



GREENER FUTURE

Building Sustainable
Tourism Communities

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Greener Future

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Greener Future: Building Sustainable Tourism Communities

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL

First edition 2025

Editorial matter and selection © 2025 Andrea Edurne Jimenez Ruiz, Volha Rudkouskaya,
and Shivam Bhartiya.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83608-989-6 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-83608-988-9 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-83608-990-2 (Epub)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*In reverent homage to the indelible legacies of **Late Mr. David Jimenez Pena** and **Late Mr. Trilok Prakash Bhartiya**, whose unwavering wisdom, profound integrity, and boundless love have transcended the confines of time, leaving a monumental imprint upon the hearts and minds of all they touched. Their luminous spirits continue to guide, even as their presence lingers in cherished memories. May this humble work stand as a testament to the eternal gratitude I hold for their enduring influence.*

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Preface

The 21st century finds itself grappling with environmental, economic, and social challenges that require an urgent shift in how humanity approaches the interconnectedness of development, sustainability, and community-building. Tourism, as one of the most influential global industries, plays a significant role in these dynamics. While it is often viewed through the lens of economic opportunity and cultural exchange, the impact of tourism extends far beyond these traditional perspectives. Tourism, particularly in its most unregulated and mass-oriented forms, has become a primary contributor to environmental degradation, loss of cultural authenticity, and the marginalization of local populations. Against this backdrop, *Greener Future: Building Sustainable Tourism Communities* emerges as a crucial academic and practical resource.

The aim of this volume is to critically examine the evolving landscape of tourism through the lens of sustainability. Sustainable tourism, as a concept, extends beyond the immediate protection of natural resources. It calls for an approach that harmonizes the needs of tourists, local communities, and ecosystems, ensuring that tourism activities do not jeopardize the very environments and cultures upon which they rely. This volume seeks to address the complexity of this challenge by bringing together a diverse range of scholarly contributions, each offering a unique perspective on the future of tourism.

The editorial team, comprising Dr. Andrea Edurne Jimenez Ruiz, Dr. Volha Rudkouskaya, and Dr. Shivam Bhartiya, has worked diligently to curate this volume, ensuring that it represents both theoretical and practical approaches to sustainable tourism. We have invited scholars, researchers, and practitioners from various regions and disciplines to contribute their insights, recognizing that a global industry such as tourism demands equally global solutions. It is only through this multiplicity of perspectives that a truly comprehensive understanding of sustainable tourism can be achieved.

We are particularly mindful of the need to balance the economic benefits of tourism with the ethical imperative to protect the integrity of local cultures and natural environments. This volume's chapters, therefore, explore a wide range of topics – from gastro-ethnography and heritage conservation to ecotourism and ethical concerns in dark tourism. What unites these disparate themes is a shared commitment to fostering tourism practices that contribute positively to local communities and ecosystems, ensuring that tourism serves as a vehicle for sustainability rather than exploitation.

The decision to compile this volume is also grounded in the recognition that tourism has the power to transform societies. It can foster cross-cultural understanding, promote local economies, and provide platforms for marginalized communities to share their stories. However, these positive outcomes can only be realized if tourism is managed in a way that prioritizes long-term sustainability over short-term profits. As the global tourism industry continues to expand, it is imperative that we critically evaluate its practices and implement strategies that ensure tourism is a force for good.

This preface serves not only as an introduction to the themes and objectives of the volume but also as a call to action. We encourage readers – whether they are academics, policymakers, practitioners, or tourists themselves – to reflect on the role they play in shaping the future of tourism. By adopting a more sustainable approach, we can help mitigate the negative impacts of tourism while fostering more equitable, inclusive, and environmentally responsible practices.

The task ahead is not without its challenges. Sustainable tourism requires significant shifts in both mindset and practice. It demands that governments enforce policies that protect natural and cultural resources that industry leaders prioritize sustainability in their business models, and that tourists make more conscious choices about how and where they travel. It also requires that local communities be empowered to take control of their own tourism development, ensuring that their needs and voices are prioritized in the decision-making process.

As editors, we are acutely aware of the urgency of this task. The environmental crises we face – ranging from climate change to biodiversity loss – underscore the need for immediate action. Similarly, the social inequalities perpetuated by unsustainable tourism models highlight the need for more inclusive and equitable approaches to tourism development. In compiling this volume, we hope to contribute to the growing body of literature that seeks to address these issues and offer practical solutions.

It is our belief that this volume will serve as both an academic resource and a practical guide for those committed to fostering sustainable tourism practices. We have strived to ensure that the insights presented in these chapters are both theoretically robust and grounded in real-world experiences. Each contribution offers valuable perspectives on the challenges and opportunities associated with sustainable tourism, and together, they provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex dynamics of this field.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the authors who contributed to this volume. Their scholarly rigor, creativity, and commitment to sustainability have made this volume possible. We also wish to thank our peer reviewers, whose feedback has helped to refine and strengthen the work. Finally, we are grateful to our families, colleagues, and institutions for their unwavering support throughout the process of bringing this volume to fruition.

Andrea Edurne Jimenez Ruiz
Volha Rudkouskaya
Shivam Bhartiya

Acknowledgment

This volume is a testament to the tireless efforts, invaluable contributions, and boundless enthusiasm of numerous individuals and institutions, all of whom deserve profound gratitude. We extend our deepest appreciation to the authors who, through their scholarly rigor, have produced chapters that encapsulate the multifaceted dimensions of sustainable tourism, offering fresh perspectives on building greener, more resilient communities. Their intellectual contributions form the backbone of this work, and their commitment to the ideals of sustainable tourism is deeply inspiring.

We are particularly indebted to the peer reviewers whose critical insights and constructive feedback have been instrumental in refining the scholarly content of this volume. Their dedication to academic excellence has elevated the quality of the contributions and ensured the rigor and relevance of the discussions herein.

Special thanks must also be extended to our institutional affiliations, which have provided unwavering support throughout the development of this work. Their encouragement and logistical backing have been indispensable in bringing this volume to fruition.

Finally, to our families and friends, whose patience and understanding have sustained us during the long hours spent on this project – your love and support have been our constant source of strength. This volume is as much a testament to your belief in us as it is to the academic community it seeks to serve.

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Introduction

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Tourism has long been heralded as one of the most dynamic and profitable industries worldwide. Over the past several decades, it has emerged as a crucial driver of economic growth, particularly in developing countries where natural beauty and cultural heritage serve as significant tourist attractions. Yet, the rapid growth of tourism has not come without consequences. As the sector continues to expand, concerns about its environmental and social impacts have intensified. Overcrowded tourist sites, pollution, and the commodification of local cultures are just a few of the issues that have led to the growing realization that tourism, in its current form, is unsustainable.

In response to these concerns, the concept of sustainable tourism has gained increasing attention. Defined as tourism that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, sustainable tourism seeks to balance economic, social, and environmental objectives. This volume, *Greener Future: Building Sustainable Tourism Communities*, is dedicated to exploring this complex and often contradictory terrain. It aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of how tourism can be reimagined to promote sustainability while also fostering community development and cultural preservation.

One of the core tenets of sustainable tourism is the idea that tourism should benefit local communities. Too often, tourism development has been imposed from the outside, with little regard for the needs or desires of local populations. In many cases, the profits generated by tourism are siphoned off by multinational corporations, leaving local communities with little more than low-paying jobs and the environmental degradation that often accompanies large-scale tourism development. This has led to a growing recognition of the need for community-based tourism models, in which local populations have a greater say in how tourism is developed and managed.

Greener Future, 1–3

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doi:[10.1108/978-1-83608-988-920251001](https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83608-988-920251001)

The chapters in this volume reflect this growing interest in community-based approaches to sustainable tourism. They explore a wide range of case studies and theoretical frameworks, each offering insights into how tourism can be restructured to prioritize the well-being of local communities. One of the key arguments made by the contributors is that sustainable tourism is not simply about minimizing negative impacts; it is also about maximizing positive ones. This means not only protecting the environment but also ensuring that tourism contributes to the social and economic development of local populations.

The opening chapter of this volume, for example, focuses on the concept of gastro-ethnography, exploring how food can serve as a powerful medium for promoting cultural sustainability in tourism. The authors argue that food is more than just a commodity; it is a vital aspect of cultural identity and heritage. By promoting local food cultures, tourism can help preserve traditional knowledge and practices, while also providing economic opportunities for local farmers, chefs, and food producers. This chapter highlights the importance of viewing tourism through a cultural lens, recognizing that tourism is not just about visiting new places but also about engaging with new cultures in meaningful and respectful ways.

The second chapter delves into the ethical dilemmas surrounding dark tourism, a form of tourism that involves visiting sites associated with death and tragedy. While dark tourism can serve an important educational function by encouraging reflection on historical events such as genocide and war, it also raises significant ethical questions. How can these sites be preserved in a way that honors the memory of those who suffered while avoiding the commodification of their suffering? This chapter offers a critical examination of these issues, drawing on case studies from around the world to explore the tensions between commemoration and commercialization in dark tourism.

Other chapters in this volume address the intersection of heritage, tourism, and community. These chapters explore how local cultures can be both preserved and promoted through sustainable tourism practices. The authors emphasize the importance of involving local communities in tourism development processes, highlighting the need for participatory approaches that empower local populations and ensure that they are the primary beneficiaries of tourism activities. This is particularly important in the context of heritage tourism, where the commodification of culture can lead to the erosion of cultural authenticity and the marginalization of local communities.

Ecotourism is another key theme explored in this volume. Defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people, ecotourism has often been hailed as a solution to the environmental and social challenges posed by traditional forms of tourism. However, as several contributors to this volume argue, ecotourism is not without its challenges. While it has the potential to contribute to environmental conservation and community development, it must be carefully managed to avoid the pitfalls of “greenwashing” – the practice of marketing tourism products as environmentally friendly when they are not.

The contributors to this volume offer a range of perspectives on how ecotourism can be implemented in a way that genuinely promotes sustainability. Some focus on the role of government policy in regulating the ecotourism sector, while others emphasize the importance of grassroots initiatives led by local communities. Together, these chapters provide a nuanced understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with ecotourism, highlighting the need for a collaborative approach that involves multiple stakeholders.

As editors, we believe that this volume will contribute to ongoing debates about the future of tourism and its role in promoting sustainability. By bringing together a diverse range of perspectives, we hope to offer a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of sustainable tourism, while also providing practical guidance for policymakers, practitioners, and local communities.

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Chapter 1

Exploring the Captivating World of Gastro-Ethnobiology and Gastronomy Tourism Applications

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Abstract

The concept of ethnobiology examines cultural values in the context of human and environmental interaction, contributing to preserving local culture and biodiversity. The concept of gastronomy tourism involves experiencing the production, consumption, and table manners of local delicacies, and it is closely related to the region's biodiversity. Gastronomy ethnobiology combines these concepts and forms the basis of people's life experiences. It includes various elements such as wild plants, ancestral seeds, local crop diversity, and changes in nutrition patterns due to migrations. Gastronomy ethnobiology is often called the invisible fingerprints of local communities. This phenomenon is recognized as an invaluable part of our cultural heritage, underscoring the urgent need for a dynamic conservation strategy to ensure its enduring legacy for future generations. This research aims to establish a flexible network using a deep understanding of gastronomy, nature, culture, and the environment. How gastronomy tourism affects the sustainability of gastronomy ethnobiology was evaluated to achieve this. The research examined traditional food ethnobiology practices in the context of gastronomy tourism and their effects on sociocultural structure, biocultural diversity, and gastronomy practices.

Keywords: Gastronomy tourism; gastro-ethnobiology; sustainability; cultural heritage; glocalization; food sovereignty; food scouting; local food; edible wild plants; eco-museum

Introduction

Throughout history, food has been seen as a phenomenon that has been given social meanings in human life and forms the basis of nutritional needs. Maslow (1943) emphasizes that food is the first step in the order of needs of individuals. When individuals fulfill their need for food, which is as essential as breathing, they only turn to their social needs, such as belonging, dignity, and self-actualization. Food is a common need for all living things, the basis of all social needs (Maslow, 1943; Mintz & Du Bois, 2002). In human history, from the hunting and gathering periods to the agricultural revolution, it is thought that the changes in primates' existence were realized through food. The need for food allowed individuals to transition to a settled life and the domestication of living things (Hamilton and Busse, 1978). Food supply is seen as one of the most challenging relationships in the lives of individuals. Food, vital for human life, meets many needs, such as energy, health, satisfaction, and pleasure (Toussaint-Samat, 2009).

Today, the change in ecosystems globally causes many political and social changes. The changes caused by global climate change have increased the number of destructive natural events, such as floods, droughts, and tornadoes worldwide. Millions of people around the world are displaced in masses due to reasons such as climate change, wars, and diseases. Natural events that endanger the ecosystem and the mass migration of people to different regions cause results such as the extinction of local species, the decrease in water resources, and the unusability of natural resources (Akyüz, 2019; Gürçam, 2023; Muslu, 2021). All these changes are seen as elements that negatively affect ecosystems and rapidly change ethnobiological systems. Ethnobiology is considered necessary as a branch of science that studies an area limited to a local community, allowing the development of precautions against all negativities (Albuquerque & Alves, 2016, pp. 3–7; Clément, 1998; Hunn, 2007). While systematically examining fauna, flora, and invasive species in different parts of the world, it also addresses ecological conditions such as habitats, migrations, and biogeographic regions. It is considered a multidisciplinary field of study to interpret the information obtained from biological, ethnological, and anthropological studies together (Kazancı, 2018). Gastronomy is seen as one of the alternative tourism sources in which food is used as a tool, creating a niche market area within the tourism sector. Destinations generate a source of tourist attraction for the region by using local culture-specific food, culinary culture, and other attractions as marketing tools (Kivela & Crotts, 2005). Local cuisines and local foods are seen as practical elements in the preference of destinations (Şengül & Türkay, 2016). The relationship between ethnobiology and gastronomy is seen as very important in interpreting people's adaptation to changing world conditions by protecting ecosystems and biodiversity.

Today's most common approach in ethnobiology is to focus on lists of valuable plants and animals, excluding attempts to understand the complex relationships between humans and biological resources but failing to identify patterns in using such resources. Conversely, gastronomy includes elements such as the use and marketing of local bioresources in touristic activities. The primary purpose of

writing this book chapter is to create an expandable network based on a deep understanding of gastronomy, nature, culture and environment. In this context, the book chapter presents a conceptual assessment examining the relationship between gastronomy tourism and ethnobiology. In this chapter, traditional food ethnobiology practices in the context of gastronomy tourism are discussed and analyzed from the perspective of biocultural diversity, sustainability of local foods, food scouting, and food sovereignty.

Gastronomy Ethnobiology and Food Sovereignty

Many of the changes experienced in human history have changed food habits and livelihoods (Harris & Ross, 1987). The domestication of plants and animals, which has affected the 200,000-year history and evolution process of human beings since the hunting and gathering periods, is seen as one of the most critical events in the development of civilization (Kazanci, 2018). With the discovery of fire, the nutritional physiology in human life has differentiated from animals and evolved toward consuming cooked food. This gradual transformation of the human diet was carried out by shepherds who managed to live a settled life by moving from one fertile region to another with the domestication of animals in approximately 50,000 BC to find new pastures. In the Neolithic age, significant transformations took place in human life, transforming animal husbandry activities into the third stage, agricultural life (Laughlin, 2017; McKenna, 1999). Thanks to these transformations, the foundations of the first civilizations that were producers instead of searching and gathering food were laid. The last transformation occurred with agricultural industrialization's rise and farming activities' replacement with industrialization. The change in human life from a hunting-gathering system to a system based on agricultural production and, in the last stage, the changes caused by the organization in social life are essential milestones in nutritional physiology (Beardsworth & Keil, 2002). As a result of cultural interactions and changes in natural environments due to environmental problems, changes occur in the diets of individuals. It is only possible to correctly interpret the lifestyle of today's communities and the changes they have undergone in different periods with the information collected by examining the ethnobiological and cultural characteristics of local peoples (Kazanci, 2018). The information obtained by analyzing the cultures of local peoples through lifestyle, religions, ceremonies, art, nutritional habits, and traditions allows the science of ethnobiology to come to the forefront as one of the most accurate ways to understand the changes in human thought, their stages, and their effects extending to the present day.

It is known that the term ethnobiology was derived from the combination of the concepts of "ethnos" and "biology" in the 18th century (Clément, 1998). Ethnobiology, which examines the relationships between humans and various biological resources such as plants, animals, and other organisms and includes how multiple peoples apply them, is a social-ecological science branch originating from ethnology (Albuquerque et al., 2015). The concept of ethnobiology is seen as

a field of research that examines the place of animals and plants in human life in social and cultural dimensions in line with the biological knowledge of humans. Ethnobiology is conceptually seen as a field where the biological understanding of a particular ethnic group, specific to a certain region, is examined (Clément, 1998; Hunn, 2007). It interacts with many branches of science to explore the relationship of a specific plant and animal group from a biological perspective (Anderson, 2011) and express the interaction of humans and biological resources from a cultural perspective. It is accepted that indigenous peoples, traditional societies and local communities are critically important for preserving biological, cultural and linguistic diversity (Kazancı, 2018). The change of ecosystems over time, the identification of new plant and animal species, the change in the distribution areas of plant and animal species and the different ways of thinking of people have made it possible to examine them in terms of ethnobiology, which is a dynamic branch of science. With anthropology and biology information, how people use plants and animals, folk medicine, the consumption of plants and animals as food, domestication, cultivation, the habitats of plants and animals, and the place of plants and animals in social and cultural issues can be listed among the research areas of ethnobiology. Vocabulary, information about language, meanings, religion, art, and plant and animal symbols are seen as prominent areas of study (Hunter et al., 2020; Kazancı, 2018; Pieroni et al., 2016).

The term gastronomy, derived from the Greek words *gaster* (stomach) and *nomos* (law), means “the passion for eating well; a healthy, well-organized, pleasant and delicious kitchen, meal order and system” in French (Davis, 2010; Tez, 2012). It is stated that the term gastronomy was first introduced into the French language in 1801 with Joseph Berchoux’s book *Gastronomy, or Man from Farm to Table*. Gastronomy, which can be defined as the culinary traditions and styles in a particular region, is defined as the “art of eating well”, which is becoming increasingly popular (Sünnetçioğlu & Özkök, 2017). It is emphasized that gastronomy emerged in the early 19th century to satisfy the constant hunger for esthetic discussions (Spang, 2007). Nowadays, it is stated that the concept of gastronomy, which includes healthy, delicious, and cultural values, has come to the fore, and the culture of eating has become an esthetic and artistic product (Şengül & Uçkan Çakır, 2023; Usta & Şengül, 2021). Scarpato (2002) defines the concept of gastronomy as the preparation, production, and presentation of food in general, as well as the perfection that reflects the cooking and eating characteristics. Gastronomy can be described as transforming food and beverage culture into science and art. Myhrvold (2011) mentioned that food is an excellent source of pleasure, as it has a function beyond the obvious function of providing the energy intake required by the body. Gastronomy is a healthy, well-organized, pleasant and delicious kitchen, meal order and system, and ensuring that food is ready to be eaten on the table, aiming for maximum palate and visual pleasure (Klosse, 2012). Accordingly, gastronomy tourism can be evaluated as a journey pursuing beautiful and good food.

The concept of gastronomy ethnobiology is developing as a concept that expands all dimensions of socio-ecological systems and reflects healthy, delicious, and cultural values about food in terms of history, culture, and philosophy.