

# THE ANCIENT MARKETS: GASTRONOMIC DESTINATION IN SUPHANBURI, THAILAND

by

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## ABSTRACT

When considering gastronomic tourism is an opportunity for impressive food and drink experiences, it can be contributed significantly to travel motivation. Thailand is perhaps a country of ‘food paradise’ for the tourists, along with the enormous stunning historic sites, culinary heritage and the friendliness of Thai people. This article emphasizes on the century-old markets in Suphanburi which is one of the central provinces of Thailand. This city has the alive markets where can be represented the mutuality and co-existence of those Thai and Chinese communities. Most Thai tourists remarked upon ตลาดสามชุก : *Ta-lard Sam-Chook*, the popular centuries-old market in Suphanburi of food remembrance as its Thai-Chinese food varieties and the atmosphere of the market which still keep the old styled decoration like in the past century. The aim of this paper is to present the gastronomic sites in Suphanburi, Thailand. The result found that Suphanburi has plenty of the stunning old-century markets with the dazzled existence of Thai-Chinese ancestor’s dishes. This ancient spots can be promoted for those Thai and foreign tourists as the gastronomic destinations along with the glittering temples and museums. The dishes which are always popular among the gastronomic tourists are เป็ดพะโล้: *ped pa-loh*, a pot-stewed duck with Chinese spices, ข้าวห่อใบบัว : *kao ho bai bue*, steamed rice in lotus leaf, and the Chinese strong coffee. Suphanburi is although located next to Bangkok but its remains the characteristic of the ancient communities and represents the identity of an ancestor’s food. Thus, Suphanburi has ability to express a sense of the heritage and cultural identity of the local communities and therefore the authenticity of the experience.

## KEYWORDS

Ancient Market, Gastronomic, Tourism, Suphanburi, Thailand

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism Industry is a part of Hospitality Industry supporting economic nation lead to the business such as accommodations, restaurants, agricultural businesses and so on. Tourism is some kinds of traveling activities from one to the other places and it can be defined that since the started point to the end must have some factors happening as traveling, accommodation and meal (Chutkul, 2008). Smith (2009) also describes in tourism term, it needs to be recognized that the average tourist now want to partake of a wide range of activities, which may or may not include traditional forms of heritage or arts tourism and more tourists are travelling than ever before; therefore the industry needs to cater for a broader range of interests and tastes. Thus, both private sector and government sector must be concerned about the strategic planning for its own business to handle the tourist’s need.

It is necessary to understand the basic nature of the tourism product and the needs and wants of the tourism market. People travel for a wide variety of reasons. The destination visited may be incidental or central to the reason for travel. By the comparison, the choice of destination is generally central to the pleasure traveler because their travel experience is tied to the destination itself (Ritchie, 2003). Thus, the destinations are attracted tourists is an important

where can be the varieties of identity such as culinary heritage, living culture or the unique of tourism marketing. In the marketing and tourism literature, emotional communication strategies, above all storytelling, are considered very successful. However, there is no empirical evidence whether a story or a more informative communication style is more successful in marketing of regional food in tourism (Sidali, 2011).

Gastronomy has become a central part of the tourism experience. In recent years, food tourism has grown considerably becoming one of the most dynamic and creative segments of tourism. Both destinations and tourism businesses have realized the importance of gastronomy order to diversify tourism and stimulate local, regional and national economic development (Modiano, 2012). The nature of this study, this article presents an analysis of gastronomic destination in Suphanburi with the aim to understanding local and food culture and also tourist's motivation to the gastronomic route and destination.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study explored the essence of the ancient markets: gastronomic destination in Suphanburi aims: 1) to seek the gastronomic destination in Suphanburi 2) to study the linking between the local culture and culinary heritage 3) to estimate the tourist's food motivation effected to the traveling 4) to analyse the decision making choosing the destination of tourist.

It provides an explanation of the research design and data collection methodology with: 1) Qualitative method and collected data by non participant observation and in-depth interviews with members of the local people, entrepreneurs also both Thai and Foreigner tourists in term of gastronomic destination. 2) Secondary data analysis to combined exploring food and local culture.

## **THE CENTRAL ROLE OF GASTRONOMIC DESTINATION IN SUPHANBURI**

Thailand has many beautiful tourist attractions and also has many worth of natural resources. The basic geographical feature in any parts of Thailand are different; it has some mountains, waterfalls, caves, rivers and beaches that can be refer to the ingredients for cooking there are nearly dissimilar in distinct places. Hence, the tourist can design the destination suit to their needs. Dwyer (2010) mentions that destination competitiveness is increasingly become an important issue since competition from emerging tourist destinations and the changing tastes of tourist, who are now increasingly better informed and harder to satisfy, are posing a challenge to developed tourist destination. To achieve competitive advantage for its tourism industry, a destination must ensure that its overall attractiveness, and the tourist experience, is superior to that of the many alternative destinations available to potential visitors.

This article puts emphasis to gastronomic destination in Suphanburi where is one of the central provinces of Thailand. It is an ancient city where has extended its culture from Suwannapum Era, Funan, Dhaveravadi, Sriwichai and Ayutthaya and the located on bank of the Tha-Chin River, locally called the Suphanburi River. In the odd day, Suphanburi was a plentifully landscape, all most people live nearby the river. In the present time, the government rebuilds many important historic site for study the local tradition, art and culture and it has managed the structure of transportation to welcome visiting. Suphanburi tourism has divided into 3 groups; natural, historic, Buddhism art and culture for tourist attractions. It has promoted the strongly potential such as local culture, civilization and comfortably transportation of journey (Anuntapong, 1993).

The result found that the gastronomic destination in Suphanburi is the ancient market and the tourist remark upon Sam-Chook where is one of the native market where is its own stories and varieties of food in the market. Buiatti (2011) describes that the pleasure of food is not only based on the taste but on the sharing of it with others, nobody can really enjoy their food without considering that is a universal right and that is each kind of food, even the most common and "simple" presents many histories that could be told; history of a region, history of an identity, history of a population, history of a village, history of family, history of a religion, in the word, history of a culture. The nature of market, Thai people believe it is a local community since the previous to the present day. Sam-Chook is an old-century market where can be represented the mutuality and co-existence of those Thai-Chinese community. Chatpolrak (1986) refers that Thai and Chinese have a good relationship for long time ago with commerce and labor movement. In particular, the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century is the most period that Chinese move to Thailand because of the progress in country needs labors and coincide the inside-problem in China lead them moved to Thailand with their culture by boat. Kanokpongchai (2007) states that Chinese behavior is honest, hard-working, patient, economize and expert in commerce so most Chinese usually lived and worked in the market in basic figure.

Nawigmoon (2011) mentions that in the named of Sam-Chook was found in 1912 and located connect to north and south by Tha-Chin River which can be through to the sea. In the past, Sam-Chook market was the center of commerce because of a good strategically located place. In this case, almost local people are Chinese so this area is mixed between Thai-Chinese Culture. Now, the Sam-Chook developed committee has a planning project to develop Sam-Chook market to be Ecotourism which is a part of Sustainable tourism. In this field, the scopes of this project are started with renovated the old building which still keep the old style decoration like in the past century, managed the delicious food festival aim to be food culture tourism, developed the basic structure for environment. Sam-Chook market is consisting of living Museum where is shown the market stories and the circle presentations, the old coffee shops, the old clock shops, old guesthouses, rattan shops, grocery shops, pharmacies, photo shop, haberdashery, food shops, noodle shops, souvenir shops and so on. They are still kept the old styled decoration like the old time.

In term of food and beverage at Sam-Chook market, there are varieties of Thai-Chinese food ancestor's dishes. The dishes which are always popular among the gastronomic tourists are เป็ดพะโล้: *ped pa-loh*, a pot-stewed duck with Chinese spices, ข้าวห่อใบบัว: *kao ho bai bue*, steamed rice in lotus leaf, and the Chinese strong coffee as it related to Chinese culture. Buiatti (2011) mentions that food is an important part of regional culture and identity, and food production has a strong impact on the landscape and the topic of food specialties is of great interest nowadays and can be considered from different points of view, in particular the relationship between products and territory and the connection between agriculture and tourism. In this result, it has shown that the food culture has an influence to the way of life and the located living and also impact to the visiting learning.

As its old stories about Thai and Chinese, two nationalities has a good relationship after loads of Chinese move to Thailand it would say Thai absorbed Chinese culture and at the same time Chinese had accepted to live as Thai as well for example cooking curry. Kanokpongchai (2007) mentions that Chinese is cooked curry with winter melon but they did not used pumpkin or eggplant as Thai because of Chinese believe that winter melon is a cool-natured herb it can be useful cooking with curry referred to the balance of Yin-Yang belong to Taoism. In this way, Thai absorbed some kinds' method of cooking by stir-fried with wok and steamed with old style steam box. In addition, Thai usually eat dipping with fresh vegetable which are all local vegetable easily to grow up in the garden but Chinese cooked vegetable by stir-fried or boil as soup which are Chinese Kale, Chinese Cabbage and Chinese Chive etc. For the architecture, all the row houses which are used to be shops where has shown the Chinese living culture such as blowhole, partitions door (Baan fiam). Hence, local culture effected to the food their eaten and the food can be shown local identity.

## CONCLUSION

Based on this source and integrating it with investigation carried out directly, the perfected elements of gastronomic tourism must be concerned the surrounding details such as the comfortable transportation and route, local culture which can be describe to the way of food come from and telling the basic life style, the trust and faith, religion and also the way of local life style. In the conversely, each local food can be refer to the ethnic group. After a brief description of the general situation, gastronomic destination is an attractive learning and environment conservation or keeping the old living style will be lead to understanding deeply of the visitors through the community. The finding of the ancient markets: gastronomic destination in Suphanburi can be shown that tourists pay attention not only the places but also the local stories. The motivation of food heritage which is effected to the traveling for learning to understand the local culture and local living since the past to the present time.

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