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Navigating Food Culture in Thessaloniki: Tourist and Resident Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

The City of Thessaloniki is known throughout Greece for its superb gastronomy. In response to the Greek economic crisis, the municipality of Thessaloniki has begun to use gastronomy as a branding tool. Our project assisted Creativity Platform, an NGO leading the city's application to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, to better understand how local residents and tourists perceive the gastronomic culture of the city. This information was collected to help inform a strategy to use gastronomy, in all of its forms, as an overarching focus for development within Thessaloniki.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a group, there are many individuals we would like to thank for their assistance with our project. First, we express our gratitude to our sponsors, Vivian Doumpa and Panos Remoundos for their support and guidance. In addition, we greatly appreciated the hospitality of storeowners in Thessaloniki as well as the efforts of the participants in our methods. We also would like to thank our librarian, Laura Robinson, for her guidance throughout our research. Finally, we would like to express our appreciation for our advisors, Professors Robert Hersh and Michael Elmes for their rich advice and guidance.

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MEET THE TEAM



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AUTHORSHIP

Throughout the drafting of this report, team members contributed equally in both writing and conducting methods. Members were assigned chapter sections to write individually, and were given a deadline to meet. Each member then read over and edited sections written by the others. Conflicting topics and ideas that arose during the editing of the drafts were discussed and resolved at group meetings. This collaborative writing and editing process was followed throughout the duration of this project.

The interviews were conducted by the whole team or in pairs and each member was assigned different interview roles. The construction of the survey and analysis of TripAdvisor was split up evenly. The content of group blogs was decided in group meetings, and the writing was distributed afterwards. All of this made for a well-organized and just work load.

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INTRODUCTION



The city of Thessaloniki and non-profit organizations have been promoting the rich gastronomic history of the city as a means to create opportunities for entrepreneurs and those involved in the city's gastronomy in a time of severe economic crisis. Events such as the Thessaloniki Food Festival (TFF), which promotes local gastronomic products and expertise, have helped galvanize interest in local foods and food culture, and have promoted the city as a gastronomic capital.



Gastronomy has been used by non-government organizations (NGO) and municipalities as a branding tool. According to Berg (2000), branding is the use of strategic and organized activities to create a “place-brand” or destination image, to attract certain audiences. For a successful branding scheme organizers must promote more than just official branding activities but also all of the independent activities associated with the movement. A successful gastronomic branding effort may utilize many creative aspects of a city, establishing “an open and invocative city branding strategy based on mobilizing and engaging actors levels,” (Berg, 2000 p.291) strengthening a city's focus and uniting its efforts for development.

Our sponsor, Creativity Platform is an NGO that promotes Thessaloniki's creative initiatives around

gastronomy. The organization is working with the city of Thessaloniki to determine opportunities to create stronger connections among many groups such as restaurant owners, tourist organizations, and other influential stakeholders involved in the city's gastronomy. The city and Creative Platform are preparing an application to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network with a focus on gastronomy, and are considering the scope and focus of food-related activities that might be pursued under the UNESCO program. They would like to understand what aspects of food culture are valued in the city, the relationship people have with food, and how food choices whether at restaurants or in the home can reveal stories about family histories, migrations, assimilation, resistance, and changes over time.

The goal of our project was to compare how local residents and tourists perceive the gastronomic culture of the city and to consider how these differences can inform a strategy to use gastronomy as an overarching focus for development within Thessaloniki. We used mixed methods approach to identify the processes by which tourists encounter and assess the gastronomic possibilities of the city and in-depth interviews to explore how local residents form, maintain, and change their gastronomic identities.



Gastronomy as a Tool for City Branding

Gastronomy can be defined in many ways. It can be seen as “the art of good eating” (Merriam-Webster’s dictionary of English usage, 1993) and, in broader terms, as the makeup of local cuisine stemming from the interplay of environment and culture (Harrington, 2005). According to Harrington (2005), a region’s gastronomic identity depends in part on the species of plants and animals available throughout the year. How products are used in cooking and how people eat is cultural, based on local beliefs, religious practices, the formation of personal and group identities, contact with others and much more. Together the culture of a society and availability of food resources forges a gastronomic Identity. Harrington expresses this relationship through the chart he created that depicts the separate aspects of culture and the environment coming together to form what is known as gastronomic identity. In Figure 2, he lists the factors that he argues make up culture, which are history, ethnic diversity, trial and error, innovations, capabilities, traditions, beliefs and values. On the right are the factors related to environment: geography, climate, microclimates, indigenous products, and the profitable adaptability

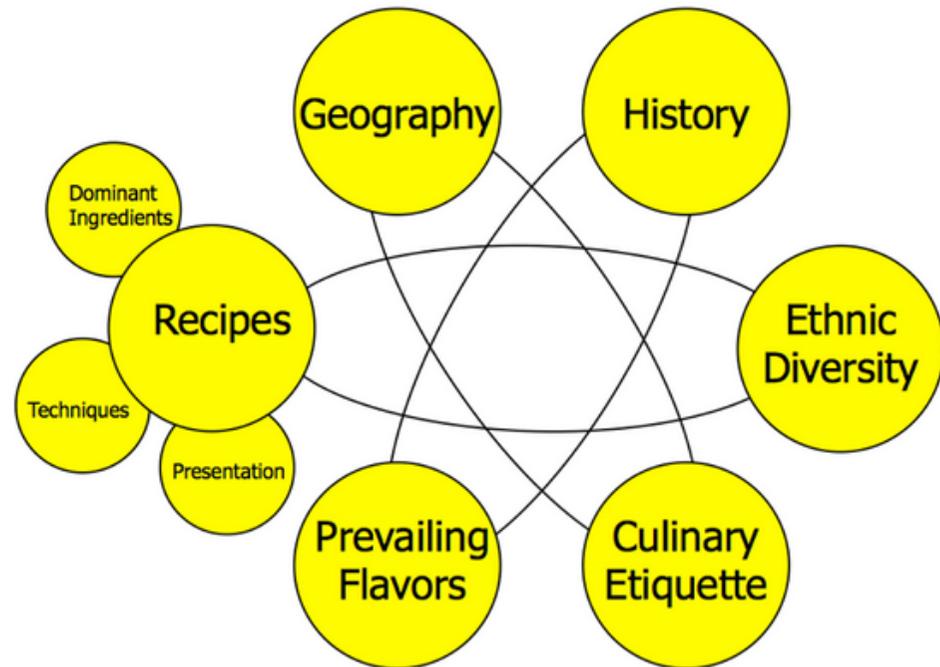


Figure 1: Ingredients of Gastronomic Identity (Danhi, 2003)

of new products. These sub attributes individually affect how a people prepare food whether it stems from their culture or from the environment.

R. Danhi argues that six main factors determine the gastronomic identity of a region. These are geography, history, ethnic diversity, culinary etiquettes, common tastes and local recipes (Danhi 2003). He then breaks down recipes into three subsidiary sections: dominant ingredients, techniques,

and presentation. To Danhi, the interconnected relationship between these characteristics defines a region's gastronomic identity. Figure 1 is a visualization of Danhi’s explanation of gastronomic identity. Both Harrington and Danhi agree that the gastronomic identity of a region is a complex blending between what the land has to offer and the people who inhabit it, and that none of these factors can be overlooked.



Figure 2: Gastronomic Identity as a Product of Culture and Environment (Harrington, 2005)

Cities like Thessaloniki have come to use gastronomy as a tool for branding. The city has implemented initiatives such as the Thessaloniki Food Festival, the Street Food Festival, the Kapani Project and now their application to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Branding, the strategic use of organized activities to attract certain audiences to a region, is an important asset to a city with unique attributes as a way to unify its forms of development (Berg, 2000). Khoo and Basarulzaman connect rich gastronomy and city development stating that, “city branding complements and supplements the concept of urban culture that views a city not only as a symbol of power, culture and identity but also as a space and place of wealth generation and accumulation” (Khoo & Badarulzaman, 2014 p.374). In agreement with Khoo and Badarulzaman, Everett and Aitchison state from their findings on this subject that establishing a gastronomic identity has, “the potential to strengthen identity, enhance appreciation of the environment, encourage the regeneration of local heritage and the economy” (Everett & Aitchison, 2008 p.164). In this sense gastronomic branding may assist a city in urban development, specifically in the areas of increased tourism, economic growth and community connectedness.



The Social Construction of Gastronomic Identity

Gastronomic identity is not something fixed but is built upon imagination. Arouh (2013, p.2) explains that the gastronomic identity of Greek food “is a collective fantasy that is composed partly of a series of invented traditions, narratives about ourselves as a nation, ethnic clichés”. In this context gastronomic identity changes and is socially constructed (Arouh, 2013). One way to document the fluidity of gastronomic identity is through cookbooks, which “provide a unique lens through which to view the changes and transformations of the foodways of Greece, and the dynamics of the negotiation of food traditions” (Papacharalampous, 2013 p.1). Over generations recipes are transformed for many different reasons and this is an indicator of shifting traditions in food culture.

Gastronomic Branding and Tourism

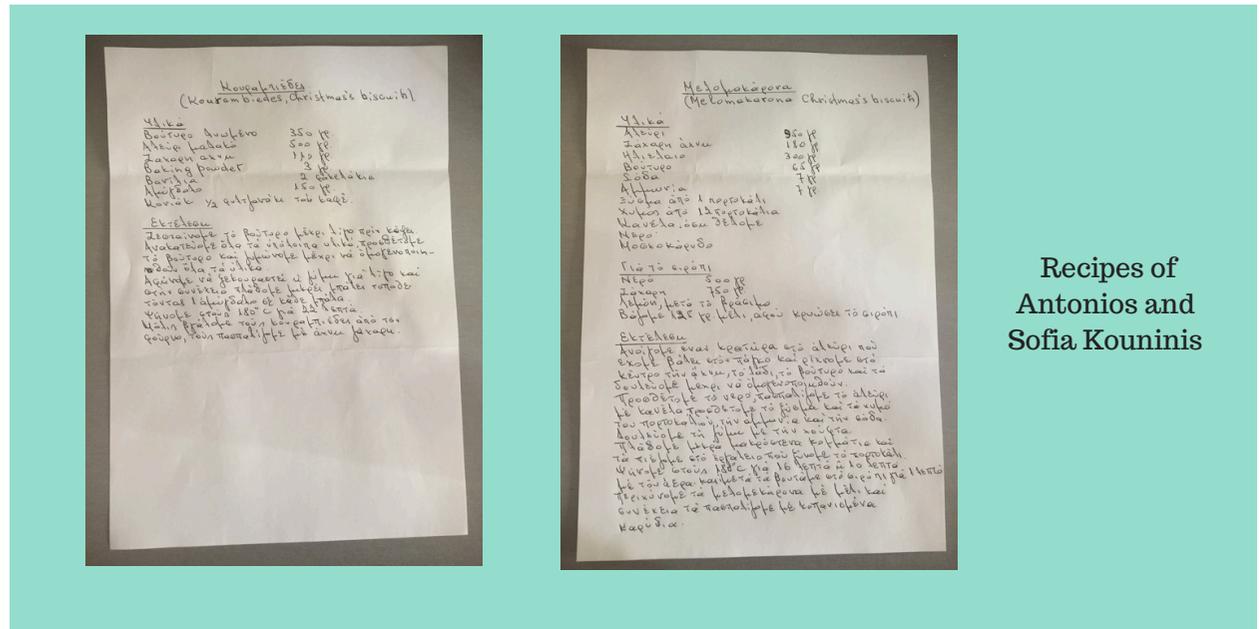
Food tourism is a mechanism that has the potential to “push” an individual to travel in order to escape the familiarity that they feel in their daily diet. It also “pulls” or attracts an individual to certain locations because of the unique gastronomy.

Local foods set the cuisines of particular cities apart from others, influencing tourists to experience this uniqueness (Bonow & Rytönen, 2012). In the case of Hong Kong, China, researchers have conducted interviews with tourists, concluding “gastronomy is an integral part of the visitor’s experience” (Kivela, 2006 p.373).

The gastronomic branding of a city plays a major role in food tourism as it is the means for which the uniqueness of a city’s food culture is portrayed and is what attracts tourists. Another study conducted in Hong Kong, supplemental to the study detailed above, noted that a tourist’s satisfaction relied heavily on the ideas they had of

the city prior to the visit as opposed to the actual experience they had while there (Kivela, 2006). The preconceived notion a traveler has of a region is important to cities who may brand themselves based on their gastronomy because it can dictate an experience before it even happens.

In many ways the gastronomic brand of a city has a powerful impact on tourism. Whether it be the sole purpose for tourism or a complementary experience, it brings about economic benefits and ties local traditions and culture to those seeking an escape from the familiarity of their everyday life. This connection between tourism and local cuisine, among other factors, helps drive economic stimulation and bring jobs to local people.



Recipes of
Antonios and
Sofia Kouninis

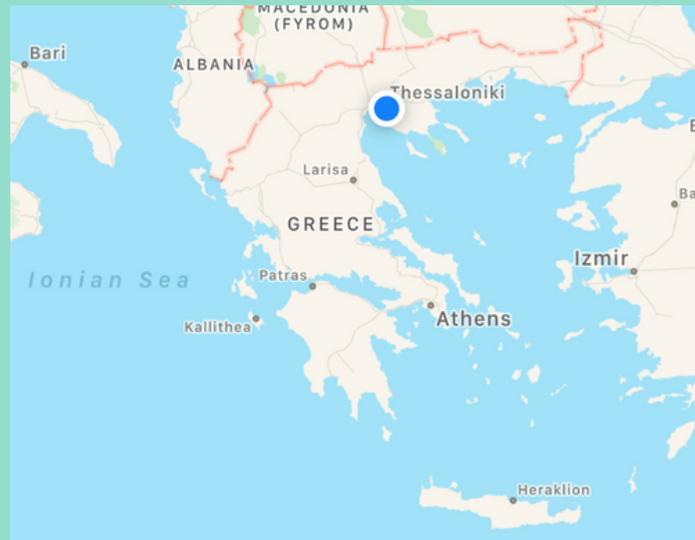
Thessaloniki's Approach to Gastronomy

Thessaloniki, a multicultural, northern port city of Greece is commonly associated with being the culinary capital of Greece (Enfield, 2015). The inner city has a population of 325,182, while the Greater Thessaloniki Area is home to 1,882,108 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011). As of 2011, the city contained 71,389 food and beverage services (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011).

Thessaloniki's rich history and culinary prowess has been influenced by many cultures. The Turkey-Greece Population Exchange of 1923 is one of these instances. This refugee movement included about one million Greeks from Asia Minor and the Black Sea. These refugees brought their own food culture to the city including spiced dishes, cheeses, and pastas (Kochilas, 2016).

Thessaloniki's multicultural nature has produced a rich gastronomy, which the city attempts to showcase in a variety of ways. One initiative is the Thessaloniki Food Festival. Organized by the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the 2016 Thessaloniki Gastronomy Festival was the sixth of its kind. This festival came to be after

George Zongolopoulos' "Umbrellas", a Popular Tourist Destination in Thessaloniki, Greece



Map of Thessaloniki, Greece

major international magazines highlighted the city as a culinary tourism destination. It aims to promote local products and shops, hold interactive events defining and promoting the city's gastronomy, and inform children on proper nutrition (Vassiliadis, 2016). The city uses other festivals to showcase its gastronomy as well. The first annual Street Food Festival of Thessaloniki launched in 2017 featured music and street food. The organizers intended it to help "Thessaloniki to become a gastronomic capital through the art of the street food!" (Thessaloniki

Street Food Festival, 2017 p.2). Food has even reached festivals seemingly unrelated to gastronomy. In the 2017 annual Thessaloniki Film Festival, the director discussed the new film section on food, stating, "You may say, 'what's food got to do with a documentary festival?' Well, it is part of the new festival section titled 'Food vs. Food', in which 9 documentaries were screened in this year's edition, revealing all aspects of food: memory, culture, human rights, life itself" (19th Thessaloniki Film Festival Closing Ceremony, 2017 p.5). The

incorporation of food into seemingly unrelated festivals demonstrates the importance of food to the people of the city. Thessaloniki is attempting to use gastronomy to link different demographics within the city. The Kapani Project is a 24-hour event, where music, street theater and performances, "aim to attract young people to the history of the market while the older generation can 'look back nostalgically'" (Kapani Project, 2016, p.1). In addition, Thessaloniki offers five walking tours of the city in order for people to have a more personal experience with the food that the city has to offer. On these walks, participants are given the opportunity to taste the flavors of Thessaloniki and learn to cook Greek meals (Eat and Walk Thessaloniki, 2017).

Although Thessaloniki is implementing its gastronomy into developmental initiatives, there have been limitations to this approach. There appears to be a lack in overall organization between the directors of these gastronomic initiatives (Creativity Platform, 2017). Regarding the Thessaloniki Food Festival, although it is a promising effort in promoting the local cuisine and gastronomy, some commentators have claimed it lacks connectivity between stakeholders of the event and the local cuisine (Chatzinakos, 2016).



Creativity Platform and UNESCO Creative Cities

Our sponsor, Creativity Platform aims to promote economic development in the city of Thessaloniki by encouraging collaboration among those working in the creative fields such as, crafts and folk art, design, film, gastronomy, literature, media arts, and music (UNESCO 2017). The purpose of this organization is to expose the “creative capital and economy” of Thessaloniki and Greece through the exchange of ideas, actions, and research (Creativity Platform 2017 p.1). Its goal is to promote

projects and activities throughout the city in order to connect people within the creative, professional, and entrepreneurial communities. This serves to encourage collaboration and thus, economic and social development within the city.

Creativity Platform is participating in “Creativity for TH” which has nine actions to develop the creative economy. Some policies enacted include hosting workshops to provide a guide for the development of a creative environment, raising awareness of the creative movement, and distributing awards for creativity. Creativity Platform also holds public meetings to promote other creative projects such as Erasmus for

Young Entrepreneurs program, which offers an international opportunity for young entrepreneurs to gain experience from experienced entrepreneurs. The initiative also has developed events such as Agrodesign, which links Dutch and Greek creatives so that these single storeowners and partnerships can collaborate and work with larger corporate clients (Creativity Platform, 2017).

Recently, Creativity Platform has been assigned by the Thessaloniki Tourism Organization to assist the city apply to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network of Gastronomy. UNESCO coordinates international cooperation between cities on the basis of education, science, culture and communication. The goals of the program include the “specific objective to ‘make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’ and identifies culture and creativity as one of the essential levers for action in this context” (UNESCO, 2017 p.1). This program aims to use gastronomy as a platform between cities to promote collaboration and the sharing of experience and knowledge in order to tackle urban development and common challenges with new solutions, learning processes and collaborative projects (UNESCO, 2017). A world map pinning of the current creative cities of gastronomy, and the corresponding city name and country is shown in Figures 3 & 4.

Team Gastronomy with Volunteers and Co-Founders of Creativity Platform, Olympia Datsi and Vivian Doumpa



In order to become a gastronomic capital, these cities have proposed and implemented initiatives in five main areas: 1) strengthening collaboration among stakeholders who participate in the gastronomic promotion efforts of the city to create a more concentrated and focused effort in promoting gastronomy; 2) developing promotional food events to invoke both local and tourist interest; 3) promoting the city's rich culinary traditions to both make the area more appealing to tourists and to preserve the culinary culture; 4) using gastronomy as a tool to create more robust local economies, and 5) addressing issues related to food access and poverty and environmental sustainability. The current and future initiatives that these cities are enacting may be seen in detail in the charts provided in Appendix A and B.

Research has been conducted on the current gastronomic initiatives in Thessaloniki, and it has been found that there is a lack of account for some of the cultural aspects of gastronomic identity, that Harrington (2005) outlines, within these initiatives. Creativity Platform would like to have a better understanding of how tourists and locals interact around food, and how efforts to brand the city as a gastronomic center can take into account this broader perspective.



City	Country	City	Country	City	Country
Ensenada	United States of America	Ostersund	Sweden	Phuket	Thailand
Tuscon	United States of America	Burgos	Spain	Shunde	China
Popayan	Colombia	Denia	Spain	Chengdu	China
Belem	Brazil	Parma	Italy	Jeonju	South Korea
Florianopolis	Brazil	Zahle	Lebanon	Tsuruoka	Japan
Bergen	Norway	Rasht	Iran	Gaziantep	Turkey

Figures 3 & 4: Map and List of Creative Gastronomic Cities

The purpose of this project was to compare and explore how local residents and tourists perceive the local gastronomic culture of the city and to consider how these differences can inform a strategy to use gastronomy as an overarching focus for development within Thessaloniki. To achieve this goal, we identified the following objectives:

1 Assess tourist perceptions of the gastronomy of Thessaloniki

2 Navigating the city's food culture as tourists

3 Explore how local residents form, maintain, and change their gastronomic identities and what influences these processes

4 Assess local perceptions of the food culture of Thessaloniki

Analysis of TripAdvisor

We analyzed 120 TripAdvisor reviews about Thessaloniki's bars, restaurants, dessert shops, and cafes that were written in English. We chose TripAdvisor over other tourist recommendation websites because of its ranking system and popularity. YELP was considered, but it is not used in Thessaloniki and, according to our sponsors, other platforms are generally used by locals rather than tourists. TripAdvisor allows customers to rate restaurants and bars on a scale of one to five. Customers are also able to write reviews capturing their overall experience and post photos to give researchers a visual expectation.

Previous analyses of TripAdvisor have been conducted to understand the correlation of positive, negative and neutral comments, with respect to the price

of each restaurant. One of the ways TripAdvisor categorizes restaurants is by price using \$, \$\$, \$\$\$, \$\$\$\$ from least to most expensive. In a case study conducted by the Tourism College of Macau and the Hong Kong Polytechnic Institute, researchers set out to find which types of restaurants customers preferred based on this price categorization (Lei & Law, 2015). Figure 5 below shows how Lei and Law categorized TripAdvisor comments into food, service, value, atmosphere, and other based on the sub-attributes of each comment. They then assigned each comment a positive, negative, or neutral descriptor and used a frequency count to analyze their data. They found that lower priced restaurants received more positive reviews on average than higher priced establishments (Lei & Law, 2015). Figure 6 shows Lei and Law's findings.

Similar to the study done by Lei and Law (2015), our group used TripAdvisor to analyze four types of gastronomic services: dessert establishments, restaurants, tea and coffee, and bars/pubs. These were chosen because these are the top available categories on TripAdvisor that relate to gastronomy. Within these four categories we analyzed reviews of the top 5 establishments listed for each. In order to gauge what attributes customers liked and disliked about each establishment we analyzed six comments, two with a high rating, two in the

Attribute	Sub-attributes	Rationale
Food	Meals, snacks, wines, desserts, variety of choices, portion size, safety, temperature, smell	No comprehensive items can be adopted to suit all comments
Service	Attitude, efficiency, helpfulness, host-guest interaction	(King, 1995)
Value	Prices on food and wine, comparative prices, discounts and compliments	(Haemoon, 2000)
Atmosphere	Ambiance, interior decoration, view, lights, music, TV, spatial layout, surrounding environment, special events, performers	(Bitner, 1992; Su, 2011)
Other	Unclassified, miscellaneous	(Law & Cheung, 2010)

Figure 5: Categorization of Comments (Lei & Law, 2015)

Categories	Positive Comments		Negative Comments		Neutral Comments	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
\$	208	82%	31	12%	16	6%
\$\$	652	75%	58%	7%	161	18%
\$\$\$	390	82%	35	7%	51	11%
\$\$\$\$	580	69%	119	14%	141	17%

Figure 6: Summary of Frequency Count (Lei & Law, 2015)

middle and two with a poor rating for each restaurant. From these we coded sub attributes, as opposed to the general attributes used by Lei and Law (2015) in order to provide more insight to our sponsors.

We also assessed the quality of these comments by determining the quality of the description. This was done because we wanted to understand what type of information an extremely influential source such as TripAdvisor uses to sway tourist decisions. We determined a review descriptive if it not only stated whether or not the customer was pleased, but also described how that customer was pleased and why they felt this way. Figure 7 is a review left by a member of TripAdvisor. In the review, the member thoroughly describes the exactly why the taste was lacking. They make a statement, and use adequate evidence to defend their claims. Figure 8 is an undescriptive review and fails to explain how and why the customer felt the way they did. This analysis has provided our partner with information on what tourists like and dislike about eating out in Thessaloniki and the things that shape their opinions.



“Overrated”

●●●●○ Reviewed September 21, 2016  via mobile

The ambiente was nice. The service was friendly. The portions were big and the prices reasonable. But taste was lacking. The cheese sanaki was dry. The fried potatoes were soaked with oil. They had the form like Pringles and looked like they had first been fried in a deep fryer and then thrown in a pan. The lambchops had been fried without any spices. The mousaka had tasteless potatoes like the fried potatoes. Such a highrated taverna should do better. We were disappointed.

Figure 7: Descriptive Review on TripAdvisor

“Classy and Delicious”

●●●●● Reviewed January 25, 2017

Order a glass of prosecco and get chocolate dipped strawberries in white cream! Me and my family definitely enjoyed our lunch. Vegetable risotto was delicious.

“Best breakfast”

●●●●● Reviewed 2 weeks ago

I've been there for breakfast ant it was great. The stuff was very polite and everything I tasted it was perfect.

Figure 8: Undescriptive Reviews on TripAdvisor

Thessaloniki Visitor Survey

We utilized an online survey on the platform Google Forms to assess the perspectives of people who have visited the city of Thessaloniki, mainly targeting study abroad students. Students were targeted because they make up a considerable percentage of our network base. Surveys are a useful tool for “collecting information from a selected group of people using standardized questionnaires or interviews” (The Pennsylvania State University, 2006). We chose Google Forms because it is a simple platform that allowed us to include multiple choice, short answer, check boxes, linear scale, and grid type questions and to collect data in a spreadsheet to easily graph data. This survey was sent to past and present Worcester Polytechnic Institute IQP students in Thessaloniki, and to others found through the help of our sponsors at study abroad programs from the two universities in Thessaloniki. The full survey can be found in Appendix C, however a preview is displayed in Figure 9.

We collected information on when people visited, where they stayed, how much they spent on food in a day on average, what type of food they sought, the bases on which they chose food, the activities they associated with eating while in the city, the food establishments they made use of, the extent to which their attitudes about Greek food changed, and what stood out to them about the food in Thessaloniki. We analyzed the quantitative question responses by graphing the frequency distributions to portray the most popular choices. To analyze the open ended questions on the survey, we used an open coding technique to uncover themes by labeling concepts and developing categories based on the responses and repetition. The analysis of these responses provided us with helpful information that was used to highlight if and how perspectives of gastronomy changed after having stayed in the city.

Thessaloniki Visitor Survey

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes. This is a cooperative project between the non government organization Creativity Platform and WPI which will help aid in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network of Gastronomy application. Your participation is greatly appreciated. WPI's Qualtrics software has been directed not to collect the e-mail and/or IP addresses of survey participants, and the survey does not ask for identifying information beyond basic demographics. The students will make the final aggregate results available to the WPI community.

The purpose of this survey is gain information on how tourist view and perceive the gastronomy of Thessaloniki. We will use this information to assist Creativity Platform, an NGO, that is leading the effort for Thessaloniki to be accepted in UNESCO's creative city initiative.

Thank you!

1. What is your sex

- Male
- Female
- Other: _____

2. Please enter your age

- 18-24
- 25-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
-

Figure 9: Preview of Thessaloniki Visitor Survey

Phenomenon Mapping

Our team has implemented a method called Phenomenon Mapping in order to understand the typical tourist trajectory in the city around food and how this trajectory changes by varying tourist strategies regarding how tourists choose cafes and restaurants. This method has also helped us explore how tourists evaluate food services, that is establishments that sell food. This method has been used by Community Food Lab to gain a basic understanding of how and where food is available in the city of Raleigh, North Carolina (White et.al 2013). In that study, researchers walked a two-mile stretch and photographed “every instance of food” they came across. They photographed restaurants, cafes, food delivery trucks, ice cream parlors, fig trees, and balcony tomatoes. After taking photographs, researchers then inputted their photos into a Flickr account to map where each photo was taken in order to visually represent and map the different ways food is available to the citizens in an urban area. We used this methodology in our project. Unlike city lab however, our team's focus was on how and why tourists decide where to eat and what influences their path from one place to the next. We have done phenomenon mapping in three steps, (1) photographing food services to visualize what we saw along the way, (2)

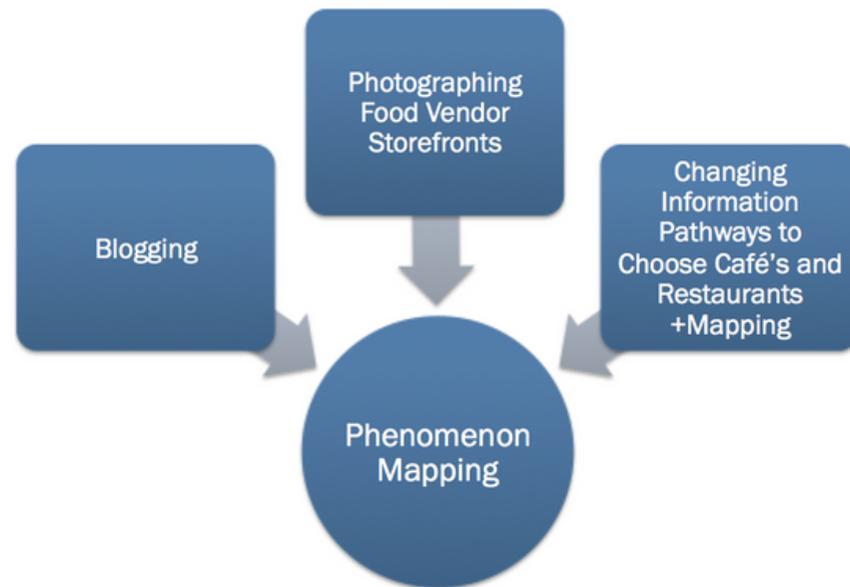


Figure 10: Schematic of Phenomenon Mapping

photomapping food service storefronts to visually map our route through the city and to understand how tourist attitudes influences how tourists navigate the city, and (3) blogging about each gastronomic service we visit to express how we experience food services. A schematic for our phenomenon mapping methods is illustrated in

Figure 10.

We undertook five city food-related excursions due to time constraints. We chose this number because of time restraints. In each excursion, we changed how we obtained information to choose cafes and restaurants in order to explore if using different strategies to find

information about food services would take us to different places in the city. For instance, one week we walked a pre-planned route of the city, determined by suggestions found on TripAdvisor and using Google maps, while another week we utilized local input to dictate where we chose to eat. To obtain local input, we chose the age group 18-22 to guide us. We chose this age because they are most likely students and had a better chance of relating to our eating habits. We asked two males and two females in the city to provide suggestions for that week’s route. The full list of behaviors is shown in Figure 11.

In addition to the photomap, our team blogged as a group and individuals about each food establishment we chose to eat at during each excursion. This blogging allowed us to convey our own impression of eating and drinking in the city. We wrote about what we enjoyed, what we found surprising and what was new to us. In addition, we also talked about the routes we took, what we saw in the city, and our experiences in the city as a result of that route. This information helped us understand how tourists evaluate food establishments. We also explained why we chose to eat where we ate, after walking by many other restaurants, cafes and fast food outlets. We analyzed these choices by taking into account

Phenomenon Mapping	
Week	Method
1	Planned/ Pre-informed: we will have a detailed and planned schedule including, where and when we will visit based on Trip Advisor
2	Planned/ Pre-informed: we will have a detailed and planned schedule including, where and when we will visit based on Four Square
3	Unplanned: We will take a random bus to a random part of the city and act as though we are "lost" and try to find food
4	Planned/ Pre-informed: We will ask prior tourists of Thessaloniki to tell us where to go
5	Improvised/ Local-dependent Age 18-22: We will ask individuals in this age group to guide us through the city to get idea student's recommendation

Figure 11: Phenomenon Mapping Behaviors

factors such as cost, location, and other reviews. We also explained how the trip was planned. For pre-planned trips we mentioned what tourist websites we used and what our thinking was when we planned the trip. In the personal blog, we highlighted experiences that were important to each individual. This could include interactions with locals we meet, personal observations of how other locals are acting or mingling, and what was liked and disliked about the atmosphere of the gastronomic service. This method began where we got off the bus, and ended once we finished at dinner.



Family Interviews

In-depth interviewing is a method used to explore perspectives of interviewees on a particular idea, program, or situation. Through these types of interviews, we captured stories about the types of food they eat and cook and how and why family recipes evolve. In depth interviews serve as a strategy to collect information in a more relaxed atmosphere, where the researcher and the interviewee have more of a conversation (Boyce & Neale, 2006). These types of interviews allowed us to have comfortable conversations with the interviewee about subjects that are more personal.

The locals we chose to interview and their demographics are included in Figure 12. We chose these demographics to ensure we gained the perspectives from a variety of family types. We recruited these participants through the assistance of friends' parents and grandparents that we have made as well as the help of our sponsor. We analyzed these interviews by transcribing them and reviewed the transcript carefully, looking for themes and patterns. Some sample interview questions can be found to the right.

What is a dish that you remember eating growing up as a child?

Was this a recipe that has been passed down in your family?

Name	Occupation	Age	#Years in Thessaloniki
Victoria Georgouvela	Study Abroad Director, American Farm School	Middle Aged	Grew Up and Returned After Schooling
Georgia Yotas	Elementary School Teacher	Middle Aged	Entire Life
Stergios Nousios	University Student	21	Entire Life
Antonios and Sofia Kouninis	Retired Civil Engineer and Mother	Elderly	Entire Life

Figure 12: Demographics of Interviewees

Photovoice

Photovoice is a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community; it enables people to illustrate and discuss a community's strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of enacting social change. Photovoice participants capture aspects of everyday realities based on a issue of concern, then share and discuss the meaning of these pictures with researchers, policy makers, and community members (Wang & Burris, 1997). We utilized this method in order to better understand what local people valued about the gastronomy of the city. This new perspective will be used to aid Creativity Platform in their application to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

To enact this method, we first recruited a group of photovoice student participants, from the Aristotle University, with the help of friend from WPI who grew up in Thessaloniki. In past studies, researchers recruited 14 participants and gave participants two weeks to capture pictures (Kelly, K. J. ,2017). Because of time limitations and the exploratory nature of this exercise, we limited the number of participants to five and the time period to five days. To start, we informed the participants on the complete process of photovoice. They were notified that they should take one to two photos that answered the following question: what aspect pertaining to the gastronomy of the city do you value the most? With each picture, participants were asked to give the photo a short caption explaining the photos importance along with a title.

After the five days, we asked the participants to send us the photos using our group email alias. The directions of photovoice may be found in the Appendix D.



TripAdvisor reviews expressed not only tourist attitudes about their restaurant experience but also illuminated cultural differences about food and food service.

From the 120 analyzed reviews on TripAdvisor, we found that the most frequently used positive words were friendly, tasty, and quality, where quality referred to both food and service. By contrast, the most frequent negative words were overpriced, slow, and typical. These depict how a negative experience with service and quality of food can be detrimental to the overall experience of a tourist, and compel them to leave a comment stating their frustrations. It is worth noting that tourists have culturally conditioned expectations and that these negative experiences may stem from these. Slow is an interesting word to see because in Greece wait staff gives you your time and space to enjoy a meal or coffee. It is custom here that one does not receive service or the check until they ask for it. This can be taken as slow service to a tourist who is accustomed to an attentive waiter and quick food preparation. In this sense, TripAdvisor provides more than just information on restaurants, but also assumptions and expectations of tourists. The complete breakdown of all the positive and negative comments can be found in Figures 14 & 15.

While TripAdvisor is powerful platform that influences where people eat and drink, the bulk of its reviews are quite limited, but its ease of use and simple ranking scheme make it popular.

After analyzing the reviews from TripAdvisor, we found that the majority of reviews do not provide much description as to why or why not they liked an establishment. Of the 120 reviews analyzed, we deemed 98 to be un-descriptive. For example, a review taken from the number one ranking coffee shop, Koukos, describes the products as “tasty” and the

coffee as “unique”. This review fails to back up these specific adjectives with reasoning or personal experiences when describing the products. This lack of description does not allow the reader to understand what makes Koukos special. Other reviews for the different cafes, restaurants, bars, or dessert shops listed on TripAdvisor were described in similar ways.

It was found that the amount of un-descriptive reviews left on TripAdvisor were in fact the majority of reviews. Figure 13 shows the percentages of descriptive and un-descriptive reviews in pie chart.

What makes TripAdvisor so influential, despite the lack of depth in its reviews, is the ease of use that it offers. When looking for a place to go, rankings influenced us the most as it appears before customer reviews on the website and app. The rankings help tourists quickly identify well-known food services that have been recommended by others like themselves. Even photos of the food served were used more than the reviews, which we often disregarded.

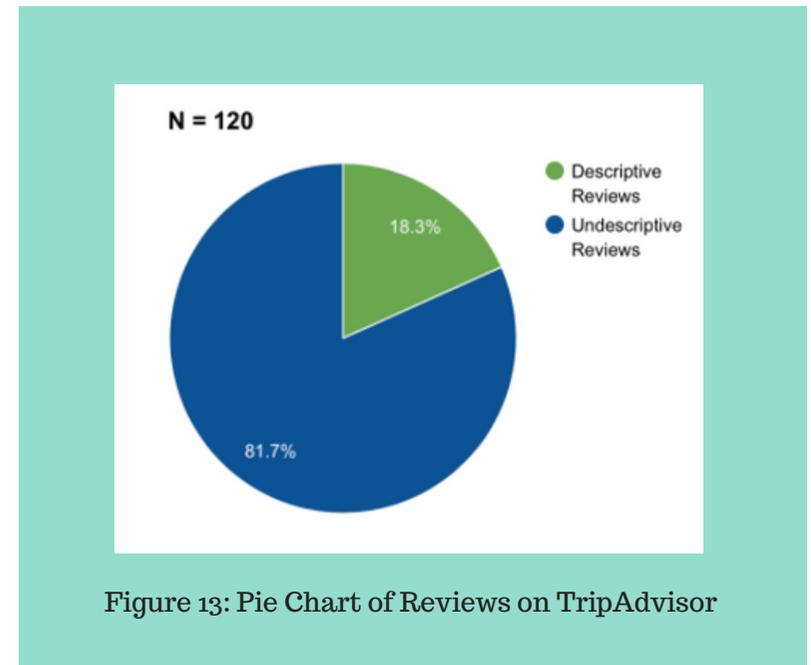


Figure 13: Pie Chart of Reviews on TripAdvisor

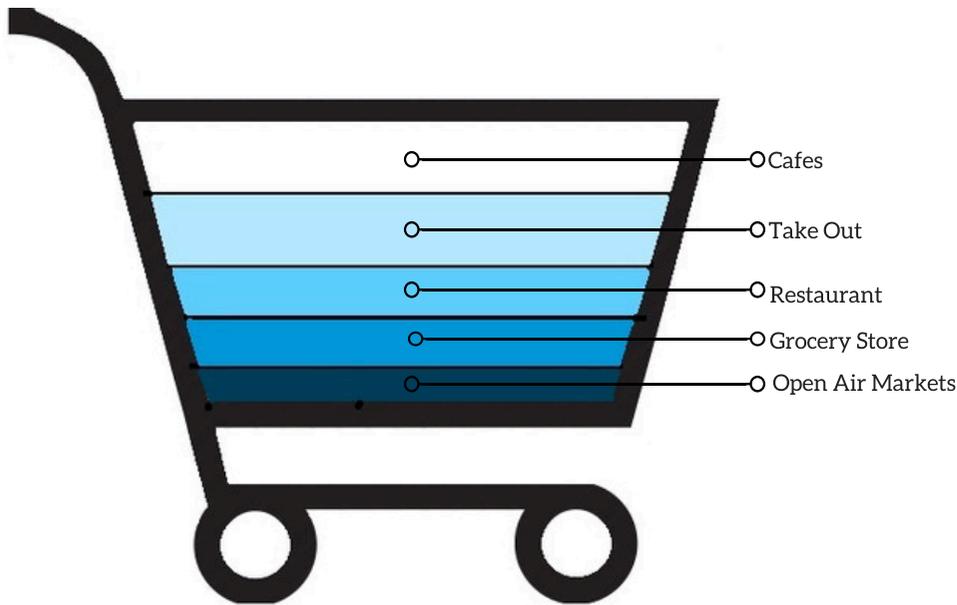


Figure 18: Relativity of Where Students Obtain Food

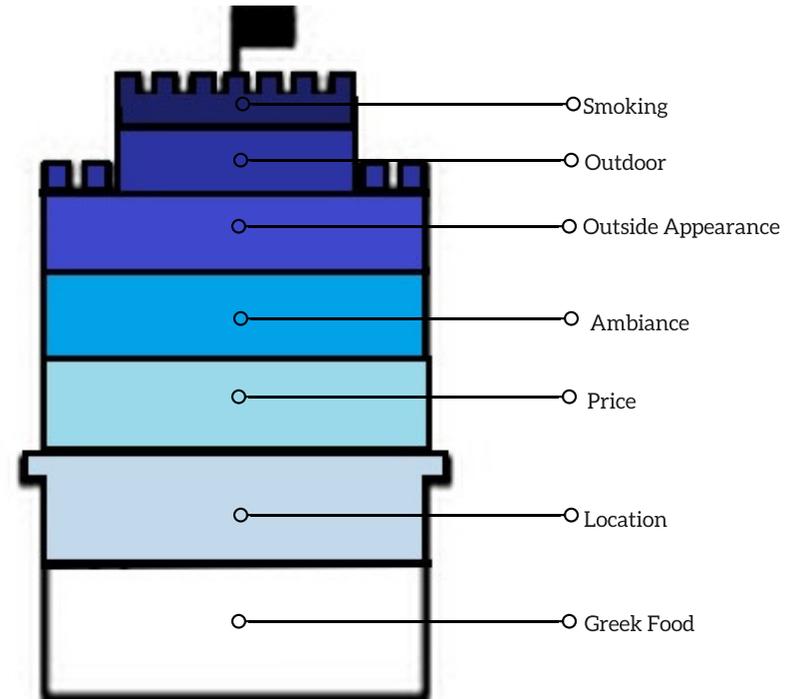


Figure 19: Relative Importance of Service Attributes

International American Students Have No Distinct Preference on Where or How They Chose to Eat

After analyzing the survey, we sent out to previous tourists of Thessaloniki, we found that students had no distinct preference between where or how they chose to eat. We use student tourists here because 45 out of 47 of the responses were of those between the ages of 18-24 who were here for academic purposes. When given the option between grocery stores, open air markets, restaurant/tavernas, cafes, or take out there was no clear distinction between where they preferred, other than that open air markets were utilized less. This relationship can be found in Figure 18. When asked how important price,

traditional Greek food, restaurant location, outdoor seating, interior decor, and smoking was to their decision a similar trend existed. These students found price, availability of traditional Greek food and restaurant location to be of importance but did not highly consider availability of outdoor seating, appearance, atmosphere, or smoking. Other than smoking, which was the least important to their decision, all of these categories fell within a few percent of each other, which can be found in Figure 19. Students have a limited budget; perhaps this is why price was an important factor in deciding where to eat. This coincides with how we chose some restaurants like Dios Xorios based on price, using the “Cheap Eats” feature on TripAdvisor.

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip One: Predetermined by TripAdvisor



Route One of Phenomenon Mapping



We began the day by going to Koukos, the number one cafe on TripAdvisor. To get there we got off at our usual bus stop, Kamara, which is located in the eastern section of the city center near the Aristotle University, and walked towards Koukos using Google maps. We all appreciated the decor of the eatery; it drew us in and made us feel comfortable (8). We liked how the barista spoke English well and how engaging he was, asking us questions about where we were from and conversing with us. It was such a genuine and authentic experience. Nabeel struck

up a conversation with him (11), leading to the man calling his friend who worked at a dessert place up the street. This interaction with the barista from Koukos caused us to diverge from our pre-planned route and visit Choureal (13). Here, his friend Alikei was also very friendly and made us a complimentary dessert, the “profiterole” the way she liked it (9). Both Koukos and Choureal had open floor plans, and we all liked the transparency of each place as you could see the workers baking the products at Koukos and all of the ingredients at Choureal

(16). We also really appreciated the pride that the workers seemed to have in the food they served and their city, which showed in the many complementary dishes they gave to us. The solicitude of the service added to the overall experience. Both places had little to customers, which was surprising to us and they seemed more catered to tourists.

After enjoying our profiterole, we needed to find a place with Wi-Fi in order to register for our classes back at WPI. Across the street from Choureal was a JOIN Juice Bar, and we decided to stop here

FINDINGS

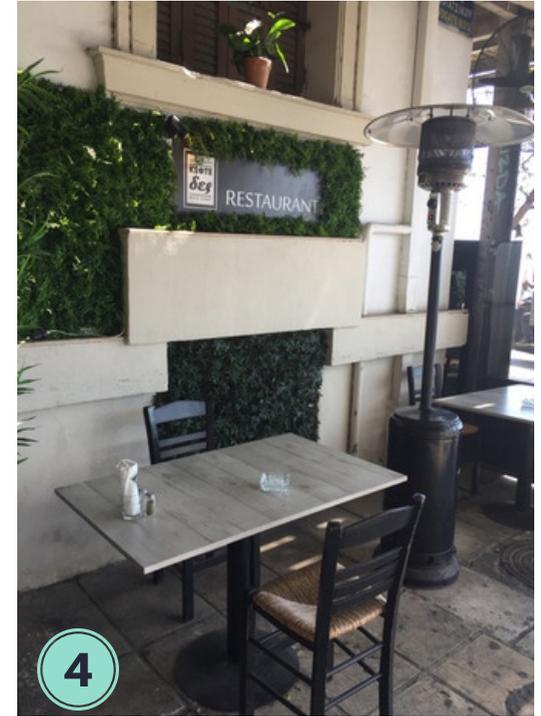
Phenomenon Mapping Trip One: Predetermined by TripAdvisor



because of its reliable Wi-Fi and it being one of our favorite places to do work in the city (12). We really enjoyed the comfortable atmosphere of this juice bar because we could do work on couches and enjoy fresh, moderately priced juices, which is important to us because of our student budget. The shop is filled with students working together and individually, which made it easier for us to work as well. This place seemed like it is well liked by locals; there were



always a lot of younger people hanging out with friends and doing work, and it was almost always filled with people. We then decided to walk along the water, and noticed a pier where many young people were talking, playing cards, and hanging out on, so we sat and enjoyed the view of the city. This young atmosphere was the key reason we chose to take a seat by the water's edge (14). Here, we introduced ourselves to some



American students after hearing them speaking in English. We were excited to befriend these students, because they were the first people we were able to meet who were native English speakers and had a similar background. We ended up inviting our new friends to join us for dinner at Dia Xoiros (15), the top Cheap Eats restaurant on TripAdvisor. The "Cheap Eats" feature was more important to us than the "Overall" feature because of our budget.

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip One: Predetermined by TripAdvisor

We liked the traditional aspects of the restaurant's dishes such as the Greek salad as well as the Greek music, decor, and the hospitable, engaging waitress, who asked us where we were from, and was curious to know more about our project. We found out the hard way that Greeks eat at separate times. We've learned that they eat lunch around 2 pm, and dinner around 10pm. It was hard for us to adjust to this schedule at first, so when we went into Dia Xoiros, we felt a bit uncomfortable at first, because no one else was in the restaurant when we went in. However, the hospitality of the waitress made us feel as if we were having an authentic meal in her home. The fact that she was so friendly with us made us think that she talks to tourists a lot.

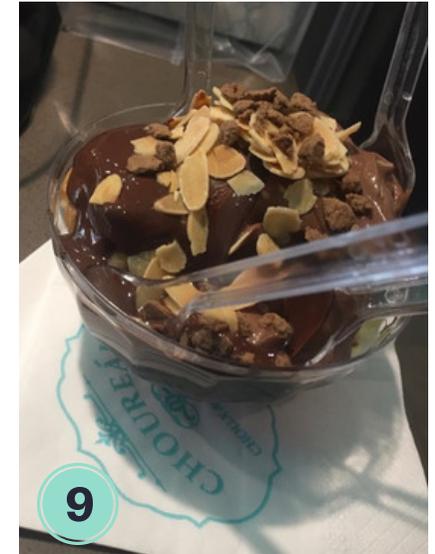


FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip One: Predetermined by TripAdvisor

“The atmosphere of the place was very comfortable and aesthetically pleasing, I liked how all the bags and napkins had the name Koukos on it and a date in the 1950’s when the place started, with a pretty red flowered design. I thought the use of the color red in and around the place was very refreshing as a lot of the cafes in the city use mostly darker colors (8). I talked to the girl, Aliki, that worked at Choureal once we got there, and she was so friendly and made us a Profiterole, which the man at Koukos had told us to get, making it her favorite way with the pastry at the bottom, liquid milk chocolate, ice cream and some almond and biscuit pieces on top. The desert was rich and delicious (9). I thought it was amazing how she cared that much about all of the freshly made products and wanted us to experience and love the food of the city so much that she let us try all of this stuff without charging us.”

-Thea



“The guy behind the glass show case handed it to me and said ‘This is the traditional item of Greece, it is from me to you’ and gave it to me for free. That’s something that I never see in the U.S. I think it showed that it really showed that they were prideful of their products.” (10)

-Steve



“Before leaving I asked one of the men working the front what his favorite dish was and within minutes he presented me with a warm souffle on the house that exceeded all of my expectations.”

-Nabeel

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip One: Predetermined by TripAdvisor



"Something that was very surprising to me was that this location didn't have much of a view, yet it was much more busy than the location that had the view of the seafront. I'm sure that if this was anything like home, it would be quite the opposite, with the seafront store being much more busy. Also, I noticed that it seemed as though there were many more college students at this location doing work." (12)

-Gabi

"Here food is more than just what's on a plate, it's all about the experience". (In reference to Greek food and food culture)

-Nabeel



14



15



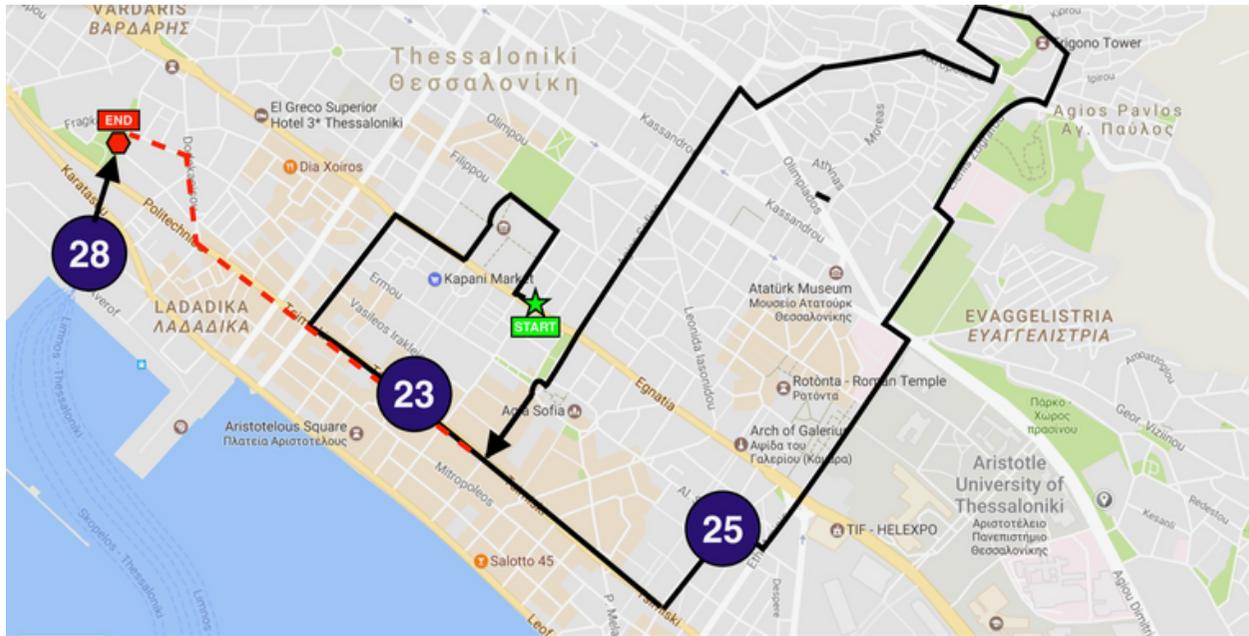
13

"Choureal was unlike many of the bright and welcoming eateries in the area. Instead, its storefront was dark, making it seem almost as though it wasn't open. If it weren't for the recommendation, I never would have even thought to walk inside." (13)

-Gabi



16



Route Two of Phenomenon Mapping

We began the day by getting off the bus at Aristotle Square, in Thessaloniki city center, and walked to Palermo (23), the number one cafe on FourSquare. FourSquare is a similar platform to TripAdvisor in which members can rank and leave reviews, pictures, and rankings about various restaurants and cafes. We all liked how it was a quiet place, it felt like we were drinking coffee in someone's home instead of a restaurant because it was a more relaxed atmosphere than the loud cafes we've previously been to (22). We appreciated how the cafe offered a non-smoking section of the cafe. It seemed to all of us like more of a local place, because you had to get

there through a somewhat hidden alley off of Aristotle Square. The antique decor of the place complemented the relaxed, eclectic feel. After about an hour, we began to get very hungry after having the coffee and decided that we needed to grab something quick to eat. We'd spoken to the head of the Study Abroad Program at the American Farm School who told us about her favorite gyro place, Giok Balik and decided to try it. In this way, our route was influenced by a recommendation from a local. We had intended to buy gyros from here but once we saw the home-style cooking presented in the Giok Balik storefront we decided to sit down and try something



new (26). The gyros were less greasy than ones we'd previously had, and we tried the Greek Specialties Moussaka and Pasticcio for the first time and really enjoyed the large portions and the comfort food aspect of these hearty meals (25).

After our unexpectedly large lunch, we decided that we wanted to do some sightseeing and walk around before dinner. We'd been up to the top of the city on our first day in Thessaloniki and decided that it was a nice day to walk up again. In this way our route was then influenced by the weather, time allowance,

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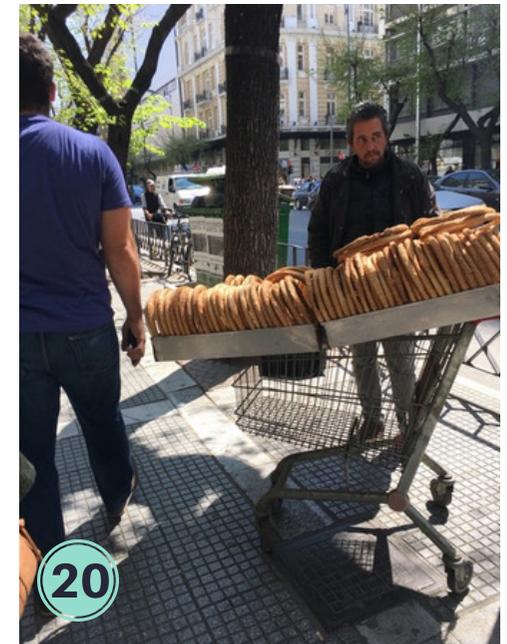
Phenomenon Mapping Trip Two: Predetermined by FourSquare

tourist attraction, and familiarity with the area where we were going. It was surprising to us that on our way up to the older part of the city we didn't come across many food establishments until we were almost at the top of Ano Poli. We walked up along the old Byzantine walls and didn't understand why there were so few restaurants, cafes and bar. By chance, we stumbled upon some of the Americans we'd met on the first trip, and they joined us for the walk and then dinner.

After spending a couple of hours at Ano Poli, hanging out and chatting on the old city walls, we

ventured down into the heart of the city to go to Sempriko, the number one restaurant on FourSquare. On the way, we saw a lot more food options than the way we'd come up along the walls, and because there weren't many quick food options up at Ano Poli, we stopped a few times for snacks and sweets. At one place we stopped, Thea grabbed a quick pastry, and the worker gave everyone free Koulouri pretzels (27). Sempriko was the furthest we'd been from the center of the city for dinner, in a quieter area near a park. It definitely felt like more of a local preferred place because of its distance from the city center and the

difficulty to communicate with the waiters. Our waiter didn't seem very friendly to any of us, but we liked how he made use of a decanter] to pour our wine when we ordered a bottle. The atmosphere of the restaurant was upscale traditional Greek, with shelves on the walls with many ingredients (28). It was more expensive than we'd liked but well worth it, with a delicious, tender steak and artfully prepared and plated food (29). Because of the local feel at both Palermo and Sempriko, FourSquare seems to be a customer review platform used by local residents rather than tourists.



FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Two: Predetermined by FourSquare



“The atmosphere was much different than I expected from a coffee shop right in the heart of the city, it was quiet like I said earlier but it was also more of a local crowd.”

-Nabeel



“You could tell that this place wasn’t known by many, but was loved by those who did.” (23)

-Nabeel

“I really enjoyed the secluded location of this café [Palermo]. It was in the center of a very busy place in the city, yet it was quiet and relaxing.” (23)

-Gabi

“It was cool how it seemed to be much more of a secret kind of local place as opposed to the more tourist friendly places we’d visited using TripAdvisor to guide us there. The place was decorated in a really different and cool way, with colorful stained glass windows and display cases with glassware and antiques, like I would expect to see in my grandparent’s house.” (21)

-Thea



“When we went inside, it was a lot quieter than outside and it was a nice change of pace. You could really relax when you went in there. The decorations inside kind of reminded me of my grandparent’s house – it had a lot of old decorations, like something out of a movie.” (21)

-Steve

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Two: Predetermined by FourSquare

“The food was awesome, it reminded me of my mom's cooking, I liked the pasticchio the most; it was like lasagna with mac and cheese. It brought me back to the days where my mom would cook all my meals. It made me feel at home, even all the way across the pond” (25)

-Steve



“That was one big difference that I noticed between TripAdvisor and FourSquare. FourSquare was much more attuned to locals, while TripAdvisor was much more for tourists. If I had to come to the city, I would much rather use FourSquare. I feel like TripAdvisor filters out the local culture a little bit more than FourSquare.”

-Steve

“It was enjoyable to be able to try foods that were more like the home cooked dishes you would find here in Greece. Trying these foods is not something I would expect to find as a tourist traveling, so it was nice to still be able to have that experience similar to a traditional home cooked meal” (25)

-Gabi



FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Two: Predetermined by FourSquare

"I was really craving a dessert, as I love sweets and stopped at a random bakery to get a sweet, moist pastry that looks somewhat like a churro. I forget the name of it but it was amazing, very sugary and sweet. The lady that worked there also gave the whole group of us free Koulouri pretzels, which I know to be the main bakery product of Thessaloniki. I thought it was a very sweet gesture." (27)

-Thea



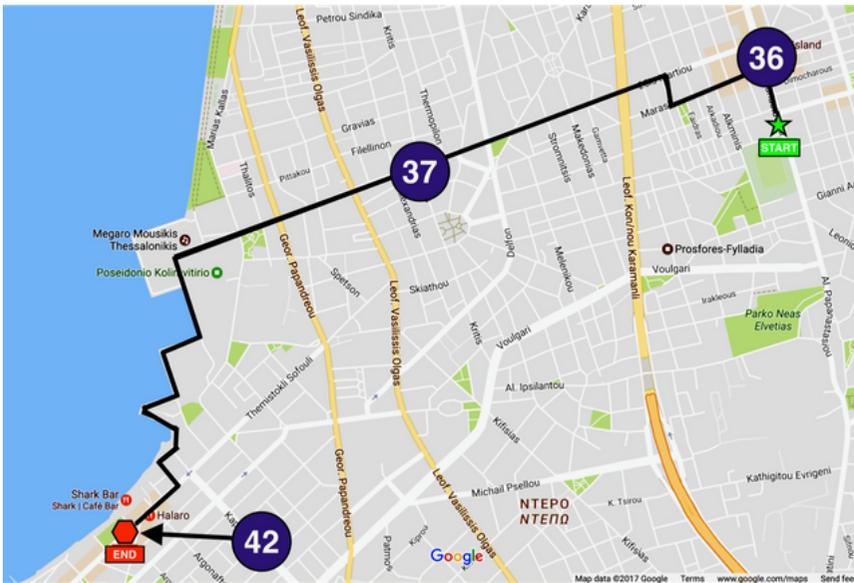
"After not having much beef here in Greece, this gem brought me back home but was also seasoned quite ethnically which I really enjoyed. It was so good that I shared it with everyone, and complimented the chef." (29)

-Nabeel



"This restaurant was on a far side of town that we don't travel to often. It was nice to be able to adventure somewhere new for dinner." (28)

-Gabi



Route Three of Phenomenon Mapping



We began our route by getting off the bus we took into the city at a much earlier spot near Aris Stadium, in a neighborhood we'd been curious about after passing by it so much on the bus. Due to our growing familiarity with the layout of the city, we were not worried about getting off at a random stop on the bus and getting lost as a tourist in a new city. We were looking for a nice spot for coffee with outdoor seating when we saw a cafe named, "Coffee Life" where people were enjoying a refreshing coffee, so we decided to stop there (36). We liked the fancier glasses our coffees were served in and the cookies that came along with them (34). It surprised us how our waitress didn't speak English, but we

were still able to communicate what we wanted as we'd ordered coffee in the city quite a few times before. Had we not had prior experience, it may have been a completely different, less enjoyable experience. We all ended up coming to a consensus that this cafe must be a location catered to locals, as there was no way for us to communicate without knowing much Greek. We all enjoyed being at this location as opposed to one that was catered to both locals and tourists. Once we knew that we could communicate enough to order our preferred coffees, we found it relaxing to not have to make small talk with those around us, and we could just enjoy each

other's company.

Because we were unfamiliar with the area, we decided to walk down to the waterfront after coffee so that we could get our bearings. Walking towards the sea, we stumbled upon a bakery called Miltos (40). We've been to another Miltos near the American Farm School, so we decided to check this one out. An important aspect in making us stay was the availability of Wi-Fi (37). This decision was therefore influenced by familiarity and comfortableness. We liked the presentations of all the food and pastries and we could see all the delicately hand crafted pastries. At one point, when we were sitting with our laptops open discussing our

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Three: "Get Lost"

project, a few ladies who were locals of the area went out of their way to ask us where we were from and why we were staying in the city. We found it really comforting to be welcomed by the locals. Some of the food reminded us of American style food, which was a nice change, like the alfredo tortellini with chicken, although we love the Greek food as well. After stopping here for a while, we kept walking towards the water. We continued walking along the

waterfront in the opposite direction of the city center towards Kalamaria, where we'd been with an interviewee the week before and knew to be a nice area with a plentiful selection of seafood (39). We originally intended to eat by the waterfront, but when the place turned out to be a bar, we crossed the street and found another with second story seating so that we could watch the sunset (42).

The culinary style of Xalara (44) was hard to

pinpoint, even the waitress could not tell us what type of food they served. It had American and Greek influences with large portions and different seasonings and options that most Greek restaurants we'd been to didn't have, like chicken chili and Caesar salad (43). Eating a meal with an American twist was a nice reminder of home, but the exotic wine of Santorini balanced the Greek and American influences well.



FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Three: "Get Lost"

"The outdoor seating here was very vibrant and comfortable. Because it was such a nice day, we decided to enjoy our coffees outdoors. This location was just barely outside of the city's center, but the difference in the hustle and bustle was clear. It was very relaxing to sit here sipping our coffees and enjoying each others company. " (35)

-Gabi



"My freddo espresso had a rich flavor that I really enjoyed. The cup it was served in was trendy. It made me feel as if the cup of coffee was meant to be admired more than it was to be consumed." (34)

-Nabeel



"I really like how in most cafes in Thessaloniki they serve you some small snacks to enjoy with your coffee, as people usually sit and socialize for a while. That's definitely something I'm going to miss about the city, not feeling rushed and being able to relax and socialize." (34)

-Thea

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Three: "Get Lost"



"Most of the time when we did work in the city it was about reliable wifi over what was served. We ended up choosing a Milto's because we knew they had wifi and we all enjoy their food somewhat." (37)
-Nabeel



"We knew that we could find a restaurant with fresh seafood if we walked in the opposite direction of the city, so that's where we headed. We walked along the seafront to take in the scenery and in hopes to find a restaurant nearby. Eventually, we came across a small shoreline with docks and boats. There was a road behind here where we found a nice restaurant overlooking the water." (39)
-Gabi



"Because we didn't know exactly where we were, we headed down towards the sea, that way we could get our bearings. After a while walking we saw a Milto's bakery, similar to a Panera, and decided to go there because there's another chain near the American Farm school so we were familiar with it." (40)
-Steve

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Three: "Get Lost"



41

"It had a second floor seating area so we thought we would go there to see the sunset, not knowing what type of restaurant it was." (42)

-Nabeel



43



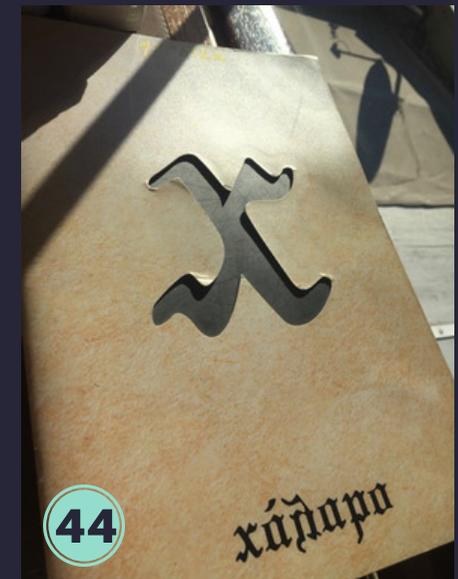
42

"We found nice restaurant called Xalaro by the water's edge, and we decided to go there because it had had a really pleasing location and we assumed it would have nice seafood." (44)

-Steve

"Before we sat down we made sure they had WIFI, and when they told us they did, we took a seat upstairs." (40)

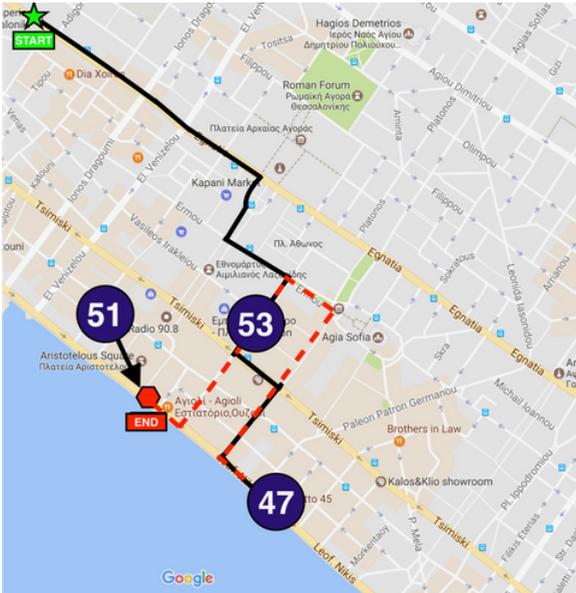
-Steve



44

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Four: Predetermined by Tourists' Influence



Route Four of Phenomenon Mapping

We began our day's route at the El Greco Hotel, which was where Nabeel's father was staying during his visit in Thessaloniki. The two predetermined locations for this trip were chosen using suggestions from last year's IQP students. Salotto 45 was their overall favorite coffee location and our first stop of the day. Its location on the waterfront was nice on such a gorgeous day, and was exactly where we wanted to enjoy a coffee and snacks. The store was packed with people around our age and the speakers were blaring music that we liked, with twists on old school rock. Immediately after sitting down we noticed strange animal pictures on the wall (47), which were a little off putting, as were the many instances of people displaying public displays of affection (PDA). PDA is more than just hand holding,

and is something that we aren't comfortable with because of how uncommon it is back home, and although other locals didn't seem bothered by it, Nabeel's father wasn't too pleased with it, which, in a way, made it even more uncomfortable than it already was. Aside from this we really enjoyed the coffee (46) and the fact that they had food, which isn't common in many coffee shops around the city. Nabeel ordered a Freddochino, which was similar to a coffee milkshake and everyone ended up sharing it. The club sandwich and Caesar salad that we ordered emulated a Greek twist on American style food which we really enjoyed because it gave us a little taste of home (50). Next, we stopped at the JOIN Juice Bar on the waterfront to do some work, because of the reliable Wi-Fi, our familiarity with the bar, and its proximity to Salotto 45.

We were happy that we could to do work for a few hours without having to continually buy food or drinks, as is custom in Greek cafes. Back home, we would of been kicked out or forced to buy more. After wrapping up our work, we met Nabeel's father at a tea place he'd found a day earlier called To Tsai (53). We really enjoyed the relaxing atmosphere and decor of this place, which was accomplished by utilizing calming lime green wall color and smooth jazz. The presentation of the tea was also a very pleasing as it was served in individual teakettles with a timer to indicate when to remove the tealeaves and drink. The bathrooms had cloths

instead of paper towels, which we thought was more intimate and really added to the overall appeal of this establishment. Our final stop of the day after relaxing for tea was a dinner spot, Agioli, which was just down the street on the waterfront. It had a very relaxing, upscale atmosphere with many sea themed decorations. We didn't like how the Greek salad had anchovies, and that our waitress wasn't very friendly, but very enjoyed the fresh fish that was served in a more upscale, American way than other seafood restaurants we'd been to (51). The fried cod that we had was very light and flakey. We didn't love Agioli because at this point in our stay in Thessaloniki we had become more used to the lifestyle, and touristic places had less of an appeal to us.



FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Four: Predetermined by Tourists' Influence



"This was by far my favorite coffee place I'd been to in the city. I wasn't surprised that it was good, as my friend from WPI and her group of friends loved the place when they were completing their IQP last year. I got a freddo cappuccino with vanilla flavoring, which I hadn't seen as an option before in the city and really liked. I also got toast, which reminded of me when I visited Italy and would have the ham and cheese sandwiches for breakfast. It was served in an artsy way and it was SO nice that they served food with coffee as that's all I ever want when we're drinking coffee around noon in the city. Nabeel got a Freddoccino which I tried and it was AMAZING, was literally a chocolate coffee milkshake so I kept drinking his." (46)

-Thea



"Animals were painted into famous portraits which hung from the walls, this was interesting but also creepy." (47)

-Nabeel



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"There was a large young crowd there and the shop played upbeat music. I didn't really like the music choice, it felt like I was in a club, not a coffee shop."

-Steve

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Four: Predetermined by Tourists' Influence



"I loved how it was very nautically decorated, there were shells and fish paintings everywhere. It was definitely more of a tourist place than some of the dinner places we'd been, but upscale as it was on the water and therefore a bit more expensive. I also always love free dessert- can't go wrong" (52)
-Thea



"I really enjoyed the atmosphere of To Tsai. It was painted a light green on the inside and had a wall will jars upon jars of different types of tea to chose from. It also had jazz playing quietly in the background, which was a pleasant change from the loud music that is usually playing at the coffee shops." (53)

-Gabi

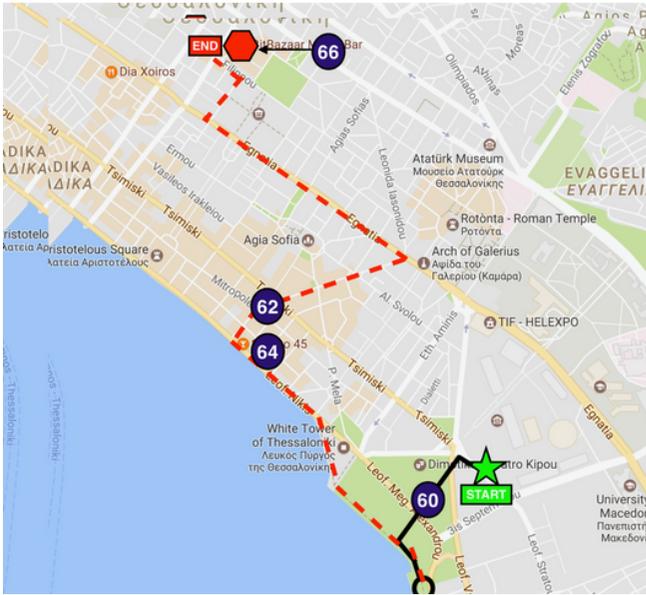


"The bathrooms were great too, it was very clean and they used cloth towels instead of paper. I liked how they were environmentally friendly in this sense." (53)

-Steve

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Five: Predetermined by Local Influence



Route Five of Phenomenon Mapping

We began this route by getting off the bus closest to the location of Treehouse (58), a coffee spot recommended by local students in Thessaloniki. We liked the overall atmosphere of the Treehouse cafe, it had tropical music, was outdoors and colorfully decorated (60) with a view of Mt. Olympus behind the statue of Alexander the Great near the seafront (57). We enjoyed the jungle theme of the cafe that used a tree in its support. The customers were younger, which made us feel more comfortable approaching the cafe because it gave us the impression that we fit in more than other places, making us feel less touristy. Although we spent a lot of time in places that had a young crowd, we didn't



54

end up ever interacting with them. Perhaps this was because this was a place where we thought we could fit in, and we wanted to keep our anonymity among the young crowd. It was relaxing to enjoy coffee, smoothies and toast in the warm sun, surrounded by people our own age socializing, even if we didn't speak the language. We didn't communicate with the servers more than ordering our food and drink, but we did so in Greek.

Next we began to make our way to Delicatessen, which was recommended to us for on the go food. We walked along the water to get there,



55

passing the umbrella statue and the White Tower. We really enjoyed spending time by the waterfront when we could. We passed Koukos while walking there, and Thea could resist but to grab a chocolate soufflé, demonstrating how tourists like to return to places that they really enjoyed. When we got to Delicatessen we realized it was a small shop, but busy with locals. The cooks and the locals traded laughs, which made it feel like a well-known local hub. The fast-food shop had lighter food, with less fat and grease than other gyro shops and we liked how we could see them grill everything right in front of us (61). They offered different takes on souvlaki that had more cheese, lighter pita bread and a mayonnaise sauce that we all loved (62). It was easy to understand why students would love the different options compared to most gyro shops we'd been to. Gabi grabbed an ice cream at a gelateria next to Delicatessen out of convenience and desire on the hot day (63).

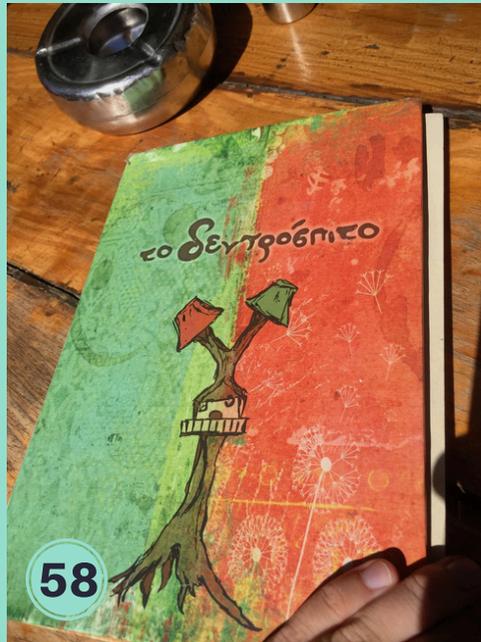
We stopped again at the JOIN Juice Bar, out of desire for Wi-Fi which again exemplified how we tended to return to places that we enjoyed. After doing some work we walked around and came across Koi Sushi Bar (56). We all love sushi, except for Steve, and we made a spur of the moment decision to have a quick sushi roll. It was really refreshing to have non Greek food and to enjoy a much different and brighter atmosphere than most restaurants in Thessaloniki, with a lot of white tables and lights (65). We found that most Greek restaurants in the city have a darker, more lived atmosphere similar to someone's home. Short term tourists may not have had the same craving for different styles of food, but having been here for six weeks, we enjoyed the change of pace. Steve enjoyed a Japanese beer, which he found to have a much more interesting and different flavor than other Greek beers. It was all very delicious and cheap, which is always a plus (64).

We then went to dinner at Bit Bazaar, which was recommended



to us by a local male student as being a popular place for young people to eat and socialize. The location made it unlike any other eating experience we had in the city. To get to the restaurant, you had to walk down an alleyway that opened up to a square surrounded by three or four different restaurants. The enclosed atmosphere allowed for the conversations of hundreds of tables to radiate. It took you back at first, and was a little intimidating because of the large crowd, but we found a table pretty easily. We sat, ate, and talked with some of our friends also on IQP that came and joined us (66). The waiters were extremely friendly with us, bringing us free extras often and sharing the complimentary raki at the end of the meal. We felt as if they were our friends, which wasn't always the case when we ate at more local-liked places in Thessaloniki. We really felt like we were immersed in the culture of these young students, sharing meals and enjoying every bite slowly throughout the night.





"We started off by going to get coffee and breakfast at Treehouse. This place was outdoors and had a clear view of the Alexander the Great Statue, the waterfront, and Mount Olympus (57). I really enjoyed the atmosphere here. I order a smoothie for myself which was great (59), but I really loved the freddo latte cappachino that Thea got. It was all the best parts of a latte and a cappachino combined into one."

-Gabi



"We've walked by this place before, and we thought it was really cool because it had a large younger crowd and a really cool atmosphere. There was a dead tree that the coffee bar used as a column support, which is how I'm guessing they came up with the name." (60)

-Steve

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Five: Predetermined by Local Influence



61

"I liked this place because it had a sort of local and hometown feel to it, it was really small, not very fancy, but it was packed." (61)

-Steve

"Up that street a little further was Delicatessen, and I split one of the "Diavalo" with chicken and haloumi with Gabi. It was great, I loved whatever mayonnaise sauce was with the stick of cheese and pork in the tortilla. I really liked how it was like a lighter, cheesier twist on a gyro. Kind of reminded me of quesadillas from home." (62)

-Thea



62

"I really enjoyed this ice cream place. There was something about the bright inside that just sparked my interested and made me think it would be a better idea to enjoy the sweet ice cream instead of something savory (although I did end up sharing some diavalo with Thea after all that sweet). Inside i was surprised to find more than just ice cream. There were also a variety of chocolate covered waffles that looked very good. However, I stuck to my instincts and ordered a very chocolatey and creamy ice cream. It was delicious!" (63)

-Gabi



63

FINDINGS

Phenomenon Mapping Trip Five: Predetermined by Local Influence



"After going six weeks without eating any sushi at all, I couldn't resist, and neither could my group members, so we went in to get a quick roll of sushi before actually going to the recommended dinner place." (56)
-Gabi

"Our final stop was the Bit Bazaar. I have heard a lot about this place from my friends who have been there before, and from the students we asked. It is all about the experience they said, and they weren't wrong. This place was hidden away in an alleyway, but when you walked in it opened up and was like walking into Narnia. It was a different world from the streets that surrounded it and was nothing like I have seen before. Many restaurants were packed into one open area and the atmosphere was electric. We stayed here for hours and were joined by our other friends on the trip with us. Here food wasn't the focus, it was all about the experience and socializing." (66)

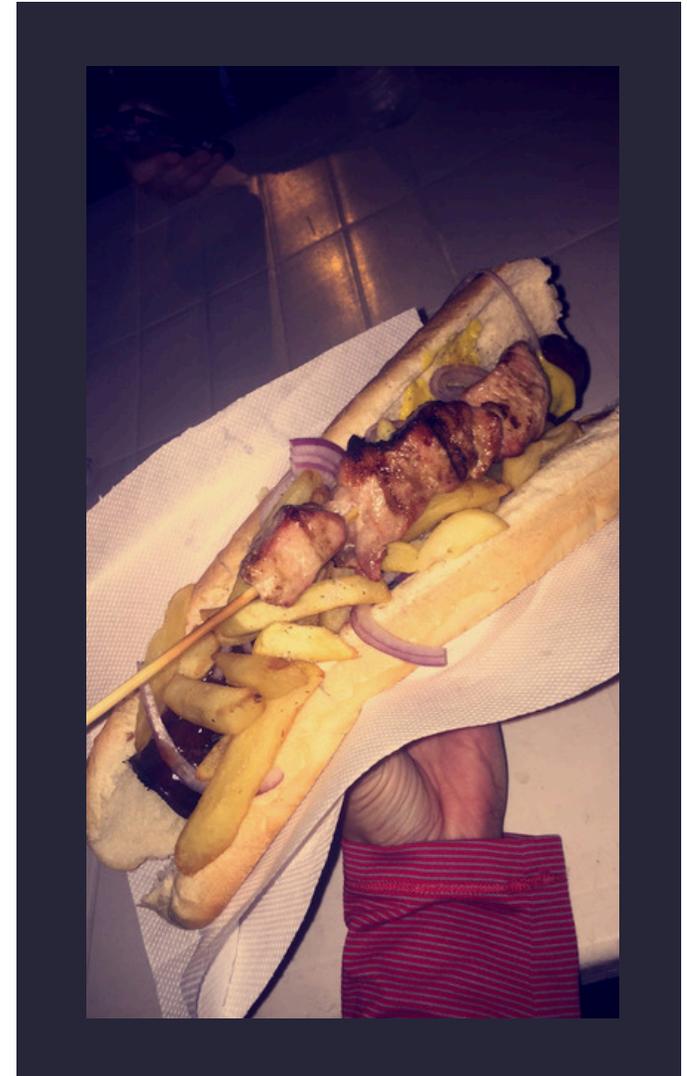
-Nabeel



TripAdvisor Yields Tourist Experience, FourSquare Yield Local Experience

We found that utilizing two separate online customer review platforms, TripAdvisor and Foursquare, led to two different experiences. TripAdvisor brought us to two restaurants located in the heart of the city that catered tourists; the servers spoke English well and provided us with complimentary food. They also expressed interest in our studies, and offered recommendations of other gastronomic services. The interactive experience, clear locations and ease of communication added to the overall quality of the trip. On the other hand, when using Foursquare we found that the store locations were difficult to find. Palermo, the number one coffee shop was hidden in an alley, and Sempriko was a ways out of the city center. Our experiences at these two places also varied from the TripAdvisor locations; workers seemed less interested in us and we even felt intrusive at times. Not to mention that the crowd was made up of almost all local residents. Another interesting point to note is that on TripAdvisor Palermo ranked 150th out of 707 restaurants on TripAdvisor and Sempriko ranked 11th. This statistic along with the experience we had lead us to believe that the Foursquare platform is utilized more by locals, and TripAdvisor guides tourists.

It is also important to mention that our group members felt differently about these two types of locations. While we all enjoyed feeling immersed in another culture in the local places some of us felt judged at times and unwanted by the staff and customers. As for touristy locations, some group members felt comfortable with employees showing interest in making conversation, while others did not enjoy making conversation as much. This just goes to show how tourists' experiences in local and touristy food establishments can differ substantially, some preferring a more culturally immersive experience, while others prefer comfort and familiarity in an establishment. These restaurants of different vibes perhaps cater to the people that often go there, whether that is tourists or locals, and this affects the experience of these places as well. These findings go along with what Arouh (2013) mentions, stating that gastronomic identity is loosely constructed and the way that the Greek cuisine is portrayed to tourists is often not synonymous with what locals associate as their traditions and memories.

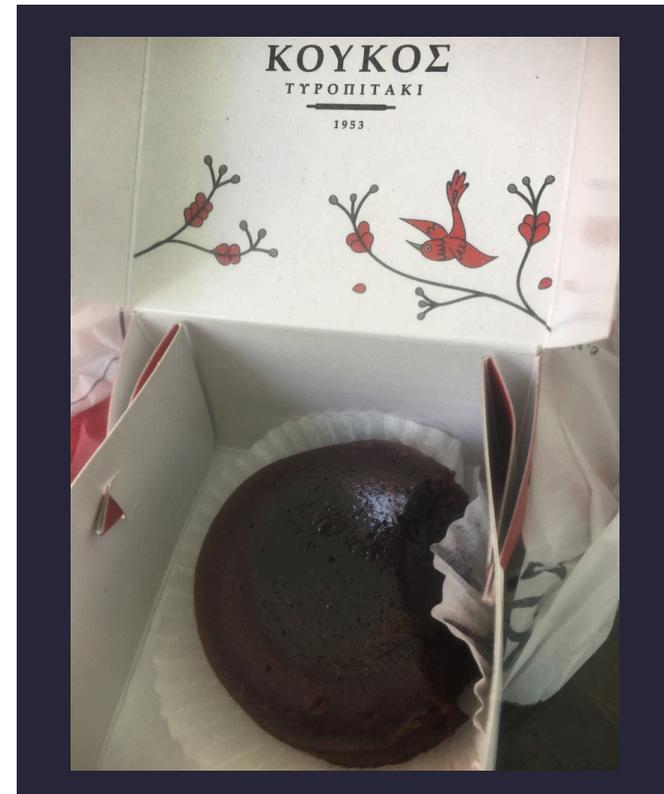


The familiarity of an area influenced our gastronomic service choice

When walking through the city in our Phenomenon Mapping excursions, we have found that the familiarity of gastronomic services had influenced our choices of restaurants and cafes. We have found that if we had already been to, and were satisfied with a specific service, it was likely that we were to return to the same place rather than find a new one. This pattern is illustrated through the return to gastronomic services such as JOIN Juice Bar, Miltos, Delicatessen, and



Koukos. We enjoyed trying new places, but often we made decisions based on Wi-Fi availability and pricing, and once we found a place, like the Juice bar, that had Wi-Fi connection, many options, and cheap prices, this was more convenient and valuable than spending time searching for new places. This contradicts with the tourist behavior that is described by Bonow & Rytönen (2012), who state that we were “pulled” by the uniqueness of the gastronomy. If it was the uniqueness that influenced us, then we would not have returned to the same place. A limitation to this finding is that we were required to do work during our time in the city and this was a main motivator for finding Wi-Fi.



INTERVIEWEES:



Victoria Georgouvela
Director of Study Abroad
Program, American Farm
School, Thessaloniki



Georgia Yotas
Elementary School
Teacher in Thessaloniki



Stergios Nousios
Civil Engineering Student
at University of Makedonia
in Thessaloniki

Photograph not
provided

Antonios Kouninis Retired
Civil Engineer
& his wife Sofia

As we note in the background chapter, gastronomic identity is not something fixed but is built upon imagination and the stories one recounts about food, eating together, meals, and how food connects generations. But stories and imagination account for only part of what we call a gastronomic identity. As we explore in our interviews, broad transformations in social life---changing attitudes toward religion, the role of women in the work force, the blurring of gender roles, the globalization of the food industry and the wide availability of convenience and fast foods---also influence how people see themselves in relation to food and what it means to participate in a “Greek” food culture.

Food and Ritual

The rituals, traditions, and nostalgia, and feeling of belonging that surround religion have influenced the food Greek families eat, and with whom they share a table.

During the great holy days, also Greek people cook at home. It is a family celebration. Housewives, mothers, grandmothers cook because family ties in Greece are I think closer. All the big celebrations, Holy days, Christmas, New Years Day, Pascha, the 15th of August, are something like Thanksgiving for you. You just have Thanksgiving getting together, we have all of these. Perhaps it's the Orthodox joined with ... because Orthodox religion influences a lot the way we eat and what we cook and the way we cook it and what we eat.

-Georgia Yotas

It can be argued that it is not religion that has impacted how families eat, but rather how families cook together during the holidays and what food has become part of the ritual. Some of these foods eaten during Easter include, as Georgia describes, “we eat magiritsa, which is a soup that has a lot of vegetables inside,

“During Christmas we make a dessert with honey and flour. Some biscuits and we put on top honey and crushed almonds”

-Antonios Kouninis

lettuce, fresh onions, potatoes, and they have from the belly.” When talking about the Easter lamb, Antonios states that, “I have done it for many years” Sofia interjected stating that, “Now my daughter... we make this.” This passing of food tradition indicates that food related to ritual has not significantly changed over many years. Although these foods have not changed, technology has affected preparation. Antonios describes that preparing the Lamb used to be labor intensive, but he “solve[s] the problem by having a machine that makes, that solves the whole problem.”

Although religion affects people’s food intake strongly around the holidays, it doesn't necessarily affect it year-round. For example, Georgia mentioned, in reference to fasting for Lent, “The newer generations, me included, I don’t follow it a lot. But my aunt, my mother, my grandmother they used to be.” Attitudes are shifting about ritual practices and how meals and preparing meals are shifting as well. This changing attitude regarding the traditions of religion, is emphasized in our interview with Antonios, when he explains, that the old people keep the religion during the fasting period, but, “Only the old people, the young do not keep traditions.” Here, Antonios expresses his opinion that younger people are breaking the tradition that previous generations have retained.

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Explore How Local Residents Form, Maintain, and Change Their Gastronomic Identities and what Influences These Processes

Food and Celebration

Events such as name days and birthdays used to be celebrated by going out to restaurants whereas now such events seem to be celebrated in the home while going out to restaurants is a matter of entertainment and sociability. For example, Georgia explains that,

Going out in Greece for food, the previous decades was actually like a celebration. Only on a birthday occasion and the name day. Now we get out more often, it is a kind of entertainment, we get more often. My parents for example, are around 80 years old, they only went out for food few Sundays of the year and on their nameday.

-Georgia Yotas

Victoria supplements this view as she explains, "the food is not I'm going out to eat, for them its I'm going to a place that I like to be with my friends."

Food and Generational Differences

When Stergios was asked if he thought that there was any generational difference in cooking food, he replied:

I think that it already has changed from our grandmothers to our mothers because a lot of things change. Everything changes over time. But okay, some things are preserved, some things last, you know I don't think that everyone will know the traditional recipes and will cook them for our children. The difficult ones, not the way we cook, that will stay the same. For example, we use a lot of olive oil, this stuff won't change, but the recipes they have change and they will change. For example the way they make pies, yes, some of the cooking had been lost. The way that it's made is changed. If you want to make a pie, maybe, even my mom, she will take from the supermarket a prepared filo dough, instead of making it. Our grandparents would do it by hand.

-Stergios Nousios



"Enjoying food the greek way! With tsipouro, mezedes and good friends! Cheers!"

-Stergios Nousios

FINDINGS

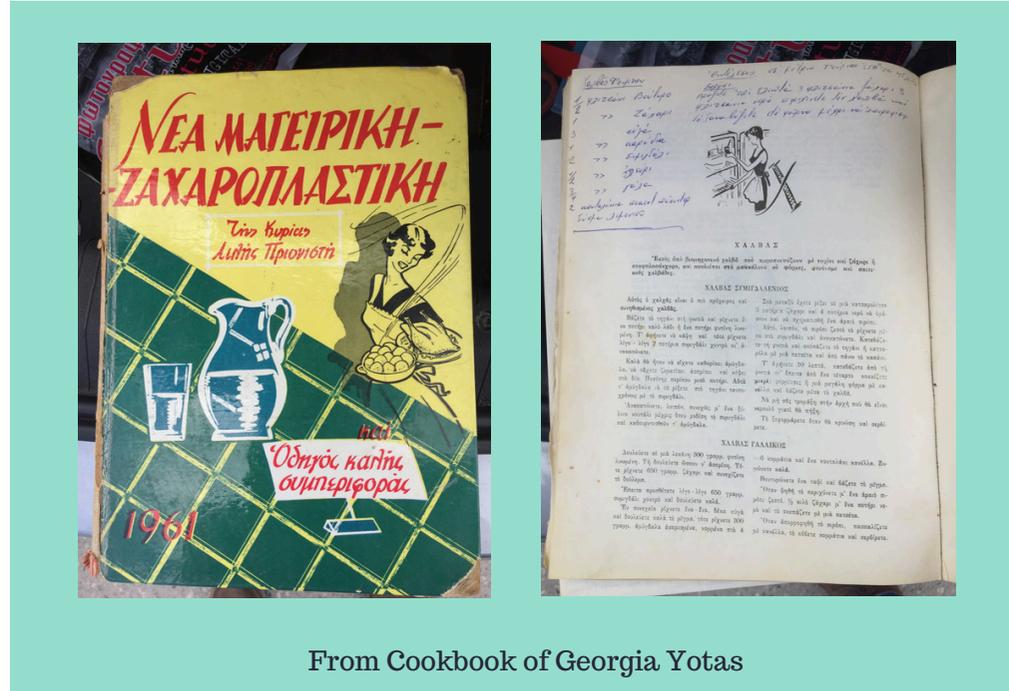
Explore How Local Residents Form, Maintain, and Change Their Gastronomic Identities and what Influences These Processes

Here, Stergios' explanation suggests how traditional recipes, the emblem for many of gastronomic identity, bend and shift with the times. Food preparation in the home is changing and ingredients that were once homemade (e.g. filo dough) can be bought pre-made in convenience stores and supermarkets. But nonetheless, traditional pies can still be considered traditional, even though some of the ingredients are now outsourced, and they're no longer made in the same way. This suggests a more pragmatic understanding of what it means to have "traditional" Greek food.

But for older persons, such as Antonios perhaps this more pragmatic view of Greek food is less agreeable. When asked if and how the "Greek" food will change, he answers, "It will change totally! **NEGATIVELY!**", suggesting, that at least part of what he knows to be the Greek food culture will at some point transform to the point when it is no longer Greek. He also claims that the new Greek food is causing health problems and even states, "That's why we see now many problems concerning high cholesterol, heart attacks, and blood pressure, and all this. Why? Because ah they eat food with many conservatives."

Food and Women's labor

The introduction of women in the workforce has changed how families cook and eat together. When asked if she likes to cook, Georgia Yotas responded, "I prefer to cook for friends. For the family it is a bit tiring because perhaps I work as well. My mother enjoys it, she didn't work...she had a lot of time." Here, Georgia explains that having a job is affecting the amount of energy she has to cook. Because of she has less time to devote to cooking, cooking can be difficult to fit in, a chore, and tiring. This change was also emphasized by Victoria, who explained that, "I love moussaka, it's another thing I make once a year [but] the most complicated thing, I would buy." This suggests Victoria only makes a certain dish once a year because she cannot dedicate as much time to cooking as she does to other things in her life.



From Cookbook of Georgia Yotas

Regardless if a woman works or doesn't work, likes cooking or dislikes cooking, there still may exist the implicit expectation that cooking is a women's job. Both of the working mothers that we talked to cooked for their children, the mother of the student cooked for his family, and the grandmother we interviewed almost exclusively cooked for the family. Clearly, part of the gastronomic identity for most families is the expectation that women are the cooks. This is evident while speaking to Victoria when she describes the influence her mother has in home cooking, "So my father started eating the way my mother wanted and he had to adjust. He always complained there was no meat, but OK."

FINDINGS

Explore How Local Residents Form, Maintain, and Change Their Gastronomic Identities and what Influences These Processes

Food and the Crisis

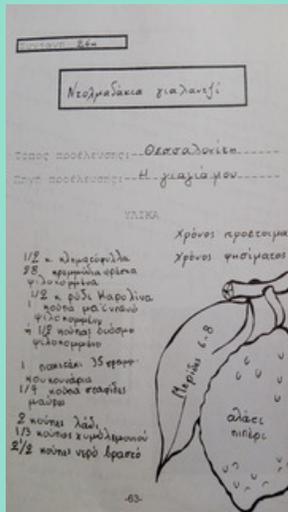
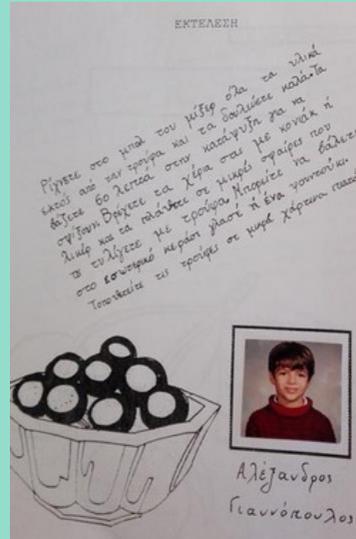
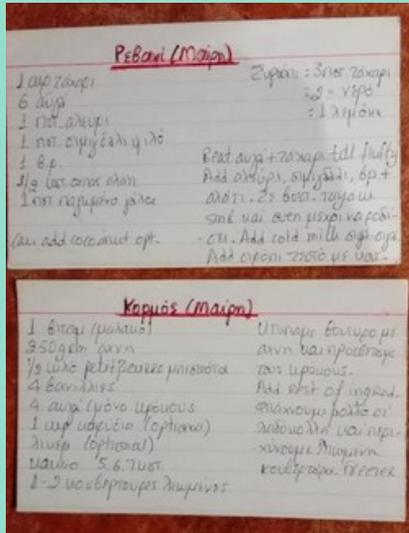
Many of our interviews described how before the crisis, people liked to go out to eat at French or Italian restaurants as if this preference indicated an interest in things from the “west” and had higher status than Greek restaurants, but also people liked to try other cuisine. The economic crisis seems to have impacted the gastronomy of the region in a considerable way. In her interview, Georgia mentioned how cuisines from other countries were more readily available in Thessaloniki before the economic crisis:

Last decades, before the crisis, where there was this fake, a lot of money going around, there was the tendency to other types of cuisine. For example, Mexican restaurants came were open in Thessaloniki, Italian restaurants with pasta and pizza, French restaurants, Chinese as well there were four or five Chinese restaurants, now I think there are only two.

-Georgia Yotas

To people like Georgia, the flow of money in Greece symbolized the expansion of westernized food culture, and to the diversity of restaurants. She states that the gastronomy here was “getting more, let's say westernized. Getting to the western civilization and following the American prototypes” before the crisis, but when the wealth of the city dissipated, so too did the symbolic attachment to these non-Greek restaurants. As Georgia explains, “What I think that influenced our restaurants and our food mentality was actually that we had a lot of money, wanted to feel like we are getting more western. We are climbing, let's say, social status. Climbing up the ladder in the social, yes.”

But gastronomic identity is also influenced by class, and where one goes to eat, for many, can be seen as an indicator of one's status. Georgia compared the “western influence” to the traditional Greek tavernas, “the rich people, they won't go out to the taverna, they will go to an Italian restaurant or a Greek restaurant that has got food influenced by... yes.”



Figures 28-31: Recipes of Victoria Georgouvela

Photovoice was not Fully Conducted

Due to scheduling difficulties, it wasn't possible to fully conduct the photovoice method as planned since we were unable to meet and discuss with the participants. However, photos were collected along with their captions, which are depicted in Figures 20-23.

"Most of us have fond memories of food from our childhood. For me, it is my mom's homemade lasagna. The way that the Food transports us back to the past is simple a piece of magic"



Figure 21: Photovoice Image



Figure 20: Photovoice Image

"The meal i chose to introduce you to is turkey and rice. This is kind of a fancier version of the chicken and rice my mother usually cooks and is one of my favourite lunch options. Recently i even tried to make it myslef but seeing how that turned out i appreciated and loved my mothers dish even more. It always reminds me of her and all the times she looked at me with surprise, as a little kid, when i asked for second or third plate considering the fact that i barely ate anything back then. I really hope one day i can make this myself and have her eat it and like it just as much."

"This is a recipe I found at Tasty and since then I use to cook this super pesto chicken very often. It is the first complete recipe I have done since I have come to study in Thessaloniki so it is my first cooking project that I keep improving! It will be a nice memory of my college years and it will remind me of all these sunny days in my balcony taking my lunch. You should really try it!"



Figure 22: Photovoice Image

"Some small chicken bites and a big scoop of mashed potato and voila...I have a perfect lunch!!!. One of my mom's favourite dishes since I was a child, easy to prepare it on my own and easy to enjoy..."



Figure 23: Photovoice Image

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Through our research, we began to understand how tourists and locals identify with and perceive the gastronomy of Thessaloniki. In assessing tourist perceptions of gastronomy, we found that customer review platforms and word of mouth do not accurately portray the food culture that exists within the city, it must be experienced to understand and appreciate the complex cultural differences and social aspects related to the gastronomy. We found that gastronomy is fluid, shifting with changing social constructs of the people that identify it and adapting to coexist within modern society.

All of this information is important to the gastronomic branding of the city, but there is more work that must be done to grasp a deeper understanding of Thessaloniki's gastronomy. One area for further research includes continuing and finishing the shortcomings experienced in conducting photovoice. This would allow for the exploration of

certain aspects of the city's gastronomy. Another aspect that could be further explored is how recipes connect to the various heritages of the local people in the city. One way that this could be achieved is through the construction of a family "recipe" tree. The family "recipe" tree would be a visual, and creative way to achieve this method. Additionally, to gain a concrete understanding of how, if at all, these branding initiatives are disconnected from the gastronomic identity of the city, as George Chatzinakos (2016) began to identify within the Thessaloniki Food Fair, more research should be conducted on gastronomic branding initiatives within Thessaloniki. Finally, what needs to be further explored is how to could link the findings displayed in this paper to help the branding process of the city. We suggest all of this because our findings only capture a portion of Thessaloniki's gastronomy, and there is more still to be found.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Thea

Throughout my time in Thessaloniki, I came to really appreciate and admire the culture around food within the city. Eating is much more of a special experience here than any place I've been. Many waitresses and waiters that we had took such pride in the food they served and the establishments that they were a part of. There was one time when I ate with my team in Kalamaria, outside the city center, and the chef served us our food and took us the back to show us all the fresh fish he had on ice, letting us pick out which one we wanted to eat and showing us his favorite. Although it was difficult to be patient at first, I grew to love how most servers don't bother you when you're trying to eat, rather they wait for you to signal them when you need something. This was almost always the case, except for when we were in establishments more geared towards tourists, so places closer to the waterfront. Although I liked how easy it was to communicate and get exactly what I wanted in more touristy establishments, I did really enjoy going out of my comfort zone in the places that seemed popular to locals, because at these places although I felt uncomfortable at first and never knew how hard it would be to communicate, or felt judged by the locals in the place who I thought were wondering why we

were there, I got to experience first hand the incredible culture around food.

It was a lot easier to enjoy the meal and the company of who I was with than in the United States, where meals are often rushed. My favorite experiences included eating at the Bit Bazaar, where we sat and ate for over four hours, socializing with friends and the servers, surrounded by probably over a hundred Greek kids our age, and the JOIN Juice Bar, which was another local-liked place that had many students working and amazing fresh juices and smoothies. I also really enjoyed the availability of fast food, it was easy to grab a pastry or baked good on the go, and they were all very cheap and very good.

One time we went to the Kapani market, which is an open air food market, and I got one of the cheapest and best pastries I'd had in Thessaloniki. Besides the pastry shop, there wasn't much in the way of food I wanted, a lot of it was raw fish and seafood and men yelling at you in Greek, which I didn't really enjoy. Markets like these were also somewhat out of the way, maybe if I was a local and older I would use them because fresh food like that would be awesome if I had the time.

I found that a lot of the restaurants we went to for Greek food had the same menu, but it was refreshing how they all made these products in different ways, with different ingredients and

portions. For example, I preferred the Greek salad with more cucumbers than tomatoes and some places did that while others did not. The freshness and quality of the majority of the food I had was also incredible. I'm glad that I was in the city for an extended amount of time because I got to experience the incredible gastronomy.

Steve

So, what do I think about the city's gastronomy? Tough question... for me it wasn't so much about the actual food. Not that the food is bad or not noteworthy, it is, it's delicious, the freshness of the vegetables, the effort spent in the presentation, its all amazing. For me it was more about how people behave and interact with the food. In our interviews multiple people told us that people don't go out to eat for the food, they go to interact with friends and family and use the food as a platform to do that. And we tried to do this our whole time here, trying to break our record for how long we would stay at a restaurant. I kept noticing that our group would come and go faster than the table next to us would finish their first dish. That was the craziest part I noticed. It took us to go to a restaurant - Bit Bazaar - and when we sat down we realized that we weren't actually hungry at all. We all laughed at it. We ended up staying

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

for 4 hours, talking about movies and actors, summer jobs, and future plans. So, what do I think about the gastronomy? Well, it's not about all what's on your plate, it's about who's eating it with you.

Gabi

When I walked off the plane after arriving in Thessaloniki, Greece, I thought I knew about the gastronomy of the city. I had been told the basics: the ingredients are fresh, the meals are eaten family style, the pace of restaurants is much more relaxed, and so on. What more was there to know? Well, what I soon realized was that knowing all this was nothing compared to how I would understand the city's gastronomy by the time seven weeks was over.

Looking back, I like to break up the way I learned about the gastronomy of the city into three parts. Starting with part one, I found myself struggling to get accustomed to the basic factors I knew about the gastronomy coming into the trip. For example, I remember going to dinner in the city our first night here at a restaurant named Rouga. I knew the pace was more relaxed, yet I found myself extremely agitated at how long it took for our waiter to bring us simple items such as bread at the beginning of our meal, or the check at the end. Also,

I knew that it was typical for meals to be eaten family style, yet our entire table ordered personal dishes.

Moving on to part two, the middle time period of my stay in Thessaloniki, I started to think I had things figured out. It was normal to be patient in restaurants, and we would order our favorite dishes to share for the entire table. However, as much as I thought I had the gastronomy figured out, I still lacked that deeper understanding, and I started questioning certain aspects. Was the gastronomy really all that it chalked up to be? The food was great and fresh, but almost every restaurant served the same dishes. What about the gastronomy of Thessaloniki gives it the unique and special touch that makes it known for its food? This questioning along with another unique restaurant experience lead me into part three, the final part of my understanding.

This experience occurred at a seafood restaurant in Kalamaria. As we enjoyed some smaller dishes to start, we asked the owner who happened to be serving us what type of fish he recommended we try. In response, he motioned for all of us to get up out of our seats and come with him to the kitchen. Here, he pulled out a drawer of fresh fish that had been caught that day. He showed us each type of fish and helped us pick out what would be best for

us to try. This one gesture may seem small, but it led me to realize so much more about the gastronomy of the city.

I started to think back on all my other gastronomic experiences. It suddenly became clear how passionate every employee was about the food they prepared. Did most restaurants serve many of the same dishes? Yes. Were each of these "same dishes" really exactly the same? Absolutely not. Every restaurant prepared the food a little differently from the next. From the spices used, to the way food items are cut up in a dish, to the presentation on a plate, each meal served is individually crafted with passion behind it, directed to please those who were eating the meal. Time and effort was put into every meal, and it started to really show.

Additionally, before this moment I had been blind to the fact that there could be any reasoning behind the slow pace at restaurants. After this experience, I began to understand what the slow place was all about. It's about the people eating the meal. Although the food is delicious and has so much passion behind it, going to eat here is not all about tasting the food, it's about spending time with the people you are eating with. It's about taking the time to relax and have experiences with those in front of you while also enjoying the delicately

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

prepared food.

Overall, I understand the gastronomy of the city of Thessaloniki to be art. It's something you can read about, or people can tell you about until you think you know what to expect. The truth is, however, until you experience all the senses for yourself, you won't really grasp how uniquely intricate enjoying a meal in Thessaloniki really is.

Nabeel

Thessaloniki has one of the most interesting lifestyles I have ever encountered and is often expressed through the term Xalara, meaning take it easy or even simply, relax. You witness instances of this term being practiced everyday here, and oftentimes it is frustrating to Americans like myself who live a fast paced life. However after being here seven weeks I have learned to appreciate this way of life, and almost prefer it to life in America.

In terms of the gastronomy of the city, it's safe to say that I was more than pleased with what it had to offer. The food reminded me of home and was very similar to what I ate growing up, because of my Middle Eastern roots. However the gastronomy is about more than just food here, and emulates Xalara. A meal was about the time you spent with those you were with and the experience

you had, over the food itself. This isn't something I've experienced back home, where waiters serve you as fast as possible and get you out of the door. But, don't get me wrong, the food was amazing, it was clear that people took extreme pride in the food they prepared and did not rush the process. I really liked this about the food here as well, because when I was in Athens almost every "Greek Restaurant" served the same exact plate, and that just isn't the case in Thessaloniki. Although menus are similar, no two restaurants served a dish the same way. In a sense the "Greek Food" in Thessaloniki isn't commercialized as it is in Athens, and gives cooks the opportunity to leave their own mark on dishes adding to its overall quality.



Cookies Made for
Our Team by
Antonios and
Sofia Kouninis

Appendix A: Current Creative City Initiatives

City	% Employed	Promotion Events	Cooperation Efforts	Culinary Traditions	Urban Development Focus
Tuscon		-Many farmers markets and festivals	-Established the Center for Food Justice, Security and Innovation to increase access to healthy foods, improve sustainable food production and expand job opportunities	-Wide array of local heritage foods -Famous for orchards, vineyards and livestock ranching -Popular traditional and contemporary dishes using local foods -Traditional food preparation techniques	-Food Security -Sustainable Food Production and Distribution
Ensenada		-Ensenada for Everyone festival brings together ethnic minorities and immigrant groups to share gastronomic know-how	-Creation of Ensenada's Gastronomic District and Food and Urban Dining Bank which is aimed to reduce food waste and offer dinners for vulnerable groups -Programs for cultivating leadership through multi-stakeholders (the Cluster del Vino launched by the Secretariat of Agriculture, Cattle, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food to build connections between producers, research centers and government institutions)	-Popular for fishing and producing many wines	-Nurturing sustainable and innovative food systems through scientific research -Urban programs to raise awareness on environmentally friendly cultivation methods and local crops
Parma	30.5	- International Food Fair Cibus			- Culture led development plan, which raises awareness about traceable and seasonable products to maintain biodiversity and environmental sustainability - Urban- rural reciprocity
Gaziatep	60% are employed 48% of companies are food related	- Pistachio Culture and Art Festival - Shira Festival	- Part of Silk Road Mayor Forum - Tackles poverty and environmental issues	- The silk road provided cuisine diversity	- Tackling poverty and Environmental sustainability - Eco parks - Pistachio shells as fuel
Rasht	NA	- Sabzeh Festival - City grants long term loans to local farmers - Offers workshops to promote sustainable production and consumption - Invests in creativity and culture to reduce inequalities and unemployment - Supports female headed families by providing free workshops		- Uses in season products, ancient cooking techniques and unique cooking utensils and methods	- Reduce inequalities - Sustainable production and consumption
Burgos	26	NA	- Leading Studies in gastronomic evolution -Looking into the development of food to increase cardio health		-The city is engaged in several networks of gastronomic cities to promote gastronomy as a key momentum for sustainable urban development. -Human development through Gastronomy

Appendix A: Current Creative City Initiatives (Continued)

City	% Employed	Promotion Events	Cooperation Efforts	Culinary Traditions	Urban Development Focus
Zahle		-Festival of the Vine is an important cultural event each September hosting concerts, plays, poetry readings and art exhibitions over several weeks	-Develops training courses mostly for women on the city's gastronomy with the Chamber of Commerce and Ministry of Tourism	-known as the "City of Wine and Poetry" -Popular wine and anise-flavored drink in cafes -Popular waterside restaurants along the historical Berdawni River -Dishes with trout are a specialty	-Works to share its experiences and cultural gastronomy
Belem	2.86	-Ve-o-Peso historic food market brings infod festivals	- Works with Institute for Food Technology to research and develop sustainable agrofood systems - Hosted a conference on Amazonian Gastronomy to make federal authorities recognize gastronomy in public policies related to culture	- Their geographic locaion and make up (39 islands and rain forest) gives their gastronomy a seafood, acai, cocoa an pupunha focus	- Focus on improving nutrition habits of the local community
Popayan		-Gastronomic activities to promote the flavors of the traditional cuisine and safeguard culinary knowledge, adopted by the Municipal Council of Popayán	-Organized the XIII Gourmet Congress of Popayán the first week of September 2015 which included 40 local cuisine stands and gastronomy tastings from a foreign city and a Colombian city for almost thirty thousand people	-Culinary traditions from the cultures of the pre-Columbians, African and Spanish -Flavors and taste from old know-how and the symbolism, rites, legends and customs of the people	
Ostersund	NA	- Brings together small farmers and entrepreneurs by providing guidance, supporting training, and product development		- Local sustainable food based on longstanding culinary traditions	- Urban rural reciprocity efforts - Environmental efforts
Chengdu		-International Food and Tourism Festival	-Exchanges information with other cultures -Researches gastronomy and cuisine -Offers educational and training programs in gastronomy -Protects traditional culture by involving citizens in gastronomy related events	-Wide variety of rich flavors -Known for large amount of catering enterprises	
Phuket		-Annual Old Town Festival restores ancient know-how in gastronomy, crafts and folk art, and visual arts. -Competitions to support gastronomic system.	-Increased opportunity for young people to engage in careers in gastronomy. -Supports groups effected by food deprivation. -Created the Thailand Creative Forum to enhance exchange of info between creative cities.		-Sustainable Urban Development -Raising awareness for safe food chain
Tsuruoka			-Promotes collaboration between farmers and chefs to enhance the unique gastronomy.	-Vegetables and mushrooms, rice, bamboo, shoots, edamame and seafood.	-Encouraging preservation and promotion of indigenous crops and their use in traditional gastronomy.
Denia	16.6	- Brings in local and international actors to create a network and promotion of stakeholders	- Works with a network of African and Arab cities to share knowledge of gastronomy	- Use of local resources in their typical Mediterranean diet, with a high focus on healthy eating seafood	
Bergen	3.5	-Hosts the worlds largest seafood conference with attendance of over 40 countries	- Same as promotion	-Organic food and seafood	-Training for kindergartens to help in the future of sustainability

Appendix B: Future Creative City Initiatives

City	Involving the Creative Cities Network	Involving International Programs	Involving City-Specific Organizations	Research	Involving the Community
Tuscon	-Nurturing cross-cutting approaches by engaging Creative Cities of Gastronomy -Promoting collaboration to develop resources and strategies for conserving heritage crop varieties	-Nurturing cross-cutting approaches by engaging Literature to the Food & Farm Writing and Literature International Forum			-Work to build community gardens for public housing, urban farms, greenhouses, farmers' markets, and small animal husbandry among other projects
Ensenada	-Helping develop the International Culinary Exchange to engage food experts from all different countries in the network	-Work with the Urban Vertical Gardens program to raise awareness on environmentally friendly cultivation methods and local crops	-the Cluster del Vino launched by the Secretaries of Agriculture, Cattle, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food to build connections between producers, research centers and government institutions	-Laboratory of Cultural Innovation aims to support research projects on social equality and environmental protection -Gastronomic Landscape of Baja California project aims to conduct research on the regional cuisine to create an interactive online database	
Parma	- Strengthen cooperation between UNESCO cities by "Become a city of Gastronomy Program"		- Supports food culture	- Increase collaborative research	- Increase food related educational programs - Rising awareness of healthy lifestyles and sustainable food
Gaziatep	- Works with other UNESCO cities to collect data on Silk Road culture - Collaborates with other UNESCO cities for international food festival	- Collaborates with other UNESCO cities for international food festival			- Establishing fully functional kitchen for low income people to promote intercultural dialogue - Offers vulnerable and disabled groups training courses on the creation and management of creative enterprises
Rasht	- Working with other creative cities by exchanging know-how and undertaking joint initiatives		- Establishing a local food museum to promote local food products	- Supports research and development on gastronomy and nutrition	- Empowering women and other vulnerable groups by providing them trainings and employment opportunities
Burgos	- Works with other creative cities to share experiences in human motors -use system to reference linkages between food and health and evolution -implementing the Plan for Creative Gastronomic Industries, as well as establishing the Gastronomic District in the city centre, to foster the local creative economy driven by gastronomy		-implementing the Plan for Creative Gastronomic Industries, as well as establishing the Gastronomic District in the city centre, to foster the local creative economy driven by gastronomy		
Zahle	-Organizes the Festival of Gastronomy in September (all Creative cities of Gastronomy invited to participate)		-Develops training courses mostly for women on the city's gastronomy with the Chamber of Commerce and Ministry of Tourism		
Belem		- Hosting a dialogue event with other cities and countries to focus local Belem plates	- Establishing a food museum and other organizations to distribute local products throughout the islands		-Implementing the cross-cutting project Paulo Martins aimed at establishing a pedestrian boulevard dedicated to gastronomy, music and folk art to foster the quality of urban life

Appendix B: Future Creative City Initiatives (Continued)

City	Involving the Creative Cities Network	Involving International Programs	Involving City-Specific Organizations	Research	Involving the Community
Popayan			-Gastronomic activities to promote the flavors of the traditional cuisine and safeguard culinary knowledge, adopted by the Municipal Council of Popayán		
Ostersund	- Hosted 10th annual UCCN meeting in 2016	- Sharing info regarding sustainable development in agriculture and food connection - Expanding international partnerships focusing on urban-rural connections education and eco-innovation			
Chengdu		-Exchanging with other cultures and becoming an innovative international City of Gastronomy	-Protecting traditional culture by involving citizens in gastronomy-related events and actions	-Developing the creative industry of gastronomy and cuisine research	-Offering educational and training programs in gastronomy
Phuket	-Enhancing cooperation and exchange of know-how with other Creative Cities of Gastronomy through the Thailand Creative Forum		-Supporting gastronomic and food innovative systems and projects through a wide range of events including competitions		-Establishing the Institute of Phuket Gastronomy to encourage research and development (R&D) in the field of gastronomy -Tackling food deprivation of vulnerable groups and individuals, especially victims of natural disasters -Increasing hand-on opportunities for young people to engage in careers of the field of gastronomy
Tsuruoka	-Sharing experiences related to the promotion of Creative Cities.		-Promoting collaboration between farmers, chefs and those who are engaged in related industries as well as research in order to enhance the region's unique gastronomy		-Encouraging the preservation and promotion of indigenous crops and their use in traditional gastronomy to transmit this knowledge to future generations
Denia	-Setting up exchange program between current chefs in different creative cities to share cultural heritage -Find best practices to improve sustainability		- Use stakeholder initiative to increase production of fresh inseason local and healthy food		
Jeonju	-Continuing to be actively engaged in collaborating and networking with cities around the world to promote cultural diversity and sustainable development -Strengthening exchanges with the Cities of Gastronomy in particular through specific agreements -Strengthening collaborative partnerships among the UNESCO Creative Cities based on the rich experiences accumulated by Jeonju over the years	-Participating in international forums and the UCCN's annual meetings	-Pursuing close collaboration with the private sector in order to host a wide array of forums and symposiums intended to stimulate the implementation of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network's goals		-Continuing to support local culinary masters and chefs to further develop the creative gastronomy sector
Bergen	- Participates in the Erasmus Mobility and the Economic Area Agreement, to develop initiatives such as an Asian-Nordic gastronomy project and a crossover Nordic cluster of Creatives Cities	-Pursuing the well-established cooperation with cities from the region of Africa, especially in the area of research on the management of fisheries, with the aim of fostering North-South partnerships in the field of gastronomy	-Partnering with Food Arena and NGO sustainable living to promote sustainable food systems and healthy eating		

Appendix C: Thessaloniki Visitor Survey

Thessaloniki Visitor Survey

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. This survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes. This is a cooperative project between the non government organization Creativity Platform and WPI which will help aid in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network of Gastronomy application. Your participation is greatly appreciated. WPI's Qualtrics software has been directed not to collect the e-mail and/or IP addresses of survey participants, and the survey does not ask for identifying information beyond basic demographics. The students will make the final aggregate results available to the WPI community.

The purpose of this survey is gain information on how tourist view and perceive the gastronomy of Thessaloniki. We will use this information to assist Creativity Platform, an NGO, that is leading the effort for Thessaloniki to be accepted in UNESCO's creative city initiative.

Thank you!

1. What is your sex

- Male
- Female
- Other: _____

2. Please enter your age

- 18-24
- 25-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 65+

3. When did you stay in the city? (Month/Year-Month/Year)

Your answer _____

4. Type of Accommodation

- AirBnB
- Hotel in city center
- Hotel outside of city
- Student residence/dorm
- Apartment
- Friend's/Famliy's Apartment/Home
- Other: _____

Appendix C: Thessaloniki Visitor Survey (Continued)

5. Where did you stay in the city?

- City Center
- Outside City
- Other: _____

6. Why were you visiting the city?

- Professional Reasons
- Academics
- Vacation
- Other: _____

7. What was your original perception of the food in Thessaloniki before your trip/visit? Check all that apply

- Didn't think much about the food in Thessaloniki
- Expected a rich food culture from research on the internet
- Had heard by word of mouth that a rich food culture existed
- Had heard by word of mouth that nothing special exists about the food
- Expected nothing special about the food from research on the internet
- Didn't know/ hear anything about the food
- Other: _____

8. If you had heard of the rich food culture in Thessaloniki, give an example of something you anticipated

Your answer _____

Appendix C: Thessaloniki Visitor Survey (Continued)

9. What kind of food did you seek when you went out to eat in Thessaloniki? Check all that apply

- Meat
- Seafood
- Dairy
- Vegetarian/Vegan
- Gluten Free
- Other: _____

10. Please rate the importance of the following when choosing to eat in Thessaloniki: Traditional Greek Food

	Unimportant	Not Very Important	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Extremely Important
Price	<input type="radio"/>				
Traditional Greek Food	<input type="radio"/>				
Restaurant Location	<input type="radio"/>				
Availability of Outdoor Seating	<input type="radio"/>				
Outside Restaurant Appearance	<input type="radio"/>				
Inside Design/Ambiance	<input type="radio"/>				
No Smoking Enforced	<input type="radio"/>				

Appendix C: Thessaloniki Visitor Survey (Continued)

11. Please rank the following activities according to how much you associate them with eating.

	Don't Associate With Eating	Rarely Associate With Eating	Neutral	Somewhat Associate With Eating	Highly Associate With Eating
Socializing With Friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socializing With Family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drinking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Going to Clubs/Bars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Please rank the following food services according to how frequently you used them to obtain food

	Don't Use	Rarely Use	Neutral	Use Occasionally	Use Frequently
Grocery Store	<input type="radio"/>				
Open Air Food Market/Farmers Market	<input type="radio"/>				
Cafe	<input type="radio"/>				
Restaurant/Taverna	<input type="radio"/>				
Take Out	<input type="radio"/>				

13. On average, how many times a week did you choose to eat out?

Your answer _____

14. On average, how much did you spend per day on food?

Your answer _____

Appendix C: Thessaloniki Visitor Survey (Continued)

15. Did you use any suggestions from websites to decide where you ate? If so, name the top three websites

Your answer

16. Did your perception of the food in Thessaloniki change during your time in the city?

- Yes
- No
- Indifferent

17. If yes, how did your perception change?

Your answer

18. Please list three things that stood out to you about your experiences with food in Thessaloniki

Your answer

19. Did you have any negative experiences with food during your time in Thessaloniki? If so, please list a maximum of three of these experiences

Your answer

20. Do you have any ideas on how the food services (e.g. restaurants, food markets, grocery store, etc.) within the city could be improved? If yes please explain

Your answer

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Appendix D: Photovoice Facilitation Guide

Step 1. Photovoice Introduction

- Thank participants for participating in research event
- Explain to them what photovoice is
 - Explain what we plan to do with the photos
 - Explain the advantages and possible risks of participating
 - Ask for verbal informed consent
- Explain what knowledge we hope to gain from this event
- Collect contact information

Step 2. Explain Instructions

- Participants will be given 5 days to photograph 2 photos
- Participants will be asked “ what aspect pertaining to the gastronomy of the city do you value the most?”
- Pictures can be taken at home
- Provide a Title and caption for each picture taken describing the significance of the photo

Step 3. Collection

- Contact the participants after the 5 day research period has concluded
- Participants will be able to share these photographs through email after the seven day period is over

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