




GASTRONOMY AS AN AUTONOMOUS FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE: CONCEPT, OBJECT, METHOD AND INTERRELATIONS

A GASTRONOMIA COMO CAMPO DE CONHECIMENTO AUTÔNOMO: CONCEITO,
OBJETO, MÉTODO E INTERRELAÇÕES

LA GASTRONOMÍA COMO CAMPO AUTÓNOMO DE CONOCIMIENTO:
CONCEPTO, OBJETO, MÉTODO E INTERRELACIONES

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ABSTRACT:

Objective: To discuss and propose Gastronomy as an autonomous field of knowledge, in which the knowledge originating from culinary practices is accumulated and systematized, with these practices as its central object. Additionally, the study seeks to clarify its relationship with tourism, particularly gastronomic tourism, and the possible interconnections between culinary practices and the development of gastronomy as a social, cultural, patrimonial, and economic expression.

Design/methodology/approach: An essayistic approach was chosen due to its epistemological openness. The systematic literature review is prioritized to support the argumentation, due to its rigor in evaluating scientific production on a given topic. During the refinement process, inclusion and exclusion filters were applied to articles retrieved from searches in the CAPES Periodicals Portal, SciELO, and Web of Science databases.

Results: The research identified in 127 articles, which were organized into two thematic blocks according to the proposed criteria: Gastronomy as a Field of Knowledge, addressing concept and method (three entries), and Gastronomic Tourism (five entries). These results formed the basis of the analysis and guided the study toward its objective.

Limitations/implications of the research: Given that Gastronomy is a relatively recent field of knowledge, its academic production remains limited. This gap reinforces the relevance of the present investigation, which aims to discuss and propose Gastronomy as a field of knowledge, emerging from dialogue among various researchers.

Practical implications: (a) To strengthen and specify the organization of Gastronomy as an autonomous field of knowledge, providing unity to the area and enabling cohesive advances; (b) To enhance the role of Gastronomy within tourism offerings.

Originality/value: To support the consolidation of Gastronomy as a field of knowledge and encourage exchanges among researchers in the area. Regarding gastronomic tourism, to promote the appreciation of gastronomy as a distinguishing factor to be culturally and economically integrated into local offerings.

Keywords: gastronomy; culinary practices; field of knowledge; concept; gastronomic tourism.

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RESUMO

Objetivo: Discutir e propor a Gastronomia como um campo autônomo de conhecimento, no qual se acumulam e sistematizam os saberes originados das práticas culinárias, tendo estas como seu objeto de estudo. Complementarmente, busca-se esclarecer a relação com o turismo, particularmente o turismo gastronômico, e as possíveis interconexões com as práticas culinárias e os avanços da gastronomia como expressão social, cultural, patrimonial e econômica.

Metodologia/abordagem: Optou-se pela abordagem ensaística, devido à sua abertura epistemológica. Priorizou-se a revisão sistemática da literatura para a sistematização da argumentação, devido ao seu rigor na avaliação da produção científica sobre um determinado tema. Durante o refinamento, foram aplicados filtros de inclusão e exclusão aos artigos resultantes das buscas no Portal de Periódicos da CAPES, SciELO e Web of Science.

Resultados: A pesquisa resultou em 127 artigos, sistematizados em dois blocos temáticos, dentro dos critérios propostos: Gastronomia como Campo do Saber, assumindo conceito e método, com três entradas, e Turismo Gastronômico, com cinco. Esses resultados constituíram a base da análise, conduzindo ao objetivo da pesquisa.

Limitações/implicações da pesquisa: Sendo a Gastronomia um campo de conhecimento recente, sua produção acadêmica ainda é limitada. Essa lacuna reforça a relevância da presente investigação, em seu objetivo de discutir e propor a Gastronomia como um campo de conhecimento, resultante de diálogos entre diferentes pesquisadores.

Implicações práticas: (a) Qualificar, especificando a organização da Gastronomia como um campo de conhecimento autônomo, dando unidade à área, conduzindo a avanços coesos; (b) qualificar a presença da Gastronomia na oferta turística.

Originalidade/valor: Corroborar a Gastronomia como um campo de conhecimento, incentivando intercâmbios entre pesquisadores da área. Em termos de turismo gastronômico, incentivar a valorização da gastronomia como um fator diferenciador a ser integrado cultural e economicamente às ofertas locais.

Palavras-chave: gastronomia; práticas culinárias; campo de conhecimento; conceito; turismo gastronômico.

RESUMEN:

Objetivo: Discutir y proponer la Gastronomía como un campo de conocimiento autónomo, donde se acumulan y sistematizan los conocimientos provenientes de las prácticas culinarias, teniendo estas prácticas como objeto. Complementariamente, se busca esclarecer la relación con el turismo, en particular el turismo gastronómico, y las posibles interconexiones con las prácticas culinarias y los avances de la gastronomía como expresión social, cultural, patrimonial y económica.

Diseño/metodología/enfoque: Se optó por el enfoque ensayístico por su apertura epistemológica. Se prioriza la revisión sistemática de la literatura para la sistematización de la argumentación, debido a su rigor en la evaluación de la producción científica sobre un tema determinado. Durante el refinamiento, se aplicaron filtros de inclusión y exclusión a los artículos resultantes de las búsquedas en el Portal de Periódicos de CAPES, SciELO y las bases de datos Web of Science.

Resultados: La investigación arrojó 127 artículos, sistematizados en dos bloques temáticos, dentro de los criterios propuestos: Gastronomía como Campo de Conocimiento, considerando concepto y método, con tres entradas, y Turismo Gastronómico, con cinco. Estos resultados sirvieron de base al análisis y dieron origen al propósito del objetivo.

Limitaciones/implicaciones de la investigación: Dado que la gastronomía es un campo de conocimiento reciente, su producción académica aún es limitada. Esta carencia refuerza la relevancia de la presente investigación, en su objetivo de discutir y proponer la gastronomía como campo de conocimiento, fruto del diálogo entre diferentes investigadores.

Implicaciones prácticas: (a) Cualificar, especificando la organización de la gastronomía como campo de conocimiento autónomo, dando unidad al área y propiciando avances cohesivos; (b) Cualificar la presencia de la gastronomía en la oferta turística.

Originalidad/valor: Consolidar la gastronomía como campo de conocimiento, fomentando el intercambio entre investigadores del área. En cuanto al turismo gastronómico, fomentar la valoración de la gastronomía como factor diferenciador para integrarse cultural y económicamente en la oferta local.

Palabras clave: gastronomía; prácticas culinarias; campo de conocimiento; concepto; turismo gastronómico.

GASTRONOMY: INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

In recent decades, gastronomy has gained economic and cultural relevance and recognition as an identity heritage, in many cases, activated by the presence of tourism, now a global phenomenon. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2025), more than 300 million tourists traveled the world in the first few months of last year alone. This means that tourism was among those responsible for the economic and sociocultural emphasis, but it also became one of the impacts that led to a demand for innovation in the gastronomic offerings of the places visited, as well as conditioning reflections on the systematization and transmission of empirical and academic knowledge accumulated about culinary practices.

Traditionally, domestic kitchens were the spaces where recipes and preparation techniques were passed down from generation to generation. In subsequent times, other discursive contributions share this role – titles proliferate in bookstores, sometimes richly illustrated, and videos on online platforms – as well as more systematized reflection in academic terms. As will be presented in the methodology description, academic studies still lack depth capable of encompassing the multiple aspects involved in food cultures, their ingredients, preparation techniques, and composition of dishes, among other sociocultural issues, such as those related to memory and heritage, resolving conceptual specificities between the different terms sometimes associated (Ferro, 2017).

Soares, Silva, and De Sá (2024) bring another important contribution, noting that the presence of Gastronomy in academia in Brazil dates to the end of the 1990s, with the creation of the first undergraduate courses. The courses that are being implemented, therefore, are offspring of the new century when, among other things, the concept of Science is being rethought. According to the same authors, and drawing on Foucault's idea of diagnosing the present, new approaches to knowledge may imply that "the present does not refer to actuality, but rather to the accumulation of historical forces that persist and influence the contemporary, added to real contingencies that the present time endures" (p. 714). Veiga-Neto (1998, p. 148), in a time earlier but contemporary to the academic emergence of Gastronomy in the country, had already noted the "radical displacement of the old, secure and good notions that one had about representation, verification, phenomenon, reality and the mind as a mirror of Nature".

These digressions aim to signal why this essay proposes to reflect on gastronomy as a field of knowledge, avoiding the word (and the concept) of Science, and, among other things that lead to the choice of an essayistic structure, not starting from questions, but rather seeking to raise questions throughout the text. In these terms, the priority is to discuss and propose Gastronomy as an autonomous field of knowledge, in which knowledge originating from culinary practices is accumulated, organized, and systematized, which constitutes its object of study. Complementarily, it seeks to clarify the relationship with tourism – leading to the segmentation of gastronomic tourism – in the possible interconnections, both positive and negative, with culinary practices and with advances in terms of consolidating gastronomy as a social, cultural, patrimonial, and economic expression.

In the following section, Methodology is presented, addressing the theoretical challenges to gastronomy in terms of object circumscription, theoretical contributions that support such approaches, and methodological assumptions for data collection and analysis, with specificities for the construction of this field of knowledge. Formally, the writing is organized, after this Introduction, into the segments Methodology, Gastronomy, in three main units: Social Construction, from a historical conceptual perspective; Autonomous Field of Knowledge, implying systematizations that lead to the proposal of a concept, indication of object and method; and Interfaces with Tourism.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

For this article, more specifically, essayistic textual conception and structure are chosen due to their epistemological openness. It is understood, following Alves (2010, p. 15), that the essay, however neglected it may have been, "giving way to the predominance of the established forms of writing scientific works – such as these, articles written for specialized journals, etc. –, has the characteristic of allowing greater conceptual freedom and enabling a wider space for creative and innovative exercise, even in 'non-literary' areas." For the same authors, the essay "approaches a theme or analysis of a problem more flexible. In certain circumstances, it becomes the best way to raise questions that, otherwise, might be limited by the need for a more systematic demonstration" (p. 16).

Following this essayistic approach, priority is given to systematizing the article's argument, more specifically, to a systematic literature review, as it allows for a rigorous, impartial, and comprehensive evaluation of scientific production available on a given topic. According to Donato and Donato (2019), systematic reviews use explicit and reproducible methods, with the aim of minimizing biases and ensuring greater reliability of the results obtained, being recognized as high-quality scientific evidence. The review will be used as a substrate to open an argumentative dialogue with what is already established in the literature on Gastronomy, aiming to achieve a conceptualization, to be discussed, that supports it as an area of study and an autonomous field of knowledge.

The literature review was conducted between March 2025 and January 2026, initially in a free and unsystematic manner, only later performing with greater methodological rigor, for which the analysis focuses on the 2020–2026 period, to map recent and updated discussions in the field of Gastronomy. As refinement criteria, open access to the full text and peer review filters were applied, aiming to ensure both transparency in access to publications and the scientific reliability of the analyzed material.

The searches were conducted in three databases recognized in the academic community: CAPES Periodicals Portal, SciELO, and Web of Science. In all platforms, the central keyword “Gastronomy” was chosen, combined with other strategic terms, to understand how the field has been conceptualized, methodologically delimited, and articulated with related areas. For this purpose, Boolean operators of the AND type were used, structuring the following combinations: Gastronomy and “field of knowledge”; Gastronomy and concept; Gastronomy and method; and Gastronomy and “gastronomic tourism”. The use of quotation marks in compound terms is highlighted to ensure greater fidelity to the results retrieved.

The choice to combine the word “gastronomy” with the other descriptors was intended to understand how discussions have been constructed and consolidated in contemporary scientific literature. At the end of the search process, a set of articles was identified that make up the preliminary analytical corpus of the research, systematized as presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Synthetic distribution of articles by descriptor (2020 - 2026)

Descriptor	Gastronomy AND field of knowledge	Gastronomy AND concept	Gastronomy AND method	Gastronomy AND gastronomic tourism	Number of articles
Periódicos CAPES	1	21	35	13	70
SciELO	1	2	5	5	13
Web of Science	2	3	25	14	44
Total	4	26	65	32	127

Source: Research data (2026).

Table 2 systematizes the inclusion and exclusion criteria, which led to two thematic blocks, bringing together the articles that met the proposed criteria: Gastronomy as a Field of Knowledge assuming concept and method, with three articles (Ferro & Rejowski, 2018; Soares, Ferro et al, 2020; Soares, Da Silva & De Sá, 2024) and Gastronomic Tourism, with five articles (Aguiar & De Melo, 2020; Minasse, 2020; Sartori, Cruz & Tricarico, 2021; Dos Reis, 2020; Jiménez Rodríguez, 2023).

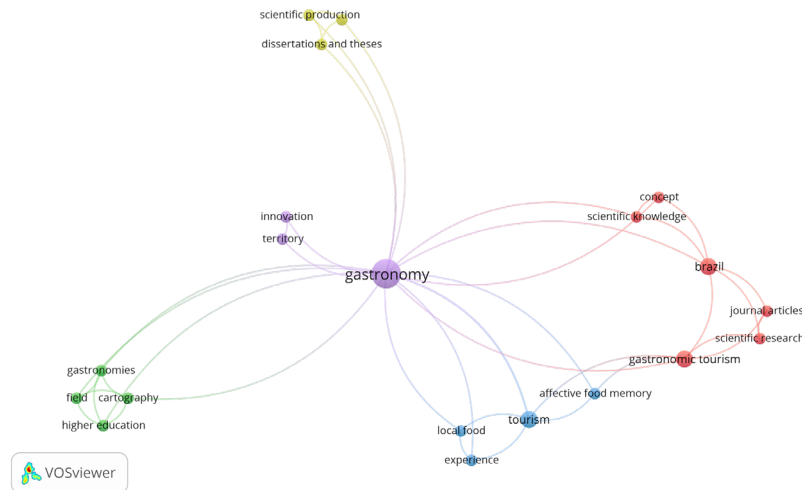
Table 2 – Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Presence in at least one of the three selected databases	Duplicate versions in the databases
Scientific journal, double-blind review, open access	Restricted access and/or lack of blind review
Publication in the period 2020–2026	Publication outside the defined period
Presence of the term gastronomy in the title or keywords	Absence of the term gastronomy in title or keywords
Define Gastronomy and/or Gastronomic Tourism	Lack of conceptual guidance

Source: The Authors (2026)

Preliminary analysis of the corpus was performed using data from selected documents, which were exported from defined platforms and subjected to initial processing in Microsoft Excel (version 16.97.2). After organizing and standardizing the information, the file was imported into VOSviewer software (version 1.6.20). In VOSviewer, the minimum occurrence of a term was established as a criterion to allow the inclusion of all relevant descriptors. From the initial set of 23 identified keywords, the 20 with the highest connectivity were selected, which served as the basis for generating clusters and creating keyword co-occurrence maps, enabling the visualization and identification of thematic clusters, presented in a synthetic way in Figure 1 and Table 2, with a description of the identified clusters.

Figure 1 – Thematic clusters from the corpus



Source: Research data (2026).

Table 2 – Thematic clusters identified in the term co-occurrence analysis

Identification	Associated terms
Red Cluster	journal articles; Brazil; concept; scientific knowledge; scientific research; gastronomic tourism
Green Cluster	field; cartography; higher education; gastronomies
Blue Cluster	local food; experience; affective food memory; tourism
Yellow Cluster	theoretical configuration; dissertations and theses; scientific production
Purple Cluster	gastronomy; innovation; territory

Source: Authors (2026).

The systematized results, bringing together a small number of articles, corroborate Dias, De Aguiar Filho and Pinheiro (2021, n.p.), whose research indicated that “Gastronomy has been relegated to a secondary position in the scientific discussions specific to the area [...] that the field of study actually has, according to the established criteria, a low number of published materials”, which could compromise the autonomy of the field. In the same vein, Soares, Silva and De Sá (2024, p. 714) argue that “the discourses that emerge in this field follow multiple directions and occupy diverse territories. In all these contexts, no territory understands gastronomy in the same way, which leads us to affirm that there is, in fact, a multiplicity of ‘gastronomies’ in practice”.

The same authors also state that the field of gastronomy does not have a clearly defined object of study, among other things. These statements highlight the relevance of this research, considering the weaknesses and gaps still present in the approaches to Gastronomy as a field of knowledge in the literature.

Epistemologically, the proposed essayistic approach aims, rather than presenting answers, to carry out relational operations to foster debate about another possible perspective on Gastronomy and its object of study, to be proposed as culinary practices. By proposing this contribution to the investigation, assuming Gastronomy as an autonomous field of knowledge, it is hoped to contribute not only to the systematization of gastronomic knowledge, but also to the strengthening of interdisciplinary dialogue between areas of Social Sciences and Applied Social Sciences, such as Tourism, among others, which at times present investigations focused on the same object.

GASTRONOMY: A FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE

We begin by referring to Pratts (1998, p. 116) and his concept of social construction, which he defines as the capacity of societies to generate discourses about a given reality, leading to processes of its legitimation. That is, “the social assimilation of these discourses, more or less unaltered. [...] because no invention acquires authority if it is not legitimized as a social construction, and no social construction is produced spontaneously without a previously invented discourse [...]”

We apply this understanding to comprehend Gastronomy from three perspectives: the first, addressing Gastronomy in its social construction, historicizing it especially through literature – in its beginnings largely associated with the format of chronicles of customs – and the presence of the first restaurants; the second, its institutionalization as an autonomous field of knowledge, seeking to make it explicit; and the third, its interfaces with tourism. The argument is structured on the premise that culinary practices occur as a cultural expression and, in these terms, as a field of socially and historically constituted skills and knowledge, that is, matured over time. Following Bourdieu (2009, p. 13), this involves applying “the relational mode of thought that [...] leads to characterizing every element by the relationships that unite it to others in a system, and from which it derives its meaning and function,” as shown in Figure 1.

Socio-historical overview

The use of the word Gastronomy has been recurrent – tradition dictates, built from classical Greek and Latin, uniting *gaster/gaster* [stomach] and *nomia/nomo* [law, norm] – to refer to the preparation and consumption of food, implicitly including the pleasure derived from both processes. In ancient Greek, more specifically, *gastēr* [γάστρη] would mean ‘belly’ or ‘stomach’, in mythology being linked to the homonymous god, responsible for agriculture and the fertility of the land (NomesPróprios, n.d.). However, the concept and the term, more properly, would only have been used for the first time in 1801, in the original edition of *La Gastronomie, Poème en Quatre Chants*, by the Frenchman Joseph Berchoux.

Berchoux’s poem is divided into four cantos (History of Ancient Cuisine [Histoire De La Cuisine Des Anciens]; First Course [En Le Premier Service]; Second Course [Le Second Service]; Dessert [Le Dessert]), and extols the cultural, social, and artistic relationships of food. From this literary piece, Gastronomy would be demarcated, beyond the biological act of eating, as a broader area of interest in its scope. As Berchoux warns in Canto I: “I will elevate cuisine to the level of the fine arts” [Mettre au rang des beaux-arts celui de la cuisine] (p. 21). Earlier, in his first verses, he declared:

Et l'intruse dans l'art de jouer aux échecs: / Pour moi de tels sujets sont arides et secs. / Je me suis emparé d'une heureuse matière: / Je chante l'Homme à Table, et dirai la manière / D'embellir un repas; je dirai le secret / D'augmenter les plaisirs d'un aimable banquet, / D'y fixer l'amitié, s'y plaire sans cesse... / Et d'y déraisonner dans une douce ivresse. // And the intruder in the art of playing chess: / For me, such subjects are arid and dry. / I have seized upon a happy subject: / I sing of the Man at the Table, and will tell of the way / To embellish a meal; I will tell of the secret / To increase the pleasures of a pleasant banquet, / To establish friendship there, to delight in it endlessly... / And to indulge in a gentle intoxication.

It’s important to emphasize that Berchoux’s poem became public in the context of the French Revolution of 1789, which led to the fall of the monarchy and, within the same revolutionary scope – encompassing political, social, and cultural issues – encouraged ‘citizen’ practices and the appropriation of the street as a privileged stage for their exercise, in opposition to the intramural practices of the royalty.

Hobsbawm (1996, p. 9) expands on this historical appropriation by stating that, between 1789 and 1848, a twofold revolution occurred: the French revolution, in the political field; and in England, the industrial revolution, which “initially took the form of a European expansion in and conquest of the rest of the world [...], a triumph of the new society.” The historian further adds that it was a triumph “not of ‘industry’ as such, but of capitalist industry; not of liberty and equality in general but of middle class or ‘bourgeois’ liberal society [...]” (p. 11).

Boyer (2002) identifies in this period a third revolution, the tourism revolution, also originating in England, a result of leisure time filled with trips organized by professionals, with destinations initially in Europe, but soon expanding throughout the world. In other words, tourism was integrated into Europe’s colonial expansion across the planet, with food playing an important role in the construction of distinction.

Among the new ways of being and existing in space, preferably urban, but also in nature, were the eating habits and commensality of this emerging bourgeois society, more sophisticated and differentiated (cuisine at the level of the fine arts, according to Berchoux), previously the privilege of the salons inside palaces and the aristocratic elites who circulated there.

Brillat-Savarin (1995, p. 286), whose work will be discussed in greater later, notes that the Frenchman Beauvilliers set up his first establishment in 1782, becoming, for “more than fifteen years, the owner of the most famous restaurant in Paris”. On the menu of the house, local products and others coming even from abroad show that “a meal made in Paris is a cosmopolitan journey in which each part of the world is represented by its products” (p. 287). It is worth highlighting that the Les Halles market, created in 1183 but renovated in 1858 to meet the new demands of what was now the City of Lights, greatly contributed to the diversification of culinary products in Paris.

From examining the various menus of several first-class restaurants, especially those of the Véry brothers and the Provençaux brothers, we know that the consumer had at least the following options for their meal: 12 soups, 24 appetizers, fifteen or twenty beef dishes, twenty lamb dishes, thirty fish dishes [...] fifty side dishes, fifty desserts. (p. 287)

In line with the presence of restaurants in public spaces, reveals that: a certain democratization of access to more specialized menus, such as that of the Beauvilliers restaurant, meeting a demand that sought the light of the streets, now with gas lighting that had arrived in Paris in 1829; the consolidation of France as hegemonic and also a colonizing power in terms of culinary norms in the Western world; and the rise of cuisine to cultural and symbolic relevance associated with life in cities and the journeys that lead to them. It should be noted that, for the beginning of the 19th century:

The word 'urban' is, of course, ambiguous. It includes the two European cities which by 1789 can be called genuinely large by our standards, London, with about a million, and Paris, with about half a million, and the score or so with 20 others with a population of 100,000 or more: two in France, two in Germany, perhaps four in Spain, perhaps five in Italy (the Mediterranean was traditionally the home of cities) [...]. But it also includes the multitude of small provincial towns in which the majority of city-dweller actually lived; the ones where a man could stroll in a few minutes from the cathedral square surrounded by public buildings. [...] These provincial towns were none less urban for being small. (Hobsbawm, 1996, p. 19-20)

In large cities and, gradually, also in small ones, the restaurants that emerged in the public space from then on were structured "with a superior kitchen, an elegant dining room, efficient waiters and a carefully curated wine cellar, whose concept of quality, class and good service spread throughout Europe and then throughout the world" (Spang, 2003, p. 43). It should be noted that for the same author, it will only be after the First Great European War that restaurants will abandon refined sophistication to meet the daily needs of workers in large Western cities.

In the same vein of its social construction, the word Gastronomy will be highlighted by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, in 1825, who will introduce the subject as "an object of reflection and systematization, leading some scholars to consider his book a landmark for the field of gastronomy" (De Castro, Maciel & Maciel, 2016, p. 21). This refers to the edition of *Physiology of Taste [Physiologie du Goût]*, about which the same authors comment that for Brillat-Savarin "gastronomy, in general, can be understood as the grounded knowledge of everything that refers to man as he feeds himself" (p. 21), or, in a similar sense to Berchoux when he writes that he would sing of Man at the Table. De Castro et al. further add: "The author reminds us that gastronomy is conditioned by cultural values and social codes, being linked to identity processes of knowledge and recognition, expressed, among other things, by his famous phrase 'tell me what you eat and I will tell you who you are.'" (p. 21).

Bill Buford, who signs the Introduction to Savarin's book in the *Companhia de Mesa* edition (which, strangely, disappears in the *Companhia das Letras* edition) is more sarcastic.

The original title is long – *The Physiology of Taste or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy* – but each of the exotic terms in its composition is the result of a deliberately calculated reflection. The subtitle is almost as revealing (A theoretical, historical and contemporary work, dedicated to the gastronomes of Paris, by a professor and member of several literary and learned societies), but, considered ironic and self-deprecating, it was never used again. In general, even the [original] title itself was usually ignored. (Buford, 1995, p. 13)

Another digression by Buford contributes to the purpose of this writing, which is to explore the social construction of Gastronomy. According to him:

In 1859, an edition of the book was published as *The Handbook of Dining*. In 1884, the text was promoted to *A Handbook of Gastronomy*. A more grandiose 1889 edition was published as *Gastronomy as a Fine Art*. The second part of the title, more problematic [*Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*], has rarely survived, as in the Brazilian edition, except as a kind of implicit mention that there should be a complement, such as *Corpulency and Leanness* (1864), or *Science of Good Living* (1879). In Great Britain, it is still possible to find the 1970s edition of the Penguin Classics collection under the title *The Philosopher in the Kitchen*. (p. 13)

It is observed that Gastronomy gradually took precedence in the context of new editions of *Physiology of Taste*, although the nationality of the cited editions is unclear. Moving from the cover to the content, Buford is more acerbic (which perhaps explains the removal of his text from other editions in Brazil):

One does not need to be a philosopher to know that the inner pages of a work are far more vulnerable than the cover, and we should be grateful that the book's first publisher, Sautelet, in Paris, treated the text with indifference and contempt. In 1825, Professor Brillat-Savarin sent a manuscript for evaluation, a work spanning three decades, extracted from a 'secret diary'. The text was rejected. Underterred, he paid for the printing of five hundred copies, on the condition that his name was not associated with the work and remained alive for only two months after its publication, just long enough to witness the book's success. (Buford, 1995, pp. 13-14)

"His book is...what? [...] In a way, it's an autobiography, but narrated mainly in the form of anecdotes at the dinner table [...]. It's not a cookbook [...]. The difficulty arises from the book's opening, which invites us to expect something that never materializes" (p. 14). After these assertions, Buford's conclusion at the end of his text is less harsh: "Brillat, despite not being a man of modern training, understands what it is to be a scientist in the kitchen. He got to the heart of the matter" (p. 18).

Gastronomy as a field of knowledge

Regarding the scientific nature of Gastronomy, Brillat-Savarin himself (1995, p. 55) explains that “sciences, cultivated over an infinite number of generations, will make progress,” because they “are not like Minerva, who emerges fully armed from the brain of Jupiter; they are daughters of time, and are formed imperceptibly first by the accumulation of methods indicated by experience, later by the discovery of principles that are deduced from the combination of these methods.”

More recently, Gastronomy, a daughter of time, is advancing as a validated field of study in academia, where it is becoming present in teaching, with training at the undergraduate level, in bachelor’s and technological courses, in addition to the consolidation of the offer of formal and informal courses focused on culinary practices. Its expansion is also noted as a theme in terms of theoretical and methodological constructions, in studies carried out in dissertations and theses at the *stricto sensu* level.

Here we present Bourdieu and his theory of the field, prioritizing it over terms such as area, discipline, or even science (and others) used academically. This is because:

Understanding the social genesis of a field and grasping what makes the specific need for the belief that sustains it, the language game played within it, the material and symbolic things at play that are generated within it, is to explain, to make necessary, to subtract from the absurdity of the arbitrary and the unmotivated the acts of the producers and the works produced by them. (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 69)

As a relatively recent field of knowledge in academic studies, it may be said that it offers room for analytical depth that allows for a systematic understanding of the complexity of culinary and food practices implicit beyond the term Gastronomy, often synonymized with words such as <food> or <nutrition>, <cuisine> or <culinary>, <eating habits> or <commensality>, <taste> or <palate>, which, according to Ferro (2017, p. 15), would allow us to question: “Do the authors who propose studies involving these words use them as synonyms for each other? What are the conceptual dimensions of these words?”

Returning to Buford (1995, p. 17) once again, despite his criticisms of the pioneer Savarin, he argues that “there is indeed, in a manifest way, a science in cooking – chemistry instead of physiology; botany, perhaps; physics, on certain occasions; and a kitchen is, indeed, a laboratory, where elements are tested, combined, subjected to extreme temperatures and studied.” However, applying the word science to it is still something observed with caution because, according to Soares, Silva and De Sá (2024, p. 219), its “most current understanding encompasses a complex system of thought that defines the relationships between the act of eating, food and its production process, and all sorts of relationships it establishes with human beings and their food”.

Gastronomy and the autonomy of the field

Addressing and discussing the scientific nature of Gastronomy, in its specificities, imposes as a first challenge its recognition as a field of knowledge and study independent of its sister field, Nutrition, only then facing challenges related to its conceptualization, methodology and epistemic consolidation.

In the academic tradition, the issue of ‘food’ has been associated with Nutrition, allocated in the CNPq (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) to the Health Sciences Broad Area and, in CAPES (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel) (2025), integrating the College of Life Sciences, with four active postgraduate programs. Gastronomy is not mentioned, even though a master’s program has been operating at the Federal University of Ceará since 2021, included in the multidisciplinary area. Faced with this erasure, separating the two areas is the first challenge, opening space for greater visibility of Gastronomy as a full *stricto sensu* academic offering, as already established in terms of undergraduate studies.

Kac et al. (2011, p. 909), in a text “prepared based on the document formulated by the National Forum of Coordinators of Postgraduate Programs in Food and Nutrition, which presented the proposal for the creation of the Food and Nutrition area to the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel of the Ministry of Education”, state that Nutrition is the science of nutrients, in their “action-interaction and balance related to health and disease, and the process by which the body ingests, digests, absorbs, transports, uses and eliminates food substances” (p. 914).

The authors go on to state that, as a field of study, Nutrition would encompass “the diet constituted from nutrients, in their functions within the normal or pathological human body, corresponding to the place of nutritional needs and recommendations, nutrient intake and nutritional assessment” (p. 913), that is, from a biomedical paradigm, relying on “the scientific rationalization of eating in modern society, making use of scientific methodologies with an experimental or empiricist emphasis, with a view to the prevention and cure of diseases, corresponding to the production of knowledge of a universal and natural nature” (p. 915).

However, considering food as a field for generating knowledge, “it is directed towards food invested with meaning, which transforms it into a phenomenon of the order of the humanities, the social, the cultural, the philosophical, the political, the economic, the psychic, the arts, literature” (p. 913). From this last statement, perhaps it can be inferred that the visibility achieved by Gastronomy in recent decades has led to the expansion of what was previously understood as the object of the field of Nutrition, in disputes for space, internal to the field of food.

We propose here, provisionally, to consider that Nutrition and Gastronomy have as their thematization food, understood as a natural, processed, or mixed substance, capable of being ingested by living beings. Separating the two fields of knowledge, the physiological-biological dimension is pertinent to the studies and practices of Nutrition, and the sociocultural dimensions, therefore historical and symbolic, as a field of study of the latter. In this movement, the logic and centrality are transferred from food to eating. Ferro (2017, p. 16) prefers to base his theorization on the duality of food versus eating, adopting “culture as the dividing line between these, where chemical, physical and biochemical studies assume the term ‘Food’, and areas that consider the human influence on food should employ the use of the term ‘Eating’”, which, within the scope of this writing, we are treating as eating. This issue will be revisited later.

Although there are still discussions about the scientific nature of academic production in Gastronomy, that is, as to whether it occurs as an autonomous field of knowledge supported by methodological criteria, as already stated, its legitimation has advanced, considering the presence of productions in journals (its own and from other areas of knowledge that embrace the theme), interdisciplinary debates in academic events and the offering of undergraduate and specialization courses in higher education institutions (Soares, Silva & De Sá, 2024).

Gastronomy: conceptualizing

Considering this context, we now propose to explore some conceptions present in the literature on Gastronomy, seeking common affinities that contribute to the formulation of a conceptualization that dialogues with the contemporary world. Among the pioneers in this path is the Frenchman Savarin, previously mentioned, who proposed in a book published in 1811 that the “material subject of gastronomy is everything that can be eaten; its direct objective, the preservation of individuals; and its means of execution, the culture that produces; the commerce that exchanges, the industry that prepares, and the experience that invents the means of arranging everything for the best use” (Brillat-Savarin, 1995, p. 58), a concept very close to the contemporary conception of Nutrition.

Two centuries after the Frenchman’s writing, the conception of the best possible diet (p. 57) reached levels probably not imagined by Savarin. Revel (1994), among others, points out that food has evolved in kitchens, reaching a high degree of specialization in what is known as Gastronomy. Furthermore, these advances were supported, compared to the early 19th century, by the introduction of electricity, allowing for refrigeration and the use of a range of equipment, as well as the presence of food and culinary supplies, now often produced, in part or in their entirety, through industrial processes.

Soares, Ferro, Brandão, Sugizaki et al. (2020, p. 150) highlight Poulain, for whom Gastronomy would mean “an aestheticization of cooking and table manners, a hedonistic turn from the biological ends of food, this activity very widely surrounded by social rules and in the exercise of which we are condemned several times a day.” These digressions lead them to include Bueno (2016) and Dória (2019), who present reflections considering the society of globalization.

During this period, as highlighted by Bueno (2016), there was also an intensification of media producing content associated with cooking in books, magazines, television programs, and recurring online offerings, resulting in (or causing?) greater societal interest in topics involving cooking, now fully treated as Gastronomy.

At the turn of the 21st century, Petrini (2009), within the Slow Food movement, treats Gastronomy as the science that investigates food and the cultural traditions associated with it, in its multiple historical and social aspects. In turn, Collaço (2013), understands that Gastronomy, in contemporary times, would be the tool to reflect on the act of eating, enabling the understanding of different models of kitchens, both domestic and commercial, that shape cultural, social, and economic expressions, including recording the fragmentation of contemporary life. Therefore, Gastronomy, previously associated with economic elites and social distinction, is now also analyzed as important for the construction of identities and/or cultural identifications (Bueno, 2016; Hall, 2006), regardless of socioeconomic class.

Following Bourdieu's (1989) field theory, it is possible to consider that Gastronomy currently operates as an autonomous field of knowledge, with its own rules and procedures, detached from external influences from other fields, in the case discussed here, even in relation to Nutrition. For Lima (2010, p. 15), in Bourdieu:

[...] the field is a space of specific practices, relatively autonomous, endowed with its own history; characterized by a space of possibilities, which tends to guide the agents' search, defining a universe of problems, references, intellectual markers – a whole system of coordinates, related to each other, that must be kept in mind (not necessarily consciously) to enter the game. Entering the game means managing this system of coordinates. [...]. The field is always characterized by competitive struggles between agents, around specific interests.

Ferro (2017, p. 24) adds another point to the discussion, centered on cuisine, which would serve “as a bridge to translate the discoveries of other fields about food (its chemical compositions, its biochemical reactions, its physics, new technologies, etc.) to gastronomy through its precisions, even if they are later translated into human precisions.

Another current issue is associated with the impacts of globalized economies and societies on gastronomy as a cultural and identity expression, leading to a search for elements considered traditional in each ethnic cuisine, with tourism boosting regional specialties as a differentiated product (Sahlins, 1997; Collaço, 2013; Bessi re, 2000). Added to this is the strong presence of aestheticization, configuring itself as an idealized model of cuisine and food, mobilizing material and ceremonial elements such as scenography, presentation of dishes, and organization of meals, aspects largely attributed to the figure of the ‘chef’ (Bueno, 2016; Gastal & Costa Beber, 2019). Legitimized since the 19th century in the world of restaurants, in contemporary times it wouldn't be uncommon to see ‘chefs’ treated as pop stars, acting (the word, here, is not gratuitous) as artists, while the restaurant becomes a stage, that is, a cultural space where they can display their art.

The advances recorded allow us to infer that “Gastronomy is an area [field] of knowledge that has as its object of study food, encompassing its preparation ritual, its combination of ingredients, its presentation, its social, cultural, political and economic relations” (Riffert et al, 2018, p.1), an object that we prefer to synthesize, to conceptualize, in the expression culinary practices. Seeking a more precise conceptualization, it is recalled that the word concept (from the Latin *conceptus*, verb *concipere*) would mean something conceived or formed in the mind. In the appropriation matured over time, it can be translated as notion, judgment, opinion, idea, or thought (Maculan & Lima, 2017). According to the dictionary, it would mean:

[...] any process that makes possible the description, classification, and prediction of knowable objects. Understood in this way, this term has a very general meaning and can include any kind of semantic sign or procedure, whatever the object to which it refers, abstract or concrete, near or far, universal or individual, etc. (Abbagnano, 1998, p. 164, apud Maculan & Lima, 2017)

To advance the Gastronomy conception as field of knowledge, based on the conceptions already presented, the following is considered: (a) culinary practices as its privileged object of study; (b) the practices integrating from the rural production until the consumption of food in a domestic or restaurant environment, and in everyday, festive and/or tourist times; (c) that culinary production chain involves ingredients, recipes, equipment, techniques and preparation rituals; (d) that each stage produces economic, environmental and cultural impacts, especially in traditional societies, but either face of globalization, including technologies and tourism, among others; (e) that such impacts occur in urban and rural spaces; (f) that the reproduction of knowledge systematized by culinary practices occurs informally via media or systematized in academic research and in courses taught at different levels and educational institutions.

Based on these assumptions, the following conceptual systematization is proposed for discussion:

Gastronomy is the knowledge field of in which the biocultural knowledge implicit in its object is accumulated and systematized, namely, culinary practices aimed at human food, generated in processes of planning, choices, preparation, presentation and service, which begin in the bio-agri-food production system, demarcated by terroirs; pass through ingredients, recipes, ways of doing, techniques and equipment, in their artisanal or industrial modulations; and reach the moment of food consumption (individual or collective, in private or public spaces), with all stages accompanied by cultural specificities in terms of rituals, imaginaries, beliefs and tastes, conventionalized by controls, motivations, learning, authenticities and results.

The knowledge generated by culinary practices is recorded informally in notebooks and recipe books, or other sources, or formalized as academic work results. There are either its reproductions in courses, in scientific dissemination, and media reproductions, beyond what is taught and learning in kitchens.

Gastronomy: Object and Method

At this point, we propose to discuss the relevance of culinary practices as a privileged object of study in the gastronomic field, expanding its theoretical scope. Soares, Silva, and De Sá (2024, p. 728) were emphatic in stating that “the field of gastronomy doesn’t have a clearly defined object of study, which is partly because researchers, teachers, and students are constructing a new narrative for what we call gastronomy.” The discussion that follows seeks to fill this gap.

The expression “culinary practice” unites two terms so that, together, they form a third meaning, expanding the original scope of both. Starting with practices, these refer to a doing, significantly mediated by the hands, so that manual skills activate thought and feeling (Sennet, 2020).

According to De Certeau, Giard, and Mayol (1996), cooking is a humble and persistent daily practice whose actions activate memories, stories, social bonds, and knowledge. Nestled in the warmth of kitchens – in Buford’s assertion, transformed into laboratories where elements are tested and systematized into knowledge – its transmission occurs not only through spoken language but is mediated, especially, by broad or subtle gestures, by rites and codes. Transmission, in these terms, can be approximated to what Bourdieu (2009, p. 90) refers to as habitus:

A product of history, habitus produces practices, individual or collective, therefore, of history, according to the schemes engendered by history; it guarantees the active presence of past experiences which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend more surely than all formal rules and all explicit norms to guarantee the conformity of practices and their constancy over time.

Practices, repeated over time, become pregnant with ancestral traditions and heritage. Updating occurs under the economic and consumption constraints of each moment, lifestyles, social class, and production possibilities within the lived ecosystem, generating and producing what Gastal and Beber (2022) describe as “possible food”. Without disregarding the spontaneity, improvisation, and creativity present in kitchens, culinary practices involve planning, organization, access to supplies, preparation, disposal, and cleaning services, among others, even at the domestic level.

They also include choices of dishes and the organization of menus, recipes, the use of supplies, inventions, and social interactions. The analysis of practices allows us to understand both concrete and subjective aspects of the production processes and access to the social rules that are expressed through food. Considering Bourdieu’s (2009, p. 27) warning about practices that once produced,

[...] according to the perfectly conscious rules of engendering, they would be stripped of everything that properly defines them as practical, that is, the uncertainty and imprecision of the fact that they are based not on conscious and constant rules, but on practical schemes, opaque to themselves, subject to variation according to the logic of the situation, the point of view, almost always partial, that they impose, etc...

The second term in the expression “culinary practice” originates from the Latin word *culinarius*, which in turn is derived from *culina*, meaning kitchen. On the one hand, it implies an eminently cultural phenomenon: the preparation of food as procedures; on the other hand, it refers to space, like a laboratory, in which these are carried out. Saying “cuisine” can also mean the culinary style that characterizes a group, involving and directing choices of ingredients, techniques, and preparation equipment, rules in the production of flavors, routines for dishes for everyday life or special occasions, in addition to other symbolic meanings (Fieldhouse, 1996).

In cooking, complex rules prevail, explicit or implicit, classification and handling systems specific to each stage of the food production process. According to Garcia (2011) this can trigger a set of recognized norms related to the food of a group, similar to what has already been discussed as habitus, impacting the sense of belonging to a culture, without disregarding the possibility of them varying according to the logic of each moment or situation. Reasons such as these led Lévi-Strauss (1991) to analyze cuisine through three logics: sensible qualities, in the differentiation between raw, cooked, and spoiled foods; in the forms of accepted mixtures and preparations; and in propositions, such as calendars of prohibitions or table etiquette.

Poulain and Proença (2003, p. 367), in the same perspective of methodologically analyzing food facts, focus on tools that, according to them, originate from studies present in different and varied disciplines, all seeking to “describe and understand the food phenomenon [...] from the most objective to the most subjective”. Restricting themselves to the most objective aspects, the authors highlight some possible practices that can be used to guide data collection techniques in academic research in Gastronomy, among them:

- Observed practices: those recorded from observation, which refer to “the eating behaviors actually used by an individual or a given group of individuals” (p. 367), collected and analyzed from descriptors, previously organized in observation scripts. As examples, they cite observing items in a shopping cart or the contents of a plate assembled by dinner at a buffet.

The construction of these descriptors is an essential phase of observation because, as reality is always extremely rich in detail, it becomes important, through a theoretical perspective, to organize and have a clear understanding of which important aspects of this reality should be observed, recorded, and then analyzed. (Poulain & Proença, 2003, p. 367)

- Objectified practices: reconstructed from anamnesis or recollection techniques, also based on descriptors and reported “spontaneously, the social norms expressed by the individual, opinions, attitudes, values and symbolic representations” (p. 367). They can be recovered by the traces they leave, for example, in the “economic flow, [in the] flow of waste” (p. 371).
- Reconstructed practices: obtained by asking “a specific person to relive, through memory, their own practices” (p. 368) of shopping, consumption, or cooking, based on a monitoring grid, in a predetermined unit of time (day, week, month...).
- Spontaneously declared practices: data are collected through questionnaires or interviews, seeking less intervention from the researcher, and, in this case, subjectivities and inaccuracies possibly present in the answers should be considered.

Returning to the proposed conceptualization of Gastronomy, within the scope of this reflection, taking culinary practices as its object, the items that compose them can be addressed using the descriptors chosen by Poulain and Proença. For discussion of the descriptors, we especially bring Bertamoni (2022, p. 9), who, following Sennett (2020), presents Gastronomy and culinary practices by “placing the cook in association with the craftsman” and, in this context, highlighting the importance of the hand of the cook-artisan who, when touching the material, also activates thought and emotion.

To construct descriptors suitable for research in Gastronomy, it is important to select, in each stage of culinary practices, those of greatest interest to each research focus. We will highlight only a few, to exemplify, given the magnitude of the processes in the unfolding of culinary practices:

a) Agri-food production system: which can be associated with the notion of terroir. Cuisine that uses local ingredients, therefore activating short chains in the producer-consumer relationship, will have its own flavors and aromas, reflecting a specific terroir. According to Jorge Toniello (2007, p. 8), a researcher at Embrapa, the “word terroir dates back to 1229, being a linguistic modification of ancient forms (tieroir, tioroer), originating from the popular Latin ‘territorium’”.

Although traditionally applied to wine, its use is pertinent to other foods when they express the same interaction between the natural environment and human cultural factors. “Prepared or not, or simply by being edible, foods become culturalized. Even a raw, freshly picked fruit corresponds to a culturalized food” (Bertamoni, 2022, p. 20), therefore, capable of expressing terroir.

Consider the following items to be analyzed as possible descriptors, being inherent to the processes of culinary practices, all permeate the cultural in terms of rituals, imaginaries, beliefs, and tastes. Hence, they are, even in their materiality, deeply marked by immateriality, specific to each social group and each historical moment.

b) Ingredients: The construction of possible descriptors for research data collection should consider, among the expertise developed in kitchens, that “raw materials will always awaken care for the professional artisan” (Bertamoni, 2022, p. 72). It will be on the ingredients – of plant and/or animal origin, spices and seasonings – that the cook’s hand will act, the culinary gestures being prior to the walls of a kitchen, being present in the collection and/or in their choice with producers or points of sale. In the case of industrialized products, the descriptors will pay attention to labels, regulatory standards, even if based on personal empirical knowledge, originating in the intimacy of the family kitchen (De Certeau et al., 1996; Strati, 2007).

c) Methods and techniques of preparation: These are largely associated with the gestures of the artisan cook. When the gesture is forgotten, the recipes disappear (De Certeau et al., 1996). Techniques imply a succession of procedures, ordered to achieve previously expected results. Expressed in gestures, they contemplate the immaterial aspects, which may prove more important than the material aspects present in the objectified account of the recipes.

d) Equipment: Integrated with the gestures, utensils and equipment act as extensions of the cook’s hands, whether they are handcrafted (wooden spoons, guava wood pots [listed by Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional - IPHAN], various basketry products, among others); or industrialized, such as knives and increasingly sophisticated electric and electronic appliances. Equipment is a mandatory presence in the kitchen-workshop, chosen according to purchasing power and local availability.

e) Recipes: Until the 18th century, when written records appeared, oral tradition encompassed the transmission of recipes and methods of preparation (De Certeau et al., 1996). Both then and now, the record of a recipe is generally composed of a minimal text, with internal definitions and terminology, which requires a certain degree of knowledge both about culinary practice and the individual who describes it, with language assuming a role of unification and accessibility to the preparation. Currently, “a large part of Western gastronomic knowledge, which has constituted a heritage of the sense of taste, has been revealed in various notebooks and recipe books [...]” (Santos, 2011, p. 116). Research, focused on these recoveries, remains fundamental for the preservation of culinary knowledge.

f) Consumption and commensality: The finished dish and its consumption are associated with the (almost) last stage of the long chain of culinary practices. Commensality would involve eating together, in public or private, routinely or exceptionally, when associated with parties and celebrations, in each case with specific practices and rituals regarding ingredients, preparation, presentation, and tasting (Costa Beber & Gastal, 2018). Currently, tourism is increasingly shaping food consumption in the places visited, often impacting local culinary traditions. Meanwhile, concern is growing about where kitchen waste is disposed of.

g) Transmission of knowledge: Consolidating and passing on knowledge are of paramount importance, even if it is currently less inherent to the oral tradition of kitchens. In their teaching and learning processes, the actions seen and experienced may seem emotional and vague at first – after all, they involve gestures – but it is these actions that awaken confidence in the development of an idea, a gesture, or an act. Free thinking, when combined with empathy and an instructor's guidance, enhances the learning process.

Other stages and moments can be added as methodologically applicable descriptors, leading to greater understanding of the field of Gastronomy. From commercial cookbooks, richly illustrated, to academic papers, their advancement already indicates the importance of constituting a corpus for the improvement of studies in the field. In contrast, Soares, Silva, and De Sá (2024, p. 727) warn that the arrival at the university:

[...] promotes, in addition to domestication, the control of the movements of its production and reproduction, and it is within this framework that knowledge gains prestige through scientific research. This prestige is curtailed by control, which, for its maintenance and participation in scientific competitions, is then operated according to the logic of standardization, homogenization, classification, and centralization.

GASTRONOMY AND TOURISM: INTERFACES

Tourism and the segmentation of gastronomic tourism [food tourism] have been held hostage by contributions to gastronomy that still refer to the 19th century, and its understanding associated (and reduced) with the pleasure at the table. Products such as itineraries, festivals, and restaurants tend to focus on the finished dish and commensality, ignoring the multiple possibilities implicit in culinary practices, among others, from the point of view of their conception as heritage, which, according to Pratts (1998), would be an invention and a social construction inherent to specific times and spaces.

The 'invention' of Tourism will be among the consequences of the Industrial Revolution, leveraged by the advancement of communications and transport – notably the train and the steamship – which will lead to organized travel as a product, for offer in the leisure market. Due to the scope and implications of the phenomenon, Boyer (2003) compares it to the great English revolutions of the 18th century: the industrial, the agricultural, and the financial. The constant growth of travel in subsequent times leads Urry (2001) to state that the generalization of tourism is not among the consequences, but among the causes that, in the post-Second World War period in Europe, led to new perspectives and conceptions about culture.

For travel to be successful, it demands improved management practices developed throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. In other words, for travel to be successful, it requires that time and space be objectively produced, providing the structures and services necessary for its realization, including accommodation and food provisions. To understand the depth implicit in the process of institutionalizing travel, which places it as one of the quintessential hallmarks of the contemporary world, it is therefore necessary to consider that various forms of tourism "have succeeded one another without replacing each other. Far vacanze, as the Italians say, has several meanings" (Boyer, 2003, pp. 68-69).

In contemporary travel plans, the emergence of gastronomy stands out as a qualified tourist attraction, enabling "food experiences and [...] contributing to the remembrance of past experiences" (Sartori, Cruz & Tricarico, 2021, p. 1007), leading the authors to propose the concept of affective food memory.

Minasse (2020, n.p.) states that the Global Report on Gastronomy Tourism (UNWTO, 2017) adopts the term food tourism, defining it as that which emphasizes "experiential travel to gastronomic regions for leisure purposes, including visits to food producers, gastronomic festivals and fairs, farmers' markets, tastings of quality food products or any tourism activity related to food".

The review carried out by the same author also highlights Fagliari (2005, p.30-31), for whom, based on demand, gastronomic tourism consists of any trip in which "the main motivation is the pleasure of tasting food and drinks and getting to know the gastronomic elements of a locality. For the tourism offer, gastronomic tourism is characterized by the offer and promotion of gastronomic elements as the main tourist attractions of the destination." Other authors indicate gastronomic tourism as a market niche, associated with the alternative tourism segment, based on agriculture, culture, and tourist infrastructure, where tourists desire new experiences rather than new places.

This means that gastronomic tourism “participates in the attractiveness of the destination, being an important experiential component” (Melo & Do Nascimento, 2024, p. 174), motivating travel over both short and long distances. In cities, especially medium-sized or small ones, visitors can have a more significant impact, as they compete for everyday or even festive spaces with locals, causing discomfort. While there is additional financial income, it can also contribute to the support of cultural structures and offerings, including gastronomic and leisure activities, which the local population alone might not be able to sustain (Gastal; De Sá; Beber, 2017; Reis, 2020; Jiménez Rodríguez, 2023).

Schlüter (2003) reinforces the idea that gastronomy remains among the demands of contemporary tourists, seen as a manifestation to be experienced in the social and cultural spheres. Gastronomic tourism would follow the general trends associated with travel practices, being among the activities that would facilitate the approximation and sharing of experiences, lifestyles, daily and non-daily habits, such as festivals, between the tourist and the local population (Beber; Gastal, 2018). With diversified offerings, according to Minasse (2020, n.p.), the segment would contribute eight categories:

[...] food establishments outside the home; typical dishes and products; food production sites; establishments that sell products; open-air markets, gastronomic fairs and street food; gastronomic events; gastronomic routes, itineraries and circuits; in addition to the “other” category (museums about food, culinary schools, cultural spaces with differentiated food services, as well as other attractions).

Many of these categories are shared by Everett (2008, p. 338), who characterizes gastronomic tourism as “visiting primary and secondary agricultural producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations [...] with the desire to experience a particular type of food or the produce of a specific region.”

In these terms, food would no longer involve only resorts, hotels, and restaurants, to signify the experience in and with the place (Du Rand; Heath, 2006; Sims, 2009). Gastronomic tourism would add to the place: cultural recognition; tourism promotion; encouragement of agricultural production; competitiveness; an indicator of the global-local relationship; attraction of a tourist with specific consumption patterns and preferences, leading to respect for the ecosystems of the place (Beber & Gastal, 2018).

PROVISIOUS CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the pages of this essay, we begin by presenting the context in which the word Gastronomy becomes public. The digressions proposed there highlighted something that is not normally present in this type of recovery, namely, the concomitance of the introduction of the term in a poem by Berchoux and in the frequently cited book by Brillat-Savarin, with the social movements triggered by the French Revolution.

Hobsbawm (1996) goes further and places, as marking the transition from the 18th to the 19th century, also the context of the Industrial Revolution, in its English origin, where the first initiatives of offering tourism as a product in the market also took place (Boyer, 2002). In both cases, a social context marked by the rise of a new money – that of the bourgeois class – which will seek as a class differential the exposure of its status in public life exercised in the urban space, among others, scenarios marked by the more conspicuous presence of restaurants and Gastronomy, and in the frequenting of elite tourist destinations. At all times and places, ideologically proposing its class exercise as ‘liberal’ – a word that originates from the Latin *liber* [free] –, even though this society has largely sustained its wealth on the colonial slave system and other forms of social and economic exploitation.

Returning to Gastronomy, it becomes confused (and fades) throughout the 20th century with its counterpart Nutrition, a more Cartesian field of study in its object – as mentioned earlier, it took on particular meaning in the process of scientific rationalization of eating in modern society, making use of scientific methodologies with an experimental or empiricist emphasis –, while the former remained where it historically belonged: domestic and commercial kitchens, experiencing errors and successes that remained as family heritage, even when incorporated into restaurants. Nutrition gains academic space and scientific recognition; Gastronomy, beyond the kitchens, is present in cookbooks and programs on traditional media (magazines, radio, television), in spaces traditionally associated with a female audience—thus representing a form of validation that may be considered ‘downgraded’.

This scenario changes with the social changes of the final decades of the 20th century, within the scope of postmodernity, Gastronomy establishing itself as a cultural expression and field of knowledge, focusing attention not on food, but on eating as a sociocultural act. Hence, we propose, as a concept, that Gastronomy be treated as an autonomous field of knowledge in which culinary practices knowledge is accumulated and systematized. These practices are marked by a long production chain, which begins with the production or collection of inputs, goes through preparation and eating, to reach moments of reproduction of accumulated knowledge. This autonomy is not built by denying interdisciplinarity, but by defining its own object, here systematized as culinary practices, and by the progressive formalization of its theoretical, methodological, and epistemic frameworks.

In other words, an associated narrative is constructed, with a beginning (ingredients), middle (techniques), end (a dish ready for consumption), and developments in teaching and dissemination, both academic and in the media, without disregarding the increasingly important attention to the waste produced in the different stages. In the interstices that reveal the essence of the gastronomic act (actions, movements, sensations, and lived experiences), lies the soul of cooking, as highlighted by Bertamoni (2022).

Having established concept and object, we include methodological possibilities for studies and research in Gastronomy, following Poulain and Proença (2003) who, in their proposal, engage in dialogue from other areas of knowledge, especially in the Social Sciences, since the preparation and consumption of food occurs socially and culturally, significant to the historical moment that produced them. This shift in centrality, from nutrient to culinary practice, constitutes a decisive epistemic shift for the scientific legitimation of Gastronomy.

From a methodological point of view, the text demonstrates that Gastronomy has consistent instruments for scientific investigation, particularly from the operationalization of culinary practices as empirical descriptors, observed, objectified, reconstructed, or declared, as proposed by Poulain and Proença. These devices allow capturing both objective and subjective dimensions of the food phenomenon, paving the way for qualitative and mixed research capable of integrating technique, culture, experience, and social structure.

It is also noted that the institutional consolidation of Gastronomy remains uneven, marked by advances in undergraduate and specialization teaching, but by fragility in the stricto sensu, evidenced by the erasure in official scientific classification systems. This scenario is aggravated by heterogeneity in the regulation of Gastronomy courses, especially regarding differences between technological and bachelor's degrees, observable in the presence or absence of scientific methodology subjects, as in the mandatory or non-mandatory nature of Final Course Projects. This formative asymmetry directly impacts knowledge production, research training, and the insertion of graduates into postgraduate programs, reinforcing the need for formal recognition of the field, an indispensable condition for its full academic legitimacy and for strengthening its own research agendas.

As also introduced, the presence of Gastronomy and Tourism are simultaneous phenomena, both gestated in the socio-economic spectrum of the rise of the bourgeoisie from the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. Likewise, both will be tools of global, colonial, and colonizing European expansion. Until the mid-20th century, eating was an activity integrated into tourism to meet the basic needs of travelers. In the final decades of that century Gastronomy was elevated to the status of an attraction, a motivator for travel, leading to specificities such as gastronomic tourism. But, and no less important, Gastronomy included association with leisure. In the contemporary context, the growing articulation reveals new layers of complexity. Gastronomic tourism, by transforming culinary practices into commodified experiences, simultaneously strains processes of patrimonialization, aestheticization, and cultural identity. Although it produces positive economic impacts and favors the appreciation of local knowledge, it can also generate pressures on territories, ways of life, and food systems, requiring critical and sustainable approaches.

Gastronomy, understood as a field of biocultural knowledge, cannot be reduced to the pleasure at the table or the finished dish. This is an emerging scientific domain that articulates production, technique, culture, experience, and politics, requiring greater conceptual rigor, methodological depth, and institutional recognition. Its affirmation as a field necessarily involves the centrality of culinary practices as a structuring object, the explication of its internal and external disputes, and the consolidation of its own epistemology, open to interdisciplinary dialogue, but aware of its specific foundations.

We reiterate that our aim throughout this essay was not to present answers, but to propose new discussions that lead to advances in the Gastronomy knowledge field, with full autonomy from other fields, minimizing possible inconsistencies in what has been proposed so far.

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DATA AVAILABILITY

The research data is in the body of the research.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Susana de Araújo Gastal – Conceptualization; Investigation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Writing - original draft; Writing – review & editing.

Israel Bertamoni – Conceptualization; Investigation; Methodology; Formal analysis.

Carlos Eduardo da Silva – Investigation; Methodology; Formal analysis; Visualization.