

Reseña de Publicaciones

Food, Agri-Culture and Tourism. Linking Local Gastronomy and Rural Tourism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Sidali, K. L., Spiller, A. and Schulze, B. , Springer Link (2011)

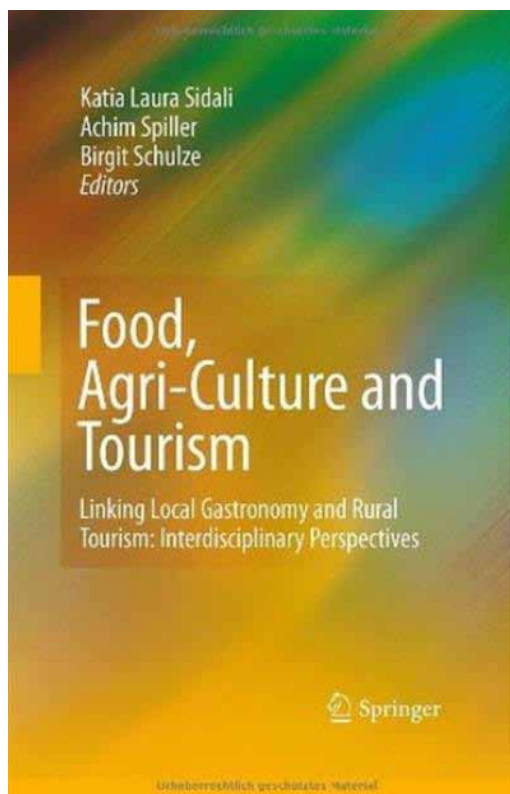
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Food in promotional strategies of rural tourism has increasingly acquired significant role of a cultural signifier of place and its essence. By bringing together research on food and tourism industries, this book is a welcome contribution in furthering the work on this angle from an inter-disciplinary perspective. The book is neatly divided into three parts, namely, Part I: Farm and Rural Tourism; Part II: Food, Wine and Tourism; and Part III: New Avenues of Research: Online Marketing and Sensory Marketing. Each part contains well-researched and an array of case studies, but one of its key weakness is its Europe-centric focus.

The key emphasis of the text is on how tourists' desire to experience farm as a product can be further enhanced by "online and sensory marketing for fulfilling the needs of the new trends within this sector" (p. 20). In this respect, the main challenge remains on identifying the most appropriate advertising strategy. Stockebrand et al.'s case research on Germany underlining the need for emotions-based communication is particularly interesting as the authors also include a number of good practices that have made agri-tourism enticing by the virtue of story-telling that embodies a mix of romantic, succulent and poetic traits. The analysis is somewhat weakly presented and does not appear to elaborate in greater depth fascinating theoretical assertions made in the chapter. Bianchi's chapter that follows



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would have better served as an opening chapter to set the scene in Part I. Generally, authors generally agree on the lack of entrepreneurial traits among rural SME owners / managers that prevent them from benefiting the niche and profitable segment of wine tourism.

Focus of Part II is on exploring different facets of commercial interface between tourism and viticulture, including a relatively under-investigated theme of co-operative marketing and wine tourism. The case studies are relevant and well-researched and highlight a combination of techniques available to providers in crafting and selling unique forms of rural tourism experience and enterprise (e.g. linking wine routes to historical sites). Except one chapter by Santini et al., most chapters on marketing included in Part III fail to make adequate links with rural or wine tourism which is the overarching premise of the book and distract the reader. This is one of the key weaknesses of the book that could have been easily rectified with greater attention to the overall message that was being conveyed and accordingly defining chapter content. Also, at the start of each section, a summary outlining key themes and the general discussion would have helped the reader to have an improved understanding of the underlying logic behind the inclusion of individual chapters.

Despite these limitations, the book foregrounds the significance of designing “memorable experiences” (p. 171) to capture and retain tourists’ attention. Certainly, concepts like sensory marketing, sensory analysis as means to distinguish rural tourists are quite interesting and have the potential to be easily replicated in other case contexts. Given the rapid pace of change and the need for differential marketing strategies required for creatively packaging rural tourism, this work by Sidali and colleagues indeed sets the scene by depicting the plurality of approaches available to rural SMEs to augment consumers’ experience. However, critical discussion on how the marketed identity overlaps with the experienced identity as well as how the relational capital of owners / managers of rural SMEs impacts on the positional features of creativity, i.e. potential of a region to become a creative milieu would have been quite useful. Thus the book should be seen as an initial step to commence further enquiries into the way contemporary rurality is experienced, consumed and marketed.

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