Food makes places as symbolic constructs.¹
It is time to forget about that ditch. Tourism will be the premier source of
income of Panama in the future and cuisine is an essential part of it.²

As historians of food have argued convincingly, food is a fundamental location to study
social change and to convey social messages.³ To the extent that food provides a conduit to
construct and represent identities, “food and what counts as food is a signifier of belonging,
cultural identity, and home.”⁴ Food is tightly connected to politics. By studying the move-
ment of foodstuffs, one can understand complex geopolitical and social associations and
their relation to globalization.⁵ Food is more than an economic commodity, “it a multi-
dimensional cultural artifact capable of linking issues regarding the relationships between
place and identity, and the material and symbolic,”⁶ as well as setting up boundaries
between “us and them.”⁷

Food and tourism are intimately entwined.⁸ The latter is based on consumptive patterns,
and food provides a particularly wide window to understand these patterns. Tourism is
part of a larger and constant process of identity formation, “of seeking out and assimilating
the exotic in order to avoid the trap of being caught in the mainstream.”⁹ In addition,
tourism is not only a highly complex production that signifies a cultural phenomenon
related to transnational movement, displacement, mobilities, and migration,¹⁰ but it is also
a very concrete industry where the actions of mediators and so-called hosts and guests have
tangible consequences.

Food is one aspect of consumption in a touristic encounter, whether the tourist is
actively looking for a culinary experience or simply seeing food as fuel. In other words,
food can be studied “as both a destination and a vehicle in tourism.”¹¹ Historically, food
has been a central component of the touristic experience in the modern western world,
and it is surprising that food did not play a significant role in tourism studies until the
late 1990s.¹² In spite of the ubiquitous presence of food in any touristic experience, there
was limited scholarship addressing the value of studying food in association with tourism
to understand social, cultural, and economic relations,¹³ or to acknowledge it as an
essential vehicle to recognize social, economic, and political inequalities.¹⁴ Today,
because we have included food, the theoretical analysis of tourism as a multisensory
experience is sophisticated. In very simple terms, understanding food is essential to understand the tourism industry. Put another way, food-and-drink-focused tourism studies “offer a fascinating lens through which to examine these more heterogeneous sensory landscapes and theorize whether they offer different ‘kinds’ of non-representable knowledge.”

Tourism is often conceived as a sensual experience, pleasurable or otherwise; producing, consuming, and constructing the sensual category of food is basic to the overall touristic experience. The often-cited “tourist gaze” is, in fact, multisensory and embodied, incorporating tastes, smells, sounds, and touch, and visual and non-visual practices. In this chapter, food becomes a lens to understand the consumption of food and culture in the context of tourism, the adaptation of cuisines to tourism venues and their relationship to authenticity and nostalgia, and the construction of national versus regional identities and identity politics. I use the Caribbean nation of Panama as an illustration of these interactions.

Food historians have been concerned with the role of tourism in shaping the history of particular foods with fruitful results. Anthropologists have always been concerned with the manifold meanings of food because of its role in social organization or as a cultural system. However, with some outstanding classic exceptions, as Wilk aptly notes, only recently has food become a legitimate topic of study in its own right. Tourism studies has contributed to our understanding of the intersection between food and tourism. In the process, this approach has effectively shifted the focus of tourism studies from the economic impacts of food in the tourism industry—which have dominated food-related tourism research—to a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at play.

Tourism studies scholars recognize the difference between studying how tourists and locals interact with food in the context of the touristic experience and studying food tourism, which can be understood as the intentional visit to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, gourmet classes, and restaurants. Culinary tourism, another term commonly used to refer to food tourism, has been cast in modern times as an important attraction by the tourism industry. Culinary tourism is sometimes used as synonym of gastronomic and food and wine tourism; it has developed a growing following around the world, particularly in Europe, where it started in the late 1990s. As Richards states, “gastronomy has a particularly important role to play in this [competition between tourism destinations], not only because food is central to the tourist experience, but also because gastronomy has become a significant source of identity formation in postmodern societies.” It is worth noting that some authors distinguish culinary tourism from gastronomic tourism, as the latter refers specifically to having a gourmet experience. Other common synonyms include “tasting tourism,” “food tourism,” and “food pilgrimages.”

Lucy Long (2004) proposes a more comprehensive definition of culinary tourism: “the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of another—participation including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one’s own.” In other words, culinary tourism refers both to geographical travel to sample foods of foreign lands and to any venture into the realm of the “exotic other” through food consumption. This approach sees culinary tourists as adventurers or explorers, and the consumption of food (whether abroad, at home learning to cook dishes from other countries, or exploring international cuisine at restaurants) becomes an expedition. Currently, the industry and academia use the term “culinary tourism” as an all-encompassing term.
Culinary tourism has deep connections with constructions of nostalgia, authenticity, memory, and otherness. Memory of and nostalgia for a long-gone past have been posited as characteristics of the modern and postmodern tourist or the “post-tourist,” embarking on a quest for the “authentic other.” Without exception, authenticity is vital to both the touristic experience and culinary tourism. Thus, understanding authenticity provides the backbone for analyzing the relationships among food, culture, and tourism. Authenticity is a complex and recurrent process, a social construction placed within specific social, political, and economic contexts. In the anthropological literature on tourism, authenticity has been both defended and problematized, particularly in establishing who has the authority to determine it, protect it, or impose it. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes (2004), the question of authenticity, and not authenticity itself, is essential to culinary tourism, for this question “organizes conversation, reflection, and comparison and arises as much from doubt as from confidence.”

In the last fifteen years, tourism scholars have approached the study of tourism from the theoretical perspective of “mobilities” to encompass a larger understanding of the many meanings of “being on the move” and to recognize the long history of human engagement with traveling, moving, and displacement. Sally Everett argues that tourism in the postmodern era has moved from a packaged and standardized approach to one where the consumer requests à la carte experiences, thus contributing to the development of new, alternative, patterns. One such emerging touristic niche that merges agriculture and tourism is known as agritourism, agrotourism, or farm tourism, which has developed and expanded in Europe for the past several decades. Agritourism offers educational experiences on farms, production and consumption of artisanal and local products, and local cuisine. Because of significant changes in consumption patterns, tastes, and attitudes, there is growing interest in what the rural areas can offer to tourists in the form of wine, food, agricultural production, and rural experiences. In Italy and France, for instance, tourism figures importantly in their rural economies, and the global recognition of the strong connections of these countries with their cuisine is firmly established. In other words, agritourism is simply one way to package the relationship between food and place in these countries. As Craig Wight asserts, “the authentic rural culinary tourism experience is perpetuated [in agritourism] through the language of tourism marketing.”

By studying food tourism from the mobilities paradigm, we recognize that the possibility of experiencing the exotic or—simply—different is not confined to those who travel or to those who migrate. By using this model, we can focus on the food consumed by migrants in their new setting who want to maintain a connection with their homeland; the tourist’s consumption of familiar foods while abroad, and the mobility of the tourist abroad and the tourist at home, where “culinary tourists can explore the exotic without leaving their own neighbourhood.” As Sara Gibson argues, “the practices of global cosmopolitanism can thus be triangulated through the relations of eating to both dwelling-in-traveling and traveling-in-dwelling.” This paradigm, when conceived from the perspective of the politics of mobility, recognizes the inequalities inherent in it, where the mobilities of some (the cosmopolitan, culinary tourist) rely on the immobilities of others (cooks, farmers, sellers, and waiters). Conversely, through a focus on mobilities, we recognize the reassuring role of food in postmodern times, its “capacity to hold time, place, and memory.” With this framework in mind, I now turn to a discussion of tourism and cuisine in the Caribbean.
Consuming tourism in the Caribbean

The Caribbean has long been constructed and represented as a sensual place par excellence. As Mimi Sheller states, the Caribbean is “constantly reassembled as a primeval, untouched site of luxuriant profusion. This ‘natural’ assemblage is then used as the lure for economic ‘development,’ military adventures, and tourist fantasies.” In this chapter, I define the Caribbean as the geographical region that encompasses the Caribbean Sea, its islands in the Greater and Lesser Antilles, and the surrounding coasts. I also include Belize, Guyana, and the Atlantic coast of Central America in this definition. My ethnographic research on tourism and constructions of identity through ethnic commodities (such as food) in the Caribbean has taken place in the Caribbean coast of Panama (Central America) and the island of Grenada (Lesser Antilles).

To understand the Caribbean, one needs a framework that recognizes its history of colonialism, neocolonialism, dependency, and heterogeneity (whether we identify it as creolization, hybridity, or multiculturality); all are looming presences in the region’s history. Consequently, it is essential to recognize what postcolonial means in regards to tourism in the Caribbean. As Mathews proposes, what has dominated in the Caribbean is a plantation tourism economy because the industry has been a part of an overseas economy protected by the local elites and the law, and with little regulation.

The search for edible and pleasurable substances was among the objectives of Europeans when exploring the Caribbean. In fact, this is the first place where European colonizers settled to produce food, through coerced labor and slavery. As Sidney Mintz states succinctly, “that brutal fact is closely linked to Caribbean food. Who came to the islands, and what they ended up eating, were outcomes that turned upon the organization of the pioneer societies into which they were, for the most part, dragged.” This process not only brought millions of people (mostly involuntarily) from Africa, Asia, and Europe as a labor force, but it also created an economy sharply divided between domestic production and export production. Plantation economies (where domestic production was rare) have dominated the history of the region ever since. The sharp distinction between domestic and export production remains today. Additionally, because foreign interests overpower the benefit of the local populations, food imports continue to increase to the detriment of local agriculture.

Tourism is fundamental in understanding this history because it has been a major contributor to social, geographic, and political transformations in the Caribbean. First, tourism replaced monocrop production as the predominant industry in the region. Second, the Caribbean is not only one of the main tourism destinations in the world but also one of the regions with the highest level of dependency on the tourism industry, a dependency that contributes to deepening structural weaknesses, high levels of income leakage, and lack of industrial diversification. Millions of tourists arrive in the Caribbean mainly to enjoy “the sun, sand, sea, and sex that is epitomized in the Caribbean holiday experience.”

Because the Caribbean has been sold as a place for sun, sand, sea, and sex, gastronomic delights have been less identified and highlighted in the touristic experience even though the area offers a cornucopia of tastes, flavors, and aromas resulting from the historical fusion of peoples, cultures, and languages in the region. With the possible exception of Jamaica, culinary attractions have received limited attention, although exotic alcoholic beverages have continuously accompanied the Caribbean tourism industry. Likewise, from the perspective of the scholarship of food tourism, Dodman and Rhiney note that the relationship between
tourism and food in the Caribbean has been underexplored. Nonetheless, a closer look at the role of food in Caribbean tourism demonstrates that both food and beverages account for a considerable share of the gross visitor spending and firmly contribute to the magnetism of the region in the imagination of the tourists. More recently, local initiatives have promoted culinary experiences in the Caribbean. For instance, agritourism enterprises have developed in Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago. They introduce the tourist to agricultural production, frequently focusing on production of foods that were part of the slavery system, such as cacao in Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago, or that have become quintessential representations of these countries, such as nutmeg in Grenada.

Tourism and cuisine in Panama: contested encounters in paradise

Although Panama is geographically located in Central America, historically and culturally it is a Caribbean country (see Map 15.1). As a result of the economic boost that Panama received during World War II, the isthmus became closer to the Caribbean, particularly in terms of its aesthetics and cultures. It should be noted that only in the last two decades has Panama developed a nationwide tourism policy; even more recently, the tourism industry, recognizing the charm of the Caribbean as a tourist destination, has labeled the country as Caribbean. In this section, I discuss how a hegemonic idea of Panama integrates into the culinary touristic experience nationally and how a contested view of Panama integrates into the regional culinary touristic experience.

Map 15.1 Map of Panama
From being a province of Colombia (1821–1903) in colonial times to an independent republic (1903–present), Panama has emphasized its Spanish origins, and it has strived to sanction a homogenizing view of the nation-state, in line with most Latin American modern nation-states. In reality, however, Panama possesses great cultural and ethnic diversity, partly as a result of its historical condition as a place of transit. There are eight indigenous groups (Ngöbe, Buglé, Naso, Bokotá, Kuna, Emberá, Wounaan, and Bri-Bri), five different migration waves of peoples of African descent (connected to slavery in the sixteenth century and to voluntary migration from the British, Spanish, and French West Indies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), and a considerable number of immigrants from China, Greece, Spain, Italy, and India. In large part, these migrations were the result of economic need, which is one end of the continuum proposed by Burns and Novelli in their analysis of tourism and mobilities.

As expected, this ethnic diversity has produced multiple foodways. “Panama is a melting pot of ethnicities, and its cuisine is accordingly influenced by its diverse population,” especially the indigenous and European. At the same time, only one cuisine (that of the rural countryside of Panama’s central provinces) has been elevated to the status of national cuisine. The cuisine of Panama’s central provinces has been influenced not only by Spanish and Colombian cuisine but also by indigenous and African cuisines. The influence of Latin American countries (particularly Mexico, Costa Rica, and Puerto Rico) can also be felt in dishes such as sancocho, patacones (fried plantains), saril or sorrel drink, and corn tortillas. However, the Spanish influence is normally highlighted.

Primary ingredients in this cuisine are bananas (Musa acuminate) and plantains (Musa paradisiaca) consumed in a variety of ways, as well as tubers such as yucca, ñame, ñampi, otoe (Xanthosoma), and potatoes. Some of the most prominent dishes include sancocho (soup made with meat, tubers, and vegetables), arroz con pollo (rice with chicken), tamales, guacho (a thick soup made with ñame [yam, Dioscorea spp]), yucca, culantro (Eryngium foetidum L), rice, vegetables, and meat such as beef, pig’s tail, or chicharrón (pork cracklings), and arroz con frijoles (rice and beans). Depending on the region, these dishes are prepared differently, thus effectively marking and determining ethnic and social ascription. For instance, the sancocho de gallina (chicken sancocho) might have fewer ingredients (if cooked among indigenous peoples) or more (if cooked among Afro-Antilleans), altering the consistency and flavor of the soup, rendering it virtually unrecognizable in different contexts.

Limited historical information exists about the evolution of Panama’s cuisine. Alfredo Castillero Calvo offers some insights in his recent work, *Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización: Panamá: Siglos XVI a XXI*. He writes that in the mid-nineteenth century the breakfast foods commonly consumed—by the lower, middle and upper classes alike—were plantains, coffee, meat, ñame, and bread. Breakfast practices have remained consistent over the years; some of these foods continue to be considered important parts of a common breakfast, with the addition of hojaldras or hojaldres (fried wheat flour dough), arepas (fried corn tortillas), scrambled eggs, or sautéed liver, with coffee and tropical fruit juices. Castillero Calvo notes that for the middle and lower socio-economic classes, lunch consisted of soup, chicken, steak, or seafood stew and rice with beans, lentils, salad, and fruit, similar to today’s menus. The upper classes delighted in imported products in addition to the aforementioned dishes. A typical dinner would be similar to lunch but with larger quantities. Snacking on fried foods was and continues to be common; some of the most popular fried foods are patacones (fried plantains), plantain chips, fried yucca, empanadas, and corn tortillas.
Not surprisingly, the capacity of Panamanian soils to produce tropical products such as plantains, bananas, cacao, and coffee brought about large transnational companies, and with them, a long history of dependency and semi-slavery labor conditions. Particularly significant examples of this history are plantains and bananas, which have played a fundamental role in the culinary history of Panama. Plantains and bananas were produced in small quantities throughout the country until 1866, when Carl August Frank initiated exporting them from Colon to New York; when the French embarked in the construction of the Panama Canal in 1881, production moved to the province of Bocas del Toro, in the northwestern region. In Bocas, the plantain and banana business grew significantly, along with coconut and rubber exploitation. This represented the beginning of the United Fruit Company, one of the oldest and most powerful US corporations. The company was founded in 1889 and later became known in Panama as the Chiriquí Land Company.

The arrival of the United Fruit Company (later Chiriquí Land Company) in Panama marked a transition from an economy based on agricultural work for domestic consumption to mono-crop production for commercial purposes. Panama’s economy vacillated between a very strong export of plantains, sugar cane, cacao and coffee by large transnational companies, and a very weak agricultural production for domestic consumption, requiring the importation of some products. As Castillero Calvo notes:

Panama started the twentieth century on the one hand, with completely archaic agrarian structures, dominated by a subsistence economy and far from being able to satisfy the feeding needs of its people; on the other hand, with agrarian structures oriented to the outside, that depleted labor resources and areas of harvesting for the production of food for local consumption.

Coffee and sugar experienced transformations. Coffee was a delicacy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but a common daily drink by the nineteenth century. “Coffee conquered the palates of the Panamanians with a velocity that no other drink had seen, with the probable exception of beer in the beginning of the eighteenth century, or whisky, in mid-nineteenth century.” Sugar became important for Panamanian cuisine in the seventeenth century and essential by the early twentieth century.

Unlike coffee and sugar, bananas and plantains were not embraced by the white elite immediately in colonial times because they were viewed as poor man’s food for most of the sixteenth century. By the seventeenth century, bananas became more common, and by the nineteenth century, rich and poor consumed bananas and plantains, which became staples in the Panamanian diet across social classes. In fact, people grew the trees in their backyards. Thus, during the nineteenth century, plantains and tubers (ñame, yucca, sweet potatoes, potatoes, and otoe) as well as rice, peppers, fruits and vegetables were present in every part of the country, whether the savannah, the tropical forest, or the city. Other products like maize were only found in the savannah and urban and rural areas, and meat was abundant in the tropical forest and the savannah.

In the early twentieth century the emphasis on export production meant that some of the most basic foodstuffs in the Panamanian diet (such as onions, potatoes, beans, maize—even sugar, coffee, eggs, and salt) needed to be shipped to urban areas, mostly to Panama City, Colon, and Bocas del Toro. Things improved in the 1940s, when focus shifted to domestic production, partly as a result of both World War II and governmental incentives that fostered agriculture.
Nowadays, the four main ingredients of the typical Panamanian diet are rice, beans, meat (especially beef and chicken), and plantains, which—along with the sabor criollo (creole or local flavor)—are assumed to produce the flavor and consistency of Panama’s national cuisine. As noted previously, the cuisine that represents Panamanian identity is the countryside cuisine of Panama’s central provinces, which are primarily agricultural areas. The cuisine and diet of indigenous populations and Afro-Panamanian populations are rarely explored in scholarly or popular contexts. Among the Kuna, some of the most common products include fresh seafood, coconut, boiled vegetables, and roots. The Kuna have been appropriated by Panama’s tourism industry as the quintessential “exotic Other” while also embarking on a series of tourism ventures mostly managed by the Kuna themselves in the Archipelago of San Blas. Commonly, offerings to tourists include mostly seafood (fish soups, crab meat, fresh fish), but chicken, beef, salads, vegetarian meals, and even versions of Italian food are also served in some tourism projects. The Ngöbe, the largest indigenous group in the country, combine agriculture with cattle, chicken, and pig raising. Their diet is mostly composed of pixbae, corn, rice, and beans. The Wounaan indigenous peoples have based their lifestyle around sustainable activities such as hunting, farming, and fishing; part of their diet results from jungle plants, fruits, hearts of palms, roots, and seafood. The Emberá indigenous peoples have experienced influences and interchange from African and Spanish populations since colonial times; these are evident in their technology and ingredients, which include rice, maize, banana, and sugar, and dishes such as bollos (maize dumplings) and tamales. As tourism (particularly ethnic and ecotourism) is expanding in the Darien region that they inhabit, there is increased interest to offer culinary options to the visitors. Emberá cuisine is characterized by rice, beans, green peas, yucca, sugar cane, ñame, otoe, and fruit—such as bananas, lime, orange, cacao, breadfruit, avocado, and mango—as well as maize, and meats such as chicken, pork, fish, deer, rabbit, birds, iguanas, peccaries, and monkey. Maize is ground, mixed with water and wrapped in the leaf of the nahuala palm (Carludovica palmata) to make bollos or tamales stuffed with fish or chicken.

Panama’s historical condition of ‘place of transit’ brought about two distinctive groups from the African Diaspora: Afro-Colonials, descendants of black slaves who arrived in Panama in the sixteenth century to work in the mining industry, and Afro-Antilleans (West Indians, criollos, or antillanos), descendants of Antillean workers who migrated involuntarily or voluntarily to build the Panamanian railroad, the French-led Panama Canal, and to work in banana plantations in the nineteenth century. The second largest city in Panama, Colon, is home to both. Its cuisine is influenced by Spanish Colonial, Afro-Colonial, Afro-Caribbean, European/North American, and Asian cultures. Some of the most common dishes include chicken, pork, beef, octopus in coconut sauce, and other types of seafood dishes, as well as turtle meat and eggs.

The Chinese presence in Panama’s cuisine is also noteworthy; the ingredients contributed by the Chinese—who first arrived in 1848 as a result of the California Gold Rush and later from 1850 to 1855 for the construction of the Panamanian Railroad—include rice, tea, cinnamon, cloves, garlic, coriander, basil, oregano, mustard, lentils, and ginger, among others. Other contributions came from Jewish, Indian, and Middle Eastern diasporas, all supplying dishes and practices such as kosher food. These populations, like the Chinese and the Afro-Antilleans, arrived as a result of the California Gold Rush and the construction of the Panamanian Railroad.

Food in Panama is a means to create, construct, and reconstruct ethnic identities through the “invention, standardization, or valorization” of national cuisines, versus
regional cuisines. By studying the plate, the pot, and the glass that is offered to the tourist, we can understand identity construction, memory, and otherness. Panama has become home to many ethnic groups, who have brought their own customs and culture with them. Although as early as the nineteenth century, some of these groups opened restaurants—typically as part of hotel enterprises—with international cuisine for upper-class tourists, or small eating places (such as fondas offering Chinese food or fried snacks) for local consumption, the first ethnic restaurants (Italian, Spanish, sophisticated Chinese, and “national” Panamanian food) were not opened until the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, during the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century, as a regular practice, Panama’s tourists were rarely offered local food, and international cuisine was served to upper-class tourists as the ideal selection.

Today, an impressive diversity of international cuisine is offered alongside Panamanian cuisine. A culinary tourist can experience Argentinian, Australian, Brazilian, Chilean, Chinese, Colombian, French, Greek, Indian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mexican, Middle Eastern, North American (United States and Canada), Peruvian, Portuguese, and Vietnamese cuisine, just to name a few. There are also new millennium fusion restaurants, as well as vegetarian, vegan, and macrobiotic restaurants. In spite of this range of choices, only recently has there been an interest in selling Panama as a gastronomic destination. The first gastronomic column in a newspaper appeared in 1998, and the first International Gastronomy Fair, Panamá Gastronómica, took place in Panama City in 2010. Public events and festivals where food is a central theme are not organized, and tours that include specific gastronomic routes have only been offered as such in the last few years. However, Panama has previously capitalized on the visibility of its culinary diversity to some degree, by suggesting its condition of a cosmopolitan culinary place in tourism guides since the 1990s. The regional cuisines that are available are more commonly presented as links to the cosmopolitan whole rather than on their own. This cosmopolitan whole gives marginal attention to Afro-Antillean cuisine, and even less so to indigenous cuisine. In this context, through my ethnographic research in Panama since 1996 I have studied how some regional cuisines have become powerful vehicles to exert an ethnic group’s identities and to contest the national trope.

In the Caribbean Archipelago of Bocas del Toro (located in the northwestern area of Panama, see Map 15.2) cuisine and gastronomy have marked the lives of Afro-Antillean populations settling there since the mid-nineteenth century. They are descendants of enslaved peoples from the British West Indies, who arrived in the early 1800s to work under the rule of Scottish, English, and Irish families who had migrated from Jamaica and Barbados. Their migration to work on the banana plantations of the United Fruit Company in Bocas del Toro caused subsequent moves. Others moved from Panama City to Bocas after participating in the construction of the Panamanian Railroad (1850–5), the French efforts to build a canal (1880–90), and the US-built Panama Canal (1904–14). The National Census of 2010 estimates that 12,300 Afro-Antilleans live in the province of Bocas del Toro, while the total number of people in the Archipelago is 18,000 inhabitants. In addition to Afro-Antilleans, the Archipelago is composed of Chinese-Panamanians, indigenous groups (particularly Ngöbe and some Kuna), Panamanian Latinos and, more recently, permanent and semi-permanent foreigners from Europe and North and South America.

As noted earlier, the role of bananas and plantains was even more important in the province of Bocas del Toro than in the rest of the country because some of the most profitable plantations in Panama were located there from 1890 until the 1920s. This
produced an economic and social boom, transforming it into one of the most prosperous regions in Panama (yet still neglected by the central government) and attracting large numbers of migrant workers, mostly of Afro-Antillean origin. In the 1920s, a soil-borne fungus known as Panama disease affected the plantations. This, coupled with the effects of the Great Depression, forced the United Fruit Company to close its plantations, reduce its payroll, and promote Afro-Antilleans to replace US citizens as clerks and supervisors. While the withdrawal of the UFC headquarters from Bocas caused a dramatic economic downturn in the region, it also allowed a considerable number of Afro-Antillean families to buy parcels of land and establish small- and medium-sized family farms. By the mid-1950s, a black rural middle class developed, producing a complete turnaround of the impact of the export boom in other regions. The Afro-Antillean experience in the banana zones is significantly different from that of black workers elsewhere in Latin America because they capitalized on their opportunity and became a rural bourgeoisie. As a result, Afro-Antilleans in Bocas del Toro have had the upper hand in politics and economic development until the onset of uncontrolled tourism in the mid-1990s.

The tourism industry in Bocas del Toro is a highly gendered and racialized experience “that exemplifies how the globalizing phenomenon of tourism interacts with and encourages a local experience,” while at the same time facilitating the internationalization of localized traditions. Men mostly work as tour guides, boat and taxi drivers, and construction workers; in addition, some men work as waiters and bartenders. There are also several well-known and respected male cooks in the Archipelago. However, there are more women working in the tourism industry as cooks in their own restaurant, or for an
employer; women also work as maids, and occasionally as tour guides and taxi drivers, and much less often as boat drivers. For most women in Bocas del Toro, knowing how to cook grants them power and prestige; thus, some choose to keep their recipes a secret, while others choose to learn as much as possible about cooking from their relatives and share their knowledge. In Bocas del Toro, knowing the secret flavors to a perfect sauce or a particularly elaborate Afro-Antillean dish might mean the difference between being respected in the community or not, and more importantly, on being employed or not. Many women have learned cooking strategies from the waves of expatriates and tourists who visit Bocas or from cooking courses taught by the Tourism Authority of Panama (Autoridad de Turismo de Panama, ATP; formerly known as Panamanian Bureau of Tourism, IPAT). Some local women have taken advantage of these courses and now teach cooking courses themselves, using some of the standard international practices they learn and adding their own Afro-Antillean taste to the courses.

The main Afro-Antillean products in Bocas del Toro include coconut, breadfruit, banana, plantain, rice, along with the following: garlic, onions, curry, cilantro, coconut milk, ginger, and hot peppers. Garlic holds a particularly important role in Afro-Antillean food. According to a famous Bocatorenean chef, every dish that contains seafood cooked with garlic (al ajillo) should be considered Caribbean food. These seasonings assist the masterful cooks in making dishes such as rice and beans with coconut milk, rondón (fish soup with coconut milk and tubers), bragadá (fried codfish cake made with flour), ackee with codfish, ackee with eggs, pig’s tail, sauce our souse (pig’s feet cooked with cucumber and vinegar), pescado en escabeche (pickled fish), pati (turnover of spicy meat), cucú (corn flour prepared with ocra), janny cake (baked bread made with flour and coconut milk), and vieks (wheat flower dumplings). Among the most desired desserts are coconut pies, plantintat (plantain tart), a turnover with filling of mature banana; yuca, uyama (a type of squash), otoe pudding, and Bastimentos or Bocas sweet bon (sweet bread). The most well-known beverages are icing glass (a drink made with seaweed, condensed milk, evaporated milk, cinnamon, and an alcoholic beverage such as vodka, rum, brandy, or wine and ice), michilá (boiled ripe plantain with coconut milk), chicheme (boiled hominy with coconut milk, condensed milk and spices), muogó (green banana with coconut milk), and a saril drink (saril chicha, Hibiscus sabdariffa), generally made with ginger. As Higman aptly notes in his book Jamaican Food: History, Biology, Culture, many of these dishes are desired and perceived as characteristically Caribbean, yet in reality they are rarely consumed. That is the case of ackee and codfish, which were transplanted from Jamaica to Panama. Although highly praised as a culinary delicacy and advertised to tourists, it is rarely consumed for two reasons: there are almost no ackee trees left in Bocas del Toro (some are found in Almirante, in the mainland), and the cost of codfish is too high to render this dish practical. Likewise, and although Afro-Antillean dishes are essential markers of cultural identity, in everyday life Afro-Antilleans choose foods based on their economic resources and time. Their choices are also based on their openness to taste, smell, and experience of international cuisine that is available nowadays in Bocas.

Afro-Antillean food refers as much to the ingredients and methods used to cook as to specific dishes. These ingredients make Afro-Antillean food characteristic and attractive to tourists. Although most Afro-Antilleans would argue that their food is hearty, filling, spicy, and hot, and even though gastronomic mobility has produced a demand for international “Caribbean cuisine” that is assumed to be quintessentially hot and spicy, many cooks know not to spice some of their dishes too strongly, or not to use too much ginger in the soups or
fish because an excess of these ingredients renders the dishes too spicy for most Afro-Antillean palates. Thus, while most tourists expect (and some tourists seek) very hot and spicy food, there are significant gradients of preferences for hotness and spiciness among locals. The expectation presented to tourists, however, is that all Afro-Antillean food will be particularly hot and spicy; in effect, Afro-Antillean food in restaurants catering to tourists is offered with a relative mild flavor, with the option of adding hot and spicy sauces to suit the preferences of individual clients. Additionally, there are different types of hotness and spiciness that are preferred or disliked by Afro-Antilleans. For instance, Caroline, a North American expatriate who had lived in Bocas for five years, planned to open a Mexican restaurant in the Archipelago. She was certain her customers would be tourists and other expatriates, not only because of the potential lack of cultural capital and purchasing power, but also because the hotness of Mexican food was not a desirable local taste. Some Afro-Antillean women have developed creative ways to sell home-made products to tourists and resident expatriates, combining the traditional spiciness of Afro-Antillean food with the desire for hot condiments in the North American taste, thus producing savory sauces to accompany Afro-Antillean or international food.

As I noted in previous work, Afro-Antilleans emphasize their cultural identities through the consumption of certain dishes. The quintessential rice and beans provides an excellent example: the way in which this apparently simple dish is prepared signals ascription to a “national” Panamanian cuisine, or loyalty to a regional ethnic identity. When rice and beans are made in local restaurants as a menestra (a kind of vegetable stew) with rice, they are considered a simple, daily meal typical of Panama. When the same dish is made with coconut milk and offered to national and international tourists and locals alike, it becomes what Afro-Antilleans call “the natural dish,” a given and expected combination, and a treasured symbol of Afro-Antillean’s complex identities as Panamanian, Antillean, and Caribbean.

Rice and beans in Bocas del Toro is simultaneously an everyday dish (and certainly not a luxury) and a special dish in the sense that it so strongly represents Afro-Antillean culture for Bocatoreneans and other Panamanians that it becomes the dish of choice when cooking a special meal for national and international guests. Within the very elaborate cuisine etiquette of Bocatoreneans (which calls for rice with chicken, potato or noodle salad, or roasted meat for special occasions, festivities, and celebrations), rice and beans are widely accepted alternatives.

A product that is especially relevant in the lives of Afro-Antilleans but currently only consumed clandestinely is turtle meat. Turtle meat is also consumed among the Ngöbe indigenous peoples. Historically, Afro-Antilleans were consumers of turtles. Since the 1980s, certain species [leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and green (*Chelonia midas*) turtles] have been listed as endangered species, so it is illegal to catch and sell them for consumption. Ironically, it was only with the onset of tourism in the mid-1990s that the pressure for turtle consumption relaxed. In Bocas del Toro, turtles became flagship species, that is, species that capture the attention and imagination of the public and bring tourists to observe and protect them. In fact, turtle tourism has attracted tourists in Bocas del Toro, where they have participated in turtle monitoring, visits to turtle nests, and scientific tourism. The turtle continues to be consumed, but clandestinely, and turtle dishes have become even more of a delicacy. A turtle weighs

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between 100 and 200 pounds, so in order to avoid waste, the procedure is to catch it and keep it alive and hidden, inform the usual customers that a turtle is available, and then kill it to sell specific required quantities to customers with complete discretion. The most common dishes made with turtle meat are turtle stew, breaded turtle, and turtle’s flipper soup or flippers with rice and plantain. The meat is generally marinated with rum and cooking wine for a day before cooking to make a stew or roasted turtle with rice and coconut milk and ripe bananas. Turtle eggs can accompany the meat or can be made into egg punch with rum, dry gin, or triple sec. A roasted turtle or a turtle stew would always come first over roasted or fried chicken in the culinary desires of those Afro-Antilleans for whom the condition of endangered species of the turtles is not relevant. Therefore, the turtle continues to be consumed at home, but it is completely absent from restaurant menus that cater to tourists.

While indigenous peoples in the region have been involved in the tourism economy alongside Afro-Antilleans, they have fewer options and opportunities. The Ngöbe indigenous peoples have engaged in ecotourism ventures with the support of the Peace Corps and non-governmental organizations. These efforts have not been marketed as ethnic or agritourism venues, and cuisine is not highlighted in these visits; ecotourism is the niche that has been carved out. Although agritourism is listed as a tourism strategy in the national management plan for 2007–20, there is no reference to engaging Bocas del Toro in this undertaking. Therefore, although cuisine has been incorporated as part of the touristic encounters in Panama, it has not become a vehicle for elevating local gastronomic experiences.

A few words about restaurants

Restaurants do not simply feed people; instead, they are a total consumption package of food, drinks and experiences. Eating at restaurants has become an expected aspect of traveling; thus restaurants offer an excellent framework for a comparative study of cooking, cuisines, and tourism. Rebecca Spang reminds us that restaurants are “neither spread uniformly across the planet nor encountered regularly throughout history.” In Panama, most restaurants were founded by resident expatriates, particularly since the nineteenth century, and were aimed at foreigners and tourists, the hypermobile of the period. In 1849 there were eleven restaurants (and seven hotels) and this number grew until 1855, when the Panamanian railroad was completed and the Gold Rush ended. By the twentieth century, there were more options, including North American food, but still most restaurants were aimed at the palate of foreigners and the Panamanian elite.

None of this was part of the culinary culture of the country. This was a world virtually prohibited for the majority of the population and very little or none of the dishes that were served in these restaurants affected culinary traditions. Eating at restaurants was not part—contrary to our times—of the quotidian traditions, and were only frequented by a minimal number of wealthy people, important business men, posh politicians, and especially tourists.

The poor consumed dishes at cafeterias or small and modest places where they could eat Chinese food, hot dogs, sandwiches, or juices, in a format similar to the fast food approach. The first fast food chain, McDonald’s, arrived in Panama in 1971; it was the
second such restaurant to open in Latin America after Costa Rica.113 The US influence on Panamanian cuisine is noteworthy, particularly but not exclusively in the Canal Zone, primarily beginning with the construction of the Panama Canal starting in 1903. As Oviero and Prado note, canned and preserved foods, soda, fast foods, and items such as pancakes, peanut butter, nuts, corn flakes, or eggs with bacon were common staples in the Canal Zone. Today, the US influence continues and is evident in national celebrations such as Christmas, when the consumption of turkey, apples, grapes, peaches, and pears is commonplace.114

The separation between food served in the private sphere and food consumed in public is important in the Archipelago of Bocas del Toro, because nostalgia and longing for a pre-touristic Caribbean, a time when food was obtained through fishing and some agriculture,115 is part of the touristic experience. Most of the restaurants that offer Afro-Antillean food in the Archipelago present their location and the food consumed as an extension of the private sphere, as home or comfort food. This is partly resulting from a lack of economic resources for investment, but it also coincides with the strategy used by Caribbean restaurants in large cities in the United States. Prior to the tourism boom in the 1990s, the small restaurants that catered to tourists did not have dishes à la carte and did not charge a service tax. When the tourism boom developed, even the most traditional and established restaurants started to charge service taxes, take-out fees, or to offer the option of dishes à la carte. To no one’s surprise, these changes have not been well received by the local customers. There is a degree of gustatory nostalgia that produces this reaction, but it is also the case that—since eating out is a common practice in Bocas—a large portion of the population relies on these restaurants for constant and consistent provision of fast, daily meals. Although these meals would not be considered traditional fast food, they do tend to be fried and consumed rather quickly. Additionally, the consumption of packaged food is more common in Panama than in other Latin American countries because of the long presence of the United States in Panamanian territory. Thus, eating the Panamanian version of fast food (fried patacones, arepas, or yuccas) at local restaurants is a traditional practice among Bocatoreneans and Panamanians in general. However, the common perception in Bocas del Toro is ambivalent: new ways of eating resulting from tourism are producing cultural decay while simultaneously bringing Afro-Antilleans squarely into the modern world.

In contrast, the restaurants that offer international food in Bocas del Toro, or the few Afro-Antillean restaurants in business in the city of Panama, do not rely on the imagery of home food for business purposes. Currently, there are about five restaurants that offer Afro-Antillean cuisine in Panama City, although the term used to refer to it is Caribbean food. In 2002, I visited one of the most well-known and highly recommended Afro-Antillean restaurants in Panama, owned by a Bocatorenean.116 It was a colorful house with several levels. The waitresses and waiters were dressed in black with vests that displayed ethnic appliqués with African motifs and South African hats. In what looked like a combination of a restaurant and a museum, this business coupled restaurant themes from the west with its owner’s version of a Caribbean marine environment: plastered in the walls diners could find turtle shells, fishing nets, shells, swordfish swords, and other marine life-related objects. The menu included only rice and beans and icing as the two main items that were particularly Afro-Antillean. The rest of the menu was the same as any other generic Panamanian or North American restaurant: surf-n-turf, spaghetti, filet mignon, and even paella.117 Other restaurants in Panama City do offer more options that are part of Afro-Antillean cuisine, ranging from small cafeterias and dives on the Afro-Antillean
Sidewalk in Rio Abajo (a neighborhood traditionally inhabited by Afro-Antilleans) to restaurants with a few more options scattered throughout the city. Because of the location of many of these places, most of these restaurants cater to Panamanians and resident expatriates, with only occasional tourists.

Afro-Antillean restaurants in Bocas del Toro compete with international offerings as varied as a raw sushi and martini bar, Thai, Mediterranean, Moroccan, Greek, Lebanese, French, Italian, Indian, Spanish, fusion, Salvadoran, Mexican, US, plus vegetarian and organic options at several restaurants.

There are about ten restaurants that serve Afro-Antillean fare in the Archipelago today. Some of these restaurants have chosen to diversify their offerings by adding dishes that would be considered sophisticated and appealing to international culinary tourists. For instance, in some restaurants, clams with ginger and wine sauce is offered side by side with *rondón* soup, fried fish, rice with beans or *guandú* with beans, thus producing the commodification of tradition entangled with the cosmopolitan.

The politics of food are fundamental in the Caribbean, where many of the ingredients are shipped to the islands, as they either do not grow those products or produce them at a price higher than the cost of subsidized imported foods. A similar situation takes place in the Archipelago of Bocas del Toro, where very little food is grown on the island, with the exception of cacao and bananas. Most products come from the central provinces or the city of Changuinola on the mainland. Some Afro-Antillean families, particularly in Bastimentos, have small gardens for home consumption; the same is true for some indigenous peoples. In islands more distant from the capital of the Archipelago, indigenous peoples have larger gardens producing yucca, banana, plantain, *uyama*, *pixbae*, or *piva* (peach palm fruit) and *ñampí*, and fruits such as lemon and papaya. It is more common for households to grow small herb gardens with rosemary, oregano, mint, basil, and different varieties of bull nose hot pepper. The vast majority, however, are brought to Colon Island. Likewise, even though there was some cattle production in Bocas del Toro since the nineteenth century118—and specifically in the *colonia santeña* in the island of Bocas del Toro—the island no longer has a slaughterhouse and meat is brought from the city of David (Chiriquí) or Bocatorito in the Archipelago. Pork is raised by the Ngöbe on the islands of Bocatorito, San Cristóbal, Bahía Honda, and Cayo de Agua, and sold in Colon Island. This situation raises the cost of living, and creates a greater dependence on the tourism industry. Although limited production has characterized the islands for most of their history, the tourism industry brought about a high demand for produce, meat, and seafood that could not be met internally. Contrary to world trends toward the consumption and support of local produce and cuisines and, more generally, of “local food,”119 in Bocas del Toro, the food that is consumed is mostly shipped to the island and prepared as international cuisine.

**Conclusions**

As Urry asserts, the post-tourist engages in a negotiation of the exotic and the familiar while occupied in a touristic experience.120 This notion applies well to the relationship of tourists with food. Culinary tourism involves exploration and adventure, which in the case of culinary tourism in Bocas is represented by visiting a restaurant that serves Afro-Antillean food either in the Archipelago of Bocas del Toro or in Panama City. Culinary tourism can also mean sampling the familiar. In a cosmopolitan world, the familiar (regardless of place of origin) are Thai, Indian, Italian, Chinese, Mexican, or Mediterranean restaurants;
these cuisines have been placed in the side of the customary because of their ubiquitous presence in any urban (and often rural) area in the west. As Hitchcock et al. affirm about the Caribbean, “[although] large numbers of tourists may be attracted to the region by its perceived ‘differentness,’ lured by the images of culture and landscape which are vividly portrayed in the promotional literature, few are able or willing to tolerate a great deal of novelty.” Thus, in Bocas del Toro, the restaurant that was once owned by Kuna indigenous peoples and offered breakfast that included Spanish tortilla, omelet, *hojaldre*, pancakes, lobster, seafood mix, shrimps, crab, conch, fish fillets, rice with seafood, or squid for lunch and dinner, has been replaced by a restaurant that offers Indian food, with pancakes, granola, cereal, yogurt, bagels, along with vindaloo omelet, chicken masala, or vegetarian paneer. In Bocas del Toro, a restaurant that promises prototypical Indian food offers a reassuring option to the tourist who might wish to take a break from the extraordinary. For Holtzman (2006) this desire to consume ethnic foods is a kind of false colonial nostalgia that can be equated to eating the Other. In Bocas del Toro, Afro-Antilleans might be too ethnic to consume.

Cuisine is a window to understand the role of the state in constructing a touristic culture alongside a national culture. In the case of Panama, the government has focused on standardizing service, while also internationalizing local food. During the job training and cooking classes—offered by the ATP that I attended while conducting ethnographic research—the emphasis was on learning international standards and menus (sirloin, Cesar salad, seafood bisque, among others), with occasional references to dishes such as rice and beans, cod fritters or *bragadá*, or banana or yucca pudding. Additionally, there was considerable information on how to open and run a restaurant. Through these classes and general assumptions about tourism expectations based on encounters with tourists and the presence of resident expatriates, the Caribbean experience is sold in Bocas del Toro, when ingredients are mixed to offer this experience. A piña colada, for instance, is a ubiquitously Caribbean cocktail found in almost every restaurant in Bocas, even if the restaurant does not offer Caribbean food. However, an icing glass can only be bought in the restaurants that offer Afro-Antillean food.

In Bocas del Toro, consuming traditional Afro-Antillean food has become an important aspect of the touristic experience, but it has become more significant for what it represents for Afro-Antillean identity formation. Bocatoreneans have customarily used food to assert a distinctive regional identity in the multicultural context where they live. Thus, they differentiate between what they call mountain food, by implication cooked and consumed by indigenous peoples (simple, without any condiments other than salt), Afro-Antillean food (thick, spicy, heavy, and complete), and tourist food (more complex than mountain food in the use of condiments, but lighter than Afro-Antillean food). Tourist consumption of Afro-Antillean food has brought both a renewal of regional culinary pride (as is the case of the re-emergence of quintessential dishes such as *rondón* as well as its elevation from daily food to delicacy), and a reduction of practices considered traditional, such as the consumption of Panamanian fast food in local restaurants, due to price increases and formalization of the restaurant process. Likewise, this brings a degree of gustatory nostalgia for the time when Afro-Antillean and Panamanian food was readily available and at accessible prices; it brings gustatory nostalgia for the time when Afro-Antillean food followed the regimented codes of confection set up by the elders, when hearths were used instead of electric ovens to make Johnny cakes, or when red plantains were used instead of food colorant to make brightly red colored *plantintats*. These more elaborate cooking
processes are presented to the tourists as demonstrations of authenticity, as the seals of authenticity. However, when they do not take place (that is, when the Johnny cakes are made in electric ovens or the plantintats contain food colorant) the discussion shifts from preparation to final product. What matters is that the final product is representative of an Afro-Antillean culture.

The study of food and cuisine in Panama, as elsewhere in the Caribbean, has been addressed only sparingly. Panama’s history of cuisine tourism offers an interesting case, in which “national” cuisine along with indigenous and Afro-Antillean cuisine has not been at the center of the touristic encounter until recently. Nonetheless, local cuisine is offered to tourists, and this has fostered governmental efforts to standardize offerings and procedures. In these instances, such as the case of the Archipelago of Bocas del Toro, the phenomenon that results can be both described as the internationalization of local food (e.g. the modification of hearty food to appeal to the tourists in Afro-Antillean restaurants) and the localization of international food (e.g. the incorporation of “Caribbean” drinks into Afro-Antillean restaurants).

Notes

2 Panamanian chef at a cooking workshop in Archipelago of Bocas del Toro, 2000.
7 Gibson, “Traveling, Dwelling, and Eating Cultures,” p. 16.
15 Everett, “Beyond the Tourist Gaze?” p. 352.
19 For instance, as Helstosky notes, tourism contributed to the consolidation of pizza (a dish born in Naples that spread throughout Italy and was significant in the unification of the nation) as an internationally known dish and a representation of Italian and Italian-American identities. Carol Helstosky, Pizza: A Global History, London: Reaktion Books, 2008.
24 Everett, “Beyond the Tourist Gaze?” p. 352.
25 Hall et al., Food Tourism Around the World.
26 Long, “Food in Tourism Studies.”
28 Claudio Visentin, “Food, Agri-Culture, and Tourism,” in Food, Agri-Culture, and Tourism: Linking Local Gastronomy and Rural Tourism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, edited by Katia Laura Sidali, Achim Schiller, and Birgit Schulze. First edn. Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer, 2011, pp. xiii–xv. It should be noted that wine tourism has also developed in California, United States, starting in the 1930s after the end of Prohibition and growing steadily since the 1950s. Gmelch and Gmelch note that most wineries in Napa Valley were reluctant to engage in the business of tourism in the 1950s, discouraging tour buses, offering tours by appointment only and limiting their wine tastings to a few people per day. By the twenty-first century, however, there were more than five million tourists per year engaging in wine tourism in the area. George Gmelch and Sharon Bohn Gmelch, Tasting the Good Life: Wine Tourism in the Napa Valley, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011, pp. 21–2.
31 Boniface, Tasting Tourism.
32 Hall et al., Food Tourism Around the World.
33 Long, Culinary Tourism.
45 Craig Wight, “Reengineering ‘Authenticity’: Tourism Encounters with Cuisine in Rural Great Britain,” in Food for Thought: Essays on Eating and Culture, edited by Lawrence C. Rubin, Jefferson and London: McFarland & Company Publishers, 2008, p. 157. Agritourism is the prime example of the relevance of food as representing the authentic in tourism experiences. While agriculture is one of the oldest and most basic parts of the global economy, agritourism is one of the newest forms of tourism in the Americas and Europe. Its popularity may be seen as one way to preserve threatened subsistence strategies (H.G. Mathews, International Tourism: A Political and Social Analysis, Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1978; Rosie Cox, Lewis Holloway, Laura Venn, Moya Kneafsey, and Elizabeth Dowler, “Adopting a Sheep in Abruzzo: Agritourism and the Preservation of Transhumance Agriculture in Central Italy,” in Tourism and Agriculture: New Geographies of Consumption, Production and Rural Restructuring, edited by Rebecca Maria Torres and Janet H. Momsem, London and New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 151–62). However, it should be noted, as Wilk states, that there is nothing inherently conservative or progressive about the issues of better quality food, preserving rural livelihoods and foodways, or even better wages and treatment for farm workers; thus, one should not assume that agritourism is necessarily a panacea for the rural world. Likewise, agritourism has been criticized for being an option that tends to be
available only to the upper echelons of the "new rurality" (Luis Llambi, Globalización, Ajuste y Nueva Ruraldad: Una Agenda Para La Investigación y El Desarrollo Rural, Caracas: Laboratorio de Estudios Rurales y Agrarios, 1995). Other problems include the impacts of rural restructuring, new geographies of consumption and production, diversification, and new forms of production and consumption.


47 Germann Molz, "Guilty Pleasures of the Golden Arches."

48 Gibson, "Traveling, Dwelling, and Eating Cultures."


50 Gibson, "Traveling, Dwelling, and Eating Cultures," p. 15.

51 Cresswell, "The Production of Mobilities."


53 Sheller and Urry, "Places to Play, Places in Play."

54 Mathews, International Tourism.


57 Daye et al., New Perspectives on Caribbean Tourism, p. 1.


60 This limited attention is partly due to the myopic view of authorities and tourism mediators, who rely on stereotypical notions of the region’s attractions.

61 Dodman and Rhiney, "We Nyammin?", p. 117.


68 Lasso-von Lang and Rogers, Flavors of Panama, p. 19.


71 Lasso-von Lang and Rogers, Flavors of Panama, p. 20.

73 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 354.
74 The Chiriquí Land Company is a subsidiary of the United Fruit Company. As noted previously, the United Fruit Company was formed on March 30, 1899 as a result of the fusion of the Boston Fruit Company (formed informally in 1885 and presided by Andrew W. Preston) and the companies controlled by Minor C. Keith (United Statian entrepreneur and pioneer in the production of banana in Central America) in Limón [Costa Rica], Bocas del Toro [Panamá] and Santa Marta [Colombia]. Clyde Stephens, “Bosquejo Histórico del Cultivo del Banco en la Provincia de Bocas del Toro (1880–1960),” in Publicaciones Especiales Revista Panameña de Antropología, ed. Stanley Heckandon Moreno, Panamá, 1987, p. 8; Frederick Upham Adams, Conquest of the Tropics: The Story of the Creative Enterprises Conducted by the United Fruit Company, Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1914, p. 68, p. 78. Adams proposes that the legal formation of the United Fruit Company generated something beyond the birth of a corporation: it marked the origin of the plantain and banana industries in the world (Upham Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, p. 85).
75 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 360. Other exports included tagua (vegetable ivory), cow and deer skin, fine wood, pearl oysters, carey (tortoise shell), and rubber (p. 352).
76 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 332.
77 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 359.
78 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, pp. 139–40, p. 147.
79 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 334.
80 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 361.
81 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 383.
82 Lasso-von Lang and Rogers, Flavors of Panama, p. 8.
84 Pérez et al., “Estudio Estratégico del Turismo en Kuna Yala,” p. 10.
85 Lasso-von Lang and Rogers, Flavors of Panama, p. 16.
86 Holtzman, “Food and Memory,” p. 368.
88 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 384.
91 Stanley Heckadon Moreno, Memorias de un Criollo Bocatoreño, Panamá: Litho-Impresora Panamá, 1980, pp. 10–11.
95 The Bocatorenean rondón is called fufú in Colon, tapao in the Darien region, bao in the Archipelago of San Blas, and tulemaci in the coastal areas adjacent to the Archipelago of Bocas del Toro. It refers to a fish soup with coconut milk (interview P.W., October 9, 2013).
96 Ackee is the flower of a tree brought from Jamaica to Bocas del Toro, and a very common ingredient in Jamaican and Bocatorenean dishes. It has become highly scarce because the flower is only edible once it is picked up after it has flourished and opened up by itself.
98 Barry Higman, Jamaican Food: History, Biology, Culture, first edn. Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago: University of West Indies Press, 2008.
100 The sauces have inventive names, such as “I’ll Be a Bitch Sauce” or “Killing me Man Sauce.”
101 Guerrón Montero, “Afro-Antillean Cuisine and Global Tourism.”
103 Guerrón Montero, “Panama,” in Albala, Food Cultures of the World Encyclopedia.
107 David Bell and Gill Valentine, Consuming Geographies: We are Where we Eat, New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 125.
109 Spang, “All the World is a Restaurant,” p. 81.
110 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 376.
111 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, pp. 380–1.
112 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 381.
113 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 382.
115 Holtzman, “Food and Memory.”
116 The restaurant is no longer in operation.
117 There is also a cafeteria (“Variedades de las Antillas”) at the Municipal Tourism Center “Mis Pueblitos” (Centro Turístico Municipal Mis Pueblitos). The food offered in this location is more connected to Afro-Antillean cuisine than what is offered at more elaborate restaurants (code fritters, saril drinks, escabeche fish, rice and beans with coconut milk, among others).
118 Castillero Calvo, Cultura Alimentaria y Globalización, p. 351.
122 Holtzman, “Food and Memory,” p. 368.