

Beer tourism – from theory to practice

ZOLTÁN BUJDOSÓ

Károly Róbert University

Department of Tourism and Regional Development, Hungary

zbujdoso@karolyrobert.hu

CSABA SZŰCS

Károly Róbert University

Institute of Environmental Sciences, Hungary

Abstract

Due to the interest in the development of gastronomy and the food and beverage culture of different countries and regions, culinary travel is gaining in popularity all over the world and gastronomic tourism has become an independent product on its own within tourism. Beer tourism has become an integrated part of gastronomic tourism. The purpose of this paper is to place beer tourism, which attracts a growing number of visitors, as a product into the system of tourism as well as to review its outward forms and future development possibilities.

Keywords: gastro tourism, theory, beer tourism, practice

1 Introduction

The most frequent motives of travel for tourism are the search for an enjoyable experience, entertainment, experience, attraction, hobby, adventure, dynamism, and new, unknown and unusual things. Guests are attracted by nicer and more substantial relaxation possibilities, without stress, experiencing the opportunities offered by each and every situation. Currently, the interest in local gastronomic specialities, full value meals, and select and primarily healthy fare are at the top of the list of expectations together with food and beverages that can provide high quality enjoyment for the senses through their quality and exterior.

Wine has a more prestigious tradition on the list of beverages of gastronomy than beer, nevertheless top quality beers have already appeared. They do not merely function as thirst quenchers but can also provide culinary enjoyment either on their own or accompanying meals if they are consumed at a special place. The purpose of this essay is to place beer tourism, which is attracting a growing number of visitors, as a product into the system of tourism, as well as to review its outward forms and future development possibilities.

2 The system of gastrotourism

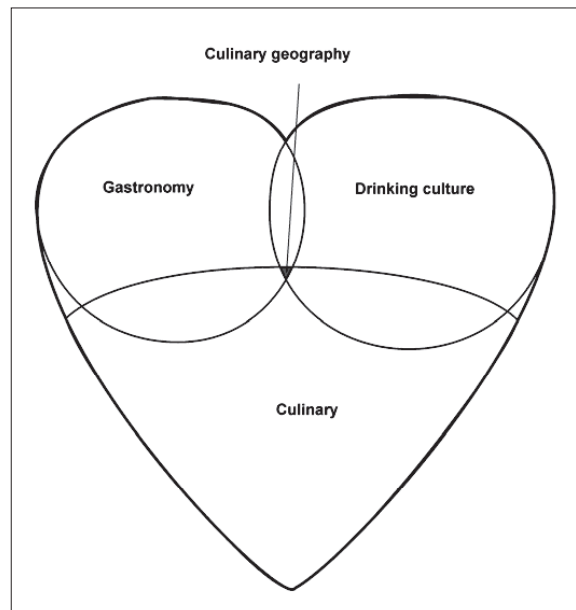
Due to the interest in the development of gastronomy and the food and beverage culture of different countries and regions, culinary travel is gaining popularity all over the world and gastronomic tourism has become an independent product on its own within tourism. Gillespie stated that ‘the study of gastronomy is the understanding of the scope of production and preparation of food and drink as well as how, where, when and why they are consumed.’ (Gillespie, 2001). According to Wolf, ‘gastronomic tourism is the pursuit of travel in the quest for the enjoyment of prepared food, drinks and other related food activities’ (Wolf, 2006).

Gastronomic tourism is also known as “food tourism”, “tasting tourism” or “culinary tourism”. Culinary tourism is defined as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences. Gastronomic

tourism refers to trips made to destinations where the local food and beverages are the main motivating factors for travel.

Dávid et al. interpret culinary geography in a wider scope than gastronomic tourism; their heart-shaped model has been widely published (Dávid, Kerekesné & Újvári, 2010). According to Dávid and Baros the features of a region and living space are formulated by the common force of historical, geographical, ethnic, psychological, religious, cultural, economic and individual factors which induce rational and emotional judgements and sentiments and shape a particular depiction coloured by historic brushstrokes (Dávid & Baros, 2010). Amongst all these, gastronomy and beverage culture have an outstanding role. In their interpretation these two characteristics refer to the tradition-based value creation of peculiarities while culinary aspects are in connection with complex consumer practices (Figure 1).

Fig. 1: The heart-shaped model of culinary geography



Source: Dávid & Baros, 2010

Considering the types of tourism gastronomic tourism belongs to the sphere of leisure tourism while of the two basic forms of tourism, it can be placed into

the alternative rather than the mass tourism section. Gastronomic tourism is nothing else but change of place in order to learn about the gastronomic values of a given area (Bujdosó, Kerekesné & Újvári, 2011).

Gastronomic tourism offers a wide choice especially in countries with great traditions and attractions. To foster culinary tourism, the food or beverage experience must be unique and memorable (Caffyn, 2010). Culinary tourism is much more than just restaurants and wineries. Here are some examples that would qualify as culinary tourism: gastronomic events and programmes, gastronomic museums, sights of gastronomic based thematic journeys, restaurants confectionaries, pubs as tourism attractions, theme dinners, and other gastronomic attractions.

3 The basis of beer tourism

Beer drinkers and other tourists are often interested in visiting breweries and other beer-related attractions. Thus beer tourism is a growing industry as more and more companies offer tours to beer brewing regions. Besides, there are beer associations in almost all countries that have a stake in beer tourism; these as-

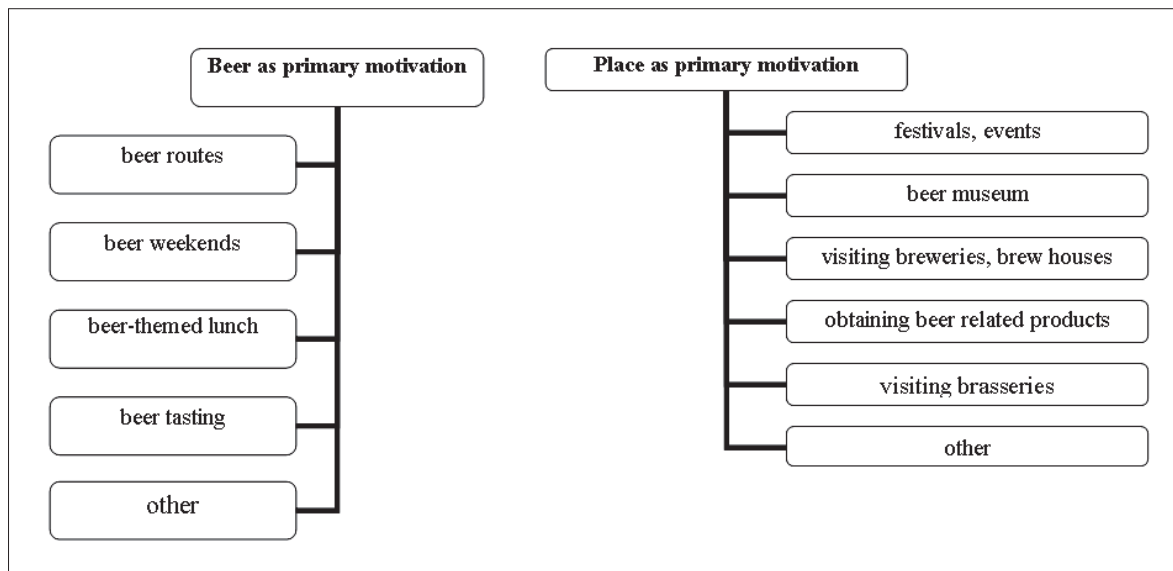
sociations can provide information about specialities, places to discover, and brasseries. What is more, it is not always necessary for us to travel to where beer is made, as the specialities of the chosen region can easily be ordered online (Bujdosó et al., 2011). Due to the above mentioned facts, beer tourism has become a new and popular form of alternative tourism especially within certain target groups (Brown, 2011).

The market for beer is most likely to be middle-aged men from higher socio-economic groups. Fewer young people and women drink beer and perhaps lower socio-economic groups are more likely to drink beers and lagers from global companies (Caffyn, 2010). According to Caffyn special markets to be considered include stag breaks, college reunions, and sport clubs trips.

4 Forms of beer tourism

Beer tourism may be divided into two distinct groups on the basis of its outward forms. In the first case, beer is the primary source of motivation for the tourist i.e. the aim is to consume the selected, chosen type of beer in a given environment. However, motivation may stem

Fig. 2: The system of beer tourism



Source: Author's own compilation

from other factors, for example when a tourist is primarily interested in a place that may be in connection with beer and beer consumption is only secondary or does not take place at all (Figure 2).

4.1 Beer as primary motivation for travel

Beer tasting

The most popular form of beer tourism may be the consumption of the beers of a given country and visiting brasseries. The role of the Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, Great Britain, the Baltic States, and Ireland can be considered outstanding. There are different associations in United Kingdom which organise the tasting of different beer brands for tourists. Most of the breweries participating in the Cask Marque scheme offer brewery tours – promoted collectively via www.visitabrewery.co.uk. These include many well-known beer brands: Adnams, Banks's, Black Sheep, Brains, Butcombe, Caledonian, Carlsberg, etc. (Caffyn, 2010). Besides this, craft beers, which are normally produced in small quantities using only natural ingredients without additives or preservatives, have become popular. For this reason they have characteristic and diverse flavour and aroma. Beer tourists (or as they are sometimes called, beer hunters) collect these beers as souvenirs. In Germany for example there are specialised beer shops (e.g. Beermania in Munich) that offer countless types of beer, as a matter of fact more than 500 types of beer are offered by Beermania (Bujdosó et al., 2011).

“Beer-themed lunch”

Beer-themed lunch refers to a menu created to accompany a given list of beers where dishes are in harmony with the intrinsic values of the accompanying beer – be it similarity, harmony or even contrast (Bujdosó et al., 2011). Dishes that at first sight might seem bizarre are made with beer e.g. beer ice cream. The motto of the restaurants offering beer themed lunches is that beer is not only part of dinner, but rather it is the ideal beverage for a meal.

During beer themed lunches, the positive effects of this drink is emphasised and included in the menu as different types of beers are offered for certain courses and dishes. The Swan Hotel in London offers beer from aperitif to desserts depending on the dish (<http://hotels.adnams.co.uk/the-swan>). Similarly, the Restaurant Alus Seta in Riga beer is brought into connection with dishes.

Beer tours

A common mechanism for promoting an area using food or drink as a theme is a trail or route. It is helpful to include more general themes such as the landscape and local heritage. Serious beer tourists may be a relatively small sector but they are quite high spenders (Caffyn, 2010). A beer trail might be a major motivator for them to plan a weekend break or short holiday in the area in order to sample local beers, stay at pubs and visit one or two breweries. Thematic routes are mainly characterised by wine tours, however, at the same time there are beer themed routes on our continent. For example the Scottish Stockport Ale Trail promotes three routes through the town each of which features six to eight pubs – conceivably forming the route for a pub crawl (Caffyn, 2010). This seems to be a good model to link the pubs and additional information about local breweries and other visitor attractions nearby. A similar example is presented by the Bavarian “Bier-Tour durch München” (Beer tour through Munich), where beside tasting beer, the tourist will learn about the famous sites of the city. There are 54 beer tours in the region of Oberfranken (BBPA, 2008). Belgian Gent offers an interesting tour of the city. Uniformed guides called ‘bellmen’ take visitors around the city’s most famous pubs. When it is time to move to the next pub he rings the bell (Tourism Review, 2010). A Canadian example is the Ale Trail, a beer tourism region set in the Canadian counties of Waterloo and Wellington, which also offers the regions’ attractions as a common product (Plummer, Telfer, Hashimoto & Summers, 2010). One can also find beer tours in the Baltic States, mainly in the cities. The pubs of Kaunas, Biržai, Panevezys and Klaipėda offer such experience.

Beer weekend

It is of vital importance for settlements featuring beer attractions to be able to offer packages that enable visitors to stay for a number of days. One way to do that is to organise beer weekends. The market for organised beer breaks or holidays appears relatively limited. In the UK only a few operators offer breaks with a beer theme. Warner Leisure highlights beer tasting or a brewery tour as part of a longer package. In the Lake District, Mountain Goat offers ‘pint to pint’ tours – usually bespoke – for particular groups (Caffyn, 2010).

There are similar examples in Belgium. The Belgian Brewers’ Association and the “Mashstaff of the Knights”, in collaboration with the City of Brussels organised the Belgian Beer Weekend at the Grand Place of Brussels. Many small, medium and large Belgian breweries participate to present their best selections of beers (Tourism Review, 2010).

A recurrent theme of beer weekends might be the acquisition of the know-how of beer brewing or even the organisation of beer brewing courses. In the United Kingdom the Woolpack Inn in Cumbria offers weekend brewing courses with accommodation in the pub (Caffyn, 2010).

Miscellaneous

Beer is often used for purposes other than consumption, which can also be attractive for tourists. In a family owned brewery in Chodová Planá (the Czech Republic), the world’s largest brewery, the so called “Beerarium” awaits tourists offering beer spa and beer therapy treatments as well as Beer-Wellness. There are a number of other beer spas in the country (Prague, Harrachov, Písek u Jablunkov (www.urlaub-im-web.de/Czechtourism)). Many smaller hotels in Germany also offer “beer-wellness” treatments emphasising the beneficial effects of malt and hop (e.g. Landhotel Gut Riedelsbach)

4.2 Place as Primary Motivation

Many tourists visit destinations not with the primary purpose of beer consumption, but because the motiva-

tion to visit certain places and points of interest stems from other factors, even though these places can be connected to beer.

Brassiere visits

Beer brewing is the same age as mankind and owing to this pubs have been an important location of social and communal life for centuries (Arnold, 2005). During this time famous brasseries and pubs emerged owing to their distinctiveness, atmosphere, historic events and other factors. These places can be found in enticing travel brochures. Pubs, inns and bars are often important architecturally or for their heritage value.

Other places can be thought of as brands which tourists feel they must visit (e.g. U Fleku in Prague, the Delirium Café in Brussels, Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese in London).

Some other pubs are mini destinations in themselves. Such as The Tan Hill Inn in the Yorkshire Dales – the highest in Britain (Caffyn, 2010), U Kalicha – the pub featured in the famous stories of the Good Soldier Svejk.

The Signal Box Inn at Cleethorpes, in Lincolnshire – the smallest pub in the world, Pub Na Spilce in Plzen – the largest pub in the world. In conclusion, it can be said that these pubs are beer tourist pilgrimage destinations.

Festivals, events

Beer festivals are popular annual events in many places and generate tourist overnight stays and day visitors (Wilson, 2006). Naturally beer is sold at other festivals as well which might be an attractive force. Beer is obviously also an important product featured at most food and drink festivals. When talking about beer related festivals we first think about the Munich Oktoberfest. This event is visited by more than 6 million people annually representing a more than a €1 billion income for the city (Dávid et al., 2009). The Czech Beer Festival in Prague is also visited by more than a million people and programmes in the Baltic States are becoming increasingly popular (Öllesummer in Estonia). Naturally

all breweries organise annual festivals whose influence may range from local to international. An individual initiation is the First Craft-Beer Festival of Hungary, which was held on 13-14 May, 2011 in Budapest with the aim to showcase the unknown achievements of Hungarian craft-beer that has been largely overlooked until now.

Besides beer festivals, other beer themed programmes and events with unique attractions must also be mentioned. Examples may be the beer marathon which connects a number of towns in Lithuania. The main point of this event is that participants visit checkpoints (bars, cafés) where the owners accomplish tasks together with the competitors. During the beer marathon beer drinking is not a must but not forbidden either, however, contestants can only walk, run or use the public transport system, the use of any other vehicles is forbidden. The Beer Bike competition in Huston, USA is a similar event. Beer Bike competition is a combination intramural bicycle race and drinking competition dating back to 1957. It takes place at Rice University, with participating students originating from all around the world.

Beer museums, collections

Breweries are an important part of the industrial heritage but pubs, inns and bars are often important architecturally or for their heritage value. Many former or recent breweries or pubs operate as museums. In many countries of Europe, local breweries have beer museums, which allow visitors to learn not only about beer brewing but also about beer culture. Some examples of this are the Plzen Brewery Museum, Saku Brewery Museum in Tallin, the Beer and Oktobertfest

Museum in Munich or the Guinness Brewery Museum in Dublin. At the same time, occasionally the collection can be found away from the brewery itself. Some good examples of this are the Alaus Beer Exhibition in Lithuania or the Dreher Museum in Budapest. Beer does not only present a theme in itself for museums, its ingredients can also be exhibited just as in Poperinge, which is famous for its hop museum. Besides, beer accessories (glasses, mugs, etc.) can also be exhibited. De Bier Tempel in Brussels exhibits different beer types as well as glasses, books, mugs, and other beer related objects while Győr in Hungary has organised a Beer mug and coaster exhibition a number of times. The Beer Can Museum, located in East Taunton, Massachusetts, is a collection of more than 4,500 different beer cans (Caffyn, 2010).

Beer house, brewery visits

The best known and classical form of beer tourism is the brewery visit during which the main motivation of the visitor is not necessarily beer consumption or familiarisation with the brewery itself, rather visiting a tourism attraction. Naturally, to make a brewery hospitable for visitors, it must possess the necessary infrastructure above all there must be a visitor centre. In Europe the attractions of Great Britain draw significant numbers of visitors (Table 1).

Almost all breweries in the Czech Republic have a visitor's centre. Such places can be found in Plzen, Ceske Budejovice and Prague. In Germany the so-called event breweries are gaining popularity as unique attractions (e.g. Watzdorfer, Schussenrieder, Hachenburger). In these breweries, the main objective is not necessarily a factory visit or beer tasting, visitors

Table 1: Visitors to selected breweries in 2008 (Caffyn, 2010)

| Brewery attraction | No. of visitors in 2008 |
|--|-------------------------|
| Elgoods Brewery and Garden, Cambridgeshire | 6,000 |
| Belvoir Brewery, Leicestershire | 10,000 |
| Shepherd Neame Brewery Tours, Kent | 17,496 |
| St Peter's Brewery and Visitor Centre, Suffolk | 17,500 |
| St Austell Brewery Visitor Centre, Cornwall | 30,000 |

Source: Visit England, 2008.

may be more interested in gaining new experience. Tourist can make individualised gifts and brew beer. In Switzerland the Feldschlösschen brewery promotes itself as “Rheinfelden – Experience the World of Beer” and offers unique experience for tourists.

In Belgium, beer brewing spread from monasteries and even today abbeys play an important role in beer brewing. Monks can now serve tourists as well. In many monasteries a monk must be present during the process and most of the money gained from selling the beer should be used for charity.

Gastropubs

Pubs that only offer beer have recently realised that they can increase the number of visitors if they diversify their business by offering gastronomic specialities or accommodation. The market for stylish comfortable accommodation alongside a relaxed pub atmosphere and good food in an attractive location appeals to many people. Gastropub refers to a bar and restaurant that serves high-end beer and food (Farley, 2009). The term gastropub, a portmanteau of gastronomy and pub, originated in England in the late 20th century, English pubs were drinking establishments and little emphasis was placed on the serving of food (Farley, 2009). Well-known gastropubs are The White Swan in London, The Poacher in Kent or the Queen in Brussels Belgium.

Pubs offering accommodation face strong competition from hotels, particularly budget hotels. These have strong brands (reinforced through high-spend marketing) and consistent standards and pricing, they are easy to book and they can refer business among themselves. Some budget hotels even offer the opportunity to drink and eat well in an adjacent pub, owned by the same company (Caffyn, 2010).

The Zibininkai HBH pas Juoza in Lithuania offers beer and food in a unique way; it has its own brewery and it aims to satisfy specific requests as well.

Acquiring beer related products

It is not only beer but also products related to it that may motivate people to travel. These products may be coasters, mugs, beer cans, glasses, beer steins, labels or even bottle caps. More and more people go on so called souvenir-gathering tours in order to acquire beer related items in a given country. Most often this item is beer coasters. Beer coasters (also called beer mats) were used in the 19th century for the first time by the poorer barflies to prevent insects from getting into their drinks (wealthy beer lovers owned porcelain mugs with a top). The art of collecting beer coasters (‘beer mats’ outside the United States) even has its own name: Tegeology. Collectors do not only visit pubs to enlarge their collections but also attend events where they can buy or exchange their collectible items. The important Collector’s Fair had the dealers with the usual beer coasters. There are many such events organised especially in Central Europe. The largest one can be found in Martin, Slovakia and Olomuc in the Czech Republic. The international collectors’ fairs focus solely on items relating to beer. Collectors very often establish their own organisation (The British Beer Mat Collectors Society, The Brewery History Society, the Australian Beer Can Collectors Association, etc.), which organise annual events. These associations were founded with the intent of encouraging and fostering the hobby of collecting items related to beer.

Miscellaneous

There are many places and activities related to beer all over the world that cannot easily be placed into the above categories. It is important to mention them as they can form the basis of motivation and travel. Innumerable small scale conferences deal with this topic. One of the largest such events was the Ingolstadt convention in 2007, which was attended by more than 250 researchers from all over the world (<http://www.ku-eichstaett.de/tourismus>). At the same time people dealing or wishing to deal with beer find a growing number of educational and training courses in this area. An outstanding example for this is the beer-sommelier training of the Bad Gleichenberg Tourism

Schools, which teaches beer culture for students who come from a number of European countries.

A unique and perhaps shocking mixture of beer and sport is the so called beer-pong. This sport is popular in a number of countries and championships are also organised. The World Series of Beer Pong held in January 2010 in the United States, had a \$50,000 grand prize and attracted over 1,000 participants, and attracted teams from Ireland, Scotland, Germany and Japan (Lippman, 2010).

Last but not least, the Android Beer Guide must also be mentioned which helps beer tourists to find their way to attractions they want to reach. It supports users by advanced technology and enables the user to browse by name, brewery, country or type, rate and review beers or list of highest rated and most popular beers. In this way, tourists can be part of this beer experience prior to travelling.

5 Conclusion

Beer is a popular motivating factor for travel and a growing number of tourists visit the beer-superpowers. At the same time tourists are increasingly influenced by the possibility of gaining new experience and therefore beer tourism is being diversified. Nevertheless, new challenges must be faced which urge suppliers to provide new products and services. The basis of this is to connect beer and local attractions and create so called “beer packages”. A beer package is a specialist beer themed trip including trips to breweries, interesting pubs, festivals and beer tastings, perhaps linked to walking or other food related activities. There should be the scope to link beer to other attractions or products of interest to visitors, such as other local food specialities, particularly those which complement beer, for example cheese, meat, sausages or even chocolate (Caffyn, 2010).

Pivski turizem – iz teorije v prakso

Povzetek

Zaradi zanimanja za razvoj gastronomije in kulture pitja in prehranjevanja različnih držav in regij, postajajo kulinarična potovanja čedalje bolj priljubljena povsod po svetu, gastronomski turizem pa je postal samostojen produkt na področju turizma. Pivski turizem je danes sestavni del gastronskega turizma. Namen tega prispevka je umestiti pivski turizem kot turistični produkt, ki privablja rastoče število turistov, v širši okvir turizma ter predstaviti njegove različne oblike in prihodnje možnosti za razvoj.

Ključne besede: gastro turizem, teorija, pivski turizem, praksa

References

- Arnold, J. P. (2005). *Origin and history of beer and brewing: From prehistoric times to the beginning of brewing science and technology*, New York: BeerBooks.
- BBPA. (2008). *A wake-up call for Westminster – Economic trends in the beer and pub sector*. Retrieved September 26, 2008, from <http://www.beerandpub.com>
- Brown, P. (2011). *Man walks into a pub: A sociable history of beer*. London: Pan Books.
- Bujdosó, Z., & Kerekesné, M. A., & Ujvári, K. (2011). *Gastronomy and hospitality* (in Hungarian). Gyöngyös: KRF Press.
- Caffyn, A. (2010). Beer and tourism: A relationship worth fostering. *Tourism Inside*. Retrieved April 20, 2010, from <http://www.insights.org.uk/articleitem.aspx?title=Beer%20and%20Tourism:%20A%20Relationship%20Worth%20Fostering>
- Dávid, L., & Baros, Z. (2011). Gastronomy of ghimes (In Hungarian). In A. Aubert, G. Szabó (Eds.), *Culture of tourism-tourism in culture* (pp.123–128). Pécs: PTE.
- Dávid, L., & Kerekesné, M. A., & Ujvári, K. (2009). *Alcohol culture* (In Hungarian). *Vendéglátás online*. Retrieved November 24, 2009, from <http://vendon.hu/fokuszban/alkoholkultura>
- Farley, D. (2009). New York develops a taste for gastropub. *The Washington Post*, 5, 6–9.
- Gillespie, C. (2001). *European Gastronomy into the 21st Century*. London: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Lippman, T. (2010). “About Beer-Pong”. *The New York Times*, 5, 10–12.
- Plummer, R., Telfer, D., Hashimoto, A., & Summers, R. (2010). *Beer tourism in Canada along the Waterloo-Wellington ale trail*. Retrieved March 22, 2009, from http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1508273
- Visit England. (2008). *Annual Visits to Visitor Attractions Survey*.
- Wilson, T. M. (ed.) (2006). *Drinking cultures*. New York: Berg.
- Wolf, E. (2006). *Culinary tourism: The hidden harvest*. New York: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.
- Tourism Review. (2010). Various kind of beer attract tourists to Belgium. Retrieved September 26, 2010, from <http://www.tourismreview.com/various-kinds-of-beer-attract-tourists-to-belgium-news2462>