

Durban's Indian Cuisine: Origins, Popularity, and Prospects for Developing Culinary Tourism'

Anand Singh¹ and Sheetal Bhoola^{2*}

Department of Anthropology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa 4041

E-mail: ¹<singhan@ukzn.ac.za>, ²<bhoolas@ukzn.ac.za>

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ABSTRACT This study is based on a PhD that researched the possibilities for culinary tourism as a marketing strategy for the city of Durban. The city has become famous for its regionalised cuisine³ types that Indians brought with them from India since 1860. There is a widespread assumption among locals in Durban that Indian Cuisine would be the most popular among the variety of cuisines in this cosmopolitan city. This paper is about this diversity in Durban Indian food, against the wider variation of cuisine types, and the potential it has to contribute towards the broader tourism framework of the city, with culinary tourism as an integral pillar of the city's destination marketing drive.

INTRODUCTION

This study begins from the notion that the concept of culinary tourism has yet to entrench itself under the broader rubric of tourism in Durban. After analysing published literature, articles in the media, travel advertising material and travel books as well as the locally produced publications of the tourism sector, the researchers began from the premise that the concept of culinary tourism is insufficiently used. Specialised cooking tours and ethnic cuisine tasting tours have not yet been entrenched in the South African tourism marketing strategy. Other regions in South Africa have marketed their cuisines effectively by facilitating tours centred on cuisine which is attractive to the gastronomic tourist. Recent print media publications reveal the continued interest of locals and national tourists in the Durban Indian cuisine, but it has not been determined whether international tourists have been enticed by the cuisine that Durban has to offer. Interviews have reaffirmed their initial assumptions in regard to the lack of importance placed on culinary tourism initiatives in Durban.

A previous paper titled *Culinary Choices: developing Durban as a culinary destination* published in 2016 identifies the opportunity for culinary tourism in Durban as well gives scholars a broad understanding of Lucy's Long's scholarly concept of culinary tourism and its popularity on a global scale. The publication also indicates in detail the numerous and varying types of cuisines available in Durban with an introduction into Durban's Indian cuisine. That paper inevitably highlights the revenue that can be generated through culinary tourism irrespective of which cuisine is utilised as a main attraction. In contrast to that paper, this paper is based on data collated which clearly articulates the popularity of Durban Indian cuisine in particular coupled with a details of the cuisine and the types of patrons this cuisine attracts. An in-depth perspective of Durban Indian cuisine as well as a discussion of the origins of the cuisine becomes a focus in this paper. Highlights include the local variances of the cuisine and the integration and acceptance of this cuisine within the hospitality sector of Durban (Singh and Bhoola 2016: 1).

Tourism as a discipline has embarked on numerous studies which merge cuisine and tourism successfully. In some instances, tourists are forced to consume foods that are available and at their convenience. However with so many variations of cuisines available in Durban and numerous eateries, take-ways and restaurants, no tourist should be forced to consume food

**Address for correspondence:*
Dr. Sheetal Bhoola
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Durban
Telephone: 0027837998499
E-mail: bhoolas@ukzn.ac.za

that they do not prefer. This study is an attempt to address the lacuna of anthropological food studies within South African societies at large and within Durban which is home to the highest concentration of overseas Indians, since their arrival in the year 1860 (Mukherji 2011). In a publication titled, "South Africa's Rainbow Cuisine" the origins of the Durban curry is explained and to the detail that cuisine preparation within the Indian culture is undocumented but rather taught by example from mother to daughter. However, this unique cuisine that has evolved differently away from the mother country features as one of many variations of cuisines South Africa has to offer (Snyman 2004: 92). The Guardian online newspaper has incorporated a feature titled the "Foodie traveller" and in 2015, a segment was dedicated to Durban which elaborated on the types of foods one can consume in the city. The article also serves as an Indian Food Directory for tourists, as local Indian restaurants and their contact details are listed within the publication (Milton 2015). In January 2017, another online publication focussed on the variety of bunny chows available in Durban and comparisons were made in regard to flavour, spiciness and palatability of the dishes at varying restaurants. The interest in the media is an indication of the growing popularity of Durban Indian Cuisine and there are additional cuisines that can be marketed and appreciated by both local and international tourists.

METHODOLOGY

Contextualisation and Research Process

A qualitative methodological approach was employed in this study and it was inclusive of participant observation, literature surveys, face-to-face interviews and surveys with both locals and tourists. There were two sampling methods employed in this study, namely: purposive sampling and stratified sampling. Stratified sampling methods were suggestive in dividing the population into subsets based on common variables between them, and an appropriate number of interviewees were then selected. An example of such a subset is the waitresses and waiters within a particular area of study. This sampling method is deemed as most convenient to manage and implement and errors can be remedied (Babbie and Mouton 2001: 191).

The primary aim of the study was to determine if Durban Indian food can serve as a tourist attraction. Further investigations focussed on understanding and identifying tourists' cuisine preferences and their opinions of this local cuisine. An attempt was made to determine the extent to which the media influences both local and International tourists and Durban residents in their choice of meal and in their selection of restaurant within Durban. The principal goal of this study was to describe and understand the need for an updated approach to culinary tourism in South Africa. The main concern was to understand social action in terms of its specific content, rather than attempt to generalize and assume (Bailey 1987: 60).

The Sites Selected for Field Work

There are three areas in Durban which accommodate leisure, eating socialising viz. the Durban beachfront (often referred to as the 'Golden mile'); Florida Road (the mid-town area that is rapidly developing into a middle class 'hangout' for students and the elderly alike), as well as Lagoon Drive and Chartwell Drive in Umhlanga Rocks – where residential areas, hotels and restaurants serve the leisure needs of mainly the wealthy from within and outside the area. Interviews, surveys and observation was conducted within these three demarcated areas. These areas in Durban were selected because they have emerged to be recognised as the food hubs within Durban and is frequented by local residents of all age groups during the week and weekends. The Beachfront region for instance has become recognised for its multicultural ambience which is created by the facilities on offer. Locals and tourists have the option to participate in rickshaw drives, experience Zulu music and dance, as well as enjoy the sights of the waves, sand art and Africa curios that are for sale. Chartwell Drive in Umhlanga for instance as become the area to visit if one would like to dine, have a drink and socialise. This road is primarily occupied with restaurants and pubs that offer patrons so many options of food franchises and varying cuisines.

The Sample Populous

For the purpose of this study, a total of 80 tourists (local and international) were inter-

viewed as well as Durban's local patrons. Of this total, 48 tourists were interviewed whilst dining in the Florida Road area, 20 tourists whom were residing in Umhlanga and dining in that vicinity were interviewed and the remaining 12 tourists responded to the researchers when they were at the Durban Beachfront. Of the 80 tourists, approximately 25 (32%) were international tourists and the remaining sixty-eight percent were from surrounding areas of KwaZulu-Natal (Richards Bay, Stanger, Ballito, Pietermaritzburg, Rustenburg, Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth and Ladysmith) and other cities in South Africa such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Cape Town. Interviewees were asked to indicate their food preference whilst visiting Durban and if they had sampled Durban Indian cuisine prior and during their stay in Durban. Other questions focused on individual preferences in relation to Durban Indian food and its popularity and the marketing of this cuisine both nationally and internationally.

Table 1 indicates the varying age groups of interviewees as well as their gender and racial demarcations.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

An Anthropological Approach

Food and its social meanings have been of interest to anthropologists since the early years of the discipline's development. Its association with gender, age, socialisation patterns and broader societal meaning forged a level of interest that gave rise to numerous studies of food and its meanings. Franz Boas, who acquired the title of "Father of American Anthropology", focussed on more than one aspect of relevance to anthropology. While he studied folklore and its connection to anthropology, in the early 1920s he concentrated on food and its varying social meanings within the societies he had studied. In

1921, he studied the diets of the Kwakiutl Indians of Canada. His focus was the social procedures and personnel involved in the acquisition, preparation, serving and social meaning of food amongst members of the Kwakiutl. Boas acknowledged the relationship between people and their physical environment (Boas 1921: 333-334). His investigation of the Kwakiutl salmon recipes in 1921 brought new meaning to the study of food and encouraged much debate around the social meanings on a range of issues.

An anthropological approach addresses numerous significant aspects to food that go beyond its primary purpose of nourishment. For some a meal is a pleasurable experience, for others it is a measure of ideological differences as well as an indicator either of social status or of similarities and differences that set people apart. Practicing Muslims and Jews, for instance are inclined to avoid places where pork is a delicacy and significant to their menus, while Hindus may have a similar aversion to places where beef has prominence. According to author Chopra (2000), Hindu Indians are predominantly vegetarian and although amongst the Indian Diaspora communities the consumption of chicken, fish and lamb are prominent with the exception of beefeating. Saunders (2007: 204) affirms this and explains that Hindus often connect living in India with a vegetarian diet and living outside of India with a non-vegetarian one. Hindu mythology offers many understandings of the practice of no beef eating, but in one of the most ancient sacred Hindu texts, the *Puranas*, it is explicitly explained that the cow is seen who has the capacity to fulfil all desires and therefore needs to be revered and loved (Chopra 2000: 12).

In many traditions, food regulations is used as a tool to separate insiders and outsiders of a community. Jewish and Muslim regulations broadly agree that one can only marry those whose food is lawful. There has been variation

Table 1: Distribution of gender, age and race groups of local patrons and local tourists

Age groups	18-30 years		30-40 years		40-50 years		50-60 years		Total no. interviewed
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Indian	2	3	4	1	9	11	0	2	32
White	2	2	2	2	1	1	3	5	18
Coloured	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	0	12
Blacks	4	6	5	3	0	0	0	0	18
Total	10	13	12	8	11	14	5	7	80

over time in Muslim thinking about permissible food especially amongst Diasporic communities. In minority contexts, religious food rules serve as evidence of Muslim distinctiveness and their religious beliefs. Kecia (2015) explains that the more people eat only halal meat, the greater its role becomes as a signifier of Muslim identity. Therefore refraining from food which is not *halal* or foods which are classified as 'taboo' can serve to differentiate between Muslims and non-Muslims and for others it has the capacity to assist in constructing identities of an co-operative Muslim and an uncooperative Muslim (Kecia 2015: 271).

It is in this vein that Debevec and Tivadar (2006: 5) argued that: "In many parts of the world food is a social jelly, a substance that binds people together and that separates them." Mintz and Du Bois (2002) explains that the study of food and eating has an established history in anthropology and it began with theorists Malinowski and Robertson Smith in the nineteenth century. Despite food being utterly essential for human existence, it has illuminated broad societal processes such as symbolic, political and economic value creation and the social construction of memory (Mintz and Du Bois 2002: 108).

Valentini (2010) explains that food represents a link with one's origins. There is connectivity between memory and the emotional dimension of food which has been often side lined by anthropologists.

Food can be used to express religious differences and can be effective in building social cohesion as well amongst people who share different cultures. Varying cuisines contribute towards developing a more concrete national or ethnic identity. Vocal restatements and literature about national or ethnic foods add to a cuisine's conceptual solidity and coherence. The anthropological study of food in present times has begun to serve as a vehicle for examining large and varied problems of theory and research methods. Food studies and the acceptance of varying cuisines in society are at present a platform for the debates of relative merits of symbolic explanations of human behaviour (Mintz and Du Bois 2002: 100).

Anthropologists have long been aware of the value of cuisine in understanding people, cultures, societies and the relationships that people share. Various cuisines allow people to make connections as well as explore controver-

sies that are not necessarily about food or cooking techniques and differences amongst communities and families (Debevec and Tivadar 2006: 5). The concepts "cuisine" and "cuisines" are defined as a distinctly unique and meritable pattern of food preparation common to a culture (Kotschevar 1984: 13). These concepts are used throughout this study and only loosely refer to foods which are unique to various cultural groupings. Anthropologists are in constant search of new avenues to explore the life practices of social groups or communities. Food, especially traditional meals, can be seen as a means to understand, engage and analyse cultures. Studying food and the exploration of cuisines has enlightened researchers on broader societal processes such as political and economic value creation and symbolic value creation.

Levi-Strauss (1970) argues that food enables the anthropologist to access significant information and gain an understanding of the unconscious attitudes of the society under study. In common with other theorists, he sought to view food as a cultural system in which taste was largely influenced by culture and was socially controlled (Levi-Strauss cited in Caplan 1997: 6). Culture, both past and present is seen as an inevitable part of food tourism in the writings of Boniface, (2003 cited in du Rand and Heath 2006: 4). Culture has firm roots in Anthropology, especially in the way it is studied. Social anthropological ideas of culture are linked to a combination of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law and customs which are established ways of thinking and behaving in societies (Marshall 1998: 139). Culture is also the general term for the symbolic and learned aspects of human society (Marshall 1998: 137). Hall (2003) argues that food or culinary tourism as it is known has become part of the "local culture" of a destination consumed by tourists. It is an indicator of globalisation and localisation, a component of local agricultural and economic development and a product and service consumed by tourists with definite preferences and consumption patterns. Today, a variety of cuisines has become an element of the promotion of destinations and a product or service consumed and utilised by tourists with definite preferences and food consumption patterns (Boyne et al. 2003 cited in du Rand and Heath 2006: 5).

Mintz and Du Bois (2002) explain that not only do people move across the globe, so do

foods. Ethnic restaurants are an example of cuisines that have travelled across the world. Thai restaurants in America for instance, represent this reality. People are curious about the atmosphere, style of dining, decor and food when they indulge in meals which are presented as authentic Thai dishes (Molz 2004: 68). Likewise, when they move to a new location for a few years, Mormon missionaries explore food to familiarise themselves with new and exotic types of cuisine and food in order to embrace a new missionary identity. New and different foods also offer people an opportunity to change their familiar identities and create meaningful relationships with others from their new living place (Rudy 2004: 135). According to Symons (1999) "authentic meals have to be true to place". Different atmospheres, the quality and texture of ingredients and cooking methods can alter a dish, making it no longer authentic. Foods prepared and eaten at their place of innovation are generally prepared with the correct ingredients and spices (Symons 1999 cited in Scarpato and Daniele 2003: 12). Therefore foods and dishes that have been founded and consumed in one place can be seen as authentic.

Understanding Durban Indian Cuisine

The Origins of Durban Indian Cuisine

There is a tendency to view people of Indian origin as a homogeneous segment in South Africa, which ignores the five major linguistic groups, and the three major religious segments. Among the linguistic groups are the Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu descendants, and among the religious segments are Hindus, Muslims and Christians. This tendency to generalise has given rise to a misnomer of a general term that refers to "Indian food" or "Indian curry in Durban" as though there is an absence of variation in the way so-called "Indian food" is prepared.

However, people of Indian origin¹ (globally referred to as "PIOs"), in South Africa are diverse in social practices and religious beliefs which has influenced the varying types of cuisine that is prepared by each ethnic group. Examples of variations of the curries include, different combination of spices for dishes, the inclusion or exclusion of fresh coconut, coconut milk, and preserved variations of coconut. Additional variations are related to preparation tech-

niques and combination of vegetables used in a single curry. Additional variations of Indian dishes is dependent on the many religious backgrounds within this segment of Durban's populous and the type of social gatherings.

"For instance, the internationally known dish called "biryani" has a significant variation during social gatherings among Muslims and Hindus, particularly of North Indian extraction. During Muslim weddings in Durban and ritual gatherings biryani is almost inevitably cooked with either chicken or lamb, whereas among Hindus in such gatherings the dish is inevitably vegetarian. Similarly, vegetarian and meat dishes vary widely in the ways in which they are prepared in Indian homes and they may vary even more from the ways in which they are prepared in the different regions in India – adding an emphatic localised adaptation to their dishes as descendants of migrant Indians" (Singh and Bhoola 2016: 6).

Till date descriptions of this diaspora cuisine vary tremendously and have been continuously evolving. A recently updated segment on www.southafrica.net indicated that Durban Indian cuisine is distinctly varied from food found in India and that this cuisine has also been influenced by the Zulu cuisine because of the close proximity of these two communities in rural Kwa-Zulu-Natal. For instance, curries are often accompanied by *pap*² which is a Zulu dish. A dish which has its roots in Zulu Cuisine known as '*Chakalaka*³⁴' is now spiced with Indian spices when prepared by local South Africans.

The Bunny Chow

Another popular way to serve curry is in a uniquely distinctive Durban created bread bowl, called 'Bunny Chow'. To make Bunny Chow a loaf of bread is cut in half, the centre is removed and the curry served into it. The very nature of this item precludes any other way but one's fingers to eat it – a normative eating habit among Indians when they eat. The origins of the bunny chow are obscure and almost a mystery. There are numerous versions of this dish and each Durban citizen will choose the version that they can relate to (Somers 1991: 25). One notion that is believed by many is that this dish was created for the Indian caddies which were employed at the Royal Durban Golf Course who were not able to go out to purchase food during lunch breaks whilst at work. Their friends went and

bought lunch for them and the curry was transported back to the Golf Course in hollowed out bread because the availability of disposable food containers were limited. Other Durban citizens believe that the shopkeepers were known as 'bannias' and hence the name 'bunny chow' developed as an indication of which cafeteria or diner the food was purchased from. Other online sources indicate that since Grey Street was central to where the bunny chow was founded, it is likely that the founders were a Gujarati family owned business known as G.C. Kapitan Vegetarian Restaurant which operated between 1912 and 1992.

A feature article in the April 2014 issue of the *Bidvest Premier Complimentary Magazine for the Discerning Traveller* on dining options in Durban is an indication of a greater awareness and a valued interest in culinary tourism and among media organisations in South Africa. Special reference was made to the 'bunny chow' being available at popular restaurants which were spoken about by participants of the researchers' study during interviews. The authors mentioned of Durban curries and its variations as well as other cuisines such as Italian and Thai (Fiore and Schauffer 2014: 46). Other online sources indicate that since Grey Street was central to where the bunny chow was founded, it is likely that the founders were a Gujarati family owned business known as G.C. Kapitan Vegetarian Restaurant which operated between 1912 and 1992 (www.wikipedia.org/bunnychow). The online dictionary Wikipedia affirms that this restaurant prepared and sold bunny chows, but narratives of individuals whom resided in the city centre have varying opinions of how and where this dish was created. However, today most café's and restaurant in Durban and surrounding areas have this dish and its variations on their menus.

This dish is often enjoyed by many local Durban residents on a daily basis because of its ample availability, whereas other South Africans may not have the opportunity to consume 'bunnies' on a daily basis because of the lack of availability of this dish within their locality of residence. Discussions with locals have revealed that they have their personal preferences of restaurants when deciding to consume a 'bunny' and there is also a preferred way to consume this dish. Some indicate that it is a must to consume this dish using your fingers, and to others

it is not of importance. Since the inception of this dish, it has become renowned as Durban's unique creation primarily because the curry within the bread bowls are uniquely identified as the Durban curry. The 'bunny chow' has been used in the marketing of Durban's cuisines especially in relation to tourism and culinary tourism (Soni 2017). Another obvious deviation from traditional meals in India is the lack of availability of 'thali' meals in Durban. Very few restaurants in Durban have this type of meal listed on their menus and if they do, the dish is offered on a seasonal basis. The traditional 'thali' is a tray that usually measures 12 to 18 inches in diameter and has a straight or angular rim, and comprises of several bowls which contain various curries, vegetables and sweets. The lack of availability of this dish resonates that it is not popular and sought after by this sect of the diasporic community in Durban (Patil 2011: 11).

What is the Durban Indian Curry?

According to the *Oxford Companion to Food*, the word curry comes from the south Indian Tamil word 'kari'. Curry is described as a spicy sauce which is poured over rice. Davidson (2006) explains that the English word was used to "describe any spicy dish with a thick sauce or gravy that came from any part of India" (Davidson 2006: 235 cited in Singh and Bhoola 2016: 7).

Food scholars have varying perspectives of the terms curry and its core ingredient known as curry powder in the western regions of the world. For instance, Clairborne (2009) has a broad indistinctive description of the term curry which can be fitting to most types of curries prepared in various regions of the world. She explains that the curry is any dish which primarily consists of a spicy gravy or sauce made with seafood, meat, vegetables or poultry. Her understanding of an Indian meal experience relents to the meal comprising of many curries, each with its own unique flavour and taste (Clairborne 2009 cited in Ray 2009: 217). Other scholars indicate that the core ingredient of a curry powder blend which is easily available at most supermarkets in South Africa and abroad is either pounded dried red chillies combined with turmeric. However, the blend of ingredients used in the preparation of the infamous curry powder differs in various parts of the world. In France for instance,

a relative indicated to me that the curry powder has a unique dominant flavour of dried coriander rather than pounded red dried chillies and turmeric powder. However, scholars cannot ignore the fact that there are multiple definitions to the word 'curry' as the term is utilised by a variety of cultures.

"For instance, Thai restaurants around the world often have dishes titled red or green curry, Chinese restaurants and takeaways tend to have chicken or seafood curries, while authentic Indian restaurants and takeaways offer a bigger variety of what has now become known as "curry". The definitions of curry are reliant upon at least three things *viz.* the origins of the dish, the era during which the dish was created and, the external influences that added to the exoticism of the dish" (Singh and Bhoola 2016: 7).

Maroney (2011: 123) for instance, states that the Portuguese was responsible for introducing the chilli plant to India during the 16th century and that curry can be viewed as a development that reflects adaptations to British interests in spicy Indian food (Maroney 2011: 123 cited in Singh and Bhoola 2016: 7). A definition that is more distinctive and appropriate for Indian cuisine terminology is the one cited by Wehmeier (2000). "Curry" is defined as a dish which is Indian and which contains meat or vegetables. The spices of a curry are often pungent which give off a burning sensation to the consumer. This dish is mainly served with rice (Wehmeier 2000: 286 cited in Singh and Bhoola 2016: 7). The online Merriam Webster dictionary describes curry as a "food, dish or sauce in Indian cooking that is seasoned with a mixture of pungent spices." Spices which are used to prepare the curry are a combination of ginger, garlic, turmeric, cumin and coriander. This online description indicates that South Asian communities have been instrumental in the birth process of the curry, despite the fact that there are numerous explanations and perspectives of the origins of this dish.

The flavours, pungency and textures of a curry are varied throughout the world, however a notable difference is that the curries prepared by South Asians are far more pungent than those prepared and consumed by North Indians (www.merriam-webster.com). The most appropriate and all-encompassing definition for curry was found on www.wikipedia.com, and not within published literature. Their definition not only

confirms the descriptions and viewpoint of origin which the researchers have presented above, but also incorporates many other details which can aid in understanding the concept 'curry'. For instance, www.wikipedia.com makes mention of the variety of curries. A curry is usually either 'wet' or 'dry'. The wet curries contain a larger amount of sauce or gravy which is usually prepared from yogurt, coconut milk, tomato and legume puree, whereas the dry curries are cooked with minimal amounts of liquid which are sufficient to coat the main ingredients (poultry or vegetables) so that they remain spicy but not immersed in a liquid sauce.

Unique preparation methods are religiously adhered to in order to ensure the dish is as traditional as possible. The Gujarati community in Durban is renowned for their various types of savoury snacks, while people that originate from the south of India (Tamils and Telegus) are known for preparation of pungent dishes. There are similarities when it comes to many dishes and their flavours or preparation techniques. A particular method known as the '*vagaar*' is common to all regional and ethnic styles of Indian cooking in Durban; this entails simmering whole spices on high heat. Another common ingredient used by most homes of Indian descent is ghee (clarified butter). This form of butter is more suitable to *vagaars*⁵, when the butter has to be heated to a high temperature (Parbhoo 2008: 17). Fresh ginger and garlic and compound red or green chillies are a necessity for most types of Indian cuisine and they form the base flavour of most cooked dishes. *A Dictionary of South African Indian English* notes that South African Indian cuisine is a hybrid of different regional styles of Indian cooking, with local Western⁶ and African influences as well (Mesthrie cited in Seid 2010). Seid believes that Durban food is a great blend of north and south urban and rural Indian cooking. Rajend Mesthrie, a professor of linguistics at the University of Cape Town adds that (quoted in a newsprint article) "Regional blending of culture is the story of our food" (Naidoo, *The Tribune Herald*, 31 August 2012).

The curry not only has multiple definitions but can also be tedious, complex and diverse in the ways in which these types of dishes are prepared. However, it is the variations and uniqueness which is often infused with local influences and palate preferences that can possibly serve as a unique and special contribution towards

the launch of culinary tourism in Durban and abroad. Such techniques also serve as the ideal opportunity for Indian cookery the South African way to be showcased through culinary tourism. For instance, cooking classes and food tours would serve as a means to satisfy the curious international culinary tourist.

In Durban, most Indian dishes are commonly referred to as curry, often cooked in heavy based pots. First onions are browned in hot oil, followed by an addition of various spices, then the garlic and ginger and the mixture simmered for no more than a minute or two before the vegetables, lamb, chicken, beef or fish is added. Tomatoes, if the dish requires, are normally added in the last few minutes of the cooking process. The pan is covered and the dish is left to simmer, bringing all the flavours of this rich concoction together. Finally fresh coriander is folded in just before serving. The curry is usually served over white rice with condiments called *chutney* and/or *sambals* and *poppadums*. Various versions of Indian cuisine have emerged as a result of the growing Indian diaspora communities and in the twentieth century we can assume that there is a steady decline of the preparation of 'authentic' Indian foods (Singh and Bhoola 2016: 7).

How Do We Describe 'Authentic' Indian Cuisine in Durban?

The concept of 'authenticity' is questioned by both scholars and tourists, especially when food becomes central in attracting the culinary tourist and other types of tourists to destinations. Tourists often enquire which dishes or foods are unique and 'authentic' to a particular destination and often they are the ones that determine the popularity of the food. This is further emphasised when tourist destinations compete against one another in a bid to attract visitors. Scholarly articles debate whether authentic foods really exist and varying theories collectively indicate that the term 'authentic' is loosely defined. Scholar Dean MacCannell initiated the discourse of 'authenticity' in tourism, but in his work the term remains undefined although its relevance and possible impacts of the concept are discussed and elaborated upon. He distinguishes between the experiences of authenticity and the authenticity of sights, objects and consumables. He identifies the need

for tourists to label certain aspects of their touristic experience as authentic and their quest for authenticity, but like many other scholars his theory lacks a clear understanding of what is authentic and what is not authentic. Cohen (2002: 269) notes that this concept is vague and that its value is primarily related to specificity of an object, experience or consumable.

Indian peoples and their foods have migrated to numerous regions outside India decades ago. Indian food in particular is viewed as an expression of one's heritage and traditions and often recipes of indigenous dishes are passed from one generation to the next in families living in India and among the diasporic communities globally. For instance, it is believed that certain Rajasthani dishes cannot be prepared without generous amount of ghee and other dairy products. Chef and author, Patil (2011) explains that because the state of Rajasthan has a scarcity of water, ingredients such as ghee and dairy are preferred when preparing the meals. Similarly, the use of chick pea flour is preferred in vegetarian dishes in Rajasthan because of the dearth of fresh vegetables. When these dishes are being prepared outside of Rajasthan, are they being prepared in the exact same way? Are diasporic communities not incorporating more fresh vegetables into Rajasthan dishes since it is freely available in their locality? Are the use of ingredients such as ghee being substituted with other types of fat by younger members of the Indian diaspora? Similarly are younger members of Rajasthan households making adaptations to their indigenous cuisine?

Cuisine and authenticity have a complexity that is difficult to define. Indian cuisine in particular has the capacity to still be largely Indian even though it can be very influenced by locality, global food trends as well as personal preferences. The local 'bunny chow' is prepared in numerous ways with varying local ingredients and strengths of the chilli within Durban and the greater South Africa. South African renowned chef and author, Mayat (1989) explains in her compilation of recipes titled, *The Best of Indian Delights* that there is a continual quest for modified recipes which are less time consuming from the younger generations within the South African diaspora. For instance, her book offers amateur chefs the option of replacing homemade pastries and doughs with store bought and or pre-packed frozen variations

(Mayat 1989: 12). South Africa at present is an importer of both prepacked and frozen foods from global regions such as The United Kingdom, India, China, and the Middle East. This has also contributed towards a growing trend of blended foods and foods that are less distinct of a region or culture. Mayat (1989) also notes that previous editions of this publication which dates back to the year 1969, have reached Indian diasporic homes in Australia, Britain, United States of America, Canada and the Fiji islands. Dishes prepared in these homes from her recipe book has also been influenced by local ingredients or variations of the spices that are available there. Parbhoo's (2008) compilation of recipes of South African Indian cuisine is titled, "*Traditional Indian Cooking in South Africa*" which clearly indicates the locality of her recipes which imply that the recipes in the book have been modified to accommodate the availability of ingredients and the palate of the South African diasporic community (Parbhoo 2008). The modification of Indian recipes to global regions has become a growing food trend and has been showcased on televised cooking channels and on multimedia. This practice is not exclusive to Indian diaspora communities and their food, but is evident among varying cuisines of the world. Therefore, it is a challenge for theorists and scholars to adequately and appropriately define the term 'authentic' in the context of cuisine, despite numerous publications and theories which all contribute towards an understanding of 'authenticity'.

Tourism scholar, Cohen (2002) explains that different understandings of authenticity can coexist within tourism. Holiday food or meals consumed whilst on holiday in a foreign destination provoke certain emotions within an individual and often when tourists relate to their meal experience it is subjected to biases such as these which impacts their experience of an 'authentic' meal. Some food experiences relate to perceptions of what a 'typical' experience should be and often this is understood by many as an authentic experience. Each individual has their own perceptions which can be interpreted by them as 'authentic' based on their cognisance of socially constructed understandings of authenticity. In tourism and in general, 'authentic' foods are often related to the landscape, culture and heritage of their destination. For instance, a brand called MRT Heat and eat dishes which

is widely available in India and globally has been identified by consumers as 'authentic' South Indian meals. One has to question if this assimilation is made because of the product's connectivity to the culture and heritage of South India or has it been categorised as 'authentic' because of its flavour and quality which resembles homemade dishes or whether marketing strategies have influenced consumers that these pre packed foods are 'authentic'. Scholar, Srinivas (2006: 193) in her publication titled, '*As mother made it': The Cosmopolitan Indian Family, Authentic Food and the Construction of Cultural Utopia*' explains that to most people authenticity is evident when it is recognised. As we understand the concept of authenticity, does the locality of where food is being prepared add value to perceiving authenticity?

Families within the Indian diaspora have an overall greater concern as to how they upkeep home culture and food consumption is central to it. Often their lifestyle, memories of India and their imagination of family as well as personal views on how a dish should taste and be prepared has influenced their perception of what is authentic and what is not. This is then coupled with the global influences of blended cuisines and the exposure to other international foods and their flavours. Today in a global village varying factors contribute towards what makes one believe that a dish is 'authentic' and what is not 'authentic'.

DISCUSSION

Twenty of eighty respondents (25%) stated that Indian cuisine was their preferred type of cuisine especially when dining out, as they rarely prepared this type of cuisine in their homes due to the lack of spices required to prepare these dishes and their inability to prepare Indian cuisine. Of the twenty-five percent, approximately half were international tourists and the remaining half were local tourists. An additional twenty-eight interviewees (36%) expressed their preference for Italian Cuisine whilst in Durban of which twenty-four percent were local tourists. Ten (10) patrons (13%) indicated that they have a preference for grilled meat prepared with western cooking techniques and flavours. Twenty-two (28%) respondents indicated a preference for seafood dishes prepared with western flavours.

The Popularity Durban Indian Cuisine amongst Durban Patrons and Tourists from South Africa

The popularity of Italian cuisine among international and local tourists are reaffirmed by a global survey completed in 2011 by the charity organisation Oxfam. It noted that pasta is the world's favourite food and that pasta is a favourite dish in South Africa, the Philippines, Guatemala and Brazil. Oxfam created a list of the world's top ten foods based on the results of the survey. Meat dishes were rated second and seafood was ranked number six (Anon 2011). Lang (2005) a professor in food policy at the City University of London, believes that the industrial revolution allowed pasta to be mass produced and transported globally. He adds that it gained popularity because people like Italian cuisine and the food is simple and a staple. These factors combined with easy accessibility to the cuisine has contributed to the decline in consumption of other traditional foods globally. Restaurants that specialise in Durban Indian cuisine have been outnumbered by global franchises which specialise in other cuisines. The number of Italian restaurants in cities around the world is an indicator of how popular Italian cuisine is in many countries (Lang, *The Guardian*, 3 August 2005). For instance, 16 Italian restaurants, 53 seafood restaurants, and only 19 restaurants that serve Indian cuisine are listed on the online restaurant guide of South Africa, www.wininganddining.co.za (Anon 2017). Therefore the popularity of Italian cuisine, grilled meat and seafood (prepared with Western flavours) amongst local people conforms to current international trends. Even though these meals are often prepared with Western flavours, most restaurants in Durban often patrons the options of indulging in spicy sauces such as coriander, mint and chilli sauces on the side. This is an indication of how PIO's have influenced most cuisines in Durban at large.

The above results have indicated that Indian food lacked popularity amongst local residents was unexpected considering that Durban is renowned for its dominance of Indian peoples and their cuisines. However, this may be an inaccurate reflection of the popularity of Indian Cuisine for the following three reasons. Firstly, there are almost no studies and literature which focus on cuisine preferences within the homes

of Durban residents. During interviews, some interviewees indicated that Durban residents often do not want to eat the type of food which they regularly consume in their homes and when they dine out, they prefer to eat cuisines which they find tedious or time-consuming to prepare. Therefore it is still uncertain as to how popular Durban Indian cuisine really is among local Durban residents but local tourists clearly indicated their preference for Durban Indian Cuisine when visiting Durban.

Secondly, numerous small restaurants that are located outside the mainstream dining areas have been excluded from a well-known online dining guide. Thirdly, the responsibility lies with the restaurateur to update and list their restaurant on to the website and it is evident that some restaurateurs choose not to make the initiative to engage in this type of marketing facility. These restaurants are then excluded from the list, especially smaller and informal take-away and eateries that serve Durban Indian cuisine or Indian Cuisine located in and around Durban. This then makes it difficult for both local tourists and international tourists visiting Durban to locate a restaurant which specialises in Indian cuisine, yet these restaurants are frequented by locals. For instance, both the restaurants Goundens and Nitas Curry Den are excluded from the list and have become renowned amongst Durban citizens, but international tourists are unaware of such places because of the lack of marketing and advertising strategies that these restaurateurs are not engaged in.

Popularity of Durban Indian Cuisine and Authentic Indian Cuisine amongst International Tourists

A total of 25 international tourists were interviewed although 25 is not a high number they are part of more than 70 other international tourists who were approached for interviews. The 25 interviewees were randomly approached and they provided reasonable insight into the spectrum of views about cuisine in Durban, cuisine in their countries of residence and what they prefer to dine on. On average, each interview lasted approximately twenty minutes to an hour and enabled the researchers to have elicited sufficient information from them. Interviewees were from France, England, The United States of America, Spain and Germany, China, India and

Malawi. Eleven nations are represented within this sample group. Sixty-four percent of the international tourists were male and thirty-six percent female. Twenty-eight percent of the male tourists were between the ages of 40 and 50, while 24 of the women were between the ages of 18 and 30. The least prevalent nationalities represented within the researchers' sample group are Chinese, Indian and Malawian.

Four German tourists from Berlin were interviewed. While they were enthusiastic about availing themselves to local cuisine in Durban, they were unlikely to steer off into food types that they were not too familiar with. Their possible dabbling with what might be considered "exotic" by foreigners who are not too used to high carbohydrates intake or spicy dishes that were "likely to make them sweat", provided responses that sounded like such options were remote possibilities. Of the four interviewees, two expressed their preference for Chinese cuisine, whilst the other two preferred Portuguese, and Thai cuisine. They further indicated that their preference would be the same almost anywhere in the world. Similarly, French tourists said that they preferred Western or continental meals, while the other two were inclined towards Italian cuisine. After sampling a local curry sandwich, a French tourist indicated that he would classify that meal as an exotic South African dish, but it would not necessarily be his first choice of a meal. The German tourists also suggested that Durban curries can be included on the list of authentic dishes in the city, despite the Spanish, French and German tourists indicating their preference of seafood which must be prepared with western flavours. The French tourists spoke of their pleasant experiences at steakhouses in Durban and their overall preferences for steak. The American tourists too indicated their preference for Italian cuisine and were disinterested in restaurants that specialised in local Indian Cuisine. Most of these international tourists had not sampled local Indian cuisine at the time of the interview and were unwilling to do so. Interesting contradictions arose in the responses received from the Indian, Chinese and Malawian tourists. While Indian food was somewhat preferred amongst the Chinese, it was ironically not an attraction to the respondent from India and neither were Malawian tourists interested in it. They expressed a preference for Western cuisine whereas they made reference to Chinese-

Indian fusion dishes as well as Thai food, even though they appreciated Indian cuisine when in India. No mention was made of Durban Indian food and the Chinese tourists were unaware of this particular variety of Indian cuisine. They also did not understand the difference between Durban Indian cuisine and authentic Indian cuisine. The English tourists had a palate for a variety of Indian dishes and special mention was made of the local variation of the fish curry which is flavoured with local Indian spices. Seafood restaurants and steakhouses were most popular among the Malawian and Indian tourists. Both indicated that their favourite meals in Durban were lamb dishes, steak and condiments such as barbeque or mint sauce. Durban's range of restaurants, franchises that are international and take-away outlets provide an impressive mixture of cuisine types that cater for the widest range of ethnic groups and international tourists. South Africa's meat production too has acquired more international attention during the Soccer World Cup than it ever did. If people from proud backgrounds such as India and China where culinary skills have been worked upon for centuries can complement South African chefs and their preparations on food, then it does leave policymakers on tourism in Durban with innumerable ideas about how to take such information and develop models for the further enhancement of tourism in the city.

CONCLUSION

As a hub of economic activity with a commendable infrastructure for business and tourism, Durban has all the facilities to market its cuisines as part of a broader package of 'culinary tourism'. If widely travelled tourists are saying it themselves, there must be some substance to it. Despite the initial assumption that Indian cuisine would be the preferred choice of tourists in Durban, the data revealed that other cuisines were preferred. Literature surveys and interviews with international tourists confirmed the researchers' initial assumption that the marketing approach of cuisines available have been minimal especially with international tourists entering South Africa. Interviews revealed that many tourists were not aware of the wide variety of cuisines Durban had to offer and furthermore many were not enticed to sample Durban Indian Cuisine. Tours specialising in cooking,

food and beverage tasting are not as yet available for tourists in Durban with the exception of one Beer tasting tour which is inadequately marketed as well. Other cities in South Africa such as Cape Town offer tourists the option to participate in cooking tours which focus on local fresh produce and their regional cuisine. Tourists interviewed indicated that they were unaware of meals and their variations that were locally born with influences from Africa and India. Some tourists deemed this variation of food as exotic. Well established restaurants which specialise in Indian Cuisine are excluded from online eating directories and printed advertisements at tourist centres in Durban. Media publications have a tendency to only give certain restaurants acknowledgment and recognition for their dishes, whereas other places are excluded from publicity initiatives. The lack of commitment to market restaurants appropriately in Durban can be liable for the haphazard approach to publicizing sporadically, infrequently and unsystematically which is an indicator that culinary tourism is not taken seriously at present in Durban and contributing to this is the lack of recent publications which focus on food in Durban, whereas food in other cities of South Africa is continually publicized by mass and print media.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Many tourists expressed the opinion that the tourism industry could benefit tremendously from cooking tours which teach tourists how to prepare locally influenced Indian and African dishes.

Culinary tourism and its current global growth has emphasised the value of food in the sphere of economic, tourism and cultural studies. Academic literature within tourism studies has concentrated on the role food has played as an income generator and a marketing tool; anthropological studies can develop and sustain the social and cultural perspectives of culinary tourism. These approaches could include reflections on food, place and identity and the development of identity formation in post-modern societies. The perspective and notion that people can explore the exotic without leaving their home towns is evident in Durban with the vast variety of cuisines available for patrons. An ethnic restaurant, for instance, is a place where people can engage in a touristic practice within their

own culture without having to travel too far. Restaurants providing other cuisine types offer an opportunity to the patron to be adventurous in their meal selections which can expose their tastes to a variety of cuisine flavours.

It is widely acknowledged by many anthropologists and other scholars that eating is not only a necessary and universal activity, but also a means through which the wide-eyed observer gains critical and informative insight into social patterns, lifestyle and taboos or endorsements of what is sacred or what is profane. Culinary tourism as a subject has the capacity to not only contribute to academic study of foods, tourism and related subject, but primarily is a vehicle for tourism for many regions in the world.

Individuals choose to indulge in foods that are new to them for varying reasons and for many individual's curiosity and the experience of pleasurable tastes are encouraging enough to sample new and exotic foods. This suggests that the meaning of food and its related practices embody social structures and relationships which fluctuate with local economic and social contexts. The impacts of broad societal change on the way in which people live, history and heritage, especially with respect to people's eating habits are of significant interest to anthropologists and historians. The development of culinary tourism has created greater awareness of the globalisation of food production and the global transportation of a variety of cuisines which have resulted in the birth of unique dishes around the world.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Local tourists were approached whilst they were at leisure, socialising at restaurants within the three aforementioned areas in Durban. More than often, these interviews were brief in comparison to the interviews conducted with international tourists. Unfortunately the majority of tourists shunned the prospect of permitting interviews and others responded in the shortest way possible only to avoid being discourteous. Some international tourists were keen to discuss cuisines and their variances in Durban than the local tourists. Managers or restaurateurs were also not always cooperative to the researchers' request to interview tourists dining at their restaurants, and this became a hindrance as they were often placed under time constraints espe-

cially when only allowed to tale to patrons before their meal arrived. In most cases, the researchers' were unwillingly granted approximately 20 minutes per table which often seated at least 2 or more patrons.

NOTES

- 1 The concepts "Cuisine "and "cuisines" are defined as a distinctly unique and merit able pattern of food preparation common to a culture (Kotschevar 1984: 13). These concepts are used throughout this study and only loosely refer to foods which are unique to various cultural groupings.
- 2 The term people of Indian Origin has been used in this paper because it at large describes people that have Indian origin in their heritage despite when they began residing in Durban and for how long. In many instances, Durban has become home to many migrants permanently and temporarily for a limited number of years. This term then incorporates people that have had families that have migrated to Durban generations ago, temporary recent migrants and permanent recent migrants.
- 3 Pap is a thick, crumbly porridge prepared from maize which is usually consumed for either breakfast, lunch and supper by African communities in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi and the surrounds.
- 4 Chakalaka is a South African vegetable relish, usually spicy, that is traditionally served with bread, pap, samp, stews, or curries. This dish is mainly prepared with grated carrots, tin baked beans, green peppers, fresh ginger, fresh garlic and chopped onions. Spices that are used include curry powder and black pepper.
- 5 Every curry is prepared with the initial capturing of the aroma of selected seeds, through a tempering that is an integral process in Indian cooking. In the Gujarati vernacular, this process is simply known as 'vagaar'. One has to heat the oil or clarified butter to a high temperature, place the seeds in it immediately and close the pot so that the aroma is captured in the pot. Thereafter the lid is lifted and the remainder of the ingredients are placed in the pot. (Parbhoo 2008: 14). This tempering of seeds can be either the prelude or final touch to curries and rice dishes.
- 6 A term used to describe food flavours that have originated in Western or European parts of the world.
- 7 Reference has been made to mass media articles throughout this study so that the public perception of aspects within the tourism and hospitality industry of South Africa could be determined and included.

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