

# Tea Tourism: A Review of Literature

Marin Diana, Sava Cipriana, Petroman Ioan

## Abstract

A new sub-type of *food & beverage tourism* has emerged in the last two decades – *tea tourism*. From a tourism perspective, tea tourism is an opportunity to diversify tourism and to revitalize tourism. At the same time, *tea tourism* contributes to the branding of destinations, harnessing authenticity, preserving local diversities and traditions, promoting destinations, and authenticity. The authors define tea tourism, place it among the different sub-types of food and/or wine / beverages, and identify tea tourism motivations and the features of tea tourism destinations – tea attractions, tea ceremonies, tea cultivation and production, tea festivals and events, tea history, tea manufacturing, tea retailing, tea services, and tea traditions – in an attempt to promote this sub-sub-type of cultural tourism in Romania.

**Keywords:** food tourism, beverage tourism, tea tourism, traditions

**JEL Classification:** M30, M32

## Introduction

**Tourism based on food** has undergone important changes in the last two decades. The main component of all these sub-types of cultural tourism is gastronomy. The analysis presented below is an attempt at showing how and why food tourism and, later, food and wine / beverages tourism have engendered new sub-type of tourism – **tea tourism**.

The sub-types of tourism based on food and/or wine / beverages identified our corpus belong to four categories: food-based tourism covering *cuisine tourism*, *culinary tourism*, *food tourism*, *gastronomic tourism*, *gastronomy tourism*, *gourmet tourism*, *taste tourism*, *tasting tourism*, and *tourism of taste*; wine-based tourism covering *(o)enotourism*, *vinitourism*, and *wine tourism*; food & wine tourism covering *food & wine tourism* and *food and beverages tourism*, and *(o)enogastronomic tourism* as a sub-type in itself. Beverages include *beer* (“an alcoholic drink

made from yeast-fermented malt flavoured with hops.” – *Lexico*), *cocoa* (“a hot drink made from cocoa powder mixed with milk or water” – *Lexico*), *coffee* (“a hot drink made from the roasted and ground seeds (coffee beans) of a tropical shrub” – *Lexico*), *cola* (“a brown carbonated drink that is flavoured with an extract of cola nuts, or with a similar flavouring” – *Lexico*), *raki* (“a strong alcoholic spirit made in eastern Europe or the Middle East” – *Lexico*), *sake / saki* (“a Japanese alcoholic drink made from fermented rice, traditionally drunk warm in small porcelain cups” – *Lexico*), *sorbet* (“a water ice” – *Lexico*), *tea* (“a hot drink made by infusing the dried crushed leaves of the tea plant in boiling water” – *Lexico*), *vodka* (“an alcoholic spirit of Russian origin made by distillation of rye, wheat, or potatoes” – *Lexico*), *whiskey* (“a spirit distilled from malted grain, especially barley or rye” – *Lexico*), and *wine* (“an alcoholic drink made from fermented grape juice” – *Lexico*) (Okumus, Okumus & McKercher, 2007; Cheng, Xu & Zhang, 2010).

*Tea* is not just a non-alcoholic beverage: it is also an *agricultural product*, an *art* (tea blending), an *export*, an *industry* (tea associations, tea auctions, tea blenders, tea brokers, tea consumers, tea distributors, tea farmers, tea producers, tea retailers, tea-service establishments, tea tasters – plus books on tea, tea accessories, tea-themed gift wares), a *meal service* (“in food-service establishments such as cafés, restaurants, tea houses, tea rooms or tea shops, where tea services reflect the tea traditions of their location”), a *pastime* (“the romance and history of tea and the experience of consuming tea, including collecting / purchasing teacups and teapots or experiencing tea experiences”), a *plant* (*Camellia sinensis*), and a *religion* (for example, the Japanese tea ceremony, “an aesthetic experience, evoking a relaxation of spirit and a worship of purity, beauty and serenity” – cf. Shapira, 1975, in Joliffe, 2003).

“Tea as a beverage has been adopted in different cultures, and many countries have evolved their own tea customs / traditions related to blending, brewing, and serving or assumed the customs / traditions of others” (Joliffe, 2003): in China, the “homeland of tea” (Pratt, 1982, in Joliffe, 2003), there is a rich tea tradition; in England, the afternoon tea engendered such related events as At Home Teas, Nursery Teas, Tea Dances, Tennis Teas; in Japan they favour green tea and they serve *sencha green tea* (“prepared by infusing the processed whole tea leaves in hot water”) to visitors at home or in the workplace; in Sri Lanka, tea boutiques function as places “for visiting friends over a cup of tea”.

“Tea can also be associated with food: in England, the afternoon tea, for example, is a meal service usually consisting of tea accompanied by sandwiches and sweets; in the south of England,

they serve the traditional cream teas – two scones, a bowl of clotted cream, loganberry / strawberry jam and a pot of tea” (Rivers, 1995, in Joliffe, 2003); in Japan, they make tea ice cream; in Scotland, they use tea as flavouring in tea bread; in Taiwan, they serve fried tea leaves, or they use tea as a flavouring or ingredient;

**Tea** is directly connected to **tourism** in the areas of *tea attractions* (events, exhibitions, factories, festivals, gardens, museums, plantations, shops, shows, tours, and workshops), *tea destinations*, *tea services*, *tea tours* and *tea travels* – and “tourists attracted by tea travel are referred to as **tea tourists**” – *accidental* ones if they only experience a traditional afternoon tea service while visiting England or *intentional* ones if they experience a traditional afternoon tea service while visiting England and seek out other tea experiences. What drives tourists to tea tourism destinations (tea estates) is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Motivational factors for tea tourism practice (after Sultana & Khan, 2018, 25-27)

Tourist profile	Motivations														
	Adventures	Affordable accommodation facilities	Closeness to other destinations	Convenient transportation facilities	Enjoy local culture and foods	Entertainment & relaxation	Feasible budget	Natural beauty	Night life	Pleasant weather and climate	Quality & diversity of restaurants & coffee	Quality Hotels	Quality restaurant & coffee shops	Safety	Shopping opportunities
<i>Couple</i>				+		+		+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Group travellers for day trip</i>	+			+		+	+	+		+			+	+	

<b><i>Youth &amp; bag packs</i></b>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+	
-------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	---	--

Table x shows that *convenient transportation facilities, entertainment & relaxation, natural beauty, pleasant weather and climate, and safety* are motivations common to all three tourist profiles, while *affordable accommodation facilities, closeness to other destinations, enjoy local culture and foods, quality restaurant & coffee shops, and shopping opportunities* are unique motivations. It seems that the tourist profile that best matches tea tourist is ***Youth & bag packs*** because they are motivated by ***local culture and foods*** and by ***quality & diversity of restaurants & coffee shops***.

**Tea tourism** can enhance the brand image and marketing of tea-producing destinations in Asia (Assam and Ooty, in India; Sri Lanka) and in North America (Canada).

## Material and Method

The **material** used in this study consists in randomly collected and articles and books from the last two decades about a special **food and wine-based sub-type of cultural tourism: *food and beverages tourism*** – where beverages refer to **tea**.

The method used in this study is **corpus analysis** – a linguistic approach consisting in analysing a corpus with a goal to discern certain rules of lexical patterns particular to a certain type of text – in this case, a sub-type of tourism based on a non-alcoholic beverage – **tea**.

## Results

Tea has a great potential as a theme for tea tourism destinations. **Tea tourism** is presented below with *definitions* (where available) and *tea tourism destinations features*.

### 1. Tea Tourism: Definition

**Tea tourism** has been defined as “tourism that is motivated by an interest in the history, traditions and consumption of the beverage <tea>” (Jolliffe, 2003, 136), a definition cited by Jolliffe

& Aslam (2009), Luo (2009), Cheng, Xu & Zhang (2010), Kumara & Kulathunga (2013), Fernando, Rajapaksha & Kumari (2016), Zhou, Hsieh & Canziani (2016), Chen *et al.* (2017), Fernando, Kumari & Rajapaksha (2017), Sultana & Khan (2018), and Jayasooriya (2019).

It has also been defined as “a tourist experiencing history, culture and traditions related to the consumption of tea” (Jolliffe, 2007, in Cheng, Xu & Zhang, 2010), as “the tradition, the local tea product and tea culture, representing the tea communities in each location” and as “experience where the tourists participate in activities ranging from tea growing methods, tea history and culture and consumptions of tea and its related products” (Jolliffe, 2007, in Yoopetch & Kongarchapatara, 2021), as “visitation to tea plantations, tea workshops, tea festivals and tea shows for which tea tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a tea-producing region are the primary motivations for travel” (Luo, 2009, 38), as “the overall experience of tourists in the midst of a tea garden or estate, staying in a heritage bungalow, at a home-stay feeling in a tea-village or in a modern resort” (Government of West Bengal, 2013). as “a form of nature tourism” (Sultana & Khan, 2018), and as “the art of travelling around the world in the quest for pleasure that comes with exposure to tracts of green tea farms” (Mondal & Samaddar, 2021).

Tourism designations such as **culinary tourism**, **food tourism**, **gastronomic tourism**, or **gourmet tourism** include beverages (wine, in particular) in their definitions (Madeira, Correia & Filipe, 2019). Muslim authors, whose religion prohibits alcohol, have replaced wine by beverages – **food and beverages tourism** (Tajik & Namavarjahromy, 2011).

## 2. Tea Tourism Destination Features

“Compared with wine, another high-consumed beverage world-wide, tea shares many common features with wine either from their cultural role in their own societies or in terms of physical characteristics.” (Luo, 2009, 37-38). Zhou, Hsieh & Canziani (2016) speak of “sustainable cultural tourism” and of “tea tourism’s green and sustainable characteristics”. It is also important to know how to pair food with tea (Rune, Münchow & Perez-Cueto, 2021). For example, green tea matches chocolate and Japanese food.

**Tea tourism destinations** need to exhibit at least one of the following features to be labelled as such:

- ***tea attractions***: tearooms with historical connections (Jolliffe, 2003); high tea, tea estates, tea landscapes, tea trail / trekking (Jolliffe & Aslam, 2009); tea factory, tea resort hotel (Kumara & Kulathunga, 2013); tea gardening, tea plucking, tea processing, tea tasting, trekking (Bhattacharya & Bhattacharya, 2015); tea estates, tea gardens (Roy & Roy, 2015); tea estates (Fernando, Rajapaksha & Kumari, 2016); listening to tea songs (Chen *et al.*, 2017); tea estates, tea plantations, tea products (Sultana & Khan, 2018); tea exhibitions, tea fairs, tea festivals, tea workshops (Mondal & Samaddar, 2021);
- ***tea ceremonies***: Chen *et al.* (2017), Weber (2018);
- ***tea cultivation and production***: 1 *Bangladesh* (Sultana & Khan, 2018); 7 *China* (Luo, 2009; Cheng, Xu & Zhang, 2010; Zhou, Hsieh & Canziani, 2016; Chen *et al.*, 2017; Weber, 2018; Mondal & Samaddar, 2021; Ye *et al.*, 2021); 5 *India* (Government of West Bengal, 2013; Bhattacharya & Bhattacharya, 2015; Magar & Kar, 2016; Das, 2020; Mondal & Samaddar, 2021); 8 *Sri Lanka* (Jolliffe & Aslam, 2009; Kumara & Kulathunga, 2013; Aslam & Jolliffe, 2015; Fernando & Ranasinghe, 2015; Fernando, Rajapaksha & Kumari, 2016; Fernando, Kumari & Rajapaksha, 2017; Jayasooriya, 2019; Mondal & Samaddar, 2021); 2 *Taiwan* (Zhou, Hsieh & Canziani, 2016; Weber, 2018); 1 *Thailand* (Yoopetch & Kongarchapatara, 2021); and 1 *U.S.A.* (Zhou, Hsieh & Canziani, 2016);
- ***tea festivals and events***: *China* (Cheng, Xu & Zhang, 2010); *Sri Lanka* (Fernando & Ranasinghe, 2015; Fernando, Rajapaksha & Kumari, 2016);
- ***tea history***: tea interpretative centres, tea museums (Jolliffe & Aslam, 2009); history (Cheng, Xu & Zhang, 2010); historical value (Fernando & Ranasinghe, 2015); tea museum (Roy & Roy, 2015);
- ***tea manufacturing***: tea estate factories, tea mini factories, tea processing (Jolliffe & Aslam, 2009); tea garden (Bhattacharya & Bhattacharya, 2015); tea manufacturer (Mondal & Samaddar, 2021);
- ***tea retailing***: Fernando & Ranasinghe (2015), Zhou, Hsieh & Canziani (2016), Chen *et al.* (2017), Fernando, Kumari & Rajapaksha (2017);
- ***tea services***: selling tea-related souvenirs, tea factory visiting, tea selling, tea tastings (Jolliffe & Aslam, 2009); heritage homes (built at least 30 years ago), heritage lodging,

- historic accommodations, tea character accommodations (Aslam & Jolliffe, 2015); lodging, retail shops (Fernando & Ranasinghe, 2015); historic bungalows / lodging (Mondal & Samaddar, 2021);
- ***tea traditions***: tea culture / livelihood (Jolliffe & Aslam, 2009); tea arts performances (Cheng, Xu & Zhang, 2010); tea character accommodations – adapted tea factories, commercial hotels, hill stations, planters’ clubs, planters’ bungalows, railway hotels, resort hotels, rest houses (Aslam & Jolliffe, 2015); tea folk songs and dances (Magar & Kar, 2016); soft traditional music (Weber, 2018).

## Discussion

The definition of **tea tourism** as “tourism that is motivated by an interest in the history, traditions and consumption of the beverage <tea>” (Jolliffe, 2003, 136) has been cited by at least ten authors as such. There are also cases in which two authors mis-cite another definition of **tea tourism** (Jolliffe, 2007) providing two different versions. Finally, there are other definitions of **tea tourism** by other authors than Lee Jolliffe, definitions shaped after the definition of **food tourism** and including such element as consumption of tea and its related products, experiences in a tea estate / garden, experiencing the attributes of a tea-producing region, history, local tea product, nature tourism, “staying in a heritage bungalow, at a home-stay feeling in a tea-village, or in a modern resort”, tea communities in each location, tea culture, tea festivals, tea growing methods, tea history, tea shows, tea tasting, tea workshops, the “art of travelling around the world in the quest for pleasure that comes with exposure to tracts of green tea farms”, and “traditions related to the consumption of tea, and visitation to tea plantations”.

Literature is very specific about **tea tourism destinations features**:

- ***tea attractions*** – there is a wide range of such attractions: high tea (“a meal eaten in the late afternoon or early evening, typically consisting of a cooked dish, bread and butter, and tea” – *Lexico*), tea estates, exhibitions, factories, fairs, festivals, gardening, gardens, landscapes, plantations, plucking, processing, products, resort hotel, rooms with historical connections, songs, tasting, tourism festivals, trail / trekking, and workshops; Mondal & Samaddar (2021, 12) grouped tea attractions into *artificially created* (tea exhibits, tea museums), *nature-based* (tea factories, tea gardens, tea

- plantations), “*social and cultural interactions* (exploring village life, local cultural programmes)”, and *special events* (tea tourism festivals, tea tours);
- *tea ceremonies* are a topic very rarely tackled by tea tourism specialists, despite the fame of the Japanese tea ceremony;
  - *tea cultivation and production* are analysed / mentioned in relation to the following countries: 8 about *Sri Lanka*, 7 about *China*, 5 about *India*, 2 about *Taiwan*, 1 about *Bangladesh*, 1 about *Thailand*, and 1 about *U.S.A.*;
  - *tea festivals and events* are mentioned for only two countries: *China* and *Sri Lanka*;
  - *tea history* refers to historical value, history, tea interpretative centres, and tea museums;
  - *tea manufacturing* concerns tea estate factories, tea garden, tea manufacturer, tea mini factories, and tea processing;
  - *tea purchasing / retailing* is mentioned by only 4 articles;
  - *tea services* refer to tea-related services such as heritage homes (built at least 30 years ago), heritage lodgings, historic accommodations, historic bungalows, historic lodging, retail shops, selling tea-related souvenirs, tea character accommodations, tea factory visiting, tea selling, and tea tastings;
  - *tea traditions* mean soft traditional music, tea arts performances, tea character accommodations (adapted tea factories, commercial hotels, hill stations, planters’ clubs, planters’ bungalows, railway hotels, resort hotels, rest houses), tea culture, tea folk dances, tea folk songs, and tea livelihood.

## Conclusions

**Tea tourism** appears as a possibility yet to be explored by Romanian tourists, despite its obvious advantages: better quality tourism, intimate relationship with certain products (food, tea, etc.) and dishes that are part of the local culture – which establishes **tea tourism** without prejudice within the framework of cultural tourism. The features of *tea tourism destinations* – tea attractions, tea ceremonies, tea cultivation and production, tea festivals and events, tea history, tea manufacturing, tea retailing, tea services, and tea traditions – prove that this is an exciting,



fascinating, intriguing sub-sub-type of cultural tourism – which is more than enough to promote it in Romania.

## References

- Aslam, M. S. M. & Jolliffe, L. (2015). Repurposing Colonial Tea Heritage Through Historic Lodging. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2014.985226>.
- Bhattacharya, M. & Bhattacharya, P. (2015). Prospect of Sustainable Tea Tourism in West Bengal. *Journal of Current Research*, 7(8), 19274-19277.
- Chen, Y., Jafar, R. M. S., Morley-Bunker, M., Lin, C., Chen, L., Wu, R. & Zhuang, P. (2017). On the Marketing Mix of Fujian Tea Tourism. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 78, 127-137.
- Cheng, S.-w., Xu, F.-f. & Zhang, Y.-t. (2010). Tourists' Attitudes Toward Tea Tourism: A Case Study in Xinyang, China. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 27(2), 211-220. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548401003590526>.
- Das, B. (2020). A Study on Prospects of Tea Tourism and Its Link with Human Capital in Assam. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 8(6), 4209-4215.
- Fernando, M. J. R. S. & Ranasinghe, J. P. R. C. (2015). Identifying the Potential to Develop Nuwara Eliya as a Tea Tourism Destination: Demand and Supply Perspectives. *Proceedings of the Research Symposium of Uva Wellassa University, January 29-30, 2015* (11-14).
- Fernando, P. I. N., Kumari, K. W. S. N. & Rajapaksha, R. M. P. D. K. (2017). Destination Marketing to Promote Tea Tourism Socio-Economic Approach on Community Development. *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 6(1), 68-75.
- Fernando, P. I. N., Rajapaksha, R. M. P. D. K. & Kumari, K. W. S. N. (2016). Tea Tourism as a Marketing Tool: A Strategy to Develop the Image of Sri Lanka as an Attractive Tourism Destination. *Kelaniya Journal of Management*, 5(2), 64-79.
- Jayasooriya, S. S. W. (2019). Exploring the Potentials, Issues, and Challenges for Community-Based Tea Tourism Development (with Reference to Hanthana Mountains). *International Journal of Advance Research, Ideas and Innovations in Technology*, 5(2), 475-480.

- Jolliffe, Lee. (2003). The Lure of Tea: History, Traditions and Attractions. In C. M. Hall, L. Sharples, R. Mitchell, N. Macionis & B. Cambourne (eds.), *Food Tourism Around the World: Development, Management, and Marketing* (121-136). Oxford – Burlington, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Jolliffe, Lee & Aslam, M. S. M. (2009). Tea Heritage Tourism: Evidence from Sri Lanka. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 4(4), 331-344. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17438730903186607>.
- Kumara, W.G.N.P. & Kulathunga, K.M.M.C.B. (2013). Tourists' Attitudes towards Tea Tourism in Sri Lanka: A Case in Badulla District. *Proceedings of the Research Symposium of Uva Wellassa University, December 12-13, 2013* (16-18).
- Lexico. Available at: <https://www.lexico.com/>. Accessed on 22.02.2022.
- Luo, J. (2009). *An Exploratory Study on Tea Tourism and Tourists' Perception on Tea Tourism Products of Yunnan Province, China*. MBA Thesis. Bangkok: Assumption University.
- Madeira, A., Correia, Antónia & Filipe, J. A. (2019). Understanding Memorable Enogastronomic Experiences: A Qualitative Approach. In A. Correia, A. Fyall & M. Kozak (eds.), *Experiential Consumption and Marketing in Tourism within a Cross-Cultural Context* (228-231). Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers Ltd.
- Magar, C. K. & Kar, B. K. (2016). Tea Plantations and Socio-Cultural Transformation: The Case of Assam, India. *Space and Culture, India*, 4(1), 25-39. DOI: 10.20896/saci.v4i1.188.
- Mondal, S. & Samaddar, K. (2021). Exploring the Current Issues, Challenges and Opportunities in Tea Tourism: A Morphological Analysis. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 15(3), 312-327, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-08-2020-0175>.
- Okumus, B., Okumus, F. & McKercher, B. (2007). Incorporating Local and International Cuisines in the Marketing of Tourism Destinations: The Cases of Hong Kong and Turkey. *Tourism Management*, 28(1), 253-261. DOI: 10.1016/j.tourman.2005.12.020.
- Roy, S. C. & Roy, Mallika. (2015). Tourism in Bangladesh: Present Status and Future Prospects. *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, 1(8), 53-61. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18775/ijmsba.1849-5664-5419.2014.18.1006>.
- Rune, C. J. B., Münchow, M. & Perez-Cueto, F. J. A. (2021). Systematic Review of Methods Used for Food Pairing with Coffee, Tea, Wine, and Beer. *Beverages*, 7(40), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/beverages7020040>.

- Sultana, S. & Khan, R. S. (2018). Factors Determining Tourism: A Framework to Promote Tea Tourism Destination in Chittagong. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research: Real Estate, Event and Tourism Management*, 18(1), 21-30.
- Tajik, Y. & Namavarjahromy, Z. (2011). *Tourism and Local Food and Beverages Consumption (The case of Mazandaran Province, North of Iran)*. MA Thesis. Luleå: Luleå University of Technology.
- Weber, Irena. (2018). Tea for Tourists: Cultural Capital, Representation, and Borrowing in the Tea Culture of Mainland China and Taiwan. *Academica Turistica*, 11(2), 143-154.
- Ye, Y., Wang, Q., Zhu, J., Ma, W. & Huang, Y. (2021). Research on the Driving Mechanism of Tourism Regional Brand Development of Tea Production Base Based on The Difference-in-Difference Method. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1774, 1-8. DOI: 10.1088/1742-6596/1774/1/012050.
- Yoopetch, C. & Kongarchapatara, B. (2021). Sustainable Livelihood and Revisit Intention for Tea Tourism Destinations: An Application of Theory of Reasoned Action. *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 27(3), 1-13.
- Zhou, M., Hsieh, Y. & Canziani, Bonnie. (2016). Tea Tourism: Examining University Faculty Members' Expectations. *Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally*, 35, 1-5.