



LUND UNIVERSITY

# Chinese Visitors' Participation in Culinary Tourism in the Öresund Region

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TKAM02 - Spring 2016

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## Abstract

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This thesis is an ethnographic study of Chinese visitors' participation in culinary tourism in the Öresund region. It aims to do qualitative research on the consumption of exotic food and the status of cooking with locals' activity among Chinese tourists and to deliver insights to culinary tourism agencies in terms of attracting Chinese tourists to joining the food-related activities in present and investigating more relevant activities in the future.

Firstly, this thesis starts to investigate popular culinary activities among Chinese tourists and the meanings of these activities for them: the meanings of consumption food; and their experiences towards local food services and culture, etc.

Secondly, cooking is meaningful for Chinese people as as an indispensable housework and special activity for fun for Chinese people. And compared to Chinese people daily cooking and preferences of culinary activities, cooking with locals can provide more sensational experience and by cooking and eating together, communication and interaction happens, identities shifts and relationship established. As a result, tourists could explore and gain knowledge of ethnic culture.

Finally, food can play its role as a medium to make people who are outside of local community to understand and learn more about local cultural backgrounds.

*Keywords:* Culinary tourism, culture exchange, Chinese visitors, qualitative methods, identity

## 中文摘要

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本文运用文化人类学和文化分析的方法，旨在研究中国游客在北欧南部地区旅游时对当地饮食文化的体验。本文调查了中国游客购买和体验当地饮食及其相关活动并以此作为当地饮食主题的旅游活动的发展参考。

首先，本文从中国游客热衷的饮食活动出发，比如购买食品和体验当地饮食文化为主题的活动等，来探究这些活动对中国游客的意义。通过探究它们的意义来分析这些活动的利弊，以及展示中国游客对北欧南部地区饮食文化的了解。

其次，烹饪在当下已成为饮食为主题的旅游活动的一个发展项目。同时，烹饪作为日常生活的一部分以及旅游活动中的一个项目有着不同的意义和作用。通过比较两者的不同，我们可以发现在与当地居民烹饪的过程中，中国游客可以获得更多的感官体验。同时，与当地居民进餐过程中，中国游客可以获得更直接的交流体验。并且，在此过程中，中国游客的价值观得以体现，身份得以转换并且可以与当地人建立联系从而对当地文化有更深刻的了解和体会。

最后，饮食在旅游中扮演着重要角色。它们作为一种媒介可以使游客从饮食这个方面来了解当地文化，并且融入到当地文化之中。

关键词：饮食文化旅游；文化交流；中国访客；身份转换

## Acknowledgments

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Firstly I would like to especially thank my supervisor, Professor Orvar Löfgren for his continuous support throughout. He has been generously reviewing my draft and providing sound feedbacks and suggestions. . Secondly, special thanks also to the programme coordinator Charlotte Hagström for her enthusiastic encouragement and generous assistance during the entire period of MACA program. Thirdly, I am grateful to all the professors and teaching assistants for their kind assistance. In addition I thank all the interviewees for their kindness and patience during the qualitative study. Special thanks for all my classmates – not only for being part of this process but also for learning and sharing experience during the past two years.

Special thanks to Inger Gislesen of Cook With a Local, an upcoming company based in Copenhagen, Denmark for the opportunity of internship. This experience was inspiring and contributes to this work in a great deal.

Last but not least, most heartfelt thanks go to my family and my friends for their endless love, care and support.

Lund, 2016-08-18

Yuanyuan Xia

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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Booming Attraction on Chinese Visitors**

Chinese outbound tourism is experiencing a tremendous growth in the world and especially in the Europe. The Öresund region in Scandinavia has become one of the most popular destinations for Chinese tourists. Tourist industry of the Öresund region has a greater interest in competing with other European colleagues to share this booming market. In order to make Scandinavia more appealing and welcoming, as well as to ensure the region keeps up in the global competition to attract Chinese visitors, the “Chinavia” pilot project ( China + Scandinavia = Chinavia) was launched in 2012 as the first phase of the Scandinavian cooperation project in tourism. The pilot project was to gain a better understanding of the poor Scandinavian market position, and to gain better insights into the Chinese travelers in general. The pilot project partners included: Wonderful Copenhagen, Helsinki Tourism & Conventions Bureau, Stockholm Visitors Board and Goteborg & Co. The research results were inspiring and revealing tremendous potential of the Chinese travel market. As such, Wonderful Copenhagen partnered with six other partners of the Oresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak region developed the Chinavia II project in 2013, co-funded by the EU Interreg Iva program. In addition to the direct partners, the project also involved the rest of Scandinavia. The second phase, Chinavia II, was launched mainly focusing on the middle age travelers, who came to the regional areas in Scandinavia for business visits. Not only tourist agencies but also other companies such as food industries and online service companies are exploring innovative ways to attract Chinese tourists as well as to equip themselves with better knowledge of Chinese tourists’ habits and preferences. In 2015, Chinavia took over from the Chinavia II project which focus mainly on development on China-aimed platforms and activities. The project will run through 2017.

Furthermore, there is a trend for tourists to have a “‘quest for a centre’ through immersion in local culture and lifestyle” (Bowen & Clarke, 2009, p. 98), which means they are not just satisfied by normal tourist activities but are eager to understand more about a place and what a place means. As a part of this trend, culinary tourism has become important. The postmodern world is “one of diversified cultural experience (including food experience) and tourism has played its role in promoting such diversity” (Bowen & Clarke, 2009, p. 43). Indeed, people are eating, cooking and consuming food not only for their daily sustenance, but also as a special tourist experience. Consumers are not just satisfied by experiencing the food culture they are familiar with, but they are



eager to experience other food cultures. While visiting destinations of other countries and regions, some tourists make food or food-related activities as one part of their travelling plans. Culinary tourism, the combination of food-related activities and tourism has thus become popular nowadays. It plays its role, by helping tourists experience other cultures by employing food as a medium, a way of sensing different tastes and traditions (Long, 2004, p. 24). Thus more and more tourist agencies and organizations carry out their efforts to create food-related activities to attract tourists. However, Chinese tourists, who have become a more and more important part of the market, are lack of knowledge of culinary tourism. Therefore tourism industry has to learn how to draw Chinese tourists' attention and make them taking part in food-related activities.

In 2015, I got an internship in a company called Cook With a Local (CWAL) which is a sharing economy website founded in August 2014 in Copenhagen, Denmark where customers can find hosts to hold food events so that they can meet new people and cook together. On the one hand, the company had limited knowledge of Chinese tourists. On the other hand, cooking with local people is quite a new culinary activity for Chinese tourists. Based on my knowledge, there is perhaps no such activity in China. Thus in order to advertising and spreading CWAL's ideas, they hired me as an intern to do marketing for the development of Chinese market.

As a Chinese who has spent one year in the Öresund region, I have developed a good understanding of its culture, traditions and heritage. Furthermore, as a cultural analyst, equipped with an ethnographic methodology, I could take another angle, based on understanding people's daily life to provide new aspects on the relation between tourism and food.

## **1.2 Aim and Research Questions**

Food, in the context of culinary tourism, becomes a destination experience and a vehicle both for tourists to enjoy local culture and for tourist agencies to develop markets. Consuming exotic food as a common activity for Chinese tourists, is a good point to study Chinese tourists' habits. In addition, by comparing their cooking habits in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts, it is possible to understand their perspectives on cooking with locals as well as trying local food, as a way of entering the local food culture.

This thesis thus centres on consumption of food and food-related activities in the Öresund region in Chinese tourists' practices. It specifically investigates how Chinese people understand food in their daily life, what their food consumption activities are during their travels and how they view and experience food during their travel. I then explore meanings of cooking with locals, as a phenomenon both in cultural and social contexts for both Chinese tourists and tourism agencies. Finally, some applicabilities are provided for culinary tourism in order to develop this market.

The following research questions are to be answered:

1. What are popular food-related activities among Chinese tourists? What do they mean for Chinese tourists, from choosing restaurants to purchase food souvenirs?
2. What are Chinese people's cooking habits in their daily life? How can we understand their habits and what are the differences between cooking in daily life and cooking with locals or having meals abroad?
3. What role does cooking with locals play in different contexts, such as domestic and public contexts, as well as local and global contexts?

### **1.3 Structure of Thesis**

Firstly, I will introduce the cooking event that I took part to give a general picture of how cooking can be used as an activity of culinary tourism and both advantages and disadvantages of this kind of cooking events. Secondly, by comparing cooking events in travelling process and cooking in daily life, I will discuss differences between cooking in these two contexts and Chinese tourists' everyday cooking habits. Thirdly, Chinese tourists have their preferences of experiencing foodways in their trips. They may search information online to plan their trips and other tourists' online travelling dairies are one of important sources to refer to since these dairies are full of texts, photos and videos, including almost all aspects of travelling. During their travelling process, the ways they experience local food culture mainly includes dining out in restaurants, both local restaurants and Chinese ones, having their breakfast in hotels, Chinese breakfast or local style breakfast, and their consumption of food souvenirs. Further, I will explore meanings of making choices between local food and Chinese food in their outbound tours and purchasing food souvenirs. I will also make a deeper understanding of reasons for purchasing or not purchasing food souvenirs in their destinations in Öresund region. Finally, I am going to discuss Chinese visitors' imaginary of food culture in the Öresund region in the trend of globalization and localization. And based on their

imagination and experiences in the Öresund region, they have to negotiate with these two sides and make their decisions on what souvenirs they will buy and find new perspectives on local food culture. Finally, by analysing all these aspects, I will give some suggestions and applicabilities for tourism agencies and food companies to improve their services.

#### **1.4 Previous Research and Theoretical Framework**

Scholarship that is relevant to culinary tourism comes primarily from three fields: anthropology of tourism, folklore, and food studies. These fields often overlap but they are often focused on festival presentations, public displays, nutritional guidelines and restaurant development, instead of taking a broader view how culinary activities might shape the touristic experience or vice versa.

The development of culinary tourism has two main backgrounds: one is the development of tourism studies; another is the development of food studies. First of all, the anthropology of tourism studies started by refining the concepts of tourism and tourists which involves typologies of tourists, tourists destinations and tourists activities. Scholars such as Dean MacCannell and Valene Smith offer their thoughts on definitions and typologies of tourism and tourists. Such work on typologies and classifications helped to establish the anthropology of tourism as a legitimate field of study and continues to refine both definitions and typologies at the same time. For example, Nelson Graburn notes the shift from tourism to touristic experience, describing this shift as a journey from the profane (everyday life) to sacred (vacation, new experiences and new culture) (Long, 2004, p. 4). Another scholar who also explores tourism as a way of experience is John Urry. He has proposed the notion of the “tourist gaze” which means that tourism is essentially different from “everyday looking” (Urry, 1990). Tourists consume goods and service which are in some sense unnecessary. “They are consumed because they supposedly generate pleasurable experiences which are different from those typically encountered in everyday life” (Urry, 2011, p. 1) since “When we ‘go away’ we look at the environment with interest and curiosity”. In other words, “we gaze at what we encounter” (Urry, 2011, p. 1). The departure from everyday life is a recurring theme in other concepts of tourism. Secondly, in addition to touristic experience, a further direction of scholarship in the anthropology of tourism is tourism as social and cultural constructions. Some scholars address the notion of tourism by deconstructing elements of the experience itself. Authenticity which is crucial for the development of culinary tourism is emphasised by some folklorists such as Barbara

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. She points out that authenticity is a social construction and a socially and historically specific phenomenon. Furthermore, there is an attention to different types of tourism such as ecotourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism and others. This focus may also help to develop culinary studies.

Surprisingly, none of this theorising I mentioned above involve the role of food in tourism. However, the disciplines of food studies and folklore address data and issues related to culinary tourism. Food studies crosses the boundaries between the arts, humanities and science in the study of culinary arts and hospitality management. These researches provides a wealth of perspectives on food. Culinary tourism is one area in which food scholars are theorising about food as a cultural, social and communication phenomena (Long, 2004, p. 7). Folklore as an academic discipline provides studies of individual food items and food traditions in specific folk groups and folklorists address the aesthetic and sensory nature of food, the use of food in expressing and constructing cultural identities and social relationships (Long, 2004, p. 8). In European studies, the theme of “folk foods” has developed since 1895. For example, Don Yoder demonstrate the concept of foodways which refers to the network of behaviours, traditions and beliefs concerning foods, and involves all the activities about food item, and its consumption (Long, 2004, p. 8). Foodways has been a conceptual model in studying culinary tourism which systematises the exploration of how food influences everyday life and personal history. Another approach is the exploration of food as aesthetic and sensory domination which is also emphasised by ethnography scholars such as Sarah Pink.

Along with studies offered by folklorists, cultural geographers, culinary historians and social scientists, exploration of culinary tourism begins. Combining studies on the significance of tourism in identifying and defining regional foods, and meanings of food traditions among folk groups, these questions are central in culinary studies: How has tourism shaped the accepted meanings of particular foods, how has it shaped foodways as a meaningful domain of experience? What are functions and roles of foods in tourism? Thus, as folklorist Lucy M. Long points out, the conceptualisation of culinary tourism attempts to understand the role of tourism in the meaningfulness of food experiences.

There are some main concepts and theories are employed in this thesis. Firstly, culinary tourism is defined as the “international, exploratory participation in the foodways of an other—participation

including consumption, preparation and presentation of food item, cuisine, meal system or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one's own" (Long, 2004, p. 20). Based on this definition, there are two realms should be focused on: foodways and otherness. "Foodways" is the "network of behaviours, traditions and beliefs concerning food" (Don Yoder, 1972, as cited in Long, 2004, p. 8) and it provides possibility of various ways to perceive otherness. "Otherness" is refers to "the anthropological notion of humans defining the world according to their own socially constructed perceptions of reality, perceptions that divide the world into the know and familiar as opposed to unknown or other" (Long, 2004, p. 23). Otherness is a construction by individual and by culture within which that individual moves (Long, 2004, p. 24). It can be distinguished from the familiar along a variety of dimensions such as culture, region and time. In the context of foodways, otherness involves three realms: as Long notes, the exotic, the palatable and the edible. The exotic is a continuum from the familiar to the strange and it is based on individual's histories, personal tastes, and collective culture and the accepted culinary experience. The parable is an authentic aspect, dealing with what is considered pleasing within a culinary system. The edible consists of cultural categories of what can or cannot be eaten. Based on these three realms, food items shifts in their locations within these realms. Tourists also shift their perspectives of foods and negotiating with themselves and local food culture. Further, local food culture are also negotiating with foreign food and export food develops and changes to cater to local market.

To study the role of food in the tourist experience a focus on the special dimensions of cooking, tasting and eating are needed. There is a growing body of interdisciplinary work which I have found helpful here. First of all, the field of sensory ethnography has been developed since 1980s and 1990s by know as 'the anthropology of senses'(Pink, 2015, p. 8). Led by the work of scholars including David Howes and Paul Stoller, anthropological studies of sensory experience have been in focus. Tim Ingold has been another important name. These debates plays an important role in rethinking and framing treatments of senses in anthropology in other disciplines such as communication studies and media studies.

In the first decade of twenty-first century, there are some new approaches in the anthropology of the senses. Instead of focusing on such as cross-cultural comparison and commitment to reflexive interrogation, a group of anthropologists focus on the senses 'at home' in modern western cultures. This includes a focus on everyday practices such as housework (Pink, 2004, 2012), gardening (Tilley, 2006) and leisure practice. This sensory ethnography attends to the experiential, individual,

and contextual nature of participants' sensory practice and also explore "culturally specific categories, connections and knowledge that inform how people understand their experiences" (Pink, 2015, p. 13). Based on this new approach, the role of sensory ways of knowing in change-making processes and applied uses of ethnography become a part of the ethnography practice.

Culinary tourism is about food as a subject and medium, destination and vehicle for tourism. Food and drinks play an important role in culinary tourism by re-discovery or re-accentuation of the sensory and bringing experiences over and over time to provide sensory pleasure to tourists. Food can evoke all the senses: see, smell, hear, touch and taste. The anthropology of senses is about how these senses contribute to our experience, memory, perception, imagination and power of place. In terms of culinary tourism, it is about exploratory participation in food-related activities—consumption, preparation and presentation (Long, 2004, p. 21). All these activities provide tourists an experience of all the senses by using food as a medium. Thus principles, theories and methodology of sensory ethnography are useful to understand how the senses are activated in culinary tourism through food. Sensory experience is an approach to explore social interactions, physical environments and memory. The sensory experience entails people's multisensorial embodied engagements with others and with social, material, discursive and sensory environment. Further, phenomenological approaches to senses offer the understanding of human perception including the interactions between the senses, the relationship between perception and culture and its implications. For example, Merleau-Ponty placed sensation as the centre of human perception. For him, sensations are produced through our encounters with 'sense-data' or qualities which are the properties of objects (Merleau-Ponty, 2002[1962], p.4). He believes that human's is a synergic system, "all of which are exercised and linked together in the general action of being in the world" (Pink, 2015, p. 29). This opinion sees food as a medium to collect and relate all our senses together as a whole.

Besides, food is not only dishes we eat but it also includes other aspects of the food system in the sense of culinary tourism. Exploring new food in destinations, where we eat is an aspect that should be taken into consideration. Anthropologist Edward Casey points out that place is an event, constituted through lived bodies and things. Place, as an event offers a way of understanding the immediacy of perception since it engages our senses with material, social and power-imbued environments. Travelling in various regions is the way to experience cultural landscapes shaped by environments and specific cultures (Long, 2004, p. 24). Regions offer localisations of cultural foodways which are

unique and distinctive of that area. Exploring senses of culinary experiences in different environment and contexts is a central agent of tourist experiences. For example, dining out in Chinese restaurants in China is different from dining out in these restaurants in foreign contexts. It provides different feelings by environments and specific culture contexts. The decorations of restaurants, languages they use, tastes of dishes and the way to serve and eat give Chinese tourists feelings of both exoticness and homy feeling because of differences in place, atmosphere and cultural background.

Sensory memory is another approach to understand the importance of food in culinary tourism. Nadia Seremetakis argues that senses are ‘a collective medium of communication’ and “The sensory landscape and its meaning-endowed objects bear within them emotional and historical sedimentation that can provoke and ignite gestures, discourse and acts” (as cited in Pink, 2015, p. 43). Food can also provide tourists with their traveling memories since “sensory experience of food contains memories, feelings, histories, places and moments in time” by shared experience and points of identification (Vannini & Gottschalk, 2012, p. 110). There is a symbolic relationship between senses and memory: senses contain memory and memory also contains sensory experiences at the same time. Our sensations begin prior to the first bite: odours, tastes and tactile or mouthfeel sensations and all these can be a rich source of tourist culinary experience. These sensations become memories of food or food-related activities and can be evoked and recalled by experiencing similar feeling in the future, and contained in some objects such as food souvenirs. For example, photos of exotic food in tourist’s trip are documentaries of sensory memory since as film theorist Laura Marks argues, photo as a visual media can “be understood to be embodied, touch and other sense necessarily play a part in vision” (Marks, 2000, p. 22). When seeing these photos, tourists may remember the smell, taste and sounds at that time which is a part of their tourism experience. In the same way food souvenirs can also recall tourist’s senses and they are the expression of local culture and connect tourists with a destination landscape and unique way of life (Lin & Mao, 2015, p. 22).

Sensory imagination is “a enplaced everyday practice carried out in relation to the multisensoriality of people’s actual social and material relations” (Pink, 2015, p. 45). People live in the world and their temporality of everyday actions with engagement of senses is referential to possible future and memories of past. Food and drinks are used as elements of tourism imagery. Tourists are likely to have anticipations with or without knowledge of local food before they visit their destinations. For

example, people sometimes have a general imagination of specific food and relate them to specific region as a general picture of local food culture, for instance, taco relating to Mexico, sushi relating to Japan and pasta to Italy. Food and drinks play an important role in evoking tourist's senses and involving tourists in imaging and "reimagining" local food culture. Thus as both social and aesthetic system, food is a powerful medium through which to enter another culture.

Secondly there is an anthropology and sociology of cooking and eating which looks at the social aspects. Richard Wilk notes that cooking is not only a daily life task, but also the phenomena of globalization, such as chain restaurant and changes of local recipes to cater to more broad market. Kaufmann and Macey argue that cooking and eating are not only considered as domestic task but they have meanings in our daily life. Cooking can be seen as 'domestic chores' and creative and impulsive activity (Kaufmann & Macey, 2010, p. 160). No matter if people cook alone or cook with others, cooking is always a social activity since it contains other people's experience such as recipes and communication with others. Furthermore, Kaufmann and Macey also pay attention to eating. For them, eating is a 'sensory experience' which involves gastronomic and emotional pleasures, and shows people's identities: within or out of group or community. Cooking and eating is not merely ordinary activities in our daily life to nourish our body but it is also a way to communicate with others, establish relationship, and provide feelings of pleasure and togetherness. Alice P. Julier also argues that food provides identity since "individual and food acts as an extension of self, how it fits with other people, the other items on the table and tastes of particular group" (Julier, 2013, p. 168). Food builds relationships or separate people. Choosing food can also be a way of distinguishing people they want to establish relationship or they do not want to.

Thirdly, tourism "supposedly generates pleasurable experiences which is different from those typically encountered in everyday life" (Urry & Larsen, 2013, p. 1). Visual sense is normally the organising sense for tourists experiences and photograph is one way to understand the tourist gaze because "the gaze is constructed discursively and materially through images and performances of photography, and vice versa" (Urry & Larsen, 2013, p.155). For example, taking photos of exotic food during travelling is popular among tourists. These photos of various exotic foods evoke viewers' other senses through their visual sense. These images recall memories of the smell, taste and even sound of tasting these food. These photos freeze space and time as well as different senses and emotions. And people choose different angles to take food images: packages, displays of dishes,



food racks, and so on. The choice of how to take these photos depends on the individual's experiences and cultural background.

Culinary tourism is also about globalization. As a theorist of contemporary globalization, Roland Roberson notes that “Globalization as a concept refers to both the compression of the world and the intensification about the world as a whole” (as cited in Eriksen, 2007, p. 4). Tourism is one of the largest industry sectors of world economy and it is also influenced by this global trends in many fields: money, labour, ideas and imaginations (Robinson, 2012, p. 92). As one of significant part of globalization process, tourism is not only affected by, but also has an effect on. Landscapes and cultures are greatly influenced by globalization when it comes to developing the staging and consumption of tourism.

Richard Wilk argues that food and drink are an essential part of the way of thinking about globalization because they literally connect people's bodies to the world. Food is “both a physical substance and a vehicle for the imagination, something that nourishes the body, but also fascinates and moves the mind, it plays a protean role in the world, connecting the economic and the symbolic in ever-shifting ways” (Wilk, 2006, p. 14). Based on his research on Caribbean food in Belize, Wilk found that Belize has both imported and exported food, which means the transformation of food production and consumption in places like as a part of a global trend. For example, his first lunch in the hotel made him disappointed since what he preferred was Belizean food but what he could find in menu was sandwiches, burgers or fish and chips, typical European dishes. Tourists may meet such situation during their travelling nowadays. What shall we eat? Local food or others? Is there any local restaurants near destinations? Where can I eat local food? Perhaps it may be much easier for tourists to find fast-food chain restaurants rather than local restaurants. Wilk points out that the prospect of global “monoculture” has led many to worry about the loss of cultural diversity and local tradition but in fact, the process of globalization make some aspects of local culture and tradition preserved and also create some new version of them. It is because “people sometimes use food to separate themselves into ethnic or national or religious communities, drawing borders and boundaries. But in colonies food was a way to slot people into ethnic and racial categories, and these categories did not necessarily have anything to do with the ones people used themselves” (Wilk, 2006, p. 15). For example, sociologists Anne-Mette Hjalager and Gerg Richards argues that people's ‘comfort foods’, their eating habits is seen as part of a national, regional and personal identity (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 4). What we eat and the way we eat are basic

aspects of our culture. Regarding tourism and gastronomy, there is a parallel development of national cuisines or certain types of foods related to certain locations. Thus globalization and localization do not conflict with each other, instead, they are influenced with each other. And the development of culinary tourism, as a medium, help spread local food culture worldwide and introduce new and exotic foods to locals at the same time.

Another aspect regarding to globalization and localization in tourism field is about imagination and expectation. Anthropologist Noel B. Salazar notes that imagination plays an essential role in tourism by seductive images and discourses about peoples and places since they are so predominant to affect tourists' travelling experiences. Origins of tourists' imaginations includes two types of source: one is the tourist own sociocultural framework, such as parental and family milieu, early worldview and early prototypes. Another is ongoing experience: the tourists' experiences include feedback and reverse gaze from destination communities, and from tour guides and other mediators (Salazar & Graburn, 2014, p. 7). This means tourists' imaginaries are both historical and in the process of reconstruction. Further, one thing should be emphasised is that because of mass-mediated master narratives, tourism imaginaries have become global. David Crouch, Rhona Jackson and Felix Thompson point out that tourist imagination can be recognised by the media in our daily consumption of films, books, television, newspapers and photography in the sense of global mobility engendered by the media (Crouch Jackson & Thompson, 2005, p. 1). These media are "heavily involved in promoting an emotional disposition, coupled imaginative and cognitive activity, which has the potential to be converted into tourist activity" (Crouch Jackson & Thompson, 2005, p. 1). These media provide sources of information of destinations to tourists before, during and after their trips. And this information shapes tourist imagination. Images and ideas of people and places are available to be edited, transformed, and shared through various media such as internet in different ways—photos, videos and records. For example, some Chinese tourists like sharing their travel experiences by writing blogs and dairies on the internet and share them with others. Photos, videos and texts combined together to present what they see, hear, touch and taste, how they feel at that time and what they recommend for other tourists. They also post their comparison of ideas before and after their trips. All these materials show the process of construction and reconstruction of the tourist imagination.

To study a cultural phenomena, is also to explore social interaction. As Hurrserl's principal advice: go to the things themselves and keep engaged with worldly activities found there. (as cited in

Lieberman, 2013, p. 281). Therefore, besides study food-relative activities themselves, social interaction and relationship caused by interaction should be paid attention to. In this thesis, I will explore how social relationships are established between Chinese tourists and local people.

Finally, consumption and cooking with locals in the context of culinary tourism could be seen as products and services which all sold, packaged and consulted by hosts and tourists thus it can be seen as part of experience economy (O'Dell & Billing, 2005, p. 19). In this context, especially cooking with locals is as the way that “culture is sold and packaged to people in terms of such things as different, otherness heritage, cultural identity...” (cf. Craig 1997, as cited in O'Dell & Billing, 2005, p. 19).

## **2 Materials and Methodology**

### **2.1 Materials**

My materials were collected in two places—Copenhagen Denmark and Lund, Sweden. I started with my internship in Cook With a Local, the online platform in Copenhagen. My main task was to develop the Chinese market by attracting Chinese tourists visiting the Öresund region, to take part in food activities such as cooking events and food seminars created by the hosts using the company's platform. On the one hand, I did observations of Chinese tourists' behaviours both during their trips and in the cooking events in Copenhagen, as well as some short interviews. Most of the food events held in Copenhagen by using the website of CWAL.

As my task was to attract Chinese tourists to join cooking events through the CWAL website, for me as a cultural analyst, the task was first to explore Chinese tourists' preferences of travelling and cooking as well as eating habits. Thus, I have been focusing on Chinese tourists' behaviour, how they communicate with local people and how they experience local food culture. In order to observe Chinese tourists' behaviours, I strolled the streets in Copenhagen and walked around some attractions to follow their tours. Furthermore, I visited some restaurants and hotels which are popular among Chinese tourists and talked with staff in these restaurants and hotels to get information on Chinese tourists' preferences of dining out and accommodation. Collecting information as well as photographs from the local staff helped me to keep distance from Chinese cultural context that I am close to. Indeed, I got some surprising insights which I had not thought

about before. After the internship, I did interviews, as well. All the interviewees were approximately between 24 to 28 years old, females, studying in Lund more than one year and one was a mother of two children. The limit here is the lack of male informants and the profile of informants—most of them were students. But all of them had rich experiences of travelling in Europe and gave me amount of information about their travelling preferences, cooking habits and suggestion on cooking events organised by local people. Moreover, in order to deal with the problem of lack of informants, I also sent questionnaires to some Chinese people who were from 25 to 60 years old, nine in total, seven females and two male, not only students. Furthermore, some Chinese tourists' travelling dairies and photographies, as well as advertisements form tourism agencies were also collected from Chinese tourism websites. For confidential issues, anonymity is provided for all participants.

Furthermore, in order to understand how cooking events work, I attended in one cooking event—cooking dumplings with a Danish family and other Chinese visitors in Copenhagen. Reasons for only one cooking event that firstly, I took part in is that it was hard to know whether the participants in events were Chinese or not because of limited personal information on the CWAL webpage. Secondly, although I knew sometimes there were Chinese visitors in these events, these events may cancel because of some reasons such as lack of participants. In that evening, I made dumplings with other participants and hosts and ate together. I noticed that two different communities—Danish family and Chinese visitors were prefer to talk with other in their own community for example, Chinese people talked together and Danish family members talked together. But both community had interests to communicate with different groups. Their main feedbacks on this event was positive since they thought it was a good to meet new friends and learnt new dish at the same time by cooking together. For me, I agree with their ideas but there are still some problems. For example, all the Chinese were not typical tourists, instead, they were students or employers in Copenhagen and this reminds me that the CWAL lacks strategies to attract tourists. Further, participants were more interested in talking with their own community rather than communicate with different groups. How to make all the participants as a whole? I think this kind of event is good for communicating and understanding food culture but for the company, they need some strategies to improve their services.

## **2.2 Methodology**

### 2.2.1 Interviews

Interviews, as one of the most important methods for cultural analysts, can provide access to informants' interpretations of their daily life and experiences because they can "go beyond the what is visible and thus observable" (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 462). In order to understand Chinese tourists' behaviours and exploring their habits and preferences while travelling and cooking, semi-structured interviews were conducted during my project. A semi-structured interview is defined as "generally organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewees" (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315). And the advantage of this kind of interviews is that the interviewers can structure "a set of written questions or it may be a very informal list, perhaps memorized, of topics"(Davies, 2002, p. 95) and open their mind to "introduce new topics and supplementary questions not included on the list, and respondents are encouraged to expand on a response, or digress, or even go off the particular topic and introduce their own concerns"(Davies, 2002, p. 95). In this sense, it provided an open and flexible context for both interviewers and respondents to elaborate their topics. What is more, the open-ended questions to let respondents to share their ideas, feelings, habits and stories which were highly diversified and very individualized based. By analysing these materials, specific cultural impacts would be explored and transcribed from common experiences.

These interviews were conducted mainly in English but not so strict because language barriers between English and Chinese occurred during interviews. For example, sometimes both interviewees and I could not come up with what we wanted to express in English, instead of wasting time, we communicated in Chinese and I translated Chinese words into English later. This mix-language strategy has two advantages. Firstly, I am not good at doing translation from English to Chinese so in order to face the risk of misunderstanding and losing the informants' informations, I conducted interviews in English. When using Chinese, as mother tongue, these Chinese informants would not go deeper on the topics since they knew their expressions would be understood by a Chinese interviewer but this taken-for-granted awareness would assume easily a congruence of meanings which does not necessarily exist (Davies, 2002, p. 113). When speaking in English, these informants would explain much more since and I also pushed them to explain more by asking why.

Nevertheless, my materials are not sufficient enough. When conducting my internship research, I could not approach enough informants to conduct my interviews because it was not the most

popular travelling season for Chinese tourists. Furthermore, although I met some groups of Chinese tourists on the streets, they were in hurry and it was hard to stop them and ask them questions.. I continued to do interviews in Lund but as I have pointed over my material was dominated by younger woman.

### **2.2.2 Observations**

The second method I used during my project was observation, to be more specific, participant observation. I did observations by walking along the streets, participating in cooking events hosted by CWAL, visiting Chinese restaurants and trying breakfasts in hotel. In terms of advantages of participate observation, firstly, by observing participants' behaviours, I can see how they act in 'natural' environment. Secondly, compared with sit-down interviews, which "usually keep informants from engaging in 'natural' activities, typically talking to them out of the environments where those activities take place" (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 459), observation show participants close to the environment they are experiencing and show their body languages. This is what Sarah Pink calls sensory ethnography, in which researchers can follow the participants' movements and understand their perceptions which perhaps are "not necessarily expressed verbally" (Pink, 2011, p. 124). Thirdly, when taking part in the cooking events, I was both consumer, guest and cultural analyst. These identities gave me the chance to observe behaviours in more dimensions.

The limitation of observation is how to keep the balance between the role as insider and outsider when the researcher participates with participants. Outsider is "a 'professional stranger' who is detected from the commitment of group under study and insider is an individual who "possesses intimate knowledge of community"(Labaree, 2002, p. 100). As an outsider, you can learn the community more objectively and be "unrestricted by prejudged practice and theory"(Labaree, 2002, p. 100) while as an insider, you can get more closely than an outsider to the community understudied and establish relationship with members in such community, which will lead to more open exchanges of informations. As a researcher, when doing participant observations in Chinese community, it was hard to keep a proper distance with Chinese participants since we have the same cultural background and sometimes I just took some phenomenon for granted.

### **2.2.3 Autoethnography**

Besides observation, I also employed autoethnography by taking part in the event during my intern research, visiting Chinese restaurants in Lund and tasting breakfast in a hotel in Malmö. The advantage of this ethnographic method is that I can focus on social and cultural aspects of my own experience. Furthermore, it is also a way to “exposing vulnerable self that is moved by and way moved through, refract, and resist cultural interpretation” (Ellis, 2004, p. 37). That is to say, by hiring myself as participants in the event and restaurants, the context that my research focus on, I could get close to the social and cultural contexts and establish relationship with other participants. Because of this, the distinctions between the personal and cultural blurred and as a cultural analyst, I became the insider. Another advantage of this method is that it is an autobiographical genre of writing and research, which allows researcher to write their experience in first-person voice and use multiple sensory forms, such as short stories and personal comments.

However, the disadvantage of autoethnography is that for researchers, it has the risk of being too involved emotionally. This means that it is of difficulty to get outside the context to analyse it from a distance and with a cultural perspective.

#### **2.2.4 Questionnaires**

As I mentioned before, I had to challenge the lack of informants to conduct interviews and my solution to this problem was sending questionnaires to informants who were separated from me by a physical distance. This method has the benefit of reducing the stress between informants and me since we were not familiar with each other and some people may be not good at communicate with others face to face. Additionally, answering questionnaires could give participants more time to consider their response compared to face-to-face interviews. All the questionnaires were conducted in Chinese since most of participants were not good at English.

But there were some limitations. First of all, translation became a big challenge for me. As Charlotte Davies claims, translating between different languages can lead to misunderstandings (Davies, 2008, p. 140). After translating, a fact will, more or less, lack some special meanings based on cultural background. I felt some Chinese words were very difficult to translate into English words and there is always something missed after the translation for example an embodied dimension. Furthermore, the limitation of questionnaires is obvious that “they are more likely to ...

reflect on the researchers assumptions of what is relevant” (Alvesson, 2002, p. 131). Compared to the interview, the topic was not elaborated much in the questionnaires. In the questionnaires, people just answered the questions. In addition, there was lack of body languages such as eye contact and facial expression which is “useful for describing how we might read the specifics of embodiment... as indications of feelings and structural relations”(Nairn, Karen et al., 2005, p. 228) and this limitation somehow made it difficult for me to understand their reactions.

### **2.2.5 Netnography and Visual Media**

Alongside the methods I discussed in previous paragraphs, an analysis of travelling dairies written by Chinese tourists in online discussion forums and photographs taken and posted online by Chinese tourists were conducted to see how Chinese tourists experience local food cultures. For example, there is a website called “Qyer” and you can find hundreds of Chinese tourists’ travelling dairies with texts, photos and videos on the webpage. Some of them wrote their dairies in details including transport, accommodation, food and drinks, and recommendations of destinations. I discuss these two methods together since Chinese posted texts and photography together. On the one hand, composed by Chinese tourists let me know their travelling processes across time, space and movement together with their insight into their tours. This kind of digital records of everyday life always includes texts and photography, which creates a sensory atmosphere with word-based and visual materials for me to analyse. In addition, other online users’ comments showed more ideas and perspectives on travelling in the Öresund region. Instead of waiting and searching for Chinese tourists in Copenhagen with no ideas about where they would appear, online dairies provided the possibility to contact them and collect materials efficiently. On the other hand, visual media not only increase the immediately understanding but also impair critical reflection and explanation (Davies, 2008, p. 118). The photography gave me the opportunity to see how Chinese tourists experience the Öresund region culture by using their cameras.

### **2.2.6 Ethics**

Ethics cannot be ignored when it comes to the responsibilities of social researchers regarding the uses of their findings. There are various issues regarding to ethics but here the main aspect will be discussed is confidentiality—“the treatment of information gained about individuals in the course of



research” (Davies, 2002, p. 51). There are two aspects should be taken into consideration: privacy and assurances of anonymity.

In this research, all the information that I gained and collected by the methods I mentioned in previous paragraphs includes personal beliefs and activities which should be considered as private, such as information of participants’ daily habits and description of their behaviours in food events through observations. So the degree of confidentiality must be negotiated between researchers and their participants in order to protect participants’ anonymity. For example, all the interviewees’ names and their gender in this paper are not mentioned, instead, I use characters refer to them and rewrite some quotes of my interviewees. This is because individuality is preserved in linguistic habits and the use of direct quotations may make participants recognizable not only for themselves but also for others who know them well (Davies, 2002, p. 52).

### **3. Cooking as an Innovation for Visitors in the Öresund Region**

#### **3.1 Cooking With Locals**

“Is it OK?” One child showed me his dumpling.

“Oh, yes. Perfect!” I said.

“Could you pass me the stuffing and dumpling skins?” Another child looked at me and said.

“Yes, of course.” I answered and gave him the plate with dumpling skins. “Oh, you are really good at making dumplings. Did you try dumplings before?”

“No, this is my first time and I think I will like it.” He folded a dumpling skin and tried to covered stuffing with it.

“Shall we cook these dumplings? Because there are so many already for cooking.” A Chinese lady suggested.

“Yes, go ahead. I am hungry now.” I said.

This is a food event that I took part in when doing my internship for Cook With a Local (CWAL) in Copenhagen, Denmark— an online platform for users to registers both as hosts to organise food events, such as cooking courses and as participants to join in these events. During my internship with this startup, I could observe how the company operated. This startup was digital-based and their daily work was based on social media to operate their own webpage, Facebook group and

Instagram for advertising their company. My task was to provide knowledge of Chinese tourists' preferences and habits during their tours, for instance, what are their favourite destinations in Europe? Which kind of Chinese tourists should be focused on, tour group or individual tourists? Which social media would they like to use? What about their suggestions for food events? How could Chinese tourists' be attracted to take part in these food events? From this internship, I found that cooking with local people is a new way of developing culinary tourism and an interesting strategy to attract Chinese tourists.

I took part in one cooking events with a Danish family. It was a two-floor house from the view outside and inside the first thing came to my eyes was a really big dining room. The decoration was kind of Nordic style — clean and simple with wooden furnitures. The carpet on the floor gave my feet soft and comfort feeling and several birds were singing in the cage, which provided background music. With the host's greeting: "Hi, nice to meet you and welcome", I sat beside the table and starting making dumpling with other participants — both Chinese and Danish people. While making dumplings and spring rolls, we talked with each other in English and Chinese, and sometime in Danish. This gave me the atmosphere of multiple cultures combined together. Though having various culture background, we communicated with each other successfully and enjoyed sharing our experience. The topics were various, such as studying, living and local news. After a while, when all the dishes done, we sat together around dinner table and enjoyed food. For me, the atmosphere was quite cosy and the food—dumplings and spring rolls gave me the feeling of home since they were traditional and common Chinese foods. It was interesting to see non-Chinese learning how to uses chopsticks. The way of serving and eating food showed the personal identity and cultural aspects. Then the conversation raw from comments of dishes to every topic we could come up with such as news, history and personal experiences. With time passing, everyone there were excited because of the combination of food and conversation. The atmosphere was like a big family instead of hosts and guests. This participation in the food event entailed the multi sensorial embodied engagements with others and with their social, material and sensory environment.

However, the problem was that these Chinese people were not tourists, instead, they were visitors, such as students. It was not the main target group my client wanted to attract but it was so difficult to find Chinese tourists for these food events. Another problem was that this event was about how to make Chinese dishes—dumplings and spring rolls taught by Chinese, which lost the main idea of experiencing local food culture. Participant E argued:

“Hahaha, making dumplings? What is the target group? I think it lost the meaning of such event. I believe if you are in China and let Chinese teach Danish how to make dumplings, it will be in a right way. I mean it creates geographic feeling of that you are in local context and the feeling of being host, because everything will be kind of nature and it is just what should be done in such local cultural context. But if it is opposite, for example, Chinese people taught how to make Chinese dish in Denmark, in foreign context, the meaning and the value of such food event will be lost.”

For me, taking part in such food event and making dumplings, the traditional Chinese food in foreign countries recalled me the memory of making dumplings in China with my family. It was kind of the activity during Chinese New Year—family members sit together and each person has specific task, like staring stuffing, kneading dumpling skins and making dumplings. It was the same when making dumplings with Danish family however, the most different thing is the the context. Casey argues that place is a domain where a set of different types of ‘thing’ come together. “Lived bodies belong to places and help to constitute them” (as cited in Pink, 2015, p. 35). That is to say, we are always ‘emplaced’ because place is the context we inhabit and our site of investigation. It is where our sensory experiences are produced, defined and acted on. In this food event, making dumplings with Danish family in Copenhagen in the host cultural context was lost. Making dumplings is not just an activity but also involves the sensory feeling of being in the right place. Places also gather experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts (Pink, 2015, p. 36). In the Danish family home, the memory of making dumplings in China was recalled for me but in a totally different way.

For example, dumplings are typical Chinese food and for some Chinese, it is the symbol of Chinese New Year and the reunion of family members. Wilk notes that food is a tool that people actively assert their common identity or their differences (Wilk 2006, p. 106). And “identity is linked to authenticity: the uniqueness, originality and sincerity of an identifiable individual or group finds expression in their cultural production” (Johnston & Baumann, 2010, p.85). When making dumplings in Copenhagen, Denmark, there is a cultural and geographic distance. Though dumplings were made by Chinese and ate in Chinese way, using chopsticks, sharing in one plate and eating with vinegar, soya source and sesame oil, the context and the whole atmosphere was not very “Chinese”. It was perhaps typical Chinese food but in the feeling of authenticity was to some degree, lost.

My mixed feelings of this dumpling event in Copenhagen made me think of the importance of exploring differences between daily home cooking and culinary tourism. In the next section I will therefore discuss this difference by starting with cooking at home.

My internship also gave rise to other questions and challenges of developing culinary tourism for Chinese visitors. Cooking with locals can be seen as a new strategy to attract Chinese visitors but there are still some risks and challenges for companies such as Cook With a Local. In order to explore these risks, the first thing should be discussed is what are motivations for Chinese tourists or visitors to take part in such events or what do they want to get from this kind of cooking event. Based on material I collected in my internship, there are two main motivations for Chinese visitors to join in events: one is that they want to learn how to cook local dishes; another is that they want to meet new friends there. Firstly, some of my participants are interested in learning part. Participant K said: “I would like to get the feeling of taking part in the learning process. I want to learn how to cook local dishes”. Participant J also mentioned: “I want to learn new dishes because I am interested in cooking. You know, it is perfect to learn something new”. For these Chinese visitors who want to learn new cooking skills, there are two main preferences they point out for cooking events. First of all, they want the hosts are good at teaching, communicating and organising the whole event since they believe these characteristics are necessary for them to understand how to cook new dishes. Moreover, some of them would rather learn local dishes, which means authenticity is important for them. For example, participant C insists: “If I am a foreigner, I want to learn how to cook Chinese food, I won’t it with a person from Thailand... I want to learn it because I pay for it. I want to learn the original recipes or the local recipes, of course, the people who teach me must be local”. She emphasised “local recipe” and “local people (hosts)” and this indicates the importance of authenticity. Secondly, those Chinese visitors who prefer to meet new friends have different expectations. Compared to the first group, other participants in cooking events are more important than dishes they will learn. Participant G said: “The main motivation for me to join the events is participants because it will be interesting to meet people from different cultural backgrounds”. Participant I also notes: “I think the main reason for me to pay for events is make new friends. Actually, I do not care too much on what I will learn. But if the dishes that I am interested in learning, the events will be more attractive to me”.

Based on all these main motivations of Chinese visitors, for companies, such as Cook With a Local, who want to create and provide adventure culinary activities for tourists, cooking with locals can be a strategies to attract tourists. It is because culinary tourism is a perception of otherness, of something different from the usual by culinary activities. Cooking as one of culinary activities can be taken into consideration of new strategies to attract tourists, especially hiring locals as hosts and cooking in local contexts. It is a way to explore local food culture by taking part in local people's daily life. By entering local's kitchen, tourists are able to join the whole cooking process from preparing to eating and as a result they can experience local's life by cooking local dishes, enjoying meals with them and communicating with locals. Tourists have requirement for authenticity in their culinary tourism but they have to meet problem to make sure whether it is authenticity or not. Dean MacCannell argues that tourists can never find or experience true authenticity. They have to face "touristic consciousness" which means tourists are motivated by desires for authentic experience and they may believe they are in direction to it, but it is difficult for tourists to for sure if the experience is in fact authentic (Long, 2004, p. 55). What tourism industry can provide is a middle ground between the inauthentic and the authentic. Thus the more or less authentic depends on how close tourism services to authenticity. Cooking with locals can provide a way for tourists close to authenticity since it can provide a local context and make it possible to communicate with locals and experience local food culture by cooking and eating. However, a risk that should be payed attention to is that cooking for some tourists can be defined as a labour work in their daily life. This means cooking in their trips has possibility not to take into consideration as one of tourism activity because the general aim for consuming tourism service is for pleasure, leisure and otherness. Cooking as a daily activity is likely to be considered out of tourism activity since tourists may relate cooking events to their everyday cooking tasks which is not enjoyable and cannot be defined as leisure activity. Hence, for tourism companies and agencies, how to make cooking become a leisure destination is one of problems they should solve. So there is a question: what are differences between cooking in daily life and cooking with locals in travelling?

### **3.2 Cooking in Daily Life**

In order to explore Chinese tourists' perspectives on cooking with local people, it is necessary to start by exploring how Chinese people cook at their home and the meaning of cooking in their daily life.

First of all, in terms of Chinese tourists' cooking habits at home, it includes cooking for social fun as well as daily eating. Furthermore when it comes to cooking alone or cooking with other people, most of informants prefer cooking alone to cooking with a group of people and there are two main reasons. First of all, informants say that they do not like to be disturbed by other people, especially people who lack skills of cooking. For example, as one informant mentioned the experience of cooking with her boyfriends because "my boyfriends knows little about cooking" and she explained that the series of questions asked by her boy friend made her lose the concentration on cooking process and as a result, made her work very inefficient (Participant A). Another reason is that the lack of confidence of cooking skills makes some avoid cooking together. As one Participant said:

"I like cooking by myself but since I am ... I think I really lack talent with cooking (laugh)...(the dish I cooked) is... it's more likely to fail than to succeed. Like... all the time(laugh), sometimes my food may taste OK but it will look ugly; sometimes it may be edible but not tasty at all. So... I think for that reason, I want to cook by myself"(Participant C).

In this quote, lack of confidence in cooking skills keeps her from cooking with others but it is not just because of personal characteristic and there is also a cultural dimension. In Chinese culture, showing skills that you are not in control of in front of others is defined as losing face or expressing conceitedness. As a result, if you do not feel very confident, it is good to avoid showing it to the public. Participant A believed that she was not such person who is talented with cooking and kept away from cooking with others. Above all, cooking could be defined as private task for Chinese which is preferred to being concentrated on and dealt with themselves.

Furthermore, cooking alone is also about the power of control. The French sociologist Kaufmann argues that "A cook is much more than someone who works in the kitchen. A cook is someone who is in charge, a leader" because as a cook, she or he makes decisions on choices of ingredients, cooking styles, types of meal and so on, which means a cook is in charge of a community group such as family and is in sole command and takes responsibility (Kaufmann & Macey, 2010, p. 159). As one of my participants mentioned:

"For example, we have to chop the onion, we have to fry the stake, we have to do something else but I would say: 'Yep, you can relax now' because I don't want him to do things differently. I would rather prefer to just have everything done by myself"(Participant C).

Although she was not confident of her cooking skills, she would rather do every step of cooking process herself since she wanted everything in her own standard, such as “chopping the carrot” into proper shapes and size.

Thus combining the concentration and control during the whole process of cooking, it is obvious that when cooking alone, cooks have to manage many different kinds of tasks and to “project themselves into the future in order to remain control” and the higher level they are in charge of the process, the more they involved in what they are doing (Kaufmann & Macey, 2010, p. 212). Otherwise, they will become anxious and mentally distressed when something goes wrong and as a result, this mistake destroys their plans. To decrease the stress of being disturbed by others, showing personal weakness of cooking capacity or make mistakes during cooking, many Chinese would thus rather cook alone.

Moreover, cooking could also be defined as both domestic work for daily life and entertainment by Chinese people depends on different situations. That is to say, cooking can be seen both as entertainment for fun and labour work for daily life. “(cooking) means relaxing, and of course, to eat and then I have to cook. And then...otherwise, it is relaxing”(Participant A) and in this quote, “to eat and then I have to cook” means physical needs and “relaxing” means the activity for fun. As Kaufmann and Macey claimed, there are two forms of cooking: one is “in the repetitive everyday world of the race against the clock and ‘domestic chores’”; another is “in a world of creativity and impulsiveness that was quite out of ordinary” (Kaufmann & Macey, 2010, p. 160). For “domestic chores”, one participant, as a mother of two children, claimed that she sometimes forced herself to cook though she felt really tired because of the responsibility of taking care of her children and then she defined cooking as hard labour work.

However, cooking could shift its meaning of mundane domestic task into something special and worth to spend time and energy on it. one participant put it like this:

“When things get more formal then I would automatically delete that part from cooking like just for example, em... heating up some leftover and like the lunch I had today, then... I... Maybe it is technically cooking, but I wouldn’t like to think about cooking now because that is really very basic, really crapy and not enjoyable type of cooking” (Participant C).

For her, daily cook for filling stomach is not enjoyable and because of the limit of time, she only cooks basic and simple dishes. “Formal” according to her opinion means some special events such as friends’ visiting and as treat after exams and she had enough time to prepare for these events. Then she is fully prepared for these events, shopping and getting recipes. In such a situation, she enjoys cooking. Here, cooking is not tough work at all instead, it becomes a pleasure activity as “break from routine” (Kaufmann & Macey, 2010, p. 161). In conclusion, cooking has two sides of meanings—unescapable everyday task and an enjoyable activity for special occasion.

### **3.3 Differences Between Cooking With Locals and Cooking in Daily Life**

Based on two different contexts of daily life and travelling, I am interested in the follow questions: what are the similarities or differences between as an activity of culinary tourism cooking and as everyday habits? What is the role of cooking in both contexts? What are the meanings of cooking in these two contexts?

Compared to dining out, cooking and eating with local people contain a richer sensory experience. The combination of cooking and eating together provides a fully sensory touring from kitchen to table and from preparation to enjoyment of food, and as a result, giving more pleasure than eating itself. “Foodways”, the network of all the activities surrounding food as I mentioned before, is one of the important elements in culinary tourism, which actives all the senses of tastes, smell, touch and vision (Long, 2004, p. 24) and these sensory dimensions are highly activated when cooking. In the kitchen, with all the procedures of preparing, such as chopping, mixing and choosing, tourists work along with all the sensory components. Although when eating in the restaurants, tourists could also use their senses like smelling and tasting, the degree of finding pleasure in seeking the unknown is lower than adding the process of cooking. Furthermore, during the preparation of cooking, people cannot only produce dishes but also get sense of pleasure of self-satisfaction by sharing food with others and get feedback. Activities like cleaning and chopping gives more pleasure than just eating itself. For Chinese people, cooking for other people who share food with chef the actual preparation and comments play a more important role in it. One participant said: “I like to cook and after that I like to share the food with my friends. And to hear there comments and to let them to make the dish I cook better after I made it.”(Participant B). In this sense, cooking



provides more than eating itself and it gives satisfaction of being approved by others after the efforts of all preparations put in. This kind of emotional pleasure is missing in dining out.

Secondly, compared to Chinese people's habits in everyday contexts of cooking alone, to cook with local could be seen as group work in which people interact with each other and identities will be established and shifted. As Kaufmann and Macey argued, "cooking is always a social activity" and to cook with local people both tourists and hosts interact together and cross cultural boundaries (Kaufmann & Macey, 2010, p. 196). Because of these interactions, social relationships are established and participants' identity are may both be confirmed and shifted. When taking the first step in a stranger's kitchen, Chinese tourists are identified as outsiders. The hosts play an important role as teacher in explaining the procedures and skills while cooking and communicating with tourist guests. During the explanation and communication, cultural meanings of specific food is delivered from the host to the assisting tourists, which helps tourists understanding the local food culture and reduces the distance of the unfamiliar environment and culture. One of informants talked about her wishes for personality of the host, she wanted him or her to be good at communication and because of this communication like explanation the reasons for cooking styles and sharing stories or the history of dishes, she could "getting in the depth, inside of the culture".

Besides the interaction in the kitchen, eating together at the table could make hosts and tourists have a further understanding of their respective cultural backgrounds than the first step. As Long argued, the act of eating food offers a way not only to share our basic humanity but also acknowledging and negotiate different identities (Long, 2004, p. 25). The pleasure of eating and the atmosphere of encouraging conversation combine together to offer the feeling of togetherness (Kaufmann & Macey, 2010, p. 107) which shift tourists' identity of outsider into a member of a local community. To be more specific, eating with local people happens at temporary home which creates a special feeling because of all the settings and decorations which create the atmosphere of home. By eating together a barrier of communication is weaken, people feel closer to each other.

Finally, there is another relation between host and tourists established at the very beginning stage—seller and consumer. Hosts are sellers who sell experience in the form of cooking events in domestic atmosphere. Tourists are experience seekers who desire a high level of engagement with local people and culture in order to partake instead of witness (Bowen & Clarke, 2009, p. 98).

To sum up, cooking with local people during the process of travelling is very different from dining out and cooking for daily life. Such cooking events provide more sensory experience compared to dining out since it includes the whole process of preparing a dish for the final eating. Compared to cook alone as daily habit of Chinese tourists, cooking with locals is a group work which means all the participants there put their effort in creating achievements and through the whole process—cooking and eating together, communication and interaction happens, identities shifts and new relationship established.

In terms of public and private context, cooking with locals twists these opposite contexts together to combine commercial and social fields. In public context, cooking with locals could be seen as commercial phenomena since cultural experience is packaged, sold and consumed. In private context, as Mary Douglas argued, cooking is a form of communication between different group's identities (as cited in Long, 2004, p. 65). Cooking with locals provides opportunity and opening environment for people both outside and inside the specific community to establish relationship, as well as produce and negotiate identity. Furthermore, in such a domestic atmosphere, it is easier for tourists to let their guard down to try and response to new food(Long, 2004, p. 130). Finally, relation between the local and the global, cooking with locals as an activity or service in culinary tourism, provides the opportunity of exchanging various cultural backgrounds because as Long argued, “within tourism, all cultures are ethnic”(Long, 2004, p. 24). By participating in a food system, both locals and tourists express and reinforce their own identity, as part of culture background, while exploring the identity of the other (Long, 2004, p. 66). Then the linkage of local and global world is built by the exchange of cultural backgrounds between the local community and visitors.

#### **4 Chinese Visitors' Culinary Experience in the Öresund Region**

As I mentioned, “foodways” and “otherness” are the two vital realms of culinary tourism. Based on these two realms, this chapter is intended to set the foundation of the following chapters by illustrating how Chinese tourists experience “foodways” when travelling in the Öresund region and the meanings behind these “foodways” for Chinese tourists.

In terms of foodways, “food as a network of activities and systems—physical, social(communicative), cultural, economic, spiritual, and aesthetic”(Long, 2004, p. 23), this realm

creates the context to take various activities into consideration as tourist experiences. I am going to discuss how Chinese tourists experience local food cultures in the Öresund region, or to be more specific, what are Chinese tourists favourite food-related activities when they are travelling. Based on the interviews conducted during the project, there are two main activities that Chinese tourists would like to take part in when travelling abroad: one is dining out in restaurants; another one is purchasing food specialities. But before discussing these two aspects, one phenomenon will be discussed—taking food photographs for online travelling dairies.

#### 4.1 Online Travel Diaries

Some Chinese tourists prefer to share their travelling experience online. They upload photographs with texts to show almost the whole tours, including transport, accommodation, destinations, attractions and food. These diary-like reports of tour experiences could be seen as sources of material to understand how Chinese tourists experience local food when travelling abroad.

Chinese tourists taking photographs of food can be understood as a means of recording their memories of food that impressed them. By using photos, their memories of local food in the Öresund region are tied up in a multiple sensory: vision, olfactory and taste. The photos show food experienced during tours in the Öresund region such as roasted salmon with vegetables, Danish



**Figure 1.** “Princess Cake, a famous Swedish dessert which I knew from others online. I am crazy about dessert so I tasted it without hesitation. It was beautiful and tasty but I don’t like marzipan and it was little sweet when I finished the last bite.”



**Figure 2.** “There were many pubs, cafes and restaurants. It was really enjoyable to eat tasty food with a cup of Carlsberg beer beside the river”. Carlsberg beer as symbol of Danish typical beverage was emphasised.

open sandwiches, Swedish meatballs and so on. “I ate typical Swedish meatballs for dinner, they were delicious since the outside was crispy and the inside was soft, and they were more enjoyable with beer and sour cucumbers” (<http://bbs.qyer.com/thread-1052316-1.html>). Why did he believe the meatballs he ate were typical Swedish taste? He did not explain the reason but just posted the picture of this dish. This could be seen as how Chinese tourists’ perspective of Swedish typical food—meatballs, as the symbol of Swedish local food. Another example was that a Chinese tourist visited a restaurant called SMUSHI in Copenhagen, Denmark. She made the comments: “Attention! This was one of the most important things when visiting Copenhagen—tasting open sandwiches, the typical Danish food. See, they were so delicate that I could not even make the first bite”(http://bbs.qyer.com/thread-939560-1.html). These pictures of food not only show what local food looks like but also communicate the experiential and embodied elements of food experiences. As Pink



**Figure 3.** Swedish meatballs with sour cucumber, lingonberry source and mashed potato. This is to show audience how Swedish local food look like and how delicious it could be.



**Figure 4.** “Danish open sandwiches, very delicate, small but making people feel full easily.”

argued, “The photographs shown are moreover not simply visual images, but also material objects with sensory qualities, or when shown on a computer screen, invested with a different type of material” (Pink, 2015, p. 88). In this sense, those food pictures not only present visual form of food, but also create the whole feeling of these foods—smelling, feeling and even tasting.

Furthermore, these photos are recordings of Chinese tourists’ memory of food experiences in foreign contexts. As Bourdieu argued, photographies performs their social functions and in the ‘recording “souvenirs” of objects, people or events socially designated as important’ (Bourdieu,

1965, p. 7). These foods are valuable for them since they are exotic, that is to say, they are alienated from Chinese food culture. So these photos are “souvenirs” which are special and exist in specific local contexts. Also these photographs are personalised memories of ‘past’ that link individuals to their identities and in a way these photos create an autobiography of travel. Chinese tourists use the camera as an ‘eye’ to record food they experiences. The angles, structures and selections of food they want to keep in the pictures show their identities. These illustrations in this thesis, for example, are selected by Chinese tourists to indicate their views of local foods in the Öresund region. They choose foods which are very different from Chinese food culture but perhaps could be seen as ordinary foods for local people.

As Susan Sontag noted, tourists expect genuineness from the objects, places and people they visit, and they expect this in a system “whereby a set of signs marks the object as authentic”, so that their attention can be focused (as cited in Gmelch, 2010, p. 117). In this sense, for instance, as the illustration shows, a tourist emphasised the brand “Carlsberg” which could be understood as a sign which marks the beer as authentic, the Danish typical beverage. But the question is why Chinese tourists believe all these food they experienced were typical local foods? As tourists travelling to foreign countries, what they will experience is cultural differences, the exotic and otherness which are based on the comparison with their own cultural background and these cultural differences should be marked clearly. For example, meatballs, princess cake and open sandwiches come to be seen as exotic foods by tourists since they are quite different from Chinese food at home.

In addition to emphasising authentic of local food by taking photographs, these photos could be also seen as a way for Chinese tourists relating their travelling experiences to their own world. The film theories Laura Marks has noted, photographs, as a vision document, can be “understood to be embodied, touch and other senses necessarily plays a part in vision” and “memory functions multi-sensorially”(as cited in Pink, 2015, p. 145). Thus, photography can evoke memories, knowledge and experiences. Relating to experiences of their tourist destinations and life in China. For example, a Chinese tourist visited a market in Sweden and he took the picture of a seafood store. He wrote: “This market was not so big and there were lots of customers. This store displayed many kinds seafood, some I was familiar and some was not. All the seafood was put in plastic boxes like what canteens usually do in China and you could eat as soon as you ordered” (<http://bbs.qyer.com/thread-851530-1.html>). This Chinese tourist made comparison between this seafood store in Sweden and canteen in China, which implies the relation between his experience in foreign

countries and the familiar daily life experience in China. As Susan Sontag argued, tourists pay their attention on a series of signs marks the object as authentic, so that tourists can be “given an orientation vis-a-vis their own framework of familiarity related to their own society” (as cited in Gmelch, 2010, p. 117). By this comparison, the authentic of local food stands out and emphasised by the picture and comments below. Tuchman and Levine have noted that tourism and food provides identity in terms of provision of the ‘other’ and in terms of self-reference (Hjalager&Richards, 2002, p. 82). For Chinese tourists, tasting and taking photographs of exotic food are the way of showing the distance of foreign culture since these foods are not familiar with them. But Chinese tourists try to make these exotic food not so exotic by comparing these to the food that Chinese tourists experience in their daily life. As the example I discussed before, he compared the seafood store with Chinese canteen and his daily life experiences.

From the discussion above, Chinese tourists use photographs as a medium to record their food experiences in their outbound tours. These photos are not merely about visual per se, but also about “a range of culturally inflected relationships enmeshed and encoded in the visual” (MacDougall, 2006, p. 221). For instance, all these food pictures above show which food which Chinese tourists experienced when travelling abroad and to some degree, how they felt about these foods. By reflecting on these illustrations with comments below, a self-conscious expression of cultural identity is represented. It is because these foods are exotic, unfamiliar and even strange for Chinese tourist within Chinese food culture. In this sense, these photographs not only just food pictures, but as footprint of Chinese tourists’ travelling and shows isolation of foreign culture different from their own cultural background. What should also be payed attention to is that almost of all these photographs are illustrated with short texts. These texts are the materials that “have been through processes of framing, developing, editing and selection” (Hurdley & Rachel, 2007, p. 356). The texts could be seen as a way of framing these photos by themselves. This framing work presents the context that Chinese tourists experienced, such as place, time, feedback, food and knowledge of such local food. By the presentation of texts and photographs, Chinese tourists can present their everyday life as extraordinary. And by the means of presenting local food, Chinese tourists negotiate their own culture background and their outbound travelling experiences, the familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Food experiences as “history-making” process (Mills, 1959), such as memory.

Another important aspect is that some Chinese people prefer posting their travel plans and travel experiences, as dairies, with suggestions and recommendations on the websites with photos and text

of scenes, local people and other local details — transports, accommodations and food, which us exotic and interesting. Their preferred social medias t are all Chinese inventions: Wechat (“微信”), a mobile text and voice messaging communication service; Weibo (“微博”) a Twitter alike tool with much more localization. The importance is to note that no western major social media is allowed in China, neither Facebook nor Twitter. In addition, there are several major travel themed



**Figure 5.** This is a post from Weibo and it is about recommendations of Swedish seasonal desserts, such as semla, luusekatter (saffron bun) and kanelbulle (cinnamomum bun).

websites such as “ctrip.com”, “qyer.com”, and “tuniu.com” play huge roles in promoting tourism abroad.. For Öresund tourism agencies, such websites could be seen and used as a means of advertising local food and get information on Chinese tourists’ experiences of local food.

#### 4.2 Choice of Restaurants: Local Restaurants or Chinese Ones?

In the choices between Chinese restaurants and other local restaurants, visitors have their own opinions and make different choices during their trips. Their choices could be based on individual tastes, that is to say individual tastes are the combination of their own cultural, social, and personal background. Even “individuals within the same culture can have different food preference reflecting their own beliefs, experiences, situations and personality” (Long, 2015, p. 160).

For Chinese who prefer Chinese restaurants during their trips, comments they were made like “it makes me feel comfortable, em... I mean Chinese food makes me feel that I am eating something”

and “my parents prefer Chinese food, otherwise they believe that there is nothing in their stomachs though finishing their meals”. According to these examples, “the search for familiar food items may involve the missionary in exotic contacts with the host culinary system, facing a new market system and unfamiliar cooking utensils”(Long, 2004, p. 132). Chinese tourists have a tendency to search for Chinese food which they are familiar with since this familiar food is more important and meaningful abroad than the one they experience in China. Moreover, the interaction with the food they are familiar with also means that they can interact with not only food but also the atmosphere and the feeling of belonging the Chinese community when they travel abroad. And this feeling makes them aware of the shared preference and identity.

Let me start on my observations in the Mui Gong Restaurant located in Lund, Sweden, it is a really small restaurant, only with about eight tables. The decorations there are kind of Chinese style—photographies with porcelain, Chinese paper cutting, Chinese painting and calligraphy. These decorations create a feeling of Chinese context. In addition, it is a feeling which for me, recalled me



**Figure 6.** These decorations such as paper cuttings, the picture of porcelain pot and calligraphy are typical symbols of China to emphasis the identity of Mui Gong Restaurant.



**Figure 7.** There is one of simple menus which emphasises dishes for vegetarian in Mui Gong Restaurant and “vegetarian” is seldom marked in Chinese restaurants in China.

the memory of eating experiences in some small family restaurants when I was in China. There was only one waiter that day so she was really busy—rushing between tables and kitchen, writing down orders, serving food, doing cash and cleaning the table. She said in Chinese: “You know, we usually have two people to offer the service everyday but today is only me here. We work everyday but close earlier on Friday and Sunday”. This working style is kind of Chinese style — working really hard. Also, the menu had a Chinese version which made me feel close to the atmosphere of dining out in China. All these examples—decoration, language and menu provide the first impression of familiar atmosphere. Furthermore, the most Chinese feeling was offered by Chinese dishes. I



ordered Wuhan noodles, a local dish from Wuhan, a city in the centre of China with peanut sauce, sesame sauce, soya sauce, egg noodle and vegetables. This dish tasted Chinese because of the typical ingredients and cooking style although I was not sure if it was really local taste since I have not tried this noodle in Wuhan.

All comments I collected from the customers were positive and they believed the dishes were typical and local. In Chinese, we call these feelings “Didao”(地道) which means typicalness and local style. The customers were both Chinese guests and Swedish guests, half to half. For Chinese customers, they communicated with staff in Chinese, ate Chinese food and behaved as Chinese customers. Moreover, dining out in Chinese restaurants, the decoration, the language used and the food, which create a atmosphere of safety, memories and habits of Chinese eating in a foreign environment. Compared to dining out in Chinese restaurants in China, all these elements, as symbols I mentioned before change their meanings in foreign contexts. For instance, some Chinese customers mentioned that it was surprising to eat such typical Chinese dishes in Sweden though the quality of these dishes was not as good as what they ate in China. One of my informants said: “The dishes in Mui Gong are much closed to Chinese style and it is of surprise for me to eat such Chinese dishes here. So I do not care about the quality since Chinese food here is rare and hard to purchase” (Participant G). That means the food tastes better in its Chinese local settings than here. And all these daily dishes experienced here are seen as ‘surprise’, which means these dishes, as symbols changed their meanings—transformed from daily food to a specific and unusual dish. In conclusion, food has the tendency to change its meanings in different situations.

However, not all the food provided in Chinese restaurants could be seen as Chinese food. Another Lund example is the Rose Garden which serves Asian style food, which means it is not what our Chinese visitors define as Chinese food. Most of my informants used “Westernised Chinese food” and “somehow like Chinese food”. It is more in mixed style — they use some elements of Chinese food like soya sauce and the way of cooking but they also change recipes in order to match Western people's taste. Perhaps these Chinese dishes, so to speak, are kind of exotic for our Chinese because they are tasted like Chinese food but still they are different from what we define as real Chinese food and this is why my informants think these Chinese food here are “strange” and “weird”.

Long points out that even “chain restaurants can all be used in creative ways and adapted into the foodways repertoire of an individual or community for expression” (Long, 2015, p. 160). Rose Garden as a chain Asian style restaurant is more Asian-and-Swedish-mixed. The dishes are not typically Asian style and as my observation and interviews indicated, the comments on these dishes — “not typical Chinese food”, “it matches Swedish people’s taste” and “too sweet”(Participant D), all these comments shows a cultural-mixed phenomenon. My own experience in Rose Garden of this Asian style buffet gave me the same feelings as my participant. I took a plate and went to the food section. There were four main parts: two were kind of Chinese style foods, one was Sushi and one was salad except drink and ice cream parts. Chinese foods included Chinese wok such as mixed vegetables and meat, roasted pork ribs, Char Siu (barbecued pork), stir fried noodles, fried stuff like fish, chicken ball and crab ball, and spring roll. Another rack included Dim-Sum, more like Cantonese style—steamed food in bamboo steamer such as buns and dumplings. I pick up every Chinese dishes and tasted. For me these Chinese dishes except fried stuff were not totally Chinese style but very similar to Chinese food. Some of them I tasted Chinese, like Dim-Sum, but some of them were more catering to Swedish taste, such as fried stuff with creamy sauce. Moreover, some dished were in between, like roasted ribs, it was a little bit sweeter than I tasted in Chinese. From my experience here, Swedish people take in more sugar than Chinese and perhaps it is why this pork dish was sweeter. As a result, Rose Garden could be seen as a success case of mixed cultural foodways since both Chinese community and Swedish community can adapt to it and make positive comments on it.

Can the success of a chain restaurant like Rose Garden be seen as an example of globalization? Chinese restaurants or Asian style restaurants in the Öresund region are example of foreign food exported to Sweden and could be seen as a process of culinary globalization. With a new ethnic group, such as the Chinese community, a new subculture is created at the same time (Long, 2015, p. 73). Global imports like Chinese restaurants are transformed in the new setting, adapted to local habits. It could be seen as the process of acculturation—“one subordinate group adopting the culture traits of a dominant group”(Long, 2015, p. 86). That is to say Chinese dishes here in the Öresund region has adopted some local elements of food culture in the Öresund region, such as more sweetness and less spiciness. One the one hand, it could be seen as catering the local market and appealing to local customers. On the other hand, it also indicates that food culture in the Öresund region has some specific characteristics or local preferences. Not only changes in dishes, but also other aspects. For example, there were three languages versions—English, Chinese and

Swedish in the menu of Mui Gong and to be more specific, the names of dishes are in English and Chinese but the introductions of these dishes are in Swedish and English. It is interesting since, as Chinese, we are familiar with ingredients if we read the names of dishes and all the dishes there are what we call them “Jiachangcai”(家常菜), which means they are familiar for Chinese visitors and usually home-made. But it is more difficult to translate Chinese names into Swedish. The level of how spicy of the dish was showed by use illustration of chilli, like two chilli means medium spicy, and also vegetarian dishes are highlighted which is not typical in China.

Local style restaurants is another choice for Chinese tourists. However, because of inefficient application of information media, for Chinese tourists, they lack knowledge of food culture here. Participant E said: “Of course the local one because Chinese food is what I have eaten for such a long period. So why not try exotic food in foreign country?”. For her to experience a local restaurant could be seen as the exploration of new and exotic food. Participant D also mentioned that she preferred local restaurant because she believed that local restaurant could provide typical local cuisine. She gave an example: “Although I could make pizza at home, I will try it in Italian restaurants since it tastes differently compared home-made one. I mean home-made one is less typical than the one in local restaurant”. So a local restaurant is also the place to explore authentic food. All these characteristics indicate that local food, or to be more specific, exotic food is “norm-breaking” food which is different, distinct and sometimes even shocking compared to the food that individuals are familiar with in their daily life.

Many tourists have various reasons of choices of restaurants. One reason is that dining out is just for filling an empty stomach. As informant A said, “when we are hungry, starving and want to eat something, we just sometimes went to... for whatever restaurants we could find” and besides the situation of requiring food eagerly during traveling process, she also added that she would search for famous local restaurants online before the trip and dine out in these restaurants during the trip. Her additional information shows the second reason for dining out is exploring local food culture since “famous local restaurant” she addressed implies the characteristics of these restaurants which are different from the restaurants picked up randomly. Another informants gave an example: “Like in Prague, we found a very famous local restaurant which was very expensive but we wanted to taste it so we went there and we had meals” ( Participant B). She mentioned the specific destination

which means the restaurant is the representation of that city and shows the local food culture which attracted her to try though it was out of her budget.

The second food-related activity among Chinese tourists is visiting local supermarkets and stores, for example, “we like to visit the local supermarkets and to see their prices and to try their product” (Participant B). One aim for visiting stores and supermarkets is tasting local food as one dimension of the way for exploring local people’s daily life. As one informant pointed out: “I think we should try the local things: the local food, the local supermarket and just join the local people that is the good way to learn the culture” (Participant C). Moreover, visiting stores to buy local food products for relatives in China is another aim. In one Chinese tourist’s travelling dairies, she mentioned that she bought two boxes of cookies in Denmark and took back home as souvenirs for relatives. “What a pity that I bought only two boxes! They are not enough to share” (<http://place.qyer.com/copenhagen/>), she wrote, since Danish cookie is popular among Chinese tourists and seen as one kind of local food in Denmark.

These two food-related activities show that Chinese tourists are willing to try local food, which is exotic for them and this could be seen as experiencing otherness, another realm of culinary tourism. Otherness is a construction by the individuals and by the culture within which that individual moves (Long, 2004, p. 24.). For Chinese tourists, local food is defined as exoticism which means that it is unknown, foreign, unconventional or even strange (Johnston & Baumann, 2010, p. 25). Trying exotic food in other countries and regions could be seen as one way of exploring foreign culture. To be more specific, when they visit some destination for the first time, it is possible for Chinese tourists or visitors feel strangeness since they are in an unfamiliar environment and most of things for them are new and exotic, including food. As I argued before, food is not only what we eat, but also provide a way of experiencing a specific culture. For example, in the interviews, participants gave examples of exotic food and the interesting thing was that they connect these exotic food to countries and regions, such as meatballs (köttbullar) related to Sweden, Paella related to Barcelona and Haggis related to Scotland. Here, food or dish is not just the stuff for eating but a symbol of one country and its culture.

Another function of consuming ethnic food is to evoke nostalgic feelings and memories. In this context, food is seen as souvenir to recall memory of travelling experience and also works as the symbol of ethnic culture. For example, a Chinese tourist bought Danish cookies while going back to

China. Danish cookies could evoke her memories of the travelling experience she had, when she tasted them at home and they were a representation of Danish culture. Exotic food can be defined as geographic reference and recall memory of past time and space. But one thing should be paid attention to is that sometimes the food that Chinese tourists consider as exotic food perhaps is not the typical one in local culture context, such as a Danish cookie.

Referring to the question of where to eat, there is often a negotiation between choosing a Chinese restaurant or a local restaurant. Although some informants would like to try exotic food, they sometimes still chose Chinese restaurants. As Rudy argued: “the moment of negotiating the familiar and exotic imitate and inform on eater’s quest to alien with, respect, and know the cultural other” (Long, 2004, p. 133). Participant D said: “If I have stayed in a specific place for a long time, I will eat Chinese food since I tried local food. However, it will be another thing, if I visit a destination that I have never visited before because I do not know if I will visit the destination again”. Long-term visiting creates the opportunity to reduce the isolation of exotic food culture and break the wall of ethnic communication. Compared to long-term visiting, short-term visiting and staying could make the difficulty for foreigners to experience exotic food because of lack of time exploring and establish relationship with locals. Additionally, Chinese tourists sometimes will choose restaurants randomly. Supermarkets and stores are also the options for them. The folklorist Long argues that tourists sometimes are cognisant of the immediate contexts rather than the larger social, cultural and political ones (Long, 2015, p. 284). In this situation, it depends on individual’s preference and time of staying.

To sum up, Chinese tourists’ choices of consuming food have various options which depend on personal preferences, history and identity. For Chinese tourism who prefer Chinese food, they are not only searching the food they are familiar with, but also the feeling of Chinese community which makes them feel safe.

### **4.3 Eat-in at Hotel — the Choice of Breakfast**

One special situation of eating has to do with hotel breakfasts. In Chinese International Travel Monitor 2014, it mentioned that seventy-three percent rate of Chinese-specific food-related items as among the most important services provided by a hotel and thirty-seven percent voting for Chinese breakfast. That is to say breakfast is one of most significant food-related activities for Chinese

tourists. How do Chinese tourists or visitors view breakfast during their trips? What are their preferences, Chinese ones or local ones? Could breakfast be an efficient way to experience local food?

When entering the canteen, I heard soft music, perhaps in English, slowly, lightly and softly, which created a comfortable and friendly atmosphere, kind of Nordic style, not so hospital but cosy. It was really cold outside — I had stepped on the thin ice and breathed cold air. But it was warm inside the hotel, I walked straight to the reception, payed for the breakfast buffet and got a plate to get something to eat. “Finally,” I thought, “I must eat something warm.” This feeling filled in my mind and I cannot wait to picking up food. For Chinese, breakfast is extremely important and warm food is the most common preference, such as Chinese bun, congee, soya milk and pancake. Especially in such frozen weather, hot drinks and warm food are necessary for keeping warm. However, when rushing into the food section, I felt it was not for me. What I saw was kind of European style food mixed with Swedish style elements, like toast, whole wheat buns, crackers, jam, butter, herring, scrambled egg, sausages, boiled eggs and baked beans. In this list, it is obvious that most of them are cold dishes except screamed egg and sausages. “OK, fine, at least there are hot dishes though limited choices.” I told myself. I picked up some of them, took a cup of very hot green tea, sit down and started eating. I looked around the cafe: most of guests were Western people, and I was the only Asian face there.

I chose this hotel since I had searched online and there were Chinese tourists’ positive comments on breakfast on the booking webpage. I did not know why they wrote like “very good breakfast” on the webpage because for me, it was not so good but not so bad either. Nevertheless, the food served today was not Chinese style at all, even not Asian style. Eventually, I thought I was full but not so satisfied. In Chinese, we use a word called “Shufu” (舒服) to describe the comfortable feeling after meals. At that time, I felt full but not so comfortable because this kind of breakfast was not match my stomach though I believe I was not such person who only is used to Chinese breakfast.

For Chinese visitors, their choice of breakfast have some common elements, such as hot meal and hot beverage. Participant E mentioned: “For me, the most satisfied breakfast in hotel abroad is that there are some hot dishes or, at least hot drinks, such as tea and coffee. If so, I will feel good and have enough energy to walk around the city”. Participant I also noted: “The most important thing is

that there is, at least, hot water and if the hotel can serve hot meals, it will be perfect! But when travelling outbound, the most common breakfasts in hotels are cold meals. I am satisfied, if the hotel offer hot meals and drinks”. As I mentioned before, in Chinese International Travel Monitor 2014, thirty-seven percent of Chinese tourists voted for Chinese breakfast. But is Chinese breakfast necessary for all the Chinese tourists? For some visitors, it is not necessary. Most of my participants said they were flexible and did not particularly need Chinese breakfast. Participant H noted: “I do not need Chinese breakfast when travelling abroad. I am not such person who only eat Chinese breakfast”. Another participant also mentioned: “Chinese breakfast? No, not necessarily. For me, a cup of tea or juice and a croissant are enough”. It seems that young generations from 20 to 25 years old are more flexible on their choices of breakfast compared to older generation. For example, participant D mentioned that when first studying abroad, her farther told her to buy Chinese bun as breakfast when going to school and she replied to this, “Chinese buns? There was no Chinese buns at all (laugh). You know, people like my father would find it very difficult to live abroad, at least, my father will not be used to Western style breakfast”.

So what about Chinese tourists travelling in the Öresund region? In their travelling diaries, they did not mention too much about their breakfast but there are still some comments and pictures there. “I liked the crispbread (knäckbröd) and the liver source. Yes, especially the crispbread (knäckbröd), it was made by whole wheat with out dairy and gluten. I thought it was really healthy. I missed them so much when coming back to China”(http://bbs.qyer.com/thread-1027359-1.html). She also wrote another dairy: “The breakfast in hotel was good and I can make waffle by myself. What a pity that you cannot smell it behind the screen!” (http://bbs.qyer.com/thread-1027359-1.html). “I was crazy about these pickled herring(sill). They were so so so tasty!” (http://bbs.qyer.com/thread-1052316-1.html). All these quotes gives a general picture of Chines tourists experiencing



**Figure 8.** “I thought smoked salmon was a little salty and it was not for me but when coming back home, I missed it so much.”



**Figure 9.** “These fish dishes (sill) were yummy”. He did not know the name of such dishes and what kind of fish it was but just emphasised that he liked them.

breakfast abroad. Most of them had positive feeling of these Western style food but they did not realised they were typical dish at breakfast in the Öresund region, such as crispbread (knäckbröd). However, were all the dishes served in hotel typical breakfast dishes? Normal Swedish breakfast usually consists of open sandwiches, possibly crisp bread (knäckebröd). The sandwich is most often buttered, with toppings such as hard cheese, cold cuts, caviar, messmör (a sweet spread made from butter and whey), ham (skinka), and tomatoes or cucumber. Common drinks for breakfast are milk, juice, tea, or coffee ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swedish\\_cuisine#Breakfast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swedish_cuisine#Breakfast)). In this sense, compared to what Chinese tourists experienced in hotels in the Öresund region, some dishes were not typical local breakfast dishes, such as pickled herrings. Though some dishes, like pickled herring, are not typical breakfast dishes, they are also typical local dishes in the Öresund region. What can we learn from the Chinese visitors' choices of restaurants and breakfasts? First of all, food is one of our basic needs and it is also one of the most widespread markers of our identity (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 4). For Chinese visitors, their choices of Chinese food even when travelling or visiting abroad could be based on their cultural aspect. It is because "what we eat and the way we eat are such basic aspects of our culture" (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 5). When visiting abroad, Chinese tourists and visitors could be in the risk of changing their eating habits, which might be seen as an attack on their national, regional and personal identity. As some of my participants mentioned, they have experiences of dining out in Chinese restaurants for several times in the Öresund region, and what they usually cook at their guest accommodations is mainly Chinese food or the food cooked in Chinese ways. For example, participant E often cooks pasta with sesame sauce, sesame oil, soya sauce and rice vinegar which are typical Chinese sauces used in Chinese cuisine. Moreover, Chinese tourists' and visitors' preferences on breakfasts in hotels like hot meals and drinks are also as a mark of their identity because it is a common habit for Chinese people eat warm dishes and drink warm beverages at breakfast. These choices and preferences on food in foreign countries are seen as seeking the 'comfort' of home in their travels and long-term stay. As I discussed before, in Chinese, we use a word called "Shufu" (舒服) to describe the comfortable feeling after meals. Chinese food and warm meals make Chinese tourists feel comfortable and satisfied with because these foods have characteristics of familiar tastes that Chinese visitors experience in China. "Our choices of food, the way we present it, the way we serve it and the way eat it speak volumes about who we are and our position within the group" (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 9). No matter dining out in Chinese restaurants or preferring warm meals at breakfast, Chinese tourists and visitors have such feeling of their familiar food culture which makes



them feel that they are in Chinese community and safe. For instance, Mui Gong Restaurant in Lund, Sweden, some traditional decorations, like paper cutting, Chinese as one of language that customer can communicate with waiters and in menu and typical Chinese dishes cooked and served in Chinese ways are create the atmosphere of Chinese culture and community. This makes Chinese visitors and tourists feel they are kind of in China and escape the foreign culture context and at that moment.

Although Chinese tourists and visitors have their habits of choosing Chinese food and the food they are familiar with, there is still the trends for Chinese tourist tasting local food in the Öresund region. There is a strong relationship between certain localities and certain types of food. This relationship is developed in national cuisines that could reflect on the power of national cultures. For instance, most of my participants mentioned meatballs while reflecting on the regional food in Sweden. This reflection could be seen as the “promotional efforts based on distinctive or ‘typical’ regional or national foods” (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 5) since there is a link between location and gastronomy which is used in number of ways in tourism. Tourists and visitors search and collect information on gastronomy before travelling outbound through tourism agencies, webpages and guides. These media are used as a means of guiding tourists and visitors to experience local food. These national cuisines and foods have the power on tourists and visitors choices of what they will eat in their trips. National food, to some degree, attracts tourists and visitors to experience local food and could be used as a way of selling the destination.

#### **4.4 Food-related Spin-offs — Souvenirs**

Souvenirs, as a universal element of the travel experience, plays an important role not only for tourists but also for hosts. For tourists, souvenirs could be memory holders to recall their memories of their travel and sometimes as gifts for their relatives, such as family members, friends and colleagues. On the other hand, producing and selling souvenirs is part of local tourist economy. My main discussion will be focused on food-based souvenirs and the following topics will be discussed: the definition of souvenirs, especially food-based souvenirs; the characteristics and attributes of food specialties and the meaningfulness of them as well as, the behaviour of purchasing food-based souvenirs.

##### **4.4.1. Food Specialties as Objects**

Tourist shopping and souvenirs have contributed significantly to tourism retailing. Purchasing souvenirs though not necessary, could be one of alternative activities for tourists as leisure behaviour and a way to experience local culture. Before going deeper of the discussion of food souvenirs, these question should be answered first: What is souvenir? What are the main elements which defines it? In order to answer this question, there are two aspects should be considered. For tourists' perspective, souvenirs are the objects that "that are symbolic reminders of an event or experience" and "they may be purchased or found and serve as tangible markers of an otherwise intangible and ephemeral experience"(Swanson & Timothy, 2012, p. 490).

This means souvenirs are sometimes described as metonymics of events, places or experiences, implying meanings and consequences. For example, one of my informants mentioned the souvenir—a toothpaste bought in Russia, and she said: "I tend to buy toothpaste every where I go because it is a very small tube of stuff but it can last for several month. So if I have a tube of toothpaste for Sankt Petersburg in Russia. Although I have been there for only a week ,the souvenir stayed with me for half a year and I can always remind myself—oh, I have been to Russia" (Participant C). For this participant, the toothpaste is not the one people use everyday but the one with a valuable memory of the travelling experience. So for her, the toothpaste is "a particular *genius loci* to be so unique that after years it will still be associated with particular time (the trip) and space (the visited place)" (Buczowska, 2014, p. 57). What is more, "souvenirs ... are often strategically placed in the home where they can best be seen by family members and visitors" (as cited in Swanson & Timothy 2012, p. 490). Souvenirs work as reminders of memory and experience of travelling and something could be shared with relatives. From the merchant's or supplier's perspective, souvenirs are tourists' commodities, which have exchange value in the marketplace and are produced, distributed, and consumed with few emotional attachments (Swanson & Timothy, 2012, p. 490). Souvenirs also produce patterns of shopping behaviour.

Souvenirs as food specialties could be understood, as Lin and Mao mentioned, "one kind of souvenirs, particularly refers to food, which is purchased by tourists in a specific tourism attraction" (Lin & Mao, 2015, p. 20). Here, souvenirs refer not only to food and beverage we eat and drink, but also as culinary souvenirs such as cook utensils, like mugs, plates and linens, as well as menus and recipes. In addition, even "photographs of dishes, fruit and spices sold in street markets, as well as

restaurants and places of production” (Buczowska, 2014, p. 52) can also be considered as culinary souvenirs. So it is obvious that food specialties share the same characteristic with other souvenirs—the functions of producing travel memory and experience. But there are also some characteristics perhaps, other souvenirs lack. First, in terms of sensory appraisal, food can evoke multiple sensory appraisals—flavours, sounds, sights, smells and feelings from destinations tourists visited.

Compared to other souvenirs, the most special characteristic that food can provide is flavour. A piece of chocolate, a slice of smoked salmon and a cup of wine, for example, could evoke all the sensory, especially when someone finally put them into mouth. During such process, by seeing, smelling, touching, tasting and even hearing, all the feelings are combined together with flavours, such as sweetness, sourness, bitterness, saltiness and spiciness. No matter whether you like the taste or not, at that time, tasting conquers the body and make individuals focus on tastes. As Prescott argued, “an enormously varied set of sensations begins prior to the first bite” and then “the characteristic flavour of a food — odours, tastes and tactile or mouthfeel sensations such as astringency, spiciness and texture emerges” (Prescott, 2012, p. 19). This specific characteristic that food provides perhaps may not be achieved from other souvenirs. For instance, participant I said: “I bought several bottles of wine when visiting Italy since the wine was so tasty — the colour, the smell and the taste, you know, all these combined together...it tasted creamy, sweet and...fantastic!”.

Secondly, besides sensory appraisals, food souvenirs have symbolic appraisals. As other souvenirs, the meanings attached to souvenirs suggest a message about where they come from and the spirits they evoke (Lin & Mao, 2015, p. 22). Souvenirs bought during trips are mementoes of events make people recall the memories of that time and place. For example, one Participant mentioned the fläder dryck (a kind of juice with a specific flower taste) she bought and took back home after she finished her exchange study in Malmö University. In her description, purchasing this soft drink was not only because of its tasty flavour, but also as medium to remind her the memory of study and living experience at that time and in that place. As Swanson and Timothy argued, souvenirs are memory holders for the person, especially representing a specific place (Swanson & Timothy, 2012, p. 491). Souvenirs hold the image of such place and give the feeling of ‘having been there’ as salient keepsake for the home. From the example I mentioned before, the soft drink with specific flower taste is special for her since the flavour cannot be found in China, as she said: “I had never seen it in any supermarket in China before”(Participant D) and even the text in Swedish on this soft drink on the package could also remind her of Sweden.

Furthermore, souvenirs' symbolic appraisal includes cultural linkages. When it comes to food souvenirs, it is the same. For example, I found a crispbread (knäckbröd) sold in supermarket and on its package, the logo is Dala horse. On the one hand, as I explained above, the logo gives this food product symbolic meaning since Dala horse can generally represent Sweden. On the other hand, the



**Figure 10.** The package of crispbread (knäckbröd) with picture of Dala horse.



**Figure 11.** The advertisement of this crispbread (knäckbröd) for showing the original production place of Dala horse and the way of eating the crispbread (knäckbröd).

crispbread, a flat and dry type of bread or cracker, containing mostly rye flour, is a very typical food of Nordic countries with long history. Authenticity is one of souvenirs' objective characteristics. From a subjective aspect, it is the individual's connection to the object, which means individuals sometimes give meanings to such souvenirs based on their own social networks, preconceived notions and cultural biases (Swanson & Timothy, 2012, p. 491). In these senses, authenticity is both objective and subjective. For tourists, the food souvenirs they purchased in destinations should best represent the originality for food specialties. For example, once one of my classmates brought a Dala horse to the class and another person asked whether the craft was made in Sweden or China. Then the owner of the wooden horse was very upset and immediately checked the bottom of the horse. After confirming it was made in Sweden, he felt happy. This focus on authenticity for food souvenirs. The local identity can be emphasised by ingredients, the way of cooking, the story and history containing in it and so on. One participant said that she bought some packages of ginger bread when going back to China. Although she was not sure if ginger bread was typical Swedish food, she bought it because she found it in a supermarket and Swedish people ate it during their daily life and especially as one of Christmas food. Also she thought the characters on the one side of

the package — “made in Sweden” could be the evidence of local food. ( Considering the history of gingerbread, it was brought to Europe in 992 by the Armenian monk Gregory of Nicopolis (Gregory Makar, Grégoire de Nicopolis). During the 13th century, gingerbread was brought to Sweden by German immigrants (Wikipedia, n.d.). Nowadays, gingerbread is called pepparkakor in Swedish and they are thin, brittle cookies or biscuits that are particularly associated with the extended Christmas period. In Sweden, gingerbreads are also used as window decorations (Wikipedia, n.d.). As Long mentioned, “food associated with one celebration can imply some of meanings or emotions in different contexts” (Long, 2015, p. 161). Regarding to this, gingerbread could be seen as a symbol of Christmas period in Sweden and for Chinese tourists, it is also seen as a typical Swedish food.

Some Scandinavian food is available in China. Danish cookies are also sold in Chinese supermarket but Chinese tourists still buy cans of them in Denmark. Participant D said: “When studying in Macao, there were many Danish cookies full of racks in supermarket, especially during Chinese New Year. You could see customers bought, for example, ten cans of this cookie and this cookie was the most common snack as a treat for guests who visited hosts. It is so interesting...”. She also added that she could see tourists bought this cookie in Denmark and she admitted that she believed it was typical local food in Denmark before she studied here. But now she does not think it is Danish food and she said: “I think it is a misunderstanding of local food in Denmark”. One Chinese



**Figure 12.** They are Danish cookie boxes taken by Chinese visitors. Most of Chinese visitors think these cookies are typical Danish food. But do they cause misunderstandings?

tourists wrote that she thought these cookies tasted really good and felt pitiful that she did not bought enough for sharing in her travelling dairy online. Danish cookies are authentic food especially in Denmark, compared to ones sold in Chinese supermarket. Salazar and Graburn claim

that “Souvenirs can be both the signs and symbols of imaginaries, which could be brand stereotypes or could be highly modified and personalised by their (tourists’) experiences in many forms” (Salazar & Graburn, 2014, p. 12). This indicates that Chinese tourists have their imaginaries of local foods here in Denmark such as Danish cookies. Though these cookies are local food product, they need not have much in little common with the local culture. Chinese tourists are influenced by advertisements of such “local food” in China and they are “complicit in creating their own ‘proofs’ or evidences of tourism imaginaries” (Salazar & Graburn, 2014, p. 12).

In conclusion, food souvenirs thus do not only have the same characteristics as other souvenirs, like reminders of memories and experiences as well as symbolic meanings of culture and destination, but also have specific characteristics such as integrating all the sensory dimension of the body.

#### **4.4.2. Purchasing and Giving Food Souvenirs**

Most of my Chinese informants had a limited view of food in the Öresund region—they lacked knowledge of food culture here. My question was that “could you tell me what food-related souvenir that comes up in your mind here?” and most of my informants could not give any specific examples. For example, participant D said: “I have never thought about food here as souvenirs because I do not think there is any specific food here as souvenir”. After thinking about it for a while, she added: “Perhaps... fläder dryck (a kind of juice with a specific flower taste)? I bought some when I was as an exchange student. It was really tasty and I had never found it in any supermarket in China before”. But she emphasised again “I cannot image which food in the Öresund region as souvenir that I can take back home...”. Another participant also mentioned that “I am not going to buy food from here, if I going back to China. Because I cannot come up with any typical Swedish food here. Em... perhaps Swedish food is not as popular as Swedish crafts” (Participant H). These quotes imply that the lack of knowledge of food culture the Öresund region is common among Chinese visitors. And based on this, it could be a problem for them pinpoint local culinary items. “I would like to buy handcrafts when travelling, like some dedicated stuff. I don’t like purchasing something with too obvious commercial sign of the city such as T-shirt with ‘I like Copenhagen’ printed in it” (Participant H). In this quote, handcraft is more valuable than commercial and mass-produced souvenirs. As Littrell argued, through crafts, tourists can appreciate the intricate handiwork, the technique employed, and the time involved in the crafts production process (Lin & Mao, 2015, p. 22). Considering food products, perhaps it is more frequent to come

up with industrial products. Nevertheless, food souvenirs could also include three characteristics of handicrafts I mentioned above like hand-made chocolate and home-made smoked salmon. What is more, cook utensils could also be handicraft like hand-made wooden spoons. The problem here is not the lack of such food souvenirs but the limitation of knowledge of food culture in the Öresund region.

Moreover, tourists' preference of deciding what to purchase not only personal but also their shopping value perceptions. In this sense, shopping souvenirs can express tourists' identity and history. Philosopher Lasusa argued: "Souvenir collecting should be considered important in the illumination of various elements of the modern and postmodern state of being-in-the-world" (Lasusa, 2007, p. 271). This means that "one's relationship to epistemological issues such as knowledge of the past and verification of an objective reality" and the methodology he or she employed to remind personal history will give him or her a sense of meaning (Lasusa, 2007, p. 271). For example, participant E mentioned: "I always send post cards to myself every time I visit some place, which is the thing that I must do during my trips". For her, post cards are the evidences of her foot prints on her travelling maps, which could be kind of documents of her personal history and give her the meaning of travelling. It may be the same for tourists who like collecting crafts. Their hobbies of collecting crafts is not only for mementos of specific destination but also as personal evidence of visiting such destination. For food souvenirs, it is the same. One of my friends visited me and after finishing the trip to Copenhagen, she bought two boxes of cookies as souvenirs. She said: "See, the pictures on the boxes are famous tourist attractions we visited and I can keep these boxes for other use after finishing all the cookies" (Participant J). In this case, cookie boxes are the reminder of this travelling experience and as evidence for her visiting since she will keep them instead of throwing them away.

Furthermore, not only buying souvenirs for themselves, but also purchasing souvenirs for relatives is another shopping behaviour popular among Chinese tourists. In Xu and McGehee's research (2012), purchasing souvenirs as gifts for relatives and friends return home provides purchasing motivation when tourists travel abroad (as cited in Lin & Mao, 2015, p.19). It was really interesting that my informants seldom bought souvenirs during their tours unless the products were their favourite and sometimes they bought souvenirs only for their relatives. For example, one of my informants said: "I seldom bought any souvenirs in my trips but if they were my favourite, I would buy them otherwise, I will not buy any thing as souvenirs" (Participant E). They did not tell me the

reason for not buying souvenirs but when I review their answers, they preferred seeing travelling as experiencing local culture and changing an environment for different life styles. If I consider this reason for travelling, it is not confusing to get these answers. Because their aims of travelling were experiencing and buying local products did not seem important. Besides, the more frequently people travel, the fewer souvenirs they tend to purchase (Collin-Kreiner & Zin, 2011, p. 24). It is because the value of souvenirs will decrease when travellers repeated trips abroad and the transformation of international travel into a common event. “With increased physical and virtual accessibility to the ‘other’, travel for some has become less meaningful, and the significance attributed to souvenirs has decreased” (Collin-Kreiner & Zin, 2011, p. 24). Most of my informants had much travelling experience abroad and some of them were crazy about travelling. So buying souvenirs for themselves could be not so important because of frequent availableness of accessibility to these physical objects.

Moreover, another reason for buying food products is to give them to their relatives and friends. “When I came back to China, I bought some local food for my family members and friends such as ginger bread...Em...Is it Swedish food? I also bought coffee for one of my friends because he likes drinking coffee but it is not typical Swedish food...Although coffee is not Swedish food, I just bought it as gift since it was food from foreign country”(Participant E). The meaning of such giving behaviour is to share the experience to others, showing politeness and establish relationships. In Chinese culture, social network is really important among individuals and it is common to give gifts from destinations when people coming back in order to establish and strength relationship. Additionally, it does not matter whether it was local food or not and the main point here is it is just from other countries outside China.

## **5 Globalization and Localization**

Contemporary globalization refers to “the compression of the world and to the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole” (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 71). For Chinese tourists, globalization also has effects on their perspectives and imaginaries on food culture and their choices of consuming food in the Öresund region.

For Chinese tourists, they also have such ideas or expectations especially about food before travelling in the Öresund region. Tourism involves the human capacity to imagine or to enter into



the imaginings of others (Salzar & Graburn, 2014, p.1). And as Appadurai argued, the imaginary can direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes (Appadurai, 1996, p.31). During my fieldwork, Chinese visitors have two main kinds of imaginaries of food culture in the Öresund region: one points to fast food style diet; another is no idea of what people will eat. The first one, participant D said: “Em...I supposed that they may eat hamburgers, chips and cheese. I mean fast food and they eat much meat, such as meatballs”. This imaginary of food culture, fast-food style diet is shaped by wider sociocultural frameworks (as cited in Salzar & Graburn, 2014, p. 1). Participant D added: “You know, when living in China, the most of Western food you can afford to eat with reasonable price is McDonald’s, KFC and Pizza Hunt. So I imagined the diet here is fast food and unhealthy food”. Her experiences of western food in China limited in fast food culture which could be seen as the influence of globalization of food culture. Furthermore, as I discussed above, when it comes to food speciality of Denmark, the first food Chinese tourists and visitors comes up with is Danish cookies since some Chinese people have such experiences of consuming Danish cookies in supermarkets during the period of Chinese New Year. These examples not only refer to how Chinese tourists shape their imaginaries of food culture in the Öresund region but also make certain food as symbol of the food culture. That is to say Chinese tourists and visitors relate certain symbolic food to a specific destination. The modern media plays its role in shaping these imaginaries. As Salzar and Graburn pointed out that modern media play upon already internalised worldview, directing it to specific destinations (Salzar & Graburn, 2014, p.7). Social media, such as apps and internet, provides amount of information on food of tourism destinations and most of Chinese tourists or visitors prefer to use these food media as references before their tours, like Weibo, WeChat and tourism webpages. All the information from online sources, magazines and guide books have influences on their expectations and imaginaries of food culture in the Öresund region. Appadurai pointed out: “global advertising is the key technology for the worldwide dissemination...and culturally well-chosen ideas of consumer agency” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 42). Food media has such ability to shape imaginaries of tourism and as a result to control their consumption choice.

However, these imaginaries and expectation are formed in an ongoing process which means tourists are constantly churning over and updating their experiences and in contrast to their earlier imaginaries and expectations. The host communities gradually develop their own versions of exoticization and tourists have their own personal collective imaginaries of indigenous hosts. In this situation, tourists are possibly to renegotiate social realities. In interviews with Chinese visitors,

some of them had imaginaries of fast food and unhealthy food in the Öresund region but they change their mind after they lived here for a period of time. “I find that Swedish people though eating fast food occasionally, they also have lots of healthy food for their daily life, such as salad, nuts and seeds” (participant D). She admitted that she changed her mind about food culture here and adopted these healthy food for her daily life. For other Chinese visitors, the evidence of change in their opinions of food culture is that they become used to, to some degree, to local food here. Whole wheat breakfast buns, smoked salmon and crispy bread could turn into new favourites. Thus their renegotiations and changes of opinions on food culture in the Öresund region support and encourage them to consume exotic food. A series of social practices and behaviours devices from tourism imaginaries and their discourses subtly influence how people engage with the other (as cited in Salzar & Graburn, 2014, p.17). This transmission of food culture in exotic places is part of process of local meaning making and consumption changing among Chinese tourists and visitors. For example, photos of food and cuisines posted in online dairies can represent unique experiences and thus be newly formed imaginaries and expectations of food culture.

As Wilk noted, “Imported food can look local, and local food completely foreign” (Wilk, 2006, p. 113). For Chinese tourists, their choices of consuming food in their experiences of foodways in the Öresund region, as I discussed above, such as their choices of Chinese restaurants and local restaurants, souvenirs and food-related activities, indicate that Chinese food here is both familiar and unfamiliar, and local food in the Öresund region is exotic. Because of globalization, Chinese food and restaurants are imported to the Öresund region and Chinese tourists are able to eat Chinese cuisine when travelling abroad. Nevertheless, compared to Chinese foods and Chinese cuisine, they are not really familiar for Chinese tourists since there are some changes in ingredients and ways of cooking. These foods are similar to Chinese food but they are not typical Chinese food. As a result, these foods produce a sense of familiar locality and exotic foreignness— sometimes at the same time and in the same dish (Wilk, 2006, p.113). For instance, Chinese wok or Asian wok, mixed-vegetable dish, is similar to the way Chinese people use to cook vegetables but there are also some differences. For Chinese people, they stir fried vegetables together with little seasoning like salt, little soya sauce and little sugar. However, when it comes to Chinese wok here, vegetables are still stir fired but with lots of sugar, soya source and oil, which makes this dish unfamiliar and sometimes even strange for Chinese tourists. Additionally, some restaurants provide national-mixed dishes by taking things from different places and cultures and putting them together in new

combinations, such as stir fried vegetables with sweet chilli sauce which gives the feeling of both Chinese and Thai style.

Although some Chinese tourists choose Chinese food in their trips, others have their interests in trying local food in the Öresund region. Globalization invades local contexts but does not destroyed them (Giddens, 1996, p. 367). Culinary tourism, create an interconnection of the local and the global. As I discussed in previous chapter, Chinese tourists have their interests in searching typical local food by some media such as WeChat and Weibo(a popular social media in China, functioning as Twitter) as well as some tourism websites. They share their dairies with pictures and texts online which could be seen as both ways of sharing their knowledge of food culture in the Öresund region and “advertising” local food. Thus tourism assists in the promotion production of places (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 72). For tourism agencies and food industries, local food is a tool in making and remarking public culture and a way that people actively assert their common identity or their differences. To sum up, for Chinese tourists and visitors, their expectations are crucial force for their social and individual action and shape the “sense of who we are” in destination society. These expectations also provide coherence to actions and behaviours.

Local place-bound and world scale territorial logics are not mutually incompatible (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 84). Globalization can be seen as a linkage and inter-dependence between the local and the global. Indeed, in culinary tourism, food and consumption take place in specific geographical locations and as a result, some component of localization is always involved (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 84). Hence, there is an opportunity for tourism agencies and food industries in the Öresund region to develop, spread and advertise local food for tourists since globalization is the extent to which the local or localization has become significant (as cited in Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 82).

## **6 Conclusion**

### **6.1 Summary**

This thesis is an investigation on Chinese tourists experiencing culinary tourism in the Öresund region including participating in cooking events, writing feedbacks online, experiencing local food

in restaurants and hotels and their negotiating with local food and Chinese food in their our bound tours, as well as purchasing food souvenirs.

Based on material such as interviews and photographs from online touristic dairies, analysis was conducted from the following aspects: popular culinary activities among Chinese during culinary tours, meanings of consuming exotic food, comparison between daily cooking habits and cooking with locals in travelling process as well as, meanings and role of cooking with locals in different contexts. Moreover, it is obvious that Chinese lack knowledge of other food-related ways for experiencing local culture such as cooking with local people. By comparing Chinese people's daily cooking habits and this new activity, I show that cooking has different meanings in both daily and culinary tourism contexts. For Chinese, on the one hand, daily cooking is as a inescapable domestic task which shows a negative side but it could be also as enjoyment for some special events such as friends visiting. On the other hand, cooking with locals can provide multi-sensory experience and break cultural boundaries between different communities, exchanging cultural perspectives. Therefore cooking with locals could a good way for meeting local food culture. It can be seen as a medium to join people from different ethnic backgrounds to get together in various contexts and this form of culinary activity has its advantages, compared to other culinary activities.

Cooking with locals as a phenomena, plays it role in various contexts. It binds people together in a setting in which creates a friendly and accessible atmosphere for tourists to explore local culture. For Chinese tourists, it is a new culinary activity and more important, a medium to experience otherness in their trips.

Though Chinese tourists and visitors have their habits of choosing Chinese food and the food they are familiar with, there is also possibility for Chinese tourist tasting local food in the Öresund region. They are willing to collect information of local food culture by using varies media such as guide books and internet. One of popular ways to share tour experiences is by writing travelling dairies online with texts, photos and videos on tour websites and all these are sources for other tourists to understand local food culture as references. These sources are also helpful to understand how Chinese tourists experience local food culture in the Öresund region. National or regional cuisines influence Chinese tourists and their choices of what they will eat. Thus national or regional food, to some degree, could be used as a way of selling the destination.

Consumption of exotic food is the most common culinary activity during travel and as a means to experience local culture, Chinese tourists are willing to try unfamiliar foods and buy food souvenirs, seen as typical for the local region. Actually, they lack knowledge of food speciality in the Öresund region and some of them do not see consumption of food souvenirs as important culinary activities. But purchasing souvenirs has its meanings for Chinese tourists since these souvenirs are containers of their travelling experiences and memories. By giving these souvenirs as gifts, they confirm relationships with others.

Globalization has effects on Chinese perspectives and images of food cultures and their choices of consuming food in the Öresund region. They have limited knowledge of local food in the Öresund region and tend to imagine local food culture as westernised food culture such as fast-food culture. However, when travelling in the Öresund region, it is possible for them to realise what is the actual food culture here and they reconstruct their imaginaries. On the one hand, globalization exports foreign food into local market. On the other hand, it is also an opportunity for local food to stand out. For tourism agencies and food industries, local food is an important tool to attract tourists since tourists have demands on experiencing local food culture.

## **6.2 Applicability**

To conclude, this thesis extracts some general and applicable suggestions for local tourism bureaus.

Firstly, tourism agencies need to develop more activities to attract Chinese tourists. For example, cooking with locals could be developed better to appeal to Chinese tourists' preferences. Chinese tourists are shy and do not want to show their weakness of cooking, thus hosts' personality and skills are very important. It is important that hosts are patient, friendly as well as good at communication and have rich knowledge of local food culture.

Secondly, the Öresund region food culture could be better branded by modern media. Local food in the Öresund region. Considering the willingness of trying local food, local tourism agencies could employ modern social media better, especially popular ones among Chinese.

Thirdly, food as souvenir is welcomed by Chinese tourists and such communities could be developed further. There is a key initiative for marking local food and regional in the south Baltic

region of Swedish region in the retail concept “Smaka på Skåne - Närproducerat och noga utvalt”. This could be translated into English as “Taste Skåne - produced nearby and chosen with care” (Petrenko & Muller-Hanse, 2015, p.50). This is based on consumers’ increasing demands of local and regional produced foods since consumers perceive these products as clean, authentic and free from chemical addictions(Petrenko & Muller-Hanse, 2015, p. 51). Furthermore, the global competition is fierce and this adds values of local or regional products. Thus, “local” and “regional” are key concepts for companies and agencies to market food culture in the Öresund region. Chinese tourists have desires of materializing and collecting their traveling experiences in the Öresund region into memorable objects. Meanwhile those souvenirs, working as the mediators, can acknowledge new potential Chinese tourists to the Öresund region. Thus for food specialities, authenticity, symbols of destinations, convenience of transporting and application at home and visual application, such as packages which can display a travel memory are important.

Finally, my argument is that culinary tourism is a very enrichening experience and could be given much more consideration in the further development of the Öresund region.

## References

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### a) Interviews

Participant A Individual interview, October 2015

Participant B Individual interview, October 2015

Participant C Individual interview, October 2015

Participant D Individual interview, February 2016

Participant E Individual interview, February 2016

Participant F Individual interview, March 2016

Participant G Individual interview, March 2016

Participant H Individual interview, March 2016

Participant I Individual interview, March 2016

Participant J Individual interview, March 2016

Participant K Individual interview, March 2016

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