

## *Chapter 15:*

# **Udaipur as a Culinary Tourism Destination– An Exploration**

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Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

Tourism is travel for pleasure or business. Tourism brings income into a local economy in the form of payment for goods and services needed by tourists, in addition to goods bought by tourists, including souvenirs. Culinary means the art of preparation, cooking and presentation of food, usually in the form of meals. Culinary tourism is defined as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences. By combining travel with these edible experiences, culinary tourism offers both locals and tourists alike an authentic taste of the place. But culinary/food tourism is not limited to gourmet food. The World Food Travel Association adds that drinking beverages is an implied and associated activity in "Food Tourism". As Udaipur being most popular tourist destination in Rajasthan so as a author decided to take an exploratory research study on Udaipur as a Culinary Tourism destination. The ideas thrown up need further exploration and trial, but it may be suggested that it may be worth it to do the exploration and motivation. This may require research and exploration at international level, idea development and project work through joint efforts by tourism department, hotel industry and other stakeholders to put the idea into practice.

### **1 Introduction**

Tourism is travel for pleasure or for business. The Manila Declaration on World Tourism, 1980 recognised tourism as "an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational, and economic sectors of national societies and on their international relations" (UNWTO, 2010). Tourists can be domestic or international. Domestic tourists are from within the travellers' country where as international tourists are from and to other countries. Earlier the major flow of international tourists was from and to developing countries, as these destinations offered what the tourists desired. However, gradually over the year many other countries such as China, Russia, Brazil, Singapore, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and India have developed the tourism related infrastructure and increased the attraction of tourist spots significantly.

Tourism benefits tour operators, hotels, resorts, entertainment venues such as amusement parks, casinos, shopping malls, music centres and theatres and transportation services such as airlines, cruise ships, taxicabs, etc. Tour operators attract, accommodate and entertain the tourists. Tourism also benefits the local economy by generating demand for products and services, by creating opportunities for employment of qualified and skilled workforce and contributes to state revenue in the form of taxes on sale of goods and services. Besides the international travellers bring foreign exchange.

Over the years, with a view to attract the larger number of people with diverse interests, many specialised tourism activities such as health tourism, educational tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, business tourism, rural tourism, agri-tourism, culinary tourism or food tourism have been developed. Considering their need and resource base many countries have developed specialised infrastructure to promote any one or more among these specialised tourisms.



## 2 Culinary Tourism

Culinary tourism is defined as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experience (Long, 2004). By combining travel with eating and drinking experience, culinary tourism offers tourists authentic taste food and beverages of the place (McKercher, Okumus, and Okumus, 2008). The UNWTO Global Report on Food Tourism: AM Report Volume Four (2012) mentions that “gastronomic tourism applies to tourists and visitors who plan their trips partially or totally in order to taste the cuisine of the place or to carry out activities related to gastronomy.” Drinking beverages is an implied and associated activity in tourism". Food tourism includes food carts and street vendors as much as pubs, wineries and restaurants. Culinary tourism differs from agri-tourism in that culinary tourism is considered a subset of cultural tourism (cuisine is a manifestation of culture) whereas agri-tourism is considered a subset of rural tourism, (Wolf, 2006).

France has been strongly associated with culinary tourism. French citizens as well as international visitors travel to different parts of the country to sample food and beverages. Ireland, Peru and Canada have made significant investment for the development of culinary tourism and the visitor spending and stays are rising as a result of food tourism promotion and product development (Wolf, 2014). Besides food travellers visit cooking schools, participate in food tours, go for shopping in a local grocery or gourmet stores food and beverages factories, participate in wine/beer/spirits tastings, and eat out in unique and memorable foodservice establishments. The growth of culinary tourism is attributed to a large extent to promotion on social media, special promotional events, live television demonstration of cooking special food dishes by celebrity chefs and cooking competitions at regional, national and international levels.

Food tourism has gained increasing attention over the past years, as it generates income and employment opportunities for local communities, allows these communities to show case their special food dishes and also provides jobs and income to tour operators, tourist guides, local chefs, hoteliers and restaurateurs, while fuelling other sectors of the local economy such as agriculture, transportation and communication, hotel accommodations, etc.

With more tourist arrivals, there is more revenue and income from hotel accommodation, air travel, meals, beverages, wine, beer, etc., at restaurants, car rentals, increased media coverage and tax revenue to government. This also creates increased community awareness, interest, involvement and pride about tourism in general, and about local food and beverages resources in particular. All these are expected to stimulate local development as food tourism is a high yield tourism that brings extended benefits beyond the tourist season and diversify rural economy. Food industry is labour intensive and creates jobs through forward and backward linkages, stimulates agriculture, trade, commerce, banking while it does not require major new investment. Food tourism also contributes to regional attractiveness, sustains local environment and cultural heritage and strengthens local identities and sense of community.

The UNWTO Global Report on Food Tourism (2012) highlights the importance of this industry to tourism sector and economies worldwide, bringing together experiences from some of the world's top tourism destinations, as well as from food tourism experts. It serves as a delicious appetizer to improved knowledge and continued development of food tourism (Taleb, 2012).

In the above background the purpose of this chapter is to highlight the strengths and unique features of Udaipur as a tourist destination and suggest measures to develop it as a culinary tourism destination.

## 3 Udaipur a Popular Tourist Destination

In India Rajasthan has emerged as an attractive tourist destination. There are sites all over the State that attracts tourists. Some recent innovations like heritage hotels, desert safaris and festivals have been great

draw. Every third foreign tourist coming to India visits Rajasthan. Jaipur, Udaipur and Jaisalmer are emerging as attractive tourist sites. However, compared to tourist destinations in other countries of the world India as well as Rajasthan are far behind.

Udaipur, known as Venice of the East, is located in the southern part of Rajasthan at a distance of about 225 km from the Gulf of Kutch and about 400 km from the Arabian Sea. It is touted to be India's most romantic city due to the lush green hills endlessly stretching away in every direction and providing everything a tourist looks for. Located in the fertile, circular Girwa Valley to the southwest of Nagda, which was the first capital of Mewar. Udaipur was founded in 1559 by Maharana Udai Singh II as new capital of the Mewar. With rulers like Rana Uday Singh, Rana Pratap, Bappa Rawal and Rana Kumbha and legends like Rani Padmini and Panna Dhai, Udaipur claims a glowing history.

Surrounded by thickly wooded, silent and stoic in green hills and lakes, this city is starkly different from other popular tourist destinations. The cool breeze blowing off the seven lakes in and around the city gives visitors a pleasant surprise. The Pichola Lake with two islands, Jag Niwas and Jag Mandir inside the lake, is one of the most beautiful sights of Udaipur. The Jag Niwas Palace, once a summer palace of the rulers, is now the Taj Lake Palace Hotel and the Jag Mandir with its eight marble elephants is now a heritage property run by the former ruling family. Some luxury hotels have been built in and around the lakes with ghats, havelis and a museum around. The Gangaur Ghat with its imposing gateway, the stunningly white Jagdish Mandir and the flamboyant City Palace are most striking icons. The rooftop restaurants on private buildings providing view of the lake draw tourists in the evenings.

The Sajjangarh Palace built in 1884 on the summit of the Bansdara Mountain and earlier used by the ruling family as a hunting lodge adds to the architectural beauty and grandeur of the city. During monsoon as the sun begins to set, clouds start streaming in from all sides on the Sajjangarh Palace. The tourists visit the place to watch the monsoon clouds go by. The Jaisamand Lake, the largest artificial lake in Asia and the Udai Sagar Lake are other tourist attractions nearby the city.

The marble and sandstone temple Shestra Bhu popularly known as Saas Bahu temple at Nagda and the Eklingji temple are fine examples of architectural splendour with exquisite sculptures carved into the walls and the ceilings. The Maharanas of Mewar ruled the state as dewans of Eklingji (Lord Shiva). Three temples of Lord Krishna in the region, the Shrinathji temple, at Nathdwara built by Goswami priests in 1672 under the protection of the then Maharana Raj Singh of Mewar, the Dwarkadhish temple, also known as the Jagat Mandir at Kankroli and the Sanwaliaji temple at Mandaphia, situated at about 40 kilometres from Chittorgarh on the Chittorgarh - Udaipur Highway are important pilgrimage centres for Vaishnava sect of Hindus. The temple dedicated to the first Jain tirthankara Rishabhadeva at Kesariyaji Tirth, situated at a distance of 65 kilometres from Udaipur, is a pilgrim site for Jains and local tribal.

Udaipur is also renowned for its miniature paintings and as a centre of performing arts and crafts. The Shilpgram festival held for 10 days from 21 to 30<sup>th</sup> Dec every year pulls in large number of tourists interested in arts, crafts, songs, dances and traditional regional culture. The solar observatory in Udaipur modelled after the Solar Observatory at Big Bear Lake in Southern California is one of the best in Asia. The zinc and copper mines at Zawar and Rampura Agucha and the zinc smelters of Hindustan Zink Limited at Debari and Chanderia contribute to economic wellbeing of people in the region. There are direct flights from and to Udaipur to Mumbai and Delhi that connect it with all important cities of India and provide access to international tourists.

#### **4 Hotels and Restaurants in Udaipur**

There are many big and small hotels in Udaipur. Some old palaces and forts have been converted into

heritage hotels. Besides good food is available at several small restaurants housed in *havelis* and *kothis* that amaze diners with the quality of food on their menu and exudes old-world royal charm and provides exquisite hospitality to visitors.

Some famous and popular star, heritage, boutique, palace, resort category hotels in Udaipur include the Taj Lake Palace, the Taj Aravali Resort and Spa, the Taj Fateh Prakash Palace, the Oberoi Udai Vilas, the Trident, the Leela Palace, the Aurika Luxury by Lemon Tree, the Ananta Udaipur Resort and Spa, the Radisson Blue and Green, the RAAS Devigarh, Hotel Lakend, the Shiv Niwas Palace of HRH Group of hotels, the Ramada Resort and Spa, the Raffles Hotel and Resorts of Fateh Collection, the Justa Rajputana, the Lalit Laxmi Vilas, the Amrit Tara Gogunda, the Chunda Palace, the Bujera Fort, the Bamboo Resort and Spa, the Inder Residency, the Jaisamand Island Resort, the Swaroop Vilas Boutique Hotel, Club Mahindra and so on.

Udaipur city is also known for the popular vegetarian and non-vegetarian food dishes to satiate tourists' hunger pangs when they eat at the restaurants and cafes. They find it worth visiting the Tribute, the Ambrai – Amet Haveli, the Kabab Mistri, the Jheel's Rooftop Restaurant, the Upre 1559 AD, the Jaiwana Haveli Roof top Restaurant, the Charcoal by Carlsson, the Sunset Terrace, the Raas Leela, the Khamma Ghani, the Millets of Mewar, the Udaipuri a Vegetarian Kitchen, the Royal Repast, the Dhabalogy, to get the true traditional Indian and Multicuisine taste.

There are many small and big travel agencies have their offices at Udaipur which help tourists from around the world in travel and hotel bookings as per their budget. These include the Udaipur Magic Tours, the Rajasthan Yatra, the Udaipur Travel Agency, the Holiday Junction, the Indian Hideaways, the Falcon Tours and Travels, the Chetram Voyages, the Rajasthan Tours and Travel, the Varsha Tours and Travels, the Discovery Travels and Tours, the Heritage Royal Rajasthan Travel with Chinmay and so on.

## 5 Cuisine of Udaipur

The food of common individuals in Udaipur, similar to rest of Rajasthan mainly comprises of wheat roti (Bread), dal (Lentil) and green vegetables. Roti of bajara and makai and vegetable of ker and sangari are preferred by individuals in provincial regions. Milk, curd, spread, ghee, margarine milk are likewise polished off by individuals. Mustard, jowar, bajra, maize, gram, wheat, millet, grain, sorghum and corn structure part of their supper menu. As greater part of individuals in the district are veggie lover an assortment of vegan food dishes like Dal-Bati, Ker-Sangari, Besan-Gatta, have become popular with travelers (Dhar, 2018).

The Rajput rulers were enamored with meat, especially the meat of wild creatures like pigs and impalas. The meat of these creatures (all means or jungle means), was cooked with ghee, salt, entire red chilies, and little water. This was marinated in a glue of onion, garlic, and red chilies. Rajput sovereigns were affected during their contact with Mughal rulers with Mughal cooking and took on certain highlights of the Mughal food, for example, liberal utilization of onion, garlic, and flavors like cardamom, cinnamon, and cloves. The meat in the 'Royal food of Rajasthan' is cooked in korma with rich fixings like curd, cream, khoya, and nuts. The plans created by cooks kept up with by sovereigns in their castles, known as the Khansamas (Royal culinary experts and cooks), gave this information and ability to their relatives and the gourmet specialists of marked inn organizations, eateries, and castles in Udaipur currently use it (Dhar & Sharma, 2015). Guests to Rajasthan convey back memory of its food, other than its strongholds and royal residences (Obrien, 2013). Udaipur with its all-around gave inns and eateries to the rich and the tiptop has likewise developed into a most loved occasion and wedding objective.

Udaipur old city has restricted by-paths that take travelers nearer to its rich social legacy and tasty food. The food of individuals in and around the city is to a great extent vegan. Being a dry and dry area the nearby

vegetables like Ker-Sangri (Ker' a kind of neighborhood berry and 'Sangria bean) vegetable is delighted in by all. Other than Besan Gatta, Papad ki Subzi, Rajasthani Kadhi, and Dal Baati, Churma are a portion of the notable dishes from the Rajasthani food.

## **6 Developing Udaipur as a Culinary Tourism Destination**

Udaipur is an attractive tourist destination endowed with famous historical and cultural monuments. The forts, palaces, art and culture, attract millions of domestic and international tourists every year. The palaces and lakes of Udaipur are among the attractive sites for tourists. The forts of Chittorgarh and Kumbhalgarh have been declared as world heritage sites by the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Thus, Udaipur has all that is needed to draw the tourists and enchant them with natural beauty, cultural heritage, international class infrastructure, star hotels and restaurants and attractive Rajasthani cuisine. However, in the changing global scenario and to meet the changing expectations of the tourists measures such as international food festival, food tours, heritage tourism, cultural tourism should be added to develop it as an international culinary tourism destination.

### **6.1 International Food Festival**

To popularise the cuisine of Udaipur internationally the hotels and restaurants in Udaipur should jointly organise an international food festival every year. Culinary competitions should be organised to motivate the hoteliers and restaurateurs to present their best menu and food dishes and the international tourists and local connoisseurs of food should be invited to judge the food and enjoy the food festival.

### **6.2 Food Tours**

Food tours are popular in some countries of Europe and Africa. Though the format varies from country to country generally a food tour includes visit to markets, food centres, bars and cafés where the tourists are invited to sample the food. The tour usually includes a visit to the market that sells ready to eat food and the tourists are encouraged to buy unique food items that are difficult to source elsewhere. The tour generally ends up with a sit-down meal at a restaurant where usually there is choice of beer, wine, soft drink besides food. The distance travelled in a food tour is never large, mostly it is focused on adjoining streets. Tourists moving on foot having zero-carbon footprint. A tour typically lasts for about three hours starting around 11:00 am till the afternoon, making it the day's major attraction. The tour generally starts and ends at a public transport hub, such as metro rail or bus station. Participants' number varies from 12 to 16. Young children share food with parents or care takers. Tours are guided by local people who talk about food, often pointing out the popular items and adding anecdotes from the history of the area and recommend restaurants in other parts of the city. The vegetarian dishes are also accommodated, though items as per the taste and preference of tourists are offered. Tour operators create and offer a sustainable food tourism model to their clients, an experience that makes a positive impact on local environment, society and economy by working with local producers and family own establishments, and celebrating local traditions. Thus, these tours take visitors to places they might otherwise not have seen, so that they can shop and eat unique local food. There is great potential for organising such food tours in Udaipur around the Pichola Lake and Jagdish temple area, particularly for the international tourists.

### **6.3 Heritage walks**

With beautiful marble palaces, ancient temples, bright and colourful *havelis* with facades of intricate *jharokas*, a temple at every turn, and walls of every house along the way adorned with frescos in miniature painting style of Udaipur region give a real feel of the old-world charm. A boat ride in the 655-year-old Pichola Lake and a walk through the old city can provide interesting exposure to the history and culture of the city and

around for the tourists. Banking on this feature a heritage walks along the winding thoroughfares of inside and around the Pichola Lake and Bhopal Sagar should be organised. The walk may start in the morning, stops at identified convenient eating points under a tourist guide well versed with the history and culture of the place explaining significance of the place and other salient details of tourist interest at each point.

#### **6.4 Cultural Tourism Circuit**

Udaipur region is blessed with five important temples, the Srinathji temple Nathdwara, the Dwarkadhesh temple Kankroli, the Saanwaliaji temple Mandaphia, the Eklingji temple Eklingji and the Kesariaji temple, Rishabdeo, that draw large number of devotees from Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Many international tourists including non-resident Indians also visit these temples regularly. This provides scope for developing a cultural tourism circuit for visiting these places. The trip may include visit, glance (*darshan*) and offerings (*Prasad*) of the deity. This may be an experience of life time for many visitors.

#### **6.5 The “Padharo Udaipur” Application**

Engineers of Five Splash Infotech have created an application for android phones “Padharo Udaipur” for the benefit of tourists in Udaipur. This was launched in Townhall on June 23, 2017. Before the launch, 500 users had already registered for this app. With the help of this app, tourists and other visitors in the city will be able to get variety of information like hotels, restaurants, events, hospitals, petrol pumps, shopping, forex, ATM, public wash rooms, social activities, etc. All bookings of tourist spots, events, guides and restaurants can be done through “Padharo Udaipur” app. The app also has option of Cash on Delivery (COD) and feedback by tourists so that the administration can look into the entire system for making the stay of tourists pleasant. People can also register for social activities and volunteer for the same through this application. Overall, the app is expected to be a complete package for the development of the system. Udaipur is the first city providing this kind of a facility to the tourists (Monika, June 23, 2017). This application should be popularised among domestic and international tourists, so that they may make better choices for themselves.

### **7 Conclusion**

After struggling for nearly two years due to Covid 19, the hospitality sector is likely to see sharp recovery with border closures and travel restrictions being withdrawn and the situation gradually becoming normal. The hospitality organizations should move swiftly, move touchpoints online as part of a broader effort to protect the health and safety of customers and employees and provide clean space and alleviate the health-related worries to benefit from the expected increase in customer arrivals. Industry should also adapt their offerings to reflect changing preferences and behaviour, and demonstrate their desire to listen, understand, and respond to their customers. In the near term, this can help deepen consumer trust in the organizations, fostering bond that can drive their future growth and success. Maintaining and building trust will be essential for organizations of all size, but larger hospitality organizations are likely to have advantage given their greater capability not only to invest in trust-building improvements but also ensuring that their consumers know about them.

The industry ought to likewise adjust its contributions to reflect changing inclinations and conduct, and show their craving to tune in, comprehend, and answer their clients. In the close term, this can assist with developing purchaser trust in the associations, encouraging bonds that can drive their future development and achievement. Keeping up with and building trust will be fundamental for associations of all sizes, yet bigger hospitality organizations are probably going to enjoy benefits given their more prominent ability not



exclusively to put resources into trust-building upgrades yet, in addition, to guarantee that their shoppers are familiar them.

The ideas thrown up above need further exploration and trial, but it may be worth it to do the exploration. This may require research at local, regional, national and international level, development of the idea and joint efforts by the state tourism department, hotel industry and other stakeholders, to put the ideas into practice.

## 8 Declarations

### 8.1 Competing Interests

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### 8.2 Publisher's Note

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