

SAINT-PETERSBURG AS A TOURIST DESTINATION: IN SEARCH FOR GASTRONOMIC BRAND*

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Valery Gordin

Professor National Research University "Higher School of Economics"
in Saint Petersburg,
Head of Laboratory of Economics of Culture
Russia 190008 Saint Petersburg ul. Sojuza Pechatnikov, 16
phone/fax: +7 (812) 315-07-10
e-mail: gordin@hse.spb.ru; vegordin@gmail.com

Julia Trabskaya

Associate Professor St. Petersburg State University of Economics and Finance
Senior Researcher National Research University "Higher School of Economics"
in Saint-Petersburg Laboratory of Economics of Culture
Russia 190008 Saint Petersburg ul. Sojuza Pechatnikov, 16
phone: +7 (921) 912-02-71
fax: +7 (812) 315-07-10
e-mail: trabskaya@yandex.ru

Elena Chernova

Head of Department of the St. Petersburg Trade-Economic Institute.
Russia 194021 Saint Petersburg ul. Novorosiyskaya, 50
Phone: +7 9052123210
e-mail: chernova68@list.ru

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to examine possible ways of building such a component of Saint-Petersburg tourism brand as its gastronomic brand that doesn't play a prominent part in the promotion of this tourist destination at the present time. The search for possible versions of a gastronomic brand is based on the underlying principles of place branding, on the recognition of the crucial part of branding in creating the tourist image of the place, on the research of the gastronomic component of the tourism product and motivation analysis of gastronomic services consumption by tourists.

The growth of interest in gastronomic brands of the place has become a pronounced tendency in recent years. For this purpose they examine the place branding as a whole, its tourism branding with its gastronomic component as well as the structure, content and individual characteristics of gastronomic industry as the key component of the tourism product of the destination. Such an apparent interest in the gastronomic component of the tourism product results from tourists' aspiration to gain a greater understanding of peculiarities and distinctive features of the tourist destination, diversify and intensify their impression of visiting the tourist destination through gastronomic services consumption in particular.

The link between tourism and gastronomy: not bread alone

Modern economy is increasingly becoming experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). One of the paradoxical consequents of this tendency is the aspiration of the person to gain various experiences in the course of satisfaction of not only high level needs (what would be logical) but also basic needs. Considering that tourism is an industry the main goal of which is “producing” experiences it is creation of various experiences that all components of the tourism product aim for. Therefore, while on traveling tourists are interested in food consumption to satisfy their physiological needs as well as to get a more detailed and complete idea of the tourist destination.

Researchers note a number of close links between gastronomy and tourism (Bessiere, 2001; Boyne & Hall, 2004; Fields, 2002; Hjalager, 2002; Jones, & Jenkins, 2002; Kivela, & Crofts, 2006; Long, 2004; Richards, 2002; Scarpato, & Daniele, 2003). Let’s examine some of them.

First of all we should note that the gastronomic factor is an essential part of the tourism product regardless of the type of tourism. The role of this factor is significantly various – in different types of tourism– from most practical in shopping tourism to key in health or eco-tourism. A great proportion of food expenses in the overall structure of tourists’ expenditure (more than 30 % (Boyne & Hall, 2004; Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009)) shows the importance of the gastronomic factor to all categories of tourists. Moreover, tourists tend to cut food expenses least of all.

Examining the interrelation between gastronomy and tourism a number of researchers define gastronomy as not just an important component part of a holiday trip but a key travel motivator (Henderson, 2009; Hjalager, & Richards, 2002; Kivela & Crofts, 2006;

Pearce, 2002). There has been a rapid growth of Culinary Tourism encouraging restaurant-keepers and authentic food manufacturers to actively interact with travel companies in the recent decades (<http://www.culinarytourism.org>).

The important aspect of the research of the interaction between tourism and gastronomy is the examinations of travelers' motivators. A lot of works have been written about travel motivators in general (for example: Baloglu & Uysal 1996; Pearce, Morrison & Rutledge, 1998; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Witt & Wright 1992). However, despite a great number of researches some aspects of tourists' behavior in gastronomic sphere still remain understudied. It makes tourist development control in some tourist destinations rather difficult and demands more goal-oriented marketing efforts. It is these aspects that we are going to investigate in our work.

The classification of tourist motivators: panem et circenses

One of the most complete classifications of tourist motivators is suggested by Fields (2002).

As Fields rightfully mentions «Types of tourism motivators are as numerous as tourists themselves» (Fields, 2002:37). However, Fields has classified the whole mass of motivators dividing them into four groups (the four categories were suggested by McIntosh, Goeldner, & Ritchie (1995) but Fields was the first to use them in relation to gastronomy):

Physical motivators. Nutrition affects physical sensations of a person – taste, smell, sight – much more than other component parts of the tourism product (other kinds of tourist experience do not touch the organs of the senses). There are many aspects of physical motivators. These are healthy nutrition issues, traveling for organic food, diets, “magic” food for instant weight reduction, Mediterranean diet etc.

Cultural motivators include the desire to learn about traditions of the community, to gain personal cultural experience. The best way to do that is to learn about the local cuisine. Trying the traditional food of the region we touch the local culture. A search for authenticity and identity is now one of the main travel motivator and gastronomy has now become an important source of identity construction (Richards, 2002). Some specialists doubt this statement pointing out that even gourmands are not necessarily in search for identity. For example, they can travel from one country to another visiting restaurants mentioned in the Michelin Guide (for example, Michelin restaurants “Ledoyen” in Paris, "Chez Dominique" in Helsinki, “Hélène Darroze” in London, "Jean-Georges" in New-York, "Enoteca Pinchiorri" in Florence) not being attracted to the local food (Blichfeldt & Therkelsen, 2010).

However, culinary authenticity being enhanced by historic, national and social factors cannot be adequately perceived by all tourists, it's only for admirers of extreme eco-tourism who are ready to immerse in most severe living conditions that existed in historic realities of the past. The of tourists content themselves with rather modernized authenticity adapted to habitual taste sensations and gastronomic foundations. Moreover, there are increasing tendencies towards creating new authenticity, for example, Singapore promotes so called “new Asian cuisine” in the tourism market.

Interpersonal motivators are associated with the social function of food. The role of food in people's social life is a subject matter for many scientists. Researchers note that food plays a significant part in family, social relations (Bell and Valentine (1997) in Fields, 2002; Fishler, 1980; Wood, 1995). For example one of the research has shown that respondents rank social function of meals (95%) above quality of food (94%) (Warde &

Martens, 2000 in Fields, 2002). Food also plays an important role in social adaptation and integration processes. Just remember, any real-life situation matches its meal: negotiations with a business partner – business lunch, family – family dinner, love – romantic dinner etc.

Status and prestige motivators. Food is often associated with prestige. Many people pay for prestige, atmosphere, eating in a well-known restaurant. The tendency is currently both going up (there has recently appeared the conception of “status” place visiting of which is obligatory for people who belong to particular – bohemian in the first place – social groups) and down with food becoming more democratic sphere. Nowadays gastronomy tourism is by no means always a search for “fine dining” and expensive food. Tourists often look for a small local restaurant attended by people living in the neighborhood and consider it to be more authentic than an expensive restaurant in the tourist centre of the city.

In our opinion, this classification of tourist motivators needs certain supplement and elaboration.

Thus, in our view, another gastronomy motivator for tourists is their feeling of favorable environment during their stay. Thus, some studies (Babaita, Istodor & Ispas, 2009) show that tourists like immigrants often experience some “cultural shock” visiting a new country or city. In this case, we are not referring to tourists’ search for new experiences, authenticity; on the contrary, the question is “search for habitual”. In this view, ironically, there are also some positive aspects about a tendency towards globalization, towards “McDonaldization” (Ritzer, 1993). The opportunity to immerse in habitual gastronomic environment reduces tourists’ “cultural shock” and promotes their adaptation, they feel more psychologically comfortable. There is much evidence for this tendency because, as practice

shows, while abroad tourists from China and Korea mainly visit their specialty restaurants, for the same reason Americans go to McDonald's and KFC, Italians – to Italian pizzerias and trattorias.. The answer to the question about the right proportion in “gastronomic environment” of the city between food habitual for different categories of tourists according to their permanent place of residence and food authentic for the place may be also the one to the question about the balance between local and global in the gastronomic component of the tourism product of the particular destination.

An important but understudied aspect of gastronomic motivations can be referred to as “search for essential”. Some categories of tourists simply need special food, for them availability of particular food at the given location is not just a question of comfort but the controlling factor of their stay. Kosher food for Jews, lenten fare for fasting Christians, special food for diabetics and people allergic to some kinds of food can be given as examples.

Last not least. In the recent years gastronomic motivators for tourist consumption have been increasingly examined through the prism of creative industries as the way of mass reproduction of particular ethno cultural values in the process of original entertainment. Moreover, the immersion in the authentic ethno cultural environment is becoming a form of edutainment – a system combining educational and entertaining functions that has recently become popular. On the ground of edutainment ideas development a new type of tourism is coming into existence – creative tourism that allows tourists to develop their social and professional abilities making the acquaintance of a new country or place.

What does the place brand taste like?

A number of studies are dedicated to place branding issues. The research “Marketing Places” (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993).) is supposed to be classic and significant in this field. Kotler writes about the necessity of place marketing to “promote a place’s values and image so that potential users are fully aware of its distinctive advantages” (Kotler *et al.*, 1993:18). “The image of the place, - as Kotler writes, - is a simplified generalization of a great number of associations and bits of information connected with the place. It is a product of the mind trying to process and select essential information...” (Kotler, Asplund, Rein, Haider, 2005:205). At the present moment one of the world’s leading authorities on the branding of countries and cities is supposed to be Simon Anholt who wrote a number of works (Anholt, 2005 b, Anholt, 2006, Anholt, 2007, Anholt, 2010) and also established indices "The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index" and "The Anholt-GfK Roper City Brands Index". Place branding has been extensively studied in recent years (Braun, 2008; Dooley & Bowie, 2005; Govers, & Go, 2009; Kavaratzis, 2009; Kolb, 2006; Metaxas, 2003; Mommaas, 2002; Therkelsen, & Halkier, 2008; Zenker, 2011; Zenker, Petersen & Aholt, 2009) with place branding being increasingly put into practice (Paris, Estonia, Perm, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, Berlin).

On the ground of the idea of place branding there has been formed the idea of tourist place branding that, in its turn, has contributed to the formation of the gastronomic brand of the place.

The gastronomic brand is a complex concept that consists of a number of elements.

Gastronomy is a competitive advantage of the place, an additional travel motivator

for tourists, a powerful tool of competition for customers in the international tourism market (Boyne & Hall, 2003; Hall & Mitchell, 2002). Some researchers even suggest that gastronomy is not just a tool in competitive struggle but the most important, often key factor of tourists' decision making (Pearce, 2002).

Gastronomy can be referred to as the tourist resource of the place (Fields, 2002). Whether this resource becomes an additional or primary one depends on a number of factors, largely on building and promoting the gastronomic brand of the country or city.

Local cuisine is regarded as one of the sources of place identity (Richards, 2002), as a marker of the tourist destination. Munsters (1994) defines gastronomy as a part of the cultural tourism product.

It is commonly known that UNESCO is carrying out the project "Gastronomic city". To win the title a city has to agree with a number of characteristics that, in point of fact, are elements of the city brand:

- "well-developed gastronomy that is characteristic of the urban centre and/or region;
- vibrant gastronomy community with numerous traditional restaurants and/or chefs;
- endogenous ingredients used in traditional cooking;
- local know-how, traditional culinary practices and methods of cooking that have survived industrial/technological advancement;
- traditional food markets and traditional food industry;
- tradition of hosting gastronomic festivals, awards, contests and other broadly-targeted means of recognition;
- respect for the environment and promotion of sustainable local products;

- nurturing of public appreciation, promotion of nutrition in educational institutions and inclusion of biodiversity conservation programs in cooking schools curricula”

(<http://portal.unesco.org/culture/>).

These component parts of the brand should be supplemented with "... cookbook and kitchen gadget stores, culinary tours and tour leaders, culinary media and guide books, caterers, wineries, breweries, distilleries, food growers and manufacturers, culinary attractions and more" according to the International Culinary Tourism Association (<http://www.culinarytourism.org>). Supermarkets are undeservingly out of the list but we should not underestimate their importance in the perception of the local color by tourists (Blichfeldt & Therkelsen, 2010). Even more essential component parts of the gastronomic brand are, in our opinion, local food markets. It is there that tourists make the acquaintance of the whole variety of food stuffs produced in the given region, ways of storage and keeping agricultural products and also learn about taste preferences of the locals buying food for plane fare there.

We should not forget that the heart of the gastronomic brand is recipes, cooking traditions and local ingredients. It should be mentioned that the use of local ingredients is of great importance for building the place brand. Thus, one of the studies (Murphy, Smith, 2007) shows the important part of chefs for promoting local ingredients in the local tourism market. However, it must be emphasized that this tendency is characteristic of the countries where the role of chefs' personality in creating and promoting the image of individual restaurants is strongly marked. But in Russia the key figure in planning the image of a restaurant is its owner. They, in their turn, invite a chef according to their restaurant

conception born in advance.

Gastronomy can be referred to as intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO has added Mexican cuisine, the Mediterranean diet, the French cuisine to the world's intangible heritage list (<http://www.unesco.org/culture>). Being cultural heritage cuisine enables tourists to gain unique experience (Grew, 2004). Gastronomy reflects the character and mentality of the native population; it assimilates myths, tales, local history, traditions, religious characteristics, family relations etc. Leigh (2000:10) gives a number of examples: «Japanese love raw fish. Chinese eat dogs and monkeys. Moslems and Jews do not eat pork. Hindus do not eat beef. French eat frogs, snails, horses and raw meat. Arabs eat camel meat and drink camel milk. Aborigines eat earth grubs. Greeks drink sheep's milk». In our turn, we draw your attention to the fact that Russians and particularly Ukrainians eat lard – fat of specially bred pork without heating treatment.

The gastronomic factor: from gastronomes to ascetics

The role of the gastronomic factor in the formation of tourist preferences for some places differs. Moreover, if for some tourists the gastronomic factor can become the key for creating a separate type of tourism, for others it doesn't play an important part even in the general assessment of the tourism product quality. Our attention has been drawn by the classification of different types of tourism suggested by Hall, Mitchell (2005) and based on the significance of the gastronomic component for creating different types of tourism. Thus, they suggest four types of tourism:

- “gastronomy, gourme, cousine tourism” – the gastronomic factor is of great

significance for tourists (the main purpose of travel is to visit particular restaurants, food markets, wine cellars etc);

- “culinary tourism” – the culinary component is of medium-level significance for travelers (this type of tourism involves visiting culinary festivals, restaurants and other places of that kind just as a part of travel, this activity is rather important for tourists but ranges with a number of other interests);
- “rural/urban tourism” – gastronomy is of low significance (visiting restaurants is an unimportant, non-essential part of travel);
- “travel and tourism” – low or even no interest in the gastronomic factor (tourists go to restaurants just because they need to eat).

Acknowledging the importance of taking the gastronomic factor into consideration while creating different types of tourism the authors of the paper developed their own classification of types of tourism connected with the given factor:

1. Professional gastronomy or educational gastronomy tourism. Here we refer to specialists who visit a country (region) to do special training courses on sommelier and chefs programmes (Culinary Art Academy "Le Cordon Blue", International Culinary Center "Interchef" in Israel, Culinary Art Academy «César Ritz», Education Center by Andrei Dellos in Russia, The French Culinary Institute in the USA, ICIF – Institute of Cuisine, Culture and Oenology of the Regions of Italy, to share experience (for example, such programmes are carried out by St-Petersburg restaurant group “Our in the city” in association with Finnish and Estonian colleagues) or to get training from a particular specialist in a particular restaurant.

2. Tourism oriented towards gastronomes and gastronomic aesthetes. The gastronomic motivator is the principle and sometimes the only motivator for such travel. It is the national cuisine, a particular restaurant or even a specific dish (for example, dishes made of St Peter's fish from the Sea of Tiberias or Peruvian seviche made of local kinds of fish) that are of great value in this case. Culinary connoisseurs of that kind have little or no interest in the culture and history of the country. This type of tourism can be referred to as niche tourism because it concerns limited groups of likeminded people. (Novelli, 2005). The biggest attraction to such travelers is "haute cuisine" restaurants. While on the subject of such restaurants it is impossible not to mention a research on Italian "haute cuisine" based on the opinions of restaurant-keepers whose restaurants received Michelin stars and who are the most influential personalities in Italian "haute cuisine" industry. The research subject is the most important issue of "haute cuisine" – "paradoxes between creativity and control, creative freedom and organizational processes" (Slavich, Cappetta, Salvemini, 2011:1).

3. Creative tourism. Gastronomic component is strongly marked in creative tourism because tourists express themselves through their culinary skills and want to form groups on this ground.

4. Tourism oriented towards admirers of different types of cuisine with different levels of "immersion" in other tourist activities. For example, it is characteristic of Indian cuisine whose admirers learn about culinary as well as behavioral traditions of the country and its separate confessions; of Chinese one as learning martial arts involves learning a suitable nutrition system.

5. Gastronomy tourism – tourists are interested in the local cuisine as a part of the national (regional) culture. Gastronomy is important to such tourists on a level with other component

parts of travel (scenery, places of interest, traditions etc). It is this category of travelers that appears to be the principle consumer of Saint-Petersburg gastronomic brand that has its culture-historical rather than culinary characteristics.

The gastronomic brand: goals and developing procedure

Gastronomic brand development requires following up a specific procedure of managerial actions. We suggest considering the given procedure.

The first stage is *defining strategic goals of gastronomic branding*.

In the authors' mind, the goals of gastronomic brand development can be:

- Strengthening the prestige of the region that has the potential for powerful gastronomic brands in general;
- Strengthening export positions of some or other food and alcoholic products;
- Increasing the investment attractiveness of the industries producing goods potential to become place brands;
- Increasing the tourist attractiveness of the region on the basis of integrating gastronomic brands into tourism products of the destination;
- Expanding a range of tourist attractions on the basis of different forms of consumption of goods and services potential to become place brands;
- Creating auxiliary facilities for customizing tourism consumption by means of acquiring branded goods as a souvenir.

It must be emphasized that in some cases gastronomic brand developers pursue practically all the aims listed above (for example, in case of branding French and Italian

wines, German and Belgian beer etc). However, there are examples of well-known brands that do not take the form of some or other forms of tourism consumption. Thus, Vologda butter brand is extremely popular in Russia and supposed to be the best Russian butter. But this brand is totally out of the picture of tourism products offered by the given region. Another example we will turn our attention to hereafter is Saint-Petersburg gastronomic brands that are not practically associated with any foods or beverages being tourist-oriented services by catering enterprises.

The second stage is *marketing research*.

It must be emphasized that marketing researches on gastronomic brands are rather special and complex because the considerable part of their target audiences is outside the given region and even the country. The above-mentioned divergence of gastronomic branding goals also complicates the matter.

The closest one to gastronomic branding in terms of methods of research and assessment is reputed to be place branding with its technique of place brand assessment on basis of the special index «Anholt-GMI Nation Brands Index» that gives nation brand assessment on basis of six main characteristics: tourism; export; people; culture and heritage; investments and immigration, governance. “The Anholt-GMI Nation Brands Index measures the power and appeal of a nation’s brand image, and tells us how consumers around the world see the character and personality of the brand. The nation brand is the sum of people’s perception of a country across six areas of national competence. Together, these areas make the Nation Brand” (Anholt, 2005 a).

The third stage is *identifying the main subjects of gastronomic branding*.

Besides such obvious and traditional subjects of the given process as territory

administration specialists, marketing and branding experts, representatives from alliances and associations of branded goods and services producers, representatives from creative industries (Gnedovsky, 2005) and the creative class (Florida, 2004) on the whole should take part in it. The gastronomic brand must be viewed as the result of work of not only agricultural and food industries but also the broad range of creative industries. In this connection it must be emphasized that it seems logical to regard chefs of key restaurants building the gastronomic brand of the place as the agents of creative industries.

At that, as in the case of place branding where the coordination of efforts is the principle success factor for this type of branding (Braun, 2008:88) goal-oriented interaction of all subjects of gastronomic branding mentioned above is a guarantee of reaching stated goals.

The fourth stage is *creating the gastronomic brand concept*.

The gastronomic brand concept must include the analysis of those unique food and alcoholic products that can win the nationwide or even worldwide market. It is of great importance because there are special foods or dishes in practically every region but only a small part of them has a chance to become a genuine gastronomic brand. It is on the stage of creating the concept that it must be defined what products and services have clear competitive advantages, a sufficient resource base and attractiveness to potential customers. The gastronomic brand concept must be interconnected with investment programs of regional development (or even be their integrated part), programs of individual industries development and, first of all, programs of regional tourism development.

In the following the above-mentioned procedure of gastronomic brand development must be supplemented with its implementation and promotion programs.

On the way toward the gastronomic brand: the case study

Saint-Petersburg is one of the biggest tourist centers in Europe that attracts tourists with its historical-cultural heritage in the first place. Saint-Petersburg culture is characterized by its considerable scales as well as high professionalism of involved specialists. There are 7783 national cultural heritage sites in the city and UNESCO put the historic centre of Saint-Petersburg and groups of monuments related to it in the List of world heritage sites. There are 148 museums, 62 theatres and 17 concert organizations working in the city.

Saint-Petersburg tourism brand is based on its several competitive advantages:

- Saint-Petersburg historic centre is one of the biggest and most complete in Europe.
- There are big architectural ensembles, a clear architectural plan and a backbone waterway.
- Unique natural features - “white nights.”
- A wide range of palaces, mansions and religious structures remaining since the time when Saint-Petersburg had the status of the capital city in the Russian Empire.
- A unique ring of imperial and grand ducal palaces around Saint-Petersburg.
- Rich collections of fine arts.
- World-famous creative teams in the sphere of symphonic, opera and choreographic art.
- The rich (despite the fact that the city is relatively new) history and the broad reflection of the city in world-famous masterpieces of literature, music and fine arts (Gordin, 2009).

Largely due to the world-famous cultural image of the city, in our opinion, the level of development and promotion of the whole brand of Saint-Petersburg as a tourist destination in the inbound tourism service market is considerably superior to the city

gastronomic brand alone, besides, the gastronomic component of the whole tourism brand is not clearly defined and discourages attracting tourists to the city.

At the same time, the statistic analysis of the level of the development of Saint-Petersburg catering industry shows its considerable scales and steady growth rates. Thus, the total number of public catering enterprises in Saint-Petersburg by the end of the year 2010 made up 6,8 ths. while at the end of the previous year the total number was 6,6 ths. In 2010 the turnover of all public catering enterprises increased 10 % compared to the previous year and totaled 1,1 billion euros (Business Petersburg, 2011).

To identify the best prospect directions of building and developing Saint-Petersburg gastronomic brand we conducted an expert survey in which specialists in the sphere of public catering, tourism, place marketing and branding took part. The total number of people surveyed is 18.

The research subject was the level of impact that the gastronomic factor has on the attractiveness of the city to tourists, strengths and weaknesses in the development of the gastronomic brand of the city.

We suggest the theoretical and empirical interpretation of the research subject, that help for better interconnecting goals and results of the research.

----- **Insert Table 1 about here** -----

To process the data obtained in the course of the research we used application software for qualitative data analysis Atlas.ti.

The experts have noted that the restaurant business in our city is well-developed

with many enterprises of various levels appearing. However, the quality of food and service is not always up to standard. Thus, in the experts' opinion, catering enterprises are not tourist-oriented, multi-language menus are not always available and foreign tourists often lack customized service they expect to get coming to Saint-Petersburg.

All the experts have agreed that the restaurant business in our city stimulates tourism product development encouraging the rise in the city's attractiveness. However, low quality and poor service provided by some catering enterprises can damage our city's image. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain and raise the level of Saint-Petersburg restaurant business using the levers of public and state control. The matter is that in high season in conditions of feverish demand for all kinds of tourist services sole factors of market regulation of public catering enterprises' work are often ineffective.

As for Saint-Petersburg gastronomic brand practically all the experts have claimed that at the present moment our city has no gastronomic brand as such. Some of them result that from the dominance of foreign cuisine in our city others have noted that since its foundation Saint-Petersburg has been a European city therefore it does not have its authentic gastronomic brand.

Assessing the role of public catering enterprises in the existing tourism product of Saint-Petersburg the experts have allotted them one of the main parts in building Saint-Petersburg gastronomic image supposing that in conditions of experience economy nutrition is of vital importance for creating fond memories about visiting the city.

Among the restaurants contributing to building Saint-Petersburg gastronomic image the experts have mentioned medium level restaurants ("Teremok", "Dostoevsky", "Troyka") as well as haute cuisine restaurants ("Europe" "Astoria" "Palkin" "Russkaya

rumochnaya № 1”).

In the experts’ opinion the level of satisfaction with the gastronomic component of Saint-Petersburg tourism product is not high. The experts have named the following reasons for tourists’ dissatisfaction: firstly, an almost general lack of information about restaurants, especially Russian cuisine restaurants, tourists simply do not know where they can try dishes of Russian cuisine they have heard a lot about. Secondly, the lack of service up to standard: tourists are used to a different level of service. These two items only refer to individual tourists, group tourists often have no choice, and they eat where their tour operator brings them. They are mostly dissatisfied with a narrow range of dishes on offer.

Among the difficulties in building and promoting Saint-Petersburg gastronomic brand the experts have named the following reasons:

Firstly, the lack of individuality in most catering enterprises in our city, a lot of fast-food enterprises appearing due to entrepreneurs’ desire to cut costs and increase profits.

Secondly, the lack of Russian chefs who know and love their national cuisine.

Thirdly, a number of bureaucratic barriers and law imperfections inhibiting the restaurant business development.

Fourthly, badly trained line personnel often unable to provide service up to standard.

Fifthly, depressive social background, significant income differentiation of the population (most Peterburgers can’t afford to go to restaurants regularly), as a result restaurants making main profit in high tourist season. A dramatic drop in restaurant attendance in low tourist season causes staff reduction and turnover and finally a drop in service quality.

Despite the key role of tourists in the functioning of restaurant business in Saint-Petersburg the experts have failed to name tourist programs using catering enterprises attendance as tourist attraction.

Among catering enterprises the most popular with tourists the experts have named medium level fast-food restaurants, coffee-shops, small cafes, Russian cuisine restaurants. The experts believe that to encourage the rise in the city's attractiveness it is necessary to establish the following enterprises: medium level national restaurants with Russian color, Russian style buffets. Some experts have noted that at a time when the market is saturated enough it is worth maintaining quality and service up to standard in the existing enterprises rather than establishing new ones.

In our research we have given our particular attention to the search for new forms of interaction among restaurants, travel companies and the city authorities. The experts' opinions on the subject have divided. Some experts believe that the city authorities should encourage the restaurant business development and support it in every way as it happens to the accommodation business in Saint-Petersburg; others think that "business is business and the local authority doesn't have to provide assistance". As new forms of interaction they have suggested the following ones: cutting the number of middle people between travel companies and restaurants, organizing culinary competitions and encouraging restaurants to participate in them, creating municipal programs of the restaurant business support, creating associations of chefs and restaurant directors, choosing a single development strategy in the frame of the city's promotion, increasing the number of contacts among the restaurant business, travel companies and the city authorities, reducing the lack of tourist information about the sphere of public catering in the city.

Preconditions for building the gastronomic brand of Saint-Petersburg

The gastronomic factor plays an important role in building and promoting nation and place brands in the tourist market. As is known, the given factor includes several components.

- Producing unique food and alcoholic products.
- Providing the opportunity to buy high-quality products and/or taste them directly from producers.
- Developing the chain of public catering enterprises creating additional attractions to tourists visiting the given destination.

In case of Saint-Petersburg it is the third component of gastronomic factor in tourism development that may play an important role. Despite the presence of developed food industry (first of all, beery, confectionery, dairy) the city lacks its own unique brands known world-wide. Branding food and alcoholic products the most popular among tourists – caviar, vodka - is nation-wide with no regional specificity. Therefore, the impact of the gastronomic factor shows itself in organizing the attractive system of public catering enterprises.

The matter is further complicated by the fact that Russian cuisine does not have a strong image in the gastronomic world map being secondary to French cuisine that had a great influence on it in the XVIII- XIX centuries.

In the course of the research the whole number of tourist-oriented public catering enterprises in Saint-Petersburg has been divided into four categories:

- Public catering enterprises specializing in Russian national cuisine.
- Public catering enterprises specializing in national cuisine of nations visiting Saint-Petersburg for tourism purpose.
- Enterprises of international public catering chains.
- Coffee-shops of different types and international character.

It should be mentioned that Saint-Petersburg being cosmopolitan in itself does not have authentic Russian traditions in respect of public catering. In the overwhelming majority of restaurants and cafes self-positioning as specializing in Russian cuisine visitors are served with dishes of cuisine “a la russe” established in the middle of XIX - beginning of XX centuries. The tendency is increasing due to analogous stylized design and entertaining programs corresponding with embedded stereotypes about Russian culture by foreign tourists. It must be emphasized that the given category of public catering enterprises is entirely oriented towards foreign tourists especially in high tourist season lasting in Saint-Petersburg from April till October.

An interesting niche in the catering service market in Saint-Petersburg is filled by cafes and restaurants specializing in foreign cuisine. Many of these public catering enterprises are rather attractive to tourists from “their” countries. It is fairly typical of tourists from China, South Korea and Italy. There is a wide choice of these national cuisines in the city of different price brackets and with account of regional specific features (that is typical of Chinese and Italian cuisines), therefore, tourists from the given countries, individual as well as group ones, have a great choice of choosing a place to go among public catering enterprises.

As for international chain restaurants, it must be emphasized that at the present moment the best part of brands spread world-wide is available in Saint-Petersburg. They definitely provide comfortable tourist service especially at the places of mass tourist flows. At that, the given public catering enterprises are visited by groups of foreign tourists relatively less often than non-chain restaurants. In some experts' opinion, it results from latent economic interrelations between non-chain restaurants and travel companies. The expert survey has also revealed that chain restaurants are more popular with individual Russian tourists than foreign ones.

The last-mentioned category of public catering enterprises - coffee-shops – makes an important contribution to creating an attractive image of Saint-Petersburg among tourists. It must be emphasized that in the recent years our city has won the title of “coffee capital of Russia” as there are a great number of different coffee-shops in the city. This fact is mainly appreciated by Russian tourists as many Russian regions lack such public catering enterprises with tourists as a social behavioral group being used to consumption a lot of coffee.

However, from the point of view of building the city's gastronomic brand it is public catering enterprises promoting Russian national cuisine that have been traditionally regarded as real players. In tour operator's view, it was their role to create the image of Saint-Petersburg as “authentic Russian city”. In our opinion, there is some confusion of ideas in it. The case is that the above-mentioned public catering enterprises oriented towards different categories of tourists create the image of Saint-Petersburg as friendly and comfortable for tourists. On the contrary, Russian cuisine restaurants do not represent its own specific features of Saint-Petersburg's cuisine doing with exploiting the nation-wide

gastronomic brand.

Generally, considering the results of the researches carried out the authors have come to the conclusion that the gastronomic factor does not play an important role in building the city's brand in the international tourist market but at the same time the system of public catering does not diminish the city's tourist attractiveness. Thus, we have revealed an urgent need for building a complete gastronomic brand of Saint-Petersburg.

To check our assumption that national cuisine restaurants are oriented towards tourists we have examined the sites of 72 randomly chosen restaurants of that type. From the compared restaurants 46 position themselves as national cuisine restaurants and are presented as following:

1. Russian cuisine – 20,16% (28 restaurants).
2. Italian cuisine – 7,2% (10 restaurants).
3. German cuisine – 3,6% (5 restaurants).
4. Korean cuisine – 2,16% (3 restaurants).

However, as the analysis has shown, even among these restaurants and cafes the proportion of tourist-oriented services is very low. For a considerable extent it results from poor managing and marketing of the given enterprises as most of them provide tourist service but fail to do that up to standard (Tabl. 2).

----- **Insert Table 2 about here** -----

Saint-Petersburg: in search for its gastronomic brand

Drafting proposals on building Saint-Petersburg gastronomic brand we proceed from the fact that the main contents of its whole brand is the city of great history, culture and architecture. The gastronomic brand must be in the midway of the given whole brand not just strengthening it but creating additional motivators for visiting it among separate types of tourists.

In the course of the conducted expert survey we worked out three components of the gastronomic brand that are able to create the attractiveness of the city to different types of tourists.

The first component of the gastronomic brand, in our opinion, must exploit the image of Saint-Petersburg as a former capital of a great rich empire. It is its architectural ensembles, parks and palaces with their rich collections created when the city was a capital that underlie the tourism brand of Saint-Petersburg. This component has been actively exploited by organizers of various festivals and special occasions (for example, in the frame of such festivals as “Saint-Petersburg palaces”, “Russian Imperial Gardens”, “New Year Tsarskoselsky ball” and others) in the recent years. Therefore, it would be logical to extend the given component of Saint-Petersburg tourism brand to the gastronomic component of the tourism product. It is all the more logical as in the recent years Saint-Petersburg has acquired the reputation of rather expensive tourist destination that makes it attractive to medium-income and high-income categories of tourists in the first place. However, as the experts have pointed out, so far there have been practically no “haute cuisine” restaurants in the city. Thus, in the authors’ opinion, the gastronomic brand of Saint-Petersburg might be “Imperial Petersburg cuisine”. It must correspond with the following main features:

- Premises with luxurious interior historically associated with the tsarist court or Russian aristocracy if possible.
- The menu based on culinary sources of end XIX – beginning XX centuries with the emphasize on the “set-meal” menu typical of the tsarist court and high aristocracy rather than the “a la carte” menu. Compile meals of 2-3 or more finely selected dishes. Select a beverage to accompany every course. It is guests’ choice whether to order the beverage or not but recommendations should be made.
- Recruiting chefs of adequately high professional standard.
- Recruiting head-waiters, waiters and sommeliers having acquired not only professional skills but also basic acting ones.

Suchlike restaurant attendance must become a kind of performance memorable for fine dining as well as high standard of service culture.

The second component of the gastronomic brand, in our opinion, must be reasonably related to great artistic history of Saint-Petersburg throwing a bridge between the bohemia life at the end XIX – beginning XX centuries and modern artistic life. The case is that in the above-noted historical period known as “silver age” cafes that became the centers of the city’s artistic life gained great popularity; outstanding poets, artists, stage directors and actors many of whom later became world-famous visited them. Cafes of “silver age” were like-kind literary-artistic clubs. In “Brodachaya sobaka” there were entirely music or dramatic or poetic soirees. Here is the description of such restaurants’ life given by one of the contemporaries: “Masked balls, plastic arts soirees, celebrations in honor of poets, dramatists, actors and writers, variety revues, gala-concerts, “magic” soirees, singing and

dancing parties, poetic soirees, lectures and public disputes, exhibitions, special banquets and tablefuls – all that lived in continuous motion being interrupted in summer months only” (Yuhimenko, Falaleeva, 2007:3).

Some of the famous cafes of that time (“Brodachaya sobaka”, “Priut komedianta” and others) are being revived in Saint-Petersburg in the recent years. But to make a real contribution to the city’s gastronomic brand such components as “silver age” cafes must offer not only culinary pastiche in the spirit of the age but also the reconstruction of luxuriant artistic atmosphere that the above-noted cafes were famous for. In our opinion, besides tourists attracted to various artistic programmes among visitors of suchlike cafes there must be people with the same interests who know and take an interest in each other, art people and art patrons supporting them. The atmosphere of creative communication, discussion and free self-expression must become an attraction to many categories of tourists and creative young people, in the first place.

The third component of the gastronomic brand is smelt – small fish inhabiting the Neva, Ladoga Lake and the Finnish Bay. On the one hand, it has a strong place authenticity that makes it the only exclusively Petersburg’s gastronomic product but, on the other hand, smelt as an event attraction in the form of “Smelt festival”, proper gastronomic weeks in restaurants and cafes can be used only during the short period (no longer than 1-2 spring months). There is no doubt that being a true low-income folk dish in the cuisine of all the peoples inhabiting the Nevsky region smelt can become a popular gastronomic brand oriented towards mass categories of tourists. But the limited time factor and also a narrow range of ways of cooking it do not make for optimistic forecasts about wide promotion of the given component of the gastronomic brand in the tourism market.

However, some specialists believe that since smelt can be easily kept frozen it is possible to organize “Smelt recollection” week in, say, the middle of summer – the beginning of autumn. There has also appeared Latin American smelt but experts say that it tastes rather different from local authentic fish. For tourists, however, who are not good at taste peculiarities smelt theme can be used by restaurants all year round.

Conclusions

The paper made by the authors on the basis of analyzing contemporary approaches to building gastronomic brands as a component of the place tourism brand proves the necessity and possible ways of building the gastronomic brand of Saint-Petersburg. So far it has gained no attention in the programs of tourism development in Saint-Petersburg. Therefore, a need has arisen in new managerial approaches to building the city’s gastronomic brand and that’s what the authors have tried to prove working out a proper procedure. The authors’ suggestions are based on studying a vast mass of special literature as well as the results of the expert surveyed. All that has enabled us to make a great step towards building the gastronomic brand of such a popular tourist destinations as Saint-Petersburg.

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TABLES

TABLE 1 - Interpretation of the subject of the research.

The theoretical interpretation of the research subject	The empirical interpretation of the research subject.
The Gastronomic factor as a component of Saint-Petersburg tourism brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of the restaurant business development in Saint-Petersburg as a tourist centre • The role of existing catering enterprises in Saint-Petersburg tourism brand • Availability/unavailability of restaurants contributing to building Saint-Petersburg gastronomic image • The search for new forms of interaction among restaurants, travel companies and the city authorities in order to increase Saint-Petersburg attractiveness to tourists
Tourists' satisfaction with the gastronomic component of Saint-Petersburg tourism product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tourists like/dislike • What catering enterprises tourist lack • Differences between Russian and foreign tourists
Saint-Petersburg gastronomic brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existence of Saint-Petersburg gastronomic brand • The role of catering enterprises in building and promoting this brand • Availability of "Petersburg-branded" dishes and foods • Difficulties in building and promoting the city gastronomic brand •

TABLE 2 - Breakdown of the restaurants

based on the level of orientation for tourists service.

The characteristics of restaurants	The number of restaurants of the given type	The share of restaurants of the given type among all the surveyed restaurants.	Commentary
Tourist-oriented restaurants and coffee-shops	26	18,72%	Have an English menu, serve tourist groups
Restaurants with tourist-oriented services	6	4,32%	Special tourist menu, provide catering
Restaurants with additional tourist attractions туристов (special music, special services etc)	12	9,36%	Folk groups, live music, concert programs