

## Foreword

### Gastronomy and Tourism: Reflections on local food consumption in urban and rural areas

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## Introduction

The ATLAS Conference “Gastronomy and Tourism: reflections on local food consumption in urban and rural areas” took place between 20th and 22nd February 2019 at the campus of the University of Évora (Portugal). The Conference was organised by CIDEHUS – Interdisciplinary Centre for History, Culture and Societies (<https://www.en.cidehus.uevora.pt>), University of Évora.

Food, gastronomy and tourism is considered a new area of academic interest (Maberly and Reid, 2014; Okumus et al., 2018) and a marker of social distinction (Okumus et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2009). Among the variety of research topics inside the area of tourism and gastronomy, local food consumption still needs further discussion. As highlighted in the literature, the consumption of local food is affected by a number of factors, destination environments, among others, being an example of a dimension that still needs to be discussed. Moreover, consumption of local food in rural and urban areas provides different perspectives in terms of environmental, social and cultural context. These challenges and perspectives suggest the need to reflect on the differences in how consumption of local food is influenced by the spatial context (rural and urban). Further, this meeting intends to reflect upon, discuss and open new avenues to enlighten researchers and practitioners by suggesting strategies and actions in order to preserve cultural and social authenticity for visitors during the process of their consumption of local food.

Gastronomy is an attribute that identifies the culture of a society and as such gastronomy states the history of a place and remains as a cultural symbol of many local communities. Gastronomy belongs to the cultural identity of a people and because of that it is transformed into a distinctive pull factor to attract visitors to destinations. In many regions, gastronomy provides the opportunity to have contact with the authenticity of different cultures (Fields, 2002, p. 39).