

## FOOD RELATED WORDS IN TRAVEL GUIDES: A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS

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**Abstract:** The aim of the present study is to determine whether food is of paramount interest to foreign travellers or not. The study analyses food related words through a concordance analysis and their collocates. The corpus-based approach enables inferences about some semantic aspects of the vocabulary of gastronomy where sets of words, which refer to food and drinks, are considered essential to tourists. It is fascinating to see the most frequently occurring collocates in the specialized corpus which are: *traditional dishes, Albanian cuisine, European cuisine, unique cuisine, tasting wine, Kokomani winery, Merlot wine, Kabernet wine, delicious dishes, enjoy dishes, offers, drink raki, taste wine, Italian dishes, rich cuisine, Albanian raki, fish restaurants, organic dishes and different restaurants*. Thus, an examination of the concordance of food-related terms in the specialized corpus offers a better idea of how dishes are presented or the words with which they are patterned.

**Keywords:** Key words: collocates, food related words, tourism, concordances.

### 1. Introduction

Texts are not constructed accidentally but are always created with a purposeful aim which is reflected in the choice of words, lexical items, and patterns employed. In the case of language of tourism, authors are interested in attracting tourists to the target country and generating some prior perceptions and expectations when encountering their new destinations. When travellers go abroad, the first step they take prior to undertaking the journey is to get acquainted with their destination by reading what is advertised about it. Usually, the first impressions about a new place are positive. Visitors are fascinated, essentially because they get in touch with a different world, where they may even undergo a cultural shock.

According to Dann (1996, 2), the language of tourism is an "act of promotion", with "a discourse of its own"; indeed, "the language of tourism attempts to persuade, lure, woo and seduce millions of human beings, and, in doing so, convert them from potential into actual clients".

Tourist discourse is very common today. It typically includes an extensive use of positive modifiers (e.g., adjectives and adverbs), plus visual aids (e.g., pictures).

Nevertheless, Fairclough (2013, 56) "assumes that language helps create change and can be used to change one's behavior. Thus, language becomes a tool of power". This is what he means by discourse analysis. By choosing certain words authors can share with the reader their attitude to the subject they are dealing with, for example the idea that Albania is beautiful. The choice of words in each of these statements expresses an attitude towards Albania. The speaker's choice of words always reveals their attitude to what they are talking about. Discourse consists in the social, pragmatic

use of language within a given community; the language that members of a discourse community use reinforces their social identity.

Language can also be a carrier of change. The words speakers use and the way they create their sentences are of crucial importance. The way in which people talk about a subject can change their interlocutors' view of the subject (Jones, 2018, 15-17). For example, in the past there has been a common place that Albania was a dangerous and poor country, and that it was not a particularly attractive destination for tourists. However, as the previous chapters have demonstrated, a "new" Albania has emerged in recent years, which is more modern and fashionable. The guidebooks that are included in the research materials for the present study also confirm this assumption as in the following example taken from the guides:

"In recent years, many provinces and villages of Albania have tried to revitalize their natural and ethnographic values by putting them in the service of tourism through hospitality and activities, which has grown the number of tourists, especially foreign ones, who want to walk through the paths and discover the numerous beauties of Albania." (Albania..., 2019, 95)

## 2. Analysis

The corpus consists of twelve corpora of tourist guidebooks with an overall size of 1,068,981 words. The text files have been labelled as *TGDB*, which stands for tourism guidebook. Table 1.1 shows a set of words which refer to food and drinks, a typical element of tourist discourse, since they are considered of paramount interest for tourists.

Place	Keyness
Winery	865.37
Restaurants	575.56
Dishes	551.34
Cuisine	686.21
Wine	453.17
Raki	436.96

**Table 1.1** A Classification of nouns referring to food and drinks

The most frequently occurring collocates in the specialized corpus are: *traditional dishes*, *Albanian cuisine*, *European cuisine*, *unique cuisine*, *tasting wine*, *Kokomani winery*, *Merlot wine*, *Kabernet wine*, *delicious dishes*, *enjoy dishes*, *offers*, *drink raki*, *taste wine*, *Italian dishes*, *rich cuisine*, *Albanian raki*, *fish restaurants*, *organic dishes* and *different restaurants*. In general, when tourists visit a particular country or place, they are very interested in local cuisine. An examination of the concordance of food-related terms in the specialized corpus offers a better idea of how dishes are presented or the words with which they are patterned. Cuisine is a key part of a culture and is also intrinsically connected with the concept of hospitality. The authorial intention in the travel guides of the corpus involve characteristic features of Albania that allow the reader to construct a set of beliefs about Albania and the Albanians. Readers are somehow made to feel at home and welcomed once they arrive in Albania. *Raki* is a typical Albanian alcoholic drink that is used in tourist discourse to appeal to those who appreciate traditional distilled spirits. As was mentioned above the word *dishes* is a key word in our list. As the series of concordances with this word listed in Figure 1.28 shows, the word *dishes*

collocate with *traditional, delicious, Italian, organic* and *Albanian*, implying that food is a highly important aspect in the Albanian lifestyle. *Dishes* are also described with the noun *gem*, in line 20.

In English, the word *gem* is defined as “a jewel (precious stone), especially when cut into a particular regular shape or someone or something that is very good, pleasing, or useful” (Cambridge, n.d.-c). In the specialised corpus the word *dishes* is used metaphorically to refer to the exceptional quality of Albanian national dishes.

(1) Line 20: Source Text

Our imagination tells us that these gem dishes were cooked in the lodgings and barns along this ancient road. The throngs of caravans embarked travellers and merchants and the menu satisfied their hunger after battles fought between the east and west. (TGDB5)

This extract reveals a very interesting piece of information about the use of the word *gem* in this context. The reader is taken to the past, to make him/her feel part of history through food. The central role of food in Albanian culture has been preserved in such a way that it is almost possible to taste history when eating. Traditional dishes are depicted as incomparable with any other.

Dishes are also characterized in the corpus as *Mediterranean*, an inclusive term which is relatively broad. Albania is a Mediterranean country meaning that the cuisines of all those countries which surround the Mediterranean are welcomed to taste Albanian food. The text is constructed in such a way as to suggest that anyone’s desires can be fulfilled by Albanian cuisine. Thus, a choice is available for all; no-one is excluded even if they are less keen on experimenting with traditional Albanian food.

(2) Line 30: Source text

To enjoy Mediterranean dishes at the seaside restaurant table, with fresh produce and quality wine, this is one of the best things you can enjoy on the Durres shores in top-rate hotels and restaurants. (TGDB4)

(3) Line 29: Source text

Mediterranean dishes are as tasteful as the traditional cooking of the cuisine of the zone of Himara. The pizzas baked in wood, are beyond the usual taste. Admiring the amazing panorama of Himara Bay, every dish will be more tasteful! (TGDB1)

Himara, a seaside city in the south of Albania, is highlighted as one of the centres of Mediterranean cuisine. As can be seen in lines 64 and 71 of the concordances in Figure 1.28, dishes are also presented as *organic* or *vegetarian*. Potential tourists can thus be reassured that choices are available and that dining options in Albania are not limited; tourists should not be concerned that they will be denied the possibility of enjoying their own eating habits.

Another interesting collocation in this search for concordances is *wild dishes*. The word *wild* typically collocates with *animals* or *plants* or with verbs such as *go, look* or *run*. This term is used as a metaphor here referring to the edible fresh food which could be fresh mushrooms, plants, vegetables or meat from animals which grow or graze in waste land. We can assume that the noun phrase *wild game* refers to the meat of hunted animals, such as rabbits, hares and wildfowl providing unique identification and function in themselves and for alluring tourists through such cuisine.

Line	Concordance	Sof	Tot	Word #	Sof #	Tot #	Frac	Head #	Foot #	File	Date	%
1	in Albania, where you can enjoy typical <b>Albanian dishes</b> and drinks, are listed below: 1.	1,947	10'	52'	0	4%		0	4%	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	4%
2	and river Vjosa. You can also enjoy the <b>delicious dishes</b> of Permet at the restaurant of the hotel	43,747	2.3	22'	0	93'		0	93'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	93%
3	150 km from the airport. You can taste <b>delicious dishes</b> by the Italian chef in the restaurant on	1,524	11'	16'	0	7%		0	7%	TGDB5.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	7%
4	, by the hearth fire while tasting the <b>delicious dishes</b> that come one after the other. The	14,472	65'	73'	0	66'		0	66'	TGDB5.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	67%
5	you. Is la Petite Mishel. Same pleasure, <b>different dishes</b> . More to experience! What to do in	39,868	2.1	10'	0	85'		0	85'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	85%
6	entire area of Dibra. 5. Try out the two <b>famous dishes</b> of Dibra <b>ështëqerparejë</b> and	14,052	78'	44'	0	30'		0	30'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	30%
7	<b>ështëqerparejë</b> and some traditional <b>gastronomic dishes</b> , popular in the entire country. Also,	42,670	2.3	82'	0	90'		0	90'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	91%
8	the early 1990s until the recent Italian <b>influence dishes</b> such as pasta, pizza, , <b>trिएšet</b> . Also	9,594	45'	94'	0	44'		0	44'	TGDB5.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	44%
9	and fish. The traditional menu and cooking <b>is dishes</b> inherited from ottoman period cuisine	9,514	45'	8%	0	44'		0	44'	TGDB5.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	44%
10	Kafe Mehmeti and a lunch with the Tirana's <b>local dishes</b> at <b>ështëqerparejë</b> Do you know that the	21,628	1.1	76'	0	46'		0	46'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	46%
11	of the deers will fascinate you. The <b>local dishes</b> are combined with the charm of a	36,910	1.9	19'	0	78'		0	78'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	78%
12	the playground in the middle of the village. <b>Local dishes</b> not to be missed are <b>fërrik</b> ( meat ) ,	10,262	48.	4%	0	47'		0	47'	TGDB5.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	47%
13	Participate in the traditional festivals. Try the <b>local dishes</b> : the Cem Trout, Maza e zimejë (a typical	11,243	62'	26'	0	24'		0	24'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	24%
14	costumers come back again. The <b>Mediterranean dishes</b> are as tasteful as the traditional cooking	37,682	2.0	21'	0	80'		0	80'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	80%
15	, especially for seafood. To enjoy <b>Mediterranean dishes</b> at the seaside restaurant table, with	4,754	21'	14'	0	43'		0	43'	TGDB4.bt	2021/Feb/16 00:	43%
16	and the sea products as well as <b>Mediterranean dishes</b> . If you go around in the countryside	16,723	94'	10'	0	35'		0	35'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	36%
17	entertainment. Fresh seafood and <b>Mediterranean dishes</b> , pool, beach, SPA services, rooms in	25,216	1.3	21'	0	53'		0	53'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	54%
18	. The gastronomy of Tirana Some <b>mentionable dishes</b> are made from cooked livestock limbs,	21,292	1.1	24'	0	45'		0	45'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	45%
19	provides European cuisine with all kinds of <b>dishes</b> . The hotel has a beach-bar to enable	1,189	51'	10'	0	11'		0	11'	TGDB3.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	11%
20	provides European cuisine with all kinds of <b>dishes</b> . The hotel has a beach-bar to enable	5,047	22'	10'	0	45'		0	45'	TGDB4.bt	2021/Feb/16 00:	46%
21	as "Pules of Berat,është and the best <b>organic dishes</b> in the area. The nature of Roshniku is	14,136	63'	91'	0	65'		0	65'	TGDB5.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	65%
22	e kostajë™, all kinds of roasted meat, and <b>other dishes</b> either inherited or influenced from the	10,918	50.	76'	0	50'		0	50'	TGDB5.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	51%
23	of the village. Roshniku offers locally <b>prepared dishes</b> prepared in Restaurant Roshniku. These	14,317	64'	60'	0	66'		0	66'	TGDB5.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	66%
24	as a culinary destination. Some <b>recommended dishes</b> are: Baked hunted birds served with	14,362	64'	19'	0	66'		0	66'	TGDB5.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	66%
25	The characteristic food of the area ( <b>special dishes</b> valled ështëëfli, kašamak, mazë e e	13,664	75'	54'	0	29'		0	29'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	29%
26	comfort, friendly hospitality and above all, <b>tasteful dishes</b> , all based on grill. The products are not	10,554	51'	73'	0	99'		0	99'	TGDB3.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	99%
27	is enjoyed by all over dinner. Most of the <b>dishes</b> are homemade while fruits, vegetables	7,504	34'	28'	0	70'		0	70'	TGDB3.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	70%
28	to join friends and to make the family happy. <b>The dishes</b> of the Mediterranean cuisine but also they	39,779	2.1	19'	0	84'		0	84'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	84%
29	welcome the daily vacationers under <b>the dishes</b> rich in menu of the famous lake's fish,	9,362	54'	70'	0	20'		0	20'	TGDB1.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	20%
30	that part of Albania would think of the <b>traditional dishes</b> like ështëëfli e dheutë™, ështëëfli e	10,903	50.	60'	0	50'		0	50'	TGDB5.bt	2021/Mar/16 00:	50%

Figure 1. Concordances of the word dishes

(4) Line 72 Source text

in, spinach etc); wild dishes (rabbit, fowl etc). (TGDB7)

However, the concept of *wild game* could be perceived by some as a sign of disrespect and cruelty towards animals. Tourist guides do not take this into consideration, but it should be understood that they try to convey the idea that tourists are offered a wide range of dishes, and that the opportunity exists to taste all the different dishes of the national cuisine.

The city is also famous for the locally produced beer, another feature which attracts gastronomic tourists; the name of the city collocates 6 times with the word *beer*.

(5) Source text:

that have begun to be popular, about the **famous Puka beer**, which can be tasted even in Tirana. Indeed, Puka has undergone a complete facelift. (TGDB7)

(6) Source text:

For example, **enjoy a glass of Puka fresh beer** without preservatives, straight from the brewery in the city. **Beer Puka** is the subject of numerous festivals throughout the year in Puka, during the opening of the tourist season, various popular holidays, activities, festivals etc. (TGDB3)

*Beer* refers to an alcoholic drink which can cause drunkenness and, in extreme cases, may lead to a loss of consciousness. This word can therefore take on a negative connotation. However, the use of this word in the corpus emphasises that the famous beer which is brewed in Puka is merely a refreshing drink for tourists, which is also

celebrated with a popular festival in the city. In this case we may assume that the tourist guide is addressed to beer lovers, to persuade them to visit the city (Hunston, 2011, 51).

### 3. Conclusion

The analysis of the corpus revealed that an important element which is evident is that of cuisine. Albanian dishes, prepared with naturally grown products, have become increasingly popular and are widely described by guide books in order to allure tourists, since good food is an essential element of every tourist trip. Albanian restaurants are shown as offering traditional food but also Mediterranean and Italian cuisine, particularly those in the city of Vlorë. This city is easily accessible from Italy by ferry and thus it has become a popular destination for Italian tourists. The famous Albanian drink “raki” is used as a promotional element in travel guides representing the country’s traditions, since grapes growers make this alcoholic drink, which is particularly popular among tourists. Albania is also gaining a reputation for the production of quality wine and the analysis of quantitative data from the corpus has revealed the high frequency of the word “winery”. Here, the travel guides aim to promote holidays in Albania by combining the unique history and culture of the country with its delicious culinary traditions.

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