



SHOWCASING CAVITE'S CULINARY HERITAGE AS A WORLD-CLASS TOURIST DESTINATION

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra28408>
DOI No: 10.36713/epra28408

ABSTRACT

This study examines factors shaping perceptions of Cavite, Philippines, as a potential culinary tourism hub. Despite iconic heritage dishes reflecting indigenous, colonial, and coastal influences, Cavite remains under-positioned amid global culinary tourism growth. Grounded in cultural, experiential, destination image, authenticity, and motivation theories, the research uses a validated descriptive–correlational design with 385 multi-stakeholder respondents. It assesses heritage cuisines, restaurants, marketing, infrastructure, and collaboration. Findings identify demographic differences, infrastructural gaps, fragmented promotion, and weak coordination. The study proposes digital campaigns, culinary routes, and collaborative festivals to enhance sustainability, competitiveness, and heritage preservation.

KEYWORDS: *Culinary Heritage, Culinary Tourism, Gastronomic Tourism, Heritage Cuisines, Pancit Pusit, Bacalao, Bibingkoy, Calandracas, Tilbok, Stakeholder Collaboration, Tourism Infrastructure, Marketing Strategies, Destination Image, Authenticity Theory, Sustainable Tourism, Resource Pooling*

INTRODUCTION

Culinary heritage has become an important component of tourism, reflecting travelers' increasing preference for authentic and culturally meaningful gastronomic experiences. Studies indicate that traditional food practices and regional culinary identities significantly influence destination image, tourist satisfaction, and travel motivation (Purnami & Setyawan, 2024). In the Philippines, culinary tourism continues to grow as visitors seek deeper cultural engagement through local cuisine (Gutierrez, Rivera, & Roxas, 2022). Cavite Province, known for its historical significance, possesses a rich culinary heritage characterized by traditional dishes shaped by indigenous traditions, Spanish influences, and coastal resources. However, despite its strong potential for tourism development, Cavite's culinary assets remain underpromoted and insufficiently integrated into tourism initiatives (Yumul et al., 2023). Moreover, challenges related to marketing, tourism infrastructure, and stakeholder collaboration may hinder its competitiveness as a culinary destination. Therefore, this study evaluates perceptions of Cavite's culinary heritage and identifies strategic interventions to support sustainable culinary tourism development and destination competitiveness.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sought to explore the factors influencing the perception of Cavite as a center of Culinary Heritage as a world-class tourist destination. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of the following:
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Occupation;
 - 1.3 Educational Attainment;
 - 1.4 Residency Status (Local Resident/Foreign visitor);
 - 1.5 Length of Residency; and
 - 1.6 Religious affiliation
2. What is the assessment of the respondents regarding the showcasing of Cavite's culinary heritage as a world-class tourist destination in terms of the following variables:
 - 2.1. Cavite Heritage Cuisines;
 - 2.2. Local Restaurants;
 - 2.3. Marketing and Promotional Resources;
 - 2.4. Tourism Infrastructure; and
 - 2.5. Stakeholder Collaboration?
3. What are the challenges faced by the respondents in showcasing Cavite's culinary heritage as a world-class tourist destination in terms of the five key dimensions as mentioned above?
4. Is there a significant effects among the above variables in showcasing Cavite's culinary heritage as a world-class tourist destination to its demographic profile?
5. Is there a significant difference in the perspectives of the respondents on showcasing Cavite's culinary heritage as a world-class tourist destination when grouped according to their demographic profile?
6. Based on the findings of the study, what marketing strategies should be initiated to showcase the culinary heritage and make Cavite a world-class tourist destination?



Literature Review

Culinary heritage tourism is widely recognized as a key component of cultural and experiential tourism, where food reflects identity, place, and tradition. Globally, heritage cuisines are considered intangible cultural heritage that preserve traditional knowledge while enhancing destination competitiveness and visitor satisfaction (Chen & Huang, 2021; UNESCO, 2021). Studies show that integrating culinary heritage into tourism strengthens cultural branding, emotional attachment, and tourist engagement (Everett & Slocum, 2021; Lee et al., 2022). Local restaurants function as cultural intermediaries, offering authentic experiences that shape destination image (Tsai & Wang, 2020). Effective marketing, infrastructure, and stakeholder collaboration further determine the sustainability of culinary tourism (Gretzel et al., 2022; UNWTO, 2021; Hall & Gossling, 2021). In the Philippines and Cavite, despite rich culinary traditions, limited promotion, fragmented governance, and infrastructural gaps hinder development (Department of Tourism, 2022; Santos & Garcia, 2023). Thus, this study examines Cavite’s culinary heritage across key dimensions to support evidence-based strategies for sustainable culinary tourism development.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design to assess Cavite’s culinary heritage tourism readiness. The descriptive component determined respondents’ levels of agreement regarding heritage cuisines, local restaurants, marketing and promotional resources, tourism infrastructure, and stakeholder collaboration, providing an objective profile of perceptions among tourism stakeholders. The correlational component examined relationships and differences between respondents’ demographic characteristics and their perceptions of Cavite as a world-class culinary heritage destination. This design enabled the identification of statistically significant associations without manipulating variables, making it appropriate for assessing complex tourism perception patterns (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Overall, the approach provided a structured and empirical basis for analyzing how culinary heritage is perceived and positioned within Cavite’s tourism development context.

Data Gathering Tool

A researcher-developed questionnaire was used as the primary data-gathering instrument, structured according to the study’s statement of the problem to ensure validity and alignment with research objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The instrument consisted of three parts. The first gathered respondents’ demographic profile, including age, occupation, educational attainment, residency status, years of residency, and religion, used for comparative analysis. The second employed a 4-point Likert scale to assess perceptions of Cavite’s culinary heritage in terms of heritage cuisines, local restaurants, marketing and promotion, tourism infrastructure, and stakeholder collaboration. The third section used a 1–4 Likert scale to evaluate challenges encountered in promoting Cavite as a world-class culinary heritage destination, ensuring systematic measurement of key variables.

Data Gathering Procedures

Local residents were recruited through door-to-door surveys in purposively selected urban and rural barangays, public markets, and community social media platforms, with screening questions used to verify eligibility. Domestic and foreign tourists were recruited through onsite intercept surveys conducted at tourist attractions, restaurants, and visitor information centers, supplemented by QR-coded and supervised online survey links. Restaurant owners, managers, and frontline staff were identified through municipal business registries, on-site visits, and snowball sampling techniques. Local government unit (LGU) tourism officers and culinary educators were contacted via formal institutional channels, including official correspondence, scheduled appointments, and professional networks. These multi-pronged recruitment strategies ensured diverse stakeholder representation in assessing Cavite’s culinary heritage tourism

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Key Challenges in Showcasing Cavite’s Culinary Heritage

Assessment of the respondents regarding the challenges in showcasing the culinary heritage of Cavite in terms of its heritage cuisines

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	P-VALUE	VERVAL INTERPRETATION
1. There is insufficient promotion of Cavite’s heritage cuisines to both local and tourist markets.	3.41	0.66	0.01	Strongly Agree
2. Traditional recipes and culinary techniques of Cavite are at risk of being lost or forgotten.	3.51	0.64	0.85	Strongly Agree
3. Accessibility to authentic Cavite heritage dishes is limited due to the decline of local vendors.	3.50	0.60	0.54	Strongly Agree
4. There is a lack of formal events or festivals dedicated to highlighting Cavite’s culinary heritage.	3.52	0.58	0.79	Strongly Agree
5. Modern food trends overshadow the appreciation and demand for Cavite’s traditional foods.	3.48	0.59	0.38	Strongly Agree
OVERALL	3.48	0.44	0.30	Strongly Agree



The respondents’ assessment of challenges in showcasing Cavite’s culinary heritage revealed that the highest mean was for the absence of formal events or festivals dedicated to local cuisine (M = 3.52), interpreted as “Strongly Agree,” although the p-value of 0.79 indicates no statistical significance, suggesting divergent perceptions among stakeholders (Legarda, 2025). This implies that while many respondents recognize the lack of culinary festivals as a concern, consensus remains weak across groups. Conversely, insufficient promotion of heritage cuisines to local and tourist markets recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.41) but yielded a statistically significant p-value of 0.01, indicating strong and consistent agreement that marketing deficiencies constitute a critical challenge. Overall, the composite mean of 3.48 reflects strong agreement on the existence of challenges; however, the overall p-value of 0.30 suggests mixed consensus across respondents. Issues such as loss of traditional recipes (p = 0.85) and declining vendor accessibility (p = 0.54) were acknowledged but not uniformly experienced, reinforcing variability in stakeholder perspectives. These findings align with UNESCO’s emphasis on safeguarding culinary heritage through public events and intergenerational transmission, as well as national policy directions under the proposed Philippine Culinary Heritage Act (UNESCO Courier, 2025; Senate of the Philippines, 2022).

Assessment of the respondents regarding the challenges in showcasing the culinary heritage of Cavite in terms of local restaurants

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	P-VALUE	VERVAL INTERPRETATION
1. Respondents observe that modern food trends and fast-food influence overshadow the appreciation of Cavite’s traditional local cuisines.	3.52	0.56	0.04	Strongly Agree
2. Younger generations show low familiarity with Cavite’s heritage cuisine in restaurant settings.	3.55	0.55	0.67	Strongly Agree
3. Local restaurants struggle to attract tourists through heritage food promotion.	3.52	0.57	0.22	Strongly Agree
4. Insufficient visibility platforms limit restaurants’ ability to showcase Cavite cuisine.	3.52	0.57	0.33	Strongly Agree
5. Lack of collaborative efforts hinders restaurants from preserving culinary heritage.	3.56	0.56	0.01	Strongly Agree
OVERALL	3.53	0.39	0.06	Strongly Agree

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Assessment of the respondents regarding the challenges in showcasing the culinary heritage of Cavite in terms of marketing and promotion resources

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	P-VALUE	VERVAL INTERPRETATION
1. Inadequate digital and media presence restricts outreach to tourists and urban diners seeking heritage trends.	3.49	0.57	0.03	Strongly Agree
2. Underdeveloped branding fails to position Cavite as a heritage food capital, overshadowed by its historical rather than gastronomic fame.	3.56	0.54	0.01	Strongly Agree
3. Minimal integration into national tourism platforms limits exposure for events like festivals showcasing heirloom recipes.	3.50	0.55	0.07	Strongly Agree



4. Lack of standardized promotion resources, such as guides or apps, impedes consistent storytelling of Cavite’s food history.	3.53	0.55	0.02	Strongly Agree
5. Insufficient partnerships with influencers or food experts slow mainstream adoption of dishes.	3.50	0.55	0.04	Strongly Agree
OVERALL	3.52	0.38	0.00	Strongly Agree

Respondents strongly agreed that marketing and promotion challenges significantly affect the development of Cavite’s culinary heritage (M = 3.52, p = 0.00). The highest-rated concern was underdeveloped branding (M = 3.56, p = 0.01), indicating a strong consensus that Cavite’s gastronomic identity remains overshadowed by its historical reputation. Inadequate digital and media presence, although the lowest-rated indicator (M = 3.49, p = 0.03), was likewise identified as a significant constraint limiting outreach to broader tourist markets. These findings suggest the need for stronger branding, digital visibility, and promotional integration. The results support the Philippine Food and Gastronomy Tourism Roadmap, which emphasizes cohesive branding and digital storytelling (Philippine News Agency, 2025; Philstar, 2025), and align with studies highlighting the effectiveness of influencer marketing and social media in enhancing culinary tourism competitiveness (Iswanto et al., 2024; Javed et al., 2025).

Assessment of the respondents regarding the challenges in showcasing the culinary heritage of Cavite in terms of tourism infrastructure

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	P-VALUE	VERVAL INTERPRETATION
1. Tourism infrastructure must integrate traditional culinary sites with other cultural and heritage facilities for a holistic visitor experience.	3.59	0.56	0.01	Strongly Agree
2. Limited public awareness and promotion of the heritage cuisine in tourism marketing hinder their potential to attract culinary tourists.	3.52	0.55	0.01	Strongly Agree
3. The absence of dedicated venues or food hubs where locals and tourists can conveniently experience the heritage cuisine impacts their tourism appeal.	3.56	0.54	0.01	Strongly Agree
4. Support from local government units in sustaining infrastructure development is crucial for improving tourist access to culinary heritage sites.	3.55	0.58	0.01	Strongly Agree
5. The integration of culinary heritage in official tourism development plans with proper zoning and land use ensures the protection and promotion of heritage cuisine.	3.53	0.60	0.01	Strongly Agree
OVERALL	3.55	0.43	0.01	Strongly Agree

Respondents strongly agreed that tourism infrastructure challenges significantly affect the promotion of Cavite’s culinary heritage (M = 3.55, p = 0.01). The highest-rated concern was the need to integrate traditional culinary sites with cultural and heritage attractions (M = 3.59, p = 0.01), indicating strong consensus that holistic tourism planning is essential. The lowest-rated indicator, limited public awareness and promotion of heritage cuisine (M = 3.52, p = 0.01), was likewise identified as a significant challenge. These findings suggest that improved infrastructure, integrated culinary circuits, and dedicated food hubs are necessary to enhance visitor experiences. The results support the Philippine Food and Gastronomy Tourism Roadmap, which advocates culinary zones



and food routes (Philippine News Agency, 2025; Philstar, 2025), and align with studies emphasizing coordinated infrastructure and cultural planning for tourism competitiveness (Chattoraj & Chin, 2024; World Economic Forum, 2025).

Assessment of the respondents regarding the challenges in showcasing the culinary heritage of Cavite in terms of stakeholder collaboration

INDICATOR	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	P-VALUE	VERVAL INTERPRETATION
1. There is insufficient collaboration among government agencies, local businesses, and cultural groups in promoting Cavite’s culinary heritage.	3.31	0.68	0.56	Strongly Agree
2. Limited market intelligence sharing among stakeholders hampers effective promotion and preservation of heritage cuisine.	3.32	0.66	0.12	Strongly Agree
3. There is insufficient leadership and coordination among the key players responsible for showcasing heritage cuisine as a tourist destination.	3.30	0.68	0.12	Strongly Agree
4. Lack of unified branding and marketing approach among local restaurants and businesses selling heritage cuisine weakens collaborative impact.	3.34	0.62	0.58	Strongly Agree
5. Stakeholders show varying levels of commitment, leading to inconsistent support and participation in culinary heritage activities related to heritage cuisine.	3.26	0.64	0.08	Strongly Agree
OVERALL	3.30	0.62	0.01	Strongly Agree

Respondents strongly agreed that stakeholder collaboration poses challenges to showcasing Cavite’s culinary heritage (M = 3.30, p = 0.01). The highest-rated concern was the lack of a unified branding and marketing approach among restaurants and businesses promoting heritage cuisine (M = 3.34, p = 0.58), while varying levels of stakeholder commitment received the lowest mean (M = 3.26, p = 0.08). Although these individual indicators were not statistically significant, the overall results demonstrate a shared recognition that fragmented coordination hinders effective heritage promotion. These findings suggest the need for stronger partnerships among government agencies, businesses, cultural organizations, and local communities. The results support national initiatives emphasizing collaborative governance in gastronomy tourism (ABS-CBN, 2025; Philstar, 2025) and align with studies showing that stakeholder coordination and shared leadership are critical for sustainable cultural and culinary tourism development (Loverio, Shen, & Chen, 2022; Legarda, 2024–2025).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following were concluded:

H₀₁: There is no significant effect among the above variables in showcasing Cavite’s culinary heritage as a world-class tourist destination to its demographic profile

H₀₂ : There is no significant difference in the perspectives of the respondents on showcasing Cavite’s culinary heritage as a world-class tourist destination when grouped according to their demographic profile

- The respondents were predominantly middle-aged adults, with the majority belonging to Generation X (45–60 years old), indicating mature and experience-based perspectives. Most were engaged in education-related professions, hospitality and restaurant services, and entrepreneurship, reflecting strong relevance to the culinary and tourism sectors. In terms of education, the respondents were generally well-educated, with most holding a college, master’s, or doctoral degree . The sample was largely composed of local residents, many of whom had more than 20 years of residency, signifying deep familiarity with Cavite’s culture and cuisine. Religiously, the respondents were mostly Roman Catholic, consistent with the dominant religious profile of the province.
- Overall, respondents agreed that Cavite’s culinary heritage has strong potential as a world-class tourist destination. Heritage cuisines received the highest assessment, reflecting strong authenticity, historical continuity, and cultural value. Local restaurants were seen as contributors to culinary heritage preservation, though heritage dishes were not always prominently featured. Marketing and promotion resources received the lowest assessment, indicating limited visibility, funding, and campaign reach. Tourism infrastructure and stakeholder collaboration were generally assessed positively, suggesting adequate support systems, though still with room for strategic enhancement.
- The primary challenges identified were insufficient marketing and promotional resources, limited budget allocation, and weak global visibility. Respondents also noted gaps in the consistent promotion of heritage cuisines in restaurants, uneven integration of food heritage into tourism circuits, and fragmented stakeholder coordination, particularly in media engagement and joint promotional efforts.



4. The study found a significant effects between respondents' demographic characteristics and their perceptions of Cavite's culinary heritage. Variables such as age, occupation, educational attainment, and length of residency influenced how respondents assessed heritage cuisines, infrastructure, marketing effectiveness, and collaboration, indicating that perceptions are shaped by experience, professional background, and cultural exposure.
5. There were significant differences in respondents' perspectives when grouped according to their demographic profile. Local residents and long-term Caviteños generally expressed stronger appreciation for heritage authenticity, while respondents from tourism-related professions were more critical of marketing, promotion, and infrastructure gaps. This confirms that stakeholder roles and lived experience affect evaluations of culinary tourism readiness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the showcasing of Cavite's culinary heritage and enhance its positioning as a world-class tourist destination.

1. Create a strong collaboration between the local government and local agencies, such as the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM), DTI's export promotion arm in the Philippines, to promote the heritage cuisine of Cavite through flagship events, including IFEX (International Food Exhibition) Philippines and various international food shows.
2. Incentivizing foreign visitors through TaxRebate. Exempting 12% VAT (Republic Act No. 12079) every time they purchase/dine/order Cavite's heritage cuisine.
3. Local restaurants should also receive financial incentives such as VAT exemptions on procurement costs for traditional ingredients sourced from local farmers and producers. Those who will qualify will be certified as "Cavite Heritage Ambassadors" to feature and promote heritage dishes, supported by targeted training on authentic preparation, cultural storytelling, and service quality. This approach strengthens restaurant participation in heritage promotion while improving customer experience and increasing demand for traditional cuisine.
4. Stakeholders from the government (LGUs, tourism offices, and the DOT), private sectors, and academe should jointly establish a **unified culinary brand for Cavite** that highlights key heritage dishes (Pansit Pusit, Bibingkoy, and Tilbok) and is consistently applied across all tourism materials and digital platforms. This initiative should be launched within a year through institutionalized province-wide culinary festivals.
5. Tourism infrastructure should focus on integrating heritage cuisine sites into formal gastronomic routes supported by digital mapping, clear signage, accessible facilities, and sustainable transport options. Establishing centralized culinary hubs will enhance visitor experience, improve accessibility, and encourage longer stays while ensuring inclusive and sustainable tourism development.
6. Further research may focus on evaluating the effectiveness of a specific culinary tourism program, festivals, and branding initiatives implemented by local government units and tourism stakeholders to determine their impact on destination image and tourist engagement.

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