

# Women in Food Tourism: The Narrative of Producers

## Abstract

Food tourism impacts the local development of communities from economic, cultural, and environmental perspectives. Also, it serves as a means for preserving and promoting traditions and fostering a sense of belonging within these communities. Despite the extensive body of research on food tourism, there is a limited focus on the perspective of women producers. This article aims to explore the development of food tourism from the perspective of rural women. Through interviews with 39 rural women involved in food production in the Campos, Ríos, and Lagunas region of the Buenos Aires province, Argentina, results highlight the area's food tourism potential driven by women's active involvement. In addition, the article highlights the necessity to expand public policies to address the situation of rural women, their vital role in agriculture, and their connection to local development and communities through food tourism.

**Keywords:** Argentina, cultural heritage, food tourism, local development, qualitative research

## 1. Introduction

In today's rural world, gender dynamics are undergoing significant changes. It is acknowledged that women, whether alone or in partnership, play a transformative role in rural communities (Farah Quijano & Perez Correa, 2003). The strong connection between women and traditional agricultural tasks (Sanz, 2004) demonstrates the continuity of these traditional rural roles. These tasks, such as producing food products, have also provided women with economic income to support their families (Guillén & Ruíz, 2022). Although there is limited literature that analyzes the role of women from the perspective of food tourism, studies have been conducted in various Latin American regions, shedding light on the challenges faced by rural women in the contexts of education and employment (Díaz Perez & Silva Niño, 2019; Mora et al., 2019). However, few have explored the gender perspective of rural women in the Republic of Argentina (for example, Cubiló, 2018). This study introduces a novel approach to food tourism to analyze the tourism development of women food producers, their connection to local heritage, and their contribution to regional economies.

## 2. The rural development of food tourism from a gender perspective

Food and gastronomy are increasingly recognized as determining factors for the sustainable development of places. They contribute to the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of regions while potentially enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of those places. This approach is necessary to conceptualize

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local development in areas through food tourism in a systematic, contextual, and holistic manner (Fernandes & Richards, 2021; Fusté-Forné, 2016). In this sense, the synergies between food production and consumption through tourism contribute to the development of a place. They must consider the relationships between these industries and the agents mediating between them, such as policies aimed at local development (Kamrul Hassan et al., 2023). Also, Aulet and Majó (2016) emphasize the importance of agriculture and rurality and the exploitation of food tourism for regional economic expansion, with an offering rooted in the flavours of local recipes and cooking techniques. Culinary culture is integral to a region's heritage and showcases its traditions (Contreras et al., 2019).

Local food allows tourists to connect with destinations, people, and practices (Coskun and Norman, 2021), fostering social bonds through a participatory approach (Silva et al., 2022). For example, Torres et al. (2001) highlight that ethnic cuisine allows for constructing a historical and cultural context that can be traced in regional foods and, later, tourist experiences. Sandybayev (2018) argues that food and gastronomy are gateways to communities' traditions and stories, making them valuable resources for distinguishing and exploring regions. In this sense, promoting food tourism should be centred around experiencing the region's food culture, with the participation of local people, and fostering a circular economy model (Polat & Aktas-Polat, 2020).

Traditionally, women have had limited or no participation (see, for example, Cabrera, 2023) in rural activities in some geographic contexts, primarily due to cultural factors. Nowadays, with advancements in social and cultural matters, women's empowerment (see Buendía & Carrasco, 2013) in rural settings is influenced by their role as the economic backbone of their households (Cànoves & Pérez, 2000). Acosta (2018) notes that studies have shown that rural, peasant-based, or community-based tourism activities become feasible only when women from these communities engage in work related to tourism, food, or services. Rural tourism has a significant economic and social impact on women (Arteaga & Coria, 2023), and it also contributes to shaping gender relations within the household and the community. During the last two decades, women entrepreneurs have emerged in rural development contexts (Castellanos et al., 2003).

Vizcaíno Suárez et al. (2016) points out the positive and negative effects of women's participation in rural tourism activities on their living conditions. Some advantages, as highlighted by Sullca Espinoza (2023), include opportunities to access sources of income, the possibility of starting their ventures and building support networks and cooperatives that enable greater social participation. In contrast, Sun et al. (2022) indicate that women tend to occupy lower-status jobs, and their leading household roles are often transferred to the tourism sector, where they are confined to domestic roles like food preparation, hotel cleaning, and customer service, which are usually less well-remunerated.

In this regard, women in rural tourism communities have engaged in activities related to food production (García & Cuesta, 2022), not only as cooks but also participating in land-based activities such as planting and harvesting. Women are also involved in food consumption (Achmad et al., 2022) as they determine which foods should be consumed within economic and cultural settings. In the same vein, the younger generations have assumed different social roles that are more economically lucrative (Valdés & Acosta, 2020), while adult women serve as custodians of the culinary heritage, which often remains undocumented, passed down through oral traditions from one generation to the next.

Prior research also highlights that families have altered dietary habits (Meléndez & Cañez, 2009). This is due to a gradual abandonment of rural activities and the extensive offerings provided by food establishments, which have expanded alongside the growth of industrialized fruit and vegetable production (Wani et al., 2024). This dietary transformation is also reflected in food preparation, shifting from private to public consumption (García & Cuesta, 2022). Women have emerged as the primary food producers for sale. While family-run establishments include men and women, recent studies demonstrate that women are more active in food production and food preparation as bearers of culinary cultural heritage due to their culinary experience and

knowledge (Wijerathna-Yapa & Pathirana, 2022). This article contributes to the analysis of women's role in developing food tourism in rural environments, which has remained little investigated in previous research.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Study method

This paper aims to analyze the relationships between food and tourism from the perspective of women entrepreneurs in the Campos, Río, and Lagunas region of the Buenos Aires province, Republic of Argentina. This area was selected because it is a region emerging in rural tourism, with food producers being the driving force behind it. The six municipalities chosen in the area are Roque Pérez, Tapalqué, Lobos, General Alvear, 25 de Mayo, and Saladillo, each hosting a food festival. The proximity to the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and the accessibility via National Route 205 have provided the region with greater visibility and a flow of visitors from the country's capital. The number of producers was selected based on the databases maintained by the tourism directors of each participating municipality in the region. In addition, a larger sample of women producers was obtained through snowball sampling, including producers not previously recorded by the municipalities. The study universe consists of seventy-one producers, including individuals, families, and cooperatives, of which thirty-nine are women who agreed to participate in the analysis, representing the study sample.

**Table 1.**  
*Profile of women food producers*

N	Food product	Marital status	Education	Municipality	Age
1	Bread	Married	University	Lobos	64
2	Jams	Unmarried (de facto union)	High school	Lobos	42
3	Artisanal alfajores	Married	Primary education	Tapalqué	53
4	Sweets	Unmarried (de facto union)	High school	Saladillo	47
5	Bread	Married	High school	General Alvear	60
6	Lamb farming	Married	Tertiary education	General Alvear	77
7	Bread	Unmarried (de facto union)	High school	Tapalqué	35
8	Bread, sweets	Single	Tertiary education	Argentina	27
9	Sweets, pastries	Separated	Tertiary education	General Alvear	57
10	Jams	Married	Tertiary education	Tapalqué	58
11	Sweets	Married	Primary education	Saladillo	55
12	Sweets	Married	Tertiary education	Saladillo	57
13	Artisanal alfajores	Single	High school	Saladillo	31
14	Bread	Single	High school	25 de Mayo	60
15	Bread, sweets	Single	High school	25 de mayo	35
16	Agriculture	Single	Tertiary education	25 de mayo	50
17	Bread, mini pizzas	Single	Primary education	General Alvear	25
18	Bread, pasta frola	Single	High school	Roque Pérez	30
19	Agriculture	Married	Primary education	Roque Pérez	58
20	Prepared dishes	Married	High school	Roque Pérez	40
21	Sweet	Married	High school	Lobos	52
22	Agriculture	Married	Primary education	Saladillo	52
23	Sweets	Married	Primary education	Lobos	63
24	Bread	Married	High school	Roque Pérez	45
25	Sweets	Married	High school	Tapalqué	50
26	Liqueurs	Married	Primary education	General Alvear	60
27	Agriculture	Single	Primary education	25 de Mayo	45
28	Bread	Separated	Primary education	Lobos	58

**Table 1 (continued)**

29	Sweets	Unmarried (de facto union)	Primary education	Roque Pérez	30
30	Prepared dishes	Unmarried (de facto union)	Primary education	Roque Pérez	39
31	Agriculture	Unmarried (de facto union)	Primary education	Saladillo	49
32	Prepared dishes	Separated	Primary education	Lobos	56
33	Sausages	Single	Primary education	25 de Mayo	42
34	Herbs and spices	Single	High school	25 de mayo	51
35	Sweets, jams	Single	Primary education	Roque Pérez	58
36	Prepared dishes	Unmarried (de facto union)	High school	25 de Mayo	30
37	Prepared dishes	Married	High school	Tapalqué	38
38	Agriculture	Married	High school	Roque Pérez	58
39	Sweet pastries	Unmarried (de facto union)	High school	Lobos	41

Source: Authors.

Data collection occurred between June and November 2022 and was conducted directly in the mentioned towns through semi-structured interviews conducted by the article's first author. The interview protocol was developed by the research team, based on previous research, to capture the opinions and perspectives of the interviewees (see, for example, Longhurst, 2009; Scanlan, 2020), which is a relevant approach in food tourism research that analyse the relations between food and tourism from the viewpoints of the producers (see, for example, Fusté-Forné & Berno, 2016; Noguer-Juncà et al., 2021). The research team developed the interview protocol based on previous research. It included three blocks of questions to understand the context of the producers, the protection and promotion of food products, and the connections between rural and tourism development. The first researcher interviewed the thirty-nine producers (Table 1), and the average duration of the interviews was 45 minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for data analysis, which was conducted to identify the main topics developed in the results. The data analysis was performed using content analysis, which, based on the organization and codification of data (Guthrie et al., 2004), helps expand the understanding of aspects of tourism that have not received attention in previous research (Yousuf & Backer, 2015). The first researcher conducted the analysis, and the fourth identified the themes and checked later for consistency with the research team. The topics developed in the next section include the current situation of agri-food producers, the commercialization of food products and the participation in tourism.

### 3.2. Study context

The Argentine countryside has historically been a man-dominated sector. For example, the leadership positions of rural organizations were always held by men. Currently, the boards of these organizations include a few women, but in much smaller numbers. In the past, men were the ones who cultivated and harvested the fields, while the wives, referred to as “chinas”, accompanied them in rural tasks but had little say in decision-making. However, this has been changing. Society has evolved, and women have empowered themselves, taking on significant roles in rural activities. They are no longer just companions but, in many cases, manage the farms, negotiate their products, and confront the government when the exchange rate does not favour imports.

In 2019, with the arrival of a new government in Argentina, the Ministry of Women, Gender, and Diversity was created. This was a response to the unfortunate number of threats and femicides that women were exposed to. One of the ministry's support initiatives is a prevention program that encourages women to break free from abusive situations. Between December 2019 and June 2022, 295,940 cases of gender-based violence were reported. The ministry also collaborates in strengthening social and community organizations, providing technical and financial assistance to organizations to enhance their work at the community level through gender and diversity training programs such as *Producir* (Spanish word for Produce) to assist vulnerable women in finding employment through food production.

Leaving their homes due to violence should be accompanied by economic independence. Local and provincial governments in Buenos Aires have also established helplines, offering training and psychological support to help women leave their homes for safety. Many women food producers, a significant percentage of single mothers, have gained economic independence by preserving and reevaluating their recipes and culinary heritage. Their food and cooking methods have provided them with more than an escape from a life of violence; as observed in the results, they have provided freedom.

### 3.3. Results

The results of this article analyze the situation of women concerning food production in rural environments, examining the characteristics and challenges in the marketing processes, the development of narratives, and their role in the context of food tourism.

#### 3.3.1. *The current situation of agri-food producers*

As explained in the methodology, 71 gastronomic producers from the Campos, Ríos, and Lagunas Region of the Salado River Basin, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, were approached. Of this total, 39 are women, half of whom stated that the income from selling their food products constitutes their entire economic income. One of the participants said, “earning come into my house thanks to the sale of my products... thanks to learning how to cultivate, today I can support my children”. For others, it is a secondary income because they have another primary activity. Some are retired schoolteachers or work part-time for the municipality, with food production as supplementary income to what their husbands already contribute to their households. Of all the producers, 18 belong to family enterprises, while the rest produce individually.

Additionally, most of them have inherited their culinary heritage. Most of them inherited it from their mothers, or in some cases, their grandmothers, which connects with the knowledge passed down through generations, encompassing both material elements, such as tools, and immaterial elements related to production methods and the origin of the products. One producer explained, “I still have pots from my mom, which she inherited from my grandmother”.

The study sample encompasses various food production, including sweets, handmade alfajores (a type of sweet), homemade bread, sweet pastries, liqueurs, prepared meals, and vegetable cultivation. The production process observed primarily involves the preparation itself, with only a few cases where they cultivate the land to provide raw materials to the food producers. The inputs used for production include flour, chocolate, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, butter, and sweet milk.

To preserve the authenticity of the value chain, from the landscape to the table, all the producers have stated that they sell directly to the end consumer, using short supply chains from producer to consumer, allowing direct contact with the customers. The primary method of sale is through fairs and markets, as well as gastronomic festivals organized by the municipality of each producer. The fairs are held weekly in town squares, featuring food producers, artisans and vendors of other products. For example, in Roque Pérez, the Municipal Market “Bien Auténtico” takes place on the second weekend of each month in Mitre Square, outdoors. Over 60 producers participate in this market. With municipal support in Tapalqué, the Union of Land Workers (UTT) has established an agroecological colony in the region as part of the provincial program “Alimentos Bonaerenses”. The goal is to establish a direct link between producers and consumers through “Mercados Bonaerenses”, reducing logistical and transportation costs and promoting local production. In General, Alvear, the “Mercado Bonaerense”, is held monthly, where each local producer displays and sells their products. In addition, community fairs are held weekly.

In Lobos, the municipality is part of the “Sabores de la Provincia” program. Here, each producer can promote their products. This local gastronomic fair strongly focuses on food tourism and coordination with

the provincial government. Its goal is to promote local food products, facilitate their marketing, and create a sense of belonging among the inhabitants, some of whom may be unaware of their own identity embedded in food. They also hold the “Week of the Alfajor” every year, where producers showcase and sell their alfajores. In addition, the black cake festival is held in Tapalqué every January. While black cake in Argentina is typically an individual serving, in Tapalqué, it is the size of a pizza, cut and shared. This festival features all local producers, mostly women, who make a giant cake that is then shared with mates, family and friends.

In Roque Pérez, the “Night of the General Stores” is held on the first Saturday of January. Ten rural stores form part of a food tour, each showcasing and selling their products and offering music and popular dance shows to entertain visitors. This invites visitors to move through different rural products. In March, the Empanada and Crafts Festival is held in this town, with each woman's rural cook preparing their typical empanadas. They sell these empanadas and offer cooking workshops to understand the unique aspects of their food.

In Saladillo, the Fiesta de la Galleta de Piso is held in April yearly. This type of cookie (galleta) is made from wheat flour with a unique baking technique on a clay oven's floor (piso). It is typical of the region and is used to accompany a mate. In addition to music and dance, photographs of the local bakeries that make these cookies are displayed. Artisans, local entrepreneurs, and the town's murga (a musical ensemble) participate. In October, the Open Rural Women's Fair is held in 25 de Mayo, where each producer offers their products alongside music and folk dances.

In addition to these events, local producers use social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to promote their products. This is especially relevant when the weather conditions do not allow the products to be sold on-site. “When it rains a lot, and there are no fairs, social media helps me showcase my products”, stated one of the interviewees. These social networks allow them to showcase their products, share their cooking techniques, provide information about promotions and seasonal offerings, conduct giveaways, and offer their products. They also inform their followers about the dates of fairs and markets where consumers can find their promoted products.

### *3.3.2. Commercialization: difficulties and opportunities*

The producers do not handle any means of payment other than cash, and in Argentine pesos, this can hinder their tourism value. In some cases, they receive payments through Mercado Pago. It is a digital payment method carried out through a mobile application between phone numbers. It is a non-bank and non-financial system. It is a virtual account. Tourists cannot access it, as having a mobile phone with an Argentine chip is necessary.

Regarding the difficulties that arise, all interviewees express a lack of financing (neither public nor private) and the lack of access to loans to develop their products. “There are no loans. We are outside the banking system!” explained one of the producers. The only loans that might exist are those for entrepreneurs, but the requirements are incredibly distant for rural producers because the interest rate is 25%. In addition, the high cost of inputs is because in the Republic of Argentina, 2022, the annual inflation rate was 94.8%. At the same time, it is difficult to maintain the final consumer price, which also harms them because the final prices fluctuate at each fair or market, and the economic crisis is reflected in the low sales.

The producers also express a lack of production skills and the need to learn or improve production techniques – “everything I learned was thanks to my grandmothers”, told one of them, or upgrade the machinery they use for product preparation. In addition, they need favourable weather conditions to carry out this activity in their homes. Many streets are unpaved, and it is impossible to access the mud on rainy days, so the lack of infrastructure is also tricky for product commercialization. Another issue they have identified is the lack of space and public restrooms. When receiving visitors at their homes, their only restroom is the family's own. The planning and development of facilities are vital to commercializing the products elaborated by women producers and the professionalization of the relationship between food and tourism, as explored in the next section.

On the other hand, there are opportunities thanks to the support of the local and provincial governments. The so-called PUPPAs (Small units of production of food products) belong to the Directorate of Industries and Food Products (DIPA) of the Province of Buenos Aires. This public policy allows them to enable their kitchens through a series of requirements, having completed several courses, including the one for food hygiene handlers. Local governments support these policies, as each municipality certifies the presence of the producer in their city, and the Province of Buenos Aires government finalizes this certification.

**Figure 1**  
Example of marketing and promotion of food products



The participants acknowledged the role of the PUPPA as “it allowed me to certify my products and market them more effectively”, reported a producer, as certification ensures that products meet specific quality standards. It also provides a competitive advantage and consumer trust. In this sense, renewing the PUPPAs requires compliance with the hygiene-sanitary, production, and marketing conditions that led to the initial approval. It is also mandatory to demonstrate attendance and approval of 80% of the workshops and maintain adequate process conditions. This opportunity allowed the producers to label their food products, giving them an image, colour, and name for family and individual enterprises. Figure 1 shows an example of labelling and digital promotion of sweets and preserves from Lobos. It is an example of promoting the sale of jams to a local farm that offers guided tours and cooperates with neighbours. In this sense, the producer has the PUPPAs certification, which is why the label includes a batch, expiration date, ingredients, and the geographical location of production.

### 3.3.3. Creating to narrate: the women producers and the tourism system

The producers have indicated that they need access to more diverse forms of training and greater accessibility to government credits, allowing them to produce more, achieve better technical results, and higher profitability. Half of them believe that microcredits would allow them to access better machinery and equipment, thus enabling innovation in their current production. In this regard, all the producers wish to access training courses covering financial matters. Understanding how to set prices, considering fixed and variable costs, would yield better results and help diversify their enterprises, especially concerning tourism.

As they produce in their homes, the facilities are limited. While the producers show their availability to engage with tourism – one of them stated, “If I had more space and better conditions, I would welcome all

the tourists!”, this prevents them from receiving visitors and tourists and conducting their storytelling. This is one of the main results of the research that shows the producers need to share their stories, talk about their living heritage and culture, and thus introduce their products. They would also like to receive visitors in their kitchens and have them directly and personally participate in their culinary activities. In all cases, they would do this every day of the week or on weekends when tourist demand is most significant. Most tourists visiting the region come from the City of Buenos Aires, the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (AMBA), and the Greater Buenos Aires metropolitan area (Conurbano Bonaerense). Most are families, including older couples passionate about local gastronomy and young couples who are nature enthusiasts and find it just an hour away from the Federal Capital. Moreover, there has been a higher influx of visitors post-pandemic. The need for rural areas and living in a healthy and fresh environment presented a significant opportunity for tourism in the region.

Regarding their active participation in the tourism system, most producers agree that the local government should involve them in tourism. They have indicated their involvement in municipal decisions and consultations initiated by the government to enhance the tourist experiences. However, they also need more government assistance to carry out their activities. As explained in the previous sections, a circular economy exists in the region, as the producers state that their products are featured at fairs and gastronomic festivals. Nevertheless, local restaurants seldom include dishes made with the producers' products. The results show that they favour the tourism development in the region, as it is an advantage for revaluing their products and introducing them to new visitors. Some of the reasons highlighted include their interest in the cultural development of their gastronomy. Valuing their products, recipes, and meals excites them and demonstrates an emotional connection to communicating local values in culinary storytelling.

Results also show very few potential private investors, but they do exist. In Tapalqué, they inaugurated thermal pools. In this case, private businesses were invited to bid for local food establishments to provide better services to tourists. This creates additional job opportunities and encourages employment. The arrival of new tourists could increase the producers' sales and thus improve their quality of life. They all feel that unity and collective goals strengthen them as regional producers. They view the Campos, Ríos, and Lagunas region rather than just different towns forming a region.

The producers are satisfied with how tourism is developing in their towns, the alliances formed by tourism directors, and the planning of food festivals. If one town hosts a festival one weekend, the other cities support it and do not host their events the same weekend. The producers buy their supplies from each other. They stated they not seek it from another area unless a specific raw material is unavailable in the region. The main priority is maintaining a circular economy, and they cooperatively support each other. “We buy the supplies among ourselves; we would not look for oranges in another location”, stated one of them. They have also mentioned that, in some cases, they make collective purchases of supplies. For example, jam producers purchase sugar at better prices by buying in larger quantities, which shows that collaboration among the producers can develop long-term relationships between tourism and gastronomy.

## 4. Discussion and conclusion

This article contributes to understanding the role of rural women in food tourism based on producers in the Campos, Ríos, and Lagunas region of the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. In previous research, Acosta (2018) found that there are studies where tourism activities in rural areas become viable only when women from these communities engage in the work and connect it with the protection and promotion of food in tourism. Vizcaíno Suárez et al. (2016) also mentions that these connections between food and tourism allow women to access valid sources of income, start their businesses, and build support networks and cooperatives that enable greater social participation, as shown in the results of this study.

In family establishments, women are more actively involved in production and preparation (García & Cuesta, 2022), and they carry the cultural heritage as they possess culinary experience and knowledge. In addition, this research observes that women empower themselves with a particular role in food production (Wijerathna-Yapa & Pathirana, 2022). Through their products, the localities in the region showcase their heritage. The fairs and popular markets, as well as their food festivals, demonstrate the significant participation of women and the narrative associated with their ventures to valorize the place, as well as the people and practices involved in the production and consumption of local food products in tourism (Leow et al., 2024).

Rural women have taken a stance of affirmation; they have gone from being referred to as “la china” (a derogatory term used for women who accompanied cowboys in the countryside) to being “THE” woman of the countryside. Over the years, women began to empower themselves in rural areas. For example, one of the localities, Tapalqué, has a small town where the main square features a statue of the rural woman, and every April, the Festival of the Rural Woman is held in Crotto. The only high school in Crotto organizes this event. The festival offers a wide range of food options, musical performances, an exhibition of photographs of rural women, regional products, presentations of school projects, and local entrepreneurial groups, such as the knitting group. The streets of Crotto bear the names of women.

The study area offers a wide range of options for planning and developing food tourism, with food production and dishes primarily in the hands of women. Women have succeeded in highlighting their local food, using their locally sourced “kilometre zero” foods and seeking recipes from their mothers and grandmothers, which they hold in memory and heart. Many of these women are heads of single-parent families, where their primary source of income is food. They bring value to their cuisine, work, and heritage. This has a significant economic and social impact on the women in the region (see Arteaga & Coria, 2023).

Understanding that the region lacks access to supermarkets in a globalized world is essential. Municipal governments promote local grocery stores and local producers. As the results of the article show, this regional policy has allowed rural women to offer their products in local markets, at festivals organized by tourism authorities, and in neighbourhood fairs where their food is consumed locally by residents and visitors. Furthermore, the region promotes food tourism with the help of public agendas (see Castellanos et al., 2003). In the province of Buenos Aires, some programs support local flavours. Municipalities also revalue their heritage through the efforts of rural women. The producers prepare food in their domestic kitchens, and some also work the land, while others have bakeries that offer typical regional pastries. Some have created rural retreats in remote areas far from the town’s historical centre where dining is more than just nourishment; it is an experience within their homes. These retreats are managed by the town’s women, mothers, and grandmothers, who cook together, serve their guests, and offer a unique perspective on food tourism in rural settings (see also Morón-Corujeira & Fusté-Forné, 2022).

#### 4.1. Theoretical and practical implications

This work is valuable for understanding the role of women in food tourism in rural areas. Few studies examine food tourism from a gender perspective. This work can establish an academic foundation for understanding the role of women in food preparation, the appreciation of territorial gastronomic values, and the promotion of culinary identity. Also, this study is helpful for rural women themselves. While some work collaboratively in their localities, they need to know and recognize each other on a regional level.

For local managers, this study provides a broad range of food producers that can be included in the tourism experiences. This work will also benefit from incorporating women as key figures in food tourism in the Campos, Ríos, and Lagunas regions of Buenos Aires. They can also offer support and collaborate with tourism stakeholders based on their needs. Moreover, this research provides first-hand information to the

women, empowering them to achieve better collective results by weaving networks among themselves and participating in tourism systems.

## 4.2. Limitations and future research

The first limitation is the challenge of understanding the role of women as drivers of regional food in patriarchal societies. New movements and trends often arrive later in remote towns far from large cities. The region is not exempt from this; a social issue still struggles to comprehend that women are free, empowered beings who can achieve their goals. The mistrust of the producers was also a limitation. The interviews show that rural women are resilient, heads of households, and strong individuals.

In some cases, they have experienced gender-based violence. In specific environments, it is difficult to access them. Some are not part of the banking system or traditional economic systems. Many fear revealing themselves and potentially losing their economic income that supports their families. This also opens new avenues for further research.

Once we understand how this study is done and the difficulty of interviewing rural producers, rural women may be more open to sharing their experiences. Researchers could explore scenarios related to the acceptance of food tourists regarding local culinary products and understand the profile of tourists from a gender perspective. New horizons regarding the motivations of visitors in the region could be analyzed. Also, the impact of these products on food fairs and regional development could be evaluated. Furthermore, another area of research could focus on an exploration of the producers' social organization and associative structures and how they organize their foundations to continue with their collective projects.

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