

1 Perceived value of foreign tourists of the gastronomic
2 offer in typical open-air beachside establishments: the
3 ‘Chiringuitos’, Costa del Sol, Málaga

4 **Abstract**

This study analyses the profile of foreign tourists in the Costa del Sol, Málaga area of Spain to understand whether their satisfaction and motivations to travel there are due to the gastronomic attributes offered in the ‘Chiringuitos’, which is a typical beach-bar restaurant where tourists can taste local products as an outdoor recreational activity in a natural environment. The authors began their research with fieldwork based on opinions of tourists collected through questionnaires completed after their gastronomic experience. The results revealed three different groups of tourists according to their attitudes towards local gastronomy, with different predispositions and gastronomic knowledge. The authors concluded that tourists have different levels of satisfaction and motivation depending on whether the tourists were identified as being in one particular segment or another. Although similar studies exist on the perceived value of tourists visiting a place, they have not been developed to provide tourism segmentation that considers three key points, namely, the culinary aspect, the experience at a coastal area that offers the possibility of tasting the local gastronomy right on the beach and the case of consulting only foreign tourists.

5 *Keywords:* Gastronomic tourism; gastronomic attributes; food motivation;
6 segmentation; local gastronomy, ‘Chiringuitos’.

7 *JEL:* C83, Z32

8 **1. Introduction**

9 Gastronomic tourism, together with the sun and beach tourism that the
10 Costa del Sol destination offers, is a key phenomenon as it represents an
11 opportunity: i) to revive and diversify tourism and promote, plan and man-
12 age local economic development; ii) to involve different professional sectors

(manufacturers/suppliers, chefs, markets, natural resources, etc.) and iii) to bring new uses to the primary sectors (Gheorghe et al., 2014).

In recent years, Spain has established itself as a reference destination because of its wide range of features that make it one of the worlds most preferred tourist destinations (the second most popular tourist destination in the world with 83.7 million visitors in 2019, just before the COVID-19 outbreak, according to the portal info *www.worldpopulationreview.com*). One of the key features is gastronomy, with Spain the pioneer of the Mediterranean diet, which was declared an example of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2010. The Mediterranean diet comprises a set of knowledge, practical skills, rituals, traditions and symbols related to crops and harvests; natural environments for fishing and animal husbandry and the way food is preserved, transformed, cooked, shared and consumed. Moreover, Spanish cuisine is famous for its popular tapas, small snacks with a lighter content, which allow for tasting and sampling a larger number of dishes.

The evolution of foreign tourism until the pandemic was significant. The UK market was the most relevant, with more than 2.7 million British tourists visiting the Costa del Sol in 2019 (29.9% of total arrivals).

The high number of visitors has promoted a culinary tourism segment dedicated to local gastronomy that transcends traditional holidays or leisure tourism (Everett, 2016), with its own identity centred on memorable moments involved in tasting the culinary offerings available (?). Within this experiential context, gastronomy constitutes a privileged means of approaching the cultural heritage of the place visited (Huang, 2017) and can promote the development of new opportunities around local gastronomy (Simancas et al., 2020).

Hence, there is a new and growing stream of tourists whose main or secondary motivation is to discover the gastronomy of the place they are visiting. Therefore, this study segments tourists visiting the Costa del Sol according to their interest in gastronomy. Accordingly, an analysis of the culinary motivations and the degree of satisfaction of each of these groups with the gastronomic experience offered in the Costa del Sol can be conducted to determine whether gastronomy is a fundamental part of the satisfaction that foreign tourists experience when visiting this location.

In this sense, it is crucial to study the role of gastronomy as a catalyst to improve the quality of the tourism experience and the promotion of a destination (Kivela & Crofts, 2005). Both aspects contribute to improving the added value and competitiveness of each chosen location through its

culinary image (e.g. Mak et al., 2013). Recent studies have shown an upsurge in quality through co-creation activities in gastronomic tourism (Park & Vidyanta, 2022) in which human beings are given more importance over the product itself.

Tourism segmentation usually considers each identified group with common interests, identical needs and similar perspectives or socio-demographic characteristics, and this information forms the basis of the development of new creative actions.

The literature studies tourism segmentation based on a destinations gastronomy (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Thompson & Prideaux, 2009), gastronomic events (e.g. Kim et al., 2015; López-Guzmán et al., 2017) and gastronomic markets (e.g. Crespí & Dimitrovski, 2016; Pérez-Gálvez et al., 2021).

Recent studies have followed this trend regarding the primary or secondary motivation and satisfaction of gastronomy in the choice of destination, and have determined, from the lowest to the highest degree, disinterested, indifferent and motivated tourists (Pérez Priego et al., 2019).

The culinary aspect and its attributes in terms of the gastronomic offer, quality, service and location can become one of the decision criteria to be considered when choosing a destination (Widjaja et al., 2020). A healthy gastronomic offering significantly increases the intention to consume local products (Seo et. al., 2017).

The authenticity of an establishment contributes to the feeling of a unique experience and the desire to repeat it (DiPietro & Levitt, 2017). Other authors identify up to four dimensions of attributes to generate a perception of a destinations gastronomy, namely, service, food safety and hygiene, variety and table manners and the taste and popularity of food Yasami et al. (2021).

According to Haven-Tang & Jones (2008), gastronomy itself provokes a unique, different and unrepeatable way of experiencing a tourist destination.

Finally, a satisfying and rewarding gastronomic experience results in the subsequent generation of positive memories that predispose the tourist to re-visit and/or recommend the area (Stone et al., 2018).

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are, therefore, proposed for testing:

H1: *Tourists manifest different attitudes toward gastronomy when travelling* (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Thompson & Prideaux, 2009).

H2: *The perceived value of the gastronomic offer of ‘Chiringuitos’ is higher among those foreign tourists who show a more favourable attitude*

89 *towards local gastronomy* (Carvache et al., 2021; Choe & Kim, 2018; Özdemir
90 & Seyitöglu, 2017).

91 **H3:** *Gastronomy is a factor that conditions and enhances tourist experi-*
92 *ence and satisfaction* (Pérez-Gálvez et al., 2017; López-Guzmán et al., 2017;
93 Haven-Tang & Jones, 2008).

94 **H4:** *The level of tourists' satisfaction with local cuisine is influenced by*
95 *the different culinary attributes* (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016).

96 2. Description of the geographical area

97 The Costa del Sol is located in Andalusia, southern Spain. It stretches
98 from the east to west along more than 150 km of the coastline in the province
99 of Málaga.

100 The main tourism indicators for the study area (Figure 1) provide an
101 important conclusion. 2019 was considered the best tourist year in the history
102 of the Costa del Sol, beating previous tourist records.



Figure 1: 2019 Tourism Indicators, Málaga, Costa del Sol. Data from: *Turismo y Planificación Costa del Sol, SLU*.

103 Regarding gastronomy in the Costa del Sol, the typical dishes a tourist
104 should not miss are the '*espeto*' (sardines on a skewer roasted on firewood
105 on the beach) and '*pescaito frito*' (fried mixed fresh fish). The '*espeto*' is

106 a typical local food that holds importance and has a traditional method of
107 preparation. It could soon be included in the General Catalogue of An-
108 dalusian Historical Heritage given its ethnological value. Equally typical are
109 establishments known as ‘*Chiringuitos*’ (a small beach-bar-restaurant) where
110 local gastronomic specialities can be tasted.

111 ‘*Chiringuitos*’ play a special role in the development of the Costa del
112 Sol. They can be defined as popular Spanish bars or restaurants, with the
113 traditional culture of fishermen and the sea, normally located at the edge
114 of the beach, open during seasonal or holiday periods and offer activities
115 mostly enjoyed outdoors for meeting and socialising. The variety of delicious
116 dishes is extensive, which is often served in the tapa presentation and allows
117 a greater variety of culinary offerings to be sampled.

118 **3. Methodology**

119 *3.1. Survey design*

120 The methodology used in this study was based on fieldwork carried out
121 on a representative sample of tourists who visited the Costa del Sol to un-
122 derstand their opinions regarding gastronomy and different motivations for
123 tasting local food in the typical ‘*Chiringuitos*’. The chosen survey points
124 were Estepona, Marbella, Mijas, Fuengirola, Benalmádena, Torremolinos and
125 Málaga, on the premise that the tourists surveyed could offer an informed
126 opinion having spent some time in the area (Remoaldo et al., 2014; Correia
127 et al., 2013). The survey was always completed after the tourist had enjoyed
128 the service (lunch or dinner), tasted the food and experienced the life.

129 The survey used in this study was based on previous research (Pérez-
130 Gálvez et al., 2020; Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Kim et al., 2015)
131 The questionnaire, related to tourism and gastronomy, was distributed in
132 Spanish and English and was divided into three main blocks, that is, (i)
133 eight questions referred to the characteristics of the trip; (ii) five questions
134 covered aspects related to visitors interest in gastronomy and some aspects
135 related to the assessment of satisfaction with their gastronomic experience
136 and (iii) a third block that addressed the socio-demographic characteristics of
137 travellers. Open and closed questions, yes/no questions and other questions
138 were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = “*very unimportant*”
139 to 5 = “*very important*” (Likert, 1932).

140 3.2. Data collection

141 Surveyors regularly collaborated with the University of Córdoba, and the
142 authors of this study collected the research data. A total of 415 surveys
143 were conducted during the summer period from June to September 2019,
144 which can be described as the closest to the pre-COVID-19 period. After
145 filtering, a total of 392 valid surveys were conducted. The initial survey was
146 checked beforehand using a pre-test to detect and correct possible drafting
147 and comprehension errors.

148 The study included a total of 12 survey points and surveyed lunches and
149 dinners to gather broad and representative profiles of the tourists.

150 Convenience sampling was used in this case in which respondents were
151 available only at a given place and time (Finn et al., 2000). No stratification
152 by sex, age, education or any other variable was carried out as no previous
153 studies were available to confirm any theory in this regard. The refusal rate
154 was low and insignificant.

155 This study is framed within a sample of international tourists who visit
156 the Costa del Sol and choose to experience gastronomy in one of its '*Chirin-*
157 *guitos*'. The hotel occupancy survey data from the National Statistics Insti-
158 tute (INE) show that more than 2 million tourists travelled to the reference
159 area in the analysed period of summer 2019 without knowing, in advance,
160 the specific reason or purpose of their visit or passage through the Costa del
161 Sol.

162 The exact size and characteristics of the reference population are un-
163 known, so the INE data were used as the study universe in this study. This
164 would imply a sampling error of $\pm 4.00\%$ for a confidence level of 95% if sim-
165 ple random sampling was used instead of the convenience sampling that was
166 finally used.

167 3.3. Data analysis

168 The data tabulation and statistical analysis were done with the statis-
169 tical software SPSS v.25[©]. First, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the
170 reliability and internal consistency of the responses obtained from the ques-
171 tionnaires. After a correct hierarchical classification, multivariate techniques
172 were used to group the cases, specifically, cluster analysis or K-means clus-
173 tering, so that the existing similarity of the respondents could be analysed
174 based on reference variables on the degree of interest and knowledge and
175 motivation to experience gastronomy when travelling.

Once the segmentation was completed and validated using the discriminant analysis technique, descriptive and association measures were applied to the groups obtained to analyse the existence of possible patterns of association between variables using a two-dimensional contingency table. Finally, hypothesis tests on means and variances were also applied to detect general differences (ANOVA), and two-by-two non-parametric statistical procedures were conducted (Kruskal & Wallis, 1952) to analyse significant differences between the groups in the sample.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Gastronomic segments

The methodology was applied to the 392 valid surveys completed by foreign tourists in different Chiringuitos during the period from June to September 2019, after their gastronomic experience. To analyse and define interest in gastronomy, visitors were asked to rate the importance of culinary aspects when planning their trips based on three items, in line with the model proposed by Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016). Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the final scale was 0.716, which represents an adequate level of internal consistency among the items of this scale (Morales et al., 2003). The critical level (p) associated with Friedmans χ^2 statistic (351.629) of the analysis to test the null hypothesis was less than 0.05; therefore, the hypothesis that the means of the items were equal was rejected.

Once different item scores were obtained, a non-hierarchical cluster analysis was performed. Maximising the variance between types and minimising the internal variance of each of them, three clusters resulted in the best possible solution, namely, survivors, enjoyers and experiencers. The characterisation of these clusters based on the means of the candidate items measuring the importance of gastronomy in tourists travel planning is shown in *Table 1*. The scores on all three items were significantly low for the first cluster (24.2%), referred to as survivors, which is characterised by a low interest in gastronomy. The second group (51.0%), named enjoyers, is characterised by intermediate scores on the items, grouping tourists with moderate gastronomic interest. Finally, the third segment (24.8%), called experiencers, is characterised by high scores on all items and groups tourists with a greater interest in gastronomy.

The Kruskal–Wallis H statistic allows us to check that the means compared are not equal between the different clusters; however, it does not allow

us to specify where the differences detected are to be found. Thus, the Mann–Whitney U statistic (Mann, 1947) was used to determine which means differ from the other.

Table 1: Characterization clusters from gastronomy attitude

Gastronomy attitude	Food clusters			H-Kruskal Wallis	
	Survivors	Enjoyers	Experiencers	χ^2	Sig.
How would you rate your knowledge on gastronomy?	3.98(*)	3.42(*)	4.76(*)	169.041	<0.000
How would you rate your interest in gastronomy?	1.68(*)	2.81(*)	4.14(*)	266.347	<0.000
How much has the gastronomy influenced your visit?	2.07(*)	3.51(*)*	3.99(*)*	192.528	<0.000

(*) The values in italic type present significant differences in two of the means clusters. To be able to test for the significant differences between the different means the U-Mann–Whitney test was applied.

Source: authors own elaboration

Therefore, consistent with other studies (Pérez-Gálvez et al., 2017; López-Guzmán et al., 2017; Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Thompson & Prideaux, 2009), these results validate the first working hypotheses:

H1: *Tourists manifest a different attitude towards gastronomy as a variable of interest in the choice of destination.*

In addition, the segmentation obtained was validated through a discriminant analysis that showed that 98% of individuals were correctly classified in each group defined because of this segmentation.

4.2. Socio-demographic profile of the foreign tourists

Of the 392 people interviewed, 47.4% were men and the remaining 52.6% were women (*Table 2*), with no relevant differences found during the months of the investigation. In terms of age, the foreign tourists in our study were young (one-third of the sample were under 40 years old). Notably, there were

no differences with reference to the groups of tourists identified (Kruskal–Wallis H statistic = 2.025; $p = 0.363$). Moreover, as in other studies (Almeida et al., 2015), the presence of senior tourists is more representative in those segments that declare greater enthusiasm for local gastronomy on trips.

Table 2: Socio-demographic profile of the tourists in Costa del Sol

Variables	Categories	Food clusters			Total
		Survivors	Enjoyers	Experiencers	
Sex (N=392)	Man	32.2%	30.0%	37.08%	47.4%
	Woman	29.5%	29.0%	41.5%	52.6%
Age (N=367)	< 30 years old	38.8%	31.3%	29.9%	17.1%
	30-39 years old	29.1%	30.9%	40.0%	15.0%
	40-49 years old	31.8%	29.5%	38.6%	24.0%
	50-59 years old	26.6%	25.3%	48.1%	21.5%
	≥ 60 years old	30.8%	29.5%	39.7%	21.3%
Educational Level (N=366)	Primary Education	26.7%	20.0%	53.3%	4.1%
	Secondary Education	36.3%	30.6%	33.2%	52.7%
	Higher Education	25.3%	27.2%	47.5%	43.2%
Occupational Category (N=380)	Public Sector	29.3%	20.7%	50.0%	21.6%
	Private Sector	30.2%	33.3%	36.5%	49.7%
	Student	55.2%	20.7%	24.1%	7.6%
	Unemployed	11.1%	55.6%	33.3%	2.4%
	Retired	25.5%	21.8%	52.7%	14.5%
	Housewife	31.3%	43.8%	25.0%	4.2%

Source: authors own elaboration

Five out of ten respondents reported having an educational level equivalent to secondary education (*Table 2*). Analysis of the level of education according to age revealed that the lower the age is, the lower the presence of tourists with a university education are (gamma coefficient = 0.280; $p = 0.000$). However, there were no differences in gastronomic groups (Kruskal–Wallis H statistic = 5.113; $p = 0.078$), which contradicts the previous affirmation that higher academic education of travellers implies a greater interest in gastronomy (Levitt et al., 2019; Beltrán et al., 2016; Kivela & Crotts, 2005). Finally, concerning the professional occupation of tourists, the majority of them were employees in the private sector, followed by public employees and

242 retired people (gamma coefficient = -0.055 ; $p = 0.420$).

243 4.3. *The perceived value of the gastronomic offer*

244 One of the hypotheses of this study was to assess the perception of the
245 culinary attributes of the Costa del Sol beach bars '*Chiringuitos*' according
246 to tourist attitudes towards local gastronomy (Carvache et al., 2021). Thus,
247 30 items were selected on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = a little and 5 = a lot) to
248 determine the satisfaction of tourists with the attributes of the establishments
249 offer and services (Question 10 of the questionnaire).

250 The Cronbachs alpha coefficient of the final scale was 0.944, indicating
251 high internal consistency among the items of the scale. The critical level (p)
252 associated with Friedman's χ^2 statistic (316.933) of the analysis to test the
253 null hypothesis (all items of the scale have the same mean) was less than
254 0.001, rejecting the hypothesis that the means of the items were equal.

255 An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the attributes
256 collected in Question 10. This allowed us to extract two dimensions (an
257 indirect indicator of satisfaction) that foreign visitors assigned to the different
258 gastronomic attributes of the Costa del Sol's beach bars. Although interest
259 lies in the factor scores derived from these components as a tool to establish
260 the perception shown, it is useful to characterise each of the extracted factors.

261 Together, these two extracted dimensions explained 68.13% of the total
262 variance (*Table 3*). The first one, which explains 35.45% of the total variance
263 of the attribute matrix, integrates attributes related to the characteristics
264 and singularities of the food tasted and the professionalism of the service.
265 The Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.909) of the seven items that constitute
266 this dimension confirms the reliability of the subscale. The second one is
267 composed of attributes referring to the location of the establishment and
268 the quality of the service, and its factor loading explains 32.68% of the total
269 variance of the attribute matrix. In addition, its Cronbach's alpha coefficient
270 (0.910) confirms the reliability of the dimension obtained.

Table 3: Rotated components factorial matrix EFA attributes of the gastronomic offer of the ‘Chiringuitos’ of the Costa del Sol.

Variables	Component		Dimension
	1	2	
Q10a	0.797		Characteristics and singularities of the food tasted and profesionalism of the service
Q10b	0.692		
Q10c	0.776		
Q10d	0.769		
Q10e	0.727		
Q10f	0.692		
Q10g	0.649		
Q10h		0.750	Location and service quality
Q10i		0.837	
Q10j		0.720	
Q10k		0.709	
Q10l		0.700	
Q10m		0.680	
Eigenvalues			
% variance explained	35.453	32.681	
% variance cumulated	35.453	68.134	
KMO	0.929		
Bartlett sphericity test	$\chi^2 = 3998.390$; $sig < 0.001$		
<i>Extraction method: PCA; Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser</i>			
Source: authors own elaboration			

Source: authors own elaboration

271 Based on the scores obtained for the items comprising the two dimensions,
272 Table 4 shows the ranking of the individual attributes.

Table 4: Dimensions of the gastronomic offer of the ‘Chiringuitos’ on the Costa del Sol

			Mean	#
Characteristics and uniqueness of the food tasted and professionalism of service	Cronbach Alpha (0.909)	Welcoming and proper treatment (10e)	4.17	3
		Quality and variety of dishes (10a)	4.05	7
		Speed in service and attention (10g)	3.99	8
		Traditional Gastronomy (10d)	3.97	9
		Prices (10b)	3.88	10
	Mean (3.92)	Information and suggestions about the dishes (10f)	3.76	11
		Innovation and new flavours in the dishes (10c)	3.59	12
Location of the establishment and quality of service	Cronbach Alpha (0.910)	General presentation and food hygiene and freshness (10k)	4.18	2
		Quiet and comfortable place (10j)	4.10	4
		Easy access and location (10h)	4.08	5
	Mean (4.12)	Appropriate and customer-oriented service (10l)	4.07	6
		Fulfilment of orders and service time (10m)	4.07	6

Source: authors own elaboration

Thus, from the two extracted factors, a variable is calculated for each as the result of the weighted sum of the items that make them up. *Table 5* shows how the analysis by gastronomic cluster allows us to compare statistically significant differences in each of the characteristic dimensions of the attributes.

Finally, analysing the Spearman correlation coefficient, the relationship between both dimensions and satisfaction is statistically significant, with the Gastronomic offer and professionalism of the service item being slightly higher (0.654).

Table 5: Characterization of the clusters from the average of the gastronomic attribute dimensions

Gastronomy attribute Dimensions	Food clusters			H-Kruskal Wallis		ρ
	Survivors	Enjoyers	Experiencers	χ^2	Sig.	
Characteristics and singularities of the food tasted and professionalism of service	3.71	3.73	4.19(*)	48.741	< 0.000	0.654(**)
Location of the establishment and quality of service	3.96	4.02	4.31(*)	25.294	< 0.000	0.560(**)

(*) The values in bold type present significant differences in two of three of the means clusters. To be able to test for the significant differences between the different means the U-Mann-Whitney test was applied

(**) The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral)

Source: authors own elaboration

282 These results, therefore, allow us to validate the second of our working
283 hypotheses:

284 **H2:** *The perceived value of the gastronomic offer of the ‘Chiringuitos’ is*
285 *higher among foreign tourists who show a more favourable attitude towards*
286 *local gastronomy.*

287 4.4. Gastronomy and satisfaction

288 Generally, a tourist destination projects the experience desired by a visi-
289 tor. Therefore, any competitive destination must consider the importance of
290 gastronomy as an enabler of unique experiences (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2008).
291 The average level of satisfaction declared by tourists who visited the Costa
292 del Sol and enjoyed its gastronomy was 4.24 points on a 5-point Likert scale;
293 46.4% of respondents were fully satisfied (indicating 5 points). Within this
294 group, the so-called *experiencer* tourists predominate (56.6%); regarding the
295 low importance of those not completely satisfied, only approximately 4% of
296 the respondents show a score equal to or less than 2. Therefore, the data
297 show *that gastronomy is a factor that contributes to and conditions tourist*
298 *experience and satisfaction*, thus **H3** is confirmed.

299 Based on the segmentation obtained, as shown in *Table 6*, the analysis
300 revealed a positive assessment of the gastronomic experience by all three
301 groups of visitors identified. Thus, the fourth of our working hypotheses,
302 **H4**, is validated, confirming that *the level of tourists’ satisfaction with local*
303 *cuisine is influenced by the different culinary attributes.*

Table 6: Characterization cluster from the variable food satisfaction

Food clusters			H-Kruskal Wallis	
Survivors	Enjoyers	Experiencers	χ^2	Sig.
4.08	3.93	4.58(*)	45.184	< 0.000

(*) The values in bold type present significant differences in two of three of the mean clusters. To be able to test for the significant differences between the differences between the different means, the U-Mann-Whitney test was applied.

Source: authors own elaboration

304 5. Conclusion and research contributions

305 Nowadays, the consolidation and differentiation of a tourist destination
306 can be based on gastronomic tourism, especially if it can be practiced in a
307 privileged environment, such as the location of majority of the ‘*Chiringuitos*’;
308 indeed, tourists turn to it more frequently during their visits to satisfy the
309 growing need to experience the gastronomic heritage of the place visited.
310 Thus, many tourists’ main motivation for their trip is to visit a particular
311 culinary establishment or taste local gastronomy.

312 Regarding the socio-demographic profile of the foreign gastronomic tourist
313 visiting the Costa del Sol, it corresponds to an adult with a medium-high
314 level of education, employed in the private sector and mainly visiting from
315 the UK.

316 In this context, local gastronomy has become a tourist attraction and a
317 primary focus when visiting a tourist destination. The study concludes that
318 tourists have different attitudes towards local gastronomy, and it is possible
319 to obtain empirical evidence on the existence of three groups of visitors,
320 namely, *survivors*, *enjoyers* and *experiencers*, according to the model of Björk
321 & Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016), which is useful for segmenting tourists from
322 a gastronomic point of view. For *experiencers* with the highest culinary
323 interest, local gastronomy plays an important role. Therefore, this study
324 investigates the effect of interest in gastronomy on tourist behaviour over a
325 coastal area but only among foreign tourists.

326 Once a greater or lesser interest in gastronomy has been defined, and ac-
327 cording to a series of gastronomic attributes, this factor determines not only
328 culinary motivations but also the perception of satisfaction experienced by

the tourist. Based on the culinary attributes defined in this study, empirical evidence is obtained on the presence of two different dimensions related to the culinary offerings and the professionalism of the service, on the one hand, and the location of the establishment and quality of the service on the other. Indeed, the natural environment of the ‘*Chiringuitos*’ was the attribute most highly valued by all the tourists interviewed.

5.1. *Empirical contributions and practical implications*

From an empirical perspective, this study contributes mainly by presenting the results of a study on the relationship between gastronomy and foreign tourism in the coastal region of the Costa del Sol in Málaga (Spain). It also contributes to the analysis of foreign tourists’ perception of gastronomy in a tourist area that originally only focused on sun and beach tourism rather than culinary tourism. By combining both, a differentiating attribute is generated to enjoy gastronomy in the outdoor environment offered by the ‘*Chiringuitos*’.

Another notable contribution of this study has been to demonstrate that satisfaction towards local gastronomy is conditioned by the gastronomic attributes of its typical establishments, the ‘*Chiringuitos*’. The results show that the attributes surroundings and pleasant environment and general presentation and hygiene and freshness of the food contribute to a greater extent to gastronomic satisfaction. Furthermore, tourists have higher satisfaction through their culinary experience, even though this assessment differs significantly according to the declared interest in gastronomy.

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. The main practical application of this study is to contribute to the understanding of the characteristics and particularities of the different groups of tourists identified and their appreciation of local gastronomy. Thus, it is possible to develop a tourist and cultural offer compatible with the sustainable management of local gastronomy that satisfies their needs to a greater extent.

From the cultural perspective, considering the existence of a percentage of foreign visitors unfamiliar with local culinary traditions, it would be desirable for economic and financial measures to be adopted to aid for the modernisation and adaptation of the ‘*Chiringuitos*’ as the main guarantors of the gastronomic expression of the Costa del Sol. The managers of these typical establishments themselves are willing to support the specific management policies necessary to achieve this target.

365 *5.2. Limitations and future research*

366 One of the main limitations of this study is the period studied and its
367 seasonality; therefore, it would be convenient to extend the research to foreign
368 tourists arriving in the area during the rest of the year. Another limitation
369 is that this was purely a demand-driven study, which makes it difficult to
370 transfer the results and conclusions to other stakeholders such as tourism
371 companies, public stakeholders or the local community itself.

372 Therefore, a future line of study would be to strengthen research that
373 considers the role of gastronomy on the supply side. In this sense, it would
374 be possible to check its level of adaptation to the real needs and expectations
375 of demand in terms of attributes, both the best and least valued, in a clear
376 example of improvement and competitive challenge.

377 Other interesting research lines already on course are *(i)* to extend the
378 analysis to other inland restaurants, not only ‘*Chiringuitos*’, so that other
379 attributes of the gastronomic offer can be valued by assessing a greater vari-
380 ety of traditional food; *(ii)* to analyse the possibilities of enjoying the typical
381 food of the Costa del Sol in each tourist’s place of origin, focusing on the mar-
382 keting and distribution of local culinary products to reinforce the experiences
383 sampled in this destination, as it is important to have similar natural places
384 where it is possible to enjoy outdoor gastronomy; and *(iii)* to investigate
385 the benefits of an adequate separation and remodelling of the ‘*Chiringuitos*’
386 dining areas to attract the segment of tourists most interested and motivated
387 to enjoy the local gastronomic experience. Thus, their loyalty and intention
388 to repeat the visit in the future could be reinforced.

389 **Ethical Compliance**

390 *All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in*
391 *accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national re-*
392 *search committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amend-*
393 *ments or comparable ethical standards.*

394 **Disclosure statement**

395 *The authors declare no conflict of interest.*

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