TRAVELING FOR TASTE:
THE MICHELIN STARS THAT PROMOTE GASTRONOMY TOURISM

Gastronomy tourism, an integral part of the tourism industry, invites travelers to explore destinations known for their culinary heritage, enhancing cultural exchange and community connection. Beyond mere food tasting, gastronomy tourism showcases a destination's culture, history, and traditions, fostering appreciation and preservation of cultural heritage. Michelin-starred restaurants are especially influential in attracting tourists, as the prestigious rating signifies culinary excellence and global recognition. Having originated in France in the early 20th century, Michelin stars have evolved to reflect high-quality, innovative, and sustainable dining experiences. This paper explores the role of Michelin stars in gastronomic tourism and presents some statistical data on the number of starred restaurants worldwide.

For Armenia, with its rich culinary potential, gaining Michelin recognition could elevate its gastronomic profile, benefiting the wider tourism sector. However, this requires significant efforts in culinary training and international engagement.

Gastronomy tourism plays a huge role in the tourism industry by involving tourists in destinations that are famous for their tasty cuisine.

Gastronomy is about much more than food. It reflects the culture, heritage, traditions and sense of community of different peoples. It is a way of promoting understanding among different cultures and bringing people and traditions closer together. Gastronomy tourism is also emerging as an important protector of cultural heritage, and the sector

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helps create opportunities, including jobs, most notably in rural destinations[1].

Gastronomy tourism includes visiting food producers, food and beverage festivals, restaurants and special places related to some special foods together with tasting a special dish, observing its production and preparation processes or eating a special dish from the hands of a very famous chef as well as seeing how a certain dish is being prepared[2].

The word gastronomy is derived from the words "gastros" and "gnomos" (which mean ''stomach'' and "knowledge or law" in Greek). A good cuisine of the destination is very important for people, and many of them prefer local cuisine of destination while travelling[3].

To taste good food, many tourists visit good restaurants, thus making them a special tourist destination. Restaurants worldwide try to engage many tourists and do a lot of campaigns for it. One of the main steps is getting Michelin stars.

A Michelin star rating is one of the most prestigious honors a restaurant can receive. Interestingly, the invention of the Michelin Star rating coincides with the invention of the automobile. Michelin Tire founders and French industrialist brothers Andre and Edouard Michelin compiled the first Michelin Guide in 1889 with the aim of creating a demand for automobiles, and therefore, a need for more Michelin tires. The French

guide was handed out for free and included maps, plus instructions on how to repair and change tires. To encourage drivers to use their cars and explore a little more, the guide also included a list of restaurants, hotels, mechanics, and gas stations along popular routes in France. Within a decade, the Michelin Guide expanded rapidly and became available throughout Europe, as well as Northern Africa. The outbreak of World War I in 1914 temporarily halted production of the guide, but by 1920 it was back on track and about to enter an important new phase. The Michelin brothers ramped up the guide's quality, eliminated advertising, added a list of hotels in Paris and categorized the list of restaurants. They also recruited mystery diners to visit and review restaurants anonymously.

The guide began awarding Michelin Star ratings in 1926. The restaurants, all of which were in France, were awarded a single star if they were deemed a "fine dining establishment." In 1931, the rating system expanded to the three-star rating that continues today. Unlike most star rating systems, one star is not considered a demerit. Any number of Michelin Stars granted to a restaurant signals a huge honor and a rare accomplishment.

In 1955, Michelin came up with a rating system that acknowledged restaurants serving high-quality fare at moderate prices, called the Bib Gourmand. This system highlights dining opportunities that are more reflective of economic standards. The Bib Gourmand is the award for great value, and highlights simple yet skilful cooking at an affordable price.

The Michelin guide now covers about 40 countries across Europe, Asia, North America, and South America. There is also a related ranking — the Michelin Green Star — which is awarded to the best, most sustainable restaurants around the world[4].

MICHELIN STAR

[1] Gastronomy, https://www.unwto.org/gastronomy
[2] Hall, M., Mitchell, R., (2005). Gastronomic tourism: comparing food and wine tourism experiences, Niche Tourism, Routledge, pp. 89-100
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[4] How Restaurants Get Michelin Stars: A Brief History of the Michelin Guide, https://www.escoffier.edu/blog/world-food-drink/a-brief-history-of-the-michelin-guide/

How Does a Restaurant Get a Michelin Star?

To determine who receives the annual award, the Michelin Guide team will first select a number of restaurants in specific locations to be inspected by anonymous reviewers, called inspectors. The inspectors visit multiple times in different seasons and at different times, i.e. making sure to eat lunch and dinner and to visit on weekends and during the week. Inspectors write a comprehensive report about the total culinary experience, including the quality and presentation of the dishes, among other rating criteria outlined below. The group of Michelin inspectors will then meet to analyze the reports and discuss in-depth which restaurants are worthy of a Michelin Star (or two or three). Elements of the restaurant such as ambiance, decor, and quality of service are supposedly not considered in the report, but many think that the total experience may subconsciously woo the reviewers. Here are the *Michelin inspector's 5 restaurant rating criteria*:

1. Quality of products,
2. Mastery of flavor and cooking techniques,
3. The personality of the chef represented in the dining experience,
4. Value for money,
5. Consistency between inspectors' visits[5].

The *Michelin Green Star* is awarded every year to restaurants that uphold outstanding sustainable and eco-friendly culinary practices. It was introduced to the MICHELIN Guide France in 2020 and is now featured in every country covered by the MICHELIN Guide. It is awarded to restaurants that are role models when it comes to sustainable gastronomy. These restaurants aim to reduce waste throughout every step of the supply chain and work directly with suppliers and vendors striving to do the same. Many collaborate with farmers and growers who practice regenerative farming - ensuring they use the freshest and most seasonal ingredients. They also put philanthropy at the forefront,

contributing to charities that also address well-being and ethics.

Michelin Green Star rating criteria are:
1. Origin of the ingredients and use of seasonal produce,
2. Environmental footprint,
3. Food waste systems and recycling,
4. Resource management,
5. Communication of the restaurant's sustainable approach to guests.

There are currently 291 Michelin Green Star restaurants in the world[6].

If the restaurant is currently in the Michelin Guide then they do not need to apply for a Star, as all the restaurants in the guide are re-assessed regularly. Any restaurant can ask to consider them for inclusion in the Michelin Guide and they love receiving recommendations from their readers too.

Also, it is important to know, that *Michelin Stars are awarded to the restaurant and not the chef.*

Some Michelin Stars are innovative, some traditional; some offer set menus, others à la carte; some are casual places, others formal. No one person will like every Starred restaurant and that is how it should be.

Also, there is no limit on how many Stars they can award in one year.

As mentioned above, the *Michelin rating has three stars*:
1. One star: A very good restaurant in its category. One Michelin Star is awarded to restaurants using top quality ingredients, where dishes with distinct flavours are prepared to a consistently high standard.
2. Two stars: Excellent cooking, worth a detour. Two Michelin Stars are awarded when the personality and talent of the chef are evident in their expertly crafted dishes; their food is refined and inspired.
3. Three stars: Exceptional cuisine, worth a special journey. Three Michelin Stars is the highest award, given for the superlative cooking of chefs at the peak of their profession; their cooking is elevated to an art form and some of their dishes are

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[5] How Restaurants Get Michelin Stars: A Brief History of the Michelin Guide, https://www.escoffier.edu/blog/world-food-drink/a-brief-history-of-the-michelin-guide/

[6] Michelin Green Star: Most Sustainable Restaurants in the U.S., https://www.escoffier.edu/blog/world-food-drink/michelin-green-star-most-sustainable-restaurants-in-the-u-s/
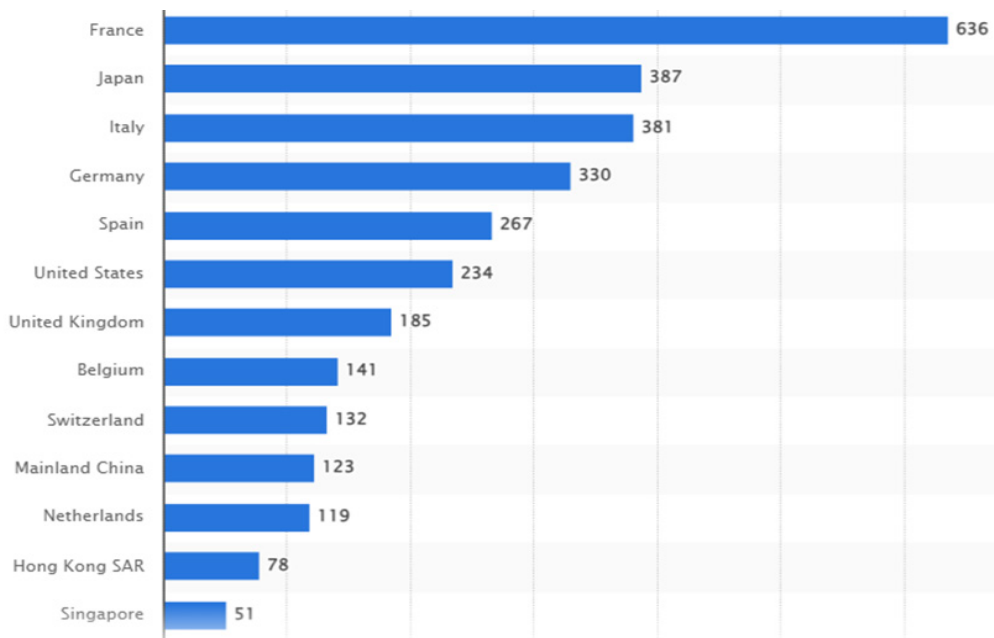
FIGURE 1

Number of Michelin-starred restaurants in selected countries and territories worldwide as of August 2024[7]
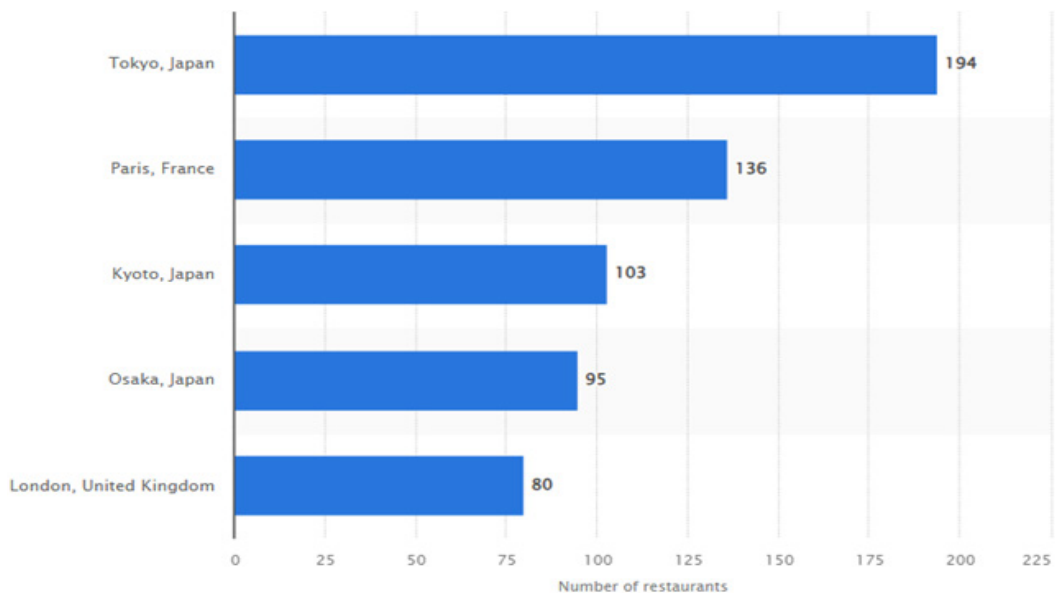
FIGURE 2

Cities with the most Michelin-starred restaurants worldwide as of February 2024[7]

[7] Number of Michelin-starred restaurants in selected countries and territories worldwide as of August 2024, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1400971/countries-most-michelin-starred-restaurants-worldwide/

[8] Cities with the most Michelin-starred restaurants worldwide as of February 2024, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1358528/cities-with-most-michelin-starred-restaurants-worldwide/

techniques and return with new experience. However, it is too early to talk about the appearance of Michelin stars in Armenia. "For Michelin to seriously consider including a country in its guide, there must be at least 40-50 high-quality restaurants or 3-5 star categories. However, Michelin is not only stars. It is important not only to have stars, but also the quality of what is on your plate," Loens emphasized. According to Loens, the global gastronomy is now focused on fusion dishes inspired by different cultures. Many restaurants feature elements of Italian, Japanese, and Peruvian cuisine on their menus. He noted that young chefs around the world are striving to create modern, creative concepts, and Armenia is already showing its first steps in this direction, but it will need time and targeted efforts in personnel training and infrastructure improvement[18].

Many research findings by different authors show that restaurant quality is more important than quantity in the gastronomy–tourism relationship and that Michelin-starred restaurants are a strong attraction for foreign tourists[19].

Having a Michelin star can significantly boost tourism by establishing a restaurant - and even the surrounding area - as a must-visit culinary destination. Here are some ways a Michelin star enhances tourism:

1. *Increased Visibility:* A Michelin star instantly places a restaurant on the global culinary map, attracting tourists specifically interested in high-quality dining. This visibility often leads travelers to plan entire trips around visiting starred establishments.
2. *Enhanced Local Reputation:* A Michelin-starred restaurant boosts the appeal of the area, creating a ripple effect for nearby businesses like hotels, local markets, and other attractions. Visitors drawn to a Michelin-starred restaurant may extend their stay to explore the local culture, benefiting the wider tourism industry.
3. *Luxury and Exclusivity:* Michelin stars are synonymous with culinary excellence, exclusivity, and luxury, attracting affluent travelers willing to spend more on travel and accommodations. This can elevate the area's tourism profile, positioning it as a destination for high-end experiences.
4. *Culinary Prestige and Curiosity:* Food tourists are curious to experience the world through taste, often choosing destinations that promise unique gastronomic adventures. A Michelin star assures quality and creativity, fuelling culinary curiosity and motivating travelers to visit and experience the expertise behind these acclaimed dishes.
5. *Storytelling and Media Attention:* The Michelin star rating often brings media coverage, social media attention, and a sense of storytelling around a restaurant's journey and unique offerings. This heightened interest can lead to increased foot traffic from both local and international tourists eager to be part of the experience.

These factors create a virtuous cycle, where the Michelin star enhances the restaurant's and location's appeal, drawing food enthusiasts from around the world and boosting tourism in both direct and indirect ways.

Taking into account the advantages of having a Michelin star restaurant for boosting tourism, Armenian restaurants must work hard toward receiving the rating stars.

18 Werner Loens: Too early to talk about appearance of Michelin stars in Armenia, https://style.news.am/eng/news/104435/werner-loens-too-early-to-talk-about-appearance-of-michelin-stars-in-armenia.html
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«Ամբերդ» հետազոտական կենտրոնի ավագ հետազոտող, ՀՊՏՀ տնտեսագիտության թեկնածու, դոցենտ

ՇՈՒԿԱՆԵՐ ԵՎ ՄՐՑԱԿՑՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

ՃԱՄՓՈՐԴՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ՀԱՄԻ ՀԱՄԱՐ․ ԳԱՍՏՐՈՆՈՄԻԱԿԱՆ ՁԲՈՍԱՇՐՋՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ԽԹԱՆՈՂ ՄԻՉԼԵՆՅԱՆ ԱՍՏՂԵՐԸ

Զբոսաշրջության արդյունաբերության անբաժանելի մաս հանդիսացող գաստրոնոմիական զբոսաշրջությունը ճանապարհորդներին հրավիրում է բացահայտելու խոհարարական ժառան-գությամբ հայտնի ուղղությունները՝ խթանելով մշակութային փոխանակումը և համայնքային կապերը։ Գաստրոնոմիական զբոսաշրջությունը, բացի պարզապես համտեսումը, ներառում է ճանոթություն դեստինացիայի մշակույթին, պատմությանն ու ավանդույթներին՝ նպաստելով մշա-կութային ժառանգության ընդունմանն ու հանրահռչակմանը։ Հատկապես Միշլենյան աստղեր ունեցող ռեստորանները ազդեցիկ դեր ունեն զբոսաշրջիկների ներգրավման գործում, քանի որ

նման հեղինակավոր վարկանիշը նշանակում է գերազանցություն խոհարարական արվեստում և համաշխարհային ճանաչում: 20-րդ դարասկզբի Ֆրանսիայում ծագած Միշլենյան աստղերը զարգացել են՝ արտացոլելու բարձրորակ, նորարարական և կայուն սննդի փորձը:

Հողվածն ուսումնասիրում է Միշլենյան աստղերի դերը գաստրոնոմիական զբոսաշրջության մեջ՝ ներկայացնելով որոշ վիճակագրական տվյալներ ամբողջ աշխարհում աստղեր ունեցող ռեստորանների թվի վերաբերյալ:

Հայաստանն ունի հարուստ խոհարարական ներուժ և Միշլենյան աստղ ձեռք բերելը կարող է խթանել նրա գաստրոնոմիական նկարագիրը՝ օգուտ բերելով զբոսաշրջության ավելի լայն հատվածին: Այնուամենայնիվ, այս ամենին հասնելը զգալի ջանքեր է պահանջում խոհարարական կրթության և միջազգային փոխգործակցության ոլորտում:

Հիմնաբառեր. *գաստրոնոմիական զբոսաշրջություն, Միշլենյան աստղեր, ռեստորան, մշակութային ժառանգություն, Կանաչ աստղ, Հայաստան*

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РЫНКИ И КОНКУРЕНЦИЯ

ПУТЕШЕСТВИЕ РАДИ ВКУСА: ЗВЕЗДЫ МИШЛЕН, ПРОДВИГАЮЩИЕ ГАСТРОНОМИЧЕСКИЙ ТУРИЗМ

Гастрономический туризм - неотъемлемая часть туристической индустрии, приглашает путешественников исследовать направления, известные своим кулинарным наследием, что способствует культурному обмену и связям с обществом. Помимо простой дегустации еды, гастрономический туризм демонстрирует культуру, историю и традиции направления, способствуя пониманию и сохранению культурного наследия. Рестораны, отмеченные звездами Мишлен, особенно влиятельны в привлечении туристов, поскольку престижный рейтинг означает кулинарное совершенство и мировое признание. Возникнув во Франции в начале 20 века, звезды Мишлен эволюционировали, чтобы отражать высококачественный, инновационный и устойчивый опыт питания. В этой статье рассматривается роль звезд Мишлен в гастрономическом туризме, представлены некоторые статистические данные о количестве отмеченных звездами ресторанов по всему миру.

Для Армении, с ее богатым кулинарным потенциалом, получение признания Мишлен может повысить ее гастрономический профиль, что принесет пользу более широкому сектору туризма. Однако для достижения этого отличия необходимы значительные усилия в области кулинарного обучения и международного взаимодействия.

Ключевые слова: *гастрономический туризм, звезды Мишлен, ресторан, культурное наследие, Зеленая звезда, Армения*