

Agriculture and Tourism linkages and the potential for import substitution

Linking agriculture and tourism in Fiji Workshop
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Introduction



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- Food expresses local culture & heritage and connect tourists with a destination's landscape and unique way of life (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2013)
- Is an important destination attribute and fundamental to destination imaging (Hjalager & Richards, 2002).
- Food consumption is integral to tourism & can have significant economic effects in the supply chain
- Dining is consistently ranked in the top three favourite tourist activities
- Approximately 25% - 35% of tourist expenditure is on food
- Culinary, gastronomic & food tourists considered high yield

Sustainable tourism



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- Not just about the natural environment anymore
- Emergence of need to consider a broader range of stakeholders & the multi-sectoral nature of tourism
- Despite this the relationship between food production, food consumption and sustainable tourism is virtually ignored
- Increasing interest in “slow food”, regional cuisine, Pacific foods & culinary tourism (Berno, 2013)

Food Tourism



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- Travellers today more experienced, have more leisure time and disposable income
- Looking for escape and new learning experiences
- Cuisine of a destination extremely important to quality of holiday experience
- Tourists seek authentic, quality experiences based on local food and cultural heritage
- Gastronomy and food a vital element in getting to know a country/communities heritage and culture (UNWTO, 2012)

Who are the Foodies?

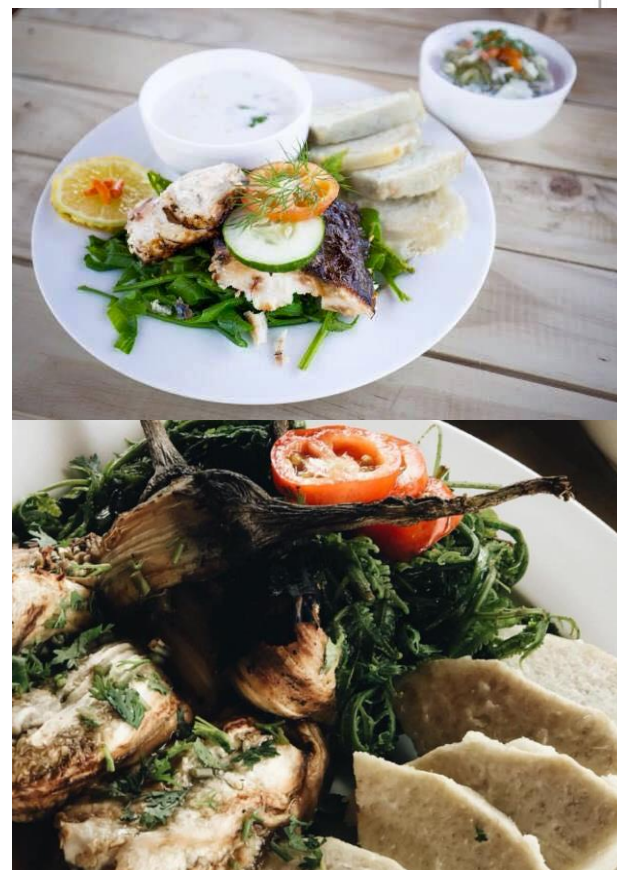


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- Mainly educated, more affluent, like communal shared experiences, actively participate in food blogs and related online food websites
- Motivated by unique experiences e.g. destination's environmental and cultural elements
- Participate in a range of food-related experiences including cooking classes, dining out, visiting farmers markets, gourmet food shopping, and attending food festivals (Robinson & Getz, 2016).
- Emergence of Foodie experiences in Fiji e.g. The Fiji Orchid, Malamala Beach Club, Nanuku, Flavours of Fiji, Tukuni etc.
- Activities include farm visits, fishing, cooking and dining
- Many large resorts offering Kids and Adults' cooking classes

Interest and opportunities

- While everyone must eat, not everyone is a food tourist
- However, more people interested in trying new foods
- Even if most tourists will only eat familiar foods still creates opportunity for local food linkages, import substitution and food related products (Hall, 2011)
- Opportunities for local economic development and alternative livelihoods e.g. Agritourism, village/farm stays/tours/street markets/food products



Tukuni Restaurant

Food interpretation – an educational experience

- To add value to food/agritourism products there is a need for interpretation e.g. Destination guides which include local stories, culture, customs, and recipes along lines of ‘Recipes for Development’; food blogs etc.
- Identify personalities & elders to deliver tours etc.



Food allergies and intolerances



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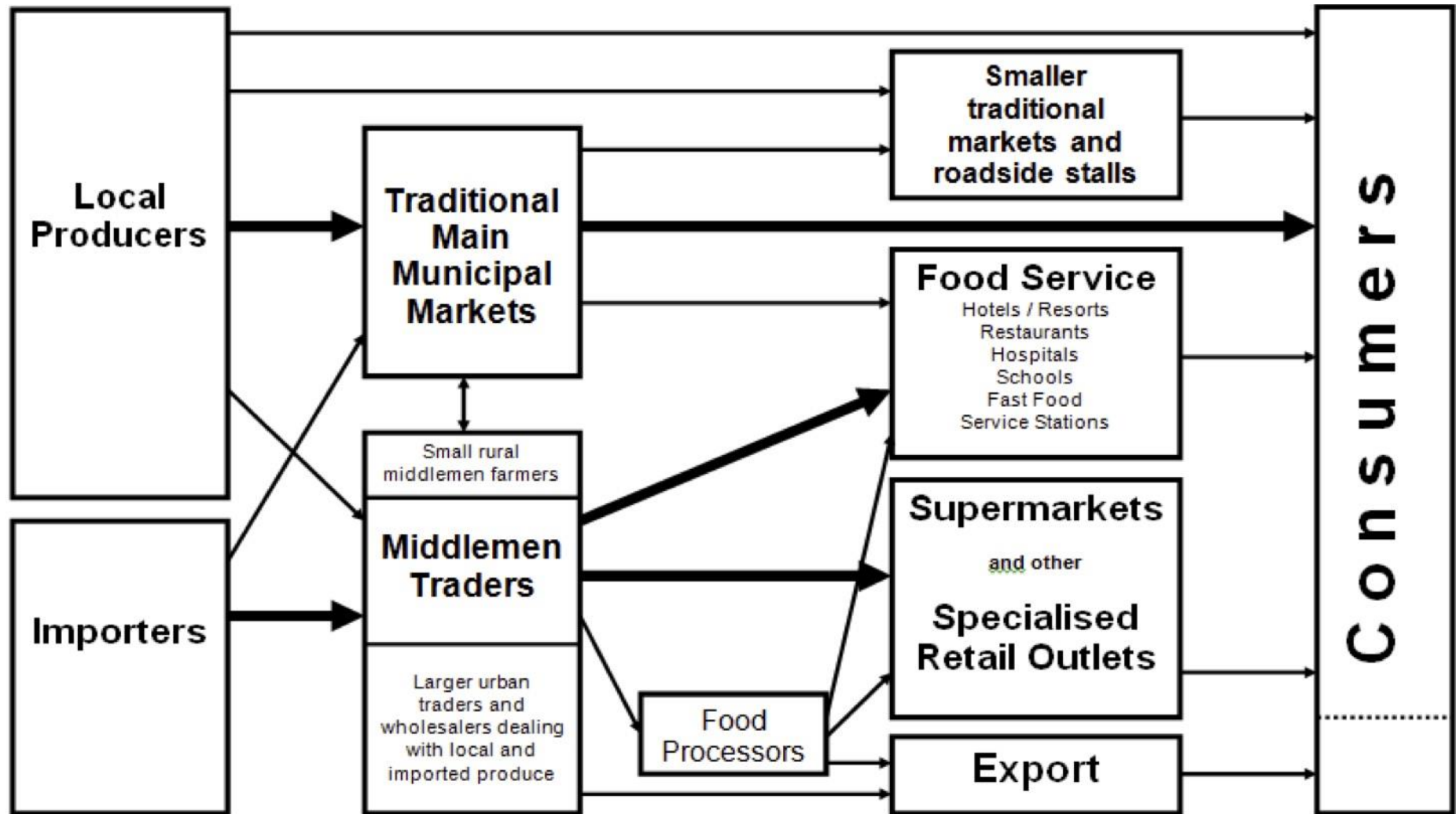
- Increasing numbers of visitors & locals with allergies & intolerances e.g. gluten, lactose, nuts
- Traditional Pacific Island cuisines are gluten and lactose free
- Provides opportunities to promote authentic local cuisine
- Need expert training for local and expatriate Chefs in understanding local produce, menu design and promotion of local cuisine
- Compulsory orientation of expatriate Chefs in use of local produce
- Recent satisfaction ratings of visitors rated Special food requests – 52.6% (Ministry of Tourism & Stollznow Research, 2018).

Fiji Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Value Chain Map

IMPORTS / PRODUCTION

MIDDLEMEN TRADERS

MARKET CHANNELS



(Johns, 2013)

Tourism and agriculture challenges



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- Common problems of sourcing products locally are well known – inconsistent quality, reliability, or volume of produce, lack of financial resources, poor/no cold storage exacerbated by poor transport and lack of communication and information between supplier and purchaser. (Meyer, Ashley and Poultney, 2004).
- Farmers rely on intermediaries/Traders to link with Chefs/ Markets

Food and the tourism product in Fiji



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Positive food ratings from recent IVS findings

- Quality of food – 78.7%
- Variety of food – 77.9%
- Availability of local food 70.9%
- 33% agreed there was high availability of local food
- Value for money 79.2%
- (Ministry of Tourism & Stollznow Research, 2018).
- Hotels and Resorts using local food in season and importing out of season e.g. Joes Farm
- More focus by Farmers on growing out of season
- Menus still reflect a bias for “Western” foods but slowly changing to include local substitutes e.g. Cassava, Dalo, Kumala or Breadfruit fries
- Smaller resorts more likely to use high percentage of local produce

Potential outcomes



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- Increase use and cultivation of indigenous products
- Increase local production of exotics (e.g. salads, micro greens, dragon fruit, rambutan, herbs)
- Farmer/ Chef markets
- Broaden presentation of traditional foods and cookery methods
- Opportunities to capitalise on broader societal trends towards organic production, “slow food”, interest in “authentic” tourist experiences etc.
- Spin-offs such as agri-tourism/ farm visits/ farm stays, value added products, food festivals, “healthy-foods” concept etc and boost agricultural exports
- By forging stronger linkages between agriculture and tourism through development and promotion of sustainable cuisine, a symbiotic relationship between these sectors can be established (Berno, 2011)

As Boyne, Williams and Hall (2001, p. 5) point out,

“...where destination areas’ [high quality] food and beverage [and other] production are utilised to strengthen the tourism product, and tourists are encouraged to purchase and consume locally produced [products] thereby stimulating local primary production sectors, we see a bi-directional development process – food production for tourism and tourism for food production.”

Strengthening linkages



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“Anyone who says Fiji doesn’t have a good and consistent enough supply of local produce to create an entire menu is not keeping up with our local farmers and entrepreneurs. From pristine fish, crustaceans and shellfish, red and white meats, to exotic organic herbs, fruit and vegetables the Fijian Farmer is hard at work. Malamala flies organically farmed edible flowers, raw pineapple vinegar and Asian herbs from Taveuni, several types of snapper and squid from Pacific Harbour, J Hunter pearl meat from Savusavu, heart of palm from Sigatoka, home-made ghee from Momi bay, young goats from the interior highlands of Kavisi, and Yaqara beef.” (Lance Seeto, 2018)

Malamala Beach Club – Fijian Food Safari



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- Always on the lookout for good local suppliers
- Using local produce is hard work
- Need to be passionate



Agri-tourism - Charley's Chocolate Factory

Mission Beach, North Queensland



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- Charley's is one of only places in the world where you can see cocoa growing on the tree being turned into chocolate you can taste.
- Our chocolate tours are a sensory journey of seeing, touching, smelling and tasting all things chocolate.
- Opportunity for Fiji



Adding value – The Samoa Example



Conclusion



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- Potential for increased linkages and economic development and entrepreneurship between agriculture and tourism exist
- Challenges exist for large scale mass tourism multinational hotels but can be minimised with government incentives and orientation of expatriate and local chefs
- Need for trained Extension Officers and/or Regional Resort/Farmer Liaison Officers who understand Chefs needs
- Increased opportunities for all including MSMEs to continue to increase use of local produce and recognise value of contemporary Fijian and International Cuisine for tourism
- Potential for added value e.g. frozen cassava, dalo, kumala chips, peeled frozen fruit, jams, sauces, chutneys etc.

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Vinaka Vaka Levu!