

Sustainable Flavors of Jaipur: Exploring Tourist Motivation, Eco-Food Destination Image and Hospitality Experiences

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ABSTRACT

Food tourism has emerged as an important component of destination development, providing tourists with opportunities to experience local culture, culinary heritage, and hospitality through food. Jaipur, a prominent heritage destination in Rajasthan, possesses a distinctive culinary identity shaped by traditional Rajasthani cuisine, local food practices, heritage hospitality, and diverse culinary experiences. However, the growing emphasis on sustainable tourism requires greater attention to the environmental dimensions of food and hospitality services. This study examines the relationship between tourist motivation and hospitality experiences while considering the moderating role of eco-food destination image. It focuses on tourists' motivations related to culinary authenticity, cultural exploration, sensory enjoyment, novelty, and engagement with local food, alongside their perceptions of environmentally responsible food and hospitality practices. A quantitative research approach is proposed using a structured questionnaire administered to domestic and international tourists visiting Jaipur and experiencing local food and hospitality establishments. The study is expected to provide insights into how perceptions of sustainable food practices influence tourists' evaluations of culinary hospitality experiences. It contributes to sustainable hospitality and food-tourism literature by integrating tourist motivation, eco-food destination image, and hospitality experience within the context of a heritage destination. The findings may assist hospitality businesses, destination managers, and tourism policymakers in developing environmentally responsible culinary experiences while preserving Jaipur's distinctive food heritage and strengthening its position as a sustainable food-tourism destination.

Keywords: Food Tourism; Tourist Motivation; Eco-Food Destination Image; Sustainable Hospitality; Culinary Heritage; Tourist Experience; Jaipur

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1. INTRODUCTION

Food tourism has increasingly become an important component of destination experiences because visitors use local cuisine to understand the cultural identity, traditions, heritage, and lifestyle of a destination. Jaipur offers a particularly appropriate setting for food-tourism research because its culinary identity is closely connected with Rajasthan heritage, traditional hospitality, street food, royal cuisine, and contemporary hotel and restaurant experiences. Official tourism information also presents Jaipur's culinary heritage as an important part of its visitor appeal. For the present study, three dimensions are particularly important:

tourist motivation, eco-food destination image, and hospitality experience. Jaipur-specific literature has examined these dimensions separately through studies of green hotel attributes, destination satisfaction, service quality, culinary heritage, food waste, and food-tourism experiences. However, relatively little research has integrated these variables into one empirical framework.

Introduction

Food tourism has emerged as an important dimension of contemporary tourism, where food is no longer viewed merely as a basic necessity but as an integral part of destination identity, cultural exploration, and tourist

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experience. Local cuisine provides visitors with opportunities to understand the history, traditions, lifestyle, and cultural values of a destination. In this context, culinary experiences can influence tourists' perceptions of a destination, their satisfaction, emotional connection, and intention to revisit. The growing interest in authentic, locally produced, and environmentally responsible food has further strengthened the relationship between food tourism and sustainable hospitality.

Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, provides a distinctive setting for examining these developments. Known for its royal heritage, historic architecture, vibrant markets, traditional hospitality, and distinctive Rajasthani cuisine, Jaipur attracts both domestic and international tourists. Foods such as dal baatichurma, gatteki sabzi, kersangri, pyaazkachori, mirchivada, and ghevar form an important part of the city's cultural and culinary identity. Recent Jaipur-focused research has highlighted the role of culinary heritage in tourism development and destination marketing, while studies of tourists' preferences indicate that sensory characteristics, authenticity, and cultural associations influence responses to Rajasthani cuisine.

The growing importance of food tourism also creates new responsibilities for the hospitality industry. Hotels, restaurants, cafés, heritage properties, street-food establishments, and other food-service businesses contribute significantly to tourists' overall destination experiences. Service quality, food quality, hygiene, employee behavior, ambience, authenticity, and cultural presentation can determine whether a culinary experience becomes memorable and contributes positively to destination satisfaction. Research conducted among visitors to Jaipur has found significant relationships between service quality, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention, demonstrating the importance of hospitality performance in shaping tourists' evaluations of the destination.

At the same time, sustainability has become an increasingly important consideration in hospitality and food tourism. Food production and hospitality operations can generate substantial food waste, consume water and energy, and create packaging and other environmental impacts. Jaipur-specific research has documented food waste generated by hotels and examined possibilities for converting hotel food waste into biogas, demonstrating the importance of sustainable food-management practices within the city's hospitality sector. Research on green hotel attributes in Jaipur has likewise shown that consumers recognize environmentally responsible characteristics of hotels, indicating that sustainability can influence perceptions of hospitality establishments.

Within this context, the concept of an eco-food destination image becomes particularly relevant. Destination image traditionally refers to the perceptions, beliefs, and impressions tourists develop about a destination. In food tourism, this image can extend beyond taste and culinary attractiveness to include perceptions of local sourcing, environmentally responsible food preparation, food-waste reduction, sustainable packaging, preservation of traditional food practices, and responsible hospitality. A destination

that successfully combines culinary authenticity with environmental responsibility may develop a distinctive and positive image among increasingly sustainability-conscious tourists.

Another important factor is tourist motivation. Tourists do not participate in food tourism for a single reason. Their motivations may include experiencing authentic local cuisine, discovering new flavours, learning about local culture, interacting with residents, seeking novelty, enjoying sensory experiences, and exploring culinary traditions. Research on domestic and international tourists' preferences for Rajasthani cuisine demonstrates the importance of food characteristics and culinary experiences in shaping tourists' engagement with regional cuisine. Therefore, understanding tourist motivation is essential for explaining how visitors evaluate food-related hospitality experiences in Jaipur.

The relationship between tourist motivation and hospitality experience may, however, be influenced by how tourists perceive the destination's sustainability. A tourist who is highly motivated to explore local cuisine may develop a more favorable hospitality experience when food establishments demonstrate environmentally responsible practices. Conversely, if tourists perceive excessive waste, unsustainable packaging, poor resource management, or a loss of culinary authenticity, their overall evaluation of the food-tourism experience may be weakened. Thus, eco-food destination image may function as a moderating factor between tourist motivation and hospitality experience.

Although previous research has examined Jaipur's culinary heritage, tourist satisfaction, service quality, green hotel attributes, food waste, and food-tourism experiences, these dimensions have largely been studied independently. Recent work on food tours in Jaipur has emphasized authentic and immersive culinary experiences, while research on culinary heritage has examined its contribution to destination marketing. However, limited attention has been given to how tourists' food-related motivations interact with their perceptions of environmental sustainability to shape hospitality experiences.

Therefore, the present study, titled "Sustainable Flavors of Jaipur: Exploring Tourist Motivation, Eco-Food Destination Image, and Hospitality Experiences in Food Tourism," seeks to address this gap by examining the interconnected relationship between these three dimensions. The study positions Jaipur not simply as a destination for consuming traditional food but as a potential sustainable culinary destination, where food heritage, tourist motivation, environmental responsibility, and hospitality quality collectively shape the visitor experience.

The study is expected to contribute theoretically by integrating tourist motivation, eco-food destination image, and hospitality experience into a single research framework. From a practical perspective, the findings may assist hotels, restaurants, food entrepreneurs, destination managers, and tourism policymakers in developing sustainable culinary experiences that preserve Jaipur's food heritage while responding to changing tourist expectations. Such an approach can strengthen Jaipur's destination

competitiveness and support a more responsible form of food tourism that balances culinary authenticity, environmental sustainability, local participation, and hospitality excellence.

Literature Review

Green Hospitality and Consumer Preferences in Jaipur

Kasliwal and Agarwal (2015) investigated consumer perceptions and preferences concerning green attributes of hotels using 300 respondents in Jaipur city. The study found significant associations between consumers' awareness, perceptions, and preferences regarding environmentally friendly hotel attributes. The findings are particularly relevant to the concept of eco-food destination image, because they demonstrate that environmental attributes can form part of consumers' evaluation of hospitality establishments in Jaipur. The 2015 study also identified specific green attributes such as energy-efficient lighting, recycling bins, green certification, key-card systems, and towel-reuse programmes as meaningful to consumers. These findings provide an early Jaipur-based foundation for examining how environmentally responsible hospitality practices may contribute to destination perceptions.

Heritage Attractiveness and Tourist Satisfaction

Research conducted through Kurukshetra University's tourism and hotel-management programme examined heritage attractiveness and tourist satisfaction in selected heritage sites of Delhi–Jaipur–Agra in 2016. Although the research covered the Golden Triangle rather than Jaipur alone, Jaipur was explicitly included as one of the study destinations. The work is relevant because heritage attractiveness provides an important contextual foundation for understanding tourists' experiences of Jaipur. Heritage tourism is particularly important for food tourism because culinary practices can operate as a form of living heritage. In Jaipur, food experiences therefore have the potential to complement architectural and cultural attractions rather than functioning merely as consumption activities.

Culinary Heritage as a Tourism Resource

Sharma (2017) examined culinary heritage of Rajasthan as an effective component for tourism growth. The study positioned regional cuisine as an important tourism resource and emphasized the connection between culinary heritage and tourism development.

Another 2017 work by Sharma, titled *Gastronomic Inheritance of Rajasthan: Its Role in Rajasthan Tourism & Economy Intensification*, further emphasized the economic and tourism significance of Rajasthan's culinary traditions. Although these studies use Rajasthan as their geographical scope, their relevance to Jaipur is strong because Jaipur is one of the state's principal tourism centres and a major location for experiencing Rajasthani cuisine.

Green Hotel Attributes and Consumer Behavior

Kasliwal and Agarwal's subsequent work on green services in the hotel industry examined changing environmental behavior among Indian consumers. Their research is especially relevant to Jaipur because the researchers were

based in Jaipur and the work developed from research concerning green hotel attributes and consumer behavior.

A related study, *Going Green: A Study on Consumer Perception and Willingness to Pay towards Green Attributes of Hotels*, reported that consumers generally demonstrated positive perceptions of green hotel services, although positive perceptions did not necessarily translate into willingness to pay more. This distinction is important for Jaipur's hospitality sector because sustainability initiatives may improve destination image without automatically producing higher consumer spending.

Sustainable Tourism and the Golden Triangle

A 2017 research project examined sustainable tourism practices among travel intermediaries in the Golden Triangle of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. The inclusion of Jaipur indicates the importance of sustainability within the tourism-management structure surrounding the city. This work supports the argument that sustainability should not be restricted to hotels or restaurants. Travel intermediaries, tour operators, destination managers, food businesses, and local communities can collectively influence tourists' perceptions of a destination.

Hotel Food Waste in Jaipur

Gandhi et al. (2019) provide one of the most directly relevant studies for the present research. Their research examined hotel-generated food waste in Jaipur, using data from 70 hotels. The study investigated the amount and nature of food waste generated by different classes of hotels and considered strategies for managing this waste. This study is especially important for the concept of eco-food destination image. Food waste is not only an operational problem; it can influence perceptions of environmental responsibility. A destination whose hotels and restaurants actively minimize food waste may be perceived as more sustainable and responsible.

Conversion of Hotel Food Waste into Biogas

Gandhi et al. (2018) investigated the treatment of hotel food waste from Jaipur city and examined its potential for biogas production. Their experiment found that thermal pretreatment under the tested conditions increased cumulative biogas production compared with the control. This research expands the sustainability discussion from simply measuring food waste to considering resource recovery. For food tourism, such practices can potentially contribute to a stronger environmental identity for hospitality establishments and, consequently, a more positive eco-food destination image.

Service Quality and Tourist Satisfaction in Jaipur

Singh, Singh and Ranjan (2020) examined service quality, tourist satisfaction and revisit intention among visitors to Jaipur using 320 responses. The study reported that destination facilities, attractiveness, price affordability, and staff behavior contributed to tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions.

This research is highly relevant to the hospitality experience variable. It demonstrates that tourists' evaluation of Jaipur

is influenced not only by attractions but also by the quality of services delivered by tourism stakeholders.

Destination Attributes and Tourist Satisfaction

Singh (2020) investigated destination attributes and tourist satisfaction in Jaipur as a cultural tourism destination using 400 randomly collected responses. The study identified destination attributes that tourists considered satisfying, neutral, or dissatisfying and proposed strategies for improving tourist arrivals and repeat visitation.

The study also conceptualized destination image as the perception formed in tourists' minds regarding a destination. This provides a useful theoretical foundation for developing the present concept of eco-food destination image, where environmental and culinary attributes become part of the overall destination perception.

Culinary Heritage and Tourist Satisfaction

Research listed by Amity University Jaipur on "Culinary Heritage of Rajasthan State: An Analysis of the Satisfaction Level" in 2020 indicates increasing academic attention to the relationship between culinary heritage and tourist satisfaction. This line of research is important because it shifts food from being considered merely a supporting tourism service to being an experiential and cultural component of tourism. For Jaipur, traditional cuisine can therefore become an important source of tourist satisfaction and destination differentiation.

Green Experiential Value and Jaipur Hospitality

Research on green experiential values in hotels included interviews with guests at certified green hotels in Jaipur, Delhi and Bangalore. The research examined how green experiences can influence green trust, hotel relationships, and behavioral outcomes. This is closely connected with the present research because it suggests that sustainability can become an experiential component of hospitality rather than merely an operational practice. In Jaipur, eco-friendly food sourcing, waste management and traditional food practices could similarly become part of tourists' overall hospitality experiences.

Sustainable Hospitality and Destination Attributes

Singh's 2020 research on Jaipur was published within a volume specifically addressing sustainable hospitality and tourism services. Its findings reinforce the importance of integrating destination attributes with tourist satisfaction and sustainable tourism planning. For the current study, this provides an important bridge between conventional destination satisfaction research and the more specific concept of sustainable culinary hospitality.

Food Waste and Sustainable Consumption in Jaipur

Agarwal, Haritwal and Meena (2023) examined food waste in selected hostels of Rajasthan University, Jaipur. The study documented substantial quantities of leftover food across breakfast, lunch and dinner and identified food waste as an environmental, economic and social concern. Although the study focuses on university hostels rather than tourists, it provides local evidence that food-waste

reduction is an important sustainability issue in Jaipur's food-service environment.

Heritage Hotels and Hospitality Experience

A 2023 study examined tangibility, reliability and responsiveness in Jaipur's heritage hotels using data from visitors to 10 heritage hotels. The research investigated how these service-quality dimensions influence customer satisfaction. This study reinforces the importance of hospitality performance in heritage settings. Since food is frequently incorporated into heritage-hotel experiences, service quality, culinary presentation, staff interaction and cultural ambience may jointly shape tourists' evaluations of Jaipur.

Culinary Heritage and Destination Marketing

Gour, Mathur, Sharma and Tak (2023) examined the role of culinary heritage in tourism destination marketing, with Jaipur specifically included in the study. The research considered tourists' likes and dislikes concerning Jaipur's culinary heritage and questioned whether culinary heritage receives sufficient attention within destination promotion.

This research is particularly significant for the current study because destination marketing can influence destination image, while culinary heritage can become a central component of that image. However, the present study extends this idea by adding an explicit environmental dimension through the construct of eco-food destination image.

Culinary Heritage from the Customer Perspective

Gour et al. (2024) investigated culinary heritage of Rajasthan from the perspective of customers. The study examined demographic differences in acceptance and preference for local cuisine and recognized cuisine as an important component of tourism promotion. The findings provide support for considering tourists' culinary preferences and motivations when designing food-tourism experiences. For Jaipur, understanding differences between visitor groups may help hospitality providers create more targeted culinary experiences.

Domestic and International Tourists and Rajasthani Cuisine

Bhartwal (2024) specifically investigated the preferences of international and domestic tourists towards Rajasthani cuisine, with food tourism as the central context. The research identified appearance and flavour among important components influencing food preferences and recommended development of food trails, festivals and culinary infrastructure. This study is directly relevant to tourist motivation and culinary experience. It indicates that tourists' responses to Rajasthani food are influenced by sensory and experiential attributes rather than taste alone.

Jaipur Heritage-Hotel Online Experiences

Manasa and Devi Prasad (2024) analysed 1,268 online reviews of Royal Heritage Haveli in Jaipur using sentiment analysis and text-mining techniques. The research identified predominantly positive customer sentiments and examined different dimensions of guest experience. This

study demonstrates the increasing importance of digital guest feedback in understanding hospitality experiences. For the proposed research, online reviews could also provide complementary evidence concerning food quality, service, authenticity, and sustainability and destination perceptions.

Culinary Tourism through Food Tours in Jaipur

Roy, Sengupta and Datta (2025) conducted a thematic analysis of culinary tourism through food tours in Jaipur. Their study emphasized authentic and immersive food experiences and identified cultural authenticity and environmentally friendly experiences as important considerations for sustainable culinary tourism. This is one of the closest studies to the proposed research topic. However, the present study goes further by developing an integrated relationship between tourist motivation → hospitality experience, with eco-food destination image as a moderator.

Jaipur's Heritage, Food and Destination Branding

A 2026 study of Jaipur's heritage architecture and city branding found that tourists associated food, cultural activities and heritage buildings with the city's "Pink City" identity. The study also noted that tourism has supported businesses such as hotels and eateries while simultaneously creating concerns related to overcrowding and pressures on local businesses. This provides recent evidence that food is not an isolated tourism product in Jaipur. Rather, culinary experiences contribute to the broader destination identity. This strengthens the rationale for investigating whether a sustainable food identity can enhance Jaipur's hospitality positioning.

Synthesis of the Literature

The reviewed Jaipur-focused literature reveals five major research streams.

First: Tourist Motivation and Culinary Interest

Studies of Rajasthani cuisine indicate that tourists are motivated by sensory appeal, authenticity, cultural exploration and the desire to experience regional food. The 2024 international/domestic tourist study particularly highlights flavour and appearance as important food-selection factors.

Culinary Heritage and Destination Identity

Research from 2017–2025 increasingly positions Rajasthan cuisine as a tourism resource rather than simply a food-service product. Culinary heritage has been connected with tourism growth, destination marketing, customer preferences and food tours.

Third: Hospitality Experience

Jaipur-specific research demonstrates that service quality, staff behaviour, destination facilities, physical environment and other hospitality attributes influence tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions.

Fourth: Environmental Sustainability

Research on green hotel attributes, hotel food waste, food-waste conversion and sustainable food practices

demonstrates that environmental sustainability is increasingly relevant to Jaipur's hospitality sector.

Fifth: The Missing Link

Despite these developments, the literature largely examines culinary heritage, tourist satisfaction, green hospitality, food waste, and service quality and destination image as separate areas. There remains limited empirical work examining whether tourists' perceptions of Jaipur as an eco-food destination change the strength of the relationship between their food-tourism motivations and hospitality experiences.

Research Gap

Based on the 20 Jaipur-related studies reviewed, the following gaps are identified:

Limited Integrated Framework

Existing Jaipur research tends to investigate service quality, culinary heritage, green practices, and food waste or tourist satisfaction independently. A combined model incorporating tourist motivation, eco-food destination image and hospitality experience remains underdeveloped.

Eco-Food Destination Image

Although green hotel attributes have been investigated in Jaipur, the specific construct of eco-food destination image has received limited direct empirical attention.

Moderating Relationship

Previous research has established relationships between service quality and satisfaction and between culinary experiences and tourism outcomes. However, little Jaipur-specific research has tested whether sustainability perceptions moderate the relationship between tourist motivation and hospitality experience.

Food Tourism and Hospitality

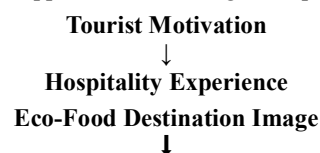
Recent Jaipur research on culinary tourism has focused on food tours, heritage and authenticity. However, greater attention is required to connect these culinary experiences with the hospitality industry, including hotels, restaurants, cafés, heritage properties and food-service establishments.

Sustainability beyond Food Waste

Jaipur research has clearly documented food-waste challenges in hotels and other food-service environments. However, sustainability needs to be examined from the tourist's perspective, including whether tourists recognize and value local sourcing, waste reduction, traditional food preservation, sustainable packaging and environmentally responsible hospitality.

Proposed Research Model

The literature supports the following conceptual model:



Moderates the relationship between Tourist Motivation and Hospitality Experience

Tourist Motivation

- Cultural exploration
- Authenticity seeking
- Novelty
- Sensory enjoyment
- Local food interest
- Learning about Rajasthani cuisine

Eco-Food Destination Image

- Local food sourcing
- Food-waste reduction
- Sustainable food practices
- Eco-friendly packaging
- Culinary heritage preservation
- Environmental responsibility

Hospitality Experience

- Food quality
- Service quality
- Staff behaviour
- Hygiene
- Authenticity
- Ambience
- Memorable experience
- Tourist satisfaction

Conclusion

The literature from 2015–2026 demonstrates that Jaipur has developed a substantial research base concerning green hospitality, tourist satisfaction, culinary heritage, food waste, service quality, heritage hotels and culinary tourism. Jaipur's culinary identity is increasingly recognized as an important component of its destination experience, while environmental sustainability is becoming an important concern for its hospitality sector. However, the existing literature does not sufficiently explain how tourists' motivations for experiencing local food translate into hospitality experiences when they perceive Jaipur as an environmentally responsible food destination. This represents a meaningful research opportunity. The hospitality industry offers valuable opportunities for professional development, creativity, global exposure, and career advancement; however, the present study highlights the importance of recognizing the workplace realities that may influence hospitality career decisions. Workplace stress, rude supervisory behavior, prolonged duty hours, physical fatigue, and perceptions of inadequate financial rewards can collectively reduce employees' and interns' enthusiasm toward pursuing long-term hospitality careers. The findings suggest that negative workplace experiences may create a gap between the attractive image of the hospitality profession and the actual experiences of those working within it. In particular, inappropriate

behaviour by supervisors can weaken employee morale and confidence, while excessive working hours and fatigue may negatively affect work-life balance and overall job satisfaction. When these challenges continue without adequate organizational support, hospitality students and young employees may reconsider their career choices or seek employment outside the industry.

Therefore, hotels and hospitality organizations need to create healthier and more supportive working environments. Effective supervisory training, respectful communication, reasonable duty schedules, adequate rest periods, employee recognition, fair compensation, and opportunities for career growth can contribute significantly to employee satisfaction and retention. Hospitality education institutions should also strengthen pre-internship orientation and maintain communication with students during industrial training so that workplace concerns can be identified and addressed promptly. Ultimately, the future sustainability of the hospitality workforce depends not only on attracting talented students but also on creating workplaces in which they want to remain. Moving beyond the glamour associated with hospitality requires a stronger focus on employee dignity, well-being, supportive leadership, and sustainable working conditions. Addressing these issues can help improve career attractiveness, reduce turnover intentions, strengthen employee commitment, and build a more resilient and motivated hospitality workforce.

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