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Why You Need to Start to Travel for Food

Do you want to experience new things? Do you want to reinvigorate your spirit? Do you want to feel like you are going to a spa and getting a massage? Do you want to feel relaxed? I have an experience for you. If someone asks me what I am passionate about, I will immediately say food and traveling. But what is exciting about it is when you combine the two words and make it into action. Culinary Tourism or commonly known as Food Tourism is the pursuit of gastronomy encounters in different places, whether locally or internationally. It is exploring and experiencing food in its finest and most genuine state. Being a foodie and a professional cook myself, I have come to love traveling and constantly hunting for excellent food. And yes, I travel for food, and I am extremely passionate about it. Why? It is because I get to experience culture through food; it is an affordable agenda when traveling; and, I get to expose myself to varieties of food and bring those dishes with me forever. My hope is to try to get you interested in food traveling by the end of this paper.

I travel for food because food is a cultural experience itself; it is the window that lets you see the beauty of one's culture—food speaks volumes of one's history and roots. To travel for food is like hitting two birds with one stone. Because other than visiting a specific place or country, I get to eat and appreciate the culture. I get this deep sense of connection with their

culture when I eat their food. Other than the adventure of traveling itself, I feel like I am in a state of nirvana when I get to eat and try new food or cuisine because food not only fills me, but it also nourishes my soul. I am so enamored with traveling and trying out new cuisine because it is an eye-opening experience, and I get to learn new values and see different perspectives. It satisfies me because I get to see the world that I am living in. It helps me appreciate and find beauty and humbleness in life. Food not only brings culture but also connects us to people and the community.

I remember traveling in Barcelona, my friends and I toured around the city using bicycles. We went to different landmarks and places. And we went to a specific place called *Mercat de La Boqueria*, a famous marketplace in Barcelona, wherein we have met various locals who were so kind and explained to us the foods that they are famous for. Every food stall we went to was so inviting and carefully explained the foods they were selling. There was this man who was selling *Jamon Iberico*, which is an expensive cured ham, and even when he knew that we were not exactly buying, he gave our group multiple slices of meat. He told us that we should at least try the ham because that is what they are known for. He even told us that we will never forget our trip to Barcelona once we get a taste of it...He was right! Three years have passed, and the memory is still vivid to me. The taste was like a salty *prosciutto* and fatty *guanciale* (cured pork cheek) combined. I have never forgotten the experience and the taste of the piece of ham that I ate. Food makes people nostalgic, and it surely creates wonderful memories and experiences.

When we are traveling, we keep all the memories and experiences throughout the journey. We invest in things that we can treasure for a lifetime rather than things that give us

temporary bliss. Investing in good food is way better than spending on material things that will never last. It is an affordable and practical option to spend one's money on food. Excellent food does not have to cost someone $100-$400 for a meal. We do not have to go to a Michelin starred restaurant just to eat a good quality meal. Sometimes the best food that we will encounter in our lives can be seen in the markets and streets. It does not cost that much because your $10 can buy you food packed with flavors. It is rather more filling and satisfying than your $100 meal. I want to reiterate that good food does not have to be expensive.

When I went to Singapore, now one of my favorite destinations to go to because of the food, my cousin brought me to a food court. In the back of my mind, I thought, "Why is she bringing me to a food court?" I thought she was going to bring me to a fancy restaurant. I was disappointed, but I did not show that I was disappointed because I did not want to cause any problems. She then introduced me to several foods and bought the foods she knew I was going to like. I was hesitant to try the food at first because it looked unfamiliar to me, but once I got a taste of the food, it was to die for. I am not exaggerating it, but the complex flavors left me speechless. The chicken over rice was tender, soft, and packed with umami. The *Hokkien Mee* was a noodle dish with a hint of a sour taste and spices that I did not even recognize. The two meals cost her $15 in total, and our stomachs were filled and more than satisfied. I could not be any happier. Until now, I still crave Singapore's Chicken over rice and *Hokkien Mee* which became two of my favorite foods. A place that we least expect that we are going to have a memory of is sometimes the place where we feel genuine happiness, which then leaves a great impact on our lives.

The benefit of traveling for food is one gets to be exposed to varieties of dishes and cuisines. You get to see, admire, and discover foreign dishes. You get to step out of your comfort zone by taking risks and trying out something new even if it is unusual. Traveling for food helps to awaken one's senses. Moreover, tasting new dishes improves a person's palate. Imagine eating the same regular food every single day. Where is the adventure in that? It is boring and dull. Sometimes it is better to eat food far different from what we eat on a normal day. Food is so powerful that it can shape a person's memory of that certain event or trip. In fact, this makes the trips so memorable when people get to eat and bond over a good meal. Food feeds our soul. It makes everyone joyful. Food can do a lot of things to a person. Not only do we get to enjoy the variety and abundance of dishes from around the world, but it creates good memories that we will be holding on to for the rest of our lives. Those dishes that we tried will become a part of our memories and that is why it is important that we savor those moments.

Back when I was still studying in Italy, I did not have the opportunity to eat rice every day. And since I am a Filipino, it is a must that I eat rice every day, or I will never feel full. My friends and I searched for an Asian restaurant in the city and we successfully found a Japanese restaurant. At that time, I was not a big fan of Japanese food. But that was my only option or else I could not eat rice. All of my friends ordered a big sushi boat, and I did not want to complain because I do not eat sushi. My friends were the ones who pushed me to get out of my comfort zone and made me try my first ever sushi. Imagine living in the Philippines where Japanese food is huge and every person I have asked tells me it is a delicious cuisine and that I should try it. But I never did! I was scared to eat raw fish, and I could not bear the smell of the fish. But guess what? During my time in Italy, I discovered my love for Japanese food. It suddenly ignited within me. If I never tried sushi at that time, which was super good, I am pretty sure I would not

have enjoyed my time with my friends. I am positive that it would have just been a memory that I would forget. But since I tried Asian food in a country that is famous for pasta, pizzas, and risottos—it became a good and unusual experience that I am proud to tell everyone about.

Traveling for food is not something I do just because it is fun. It is so much more than that. I do it because I get to experience food through culture, explore dishes that were unknown to my palate, and discover good food. It connects me to people and the locals, it awakens my senses, and it invigorates my spirit. I can go on and on evangelizing why I like to travel for food because certainly things that I just told you are not the totality of my entire experience. These are just an excerpt of the journeys that I had. But I want you to try it because food not only fills and nourishes your body but because food feeds your soul. It relaxes you. It is like going to a spa and getting a massage. Who would not want that? You get to experience a whole bunch of things you never experienced before just by traveling for food. For you to find out, I want you to experience it firsthand. Then you tell me about it. Share your stories with me and let us talk about it over a good meal.

Pre-Writing and Reflection

Identifying what I am passionate about was not a hard thing for me to do, but choosing a topic was the one that made it difficult. I had a couple of things that I did want to talk about: anime, Korean drama, Animal Crossing, and food. I was excited about the thought of being able to share these topics in my essay. But I am mostly convinced of evangelizing my passion for food travels. It is something I want people to be aware of, and I want them to try it. It is definitely an exciting and extraordinary experience, and it is one for the books.

Considering my passion for food is something that I can easily talk about with anyone on any day. I am so passionate that I can go on and on talking about food for hours. I always ask myself, "Who does not love food?" Everyone loves food. I am the happiest when I eat and try out new food. The fact that I can savor the aroma and taste of the food is something that I like to do. It is fulfilling. How the food was plated, how it made me feel, the sound I hear on every bite just awakens my senses. Moreover, food energizes not only me but everyone. And it is important to note that, when you travel for food, you only do not get to experience the food, but the culture itself. How beautiful is that? It speaks the history and roots of the food. It opens your palate with new flavors. If only I can do it every single day, I would be willing to.

Writing my draft drained me. I wasted lots and lots of papers by scratching things off and introducing new topics and concepts that I want to talk about in this paper. I wrote a lot of things, when I say a lot, it is a lot! I have so many things I wanted to discuss, but since it was a lot, I had to narrow it down, so it does not get overwhelming. I was trying to think of ways on how I am going to structure my essay. It was mentally draining, thinking about how I am going to persuade my audience into making them try this new hobby or passion. And as usual, building a concept map and organizing it was a tough one for me, but I got through with it.

In figuring what I wanted to talk about in this essay, I have come to a point wherein I put myself in the shoes of my audience. Sometimes it is just so hard to discern what they want to hear, learn, and read about. While writing, I had to question myself things that I would probably ask and want to know about when something is trying to get me on to try new things. With that in mind, that was the concept I was going for while writing. I had to show my audience how I felt and the experiences I gained while doing my passion.

I completed my draft in one day, and I am so proud of myself that I can now write a 1,500-word in a day. Before, I used to get anxious when I have to write, but as time goes by, doing all these essays, I feel like I dramatically improved. I gained more confidence in myself when it comes to writing. Experiencing how to write different forms of essay brought out the best in me. I cannot even fathom the way I am feeling because I am so much better now.

Thankfully, this time around, there was a vacant slot with The Writing Center. I was able to get myself a schedule, so I could have my essay tested and polished. Initially, I was not that satisfied with how my essay turned out because I thought I was not able to able to persuade my audience enough. Working with the consultant, we were able to explicitly address the reader and my essay came off more persuasive. I just had to give my introduction a more persuasive tone so that my readers will know the purpose of why I am writing this essay. Moreover, I was happy to learn that the consultant himself wanted to try to travel for food after reading my essay. Also, we only had to fix the grammar issues throughout my essay.

Figuring out what my title should be was an easy one for me. I just wanted it to be direct. Also, I do not want to be wordy. I just want it simple. Lastly, I want to share this passion with the world, but I do not think I will ever be ready to publish my work. Hopefully, one day I can

find the courage to share this with the entire world because I know that am confident enough to share this with my friends.

Overall, I was happy with how my essay turned out due to the fact that I was able to tell my audience how it made me feel, and how it is going to make them feel. I wanted to tell them my experience in order to show them where I am coming from and why I chose to do such a thing. There are so many things with food and my journey that I badly want to talk about, but I did not want my essay to be solely for me. I want my audience to feel that I am doing this for them. I want to express my excitement about how it is so much fun to do this passion of mine. And I sincerely hope that my audience will get to receive my message by reading this essay.