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THE ROLE OF ANDHRA PRADESH CUISINE IN PROMOTING CULINARY TOURISM: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract: This research paper examines the role of Andhra Pradesh cuisine in promoting culinary tourism and evaluates the opportunities, institutional support, and constraints associated with transforming the state's food heritage into a stronger tourism product. The study adopts a mixed-data research design, combining a primary survey of 193 respondents with secondary data covering the period 2020–2025. Secondary data were obtained from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Andhra Pradesh district-wise tourism footfall records, and relevant sectoral sources on GI-tagged food products, agricultural crops, and culinary events. The data were analyzed using percentage analysis, weighted mean, standard deviation, one-sample t-tests, annual growth rates, compound annual growth rate (CAGR), index numbers, Pearson correlation, and tourist-footfall concentration measures. The primary results show strong agreement that Andhra cuisine is an important attraction (mean=4.01), that regional dishes enrich the visitor experience (mean=4.04), and that food festivals encourage destination visits (mean=4.02). Respondents also support stronger cuisine promotion by Andhra Pradesh Tourism (mean=3.91) and experiential products such as food trails, cooking demonstrations and farm visits (mean=3.81). Secondary analysis shows a strong recovery and expansion of domestic tourism: visits increased from 70.83 million in 2020 to 333.83 million in 2025, implying a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of about 36.35%. The 2024 district data indicate sizeable tourist markets in Tirupati, NTR, Guntur, Visakhapatnam and other districts, while foreign visits are highly concentrated. The paper concludes that Andhra Pradesh has a credible basis for culinary tourism through its regional cuisines, GI foods, pilgrimage-linked gastronomy, seafood, chilli, mango and Araku coffee, but requires integrated branding, quality assurance, food storytelling, market intelligence and district-level culinary circuits to convert high tourist volume into greater local food expenditure and destination differentiation.

Keywords: Andhra Pradesh cuisine; culinary tourism; gastronomic tourism; tourist footfalls; GI-tagged foods; destination marketing.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, food and beverages constitute basic physiological necessities for people, irrespective of race, community, or nationality. In the context of tourism, food and beverages also play an important role in attracting visitors to a destination because they reflect local culture, traditions, lifestyles, and regional identity. Cuisine can therefore influence tourists' destination choices and contribute significantly to the overall travel experience.

Andhra Pradesh has considerable potential for culinary tourism because its food culture varies significantly across geographical regions. Andhra Pradesh offers a rich variety of regional and traditional cuisines prepared with locally available spices, vegetables, herbs, fruits, meat, and seafood.

Coastal Andhra is widely associated with fish, prawns, crab, seafood curries, and different varieties of pulusu. The Krishna-Guntur region is known for chilli-based preparations, gongura, pickles, and spicy curries, while the Godavari-Konaseema region is identified with Pootharekulu, Pulasa fish curry, other seafood items, and traditional festive foods. Rayalaseema has its own distinctive culinary identity, characterized by spicy meat preparations and millet-based foods. Tirupati is strongly associated with the famous Srivari Laddu, which links food heritage with pilgrimage tourism, while Araku is renowned for its coffee, bamboo chicken, bamboo biryani, and scenic hill tourism.

These regional food traditions are closely connected with the wider tourism resources of Andhra Pradesh. Culinary experiences can be integrated with pilgrimage tourism, beach tourism, rural tourism, tribal tourism, cultural tourism, agro-tourism, and eco-tourism. Such integration can encourage visitors to spend more time at destinations, explore local markets and food-producing communities, participate in food festivals and culinary activities, and purchase local food products as souvenirs.

In Andhra Pradesh, star hotels, restaurants, food courts, and other hospitality establishments also play an important role in promoting Andhra cuisine among domestic and international tourists. By organizing regional food festivals, culinary events, special Andhra food promotions, and traditional menu presentations, these establishments help create wider awareness of the state's culinary heritage.

The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Policy 2024-2029 gives gastronomy a specific place within tourism product diversification. Its Gastronomic Tourism section states that the Government intends to position Andhra Pradesh as a gastronomic destination, collaborate with the Indian Culinary Institute (ICI), Tirupati, organize food festivals and culinary competitions, highlight traditional spices, and develop culinary trails through local markets, traditional kitchens and spice farms. This policy direction is significant because it moves cuisine from an incidental hospitality function toward an explicitly recognized tourism experience. Earlier promotional actions, including National Tourism Day activities across all 26 districts and a food festival focused on authentic Andhra food, also demonstrate the use of cuisine in state tourism promotion.

Culinary tourism also faces several practical challenges. Maintaining authenticity while ensuring consistent quality can be difficult, as excessive standardization may reduce the uniqueness of local food traditions. Informal food vendors often possess considerable cultural value, but they may differ in terms of hygiene practices, food-safety standards, visitor interpretation, service quality, and digital visibility.

GI-tagged food and agricultural products add another dimension in Culinary tourism. Geographical Indications can provide legal recognition and origin-based differentiation, Tourism value arises when GI products are interpreted through stories, producer visits, demonstrations, retail experiences, trails and festivals. Andhra Pradesh has multiple food-linked GI assets, including Tirupati Laddu, Guntur Chilli, Bandar Laddu, Banaganapalle Mangoes and Atreyapuram Pootharekulu; Araku Valley Arabica Coffee provides a further shared geographical identity with strong experiential potential. These products connect religious heritage, spice culture, sweets, horticulture, coffee landscapes and local livelihoods.

The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Policy 2024-2029 gives particular importance to culinary tourism by proposing initiatives such as food festivals, culinary competitions, the promotion of traditional spices, and the

development of culinary trails through local markets, traditional kitchens, and spice farms. The Indian Culinary Institute (ICI), Tirupati, can play an important role in culinary documentation, chef training, product curation, skill development, and quality enhancement. At the same time, Andhra Pradesh Tourism can support destination packaging, branding, promotion, event organization, and market access, thereby helping to transform the state's diverse culinary heritage into a more structured and marketable tourism product.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kivela and Crotts (2006) established an influential connection between gastronomy and the quality of destination experience. Their work showed that motivation to travel for gastronomy can be treated as a meaningful tourism construct and that cuisine can contribute to destination experiences and revisit intentions. This is relevant to Andhra Pradesh because the state need not depend exclusively on visitors whose primary purpose is food; cuisine can enhance the total experience of pilgrims, beach tourists, cultural tourists and leisure travellers.

Okumus and McKercher (2007) compared the destination-marketing use of cuisine in Hong Kong and Turkey and found that a rich indigenous cuisine does not automatically translate into strong destination positioning. The study underscores a critical issue for Andhra Pradesh: culinary resources require deliberate representation in brochures, websites, social media, events and tourism packages. A destination may possess distinctive food assets yet fail to gain culinary-tourism advantage if the cuisine is not integrated into its core tourism narrative. Sims (2009) placed local food within the wider debate on authenticity and sustainable tourism. Local food can connect visitors with place, culture and production systems, and it can strengthen local economic linkages when tourism spending reaches producers and small enterprises. For Andhra Pradesh, this perspective supports linking visitors with chilli farms, mango orchards, coffee plantations, sweet-making clusters, fishing communities, traditional markets and home-based food production rather than limiting culinary promotion to restaurant consumption alone.

Chatterjee and Suklabaidya (2020) examined tourists' perceptions of local cuisine in Delhi, particularly its food image and acceptability. Their study highlights the importance of local cuisine in shaping tourists' destination experiences and supports the need for effective culinary branding and promotion.

III. RESEARCH GAP

Culinary-tourism research provides strong theoretical support for the relationship between food, authenticity, destination image and visitor experience, but there is limited empirical work that combines tourist perceptions, official tourism footfall trends, district-level visitor distribution and Andhra Pradesh's emerging gastronomic-tourism policy in one framework. Most available Andhra Pradesh tourism statistics measure total domestic and foreign tourist visits rather than culinary tourists specifically. Food-festival attendance, visitor food expenditure and culinary-trail participation are not reported as a consistent statewide time series. As a result, the role of cuisine is frequently discussed descriptively but less often linked to the scale and spatial distribution of the tourism market.

The present study fills this gap in four ways. First, it uses a 193-respondent survey to quantify perceptions of cuisine, festivals, GI products, satisfaction, promotion, and challenges of culinary products. Second, it applies inferential tests to determine whether selected mean scores differ significantly from a neutral benchmark. Third, it links culinary-tourism potential with state-level domestic and foreign tourist trends from 2020-2025 and district-level footfall concentration in 2024 and January-June 2025. Fourth, it evaluates the operational role of Andhra Pradesh Tourism against the explicit gastronomic provisions of the 2024-2029 policy. This combined approach is intended to produce both academic interpretation and actionable destination-management recommendations.

IV. OBJECTIVES

- To examine tourists' perceptions of Andhra Pradesh cuisine as a tourism attraction and its contribution to the overall tourist experience.
- To analyze the role of food festivals, GI-tagged products, authentic local food and experiential activities in promoting culinary tourism.
- To analyze Andhra Pradesh domestic and foreign tourist footfalls during 2020-2025 and identify their implications for the culinary-tourism market.
- To examine the role of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority and related public institutions in policy, promotion, events, culinary trails, skills and destination branding.
- To identify major opportunities, challenges and practical recommendations for strengthening culinary tourism in Andhra Pradesh.

V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- H01: The mean tourist perception that Andhra Pradesh cuisine is an important tourism attraction (Q2) does not significantly exceed the neutral midpoint of 3. H11: The mean significantly exceeds 3.
- H02: The mean support for stronger Andhra Pradesh Tourism promotion of local cuisine (Q7) does not significantly exceed 3. H12: The mean significantly exceeds 3.
- H03: The mean perception that hygiene, food-safety standards and quality consistency are a challenge (Q8) does not significantly differ from 3. H13: The mean significantly differs from 3.
- H04: The mean support for food trails, culinary tours, demonstrations, farm visits and local food experiences (Q10) does not significantly exceed 3. H14: The mean significantly exceeds 3.
- H05: There is no significant linear association between calendar year and Andhra Pradesh domestic tourist visits during 2020-2025. H15: A significant association exists.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design: The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data consist of 193 responses. Question 1 is dichotomous, while Questions 2–10 use a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The secondary data cover the period from January 2020 to December 2025. State-level domestic tourist visits and foreign tourist visits data, particularly for 2024 and January–June 2025, were obtained from the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority. Policy and culinary indicators were drawn from the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Policy 2024–2029, annual reports and publications of Andhra Pradesh Tourism and the Ministry of Tourism, and other relevant sources related to GI-tagged food products, horticulture, spices, coffee, and pilgrimage-linked food demand.

Statistical tools: Percentage analysis and weighted means summarize survey responses. Standard deviations measure dispersion. One-sample t-tests compare selected Likert means with the neutral midpoint (3), treating the five-point scale as a quasi-interval measure for analytical purposes. State tourism trends are examined using year-on-year growth, Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR), an index with 2020=100, and Pearson correlation between year and tourist visits. District distribution is assessed using the top-five concentration ratio (CR5) and Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI). A conventional 5% significance level is used.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

7.1 Exposure to Andhra Cuisine and Core Tourism Perceptions

Table 1. Q1. Tourists who tasted traditional Andhra Pradesh cuisine

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	182	94.31
No	11	5.69
Total	193	100.00

Interpretation: The above table shows that a very high proportion of respondents (94.31%) reported that they had tasted traditional Andhra Pradesh cuisine during their visit. This finding provides a strong foundation for the development of culinary tourism, as local food is already an important part of the visitor experience for most respondents. However, the result should not be interpreted as evidence that cuisine was the primary motivation for travel. Rather, it suggests that Andhra Pradesh cuisine has wide exposure among tourists and considerable potential to be developed as an important component of the state's tourism experience.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for Likert-scale statements (n=193)

Item	Statement (short form)	Mean	SD	Agree + Strongly Agree (%)
Q2	Cuisine as a tourist attraction	4.01	1.09	76.68
Q3	Regional dishes enrich experience	4.04	1.02	76.68
Q4	Food festivals encourage visits	4.02	1.10	75.65
Q5	GI foods strengthen culinary identity	3.94	1.16	75.13
Q6	Authentic food raises satisfaction	3.78	1.21	66.32
Q7	Need stronger AP Tourism promotion	3.91	1.11	69.95
Q8	Hygiene/food-safety is a challenge	2.88	1.49	39.38
Q9	Awareness/marketing is a challenge	2.91	1.38	37.31
Q10	Food trails/tours can raise arrivals & spend	3.81	1.22	66.32

Interpretation: The highest mean is recorded for Q3 (4.04), which states that popular Andhra dishes such as Gongura, Pesarattu, Pulihora, Pootharekulu, Bandar Laddu, seafood and Rayalaseema cuisine enhance the tourism experience. Q4 (4.02) and Q2 (4.01) follow closely. The pattern shows that respondents distinguish cuisine not only as food consumed during travel but as a meaningful attraction and experience component. Q5 (3.94) also indicates substantial support for the role of GI-tagged foods in creating a recognizable culinary identity. Q6 records a mean of 3.78, with 66.32% positive responses, showing that access to authentic local food is related in respondents' perceptions to overall satisfaction. Q7 has a mean of 3.91, with 69.95% agreeing or strongly agreeing that Andhra Pradesh Tourism should promote local cuisine more strongly through food festivals, tourism packages, social media and promotional campaigns. Q10 records a mean of 3.81, supporting a shift from passive food availability toward experiential products such as trails, demonstrations, farm visits and guided culinary activities.

The two challenge statements require more cautious interpretation. Q8 (hygiene, food-safety and quality consistency) has a mean of 2.88, while Q9 (lack of awareness and inadequate marketing) has a mean of 2.91. In both cases, opinion is divided rather than strongly negative or positive. This is valuable because it prevents the analysis from overstating problems that the survey does not clearly establish. The challenge agenda should therefore be treated as a risk-management and quality-development priority, supported by destination audits and vendor-level evidence, rather than as a universally perceived failure.

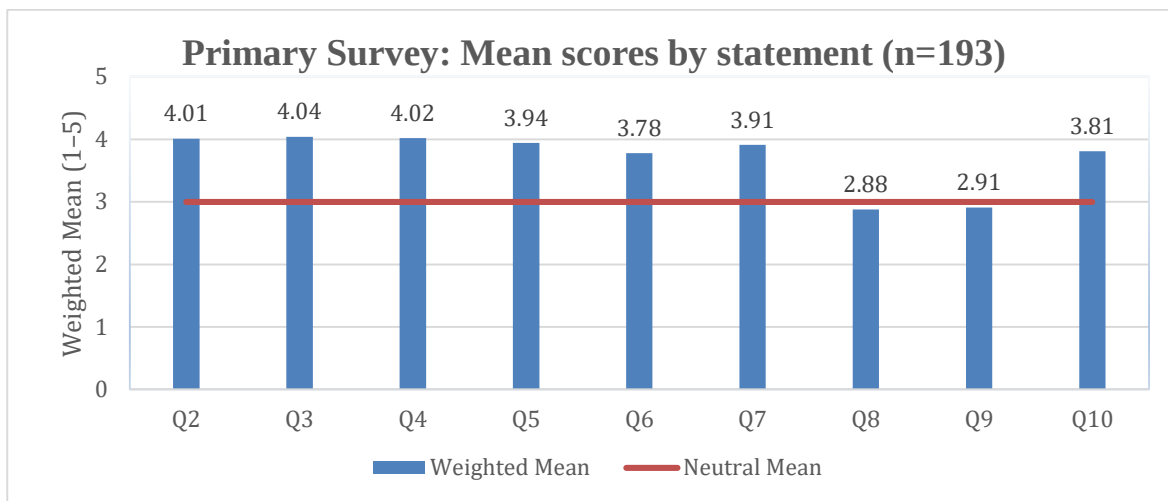


Figure 1. Mean scores for primary data survey statements

Interpretation: Visualizes the contrast between opportunity/promotion items and challenge items. Q2-Q7 and Q10 are clearly above the neutral reference of 3, whereas Q8-Q9 cluster around the midpoint. This pattern is consistent with a market-development interpretation: visitors appear more certain about the positive value of cuisine and culinary experiences than about the severity of the two constraints measured in the questionnaire.

7.2 Inferential Analysis of Primary Data

Table 3. One-sample t-tests against neutral midpoint ($\mu_0=3$)

Item	Test statement	Mean	SD	t	p	Decision
Q2	Cuisine as attraction	4.01	1.09	12.79	<0.001	H01 rejected; H11 supported
Q7	Stronger AP Tourism promotion	3.91	1.11	11.44	<0.001	H02 rejected; H12 supported
Q8	Hygiene/food-safety challenge	2.88	1.49	-1.16	0.247	H03 not rejected; H13 not supported
Q10	Food trails/tours opportunity	3.81	1.22	9.17	<0.001	H04 rejected; H14 supported

Interpretation: Interpretation: The one-sample t-test results indicate that Q2 recorded a mean of 4.01 with $t = 12.79$ and $p < 0.001$. Therefore, H01 is rejected and H11 is supported, confirming that tourists perceive Andhra Pradesh cuisine as an important tourism attraction at a level significantly above the neutral midpoint. Q7 recorded a mean of 3.91 with $t = 11.44$ and $p < 0.001$; hence, H02 is rejected and H12 is supported, indicating significant support for stronger promotion of local cuisine by Andhra Pradesh Tourism. For Q8, the mean score was 2.88 with $t = -1.16$ and $p = 0.247$. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, H03 is not rejected and H13 is not supported. Thus, the survey does not provide statistically significant evidence that respondents clearly perceive hygiene, food safety, and quality consistency as major challenges. Q10 recorded a mean of 3.81 with $t = 9.17$ and $p < 0.001$. Therefore, H04 is rejected and H14 is supported, demonstrating significant support for culinary trails, food tours, cooking demonstrations, farm visits, and other experiential culinary-tourism activities.

For the secondary-data analysis, the Pearson correlation between calendar year and domestic tourist visits during 2020–2025 was $r = 0.985$ with $p < 0.001$. Therefore, H05 is rejected and H15 is supported, indicating a strong and statistically significant positive linear association between year and domestic tourist visits in

Andhra Pradesh. This association reflects an increasing tourism trend but should not be interpreted as evidence that culinary tourism caused the increase in tourist visits.

7.3 Composite Interpretation of the Primary Evidence

The Primary survey supports three propositions. First, Andhra cuisine already has high visitor exposure and strong experiential value. Second, respondents favour an active public-sector role in promotion and product development. Third, future culinary tourism should be built around experiences—food trails, demonstrations, farm visits, events, regional dishes and GI products—rather than relying only on the presence of local dishes on menus. The data therefore justify moving from ‘food as hospitality provision’ toward ‘food as a designed tourism experience’.

7.4 Andhra Pradesh Tourist Footfall Trend, 2020-2025

Table 4. Andhra Pradesh tourist visits and growth, 2020-2025

Year	Domestic Tourist Visits	Foreign Tourist Visits	DTV Growth %	FTV Growth %	DTV Index (2020=100)
2020	70,828,590	67,591	—	—	100.0
2021	93,277,569	27,551	31.69	-59.24	131.7
2022	192,716,721	165,845	106.61	501.96	272.1
2023	254,706,328	60,426	32.17	-63.56	359.6
2024	290,266,452	262,431	13.96	334.30	409.8
2025	333,827,759	226,311	15.01	-13.76	471.3

Source: Ministry of Tourism Data – Tourist Visits: 2020-2025

Interpretation: Domestic tourist visits increased from 70.83 million in 2020 to 333.83 million in 2025. The implied 2020-2025 CAGR is 36.35%. The strongest year-on-year increase occurred in 2022 (106.61%), reflecting the post-pandemic rebound from the low 2020-2021 base. Growth continued in 2023 (32.17%), 2024 (13.96%) and 2025 (15.01%). The index number rises from 100 in 2020 to approximately 471.3 in 2025, demonstrating that the domestic tourism market became nearly 4.7 times its 2020 level over the study window.

The 2024 India Tourism Data Compendium places Andhra Pradesh among India’s leading domestic-tourism states, with 290.27 million domestic visits and a 9.85% national share. This scale is central to the culinary-tourism opportunity. Even if only a small share of existing visitors purchase curated food experiences, the addressable market is large. Culinary tourism in Andhra Pradesh can therefore be developed as an ‘experience layer’ attached to pilgrimage circuits, beaches, urban breaks, hill tourism, cultural events and family travel, rather than depending entirely on attracting a new category of visitors from outside the state.

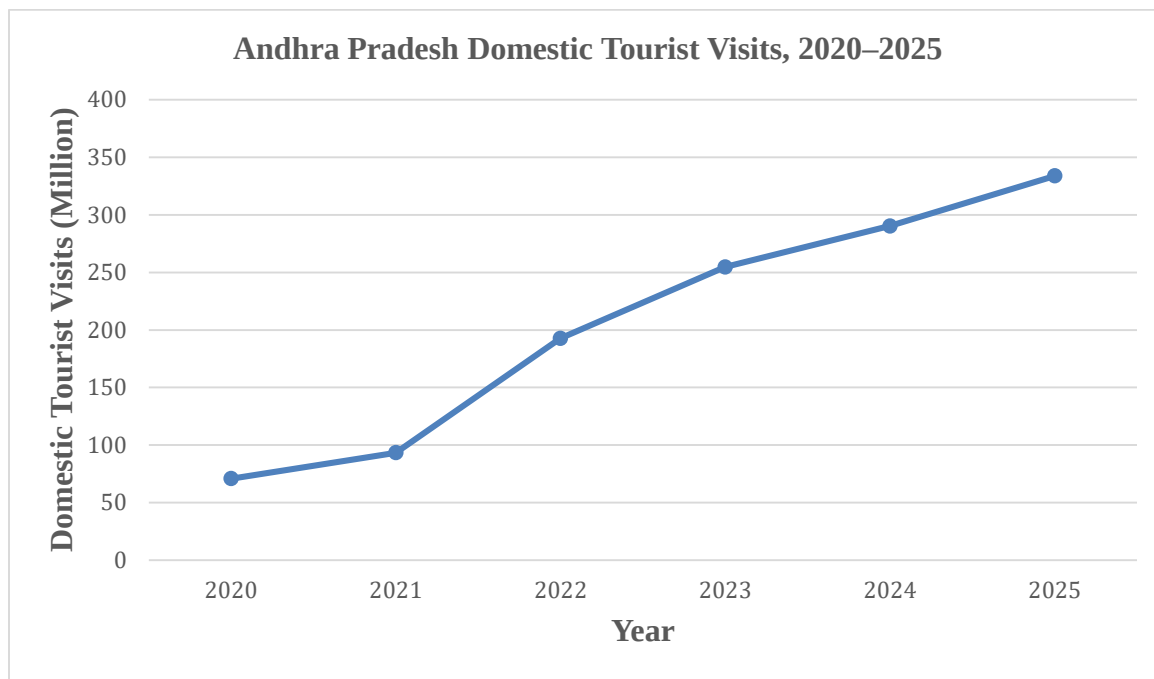


Figure 2. Domestic tourist visits in Andhra Pradesh, 2020-2025

Interpretation: Pearson correlation between calendar year and DTV is $r=0.985$ ($p<0.001$), indicating a statistically significant positive linear time trend across the six annual observations; H_0 is rejected and H_1 is supported. This result should be interpreted as a descriptive time association rather than causal evidence. The rise cannot be attributed to cuisine because multiple factors - pandemic recovery, pilgrimage, transport, income, events and destination development - affect tourist visits. The analysis instead demonstrates that culinary-tourism initiatives would be entering an expanding domestic tourism market. Foreign tourist visits show substantially greater volatility. The correlation between year and FTV is $r=0.766$ ($p=0.075$), which is not statistically significant at the 5% level with only six observations. FTV falls sharply in 2021, rebounds in 2022, declines in 2023, rises strongly in 2024 and eases in 2025. Culinary promotion to international visitors therefore requires targeted market development, multilingual food interpretation, safety/quality communication, digital discoverability and integration with the districts that already receive foreign visitors.

7.5 District-wise Footfall and Spatial Market Concentration

Table 5. Top 10 districts by domestic tourist visits, 2024 – Andhra Pradesh

Rank	District	Domestic Visits 2024	Foreign Visits 2024	Share of AP – DTV (Domestic Tourist Visits) %
1	Tirupati	34,415,122	9,262	11.86
2	NTR	28,275,115	8,293	9.74
3	Guntur	20,723,902	688	7.14
4	Visakhapatnam	19,963,202	41,106	6.88
5	Alluri Sitarama Raju	18,186,023	0	6.27
6	Srikakulam	18,113,584	111	6.24
7	Chittoor	17,484,916	5,875	6.02
8	Kakinada	16,575,347	0	5.71
9	Nandyal	14,890,752	161	5.13
10	Krishna	11,953,163	2,507	4.12

Source: District-wise Footfall, AP Tourism Authority

Interpretation: Tirupati is the largest domestic market in the workbook with 34.42 million visits, followed by NTR (28.28 million), Guntur (20.72 million), Visakhapatnam (19.96 million), Alluri Sitarama Raju (18.19 million), Srikakulam (18.11 million), Chittoor (17.48 million), Kakinada (16.58 million) and Nandyal (14.89 million). These high-volume districts offer distinct culinary entry points: pilgrimage gastronomy in Tirupati; urban/event-led food experiences in Vijayawada-NTR; chilli, gongura and pickles in Guntur; seafood and city cuisine in Visakhapatnam; tribal food and coffee-linked experiences in Alluri Sitarama Raju; and regional cuisine in Rayalaseema.

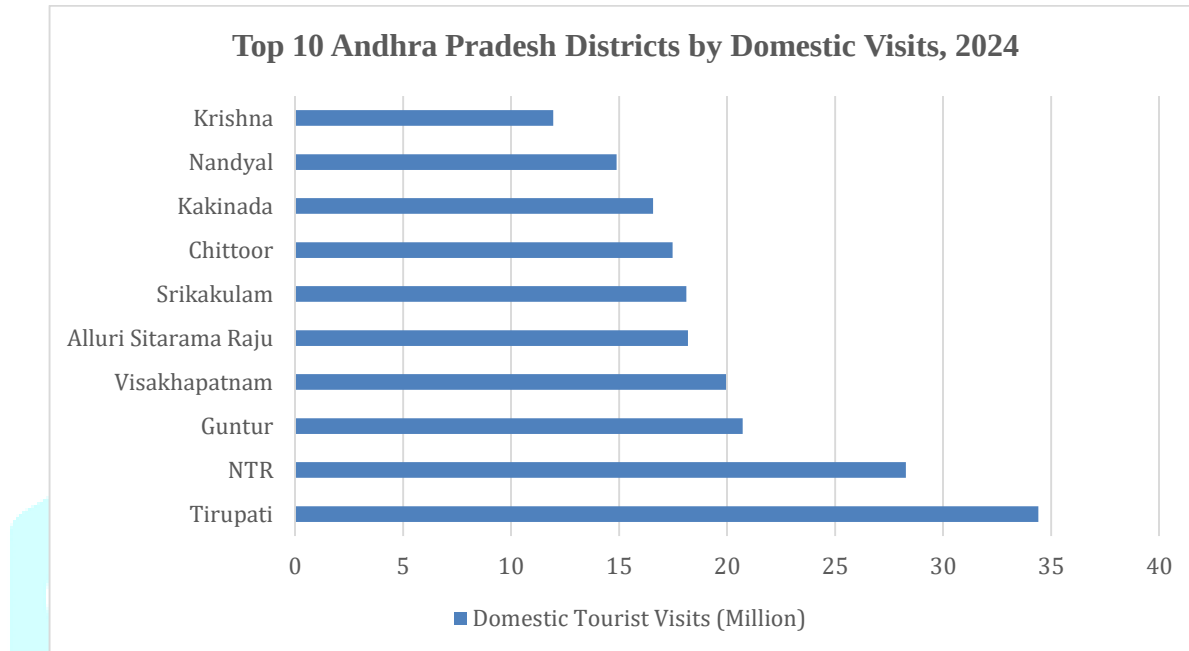


Figure 3. Top 10 districts by domestic tourist visits, 2024

Interpretation: The top five districts accounted for approximately 41.88% of Andhra Pradesh's domestic tourist visits in 2024. The domestic Herfindahl–Hirschman Index (HHI) was approximately 603 on a 0–10,000 scale, indicating a relatively low level of spatial concentration. This suggests that domestic tourist visits are distributed across a broad range of districts rather than being concentrated in only one or two locations. Such a distribution is favorable for culinary tourism development because region-specific food circuits can be created across multiple tourism hubs.

Foreign tourist visits, however, show a markedly different pattern. The top five districts accounted for approximately 95.57% of foreign tourist visits in 2024, while the foreign-visit HHI was approximately 5,228, indicating a very high level of concentration. Sri Sathya Sai district recorded the highest number of foreign tourist visits at 184,557, followed by Visakhapatnam (41,106), Tirupati (9,262), NTR (8,293), Anantapur (7,599), and Chittoor (5,875). This suggests that international culinary-tourism promotion should initially focus on a limited number of major foreign-tourist gateways, whereas domestic culinary circuits can be developed across a wider geographical area.

This concentration analysis has important implications for tourism marketing and product development. Statewide promotion can create a common umbrella image for Andhra cuisine, but culinary products should be designed according to the characteristics of high-footfall district clusters. For example, pilgrims visiting Tirupati may prefer pilgrimage-linked food experiences, while visitors to Visakhapatnam may be more interested in seafood and coastal cuisine, and tourists travelling to Araku may seek coffee, tribal food, and hill-based culinary experiences. Therefore, the success of culinary tourism in Andhra Pradesh depends on aligning food experiences with the travel motivations, destination characteristics, and geographical context of each district.

7.6 Culinary Resource Base and Product Development Potential

Table 6. Selected culinary items and possible tourism products

Culinary Items	Place/region association	Tourism-development opportunity
Tirupati Laddu	Tirupati	Pilgrimage gastronomy, interpretation, authorized retail and food heritage
Guntur Chilli	Guntur region	Spice trails, market visits, farm visits, cooking demonstrations
Bandar Laddu	Machilipatnam	Traditional sweet trail, producer demonstrations, souvenir retail
Atreyapuram Pootharekulu	Konaseema / East Godavari belt	GI heritage, women-led livelihoods, demonstration visits
Banaganapalle Mangoes	Rayalaseema / AP horticulture	Mango festivals, orchard visits, processing and seasonal agro-tourism
Araku Valley Arabica Coffee	Araku / tribal hill region	Coffee plantation tours, tasting, tribal-rural tourism
Coastal seafood	Visakhapatnam, Konaseema, Krishna, Nellore and coast	Seafood trails, fish-market interpretation, beach-food festivals

Interpretation: The culinary tourism potential of these items lies in combining consumption with origin, story and participation. A sweet becomes a stronger tourism product when the visitor understands its place of origin, production technique, cultural use and producer community. A chilli becomes more than an ingredient when linked with a market visit, farm landscape, tasting session and cooking demonstration. Coffee becomes an immersive product through plantation walks, processing interpretation and tasting. This experience logic can increase local spending while strengthening the visitor's memory of place.

The secondary data reports substantial chilli production in Andhra Pradesh, including 11.67 lakh tonnes in 2024-25, and total mango production of about 4.986 million tonnes. Coffee Board information - Araku coffee cultivation at roughly 20,000 hectares with average production around 3,100 MT. These are not direct culinary-tourist counts, but they demonstrate a large resource base for agro-culinary experiences and local sourcing.

VIII. GI PRODUCTS, PILGRIMAGE GASTRONOMY AND MEASURABLE DEMAND INDICATORS

GI-linked foods give Andhra Pradesh a set of recognizable culinary anchors. Tirupati Laddu connects food heritage directly to one of India's largest pilgrimage destinations. Guntur Chilli connects the state's widely recognized spicy food identity with an agricultural landscape. Bandar Laddu and Atreyapuram Pootharekulu connect sweets with place-specific production traditions, while Banaganapalle Mangoes support seasonal agro-tourism. Araku coffee offers a distinctive combination of beverage tourism, tribal livelihood, rural landscape and hill tourism. A strategically designed GI food map could therefore connect pilgrimage, coast, delta, urban, rural and hill regions under one state culinary identity.

The Tirupati Laddu provides a rare quantitative indicator of food demand within tourism. TTD reported sales increasing from 12.15 crore laddus in 2024 to 13.52 crore in 2025, an increase of roughly 10%. The figure cannot be equated with tourist arrivals because pilgrims may purchase multiple laddus and distribution rules apply, but it demonstrates the extraordinary scale of pilgrimage-linked food consumption. It also illustrates why culinary tourism in Andhra Pradesh should not be confined to conventional restaurant tourism: sacred foods, festival foods and souvenir foods are part of the state's gastronomic economy.

IX. ROLE OF ANDHRA PRADESH TOURISM AUTHORITY IN PROMOTING CULINARY TOURISM

The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority can influence culinary tourism through policy, destination development, marketing, events, skills, partnerships and quality systems. The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Policy 2024-2029 provides the clearest formal mandate. Gastronomic Tourism commits the Government to positioning Andhra Pradesh as a gastronomic destination. It proposes collaboration with the Indian Culinary Institute, Tirupati, for food festivals; culinary competitions involving small businesses and premium establishments; recognition of excellence; promotion of traditional spices; and culinary trails through local food markets, traditional kitchens and spice farms. This is a strong policy foundation because it defines specific product-development mechanisms rather than simply stating that local food is important.

State-level promotion has already used food in public tourism events. The Ministry of Tourism's UTSAV portal records Andhra Pradesh Tourism's National Tourism Day programme in January 2023 across all 26 districts, including a food festival focused on authentic Andhra food.

On the occasion of World Tourism Day, the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority presents the Andhra Pradesh State Tourism Awards in various categories. The "Best Chef (Andhra Cuisine)" category recognizes professional excellence in preparing and promoting traditional Andhra cuisine and can help position chefs and food entrepreneurs as ambassadors of the state's culinary tourism. Tourism brochures for destinations such as Konaseema also highlight local food as an important component of the visitor experience.

In 2025, the Vizag Food Festival was organized as a three-day event featuring approximately 30–40 food stalls. The event was expected to attract around 15,000–20,000 visitors per day. Such food festivals provide opportunities to showcase regional cuisine, promote local food entrepreneurs, create visitor awareness, and strengthen the culinary identity of Andhra Pradesh.

APTDC hotels and resorts can play an important role in promoting Andhra Pradesh cuisine by offering regional menus, GI-tagged products, and a variety of local Andhra food items. However, institutional restaurants should complement, rather than replace, community-based food enterprises. An effective model would connect formal tourism facilities with certified local vendors, producer clusters, food walks, farm visits, and neighborhood markets, thereby creating stronger linkages between tourism and local livelihoods.

X. OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULINARY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ANDHRA PRADESH

- Large domestic tourism base: more than 290 million DTVs in 2024 and 2025 total of about 333.83 million provide a large market for food experiences attached to existing trips.
- Regional diversity: North Andhra, Konaseema/Godavari, Krishna-Guntur, Machilipatnam, Tirupati and Rayalaseema offers different culinary items.
- GI-linked products: place-specific foods and agricultural products can be used for origin storytelling, producer visits, demonstrations, authentic retail and souvenirs.
- Pilgrimage gastronomy: Tirupati and other temple destinations can integrate sacred foods, traditional meals and regulated local food experiences into pilgrimage itineraries.
- Agro-culinary tourism: chilli, mango and coffee landscapes can support farm visits, tastings, harvesting/processing interpretation and seasonal festivals.
- Coastal and seafood tourism: A long coastline and established seafood culture support beach-food events, harbor/fish-market interpretation and chef-led seafood trails.
- Women and micro-enterprise participation: Traditional sweet making, pickles, snacks and household food skills create potential for community-based experiences and livelihood diversification.
- Digital storytelling: short-form video, geotagged food maps, multilingual menus, QR-based food stories and itinerary integration can reduce the information gap between cuisine and tourism.

- ICI Tirupati and hospitality institutions: culinary education partners can support training, recipe documentation, food safety, competitions and product curation.
- Event-to-circuit conversion: successful food festivals can be used to identify popular vendors and dishes and then convert temporary events into permanent, bookable food trails.

XI. CHALLENGES

- Culinary tourism requires a balance between authenticity and quality assurance. Standardization should focus on hygiene, food safety, truthful origin claims, transparent pricing and service reliability rather than forcing every local dish into identical taste and presentation.
- International tourists require multilingual interpretation, clear ingredient/allergen information, digital payment, online reputation management and reliable transport connections. A foreign-market culinary strategy should therefore begin in districts with existing foreign footfall rather than attempting an undifferentiated statewide campaign.
- Seasonality and climate affect several culinary experiences. Mango tourism is seasonal; seafood supply and coastal weather vary; and farm-based experiences require coordination with agricultural cycles. Culinary tourism packages should therefore be designed with seasonal calendars rather than marketed as identical year-round products.

XII. INTEGRATED INTERPRETATION

Visitors already consume local cuisine, the survey strongly values cuisine and food events, the tourism market is large, and the current policy explicitly recognizes gastronomy. The main development task is institutional conversion: turning dispersed food heritage into a portfolio of identifiable, quality-assured, bookable and measurable experiences. The policy objective should be to increase the proportion of existing tourists who participate in at least one local food experience and to increase the share of tourism expenditure retained by local food producers and enterprises.

XIII. MAJOR FINDINGS

- 182 of 193 respondents (94.31%) had tasted traditional Andhra Pradesh cuisine during their visit, showing very high exposure to local food.
- Cuisine as a tourist attraction achieved a weighted mean of 4.01, and the one-sample t-test shows that this is significantly above neutral ($p < 0.001$).
- Regional dishes recorded the highest mean (4.04), confirming strong perceived contribution to the visitor experience.
- Food festivals and culinary events recorded a mean of 4.02; 75.65% agreed or strongly agreed that such events encourage destination visits.
- GI-tagged foods achieved a mean of 3.94, indicating strong support for their role in culinary identity and destination branding.
- Support for stronger Andhra Pradesh Tourism promotion recorded a mean of 3.91 and was significantly above neutral ($p < 0.001$).
- Food trails, culinary tours, cooking demonstrations and farm visits recorded a mean of 3.81, with statistically significant support above neutral ($p < 0.001$).
- The two challenge items (hygiene/quality and awareness/marketing) had means close to neutral (2.88 and 2.91), showing divided perceptions rather than strong consensus.
- Andhra Pradesh DTV increased from 70.83 million in 2020 to 333.83 million in 2025, with an estimated CAGR of 36.35% over the study period.
- The year-DTV correlation is strongly positive ($r = 0.985$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating a significant upward time trend, although it does not establish cuisine as the cause of growth.

- In 2024 Andhra Pradesh recorded 290.27 million domestic tourist visits and a 9.85% share of India's domestic visits, demonstrating a large addressable market for culinary experiences.
- District-wise 2024 domestic visits are spread across several major hubs, but foreign visits are highly concentrated, implying different domestic and international culinary-marketing strategies.
- The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Policy 2024-2029 explicitly supports gastronomic tourism through food festivals, ICI collaboration, culinary competitions, traditional spices and culinary trails.
- GI foods, pilgrimage gastronomy, chilli, mango, Araku coffee, coastal seafood and regional cuisine provide a diversified culinary product base.

XIV. SUGGESTIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop an Andhra Culinary Tourism Master Map. Create a state umbrella brand with region-specific sub-circuits: North Andhra-Araku, Godavari-Konaseema, Krishna-Guntur, Machilipatnam, Tirupati-Chittoor and Rayalaseema. Each circuit should identify signature dishes, GI foods, markets, producers, restaurants, seasonal events and bookable experiences.
- Culinary trails in high-footfall districts. Tirupati, NTR/Vijayawada, Guntur, Visakhapatnam-Araku and Konaseema districts.
- Use the Indian Culinary Institute as a knowledge partner. ICI Tirupati can support recipe documentation, chef training, culinary guides, food-storytelling modules, food-festival curation and research on visitor preferences. This would operationalize the policy's stated collaboration with ICI.
- Integrate culinary products into existing tourism packages. Pilgrimage, beach, heritage, rural, tribal and eco-tourism itineraries should include optional local-food modules. For example, a Tirupati package may include a curated regional breakfast or culinary interpretation; an Araku package can add coffee tasting and a tribal food demonstration; a Konaseema itinerary can combine river/backwater experiences with local seafood and Pootharekulu demonstration.
- Adopt responsible food-tourism practices. Events and trails should include waste segregation, reusable/compostable serveware where feasible, local sourcing, water management and crowd-capacity planning. Authenticity should be documented through origin and producer stories rather than reduced to decorative branding.

XV. CONCLUSION

Andhra Pradesh possesses a strong foundation for culinary tourism because cuisine is already highly visible in the visitor experience, the state has a very large domestic tourism market, regional food identities are diverse, several foods and agricultural products possess geographical recognition, and the current tourism policy explicitly recognizes gastronomy. The primary survey confirms strong perceived value: respondents view Andhra cuisine and regional dishes as important attractions, support food festivals and GI products, favour stronger Tourism Authority promotion and endorse experiential formats such as food trails, demonstrations and farm visits.

The secondary analysis reinforces the scale of the opportunity. Domestic tourist visits rose markedly during 2020-2025, and Andhra Pradesh accounted for 9.85% of India's domestic tourist visits in 2024. The central challenge is to transform food heritage into meaningful tourism value without compromising its authenticity. The 2024-2029 policy provides a timely institutional platform through its proposals for food festivals, ICI collaboration, traditional-spice promotion and culinary trails. If these provisions are implemented with measurable targets, Andhra cuisine can strengthen destination branding, increase local spending, support producer livelihoods and encourage visitors to explore regions beyond their primary attraction.

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