Culinary tourism, the newest crop in Southern Italy’s farms and pastures
Breeding the bitterness out of this promising new economy

Le tourisme culinaire, la plus récente récolte des fermes et pâturages du sud de l’Italie; éliminant l’amertume de cette nouvelle économie prometteuse

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Introduction

Close your eyes, and picture Italy... Maybe a green rolling countryside with a villa perched on top of a hill comes to mind, the approach lined with tall, thin cypress trees, the air hazy in the hot afternoon light. Maybe there is a vineyard, a steaming plate of spaghetti, or an ancient shepherd moving his sheep across a pasture, or a loud gathering of people around a long dinner table that will feature fantastic food, wine, and laughter that stretches late into the evening. These images are shared by so many perspective travelers because various forms of media, from movies and books, to the advertisements of travel companies, build a stereotyped narrative that creates expectations about what Italy will be like (Chrzan 2008). Travelers make decisions based on these expectations, regardless of their validity: don’t go to Napoli because it’s dirty and crime riddled, live la Dolce Vita in Tuscany, check out the southern peninsula to experience a place that is stuck in time. Tourists choose to go somewhere based on their interests and how they envision spending their hard-earned leisure time. But the expectations that tourists bring with them have the power to shape what they actually experience, a stereotyped, and self-fulfilling prophesy instead of unexpected authenticity. Destinations transformed by and for tourists can become less than pleasant places for residents to live, as they have to contend with crowds, increased prices of goods and services, and a degradation of the built environment (Russo 2001). This tradeoff is particularly poignant as regions off the beaten tourist path in southern
Italy seek economic and cultural salvation by embracing the tourism industry, and outcomes can leave a bitter taste in locals’ mouths. How can tourism be shaped to meet the needs of all stakeholders? How can the expectations of tourists, with money to spend in communities that need it, be met while fulfilling the needs of locals, who gamble that heritage tourism, and specifically a focus on food heritage, will dignify and invigorate these traditions in a modern world? For tourism to be part of sustainable economic development more than just hard economic indicators must be considered; a critical and honest evaluation of how culinary tourism can both validate and tarnish these traditions and places is required. This paper considers this in the emerging culinary tourism economy of the southern peninsula by evaluating what can be learned from the experiences of food destinations like Tuscany, a region of Italy now renowned as a culinary tourism destination but that until recently was better known for its poverty (Chrzan 2008). Tuscany serves as a useful lens through which to consider contemporary developments in culinary tourism in Puglia and Campania, regions of southern Italy trying to address similar social, cultural and economic challenges and actively courting tourists. While this paper does not deliver new insights with respect to broader topics of interest in culinary tourism studies, they are new in the context of the southern Italian peninsula, and no less relevant. Although Puglia has been a vacation destination for northern Italians for some time, its fairly recent “discovery” by British and North American tourists is shaping the Tourist Rush that is sweeping the region. Billed as a quiet, untouched, rural paradise where people continue to live lives relatively untouched by the “modern world”, the region is quickly becoming a top travel destination. This makes a critical evaluation of the costs and benefits of tourism very timely; the hope is that learning from other regions such as Tuscany may provide guidance on how to better balance the tourism equation in favor of local interests.

Tourism is big business, and forms a significant part of Italy’s economy. In 2015, foreign tourists spent almost 36 billion euros, and are coming in increasing numbers (Farnesina n.d.); notably, American visitors increased by 10% in that year over 2014 statistics. Tourism accounts for 11.8% of the national GDP and is directly responsible for 12.8% of jobs nationally (Farnesina n.d.). Until very recently, most of the 40 million tourists that visit Italy annually have concentrated their interest (and money) in key destinations like Rome, Venice, and the beaches of northern Italy (Lazzeretti and Capone 2008). Under the broad umbrella of tourism, culinary tourism is experiencing huge growth globally (UNWTO 2012); statistics from 2013 identify almost three-quarters of the US adult population as leisure travelers, people who have enjoyed at least one vacation in the past year, and 77% of them are classified as culinary travelers (Mandala Research 2017). This niche market is an opportunity for other regions to attract tourists by commodifying the rural experience and traditional foodways. Following the lead of Long (2004: 21), the term culinary tourism is used here to describe the “intentional, exploratory participation of the foodways of the other”. A culinary tourist is someone whose itinerary is intentionally shaped by the desire to learn about the culinary traditions of a new place, to engage all the senses and be immersed in the experience. The term foodways is useful to describe food holistically, extending beyond the food on ones plate to include its consumption, preparation, acquisition, production, knowledge, and the landscape that it shapes and is grown in (Long 2004). Appreciating a foodway as a culinary tourist is about participating in the experience rather than just viewing it and consuming it, grasping the integrated physical, social, cultural, economic, spiritual, and geographic components of food (Adema 2013).
Since the 1950s economists have argued that becoming part of the global market is an effective strategy for poverty reduction (Sassoon 1986): modernize, experience higher levels of material wealth, and all will be well. This is a key motivation in rural tourism; communities struggling with the challenges of high unemployment and limited economic opportunity are throwing open their doors and welcoming the world. But to integrate into this global market you have to have something to sell, and someone who wants to buy it. Since the distinctiveness of place is key in terms of attracting visitors to a destination, it is not surprising that regional foods have much to offer in terms of branding, which Hall and Mitchell (2002) call “touristic terroir”. Regional foodways provide distinctive tourist appeal because they must be experienced in situ, building regional brands that have the potential to “reinforce local food economies, encourage the conversation of food and biodiversity, and help sustain local identities” (Hall, Mitchell and Sharples 2003: 29; Peters 1997), all of which are beneficial to locals and should lead to positive tourism development for all stakeholders. The growing interest in culinary tourism comes at a time when food systems are experiencing huge change. An increasingly industrialized and globalized food chain challenges the connections to food production, the environment, and fellow human beings. Urban dwellers with food accessed from a homogenized, anonymous system can forget that foods have seasons, that producing food takes great effort and knowledge, and that aspects of the landscape in which a food is produced can actually be tasted in the food itself. Since travel is generally promoted as a contrast to daily routine (MacCannell 1976), and images of tourist destinations woo visitors by being distinctive, unusual, and exotic, traditional foodways that seem to maintain essential connections between food, family, community and landscape are very appealing. Communities where local food systems still appear to be relatively intact are attractive to tourists because they are both exotic in comparison to urban realities, and considered authentic, something tourists desire as part of their experience. The use of food and heritage in destination branding is powerful in promoting an “authentic” experience; as National Geographic travel advertises, the best holiday is one where the visitor gains an insider’s perspective by experiencing things like food that reflect the local character (National Geographic n.d.).

Another buzz word in the travel industry is “transformation” (Chrzan 2008; MacCannell 1976; Urry 2002): travel slogans promise that “everything is better on vacation”, where you can be reinvigorated by stepping out of your regular routine and experiencing places that stimulate, awe, and excite the senses. While the personal transformation of visitors is well recognized, what is well studied but less often discussed beyond academic circles is the considerable power that tourism wields to transform what it is consuming. The phenomenon of tourists constructing stereotypical representations of destinations and then expecting them when they visit is called the Tourist Gaze (Urry 2002). In general, critical tourism studies reveal that leisure travelers want to be amused and entertained, experience the beautiful, have a sense of fellowship with people, satisfy curiosity and participate in history (MacCannell 1976; UNWTO 2014; Urry 2002). This wish list shapes the anticipation of tourists and their expectations about their experience. It also sets in motion a dynamic between visitor and host that has the potential to compromise one to please the other. Add the vulnerabilities of a struggling economy, and this dynamic is amplified.

Tourism has embraced the idea of commodifying elements of cultural landscapes to make them appealing to visitors (Bunten 2008). Since tourism studies repeatedly indicate that tourists want an “authentic experience” in keeping with their pre-
conceived ideas (MacCannell 1976; Russo 2001), when it comes to commodifying cultural heritage this is often defined as something that appears unchanged, a throwback to “yesteryear”. This is problematic because culture is always changing; Italian cuisine is a case in point, reflecting a rich history of new ingredients introduced by outside influences. Tomato sauce seems to be quintessentially Italian, and it is, despite the fact that tomatoes are indigenous to Mexico and were introduced to southern Italy by the Spanish in the 1500s. Tourists often define an authentic experience as one that has been untouched by time, and catering to these stereotypes can lead to defining tradition as something stagnant and stuck in the past. This threatens to destroy these cultural traditions by transforming them into performances. I have personally encountered this while helping to facilitate food workshops in southern Italy, part of food and tourism research that I have conducted since 2014 and is described later in this paper. A participant took pictures of an elderly woman expertly leading a pasta making workshop in the kitchen of the old farmhouse where we were staying, and posted them to Facebook. There were many enthusiastic comments about getting to experience “real” Italian life, but one follower commented, disappointedly, about the microwave visible in the background, a modern appliance that apparently compromised the narrative of stepping into the Past. The next time I helped facilitate the same workshop in the same kitchen, there was much discussion about whether to move the microwave out of view of tourists and their cameras, a clear expression of the perceived need to curate an experience for tourists to meet their expectations.

Building the myth of Tuscany

Tuscany offers an interesting example of the transformative power of tourism, the commodification of the rural (with a particular focus on culinary tourism) and the vulnerabilities that this presents. Historically the region was quite poor, and like regions in southern Italy experienced acceleration in the decay of small scale farming in the 1950s as farmers abandoned food production to search for work in larger cities (Sassoon 1986). But Italians value highly the traditions and foods of small food producers (and the integrated concept of culture and landscape), and by 1985 a national law defined Agriturismo, whereby farmers could supplement their farming income by adding accommodation and other farm and food related opportunities for tourists (Sonnino 2004). This legislation recognized agritourism as an agricultural activity, and farms across Italy have been growing tourism as a new crop in increasing numbers ever since (Santucci 2013). Rural homes and buildings abandoned in the course of the rural exodus since World War II started to be reoccupied, farmhouse Bed and Breakfasts popped up, and wineries built tasting rooms. The branding was focused on the creation and revival of cultural identity based on local food products, food heritage, and rural lifestyles, all incredibly important things to preserve and promote for locals as well as tourists (Sonnino 2004).

Over the past 30 years Tuscany has become a leader in agritourism and this has been a significant contributor to the region’s iconic tourism identity (National Tourism Agency 2012). ISTAT data from 2015 indicate that 20% of farms in Tuscany are engaged in agritourism, double the number reported in 2009 and well above the national average (ISTAT 2015). The region is “the” hot travel destination in Italy, especially for
food lovers. Respected travel guides like Fodors describe this destination as Italy Heaven, where you can expect “rich wines and historic towns, some of the world’s greatest works of art, rolling hills covered with olive groves and vineyards, scatterings of villas and farmhouses...” (Fodors n.d.). Other media like books and movies have also helped craft the “Myth of Tuscany” for American visitors. Frances Mayes’s book *Under the Tuscan Sun* (turned in to a movie) fuelled the romance of Tuscany, and the idea of personal transformation in travel – and Tuscany in particular – continues to inspire (Chrzanz 2008). Canadian designer icon Debbie Travis recently bought and restored a 13th century farmhouse as a reality TV show that now welcomes guests for exclusive women’s retreats (Travis n.d.). Tourism has brought many economic benefits to region. It has clearly created opportunities for younger family members who can speak and write in English, a common language of tourism. The renovations of farm buildings to accommodate agritourism enterprises have employed many small business and local craftspeople, which boosts the economy beyond the boundaries of the farm (Santucci 2013). However, the power of the Tourist Gaze has slowly shifted the focus away from primarily benefiting local food producers to attending to the trends set by the global tourism industry and catering to the demands of consumers (Ciervo 2013). The rules for agritourism were originally to focus on the farm, whereby tourism was an add on, meant to create another revenue stream to support the rural economy and keep youth from migrating to the city looking for work (Soninno 2004). But slowly there has been a separation of agritourism from agricultural activities, supported by more recent laws meant to harmonize Italian legislation with that of the EU Rural Development Objectives and Programs (Potočnik-Slavič and Schmitz 2013). Agritourism now comes in different forms that range from staying on a former farm that has been transformed to wholly serve the tourist, through to the most participatory where tourists stay on a working farm and experience authentic farm activities. In addition to the main “Agriturismo” enterprises, there are now cooking classes, food tours featuring markets and producers, and other leisure activities like horseback riding, hiking, morning yoga and massages, all designed to help attract tourists and promote the key food components of the Tuscan identity. Many argue that the EU Rural Development Program (2007-2013) has not done much to support small enterprises, and national laws are stimulating commercial agritourism that conforms to offering comforts and modern services (Ciervo 2013; Potočnik-Slavič and Schmitz 2013). It is telling that a key critique of Italian agritourism (i.e. Santucci 2013) is identified as underutilization, the solution to which is the need for greater promotion and diversification of activities to attract more customers; this clearly speaks to a focus on economics-based benefits. When agritourism is considered, first and foremost, as an instrument for economic growth and a solution to the employment and revenue problems of rural zones, a holistic perspective of the foodway has been sacrificed and the vulnerabilities of commodification are obscured. When “rural” becomes merchandise, agritourism is shaped by market demands. This can be positive; a benefit of this has been that farms that had become more homogenized as part of their industrialization are now planting a wider variety of crops to meet the needs of revitalized “typical products” (Santucci 2013), a win not only for heirloom food varieties but also local biodiversity. However, in other respects commodification can compromise the cultural aims of locals hoping to promote and maintain rural lifestyles and the identity value of being a food producer. With a focus on romantic simplicity and tradition, local culture can easily become theatre. You want romantic, ancient, pure, untouched, and friendly (almost family-like)
culture? Welcome to Tuscany, where the food is pure, good and plentiful, meals stretch out for hours, and even a tourist can get a heady sense of community and “authentic” traditions (Chrzan 2008). Tuscany has become the exotic “Other”, perceived as “a type of promised land, rooted in ancient traditions which act as an antidote to the more stressful elements of ‘modern’ life” (Chrzan 2008: 236).

Rural Tuscany, reinvented for the 21st century, seems to be squarely within the Tourist Gaze; how else can you explain the contradictions of associating words like “countryside, farmer, rural” with “nobility, comfort, refinement” on Italy’s Agriturismo promotion website (Agritourist n.d.)? Tourists may want to “get away from it all” and enjoy a rustic experience, but they still expect much of their urban lifestyle in these contexts. Modern tourists, especially the influx of affluent North American and British travelers paying top dollar, expect private bathrooms, Wi-Fi, air conditioning, and other amenities, and hopeful entrepreneurs have scrambled to accommodate. Gardens are transformed to make room for the “relaxation services” of swimming pools and spas (ISTAT statistics from 2009 indicate that 37% of agritourism farms in Italy had pools [Santucci 2013]). This highlights the vulnerability of rural populations that hope to promote both economic and cultural success via tourism, yet are bound to the power relationship whereby the tourist dictates what they want to consume.

Economic power plays an important role here, and the resulting representations, carefully curated to meet the wants and needs of the tourist customer, can erase inconvenient truths. In a concerted rebranding effort, la cucina povera (loosely translated as “poverty food” but more fairly the food of rural peasants) has become the darling of the tourism industry. Nowhere has this been capitalized on more than in Italy, where the Tourist Gaze can get a bit misty eyed as it conjures a romantic image of utopic rural lifeways and food cultures. Despite the broad geography and ethnic diversity of the Mediterranean (at least 16 countries border the Mediterranean Sea, representing tremendous cultural, ethnic, religious, and economic variation), a singular diet has emerged that is often juxtaposed with the Western (North American) diet. The Mediterranean Diet (of which la cucina povera is Italy’s generalized variant), interpreted by a North American audience, has earned prime real estate on bookstore shelves. A disenchantment with the industrial food system has led many to cast their gaze rather longingly to the Mediterranean (Chrzan 2008; Nestle 1995), where one sees populations drinking wine daily, consuming large quantities of olive oil, cheese, bread and generally an abundance of whole foods (especially vegetables) and living long, relatively healthy lives. Industrialized urbanites on vacation often feel nostalgia for country food, and the clichés and stereotypes of food and lifestyle weave a powerful myth of a rural paradise. Take this comment from culinary tourists in Tuscany: “if only I could live like this at home-with the Mediterranean diet and lifestyle- I’d be so healthy and happy” (Chrzan 2008: 240).

Historically, la cucina povera was simple, local, and seasonal. In Tuscany cheeses and milk were seasonal and chickens and eggs were available from spring to the end of autumn (Chrzan 2008; Poe 2001). Beef was an absolute luxury and reserved for the elite, and meat overall was rare for peasants, who had access to organ meats and tripe, and the occasional meals of pork (fresh in the autumn, salted or preserved at other times). Salted cod was a staple in Tuscany because it was a cheap form of protein. As John Dickie (2008: 6) indicates, poverty of the peasant diet echoes in Italian proverbs: “when the peasant eats a chicken, either the peasant is ill, or the chicken is.” It’s easy to forget
that peasants of the not so distant past lived in the shadow of hunger and consumed fresh, local, and seasonal food not because of moral elitism but because they ate what was available (Chrzan 2008). As Lucy Long highlights, foods “frequently represent a highly selective past, and sometimes an invented one” (2004: 26). Tourists to rural Italy experience incredible abundance and beautiful food, including lots of fresh meat (pork, horse, beef), which is more of the Tourist Mediterranean Diet, constructed to cater to the tourist’s expectations and cultural ideologies (and mirroring the affluent Western diet and, increasingly, the modern Italian diet).

The need for authenticity can be at odds with other tourist demands. Modern studies have concluded that many travelers like to find the familiar cuisine of home and will not travel to places that do not offer these options (Cohen and Avieli 2004). There is considerable pressure to manipulate tourist cuisine to meet demands and expectations, since accommodating the wants and needs of tourists makes very good economic sense. This is on display in complimentary hotel breakfasts in southern Italy; bacon and scrambled eggs are on the menu for North American and British tourists, and you will find butter on the table in a world dominated by olive oil.

So for tourists, all is pleasing, beautiful, and stress-free. Every effort is made to make it like this for tourists, to build the brand, and to get good reviews on Trip Advisor; it is easy to see how fantasies are created. The hosts need to be profitable and therefore construct identities that meet the expectations of tourists but that may not be meaningful or useful to locals. Experiences are carefully constructed to promote the brand, and in this way culture can become a performance that is rolled out for tourists to consume but is no longer meaningful to the locals for anything other than economic profit. Tourism is not reality in this sense; it is not reality for the tourists, who do not have their regular constraints, but also not the reality of Tuscans so much as something shaped by tourist expectations. What is real though are the consequences. When revenue generation is the top priority, tourism can not only damage the “soul of place”, but it can ignore some of the real costs, which generally are paid for by locals. Tourism places new demands on water and energy use, and generates waste (Buckley 2012; Gossling and Hall 2015). Sustainable tourism tries to reduce this, but it can be really hard when meeting the expectations of tourists is prioritized. For example, is it acceptable to serve leftovers to paying guests? The ethic of wasting nothing is an incredibly authentic one in rural Italy, out of necessity, but can conflict with the etiquette of how to look after important visitors.

Tourism development in the Southern Peninsula; avoiding the myth of Mezzogiorno

Agritourism has been instrumental in putting Tuscany on the tourist map (Chrzan 2008), and the southern Italian peninsula is actively embracing this form of tourism in the hope of improving its own depressed economy. Tuscany’s experiences with agritourism offer a useful model for thinking about the introduction of heritage tourism (and specifically culinary tourism) to other regions of Italy seeking to address the same rural issues of modernity. Evaluated through an economist’s lens, tourism is successful at meeting its measured goals (employment, increased standard of living, the ability to accumulate material wealth) (Fretchling 1994; Santucci 2013). Despite significant shifts towards industrialism since World War II, southern Italy has remained
predominantly agricultural and continues to lag behind the north economically
(Lazzeretti and Capone 2009). Unemployment rates in the south are two and a half
times as high as in the north (ISTAT 2015). This fuels out-migration as youth move to
urban centers looking for work, and the decay of critical social and subsistence
structures that result from this. Economic development is critical, and tourism offers
the potential for cultural maintenance and revitalization, which is very attractive. But
at what cost? It is clear that tourism can increase the awareness of food heritage for
both visitors and locals, thereby encouraging community pride and strengthening local
identity and culture (Cohen 1988; Hall, Mitchell and Sharples 2003; Wood 2001), even if
these food products are no longer commonly consumed by locals. It is important to
recognize, though, that this objective can be at odds with the representations
demanded by the Tourist Gaze. What are the consequences for the locals whose cultural
practices and built and natural environments are the essential ingredients of these
representations? How can the negative elements be addressed, so that locals benefit
from the economic infusion that comes from tourism without selling themselves out?

These questions shaped much of my field research in Puglia and Campania from 2014 to
2016. Most of the work was done in collaboration with Messors, a small tourism
organization based in Altamura, Puglia that has offered cultural heritage workshops for
over 20 years and is described as a case study below. The owner, Tonio Creanza,
represents at least the sixth generation of his family to live in the region and grow the
key ingredients of the south—things like olives, grapes, wheat, almonds, and apricots.
His connection to the region has also cultivated a knowledge and passion that he shares
with the small groups of tourists that he welcomes as personal guests. I participated in
a workshop as a tourist in 2014, then helped facilitate culinary workshops in 2015 and
2016 to better understand the dynamics of this type of tourism from multiple
perspectives. Through a combination of participant observation and unstructured
interviews with workshop participants and local food producers I have come to
understand some of the complexities of this emerging economy. As a visitor myself I
have been able to reflect upon my own pre-conceived expectations and the
construction of the “exotic other”, and then evaluate the expectations of small groups
of culinary tourists, predominantly from North America (although two Australians, two
Argentinians, and one Dutch participant were part of the sample). Observing the
expectations and experiences of participants highlighted the power dynamics present
in the relationship between paying guest and accommodating host. As a facilitator I
could feel the vulnerabilities of tour operators concerned about negative reviews on
social media affecting future interest in workshops, and the perceived need to curate
the experience to meet expectations.

In addition to general participant observation data, 32 individual workshop
participants and three operational staff contributed to the research in informal
conversations. After extensive background reading about shepherding and lemon
gardens, three food producers were also interviewed, one in detail, to better
understand their livelihoods both historically and in a contemporary context. A sample
of heritage and food-oriented tourism endeavors is considered here to evaluate this
emerging economy on the southern peninsula.
Lemon gardens of the Amalfi coast

The lemon gardens of the Sorrentina peninsula clearly identify the vulnerabilities of traditional agricultural systems and the promise of agritourism to maintain their viability in a modern world. The earliest lemon gardens on the Amalfi coast date to the 11th century; when demand skyrocketed for lemons during the Age of Exploration, fueled by the discovery that lemon juice could ward off scurvy, more and more of the steep slopes of the Sorrentina peninsula were transformed into lemon gardens (Litchfield 1997). A special variety of lemon – *Sfusato Amalfitano* – has evolved in response to the unique conditions of the landscape. These lemons are grown in chestnut wood pergola structures on narrow, stone walled terraces that hug the steep valley slopes that fall away to the Tyrrhenian Sea. Work on these farms cannot be mechanized, relying on human labor to maintain the stone walls, replace wooden supports, and pick the fruit. Traditional agricultural practices are still largely intact, meaning that most of these lemons are organic; animal manure is used for fertilizer, and because of the reduced light under the pergolas, weed growth is minimal so there is little need for herbicides (Aceto personal communication 2015). The result is lower production per hectare than elsewhere in Italy, which makes it difficult for these farmers to compete in the modern economy (FAO n.d.). Add to this the realities of a global economy that imports cheap lemons from places like Argentina, and the unpredictability of weather that can destroy 75% of the crop, as it did in 2014/2015 (Aceto personal communication 2015), and you begin to understand why a growing number of lemon gardens lie abandoned above the picturesque towns of Amalfi and Minori.

This spells trouble in terms of cultural traditions, but also in terms of the environment. The terraces prevent soil erosion and manage the rainwater, keeping what the trees need and slowly draining the rest. Italy’s leading geologists have sounded the alarm, estimating that if the lemon gardens disappear, the iconic landscape of the Amalfi coast will follow, as landslides sweep the steep coastline into the Mediterranean (FAO n.d.). In a world facing a future of more torrential rains due to climate change, these lemon gardens are a critical local conservation measure. When neighbors abandon their farms it creates enormous trouble for others in the valleys trying to maintain their livelihoods, not to mention those living below. From a holistic perspective, it becomes clear that lemons are a living component of the Amalfi Coast’s UNESCO World Heritage site designation.

The recent *Indicazione Geografica Protetta* designation for the *Sfusato Amalfitano* variety (2001) recognizes the many values of lemon gardens in this region that grow lemons prized by chefs across Europe for their low acidity and delicate flavor, but this niche market alone is not sufficient to support these farmers. The gardens must grow more than just lemons, which is where tourism enters the equation. The greatest economic benefit identified by the FAO is tourism (Grego n.d.); thousands of tourists a year are drawn to the beautiful Amalfi coast and its distinctive lemon gardens dripping down from the steep cliffs. Lemons are critical to the identity and character of the Sorrentina Peninsula; lemon farmer Salvatore Aceto describes lemon juice running through his veins, this essential connection that brought him back to his family’s vertical gardens despite a successful career in economics (Aceto personal communication 2015). His new
family business venture, called the Lemon Experience, is the most recent chapter in the story of lemons in southern Italy.

The tour of the farm allows the multiple generations of family to diversify and create alternative revenue streams. A big covered seating area that overlooks the valley is a place to eat and enjoy cooking lessons led by Salvatore’s wife. The family’s “Lemon Experience” website promises tourists they will learn how to cook the “cult dishes of the Mediterranean cuisine” that they can then take home and “reproduce” for friends (Amalfi Lemon Experience n.d.). Limoncello factory tours and tastings round out the experience that Salvatore hopes tourists enjoy and will write favorable reviews about on Trip Advisor. And the reviews are fantastic. The smell of the lemon gardens, and the buzz of bees amongst the fruit is authentic lemon farming, presented by the farmers themselves, which appeals to tourists wanting to connect with food traditions in more meaningful ways. The hope is that this juggling act saves not only the farm but retains a meaningful identity for Salvatore’s family and the region.

A visible indicator of the commodification of these lemon farms is the suite of matching bright shirts worn by the Aceto family when they are within the Tourist Gaze; a comedic tourist lemon strides across the front and “LEMON CREW” is printed in bold letters across the back. Wearing a uniform is a loaded symbol, and says much about the power dynamic of the Tourist Gaze. It clearly signals the relationship between the parties, one that often includes a power differential, and mediates the interactions and expectations between wearers and viewers (Hertz 2007). While image management is critical in tourism, and agritourism entrepreneurs may be choosing uniforms to legitimize their enterprises and look more official, one must recognize the power of these important visual cues in shaping the overall experience. The uniform is not one’s authentic identity, but one created in the context of the tourist experience; individual identities are suppressed in favor of a homogenized appearance defined by and for someone else (Hertz 2007). There is the potential for some types of uniform to signal servitude, formality, restriction, and external control. In a tourism context, a uniform can distinguish customer from staff and illustrate who is in charge of the construction of the experience. This overt manifestation of conforming to the Tourist Gaze is an important reminder of how easily the balance can be tipped in favor of the tourist.

Nuns and pastry traditions: using food heritage to promote new business

Another expression of food heritage can be seen in the branding of a new bakery in Altamura, a town of 75,000 in Puglia. Religious communities have been important repositories of food traditions for centuries (Villette 2011); a well-known example is Trappist monks brewing beer, but equally significant is the diversity of pastries made by nuns in the monasteries on the southern Italian peninsula and Sicily. Convents and monasteries were supported in great part by their patrons; most were peasants who brought the products of their farms to the convent gates, but wealthy patrons provided more expensive ingredients like cane sugar and almonds. This created the opportunity for nuns to produce something unique for their communities; the farmer could bring the common ingredients of wheat, olive oil and wine and get sweet pastries in exchange for special holidays. More recently these exquisite pastries were sold to fund regular operating costs and charitable causes; all in all, this was a lucrative trade both
economically and in social credit, with food maintaining important connections between the cloistered nuns and their families, and knitting convents into their broader communities (Mazzoni 2005)

Despite being repositories for food traditions for centuries, Italy’s religious communities have faced the challenges of changing social dynamics in a modern world, and the erosion of these traditions has accelerated since World War II. Monastery populations have withered, and nuns today do not necessarily view pastry-making as an important contribution to their communities. Recipes that were once preciously guarded to maintain exclusivity and the renown of particular monasteries were given away, or no longer used. These traditions are at risk of being completely forgotten in communities with increasingly good access to cheap, mass produced, store bought cookies and pastries. It is therefore interesting to watch the emergence of a new bakery, which opened in the old part of Altamura in 2015 that celebrates the monastic tradition of pastries as part of its entrepreneurial identity and brand. The bakery advertises its use of traditional recipes from the nearby monastery and in celebrating the tradition, is using it as a point of distinction from other bakeries in town. The hope is that this tradition, now a story more than reality, will attract curious tourists and locals alike; the bakery’s social media presence certainly leverages the story as a point of pride and distinction. The business’s Facebook page (in both English and Italian) includes pictures of a nun in the bakery’s kitchen, her black habit swirling about her as she pipes cookie dough onto an industrial-sized baking sheet. While a nun apparently oversees the bakery operations, it is unclear how frequently nuns are actively participating in the kitchen. Although some might consider this opportunistic marketing, it brings this story into the modern fabric of Altamura, and celebrates these traditions so they are not completely forgotten. Keeping the story alive dignifies this centuries-old heritage of pastry making in Italy’s religious communities, and maintains an essential connection to community and history in a way that is meaningful, and delicious, in the 21st century.

Messors: a model for small scale, local tourism

As the south is “discovered” by a new type of tourist, businesses are hoping to both catch the wave and direct it to avoid it becoming a destructive tsunami. Messors is a small company based in Altamura that aims to offer a positive experience for both participants and the region as a whole by sharing cultural heritage through hands-on, immersive experiences (www.messors.com). Unlike a bus tour, where visitors pass through a place rather passively, seeing disconnected parts without really understanding the relationships between them, Messors seeks to create opportunities for a visitor to appreciate firsthand the profound connections between humans, cultural traditions, and the landscape that can still be tasted in the food. Long’s description of a foodway as a “metaculinary universe” (2004: 23) is apt here; foods from a particular place deliver a taste of history, geology, religion, economy, and even politics, the complexity of which can only be appreciated with immersion and participation. This means meeting the cheese maker, the baker, the butcher, the farmer, and the shepherd, and spending some time in their worlds to see the art, science, and magic that are part of their craft.
The owner and operator, Tonio Creanza, is uncomfortable calling visitors with Messors “tourists”, preferring instead the term “participants”, in recognition of the co-production of the experience. Tonio is a local providing an intimate tour of his landscape, which is very different from other tour companies that may not have local guides and facilitators. His expertise and ability to connect with local food producers that he has known his entire life easily satisfies the tourist demands for an authentic experience. Daley (2001) calls this type of knowledge and these deep seeded relationships with people and place intangible assets, which he considers essential for tourism to be a successful and sustainable form of regional development. Participants are introduced to a host of food artisans who graciously invite them to try shaping the dough for famous Altamura bread, make sausages and various cheeses, and blend local ingredients together for delicious meals served outside, family-style. Sometimes, after a late evening meal, Tonio will pull out his guitar and play. Often he can get a local owl to sing along with him when he whistles. As you sip home made limoncello the rest of the world seems to melt away into the warm night.

To be successful, Messors must comply, to an extent, with many of the expectations of the Tourist Gaze, which is accomplished with beautiful settings and delicious food. However, the intimate, learning-through-doing ethic gently redirects this gaze in a way that creates a more well-rounded expression of modern rural identity. This holds the promise of capturing the benefits of culinary tourism as sustainable development while minimizing the threat of hollow performance that can creep in when culture is commodified. While the tendency of cultural tourism is to present the experience in a tourist-friendly format (MacCannell 1976), unstaged authenticity should add to the overall experience. Farm-based tourism allows visitors to witness agricultural work up close, which will inevitably include barnyard smells and early morning wake ups from the sound of sheep assembling to be milked. Rather than sanitizing the experience to make it more “comfortable” for tourists, these realities should be celebrated as the reality of producers involved in making the food that will be part of a future meal. With Messors, a trip to meet and work alongside the baker starts with a 4:30 am wake up call. This hardly sounds like the schedule of someone on vacation, because it isn’t; it’s the rhythm of the bread and the oven and the baker, who began making the dough at 2am to have it come out of the cavernous wood fired oven in time for the day’s customers. In this way the baker is not performing, but instead is going about his daily routine and tourists are invited to fit in to this reality instead of the other way around. Interestingly, creating opportunities like this that potentially “inconvenience” an individual on vacation promotes the authenticity that tourists expect. Participants in Messors workshops are given what amounts to a “backstage pass” when they are encouraged to help in the kitchen or learn how bread is made rather than just eating the finished products. This is immensely satisfying to the visitor and maintains the integrity of food producers.

A core philosophy for Messors is the desire to promote and preserve the cultural knowledge that is embedded in the complex relationships between people, their food, and their landscape (Creanza personal communication 2015). Not only do these workshops provide opportunities for tourists to experience and learn about food heritage, but the interest from outsiders helps to dignify these traditions, with the hope that youth will take an interest in learning and perpetuating these cultural practices. Shepherding offers a good example of this. The livelihoods of farmers and shepherds have been woven together across the limestone Murgia Plateau of the
southern peninsula for thousands of years. Shepherds herd their flocks of sheep and goats across the pockets of rocky terrain that are not suitable for farming, making the most of a marginal landscape. Historically their wool and dairy products were important components of local economies, but a combination of factors have eroded the viability of shepherding as a livelihood (Minori personal communication 2016). A particular challenge is the sweeping set of EU regulations meant to address food safety that are blunt instruments and not realistic (or all that necessary) for small producers. It is common for shepherds to have the first level of certification required to sell their milk; animals are tagged and frequently inspected. But upgrading cheese-making facilities to meet modern production regulations can be very expensive, leaving many shepherds with limited options. Selling the raw milk can mean that shepherds work hard for next to nothing; milk prices are very low (about 70 cents a liter for sheep’s milk in 2016) (Minori personal communication 2016). Another option is for shepherds to make cheese for “personal consumption”, which generally means selling it quietly from the farm at a greatly reduced price. It is also important to remember that while shepherds work tirelessly every day meeting the needs of the animals, the food they produce, and by extension their wage, is seasonal, since sheep and goats only produce milk from March through August. Although shepherding traditions are woven into the cultural fabric of southern Italy, the industrial food system, which makes cheap dairy products from global producers alluring and easily accessible, changes the perceived value of shepherds in these communities. With such hard work and such tenuous compensation, it is hard to find many Italian youth who are dreaming of shepherding as a career choice. A growing number of shepherds in Italy are immigrants from Eastern Europe or India (Creanza personal communication 2015); as wage laborers they are vulnerable to exploitation while keeping the price of milk low.

Maintaining the viability of shepherding in southern Italy will include rediscovering economic value of both the products and the landscapes of shepherds. There are tourism opportunities in both regards. Historically, extensive networks of shepherds tracks, at one point legally protected by the King of Naples to ensure their continued maintenance, provided access to grazing land (Sarno 2014). These tracks, called tratturi, connected grazing areas used daily, but were also instrumental for the longer distance transhumance practices of shepherds who moved their animals from the summer pastures of Abruzzo and Molise to the winter pastures of the Murgia Plateau. A study completed in 1998 indicated that the majority of the 3000km of tratturi in southern Italy were either no longer visible or in very poor condition (Camera dei Deputati 1998 cited by Sarno 2014), which speaks to the overall integrity of shepherding in the region. However, an initiative to have these tratturi recognized and protected by UNESCO may boost their tourism appeal, and they are being eyed as a tourist draw like the Camino de Santiago pilgrim’s walk in Spain (UNESCO n.d.). This could be important economically for the region but also in the maintenance of what is left of the pastoral infrastructure critical to shepherds. The goal in parts of southern Italy where shepherding is still practiced can be more than just the economic benefits of tourism. If integrated foodways are to be maintained or reinvigorated, tratturi are a key part of this; shepherds must move their flocks to access grazing areas, otherwise the subsistence pattern falls apart. Creating pathways that allow tourists to appreciate the pastoralist experience and “walk a mile in their shoes” is of limited cultural value if pastoralism is not promoted holistically in these contemporary landscapes. Tourist encounters with shepherds and their flocks using these tracks as they have done for
centuries create the ultimate agritourism opportunity to walk alongside and gain a
deeper, more authentic appreciation for the many contributions that pastoralists have
made to food, culture and landscape.

Beyond maintaining shepherding landscapes, a concerted effort is also needed to
maintain the shepherds themselves, and the knowledge embedded in a tradition now
largely sustained by elder shepherds and immigrants. The Fornello Project, affiliated
with Messors, aims to apply the philosophy of participatory agritourism to generate
benefits for both local shepherds of the Murgia plateau and visiting tourists. This
holistic endeavor envisions heritage as something living and contemporary rather than
something frozen in time, and the long term goal is to restore the built heritage of the
Fornello site located just outside of Altamura, reinstate shepherding activities in the
area, and in so doing help to re-establish its relevance in a modern frame (Creanza
personal communication 2015)

This starts by re-establishing cheese making at Fornello in small, hands-on workshops
designed to help connect visitors with the landscapes and people that make quality
food. While still in its infancy, the idea is to purchase milk from local shepherds at
twice the going rate, and practice the craft of cheese making in a stone shepherd’s
dairy that lay abandoned at the site, like so many other structures across this
landscape, for 150 years. The wheels of pecorino cheese are aged in one of the many
caves located in the soft tufa limestone below the building, restoring some of the
historic functionality of the area. Because EU regulations do not allow this cheese to be
sold, it is gifted to supporters of the project, whose donations finance the perpetuation
of the project and restoration of the many heritage elements of the site. The objective
is to meet the needs of both visitors and shepherds. Visitors want an authentic,
exclusive experience, where they can connect with food producers and learn about
local food traditions. The shepherds need the ability to sell their milk for a higher
price, and benefit from being re-inscribed on the landscape. The hope is to demonstrate
interest that can lead to a local revival in shepherding traditions; if shepherding can be
dignified by the Tourist Gaze, it may become a more desirable profession for local
youth.

Interacting with locals creates a dialogue that promotes the value of cultural
knowledge in a modern, rapidly changing world. This explicit recognition by outsiders
of the economic and social value of integrated elements of culture can be profoundly
meaningful. According to one local in Altamura, whose family has been shepherding for
generations, the genuine interest of visitors in shepherding and other foodways
dignifies these traditions. The pride that is demonstrated, that shines when others
appreciate and are interested, is critical to the ongoing success of these cultural
traditions. If there is perceived value in these professions and the knowledge that goes
with them, young people are more likely to pursue them rather than casting them off
as expressions of “backward” rural life incompatible with a modern reality. It shouldn’t
be an either-or proposition.

For this style tourism to work there must be a re-framing of the tourist as guest rather
than customer. As guests they are not consumers, or passive viewers, but travelers
invited to observe, listen, smell, and taste a place on the terms of the local host. This
form of dynamic tourism acknowledges participation and co-production in an
experience that is meaningful for everyone. This becomes a very different type of
experience for everyone involved. For less flexible travelers, this is challenging,
particularly when things do not conform to expectations and timetables. There can be a sense of disappointment and not getting what one was expecting from a trip itinerary if the baker is ahead of schedule and has shaped most of the loaves by the time visitors arrive, or the shepherd anticipated to join the group for lunch comes late, or cannot stop because the animals are on the move. This is challenging for the tour operator, who is balancing the expectations of paying guests while honoring the natural rhythms of food producers. It can feel less organized than many travelers expect, leading to frustrations. For the more adventurous, this is intoxicating: one clearly feels and understands Tonio’s desire to protect his culture, promote it, share it, and make this model of tourism work for himself as a business person but also his broader community. A reoccurring comment from Messors participants was that they had enjoyed an experience like no other, so much more than a vacation, and very clearly transformative. I heard one participant say “Tonio, I don’t have much, but anything I have is yours”.

Messors offers an example of what small scale, locally focused tourism can look like, and how it can be beneficial both to visitors and local food producers. But being sustainable must also include being economically successful, and even Messors feels the pressure to be profitable and attract more participants. It is easy to start making decisions based on how participants will perceive things, or how a dinner location will photograph for Facebook and Instagram promotion. Creating fantastic, memorable experiences is a huge amount of work, and sometimes pulling off the magic can be at the expense of health and inter-personal relationships. As a small business, Messors feels key vulnerabilities of the tourism industry. World events like the turbulent global economy since 2008 and sharp changes in the value of currencies, and safety concerns associated with terrorist activity in Europe and the unrest tied to the ongoing refugee crisis can make tourists re-evaluate their travel plans. These factors, like the weather for a farmer, are beyond a tourism operator’s control, but have significant consequences that ripple through communities that have come to depend on this contribution to their economy.

**Breeding better tourism**

Despite the shortcomings of commodification, three concepts stand out in this expression of sustainable culinary tourism: awareness, appreciation, and participation. Taken together, they impart a special tourist experience that is both enjoyable and valuable to everyone involved. It is impossible to make your own food without becoming aware of the human connections that link the land to the food and the people. In the context of the industrial food system it is unusual to be able to connect so closely with food producers. Reconnecting consumers and producers creates an appreciation for the effort and knowledge that is required to make food that is good, clean, and fair, the watchwords of the Slow Food Movement (Petrini 2007). While Slow Food is a complex organization with cultural and political motivations, its mantra of “good, clean and fair” is useful for summarizing this dawning of awareness that can happen as tourists engage with their food in new ways. The food that Messors shares with participants is “good” because it is made from scratch with fresh ingredients, generally purchased directly from producers who infuse their stories into their products. It is “clean” because of its environmental footprint; it is local, seasonal, and in many cases promotes the maintenance of a landscape, be it in terms of soil erosion.
(like lemon gardens) or biodiversity (shepherding), that has broad benefits. Finally, it is “fair” because in appreciating the amount of effort required to produce the food, a consumer is more likely to pay the real price of a product, providing more of a living wage for producers.

The potential benefits of tourism are varied and significant. In recognition of this, the United Nations proclaimed 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, “in recognition of the tremendous potential of the tourism industry, which accounts for some 10% of the world’s economic activity, to contribute to the fight against poverty and foster mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue” (United Nations n.d.). The trick is to make sure that holidays do not become an experience, as Gössling and Hall (2015) put it, of the tourist, by the tourist, and for the tourist. Experiences run by tourists, directed by tourists, and primarily in the interests of tourists generally don’t lead to widespread benefits for locals. Many in the south are keenly aware of this difficult balance. A colleague in Altamura, whose credentials are in tourism, told me that he no longer visits Florence or Venice because these cities are shells of their former selves, designed to fit and meet the expectations of tourists. He passionately argued that despite having a vested interest in tourism being successful in Puglia, he would rather it not attract visitors than destroy the region that he holds so dear.

It is no surprise that part of the Myth of Tuscany that is so compelling for tourists is the idea of being more connected to community and food production, a stark contrast to most industrialized, urban realities. The fast paced lifestyle that is selected for and then required to support a fiercely independent, consumer culture can feel impersonal and out of touch with life’s more basic elements: food, family, community, and landscape. Increasingly, consumers do not grow their own food, or know people who do, and families are scattered across a broad geography to better access personal opportunities like school and work. The trend is to invest personal effort in personal success rather than communal effort for a shared benefit. This sense of Paradise Lost fuels nostalgia in travelers and a desire to experience a utopic, “simpler life” in rural travel destinations, one seemingly un tarnished by the harsh trade-offs of modernity.

Brush away the rural myth, though, and you will see the same things happening in southern Italy that tourists are responding to; this landscape is not isolated in a bubble. When communities are fractured by family members moving away to cities or even other countries looking for work, it is difficult to find people with the moral obligation to participate in food production work in a reciprocal way. So workers must be hired to harvest the olives and the grapes that are made into olive oil and wine, which can make maintaining small family groves and vineyards prohibitively expensive. This then accelerates the trend of small farmers selling out, and larger corporate producers moving in or farms being abandoned all together. A tourist in rural Italy can contribute to sustainable economic development, but can also appreciate the modern challenges of maintaining the cultural traditions that are considered so novel and appealing to the outsider. What a great opportunity to look at these processes and critically evaluate our own realities at home, to not only dignify and support the perpetuation of these key cultural elements in Italy, but to think about how to do the same after the vacation comes to an end. This awareness, this sense of connection, means that visitors may go home and shop at farmers’ markets, and have a better understanding of why small
farmers charge more for their high quality products, and so invigorate their own local foodways. The knock-on effect is significant.

Concluding thoughts

This critical evaluation of agritourism is timely; the southern Italian peninsula is experiencing a surge in tourist interest. Hoping to cash in on the Tourist Rush, entrepreneurs are transforming masserie – large stone farmhouses – into boutique hotels, and the list of “guest services” that are now expected can be challenging to offer. In a landscape where water has always been scarce, the burden of tourists expecting fresh towels and bed linens every day will be borne by locals. Providing air conditioning and central heating for year round comfort will be incredibly expensive given the price of electricity. Sanitizing the rural landscape to conform to the sleek modern definition of “luxury” may actually compromise its ability to offer an “authentic”, exclusive experience. Tourists may want the farm atmosphere but not the farm reality. Reshuffling priorities to suit the tourist consumer can lead to a carefully curated version of a pastoral landscape, yet remove the sounds and smells of animals to appease guests, and these landscapes cease to be working farms. This style of luxury accommodation, and the associated food and wine based activities offered to guests, can end up looking the same, a standardized, homogenized set of products based on the supposed needs and expectations of the paying customer. The effect is that these farms shift to growing tourist experiences, and nothing else.

Historical underdevelopment of the region creates the potential for vulnerability and exploitation based on power dynamics and the perceived need to give tourists what they are looking for. Successful sustainable tourism, both economically and culturally, will meet the expectations of tourists while maintaining meaningful local identities and cultural practices, which can be a tall order. If tourists expect a romantic throwback to the Past, when things were “pure, simple, and healthy”, one of two things will happen: 1) they will be disappointed to see microwaves and other expressions of modernity, or 2) tourism enterprises will carefully script the tourist experience to hide these “inauthentic” components from the Tourist Gaze. Neither of these are very positive outcomes, particularly if the dictates of outsiders stagnate tradition into dusty relics from an imagined past. What is encouraging though, is that success depends on knowing your audience, and the audience is changing; a number of recent studies suggest that there is a growing demand for a new type of tourism, one that is environmentally, culturally, and economically sustainable (ICTA 2010; Mohn 2014). This demand is coming from Millennials, a generation that has been unfairly stereotyped as self-centered, lazy, and looking for a good party. In reality, Millennials are quite interested in sustainability, community, creativity and entrepreneurship, more so than their parents’ generation (Mohn 2014). This makes them a special kind of tourist, and since they are expected to account for half of all global travel spending by 2020 (Mohn 2014), the industry ignores them at their peril. Millennials appear to be giving big mainstream hotels and restaurants a miss, looking instead for the hidden gems that make you feel like you’ve stumbled upon a local’s favorite, providing an insider’s experience. They want local experiences rather than luxury ones, and when it comes to food, they celebrate the concept of farm to table and craft beer, and support local artisans (Mohn 2014; Stanley and Stanley 2015). In 2014, Forbes magazine commented
that Millennials not only want to know how and where their food is produced, they want to enjoy food as a shared experience (Mohn 2014). Since statistics show that culinary tourists in general spend more for their experience (ICTA 2010), the culinary tourism industry is looking like a rosy economic opportunity.

Equally encouraging is the conclusion that educational-based travel is well suited to culinary tourism (ICTA 2010), as the typical food tourist is often the well-educated professional with the disposable income to not only enjoy travel but the interest in a “professional vacation”, where one learns something that helps with personal development (ICTA 2010). This should create a unique opportunity for successful economic and cultural development that moves beyond the fantasy to give tourists a more authentic experience in a modern context. In multiple, small ways sensitive tourism enterprises can introduce travelers to real, meaningful local identities by highlighting the “fantasies” and omissions that are common in the Tourist Gaze, and emphasizing how these identities and traditions are produced by everyone, including tourists. This becomes part of the education, and invites a critical evaluation of expectations and experiences. As O’Connor (2014) notes in another context It has been noted elsewhere (the consequences of UNESCO’s recognition of Mexico’s national cuisine, inscribed in 2010) programs that are meant to support heritage often benefit only those consuming it (like the tourists) or those who profit directly from tourism rather than the indigenous groups that supply the “backbone of continuity” to these foodways (O’Connor 2014). Tourism can be cast as a form of neocolonialism, a hegemonic act shaped by capitalist agendas (Goody 1982; Heldke 2001), but equally possible is thinking about tourism as an opportunity for empowerment, where the curiosity that fuels tourists creates an opening for producers to dignify their foodways by sharing them with a receptive and respectful audience. It is clear that tourism commodifies foodways, which comes with great responsibilities and potential vulnerabilities; if done carefully, tourism can leverage the resources of the affluent traveler and support local development while offering experiences that are positive for everyone.

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ABSTRACTS

Food tourism offers important opportunities for southern Italian communities struggling with high unemployment and the erosion of food traditions. These foodways are at once threatened in a modern reality and desirable to tourists looking to connect with local food and its producers as part of an “authentic” travel experience. For this new economy to be sustainable, both economically and culturally in southern Italy, there are lessons to be learned from Tuscany’s embrace of agriculturally-based tourism, where the power of tourism has crafted romantic narratives of the Mediterranean Diet and La Dolce Vita that are often more meaningful to the paying customer than rural residents. Data collected in the regions of Puglia and Campania since 2014 are presented here to explore how best to validate food traditions through tourism. Examples of food and heritage tourism, including lemon garden tours, the historic role of nuns in pastry making, and shepherding traditions of the Murgia Plateau, highlight the potential benefits and vulnerabilities of tourism-based revitalization initiatives.

INDEX

Keywords: Southern Italy, agritourism, foodways, lemon gardens, shepherds, sustainability, Tourist Gaze

Mots-clés: Italie méridionale, agritourisme, traditions alimentaires, jardins citronniers, bergers, durabilité, Vue Touristique

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