

Cross-cultural culinary mapping —How locals and tourists navigate the foodscape of Chiang Mai, Thailand

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Local food and food culture is integral to residents' everyday lives, but also an important driver of tourism. Whether we explore as visitors, or know exactly where to find our favourite treats, shapes how we experience the local foodscape and interact with it. These diverging roles may also result in radically different personal foodsheds, including different social and environmental impacts associated with our food consumption behaviour. Understanding these differences may help to inform not only tourism and environmental planning, but also provide a glimpse into how we as individuals navigate the local foodscape and how food connects us with other people, animals, plants.

This study reports preliminary results from a case study comparing how the local foodscape of Chiang Mai, Thailand, is navigated by locals and tourists. Drawing upon theoretical work by Cohen and Avieli (2004) on food in tourism, the central questions were: How do locals and tourists look for, find, and eat local food? Why do they chose one food over another? What do they eat? Where do they eat? How does their food connect them with the environment? In a three day joint workshop with Japanese students (tourists) and Thai students (local), they took turns as participant observers and observation subjects in the food and drink on offer, then shared their observations and attempted to conceptually and spatially map the results together. These results are then further discussed to probe whether this approach allows to map the differences in local and tourists foodshed, with implications for future research.

Keywords: foodscape, foodshed, tourism, participant observation, cross-cultural comparison, geography

Participant observation Conceptual/spatial mapping

