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MARKETING OF GASTRONOMIC TOURISM IN ARMENIA WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

To clarify the development trends of gastronomic tourism in Armenia, digital marketing strategies and PR tools were examined. Through a quantitative analysis of the opportunities and threats facing Armenia's gastronomic tourism sector, it was demonstrated that the country possesses significant potential, as reflected in the ratio between the overall scores of its strengths and weaknesses. The sector is supported by a competitive foundation, including rich culinary heritage, high-quality raw materials, and longstanding winemaking traditions. The high score assigned to opportunities further indicates the strong growth potential of gastronomic tourism, particularly due to increasing international interest, digital promotion, and rising demand for organic food products. The identified threats are comparatively less significant, suggesting that external risks are driven mainly by demographic and political factors that remain manageable.

Keywords: gastronomic tourism, digital marketing, territorial marketing, tourist, service.

Introduction

Armenia is a relatively new participant in the global tourism industry; however, the tourism sector possesses significant potential and may create unique opportunities for the country's economic development.

Marketing in the tourism sector requires a thorough understanding of urgent market demands and current trends, the alignment of tourism product offerings with the volume and structure of demand, the development of pricing and pricing strategies, the selection of distribution platforms, the application of effective tourism promotion tools, as well as the forecasting of seasonal sales opportunities.

The tourism market consists of a network of diverse segments that include specific groups of consumers characterized by their preferences, expectations, demands, and motivations. Therefore, the tourism market may be differentiated into numerous categories of tourism for the purpose of developing appropriate marketing strategies.

In studies devoted to tourism, when referring to its various forms, including historical-cultural tourism, health tourism, sports tourism, commercial tourism, industrial tourism, nature tourism, and ecotourism[2], gastronomic tourism, which constitutes the

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[2] Musliha 2022: 132.

subject of the present article, is generally not addressed. In this article, the aforementioned concept of digital marketing will be examined in order to present the issues related to the development of gastronomic tourism in Armenia.

The development of gastronomic tourism is influenced by a number of positive and negative factors. The positive factors include:

1) the enhancement of the competitiveness of gastronomic products and the region's competitive potential,
2) benefits for local farmers and food producers, as well as for small business owners operating in the hospitality sector and related industries,
3) advantages for settlements that lack other significant tourism resources and attractions,
4) the improvement of the living standards of the local population, the creation of additional employment opportunities, the increase of revenues within the local economy, and the preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

The factors hindering the development of gastronomic tourism include:

1) the absence or insufficiency of experience among local tour operators in the organization and promotion of gastronomic tours,
2) the low quality of services provided to tourists within tourism establishments,
3) the inadequate development of tourism infrastructure in settlements,
4) the high cost of culinary tours[3].

Types of Gastronomic Events	**Organizers**
Festival	Non-governmental organizations
	Food service establishments
Tour	Tour operators
Excursion	
Master classes	Food service establishments
	Development centers
	Culinary studios
	Non-governmental organizations
Tasting	Food service establishments
Gastronomic dinner	
Culinary quest	Culinary studios

1. Transition from Traditional to Digital Marketing

The most important tool for the promotion of gastronomic tourism services, marketing, has today transformed into digital marketing. Digital marketing first gained recognition in the early 1990s and, beginning in 2014, started to become one of the principal strategies widely applied in the business world. Since then, companies seeking

[3] Khesina 2020: 18–24.

to remain competitive and achieve success in the market have been compelled to reconsider their customer engagement technologies and transition from traditional forms of marketing to digital marketing.

Digital marketing refers to the analysis and promotion of products and services through digital channels. The principal difference between digital and traditional marketing lies in the fact that digital marketing campaigns are implemented exclusively through digital channels, thereby providing marketers with greater control, a wider range of tools, and more extensive data for analyzing the effectiveness of marketing campaigns[4].

The application of digital technologies significantly increases competition in the national and international tourism services market. However, at the same time, the condition must be satisfied that old methods of service promotion should lose their significance. The creation of effective technologies for the processing and use of information should increase efficiency, but only if traditional methods “yield their positions.”

Agreeing with the necessity of replacing outdated technologies for working with information, it should be noted that only the existence of competition in the market stimulates market participants to seek and find new, more modern, and effective methods of conducting business, which ultimately ensure the development of the economy in general. Moreover, digital marketing is more accessible than traditional marketing.

The application of digital marketing may yield tangible results in the field of tourism, and particularly in gastronomic tourism. It has become a necessity, as the present generation frequently relies on it, both consciously and unconsciously.

Tour operator services, airline tickets or tickets for other forms of transportation, hotel reservations through websites or by telephone—all of these are independently purchased and arranged by the majority of travelers. Consequently, there are no significant obstacles to the application of digital technologies within the tourism sector. Tourism companies utilize digital technologies, including online sales systems, booking platforms, GIS systems, blockchain technologies, and other digital tools.

Through these technologies, tour operators present tourists with traditional and regional dishes, the rituals and beliefs associated with them, methods of preparation, as well as the territorial and seasonal diversity involved in obtaining ingredients. Digital marketing has become one of the principal instruments of gastronomic tourism strategy. For its effective application, the following factors are important:

1. the selection of a target market, which will help focus on the market segment interested in Armenian gastronomy,
2. maintaining continuous awareness of technological innovations and developments in order to utilize all possible forms of product presentation,

[4] See Tyshchuk and Ilyina 2023: 38–49; Awad and Alharthi 2025: 14–26.

3. ensuring distinctive content in terms of design and style,
4. maintaining an active and effective online presence.

1.1 Digital Marketing and the Development of Tourism Personnel Capacities

The issue of personnel training is particularly significant in organizations operating within the service and tourism sectors.

It cannot be stated that insufficient importance is attached to personnel training in the tourism sector or that no investments are made in this sphere of tourism company operations. Training programs are conducted both at the local level and abroad. Nevertheless, it should be noted that it is often very difficult to cultivate genuine interest in the needs of customers within the tourism services sector. A customer-oriented approach, however, constitutes a fundamental principle of the modern concept of services marketing, directing organizations toward the provision of the highest quality services, the establishment of long-term partnerships with customers, and the maximization of managerial flexibility.

Scientific and technological progress, the development of information and communication technologies, and the implementation of digitalization all lead to the necessity for a higher level of personnel education and training. The introduction of advanced technologies requires the provision of higher-quality tourism services by more knowledgeable personnel. In practice, personnel constitute the primary implementers of digital marketing, as it is through them that communication with customers is maintained and the effective use of social networks is ensured[5].

Trained personnel implement digital marketing strategies, including digital campaign planning, market analytics, and ethical tourism management, while simultaneously building strong foundations in leadership and business operations. The distinctive feature of personnel organizing gastronomic tourism lies in their knowledge of local cuisine in both synchronic and diachronic dimensions. The historical-cultural context and digital marketing, as well as their successful integration, constitute some of the most important competencies of contemporary organizers of gastronomic tourism.

1.2 Digital Territorial Marketing

Digital technologies have found broad application in territorial marketing, creating numerous new opportunities for its development. The purpose of this form of marketing is to increase the recognition of a territory’s brand, promote the territory, ensure the growth of its competitiveness through the attraction of additional investments, develop domestic and inbound tourism, increase the export of goods and services produced within the territory, expand the territory’s participation in the implementation of international and regional programs, and consequently maximize the satisfaction of the needs and demands of the population.

[5] Berenyte 2021: 147-153; Flint 2025: 143–150.

At present, territorial promotion is carried out through both traditional (offline) tools—such as advertising, public relations activities, including through various media channels, as well as the organization of and participation in cultural, sports, and business events—and rapidly developing digital (online) tools, including social media marketing (SMM) and blogs, internet forums, video advertising, search engine marketing (SEM), search engine optimization (SEO), digital content marketing, email marketing, press releases in online media, mobile applications, crowdsourcing platforms, and others.

The success of digital marketing depends on the rapid consideration of emerging trends in the tourism sector, including:

1) the growth in the volume of information and the use of large-scale databases (Big Data), which makes it possible to encompass a significant number of potential consumers;
2) the increasing personalization and concentration of marketing, including advertising targeting through the segmentation of target audiences, the identification of those segments corresponding to specified criteria, and the creation and implementation of advertising campaigns specifically designed for them;
3) the development of content and advertising across various digital platforms (Instagram, Facebook, and others), due to the growing share of internet traffic in comparison with television, which enables the attraction of new users and the utilization of the opportunities provided by social media;
4) the leading role of video marketing within the digital environment.

2. Marketing Policy of Gastronomic Tourism in Armenia Based on Enotourism Data

Armenia has identified the promotion of wine and gastronomic tourism as one of its priorities. Within this framework, various thematic events are organized, including the UN International Conference on Wine Tourism, held on September 11–13, 2024, “Yerevan Wine Days,” the “Dilijan Wine Festival,” and “Yerevan Cocktail Week,” among others. In parallel, favorable conditions are being created for the development of gastronomy and the restaurant business.

2.1 Enotourism

Wine tourism, which is also known as enotourism[6] (from the Greek word *oinos* meaning “wine”), occupies a significant place within gastronomic tourism and has become an important and rapidly developing sector of global tourism since the beginning of the 21st century.

[6] The term “enotourism [enozbosashrjutyun]” is a newly coined concept in the Armenian language, for which the equivalent expression “wine tourism” is also used; see Mkrtumyan 2023: 43–66.

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This is due to the possibility of combining natural elements with traditions and folklore, as well as to the development of local entrepreneurship, which leads to the sustainable use of land and the increase of incomes among the rural population. The economic significance of wine tourism is conditioned by the necessity of employing a larger number of people in the sectors of viticulture and winemaking, as well as in the distribution and sale of wine.

Wine tourism is particularly important in rural areas located far from major urban centers and characterized by a low level of socio-economic development. Wine production and the related sphere of wine tourism may contribute to the creation of new jobs, reduce youth outmigration, and increase rural incomes[7].

In recent years, wine tourism in Armenia has begun to develop actively. This sector is becoming increasingly important for both local producers and tourists. People travel to Armenia specifically to become acquainted with its wine culture; they seek not only to taste wine, but also to see vineyards, communicate with winemakers, and visit each wine-producing region.

Winemakers themselves demonstrate considerable initiative and creativity. They organize festivals, vineyard dinners, musical evenings, tasting tours, and various related events through which every visitor may discover something new. As the global market has become increasingly saturated with standard flavors, consumers are showing growing interest in trying new products, discovering lesser-known regions, and exploring distinctive styles.

In this respect, Armenia is becoming progressively more attractive. Armenia possesses indigenous grape varieties such as *Areni, Voskehat, Kharji, Garandmak,* and *Kakhet*, each of which reflects the characteristics of the land, climate, history, and culture from which it originates.

These are the wines that generate the greatest interest among international sommeliers, wine critics, and consumers. They are unique wines distinguished by depth of flavor and excellent aging potential. Owing to its unique grape varieties and longstanding traditions, Armenia possesses all the prerequisites necessary to occupy its rightful place on the global wine map.

Armenian wine tourism is not merely a form of excursion tourism, but rather a living experience and an opportunity to discover the country through its land, flavors, traditions, and people. Wine festivals serve as bridges between winemakers and consumers, providing an opportunity not only to taste wines, but also to hear their stories and meet the individuals who create them. Such events bring wine closer to people and create an atmosphere of open dialogue in which individuals may communicate, acquire new knowledge, and discover different flavors and regions. This is particularly important for young wineries and small producers, for whom such

[7] Jezierska-Thöle; Gonia; Podgórski and Gwiaździńska-Goraj 2025.

platforms provide greater opportunities for self-presentation and for identifying their consumers.

The Areni Wine Festival possesses particular significance. First, it takes place in one of Armenia's principal winemaking regions. Second, winemakers present their wines within the context of nature, traditions, and local cultural identity. This creates a unique connection between terroir and the glass.

Festivals play an important role in the development of wine tourism by attracting not only local visitors, but also an increasing number of foreign tourists. They provide an excellent opportunity to present Armenia as a country with a rich wine history and a dynamic contemporary wine industry. Such events should be supported and further developed, particularly in the regions where wine production originates.

However, there are also existing challenges related to the development of wine tourism in Armenia. It is necessary to develop a wine tourism development program in order to organize cooperation with stakeholders in a more systematic manner. Correspondingly, there is a need to develop wine tourism maps in order to increase the visibility and accessibility of the locations where wine festivals are held. It should be noted that, at present, wine festivals are conducted primarily in Areni and Yerevan. There is also a need to increase the number of such festivals.

The development of wine tourism also requires addressing branding-related issues. The internationalization of the brand should contribute to solving the following key objectives: increasing sales volumes, enhancing profitability, and improving brand recognition. The development of gastronomic tourism in particular regions of the country is based on the cultivation of specific grape varieties, including *Areni, Lalvar, Kangun, and Voskehat.*

Wine and wine-based products have always held significant importance for Armenia. In regional markets, the Armenian wine brand is recognizable to consumers. Armenian wine remains in demand among consumers in regional markets due to its distinctive qualitative characteristics, as well as the strong reputation established during the Soviet period. It is necessary to develop appropriate state support programs for the proper cultivation of vineyards of these grape varieties, as well as for the development of winemaking based on traditional methods, such as the use of *karas* winemaking techniques.

Armenian wine has a need for market diversification. The Government of the Republic of Armenia and various state agencies have developed and implemented a number of measures aimed at ensuring the international recognition of Armenian wine. In particular, the Vine and Wine Foundation of Armenia, established by the Government of the Republic of Armenia, carries out activities directed toward increasing the competitiveness of Armenian wine in international markets. With state support, Armenian winemakers participate in prestigious international exhibitions held in Moscow, Shanghai, Prague, Madrid, and other cities. Nevertheless, Armenia's level of recognition in the international market remains relatively low and, consequently, cannot

support the formation of international branding for wine-producing commercial organizations to the same extent as countries such as Spain, Italy, France, Greece, and the United States. For this reason, the coordinated efforts of various state institutions aimed at enhancing the country's international reputation are of particular importance[8].

Each bottle of Armenian wine represents a unique "visiting card" of Armenia. Armenia is a land of grapevines and a cradle of winemaking. Armenian wine is not merely a beverage; it is history, land, and traditions expressed through taste.

Wine tourism serves as a cultural bridge between traditions and the modern world and is expected to play an important role in the sustainable development of rural areas and in strengthening Armenia's international image as a winemaking country. In addition, the sector has become more open to the world. Armenian producers participate in international exhibitions, organize tastings and wine tours, and cooperate with critics, sommeliers, and journalists. Armenian wine is gradually becoming recognized and appreciated not as an exotic product, but as a constituent part of the global wine map.

The application of artificial intelligence is also of particular importance in the development of gastronomic tourism. The artificial intelligence-powered tool *Travelinsights* contributes to the development of Armenia's growing tourism sector by collecting and analyzing, in real time, reviews concerning various services from popular online platforms. *Travelinsights* functions as a platform for businesses, including restaurants, hotels, and museums, seeking to monitor key trends in the tourism sector and improve the quality of their services[9].

Today, QR codes are becoming an integral tool in marketing, enabling brands to connect with consumers at a new and modern level. One of the principal advantages of using QR codes in marketing is their ability to link offline and online channels. By placing QR codes on product packaging, advertising materials, or display windows, companies can direct consumers to their websites or special offers, thereby increasing the level of customer interaction. For example, links to social media platforms, including videos and reviews, strengthen the connection between brands and customers.

In the context of increasing competition, the use of QR codes not only attracts attention, but also creates a unique user experience, which ultimately contributes to the growth of customer loyalty and sales. In addition, QR codes make it possible to collect data regarding consumer preferences, which significantly contributes to the further targeting of advertisements.

Brands are able to monitor code usage data in order to analyze consumer behavior and adapt their strategies accordingly. Such analysis allows companies to improve marketing campaigns and enhance their effectiveness. QR codes also provide opportunities for content personalization, which has become one of the most important elements of contemporary marketing strategies.

[8] Iskajyan 2023: 94-105.

[9] Travelinsights, https://www.travelinsights.am/

At the same time, there are a number of challenges associated with the use of QR codes. The first challenge is the lack of awareness among target audiences. Many consumers still do not know how to properly scan QR codes or do not understand why such actions are necessary. To address this issue, companies should conduct educational campaigns and include explanatory information within their promotional materials. The second challenge is the low level of consumer trust toward QR codes[10].

Tourists are becoming increasingly educated, experienced, knowledgeable, and demanding with regard to the quality of services and offerings. Consequently, within the changing environment of the tourism business, marketing knowledge and skills are becoming increasingly essential for long-term survival and growth.

3. SWOT[11] analysis

A combined qualitative and quantitative was conducted SWOT analysis to assess the current state of development of the gastronomic tourism market in the Republic of Armenia and to identify the existing opportunities and threats affecting the sector.

To ensure the scientific reliability and objectivity of the methodology, the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) and External Factor Evaluation (EFE) matrix models proposed by Fred R. David were applied.

According to David's model, the total weighted score of both the internal and external matrices ranges from 1.0 to 4.0, with 2.5 serving as the benchmark value. A score above 2.5 in the IFE matrix indicates a strong internal position, whereas a score below 2.5 reflects internal weaknesses. Similarly, an EFE score above 2.5 suggests that the sector effectively responds to external opportunities while mitigating potential threats.

Following David's methodology, a weighting process (W) was conducted. Each factor was assigned a relative weight ranging from 0.0 (not important) to 1.0 (extremely important), depending on its degree of influence on the sector. The sum of all factor weights within each matrix equals 1.0 ($\Sigma W = 1.0$).

A rating score (R) was subsequently assigned to each factor:

For the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) matrix:

4 = major strength;
3 = minor strength;
2 = minor weakness;
1 = major weakness.

For the External Factor Evaluation (EFE) matrix:

4 = superior response;
3 = above-average response;
2 = average response;
1 = poor response.

[10] How to Use QR Codes for Marketing Strategy and Advertising [Electronic resource]. Available at [Как использовать QR-коды для маркетинговой стратегии и рекламы на мобильных устройствах: 8 идей • BYYD] (30.11.2025).

[11] Puyt, Lie, De Graaf, Wilderom s2023.

The weighted score (AW) for each factor was calculated using the following formula:

AW = W \times R

The sum of the weighted scores constitutes the final matrix score. Analysis of the internal environment makes it possible to assess the extent to which the competitive advantages of Armenian gastronomy outweigh its structural weaknesses.

Table 1. Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Matrix

No.	**Strengths**	**Weight (W)**	**Rating (R)**	**Weighted Score (AW)**
1	Rich culinary heritage and centuries-old traditions	0.09	4	0.36
2	Environmentally friendly and high-quality local agricultural products	0.08	4	0.32
3	Dynamic development of the wine industry and international recognition	0.07	4	0.28
4	High frequency of gastronomic festivals (Wine Days, Barbecue Festival, etc.)	0.06	3	0.18
5	Strong culture and tradition of hospitality	0.05	4	0.20
6	Potential of the Armenian diaspora and international presence of Armenian cuisine	0.05	3	0.15
No.	**Weaknesses**	**Weight (W)**	**Rating (R)**	**Weighted Score (AW)**
7	Uneven distribution of tourism infrastructure (concentration in Yerevan)	0.09	1	0.09
8	Weak international branding of Armenian gastronomic assets	0.08	1	0.08
9	Low quality of services and hospitality in the regions	0.08	2	0.16
10	Lack of well-structured gastronomic tourism packages	0.07	2	0.14
11	Absence of a unified sectoral marketing strategy	0.07	1	0.07
12	Insufficient targeted public investment and subsidies	0.06	1	0.06
13	Shortage of specialized professionals (gastro-guides, sommeliers)	0.05	2	0.10
14	Underestimation of the sector by local self-government bodies	0.05	2	0.10
	Total	1.00	-	2.29

Based on the internal factor analysis, the calculated total weighted score is 2.29. As this value is below the equilibrium benchmark of 2.5 established by Fred R. David, it indicates that the internal weaknesses of Armenia's gastronomic tourism sector outweigh its strengths. Although the sector possesses exceptional natural and cultural assets, including a rich culinary heritage and centuries-old traditions, environmentally friendly and high-quality local agricultural products, as well as the dynamic development and international recognition of the wine industry (all rated at 4 points), structural challenges limit its ability to fully capitalize on these advantages. In particular, the absence of a coordinated marketing strategy and the uneven distribution of tourism infrastructure significantly constrain the sector's development potential.

The analysis of the external environment, in turn, provides insight into the extent to which the current system is prepared to capitalize on global trends and opportunities while effectively responding to geopolitical uncertainties and increasing competitive pressures.

Table 2. External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix

No.	**Opportunities**	**Weight** (W)	**Rating** (R)	**Weighted Score** (AW)
1	Rapid growth in global demand for gastronomic tourism	0.09	3	0.27
2	Targeted marketing through digital platforms (SMM, TikTok, TripAdvisor)	0.08	3	0.24
3	Regional development opportunities resulting from decentralized governance and municipal consolidation	0.08	2	0.16
4	Funding opportunities from international donor organizations (UNDP, USAID, etc.)	0.07	3	0.21
5	Integration of global gastronomic trends (Organic Food, Slow Food)	0.06	2	0.12
6	Collaboration with internationally influential platforms (Michelin, World's 50 Best Restaurants)	0.06	1	0.06
No.	**Threats**	**Weight** (W)	**Rating** (R)	**Weighted Score** (AW)
7	Aggressive appropriation of culinary heritage by neighboring countries	0.10	2	0.20
8	Regional security challenges and geopolitical instability	0.09	2	0.18
9	Demographic decline and outmigration from	0.08	1	0.08

	rural communities			
10	Economic fluctuations, inflation, and currency-related risks	0.07	2	0.14
11	Spread of negative online reviews due to service quality issues	0.07	2	0.14
12	Strong state-supported promotion and public relations campaigns by competing destinations (e.g., Georgia)	0.06	2	0.12
13	**Total**	1.00	-	2.09

Fred R. David's nine-cell matrix, commonly known as the Internal–External (IE) Matrix, is one of the most important strategic tools for assessing the current position of a sector and determining its future strategic direction. According to David's nine-cell matrix framework, when the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) score falls within the medium range (2.0–2.99) and the External Factor Evaluation (EFE) score is also within the medium range (2.0–2.99), the sector is positioned in Cell V, the central cell of the matrix.

The IE Matrix consists of two axes: the horizontal (X) axis represents internal factors, while the vertical (Y) axis represents external factors. Based on these dimensions, the matrix is divided into nine cells, which are further grouped into three major strategic regions. These regions provide guidance regarding the most appropriate strategic actions to be pursued in response to the sector's internal capabilities and external environment.

Table 3. Fred R. David's Nine-Cell Matrica

		Internal–External (IE) Evaluation		
		Strong (3.0–4.0)	**Medium (2.0–2.99)**	**Weak (1.0–1.99)**
External Factor Evaluation (EFE)	**High (3.0–4.0)**	**Cell I** Grow and Build	**Cell II** Grow and Build	**Cell III** Hold and Maintain
	Medium (2.0–2.99)	**Cell IV** Grow and Build	**Cell V** Hold and Maintain	**Cell VI** Harvest or Divest
	Low (1.0–1.99)	**Cell VII** Hold and Maintain	**Cell VIII** Harvest or Divest	**Cell IX** Harvest or Divest

Horizontal axis: Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Vertical axis: External Factor Evaluation (EFE)

Based on the calculated scores (IFE = 2.29; EFE = 2.09), Armenia's gastronomic tourism sector is positioned in Cell V of the IE Matrix. This position corresponds to the "Hold and Maintain" strategic region. Scientifically, this finding indicates that while the sector remains in a developmental and consolidation phase, the external environment offers sufficient opportunities for growth. However, internal structural weaknesses, reflected in the IFE score of 2.29, constrain the sector's ability to pursue an aggressive expansion strategy. Therefore, the current priority should be the preservation of existing resources and the strengthening of institutional and organizational foundations.

The gastronomic tourism sector of the Republic of Armenia is in a central strategic position in the matrix. Based on this, the roadmap for the development of gastronomic tourism in the Republic of Armenia for 2027–2029 has been developed, which includes four strategic targets. Within each direction, specific measures to be implemented, responsible bodies, implementation deadlines and expected results have been defined.

The following target areas and the strategic steps arising from them are highlighted:

Step 1: Gastro-territorial decentralization

Step 2: Comprehensive digitalization and targeted digital marketing

Step 3: Consolidation of public-private partnerships and diversification of markets.

Step 4. Raising the educational level and customer centricity

As a result of combining these steps, the following prospective strategic directions for the development of gastronomic tourism in RA are proposed:

- Conceptual shift from "Simple Travel" to "Experiential Gastronomy".
- Development of Terroir Marketing.
- Stabilizing the national gastro brand through digital technologies

Marketing strategy should not focus on blindly increasing market volume, but on protecting existing resources, eliminating internal structural shortcomings (digitalization, education) and strengthening positions. Below is presented the marketing toolkit necessary for the roadmap.

- ✓ Application of AI and Big Data
- ✓ "Four-Hands Dinner" concept
- ✓ Terroir Marketing and Endemic Varieties
- ✓ "Gastro Yards" and the "Farm-to-Table" model.

Table 4. Comprehensive Action Plan for the Gastrotourism Roadmap of the Republic of Armenia for 2027-2029

Target direction	Specific action	Responsible persons	Implementation period	Expected results
1. Territorial diversification	•Development of integrated interactive maps of gastronomy and enotourism. • Increasing the number of “Gastro Yards” and “Farm-to-Table” points in the regions. • Creation of micro-brands based on local endemic grape varieties.	RA Tourism Committee, local authorities, private sector, NGOs	2027-2028	Increase in the number of regional gastro-houses by 30%, equal distribution of tourist flows, increase in income of the rural population
2. Digital marketing	• Implementation of AI-based Travelinsights and Big Data tools to analyze consumer behavior. • Implementation of targeted SMM, SEO and video marketing campaigns in the restaurant and wine tourism sector.	Marketing companies, HoReCa portals, tour operators	(starting January 2027, onward)	Increasing proportion of tourists engaged through digital channels, growth in online bookings.
3. International promotion	• High-level organization and holding of the EXPO 2027 international wine exhibition in the Republic of Armenia. • Organization of international familiarization visits (Fam Trips) for famous bloggers and Forbes, IL Gusto journalists.	Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia, Viticulture and Winemaking Foundation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2027 (EXPO period and beyond)	Increasing the recognition of Armenia as a gastro-industry in the international market, acquiring new export markets.
4. Education and service	• Strengthening the connection between educational institutions (EVN Wine Academy, etc.) and HoReCa entities. • Development of special “customer-centric” and digital skills training courses for staff.	EVN Wine Academy, HoReCa associations	2027-2029	Bringing the quality of services into line with global standards, increasing the tourist satisfaction index.

To enhance the development of gastronomic tourism in Armenia, a transition is required from a passive, extensive development model toward an active and targeted territorial marketing approach. In this regard, the implementation of decentralized governance is recommended, whereby local authorities of consolidated municipalities recognize gastronomic tourism as an instrument of community branding and local economic development. This can be achieved through the promotion of local festivals, food-related events, and cultural activities using Event Marketing strategies.

Furthermore, considering the relatively high significance of external opportunities identified in the EFE analysis, greater emphasis should be placed on the application of digital marketing tools. The systematic use of social media marketing (SMM), influencer marketing, and food and travel blogging can significantly increase the international visibility of Armenian cuisine, strengthen Armenia's gastronomic brand, and contribute to counteracting cultural appropriation and misrepresentation of Armenian culinary heritage in international markets.

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