

Южный Казахстан оказался самым предпочтительным регионом для гастрономического туризма среди местных жителей. На основе этих результатов были предложены практические рекомендации для туристских предприятий, заведений общественного питания, шеф-поваров и исследователей с целью развития гастрономического туризма в Казахстане.

Ключевые слова: меню, местные блюда, казахская кулинарная культура, местное население, гастрономический туризм.

Introduction. Historically, the culinary culture of the Kazakhs, who traditionally led a nomadic lifestyle, has been dominated by meat and dairy products. Various methods of preparing food and beverages from meat and dairy in Kazakh culture have been transmitted across generations from the past to the present [1]. With the transition from a nomadic to a settled lifestyle and the subsequent development of agriculture, grain products such as wheat, millet, corn, and rice began to be consumed, alongside the inclusion of vegetables and fruits in the Kazakh diet [2]. However, the incorporation of these products into the Kazakh table does not imply a transformation of the characteristics of the traditional nomadic Kazakh culinary culture. With the advancement of livestock farming first and agriculture later, the Kazakh menu became increasingly richer and more diverse [3].

The seasonal variations in the culinary culture of the Kazakhs were shaped not only by the ecological conditions of their environment and economic factors but also by their biological needs. During the winter months, meat-based foods were predominantly consumed, while dairy products were favored in the summer. To withstand the challenges posed by the harsh six-month-long winters, it became a natural necessity for nomadic Kazakhs to rely on nutritious, high-calorie meat and dairy products as their staple diet [4]. The significant role of meat and dairy products in Kazakh culinary culture, which is widely recognized in global cuisines, enables Kazakh gastronomy to easily adapt to global culinary trends [5].

The purpose of study: It is designed to identify the places that local population wish to visit in order to experience regional culinary cultures in Kazakhstan.

The objectives of the study:

- the preferences of Kazakhstan's population regarding food and beverages;
- to identify the prominent geographical regions of Kazakh culinary culture in terms of gastronomy tourism.

The development of an ideal Kazakh menu is considered important as it contributes to the standardization of local food and beverages as a gastronomy tourism destination, promotes Kazakh cuisine, and ensures that foreign tourists visiting or planning to visit Kazakhstan can experience the local culinary offerings. The preference for using the local population as a sample group is based on the

assumption that they have a better understanding of Kazakh culinary culture and possess more knowledge about it compared to foreign tourists.

Therefore, it is evident that studies on the ideal Kazakh menu suitable for foreign tourists are limited. While Chernyavskaya, Kauymbayev [6] examined the presentation of Kazakh food and beverages in a fast-food format, Mussina [7] addressed it as a unique factor influencing the formation of a tourism brand. Tourists visiting Kazakhstan may wish to taste the country's traditional food and beverages. Hence, one of the most crucial elements of the country's tourism industry is the development of an ideal Kazakh menu that can be offered to visitors [8].

Literature review. When examining the research results on Kazakh cuisine menus, Chernyavskaya, Kauymbayev [6] found an increasing trend in the number of fast-food establishments offering different menu options in Kazakhstan. This trend is particularly noticeable in the country's large cities. However, the study also concluded that one of the drawbacks of Kazakh food production is that it takes a long time and is often made from sour products. Therefore, it was suggested that product diversification and differentiation should be made in Kazakh food and beverages, and that more Kazakh dishes should be offered in food and beverage establishments to address the insufficiency of offerings. Another study concluded that only 16% of the food and beverages offered in food establishments were of Kazakh national cuisine, while the rest were dominated by Eastern and European cuisines, such as Korean, Uzbek, Turkish, and Dungan [9].

Mussina [7] stated that an important national cuisine influences the formation of a tourism brand. The research concluded that Kazakh tourism prefers dishes such as *asu*, *kumus*, and *kazy*, which hold significant places in the Kazakh culinary menu. However, dishes such as *shubat*, *kurt*, *kuyrdak*, and *shelpек* were identified as less preferred by consumers. It can be said that these highlighted dishes play an important role in the formation of the Kazakh tourism brand.

Materials and methods. The survey technique was used in data collection. In determining the survey questions, Şengül's [10] study was utilized in line with the purpose of the research. To ensure the content validity of the survey form, academic experts in the fields of gastronomy and tourism were asked to evaluate the scale. As no structural issues were encountered

following the expert evaluations, the survey form was applied. In this context, the following questions will be posed to the local population:

1. Which dishes should be included in the Kazakh cuisine menu, such as cold appetizers, starters, main courses, soups, side dishes (salads), desserts, and beverages?

2. What are the first foods, drinks, and desserts that come to mind when thinking of Kazakh cuisine?

3. Which geographical region stands out in Kazakh culinary culture for gastronomy tourism purposes?

The population residing in Kazakhstan constitutes the universe of the study. In line with this aim, population data from 2024 were used to ensure the representation of the resident population in Kazakhstan. Based on this data, a stratified sampling method was applied according to the population proportions of the provinces, among the 20.095.963 people living in Kazakhstan. Accordingly, convenience sampling was used to select participants from the resident population of 17 provinces in Kazakhstan. A survey was conducted online with 421 selected individuals.

Since it conforms to a normal distribution, the sample is considered sufficient to represent the population.

Descriptive statistical analysis was used in the analysis of the findings. ChatGPT AI was used to translate the research into English.

Results. The findings derived from the analysis of data collected from a sample chosen from the Kazakh population regarding the question, “What should the ideal Kazakh cuisine menu look like?” are as follows.

Cold appetizers: The responses of participants to the question, “Which cold appetizers should be included in the Kazakh cuisine menu?” are presented in Figure 1. Participants were asked to indicate their top three preferences from a wide selection of cold appetizers. The most preferred cold appetizers were determined in ranked order. As shown in the figure, 24% of the participants selected kazy, 16 % chose shuzhuk, and 15% indicated zhaya as their preferred cold appetizers. Accordingly, given that meat products are predominantly consumed in Kazakhstan, it is appropriate to include kazy, shuzhyk, and zhaya in the Kazakh cuisine menu. These dishes can be served as cold appetizers to tourists visiting Kazakhstan.

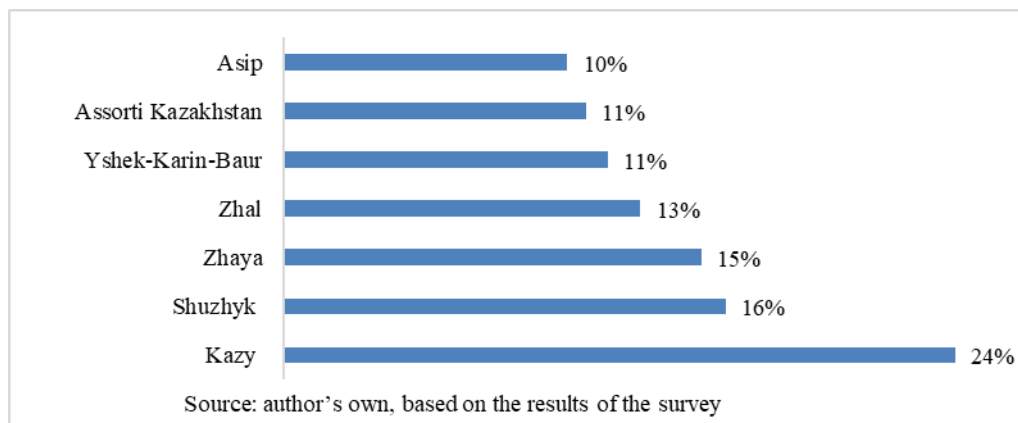


Figure 1 – Participants' preferences for cold appetizers

Soups: The responses of participants to the question, “Which soups should be included in the Kazakh cuisine menu?” are presented in Figure 2. Participants were asked to indicate their top three preferences from a variety of soups. The most preferred soups were ranked in order. As shown in the figure, 21 % of the participants selected meat soup, 18 % chose Kazakh soup, and 14 % indicated naryn soup. Based on these findings, it is observed that soups prepared with meat products are frequently and enthusiastically consumed in Kazakhstan, largely due to the variation in weather conditions across different regions and the generally cold climate. To help tourists cope with the

cold weather, it is recommended to serve the soups most preferred by Kazakhs, meat soup, Kazakh soup, and naryn soup, to visitors coming to Kazakhstan.

Main foods: The responses to the question “Which main dishes should be included in the Kazakh cuisine menu?” are presented in Figure 3. Participants were asked to indicate their top three preferences from a wide selection of main dishes. The most preferred main dishes were identified in rank order. As shown in the figure, 26 % of the participants selected et asu, 24 % chose kuirdak, and 16 % indicated Kazakh pilaf as their main course. Based on these findings, it can be stated

that Kazakhs consume dishes made with red meat, dough-based dishes, and pilaf with meat frequently as main courses in their daily lives. In particular, et

asu, due to its preparation with authentic ingredients, can be considered and promoted as an attractive element of gastronomy tourism.

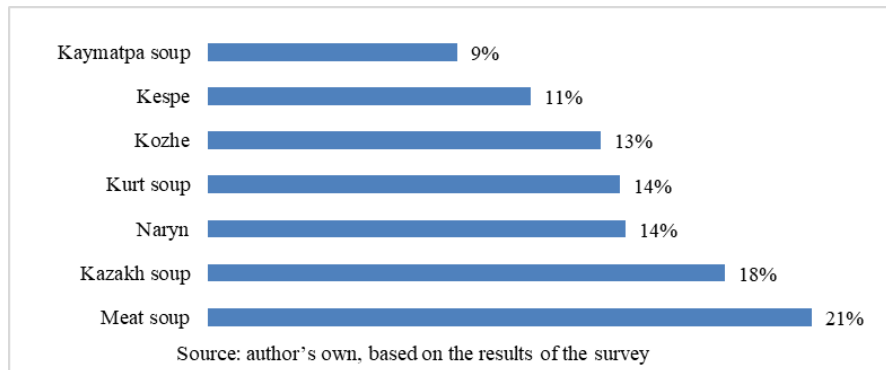


Figure 2 – Participants' preferences for soups

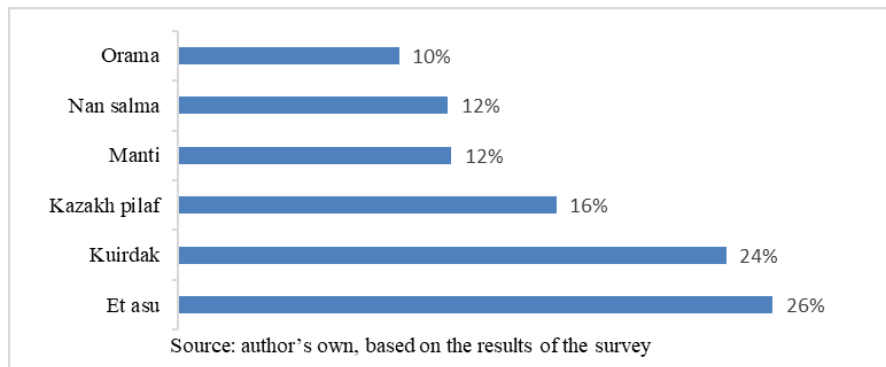


Figure 3 – Participants' preferences for main foods

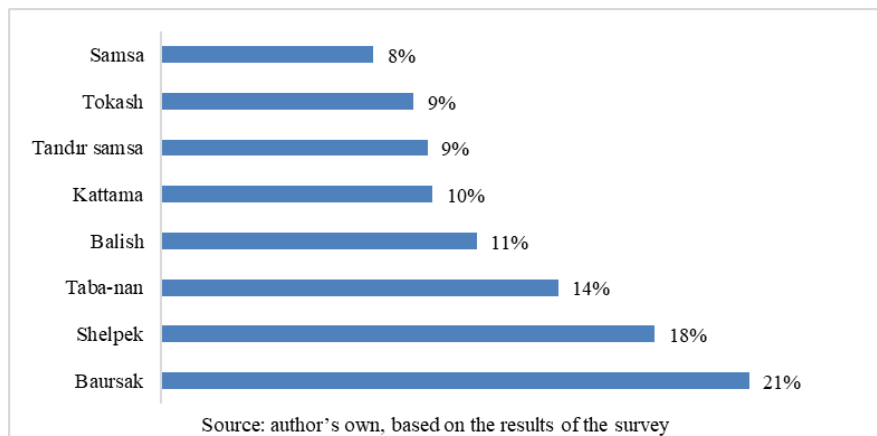


Figure 4 – Participants' preferences for main hot appetizers

Hot appetizers: The responses to the question “Which hot appetizers should be included in the Kazakh cuisine menu?” are presented in Figure 4. Participants were asked to indicate their top three preferences from a wide selection of hot appetizers. The most preferred hot appetizers were identified in rank order. As shown in the figure, 21 % of the participants selected bausak, 18 % chose shelpek, and 14 % indicated taba nan as their preferred hot appetizers. The abundance of wheat cultivation and the production of high-quality flour in Kazakhstan significantly contribute to the widespread consumption of dough-based dishes. In this context, it can be concluded that Kazakhs enjoy consuming flavorful hot appetizers with great enthusiasm.

Salads: The responses to the question “Which salads should be included in the Kazakh cuisine

menu?” are presented in Figure 5. Participants were asked to indicate their top three preferences from a wide selection of salads. The most preferred salads were identified in rank order. As shown in the figure, 34% of the participants selected meat salad, 24 % chose fresh salad, and 17 % indicated beet salads. The widespread breeding of animals such as horses, camels, sheep, and cattle in Kazakhstan ensures the availability of affordable meat in the country. As a result, meat products are commonly used and consumed in almost every salad in Kazakh cuisine. This unique characteristic of Kazakh salads may attract tourists seeking to experience authentic salad varieties, making Kazakhstan a potential destination for gastronomy tourism.

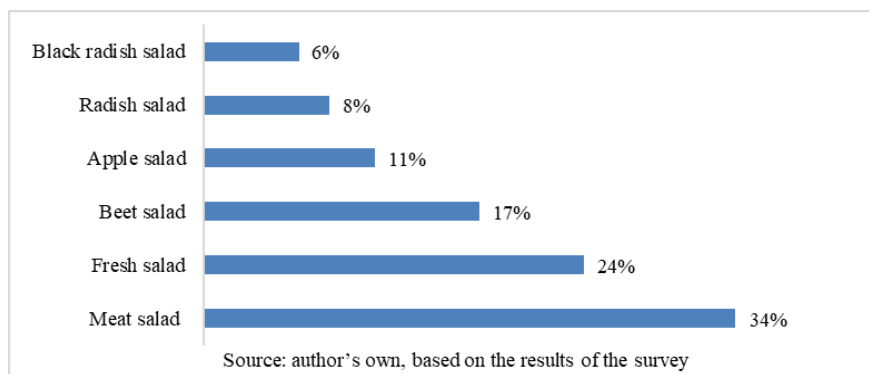


Figure 5 – Participants' preferences for salads

Desserts: The responses to the question “Which desserts should be included in the Kazakh cuisine menu?” are presented in Figure 6. Participants were asked to indicate their top three preferences from a wide selection of desserts. The most preferred desserts were identified in rank order. As shown in

the figure, 15 % of the participants selected irimşik, 14 % chose kaymak, and 14 % indicated talkan as their preferred desserts. Based on these results, it can be stated that desserts made from dairy, wheat, and flour products hold a significant place in the Kazakh cuisine menu.

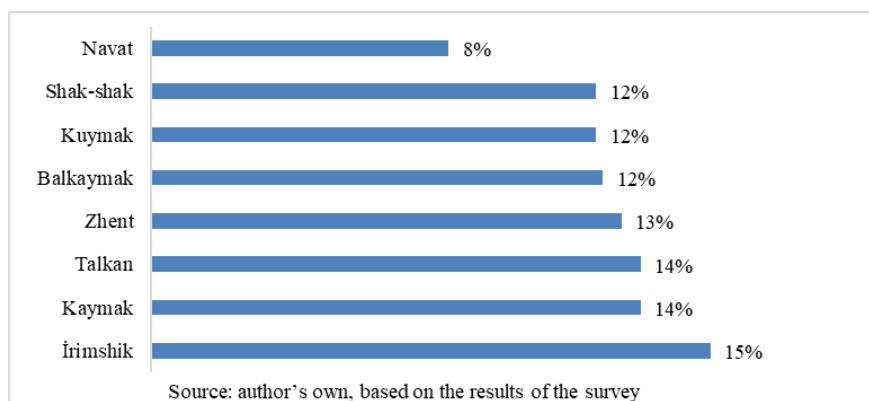


Figure 6 – Participants' preferences for desserts

Beverages: The responses to the question “Which beverages should be included in the Kazakh cuisine menu?” are presented in Figure 7. Participants were asked to indicate their top three preferences from a wide selection of beverages. The most preferred beverages were identified in rank order. As shown in the figure, 18 % of the participants selected kumis, 17 % chose shubat, and 15 % indicated ayran as their preferred beverages. The production of unique beverages from

the milk of various animals holds significant importance in Kazakh gastronomy. In particular, the breeding of animals such as horses and camels in Kazakhstan allows for the production of authentic beverages like kumus, shubat, and ayran, which provide a distinct advantage for the country in terms of gastronomy tourism. It is suggested that these beverages be modernized using new technologies and promoted to further enhance their appeal.

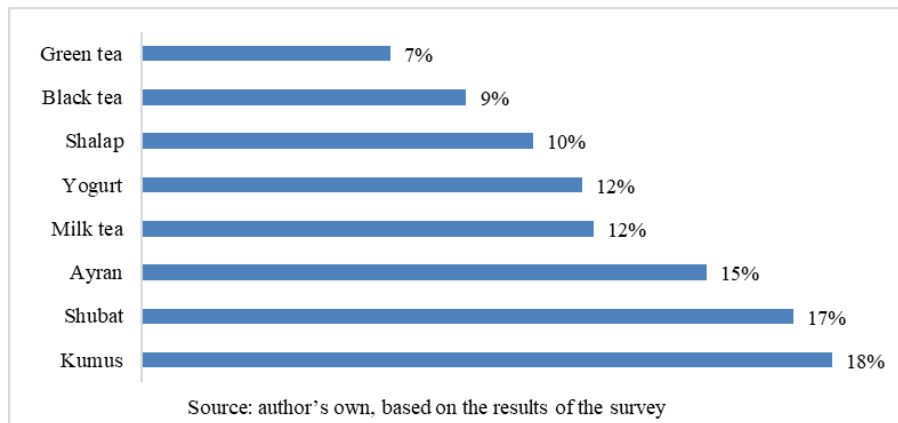


Figure 7 – Participants' preferences for beverages

Dishes, desserts, and beverages most associated with Kazakh cuisine: Participants' responses to the open-ended question “What dishes, desserts, and beverages come to mind when you think of Kazakh cuisine?” are presented in Figure 8. The dishes, beverages, and desserts listed in the figure were analyzed based on the number of responses provided

by participants. As shown in the figure, items such as et asu, boursak, kuirdak, kumus, shubat, ayran, zhent, irimshik, and talkan were identified as the prominent flavors of Kazakh cuisine. These food and beverage items can serve as key attractions for gastronomy tourism, highlighting their cultural and culinary significance.

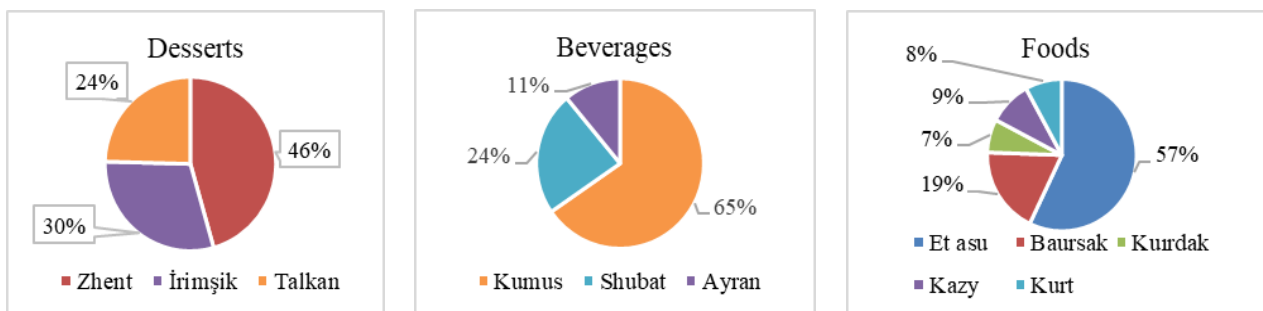


Figure 8 – Participants' ranking of Kazakh cuisine menu

Prominent gastronomy tourism regions: When evaluating the responses to the question, “Which geographical region stands out in Kazakh culinary culture for the purpose of gastronomy tourism?”

as shown in Figure 9, the South Kazakhstan region ranks first. The primary reason for the south Kazakhstan region being ranked first is the presence of provinces rich in culinary culture, such

as Almaty, Zhambyl, Turkestan, and Kyzylorda, within this area. It can be said that this region serves

as a significant attraction center for gastronomy tours and events.

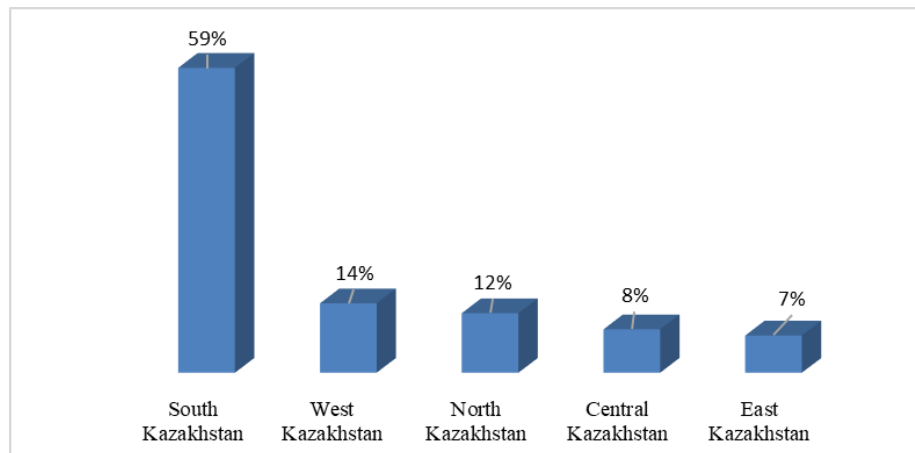


Figure 9 – Participants' selections of prominent geographical regions in Kazakh culinary culture

Discussion. In the context of gastronomy tourism, the presence of appealing menus plays a crucial role in enabling tourists to experience a country's food and beverages. Accordingly, based on research conducted among the local population to determine the ideal Kazakh cuisine menu, the following dishes have been identified: kazy as the cold appetizer, meat soup as the main soup, et asu as the main course, boursak as a hot appetizer, irimshik as the dessert, meat salad as the salad, and kumus as the beverage. When thinking of Kazakh cuisine, the first associations are et asu as the main dish, kumus as the beverage, and jent as the dessert. These findings align with the results of Chernyavskaya, Kauymbayev [6] who found that a significant portion of the population considers traditional Kazakh dishes, such as et asu, kuirdak, kazy, naryn, kattama nan, boursak, and taba nan, to be essential offerings for guests and highly appreciated. Similarly, another study identified et asu, kumus, kazy, shubat, kurt, shelppek, and kuirdak as the most preferred national Kazakh dishes among tourists [7]. Regarding gastronomy tourism, the south Kazakhstan region has been identified as the most prominent geographical area within Kazakh culinary culture. Additionally, Yerdauletov [11] highlight Turkistan, Almaty, and East Kazakhstan as key provinces for the development of agro-gastronomy tourism and the organization of regional tourism initiatives.

Conclusion. The findings of this study can serve as a guide for national food and beverage establishments in Kazakhstan in terms of menu planning and the promotion of regional culinary products. The highlighted

food and beverage items have the potential to provide tourists with memorable experiences and valuable insights into Kazakh cuisine, thereby enhancing its recognition and recall.

In line with the obtained results, highlighting the culinary culture of these regions, which have high potential for being visited for gastronomy tourism, is highly important for Kazakh tourism. In this context, it is necessary for the Ministry of Sports and Tourism, which has the authority to plan Kazakh tourism, to establish gastronomy tourism regions and corridors and to encourage infrastructure and superstructure developments in the supported destinations within these regions.

Furthermore, the key gastronomy tourism destinations identified in this study present significant opportunities for tourism enterprises to cater to the gastronomy tourism demands of visitors and to facilitate the organization of culinary tours across Kazakhstan.

Local food and beverages are essential elements of a tourism destination. However, studies highlighting their significance in the context of Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism are limited. Therefore, this study will make a significant contribution to the literature by demonstrating the importance of local food and beverages in attracting tourists to Kazakhstan and ensuring their satisfaction.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations have been developed in the context of highlighting local culinary elements to enable Kazakhstan to utilize its gastronomic tourism potential, market itself as a gastronomic destination, and achieve the desired number of tourists and revenue:

-Diversified gastronomic products should be developed to enhance tourists' gastronomic experiences in Kazakhstan. For example, organizing different thematic gastronomic tours between cities and regions, hosting culinary-focused cultural events, and establishing ethno-villages showcasing gastronomic products can encourage tourists to stay longer in Kazakhstan, revisit the country, and recommend it to others.

-To encourage first-time tourists to revisit Kazakhstan, their satisfaction with the experience of Kazakh food and beverages must be ensured. Kazakh cuisine should be made attractive through experiential marketing activities.

- Research should be conducted on the historical development of Kazakh food and beverages in each region.

- Authentic Kazakh food and beverages should be identified, and differences from the cuisines of other ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan should be highlighted.

- Standardization efforts should be carried out for region-specific food and beverages in Kazakhstan.

This research is limited to collecting data from the resident population in Kazakhstan. The obtained data has been analyzed within this limitation. To expand the research findings, studies can be conducted using interview techniques with chefs and food and beverage managers in Kazakhstan.

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