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FROM TRADITION TO MARKET: FOOD WISDOM OF ODISHA

Dr. Rasmi Kanta Roul¹ and Dr. Rajashree Sutar²

¹Department of Hotel and Tourism Management,
Central University of Rajasthan, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India
rahulchefs@gmail.com

²Department of Hotel and Tourism Management,
Central University of Rajasthan, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India
Sutarr59@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of traditional cooking attributes on guests' dining satisfaction and future intention in Odisha. Despite the effects of modernization on food culture and differences in traditional food attributes, tourists consistently seek service culture and the wisdom associated with traditional foods. The research uses a qualitative, phenomenological approach to explore tourists' experiences regarding traditional cuisine in Odisha. The findings show positive growth in the popularity of traditional cuisine. The study emphasizes that both management and the government must collaborate to provide support and implement resources for the development of culinary tourism. Stakeholders can achieve this by upgrading infrastructure, promoting traditional food through targeted campaigns, encouraging entrepreneurship, and conducting training programs for culinary entrepreneurs. It is essential to preserve the authenticity of traditional food-making processes, the use of traditional raw materials, and to serve dishes in a way that allows tourists to experience genuine traditionalism. Strengthening these aspects will ensure that traditional food becomes a strong cultural identity and enhances Odisha's tourism appeal.

KEYWORDS: Food Wisdom, Presentation, Raw Materials, Orientation, Traditional.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional food is the medicine that our ancestors gave us. Food is nourishing and helps to maintain good health for everyone. It is made from local materials and prepared using a traditional cooking process rooted in Odia culture, and is called "Odisha cuisine". Food has always played a vital role in promoting Odisha as a destination (Singh,2025). Traditional food attracts tourists worldwide. Odisha is known as a traditional food tourism destination. It is a perfect destination for beaches, mountains, festivals, eco-tourism, historical kings' places, temples, wildlife, sandy and sunny places, heart-touching music, and dance. The heritage, history, and culture of Odisha, combined with its cuisine,



have formed a base for “cuisine tourism”. The state itself spread the aroma of traditional food and culture, which it transferred to the tourist destination of Odisha (Mohanty, 2019).

The traditional food of Odisha is the product of inherited wisdom: food made from natural and local materials, cooked with spices and herbs available only in that particular area, and distinguished by beliefs, economy, and customs. These cooking processes are easy as they involve plants. Ancestors have passed down the tradition of cooking and eating over several generations. The quality of food is essential to human life. Cooking serves as a medium for practice, education, and service with love. It can play a vital role in attracting guests due to its traditional taste, service style, and use of authentic recipes and processes. Outstanding food products win over tourists and make an impact on the tourism industry. Odisha's climate, environment, geography, way of life, and local people all contribute to the unique character of its food culture. Odisha is a tourist destination for forests, forts, flora and fountains, monuments and temples, and serves mouth-watering traditional food that makes the tourist feel heavenly.

From south to north, east to west, across Odisha, traditional food creates an enjoyable experience for tourists. It pleases everyone's saliva to drop from their tongues as they serve a variety of dishes, tied to emotions of culture, heritage, and history, and sumptuous by nature. People in the area of tourist places are well-trained in cooking and serving, and are confident in presenting what they cook, or, more likely, provide seafood and other traditional foods that guests or non-local guests are already familiar with.

The cuisine of Odisha has the potential to attract visitors with its distinctive cooking style, flavors, methods, cooking pots, and the use of local and special ingredients. The traditional food culture of Odisha has an ancient history. The researcher found that the traditional foods of every region of Odisha have the power to create an impact, generating more revenue for the state and developing local communities. Traditional food habits and culture are the main attractions for tourists, who also wish to experience and enjoy local cuisine. Government, vendors, Stakeholders, entrepreneurs, and local people should be involved in promoting tourism, which should generate revenue for the state and local people. For the benefit of local people, to whom traditional food wisdom belongs, and to provide maximum satisfaction to guests, apply a wonderful service process to promote tourism and its sustainability.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

First of all, cooking is an art and a science, requiring individuals to prepare food creatively while using scientific methods. Traditional cuisine is a specific style of cooking that maintains traditional processes and uses ingredients similar to those our ancestors used, and which closely connects a



particular area or region. However, the cast, tradition, culture, heritage, and region of a destination influence traditional food wisdom. Traditional food wisdom plays a vital role in the sustainability of a tourist destination. Traditional food significantly influences hospitality and tourism destinations; however, researchers rarely document its impact in the literature. Without traditional cuisine, the destination tourism has no value, like sweets cooked without sugar.

Nowadays, tourists are diverse and have drastically changed the face of a destination. Traditional cuisine, hospitality, and tourism are interrelated and make an important contribution to the work, as traditional food plays a vital role in improving stakeholder outcomes. It also serves local development and is a vital part of the hospitality and tourism experience. As the results show, the tradition, economic, and social diversity of a destination influences the traditional cuisines and cultures in the area (Richards, 2012). Apart from that, the tourists want to have a delightful experience in the destination by participating in and learning about Odisha's lavish cuisine. The guests learn the uses of local herbs and spices, special ingredients, and the traditional way of cooking. To boost tourist volume and generate more revenue from tourism, it is important that the destination be attractive and that traditional food be well-prepared and tasty. The most powerful tools are good service, a homely atmosphere, and food and beverages, which play vital roles as tourist products in destination tourism or as the main attractions of the place. When we discussed the tourism economy, we discussed the budget for traditional food and beverage-related contributions within the tourism environment. Tourism revenues increase with the expenditure and use of opportunities in a destination (Chen, 2021). Traditional food (including beverages) is an important part of the tourist experience that can leave a lovely impression on guests' hearts, later attracting them to return to the destination. Traditional cuisine tourism mentions "during the travel, the purchases or eating of local traditional foods and drinks, or learning of the cooking from the traditional local people, presented a meaningful motivation or activities" (Okumus, 2018).

Over the last three decades, hospitality and tourism have transitioned from being aimed solely at travel for happiness to being recognized as an important industry (Kay, 2003), while the hospitality industry provides services that restore life energy (Michelitsch, 2001). According to Hunt and Layne (1991), people mostly accepted the nature of roles until the late 70s. In the 80s, there was a radical shift towards other tourism-related activities. Food-related activities, known as culinary tourism, replace the concept of travel motivators (Mohanty, 2019). The word culinary originated from the Latin word "Culina," which means cook stove. The word cuisine derives from the Latin word "Coquina," which means a style of cooking.

Traditional food wisdom is closely associated with the lavish cuisine of Odisha, and it reflects the particular regions or destinations, their creation, and the spread of traditional methods, processes,



techniques, local ingredients, tools, and equipment. Likewise, traditional cuisine tourism focuses on the desire to experience a specific region (Hall & Sharples, 2003). Traditional cuisine in destination marketing requires experienced and professional individuals not only in destination marketing but also in traditional cuisine, as well as an understanding of the socio-cultural characteristics of potential visitors for local development (Okumus & McKercher, 2007).

At this time, an important task is to create skill development programs that align with the trend toward sustainability of traditional foods, Herbal cuisine, tribal cooking styles, and local services and cooking wisdom. The inner diversity defines food, beverage, hospitality, and tourism. In an era of globalization, there is a specific desire to enjoy varied dining and wine (Boniface, 2003). However, Hall & Mitchel (2001) state that food plays four primary roles: tourism uses food as a promotional tool; local food culture shapes tourism destinations; tourism supports the growth of local people; and the tourism industry prioritizes guest satisfaction.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper used qualitative research methodology to explore traditional food wisdom and its potential for tourism development in the state of Odisha. Researchers drew on established specific ideas and concepts from academic research articles as needed to build a strong conceptual foundation for the study; moreover, researchers collected data from various secondary data sources, including news reports, academic journals, and social media platforms, as well as direct observation by the researcher. This study uses a content analysis approach to examine a wide range of secondary sources systematically. This method is reliable for this emerging research on traditional food wisdom tourism, which has received limited public and scholarly attention so far.

This qualitative research methodology has been mapped out for further assistance and outlines the many stages for examining the interrelationship between traditional food wisdom and tourism development. This methodological approach will assist future researchers who wish to conduct research on traditional food wisdom in this field. Moreover, this research also examines the potential and future implications of traditional food wisdom tourism in Odisha.

4. DISCUSSION

The flavorful blending of various handpicked, locally sourced herbs and vegetables is the hallmark of Odisha's traditional cuisine, and the excellent blend of different types of traditional food essences and aromas has created an impact of uniqueness and incredible. The state provides many lavish dishes prepared through traditional cooking methods and authentic processes, using proper equipment and earthen pots, along with cultural inheritance passed down from one generation to another. The state is well known for its spiritualism, and devotion is playing a vital role in preparing more *Satavik Prasad*

(Temple food) and in creating an impact for temple food as a tourist destination.



(Source: Tripadvisor.in)

Rasabali, traditional sweets from Kendrapada, Odisha, is famous at Baladevjew temple, where devotees serve it as Prasad, and is known for its traditional preparation with fried cottage cheese patties dipped in thickened milk (Rabirdi). However, "Great Odisha cuisine in Mumbai" was held in the year 2024 19th Jun, in "Raja Festival", I was surprised to find "Rasabali Gourmet" offering dahi bara, pado pitha, Cuttaki aloo dum, arisa pitha, Odisha rabidi, aloo dum, ghuguni, rasabali, chena jhili, etc, in Mumbai. Rasabali received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2023, confirming its real place of origin (Jena, 2024).

Traditional food wisdom has been enhanced by various cultural functions and festivals, traditional music and folk dance, and the traditional lifestyle, with occasional dishes cooked being the main attractions for tourists. However, tribal and forest communities actively express their way of life through music, dance, and culture, and the process of preparing traditional food shapes gastronomy. The main staples of Odisha's traditional food culture are banana leaves, lotus leaves, and *sal* leaves for food preparation. People in Odisha use a *Thali* (Plate) along with a *Tava* (bowl) to eat food. The

traditional cuisine of this state is well known for its *Pkhalo* (Fermented water rice), *Daloma* (Green gram cooked with local vegetables), *Pitha*, and *Metha*, which are now creating curiosity among national and international guests.

Various traditional food wisdom of Odisha, with short descriptions, are mentioned in the table below:

Table-01 (Traditional food of Odisha)

List of Dishes	Description
<i>Besaro</i>	Stir-fried mixed vegetables prepared with mustard, dry red chili, and fennel paste.
<i>Chenchda</i>	Fish head cooked with sautéed different vegetables.
<i>Badichura</i>	Fried badi fast, then coarsely powder
<i>Kaanikaa</i>	Slightly brown rice cooked with clarified butter, mixed fruits, and slightly caramelized with sugar.
<i>Dai Baigano</i>	Fried brinjal is prepared with curd.
<i>Dalma</i>	Mixed vegetables with lentils cooked and tempered with panchphoron
<i>Ghanto</i>	Stir-fried different types of vegetables and tempered with panchphoron
<i>Kankada jholo</i>	Crab and potato prepared with mild spices.
<i>Oaukhata</i>	Elephant apple is cooked with sweet and sour.
<i>Ambulorai</i>	Soaked, dried mango cooked in mustard gravy.
<i>Santula</i>	Steamed mixed vegetables cooked with light spices.
<i>Ghuguni</i>	Soaked dry peas, cooked with diced potato and mild spices.
<i>Kakharuphulo bhaja</i>	Washed pumpkin flowers, soaked in a raw rice batter with spices, and sautéed one by one.
<i>Sago mogo</i>	Leafy vegetables cooked with half-boiled mung
<i>Jhodabesaro</i>	Khainga fish and mixed vegetables cooked with mustard gravy.

Source (collected by author)

4.1 Traditional Festival Food (*Piithas* and *Miithas*):

Fairs and festivals reflect the culture, heritage, and history of regions, as well as traditional dance, music, and food. Traditional food wisdom enhances the celebration for every guest; without traditional dishes, such as Penne arrabiata pasta, there is no arrabiata sauce. *Piitha* and *Miitha* are prepared traditionally and spread the essence of culture.

Table-02 (Traditional food *PiithanadMiitha*)

Dish name (<i>Piitha</i>)	Methods
<i>Arisha Piitha</i>	Rice flour and jiggery are mixed with hot water to form a dough, which is then fried in clarified butter.
<i>Enduri Piitha</i>	Make a thick batter of <i>udad</i> and raw rice, put it in a turmeric leaf, and steam.
<i>Chakuli Piitha</i>	Soaked and ground rice is then cooked like an omelet.
<i>Chitao Piitha</i>	Grind raw rice and sauté like a dosa.
<i>Gaintha Piitha</i>	Make tiny rounds of dough from raw rice powder, then prepare with thickened milk.
<i>Suji kakora</i>	Mix semolina, salt, sugar, and cardamom powder with hot water, then deep-fry.
<i>MandaPiitha</i>	Dough made with raw rice powder, coconut, salt, sugar, and hot water, then stuffed with <i>mawa</i> and <i>tuti</i> fruity, then steamed.

(Source: Author)

Table -03 (Local *Miitha*)

Name of <i>Miitha</i> (Sweets)	Description
<i>Chena jhilli</i>	Flatten the shape of the cottage cheese dipped in sugar syrup
<i>Rasabali</i>	Semolina and cheese mixed, small dough flattened, deep fried, and soaked in <i>chasni</i> (Syrup of sugar)
<i>Chenapodo</i>	Mixed <i>Chena</i> (Cottage cheese) and semolina and <i>Sakaro</i> (Sweet), then baked in red charcoal.
<i>Chandrakanti</i>	Make a batter of gram and raw rice powder, shallow-fried and soaked in sweet syrup.



<i>Khaja</i>	Made from refined flour dough, shallow-fried and soaked in sweet syrup.
<i>Karanji</i>	Make a dough of refined flour, salt, sugar, and cardamom powder, stuff it with <i>mawa</i> and jiggery, then shallow-fry.
<i>Khersagar</i>	Dumpling of <i>chena</i> (cottage cheese) dipped in sweetened reduced milk.

Source (collected by author)

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Odisha's traditional food wisdom holds significant potential, and its broad prospects demonstrate a strong capacity to enhance the state's tourism appeal by attracting more inbound and outbound visitors. The preparation of Odisha's traditional food reflects its distinctive cooking style and a calm, mindful approach to consumption. Odisha's rich tradition, culture, and religious beliefs have long shaped its cuisine. Odiya traditional food and temple food are popular for their variety, mild spices, and herbs, along with natural local vegetables and grains. The state is also famous for celebrating every occasion with a unique variety of local food. Its lavish traditional food, culture, and hospitality inspire tourists to visit. The contribution of traditional market food wisdom to the social, economic, and sustainable growth of the destination will be highly acclaimed if it is promoted and implemented at all levels of tourism planning and administration. In the current scenario, the command for traditional food wisdom tourism can demonstrate its courage alongside the local DMMO, travel, and tourism planner.

6. SUGGESTION

The state's traditional cuisine tourism involves a multifaceted approach that promotes in both the international and domestic tourist markets. This study significantly raises awareness among potential tourists about offering unique traditional cuisine wisdom.

The state tourism and hospitality administration must take the initiative in this endeavor, focusing on improving existing tourism resources and seriously promoting traditional food and culture. To provide a unique experience for guests, stakeholders, hoteliers, and planners should associate to create a dedicated traditional food pathway, a framework to enhance both international and domestic visitors. Ultimately, the government of the state of Odisha should actively support and promote the spread of authentic traditional food, hospitality, and tourism.

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Author Profile



Dr. Rasmi Kanta Roul received the MBA degree in Hotel Management from Bharathiar University in 2011, the BBA degree from Alagappa University in 2009, and the Diploma in Hotel Management and Catering Technology in 2002. He has over 22 years of professional experience in the hospitality industry, including international exposure with Carnival Cruise Line (USA) and executive chef positions in leading hotels in India and Nigeria. His expertise includes food production, Indian, continental and western cuisines, and culinary arts. He is currently working as an Assistant Professor at the Central University of Rajasthan, India.



Dr. Rajashree Sutar received the Ph.D. degree in Tourism Management from Lovely Professional University, Punjab, in 2024. She completed her Master's degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management from Bhadrak Autonomous College, Odisha. She is currently working as an Assistant Professor at the Central University of Rajasthan, India. Her academic and research interests include wellness tourism, community-based tourism, sustainable tourism development, and tourism marketing. She has published research articles in reputed national and international journals and has presented papers at several international conferences. She actively contributes to curriculum development, academic research, and faculty development programs in the field of hospitality and tourism management.