



Catering services of selected establishments in Lviv according to the opinions of their owners

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Abstract:	<p>The development of urban tourism in 2018 - 2019 contributed to Lviv becoming one of the most frequently visited cities in Ukraine, attracting both domestic and international tourists. One of the key elements influencing the city's tourist appeal was its culinary offering, particularly regional cuisine. The aim of this study is to analyze the state of gastronomy in the center of Lviv, with particular emphasis on establishments located in the Market Square and its immediate vicinity. The research was conducted using a diagnostic survey method among the owners and managers of 20 gastronomic establishments, employing a questionnaire. The results indicate that the location of the establishment and the type of cuisine offered significantly affect the number of visiting tourists. Venues serving regional cuisine - Ukrainian and Galician - enjoy greater popularity, especially among international tourists. The analysis also revealed that establishments located directly on the Market Square attract nearly twice as many tourists as those situated nearby. This study provides valuable insights into tourists' culinary preferences and the factors influencing the success of gastronomic businesses in the context of urban tourism development.</p>			
Keywords:	gastronomy, tourism, Lviv, regional cuisine			

Introduction

The rapid development of tourism has made Lviv increasingly popular among both international and domestic tourists. Tourism serves as a source of income for the local economy, which is why city authorities strive to provide visitors with the most comfortable conditions during their stay. In addition to architectural landmarks, which attract tourists, accommodation options, and the ease of access to Lviv, gastronomy plays a crucial role in the city's tourism development. Lviv's gastronomic offerings are an important part of the city and one of its main sources of revenue. Dining plays a significant role for tourists visiting Lviv, and the quality and diversity of the cuisine leave a positive impression of their stay. Food is an integral part of the experience of spending time in Lviv, and what the city can offer in this regard elevates its attractiveness to a new level. The main objective of this study is to analyze the current gastronomic situation in Lviv, to present and evaluate the food services of selected establishments located in the Market Square and near the Town Hall, with particular attention to regional cuisine and the location of the venues. This will help identify the main development trends and the key factors contributing to the successful operation of restaurant businesses in Lviv from the perspective of their owners.

The Tourism Department of the Lviv City Council summarized and presented statistical data on tourist traffic in Lviv in 2019. According to this data, the largest

group of tourists visiting Lviv were Ukrainians themselves - 35.7%. Among international tourists, the highest number came from Poland - 18.3%, followed by visitors from Belarus - 6.6%, and Turkey - 6.2%. In total, Lviv was visited by 2.5 million people in 2019, compared to 2.2 million in 2018 [1].

When comparing the first half of 2018 and 2019, it can be observed that, on average, 31% of Moldovans, 16% of Belarusians, 11% of Russians, and 9% of Poles arrive in Ukraine. However, it should be noted that not all of these individuals are tourists. Moldova, Belarus, and Russia are countries with large populations of ethnic Ukrainians, and many foreigners live in border regions. In this context, cross-border movement does not necessarily reflect tourist traffic, but rather commercial and personal travel [2].

When discussing the first half of 2019, it should be noted that the total number of tourists (both domestic and international) in Ukraine decreased. However, in the case of Lviv, the number of tourists increased compared to 2018. This may be attributed to the introduction of additional low-cost flights from Europe, the railway connection with Przemyśl, and the ease of crossing the border by car or bus [3]. A comparison between 2018 and 2019 shows that nearly 50% of tourists visited Lviv again and rated their satisfaction with tourism services at 4.4 on a 5-point scale. The average length of stay in Lviv was four days. In 2019, the average tourist spent approximately 94 euros per day, compared to 74 euros per day in 2018 [1]. Most of the expenses were related to accommodation and food. In the 2017 statistics, this amount was broken down by nationality and amounted to 131 euros for an American, 112 euros for a Briton, 111 euros for a Turk, 83 euros for a German, 75 euros for a Pole, 56 euros for a French tourist, and 35 euros for a Ukrainian, based on the same average [4]. For tourists, the main attractions that make Lviv worth visiting include cafés and restaurants, city walks, visits to cultural institutions, shopping, and guided tours [3].

Lviv is a city rich in various historical and sacred monuments, many of which have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This recognition was granted during the 22nd session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, held in Kyoto, Japan, in 1998 [5]. Lviv has the highest number of architectural monuments in Ukraine, the vast majority of which are located in the historic city center. Among the most important are the Market Square, the Town Hall, the Black House, the Royal House, the Latin Cathedral, the Opera House, and others. The Market Square is the most significant part of the Old Town, which once served as a marketplace [6]. It was the center of social, cultural, and economic life. The square was established in the second half of the 13th century, but after a great fire in 1527 that destroyed almost all the buildings, it was rebuilt in the Renaissance style. This era dictated specific urban planning principles, the main one being strict adherence to proportionality in building design. All townhouses around the square had to be approximately the same width and height, and the square itself was rectangular in shape. A mandatory element of the façade was the presence of three windows. At the beginning of the 19th century, four well-fountains depicting mythological figures were built in the corners of the square [7]. Today, the Market Square is surrounded by 44 townhouses representing various architectural styles, from Renaissance to Modernism, housing museums, shops, cafés, and restaurants.

The aim of the study

The aim of the study is to determine the current state of gastronomic development in Lviv. This will help identify the main development trends and the key factors contributing to the successful operation of restaurant businesses in Lviv from the perspective of their owners.

Hypotheses:

1. The number of tourists in an establishment depends on its location.
2. Local cuisines attract more international tourists.

Material and methods

The diagnostic survey method was used to conduct the research. The technique employed was a questionnaire, and the research tool was a survey form. The questionnaire consists of nine questions addressed to restaurant owners, including four closed-ended questions, four semi-open-ended questions, and one open-ended question. The survey defines the profile of the examined restaurant through questions about the type of establishment and the type of cuisine. The analysis in this study presents data collected using the data collection method - a survey conducted among food establishments located in and around the Market Square. The survey was completed by restaurant owners and managers. To test the hypothesis that the number of tourists near the Town Hall is higher than in establishments located on the streets adjacent to the Town Hall, the venues were divided into two groups: those located directly on the Market Square and those nearby, but no further than 200 meters from the Town Hall. Tourist preferences were also examined by considering the type of cuisine offered. For this purpose, establishments were categorized by type - restaurant, café, bar and by cuisine - European, Ukrainian, and Galician. This allowed for an analysis of whether the type of venue and cuisine influences the number of visitors, as well as an examination of the characteristics and number of establishments in the center of Lviv. The analysis also included middle-aged individuals visiting the venues and the percentage of tourists from various countries. The questionnaire asked about Polish, Belarusian, Russian, German, British, French, and Turkish visitors. Thus, representatives from Europe, Russia, Belarus, and Turkey were included, reflecting diverse national preferences. In the final part of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate what, in their opinion as owners and managers, determines the number of visitors to their establishment. This approach enabled an exploration of owners' attitudes toward the development of their venues, the creation of a visitor profile, and the factors influencing tourists' choice of dining establishments.

Results

Over the past decade, Lviv has become one of the most frequently visited cities in Ukraine, attracting tourists not only with its magnificent architecture and centuries-old history but also with its renowned local cuisine. Culinary tours around the city are becoming increasingly popular, and most of them include visits to the most interesting cafés, restaurants, and pubs. Although Lviv cuisine is part of Galician cuisine, it has its own distinctive features due to the fact that the city of Lviv has always been the largest in the region, attracting merchants and travelers

from all over the world. As a result, dishes from other countries appeared on the tables of local residents, and spices from the East were even sold in pharmacies. Only later were the best recipes transferred to other towns and villages of Galicia, often undergoing modifications [8].

When discussing the current gastronomic landscape, it is important to note that many abandoned factories and industrial facilities remain in Ukraine. These spaces are now being transformed into cultural, educational, or commercial centers. Among the most well-known examples are the revitalized industrial areas developed by “!FESTrepublic,” the restaurant network “!FEST Emotion Holding,” and “LOKAL.” These initiatives have led to the creation of numerous themed restaurants focused on gastronomic tourism. Today, these networks are breathing new life into neglected residential and commercial buildings in and around the city center, thereby enhancing Lviv’s tourism potential [9]. Notable projects include the OUN-themed restaurant “Kryivka,” the “Lviv Handmade Chocolate” factory café, the “Lviv Coffee Mining Manufacture,” the literary-themed “Masoch Café” inspired by the works of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, the wine bar “Drunken Cherry,” among others [10].

Analyzing the statistical data reveals a clear distinction in the types of cuisine preferred by tourists dining in Lviv establishments. The findings indicate that tourists favor Ukrainian and Galician cuisine. During the data preparation process, the types of cuisine were categorized into Ukrainian and Galician, as restaurant menus often include dishes that are neither strictly Ukrainian nor Polish, but rather emerged through the historical development of the city. Jan Bobretski, in his book “Cookbook”, emphasizes that Galician cuisine is the regional cuisine of Galicia, representing a fusion of Polish and Ukrainian culinary traditions [11]. This has led to the inclusion of dishes such as cheesecake, apple pie, potato pancakes, sour rye soup (*żurek*), cucumber soup, and others, which are offered in Lviv restaurants as part of Galician cuisine. The rationale for distinguishing between Galician and Ukrainian cuisine was confirmed by positive results, which indicate a difference in tourist preferences depending on the type of cuisine.

According to the statistical data presented in Table 1, tourists in Lviv tend to choose establishments offering regional cuisine. The data show that 47% of Polish tourists prefer Galician cuisine, while 29% opt for Ukrainian cuisine. Similarly, tourists from other countries also favor regional dishes - for example, among Russian tourists, 42% choose Galician cuisine and 37% Ukrainian; among German tourists, 48% prefer Galician and 31% Ukrainian; and among British tourists, 53% select Galician cuisine and 40% Ukrainian (Tab. 1).

Table 1. Number of tourists visiting venues daily.

Type of cuisine	Nationality of tourists						
	Poles	Belarusians	Russians	Germans	English	French	Turks
European cuisine	180	70	40	60	10	30	70
Galician cuisine	370	160	80	140	80	100	180
Ukrainian cuisine	230	190	70	90	60	60	190
Total:	780	420	190	290	150	190	440
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
European cuisine	23%	17%	21%	21%	7%	16%	16%
Galician cuisine	47%	38%	42%	48%	53%	53%	41%
Ukrainian cuisine	29%	45%	27%	31%	40%	32%	43%

Source: Based on the author’s own research

Based on statistical data, it can be inferred that local cuisine attracts a greater number of international tourists, and that the country of origin does not significantly influence their culinary preferences. It is also evident that tourists from Russia and Turkey choose Ukrainian or Galician cuisine with comparable frequency (Fig. 1).

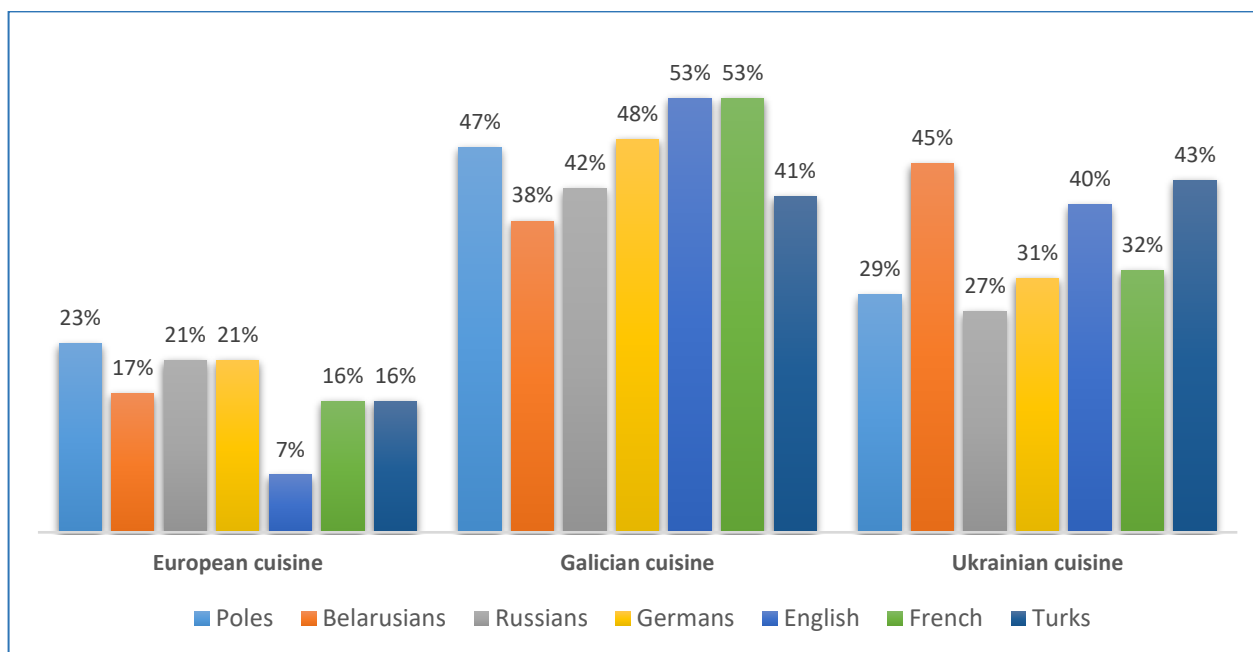


Figure 1. Cuisine preferences depending on the tourists' country of origin

Source: Based on the author's own research

It can be assumed that restaurant owners located in and around the Market Square intentionally open establishments offering Ukrainian and Galician cuisine, considering that approximately 70% of tourists prefer to dine in venues serving regional dishes.

When discussing tourist preferences, data analysis indicates that the location of an establishment does not correlate with the number of tourists who choose it based on the type of cuisine. Ukrainian and Galician cuisine venues are more popular than those offering European cuisine, both in the Market Square and on the surrounding streets. Based on the research data presented in Table 4, it can be observed that most establishments in the Market Square focus on regional cuisine. This contributes to an increase in the number of tourists visiting these venues and aligns with the broader development of gastronomy in Lviv. In addition to offering traditional Ukrainian dishes, Lviv is also home to popular concept restaurants that adapt their menus to match the interior design and thematic character of the venue.

The second part of the study aimed to analyze which factors, according to restaurant owners, influence the number of tourists. After processing the survey data using the previously mentioned formula, the results were categorized into four groups. Each group reflects the overall rating of a factor that, in the opinion of the owners, is important to tourists, with the highest possible score being 100 (Tab. 2).

Table 1. Factors Influencing the Number of Tourists in an Establishment

Group	Factor	Rating
1	Appearance of the restaurant	98
	Proximity to the city center	97
	Quality of food	94
2	Recommendation from friends	89
	Quality of service	89
	Type of cuisine	88
	Online reviews	80
3	Terrace/garden	79
	Staff speaking foreign languages	78
	Portion size	76
4	Affordability	62
	Advertising in guidebooks/maps	56
	Place to work with a laptop	50
	Vegetarian / vegan menu	39
	Home delivery	29

Source: Based on the author's own research

Discussion

The trend of gastronomic tourism in Lviv continued to grow during the years 2018–2019, although it still did not account for 10% of the local food service market share, as was the case in some foreign cities. Currently, the popularity of gastronomic tourism is increasing. There are several reasons why regional cuisine contributes to tourism development. Primarily, food is one of tourists' favorite forms of entertainment, and regional cuisine has become a factor influencing the choice of travel destination [12]. According to the study, the location of an establishment is a significant factor. When considering this aspect alone, without reference to the type of cuisine, the data analysis indicates that proximity to the city center is an important determinant of a venue's popularity and the number of visitors. It can be assumed that tourists prefer venues located near architectural landmarks and the Town Hall, as their sightseeing routes typically pass through the center of Lviv. Therefore, the presentation of the venue, its storefront, and online reviews become decisive factors in the selection process. It can also be assumed that there is a need for more in-depth research on Lviv's gastronomic market, taking into account a larger number of restaurants located in the city center, within 1 km of the center, and beyond. This would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of both tourists' and residents' preferences regarding types of cuisine.

The study "Appetite for the Region," conducted by ARC Rynek i Opinia and Citybell Consulting on behalf of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in early September 2013, revealed that 54% of respondents stated they would not choose regional cuisine in a new location, while for 33%, a culinary journey is associated with the obligatory tasting of regional dishes. Interestingly, 49% of respondents indicated that if they were to recommend a place to friends, they would first suggest trying the regional cuisine [13]. These findings demonstrate that both the type of cuisine and the location of the establishment are significant factors in tourism development. For half of the tourists, food is the most important criterion when evaluating their vacation experience. As has already been shown, tourists prefer regional dishes, which opens up opportunities for restaurant owners to improve their business and adapt their menus to attract more customers.

Conclusions

1. Regional cuisine influences the choice of destination, as for many tourists food is a form of entertainment and cultural experience.
2. The location of the eatery is crucial - proximity to the city centre, monuments translates into more visitors.

3. The appearance of the establishment and online reviews are important for tourists when choosing a place to eat.
4. There is a need for more detailed research into the catering market, taking into account the different locations of restaurants (city centre, outskirts, etc.) to better understand the preferences of both tourists and locals.

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