

Creative Tourism through food activities in Thailand

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INTRODUCTION

Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development (OCED) explains Creative tourism, which differs from cultural tourism primarily in being based on intangible skills and knowledge-related assets. There is a shift towards value networks and a focus on innovation and co-creation with tourists. There is evidence that these new models of creative tourism add value, increasing tourism demand and diversifying tourism supply. (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2014) Creative tourism has attracted new generations such as Gen Y, Z which is playing a key role in generating economic revenue to countries around the world by focusing on creating value of the socio-cultural heritage of the locals and thereby helping the creative economy. It is also helpful in creating Community Based Tourism (CBT) approaches. Creative City Network of UNESCO emphasizes supporting tourism model that focuses on the bond between the guests and homeowners acknowledging the tourists with the local life at the destination.

Creative Tourism in Thailand is just in the beginning stages. However, The Thai government has set up an agency that promotes creative tourism named Designed Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA); this will be helpful in bringing creative tourism strategies to national agenda in The National Economic and Social Development Plan of Thailand. Thailand Creative Tourism Products have special characteristics that reflect Unique Thai Culture and Way of Life called “Thai-ness”, which focuses on Cultural Heritage and includes Ruins, Historical Parks and Festivals. (Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), 2013)

- 1) Lifestyle or the way of life as Urban and Rural Lifestyles
- 2) Arts such as Artworks, Paintings, Performing Art, Folk Music and Dance.
- 3) Functional Creation such as Meditation, Thai Cooking Classes and Food Activities, Muay Thai (Thai Boxing) and Agricultural Tours.

Furthermore, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) charts new value-based strategy in line with National Economic Reform Plan. The goal is to move the Thai tourism industry from offering “Value for Money” to “Value for Experience” and focus on the “Unique Thai Local Experiences” to create valuable and memorable experiences to quality tourists by creating value tourism products and upgrading product standards. It means greater emphasis on promoting Creative Tourism through Thai culture, experiences and way of life.” (TATNEWS, 2017)

Meanwhile, DASTA driven the Master Plan of the areas was operating in accordance with the criteria of the GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council) is shown eight methods as following: 1) Coordination of integration policy 2) Coordination with the private sector 3) Creation awareness and understanding of the DASTA Master Plan for government and community 4) Assessment knowledge and partners satisfaction 5) Setting the budget for the project 6) Public Relations by TAT and Media 7) The MOU was signed with partners (government, local authorities, communities and associations 8) Coordination at the local level. (Government, regional or local authorities) (DASTA, 2016) Road activities in Thailand reflect cultural identity that conveys a truly Thai-ness experience. According to the project survey of “Thailand destination Image in the eyes of foreigners” (TAT, 2012) it is a paradise of food. Variety of fruits and street food are main attractions. Furthermore, famous international media such as CNNGo and Bootsatall has ranked Thai Food in the top gourmet in the world (CNNGo., 2011). According to Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) survey of international tourists for top activities (TAT, 2015) to do when travelling in Thailand have shown that food activities are the most favorable and ranked it second, accounting for 75% of activities for the international tourists.

LITERATURE REVIEW

UNWTO's 2030 Vision forecasts that international arrivals are expected to reach over 1.8 billion by the year 2030 and the world's population statistics state that in year 2009, 2030 of middle class tourists in Asia Pacific will be increased more than 38%. They will have an emphasis on quality related to experience, education, life style and culture having awareness of sustainable tourism, which is driving the

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global economy that contributes to the conservation of natural resources, society and cultural attractions. (UNWTO, 2011)

Creative Tourism is defined as tourism which offers visitors opportunities to develop their own creative potential through active participation in learning experiences, which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken (Richards & Raymond, 2000) Likewise, Raymond C. has defined creative tourism as authentic experiences involving engagement between hosts (locals) and guests (tourists/visitor) with participative learning of the art, heritage or special characters of the place (Richards G., & Marques L., 2012) Furthermore, Richards (2010) proposed a Patterns of Creative Tourism which consists of basic implementation mode of creative tourism between using creativity as a tourist activity and using creativity as a backdrop for tourism. The patterns of creative tourism on basis of activities are inclusive of learning (workshops, course), testing (experiences, open ateliers), seeing (itineraries) and buying (galleries, shop windows) (Richards, G, 2010b)

In Thailand, Creative Tourism supports regional development. The Thai government has developed a creative economy approach which involves a significant tourism component. At a regional level, creative tourism programs have been implemented by the Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration: (DASTA), which is working with local communities and related stakeholders) from all sectors to develop creative experiences in Creative Tourism activities based on Communities Based Tourism (CBT) management and Sustainable Tourism Management. (Sangsnit, 2013) who has been as a Director of DASTA proposed policies and guidelines about "Creative Tourism" which defines Creative Tourism as "tourism that relate to the history, art, culture, lifestyle and unique place. Here visitors learn to build an experience with the culture and have an opportunity to live together with the local owner of the place, to create added value for their history, culture and identity of the community. The creative activities not only focus on income communities but also on the values of the community". (Wisudthiluck, 2012) has given the meaning of creative tourism as the tourism that encourages visitors to exchange and learn to understand the value of social and cultural environments of local tourism destination through hands-on experience with the local owner or the owner's culture. In Thailand there are 10 provinces, which were selected as "creative city prototypes" under the "Creative Thailand" policy, which includes Chiang Mai (fine handicrafts theme), Lop Buri (renewable energy innovation) and Lampang (creative ceramics). One of the emerging ideas from the TAT is to link the creative economy to "Thai-ness", which includes Thai experience, way of life, and culture. It is an interesting example of how intangible resources can be used creatively to develop new tourism products. (Thai Government Public Relations Department (PRD), 2011)

Designated Area for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA) is a central organization that is responsible for promoting, cooperating with, and supporting all stakeholders to maintain balance in three dimensions: economic, social, and environmental. Sustainability in the area for tourism policy is driven as follows: 1) Quality Tourism Policy (Co-Creation) Contemplate Plan, Co-Responsible Practices and Benefits 2) CBT: Community Based Tourism Policies 3) Travel policy depends on environmentally friendly (Low Carbon Tourism) 4) Creative Tourism Policies and 5) Operation policy with development networking partners and stakeholders, both domestic and foreign. Also, DASTA Master Plan of the areas was operating in accordance with the criteria of the GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council). The new strategic policy is designed to bring tourism, now recognized by the country's leaders and policymakers as of one of Thailand's most successful economic pillars, in line with the 20-year reform program called Thailand 4.0, being charted by the government of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha under the vision slogan, "Stability, Prosperity, and Sustainability." (DASTA, 2016)

Tourism of Thailand (TAT) is to start shifting the structure and directions of the national tourism industry towards a new value-based offer in order to position Thailand as a Quality Leisure Destination. Mr. Yuthasak Supasorn, TAT's governor, emphasized) focusing on the "Unique Thai Local Experiences" to create valuable and memorable experiences to quality tourists by creating value tourism products and upgrading product standards in terms of "Value for Experience" and placing emphasis on promoting Creative Tourism through Thai culture, experiences and way of Thai life for delivery them on the world stage. The Amazing Thailand brand will remain in place supported by powerful narratives called "Discover Amazing Stories in Amazing Thailand". In 2017, TAT wants to ensure that Thailand is seen as a 'Preferred Destination' in the minds of international tourists. At the same time, tourist arrivals will have to be managed by greater focus on sustainability and management of the natural resources." "Strength

from Within and Qualitatively Connect to the World are the keys to the success. Strengthening of the local business communities and small and medium sized enterprises at the grassroots of society, as well as promoting local and stakeholder empowerment by integrating the value chain between the private and public sectors (Public and Private Partnership) will be crucial to the successful development of creative and value-based tourism.” (TATNEWS, 2017)

Food Tourism, also known as culinary tourism, gastronomic tourism, or gourmet tourism, expresses the relation between food and tourism. It has grown considerably and has become one of the most dynamic and creative segment of tourism (UNWTO, 2012) (Hall & Mitchell, 2006) gave the definition of Food Tourism as “visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production regions are the primary motivation for travel”. According to (Smith & Xiao, 2008), Culinary Tourism is “any tourism experience in which one learns about, appreciates, or consumes branded local culinary resources”. Likewise, (Ignatov, E. & Smith, S., 2006) defined Culinary tourism as “the tourism trips during which the purchase or consumption of regional foods (including beverage), or the observation and study of food production (from agriculture to cooking school) represents a significant motivation or activity.” In researchers’ views, it can be defined as activities of tourists and visitors who plan their trips in order to taste the food of the place or to do activities related to gastronomy. Thus series of food tourism definition expressed relationship between food related activities.

Food activities which are popular among gourmet travelers are winery visits, cooking classes, food tours, special dining, visiting food events, festivals, food markets and farms (The World Food Travel Association : WFTA, 2015) In addition, **Global Food Trends (2015)** Gastronomy is a strategic element in defining the brand image of their destination. There are many food activities for food traveler such as food events (expressed by 79% of respondents) gastronomic routes, cooking classes and cookery workshops 62%, food fairs featuring local products 59%, visit to markets and producers 53% etc. (UNWTO, 2012)

(UNWTO, 2011) summarized **10 attributes of creative tourism** which are

1. Engaging with each other
2. Cross-cultural engagement/Cultural experience
3. Spirit of place/deep meaning/understanding the specific cultural of place
4. Hands-on experience
5. Exchange of information/transformation and transformative experiences
6. More participation than observation
7. Co- creating tourism experience
8. Authentic process and product/genuine experience
9. Memorable and
10. Tailor-made approach

Bangkok or Thai to called Krung Thep; it means "The City of Angels" was established in 1782 by King Rama and spiritual **capital of Thailand**. Bangkok features both old-world charm and modern convenience with 50 districts in the big city. In terms of tourism, Bangkok is a famous and significant attraction, which is usually selected by international tourists as the top tourist destination of the world. Bangkok was ranked first as the most popular destination in Asia Pacific for the year 2015 by MasterCard Asia Pacific Destination Index. It was also awarded by Condé Nast Traveler’s readers as the fourth best world destination. "Most Popular Destination" by Go Asia, at the International Tourism Exchange Berlin 2012. It got the award of World Best City for four years (2012, 2011, 2010 and 2008) by Travel & Leisure Magazine. Furthermore, Bangkok is also voted as one of the World’s best gastronomy destination cities in tasty Street Food (Shea, 2016)

Objectives of the Study

- 1.To study the plans and policies of DASTA and TAT on Creative Tourism using Content Analysis.
- 2.To study the food activities at the sample destinations related to Creative Tourism.

METHODOLOGY

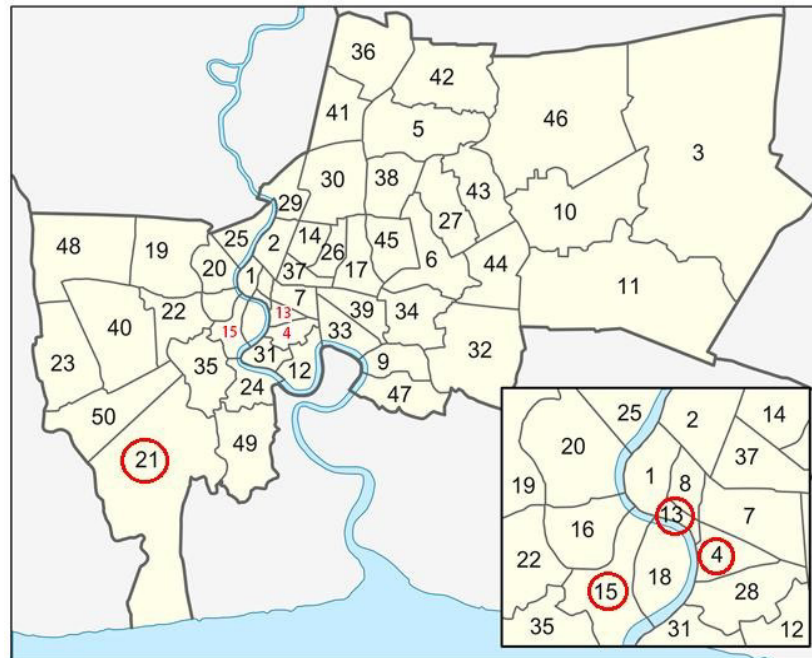
This research study was based on the conceptual and theoretical framework of creative tourism and activities of food tourism. The plans and policies of DASTA and TAT of Creative Tourism were studied based on secondary data. Qualitative research (Content Analysis) was done by using QDA miner software.

To study food activities related to Creative Tourism data was collected from four destinations using in-depth interviews, small group discussions, and observations from 1) The Private sector including Entrepreneurs 2) The Publics and Government sector 3) Educational Experts 4) Local Residents &

Communities in Bangkok and 5) Travelers. The study of food activities is conducted in Bangkok, both in urban and suburban areas. Four **samples in Bangkok** namely:

- 1) Bang Khun Thian district at Baan Saen Tor community which is (well-known as seashore of Bangkok in travelers' perception)
- 2) Thon Buri district (Kudeejeen community is multi-cultural community having Buddhists, Catholic and Muslim people)
- 3) Samphanthawong district at Yaowarat zone, (Bangkok's Chinatown which is the World's most renowned street food destination and favorite dining district in Bangkok for traveler and locals).
- 4) Bang Rak district at Charoen Krung and Silom zone (a central business area in Bangkok.)

Fig 1: Map of sample destinations ((4) Bang Rak, (13) Samphanthawong (15) Thon Buri and (21) Bang Khun Thain)



This data was analyzed using Descriptive method.

Table 1: Data Collection

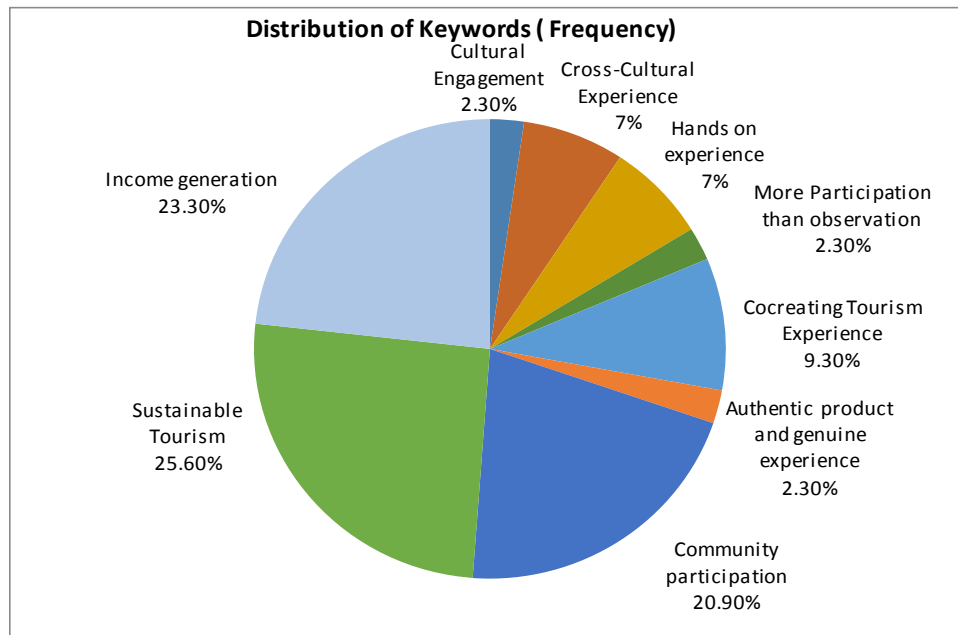
Research Techniques/Tools	Sample Size	Key Informants
In-depth Interview	30 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entrepreneurs - Governors - Educational Experts - Local residents & communities - Travelers
Small Group Discussion	4 groups of 5 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local residents & communities - Travelers
Observation Participation	12 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local residents & communities - Travelers

FINDINGS

Table 2: Result of Content analysis using QDA Miner

Category	Code	Count	% Codes	Cases	% Cases
Creative Tourism	Cultural Engagement	1	2.30%	1	100.00%
Creative Tourism	Cross-Cultural Experience	3	7.00%	1	100.00%
Creative Tourism	Spirit of the place				
Creative Tourism	Hands on experience	3	7.00%	1	100.00%
Creative Tourism	Exchange Information				
Creative Tourism	More Participation than observation	1	2.30%	1	100.00%
Creative Tourism	Cocreating Tourism Experience	4	9.30%	1	100.00%
Creative Tourism	Authentic product & genuine experience	1	2.30%	1	100.00%
Creative Tourism	Memorable				
Creative Tourism	Tailor made approach				
Creative Tourism	Community participation	9	20.90%	1	100.00%
Creative Tourism	Sustainable Tourism	11	25.60%	1	100.00%
Creative Tourism	Income generation	10	23.30%	1	100.00%

Fig 2: Pie Chart



The result of the content analysis using QDA Miner shows that the planning of DASTA and TAT has emphasized more on sustainable tourism, income generation, and community participation. Emphasis was also laid on co-creating tourism experience and cross-cultural experience. The other aspects like cross-cultural experience and more participative approach is needed to be emphasized in the plans and policies. This will definitely be helpful in developing creative tourism in Bangkok.

Table 3: Relationship among Study Areas, Food Activities and Attributes of Creative Tourism in Bangkok, Thailand

Food Activities				
1. Food Trail or Farm	√	√	√	√
2. Food Demonstration	√	√	√	√
3. Food Tasting	√	√	√	√
4. Food Consumption	√	√	√	√
5. Cooking Class	√	√	X	√
6. Local Market Visiting	√	X	√	√

Study Areas:		A.	B.	C.	D.
A. Bang Khun Thian district (Baan Saen Tor Community)					
B. Thon Buri district (Kudeejeen Community)					
C. Samphanthawong district (Yaowarat zone)					
D. Bang Rak district (Charoen Krung and Silom zone)					
Attributes of Creative Tourism		Suburban		Urban	
1.	Engaging each other	√	√	√	√
2.	Cross-cultural engagement/Cultural experience	√	√	√	√
3.	Spirit of place/ Deep meaning	√	√	√	√
4.	Hands-on Experience	√	√	√	√
5.	Exchange information/ transformation and transformative experiences	√	√	√	√
6.	More participate than observe	√	√	√	√
7.	Co-creating tourism experience	√	√	X	√
8.	Authentic both process and product/genuine experience	√	√	√	√
9.	Memorable	√	√	√	√
10.	Tailor-made approach	√	√	√	√

The findings indicated that most food activities reflect creative tourism in samples both of suburban and Urban in Bangkok as, food tasting, food demonstration, food consumption and food trail of a legendary food tasty and the source of origin of raw materials respectively.

Samphanthawong district - Yaowarat zone was the only one not having cooking class activities in the area and affected the attribute of creative tourism that is does not support co-creating experiences. It might be this area “Yaowarat zone – China Town in Bangkok” is not only a popular foodie walk in Bangkok but also it is a top food street destination of the world. So, most tourists travel often to consume food, taste the famous cuisine at restaurant with legendary, and authentic dishes in the traditional food outlet rather than cooking classes. While, Thon Buri district - Kudeejeen community was representative of suburban area which did not have local market visiting activities, due to lack of area; however, there are food tasting, food demonstrations, cooking classes and food trails of the legendary and famous bakery like the oven baked with Thai charcoal and local ingredients, named “Kanom Farang Kudee Jeen” which is the combination of Thai and Portugal culture. It has still retained the original taste which was inherited from the past.

The activities of all the other sample destinations have creative tourism pattern which facilitates the tourists to experience local culture by learning to cook authentic Thai cuisine, food tasting of unique cuisines, participating in local activities like prawn and cockle feeding at the farms with local experts. They also experience the local cultures by seeing the food demonstration by locals and buy foods which are legendary cuisines from local seashore area.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Qualitative research must be undertaken by the government and stakeholders to understand the travel motivations of the tourists.
- 2) The benefits of creative tourism must be promoted by TAT and other agencies to the stakeholders so that they can participate and invest in creative tourism activities.
- 3) Apart from the other attributes of creative tourism like a craft making and painting more focus must be given on food activities.
- 4) Branding the destinations using various food activities will help for promotion of creative tourism.
- 5) Legal concerns should be supported by entrepreneurs to implement business convenience and efficiency for consistency in growth.
- 6) Local residents and communities should maintain the sustainability by limited carrying capacity. Tourists must be acknowledged to respect local cultures.
- 7) Educational institutes should create awareness of creative tourism through food activities about Thai way of life and unique Thai wisdom among young generation such as students.

8) DASTA and TAT must focus more on cultural engagement, more participation than observation, authentic products, genuine experience and cross-cultural experience in policy making of creative tourism in Thailand.

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