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## **GASTRONOMIC TOURISM AS A LINK BETWEEN BRAZIL AND UKRAINE**

This work discusses the possibility of incrementing the flux of tourists between Brazil and Ukraine through the strengthening of gastronomic tourism. Therefore, it defends the importance of gastronomic tourism based on Gimenes [1] and explains how Paraná State already benefits from it in regions like Campos Gerais [3]. Finally, Paraná State could increase the already significant relation with Ukraine – considering that 70% of Ukrainian descendants in Brazil live in Paraná, by encouraging gastronomic tourism.

According to Gimenes [1], gastronomic tourism is relevant because involves way more than “just food” – through gastronomy the tourist is able to get to know the culture of a location, its history, and, at the same time, experiment physiological comfort.

This point of view is corroborated by Kivela and Crotts (2015), whom explain there are four main categorizations for understanding tourists' relation with food: recreational, existential, diversionary and experimental gastronomy tourists [2]. By these categories, tourists who are specifically motivated in seeking new gastronomy and increasing their knowledge about it (existential tourist), also those interested in trying new foods because they are *trendy* (experimental tourist). The most conservatives would be the ones in the recreational and diversionary categories, because they usually seek food and beverages similar to what they already know.

Although pointing how differently tourists can experience gastronomy, the authors claim that “gastronomy plays an increasingly deciding role in the way tourists select a destination” [2, p.376].

Referring specifically to gastronomic tourism in Paraná State, Mascarenhas (2009) points how Campos Gerais region benefits by relating

gastronomy and tourism. The results presented in his doctorate dissertation indicate that good gastronomy adds value to the touristic experience [3]. In Castro city, for example, the regional culinary turns touristic sightseeing into a whole sensorial experience.

Regarding Ukrainian influence in Paraná State, the city of Prudentópolis is considered to be “the most Ukrainian city in Brazil”, which presents a great opportunity to increase the connection between the countries through tourism. Taking in consideration Schlütter’s (2003) view that, by eating, we also incorporate culture and symbolic values, promoting Ukrainian gastronomy in Paraná State would increase the interest in Ukrainian country as a whole.

*Keywords:* tourism, food, gastronomy, gastronomic tourism, Brazil.

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