan and Silvanto (2010) stated that those destinations that have well-known cultural and heritage characteristics (e.g. historic cities, monuments, …) attract a greater number of tourists for cultural purposes than other cultural destinations. Meanwhile, Yang and Lin (2014) concluded that the real effect of labelling WHS on tourism demand of a destination is heavily dependent on the means by which, and the degree to which, it is marketed by the destination agents. However, the official intention of listing WHS is not to promote tourism to those sites, but rather to protect and maintain the global heritage of humankind (UNESCO, 2021). The cultural heritage of a UNESCO classified city is what shapes the 'sense of place' of a territory and, when visiting WHS worldwide, tourists look for authentic attributes that create a direct/close link with the past. Because of that, sustainability emerges as much more than a concept, emerges as a real need for these destinations to consider and implement in short, medium and long term tourism development strategies.

Still, for a destination, the promotion of heritage tourism through a brand like WHS is expected to be an important strategy for its development, as it may help maintaining and valorising fragile resources (as the cultural ones) by attracting the right type of tourists. This increased number of tourists will be of particular interest in maximizing the role that tourism may have on local sustainable development by attracting tourists that are really interested in culture, usually associated with higher expenditure patterns and conservation/preservation concerns (Richards, 2007).

Conversely, the promotion of WHS destinations may attract an excessive numbers of visitors, bringing some undesirable effects, like negative cultural, economic, social and environmental effects on the resources/ambience of destinations (Eusébio & Lima, 2012; Ryan & Silvanto, 2010; Yang & Lin, 2014). Destinations' marketing strategy should always enhance the overall sustainable development goals of the destination, which are a particularly sensitive matter since the COVID-19 pandemic and in small cultural destinations. Select and characterize the tourist' segments of a destination may be a decisive step in the success of its sustainable marketing strategy.

Gastronomy, as cultural heritage and a tourism resource, reinforces the cultural and social identity of a destination. Also, gastronomy, as intrinsically linked to the natural and cultural resources of a specific destination, has a great potential to preserve local agricultural and culinary traditions and intensify local economic linkages, as its authenticity largely depends on the "manufacturing process" and local character of the agro-food products used for cooking. In this context, studies profiling gastronomic tourists may be a valuable tool for WHS with relevant gastronomic resources, when the objective is not the number of tourists but an increase in tourism positive impacts for destinations.

Considering the results gathered from the SCOPUS search, there are many studies dedicated to the analysis of cultural tourists and several studies that segment and analyse the profile of cultural tourists, but few studies focus on tourists visiting UNESCO WHS (e.g., Menor-Campos et al., 2020; Ramires et al., 2018). Moreover, to our knowledge, there are only 7 studies Scopus-indexed (search conducted in July 2022) aimed at profiling gastronomic tourists at a WHS destination: Leong and Karim, 2019; Pérez Gálvez et al., 2017a; Pérez Gálvez et al., 2017b; Medina-Viruel et al., 2019; Pérez-Gálvez, et al., 2021; Menor-Campos et al., 2022; and Moral-Cuadra et al., 2022. None of them focuses a case study from Portugal. These fact adds relevance to the present study as a case study from the Mediterrean region.

The study context – Évora

Évora is a small city, part of the Alentejo region of Portugal (Figure 1), considered the main urban agglomeration of that region, both in terms of population (the municipality had 52,428 inhabitants in 2019) and of activities and services (INE, 2020). The municipality of Évora has a surface area of 1307.08 km2 (INE, 2019), allowing the extensive cultivation of cereals, pasture areas, cork and holm oak forest, olive groves, vineyards and irrigated crops (rice), giving to its territory unique productive and landscape characteristics (Évora City Council, 2021).

Insert Figure 1 here

Additionally, due to the authenticity of the historic centre, Évora is the right place to understand the influence of Portuguese architecture in Brazil and to serve as an example of a city of "Portugal's golden age" (after the Lisbon earthquake in 1755). This authenticity of the historic centre much contributed to Évora being a WHS since 1986 (Marujo et al., 2016).

Marujo et al. (2016) highlighted also the handicrafts made from cork as a product that supports the city's cultural tourism. Another important intangible cultural heritage in the Alentejo region is the *Cante Alentejano*, a polyphonic singing with its roots in the agricultural work, classified as ICHH since 2014 (UNESCO, nd), and much associated with social interaction around the food and beverage consumption in the region.

The gastronomy (e.g., *Açorda à alentejana*, pot soup, tomato soup, bread and local homemade sweets made from convent recipes) and wine tourism (there are five wine sub-regions of denomination of controlled origin – DOC – wine, among which the *Adega da Cartuxa* stands out) are other cultural important resources to consider. Alentejo distinguishes itself because of the bread-based recipes abounding in herbs such as pennyroyal, coriander and many others. It should be noted that Portuguese gastronomy was considered as national intangible cultural heritage (Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 96/2000) and the Mediterrean diet, part of the identity of the Portuguese gastronomy, is considered Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (ICHH) since 2013 (UNESCO, nd). In this context, this small city presents very distinctive particularities not only regarding built heritage, but also intangible heritage, with strong rural links, such as the gastronomic resources.

Being a WHS favoured the preservation of its heritage and promoted the tourism activity in this small interior city of Portugal. Concentrating almost 20% of the total region's guests and 27% of the region's foreign guests in accommodation establishments (INE, 2022), Évora is the main tourism destination in Alentejo. The city has been growing and refreshing itself as a tourism destination, which can be seen by the increase in the number of accommodation units and other tourism services (including creative tourism services) in the municipality. In 2021, the year of the beginning of the recover for tourism during the COVID pandemics, a total of 220,072 guests (73.7% domestic) were responsible for 396,696 overnights (INE, 2022) in this municipality.

Methodology

Data collection

Given the context presented in the previous sections, our research questions are:

- What is the importance that visitors give to gastronomy for visiting the city of Évora, a UNESCO's WHS?

- Are there some differences in terms of profile and travel behaviour of the gastronomic visitors in this city?

In order to answer these questions, a questionnaire was applied to the visitors of the historic city centre of Évora, using a direct, personal administration approach, during April-August of 2017, when there was usually the greatest number of guests in hotel establishments in Évora (INE, 2019). Data was collected during the week and at the weekend and near the main cultural attractions in the city centre. A multi-step cluster-sampling approach was chosen and however the adopted sampling method was non-probabilistic, it has implemented a criteria based upon a stratified sample by place of residence. The questionnaire was completed only by those visitors that had spent a minimum of one half-day in the city. A total of 465 valid questionnaires were obtained.

For the present research, the questionnaire dimensions for analysis consisted of four main sections, these being: socio-demographic data; travel motivations; travel behavior and satisfaction. The questionnaire was built based on previous literature on the several dimensions approached. A five-point Likert-type scale was used, with 1 being the minimum level of relevance and 5 being the maximum level. For the questions regarding the importance of travel motivations, the response scale ranged from not important (1) to extremely important (5).

Data analysis

With the objective of identifying visitors that are similar to each other in terms of importance given to gastronomy when deciding to visit Évora, a multi-variant technique for case grouping (Hierarquical cluster analysis) was applied to identify homogeneous groups (segments) of visitors. The Ward's method, as a hierarchical method and deterministic algorithm, was chosen to obtain the clusters, as this kind of method is widely used in tourism segmentation studies (Dolnicar, 2002; Ernst & Dolnicar, 2018; Santa Cruz et al., 2020). The results suggested three and two solutions of the clusters. A more detailed test of the group assignation and the size of the groups, as well as the dendrogram analysis, confirmed that optimal solution was to use two clusters.

Chi-square and Mann-Whitney U test proved to be the adequate tests to be used to analyse differences between segments according to sociodemographic profile, travel motivations, trip behaviour and degree of satisfaction of the visitors with destination attributes. The statistical processing was completed with the help of SPSS v. 24 software.

Results & Discussion

Sample characterization

The sample integrated tourists and daily visitors, residents in Portugal and foreign visitors (mainly foreign), with age range from 18 to 80, 1st visit and repeated visitors and visitors that were travelling mainly in family (Table 1).

Insert Table 1 here

Results show that for all the surveyed visitors, in average, gastronomy was the main pull factor motivating the visit to Évora, with the "UNESCO WHS brand" appearing as the sixth most important pull factor (Table 2). Also, only 0.9% of the respondents referred gastronomy as a non or less important motivation and 16.4% assumed to be "just" important (level 3) – the remaining 82.8%, assumed this motivation to have a 4 (very important) or 5 (extremely important) level of importance in their decision to visit Évora. The results raise the discussion on the implicit destination attributes and the declared motivational factors that evidence more variability (Nicolau & Más, 2006). We believe that this fact means not that the UNESCO brand and built heritage have lost importance, but that this is a result of the great concentration of repeated visitors in the sample and also because the UNESCO brand and built heritage are implicit destination attributes. Additionally, in recent years Évora is starting to be known because of specific offers related with creative culinary, as few restaurants/tourism agents already use creativity and gastronomy in their offers (e.g.: Portuguese Cooking School).

Highlighting the claim of Sio, Fraser & Fredline (2021), this case study seems to confirm that there exist an interesting number of visitors who travel specially to experience the gastronomic culture of this city/region, recognizing that "gastronomic motivations become key aspects for the tourist to opt for one destination or another" (Pérez-Gálvez et al., 2021, p.1141).

Insert Table 2 here

Another interesting result is related with the satisfaction of the surveyed visitors: they all seem to be satisfied with the visit to the city and the attributes with which they are more satisfied are Gastronomy and Built heritage. It is worth mentioning that Gastronomy was the only top-5 attributes that didn't have any visitor of the sample reporting a satisfaction level of 1 "very unsatisfied".

Insert Table 3 here

Segments of visitors

The cluster analysis resulted in a combination of four clusters, which were named according to the level of importance visitors give to gastronomy as a pull motivator of their visit to Évora: most motivated by gastronomy, "Gastronomic" (segment 1), and those with other motivation, "Others" (segment 2), representing 67.9% and 32.1% of the total visitors, respectively (Table 4).

Insert Table 4 here

More detailed descriptive statistics of each segment show that the gastronomic visitors were all the visitors who stated a level 5 (in a Likert-scale, ranged between 1, not important, and 5, extremely important) of importance to gastronomy when deciding to visit Évora – all of them stated that gastronomy was extremely important (5) in this decision. When looking to segment 2 ("Others"), the values attributed to the level of importance for gastronomy when deciding to visit Évora, range from 1 to 4, with 53.5% of the visitors included in this segment indicating level 3.

The visitors who were most motivated by gastronomy, were older, females, professionally active or retired and residents outside Portugal (Table 5). Though no significant statistical differences were found, a slightly concentration of tourists (stay at least one night in Évora) in this segment, rather than daily visitors, was noticed.

Insert Table 5 here

The gastronomic visitors were those whose push motives were more related with living a new cultural experience and status/prestige (being in a famous and reputable place and knowing to recommend) and interpersonal needs, like having fun, socialization (with the travel group or at the destination and meeting other people) (Table 6). Regarding the pull motives, results show that gastronomic segment is more motivated by the wines and social life than the Others, that valued more the built heritage and WHS brand (Table 6). This result may indicate that the gastronomic tourists may be more interested in knowing/experiencing the immaterial (and related to social interaction) attributes of the destination.

Table 6 also shows important differences between the segments regarding the type of expenditure at the destination - the gastronomic segment spent, in average, per day, per person, 5 times more on meals and 3 times more on accommodation and transports than the others (Table 6). Although there weren't statically significant differences regarding the average total daily expenditure per visitor, they spent relatively more than the others – it was observed that the visitor with higher level of expenditure (more than 141€, per visitor, per day) were more concentrated in the gastronomic segment.

The gastronomic tourists also had slightly higher levels of satisfaction with the destination (Table 6), as found by Cordova-Buiza et al. (2021) and Perez-Galvéz et al. (2020).

Insert Table 6 here

Concluding, the visitors most motivated by gastronomy in Évora are visitors aged 46-60 years-old, foreign, females, professionally active or retired, stay less nights in Portugal (but tend to sleep at least one night in Évora), with higher levels of satisfaction with the destination, much motivated by the presented pull factors, with push motives more related with interpersonal needs, like socialization (with the travel group or at the destination), cultural enrichment and status/prestige and spent almost 5 times more on meals than the others.

Conclusions & implications

This study aimed at raising awareness into how WHS' destinations may, more effectively, explore beyond their implicit cultural material heritage attributes, contributing to their sustainable development as a tourism destination. Though the urge to recognize the central role of visitors in the experience has become clear in conceptual and empirical studies that reflect on dimensions of the tourist experience (Carvalho et al.2021), in WHS destinations this process may be a bit slower because the destination is used to just exist to attract tourists. However, in a more competitive market, with more experienced and demanding customers, and with sustainability concepts being at the hearth of tourism development, this recognition of the role that the tourist has on the experience is vital. Gastronomy experiences involving creativity may be a sustainable (links to local identity and products) and easy way to these kind of destinations to respond to the increased number of tourists who seek authentic experiences while travelling and go beyond the tangible heritage (Dixit, 2019; Carvalho et al., 2021).

Gastronomy is believed to be one key element for the promotion and consolidation of the destination's image (López-Guzmán et al., 2017), also being an important resource for tourism sustainability. This study contributed to deepening the knowledge on gastronomic visitors of

Évora, that may be very interesting to explore as a market segment. To answer the first research question (What is the importance that visitors give to gastronomy for visiting the city of Évora, a UNESCO's WHS?), results show that in 2017, gastronomy had a major role motivating visitors and contributing to their satisfaction at the analyzed UNESCO WHS. Answering to the second research question (Are there some differences in terms of profile and travel behaviour of the gastronomic visitors in this city?), there exist, indeed, some differences in terms of profile, travel behaviour and satisfaction of the gastronomic visitors in Évora.

Results indicate that in Évora, a WHS, gastronomy is a major motivation pull factor, proving the strong importance of gastronomy given by the visitors to visiting the city of Évora. This result is interesting as WHS are assumed to be visited explicitly for that brand and/or the elements that motivated the classification as WHS and gastronomy tends to be considered secondary (or additional) motivation. In this context, more research is needed, particularly comparative studies in small/medium cities in the Mediterrean region, in order to analyse whether the Mediterrean Diet can really act as a differentiating element for this kind of peripheral destination –WHS small/medium cities in the inland of the Mediterrean region – or if the motivation is not directly the gastronomy but (perhaps) the desire to fulfil a particular personal feature (as the foodies vs gourmands). Also, results show that it can be a complementary tool to deepen socialization at the destination, also allowing for visitors to experience the destination's heritage through their senses, increasing the satisfaction and intensity of the lived experience. The key dimensions of co-creation in food experiences for promoting involving and immersive experiences were summarized by Carvalho et al. (2021) as being interaction, engagement, participation and personalization. Therefore, the development of local gastronomic products, enhancement of typical food products and dissemination of more co-created and innovative food-related products, such as gastronomy or handicraft courses, are some of the proposals that may increase the attractiveness of the destination for this kind of tourists and support more successful sustainable tourism development strategies for this destination. This kind of strategies will benefit from segmentation studies that analyze the differences in terms of profile, travel behaviour and satisfaction of the gastronomic visitors of the destination.

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), created in 2004, aims to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. The integration of Évora in this network may be a strategy to consider and analyze in-depth. Nowadays few restaurants and tourism agents already use creativity and gastronomy in their offers (eg: Portuguese Cooking School). So, why not a longstanding commitment of the destination with creativity & gastronomy, by joining UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy?

Additionally, Sthapit et al (2020) proposed a conceptual framework for memorable local food experiences, which comprises several components: taste, socializing with friends and family

members, novelty, authenticity, ambience, affordable price, and interacting with locals. The study here presented shows that Évora seems to be a destination were all these factors may be easy to combine and maximize.

It would also be interesting to collect and analyse data for broader periods of time in order to consider seasonality effects. However, limitations are also opportunities for further research, such as studies to collect and analyse data for broader periods of time and other similar destinations in order to make comparisons and enrich the findings. For a more complete picture, it would also be most interesting to study in-depth the tourists with strong gastronomic motivation at this kind of destinations, to address the central issues that shape their positive experiences. This may identify other issues that may help to assess the attractiveness of the existing supply at the destination and its level of adequacy to this market segment.

Finally, there is the need to recognize that this study presents a case study, with exploratory results that were part of a general survey and need to be further analysed and explored, eventually complemented with qualitative methodologies that allow us to understand the "whys" that these numbers don't show. These results have also awakened us to the importance of studying additionally, the typology of the gastronomic tourist, to compare destinations with similar characteristics and to study in-depth the tourists with stronger gastronomic motivation at WHS destinations, trying to understand the central issues that shape their positive experiences in a post-Covid19 reality.

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Figure 1. Location of Évora (Alentejo region / Portugal)
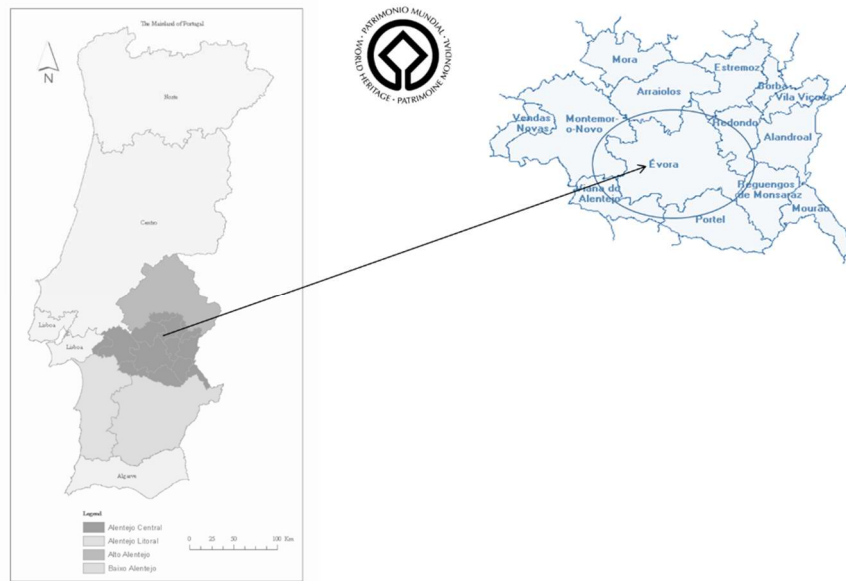
Source: adapted from INE (2019)

Table 1 – Sample descriptive statistics

Type of visitor:		Type of visit:	
Tourists	53,3%	First time	45,6%
Daily visitors	46,7%	Repeated visit	54,4%
Place of residence:		**Travel party composition:**	
Portuguese	36,7%	Family	67,1%
Foreign	63,3%	Friends	15,7%
		Other	17,2%

Age:	
18-30	19,4%
31-45	25,6%
46-60	31,8%
61-80	23,2%

Source: Own elaboration

Table 2 – 10-top pull factors motivating the visit to Évora

10-top Pull Motivators (level of importance in the decision of visiting)	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
Gastronomy	402	4,50	5	0,800
Relaxing atmosphere	372	4,19	5	1,034
Wines	350	4,05	5	1,195
Social life	353	3,94	5	1,244
Accessibilities	348	3,86	4	1,226
Évora UNESCO World Heritage brand	414	3,79	4	0,869
Security services	373	3,76	4	0,681
Built heritage, monuments	360	3,75	4	0,710
Prices	359	3,75	4	1,032
Cleanliness	340	3,70	4	0,869

Source: Own elaboration

Table 3 – 5-top attributes of Évora (visitors' level of satisfaction)

5-top attributes of Évora (level of Satisfaction during the visit)	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Gastronomy	388	**4,25**	4	4	0,717	2	5
Heritage monuments and buildings	428	**4,24**	4	4	0,731	1	5
Residents hospitality	361	4,12	4	4	0,789	1	5
Natural heritage and landscape	398	4,10	4	4	0,764	1	5
Accommodation	320	3,94	4	4	0,776	1	5

Source: Own elaboration

Table 4 - Descriptive Statistics – Segments profile

Number of the segment (cluster)		1	2
Designation		**Gastronomic**	**Others**
Elements	N	273	129
	%	67,9%	32,1%
Gastronomy (as pull motivator)	Average level of importance	5	3,43
	Median level of importance	5	3
	Mann-Whitney U (p-value)	0.000 (.000)	

Source: Own elaboration

Table 5 – Differences between the segments – profile of visitors

Socio-demographic profile	Segments (% by column)		Total	Chi-square test	
	Gastronomic	*Others*	**%**	*Chi-square*	**Sig.**
Residence country					
Portugal (domestic visitors)	28.6%	**46.5%**	34.3%	12.507	0.000*
Other (international visitors)	**71.4%**	53.5%	65.7%		
Gender					
Male	48.7%	**57.4%**	51.5%	2.622	0.100**
Female	**51.3%**	42.6%	48.5%		
Professional situation					
Student	**10.4%**	6.3%	9.1%	15.687	0.003*
Own work	**14.5%**	12.5%	13.9%		
Work for others	**51.3%**	50.8%	51.1%		
Retired	**20.1%**	16.4%	18.9%		
Other	3.7%	**14.1%**	7.1%		
Age					
18-30	16.8%	**24.8%**	19.4%	8.136	0.043*
31-45	24.9%	**30.2%**	26.6%		
46-60	**34.8%**	22.5%	30.8%		

*Legend: * Statistically significant at a 5% level; ** Statistically significant at a 10% level*

Source: Own elaboration

Table 6 - Differences between the segments – travel behaviour

Push factors	1 - Gastronomic		2 - Others		Mann-Whitney test	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	U	sig.
Escape from routine	4.14	4	3.95	4	13162.5	0.061**
Learning and cultural enrichment	4.05	4	3.91	4	11872.0	0.075**
Seeking novelty	3.98	4	3.52	4	8394.0	0.000*
Travelling and being together with family or friends	3.84	4	3.60	4	11236.0	0.011*
Have fun	3.79	4	3.49	3	8882.5	0.000*
Live a new experience	3.60	4	3.16	3	9170.5	0.001*
Knowing to recommend	3.51	4	3.26	3	9505.5	0.051**
Being in a place with fame and reputation	3.17	3	2.89	3	9319.0	0.068**
Knowing other people	3.11	3	2.76	3	9317.0	0.014*
10-top Pull Factors						
Gastronomy	5.00	5	3.43	3	0.0	0.000*
Wines	4.47	5	3.08	3	4910.0	0.000*
Relaxing atmosphere	4.38	5	3.69	4	8485.5	0.000*
Social life	4.21	5	3.35	3	7803.5	0.000*
Accessibilities	4.10	5	3.35	3	7674.0	0.000*
Security services	3.91	4	3.40	4	9247.5	0.000*
Évora UNESCO World Heritage	3.88	4	3.59	4	13359.0	0.004*
Cleanliness	3.85	4	3.33	3	8065.5	0.000*
Handicraft and regional products	3.83	4	3.14	3	8944.5	0.000*
Built heritage, monuments	3.82	4	3.58	4	11243.0	0.009*
Overall satisfaction	4.02	4	3.68	4	8730.0	0.000*
Expenditures						
Accommodation	21.59	0	5.53	0	15760.0	0.006*
Meals	17.88	0	3.07	0	14385.5	0.000*
Transports	6.08	0	1.86	0	15803.5	0.003*
Animation and attractions	6.54	0	0.89	0	15832.0	0.003*
Shopping	7.44	0	2.98	0	15681.0	0.002*
Other type of expenditure	6.57	0	1.28	0	16077.5	0.004*

*Legend: * Statistically significant at a 5% level; ** Statistically significant at a 10% level*

Note: Items were measured using a 5-points Likert scale (1 minimum value to 5 maximum value)

Source: Own elaboration